

What is one thing you have given up for Lent? One thing I've given up is meat: after all, it's always important to embrace our inner Maronite! So I had a meeting at a cafe the other morning. Walking in I noticed a guy in front of a plate of fresh, hot bacon, and then the smell of fresh slightly crispy bacon wafted past my nose. I could taste the beautiful fat, that sweet salty flesh - and I thought *That's a good idea for breakfast!* And then I realised my Lenten commitment - and put it out of my mind.

Adam and Eve, and Jesus too, are in the same situations today: Adam and Eve experience the sweetness of the temptation, and choose death. Jesus - who is not in a garden mind you, but in the desert! - experiences the waft of temptation past his stomach - but chooses life - and the care of the angels.

How can we better deal with our temptations? All of us can do that - it's just a matter of how. So I thought I would give you some key things which can be helpful:

In the long term - the key thing is to prepare for it, because it is coming!:

1. Accept you will be tempted - partly because we are weak, wounded and fallen, and partly because God permits it as overcoming it makes us stronger.
2. Pray daily: without spending time with the Lord, it will be hard to stick by him.
3. Love Christ. Do you love Jesus? How high is he in your hierarchy of loves?
4. Plan to grow in virtue. Last year I knew I had to be fit enough within 3 months to be able to run at least 15 minutes. So I followed a plan where I slowly built my body to do that. What daily things do you do to build up your virtue?
5. Have a regular confessor. Confession is not just about jumping around to different priests so you get absolved. It is also so that you truly are able to be shepherded by your shepherd. This way he can really accompany you.
6. Live community life. Having a common spiritual life with others is a big help.
7. Exercise regularly and sleep well: stress and fatigue can be occasions of sin.
8. Know the situations where you sin, and take them out of your life. Eg:
 - a. Alcohol: how much can you drink before your will starts to weaken?
 - b. Mobile phone: St Josemaria Escriva says that if you eat without having given up some small thing, you have eaten like a pagan. I think the same applies to mobile use: is there part of the day the phone is off?
 - c. Being home alone with my girl/boyfriend. Does this need to change?

In the situation:

1. Run away. Like St Philip Neri. It is not cowardly - it is humble.
2. Move around, change the atmosphere. For example, play music, which affects and moves the heart and senses. Or go outside in nature and admire it.
3. Phone a friend. A good quick way to be distracted from it.
4. Do as Jesus, and remind yourself of a useful scripture verse you have prepared earlier. On this point - do not, do not, do not address the Devil. This is not your affair. Instead, turn to Jesus. Turn to Mary - the vial of Galadriel.