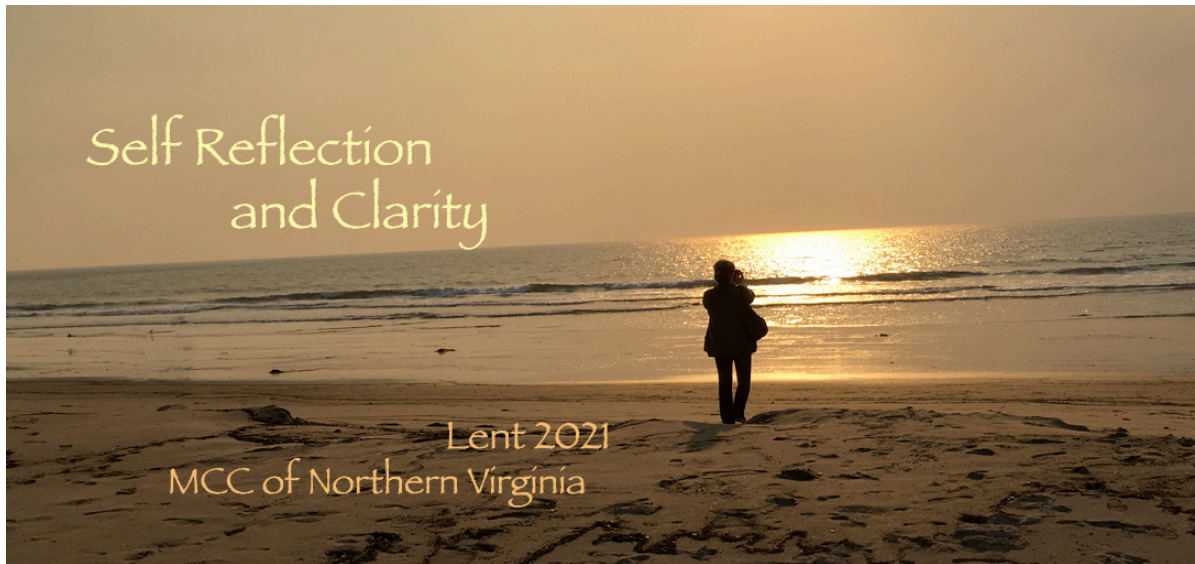


February 21, 2021

First Sunday in Lent



Other Voices

Rev. Emma Chattin
Preaching

First Reading ~ *Mark 1:9-15*

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "This is my child, my Beloved; with whom I am well pleased."

And the Spirit immediately drove Jesus out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the dominion of God has come near; repent (turn around, change your mind), and believe in the good news."

Second Reading ~ *adapted from Paul Tillich*

Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness. It strikes us when we walk through a dark valley of life. It strikes us when we feel our separation is deeper than usual, because we have violated another life, a life which we love, or from which we were estranged. It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility, and our lack of direction and composure has become intolerable to us. It strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection of life does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades, when despair destroys all joy and

courage. Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: "You are accepted. You are accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know...." If that happens to us, we experience grace. After such an experience, we may not be better than before, and we may not believe more than before. But everything is transformed.