It is so easy to play the world’s game which is the power game, the game which depends on setting myself apart from others, distinguishing myself, seeking the limelight and looking for the applause.

I find that it is only too easy to become compulsive in my continual need for affirmation, for more and more affirmation, as I anxiously ask Who am I? Am I the person who is liked? Admired? Praised? Seen as successful?

My whole attitude towards myself becomes determined by the way in which others see me. I compare myself with others, and I try to emphasize what is different and distinctive about me. The three temptations which Christ faced in the wilderness are equally my temptations: to be pertinent. To be spectacular. To be powerful.

Am I able, like Christ to put them down?

Am I prepared to shed all these outer shells of false ambition, of pride?

Am I ready to admit that the mask is a disguise put on to cover up the insecure self? And the armour a shield to protect the vulnerable self? Am I ready to receive a new self, based not on what I can achieve, but on what I am willing to receive?

Esther de Waal