

Theme of the Week - Lent

The temptation of Jesus, the Gospel from Sunday, is one we hear in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. And it is a reading that occurs before Jesus calls His first disciples. Jesus went into the desert to think, to pray and to be close to God before He called others to follow Him in His ministry. Jesus showed us the importance of spending time reflecting on our own lives and drawing closer to God through prayer. We use these forty days of Lent to do this too. It is an opportunity for us to do something for God, to not only show our love to Him but also how sorry we are for the mistakes we have made. It gives us the chance to have a fresh start but by also ensuring we have a relationship with God first.

Sunday's Gospel speaks of a period of forty days that Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying. In Scripture, the desert or wilderness is a place of great deprivation and hardship. It is filled with danger - wild animals, bandits, outcasts from society and even demons. Yet it was the Spirit which led Jesus there. The temptations challenged Jesus to prove his divine sonship. Jesus counters each episode with a reference to Scripture. And throughout, Jesus remains faithful and the devil departs for a time.

Lent, traditionally a time of fasting, prayer and giving, also runs for forty days. It is a special time of preparation, when we are invited to really examine our lives in detail. Our 'desert experiences' often leads us to a new faith experience and a new understanding of God. Which of the temptations of Jesus would you personally find most challenging? What are the great temptations in your life? In what ways have you been **Faith-filled** and **Hopeful** when being 'led by the Spirit' through your wilderness? Spend some time this week contemplating the difficult periods of your life, and how they lead you to new understandings of yourself, others and God. How can you be **Faith-filled** and **Hopeful** in listening to the Holy Spirit and bringing to others this Lent? And during this Lent continue to remember that God Loves you and believes in you so much he gave His son for you.



From the Gospel of Luke (6: 39-45)

At that time: Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were over, he was hungry.

The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone." '

And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, 'To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve." '

And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." ' And Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." '

And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Prayer for the Week

Gracious God,

Let us remember Jesus in His lonely days in the wilderness, His time wrestling with temptation, and the ministry that followed restoring and transforming so many lives.

Create in us a clean heart, O Lord, and put a steadfast spirit within us

Through Christ our Lord

Amen

Day 1

Can you state the three temptations posed to Jesus in the desert?

Why do you think the Spirit led Jesus into the desert?

When have you followed the Spirit into your wilderness?

Day 2

How does Lent give us the opportunity of a new Faith experience?

How can you be more Faith-filled and Hopeful to the Holy Spirit bring it to others around you?

Day 3

Each day three of each week in Lent will be given to pray three Stations of the Cross. This week please pray:

Station 4: Jesus is denied by Peter

Station 5: Jesus is judged by Pilate

Station 6: Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns

Catholic Social Teaching - Solidarity

By coming together in hope as individuals, families, communities, organisations and nations, we can achieve transformative change for the common good. When we unite and make a stand for what we believe in, we can achieve remarkable things

"I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security...while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: 'Give them something to eat' (Mark 6:37)." Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*,