

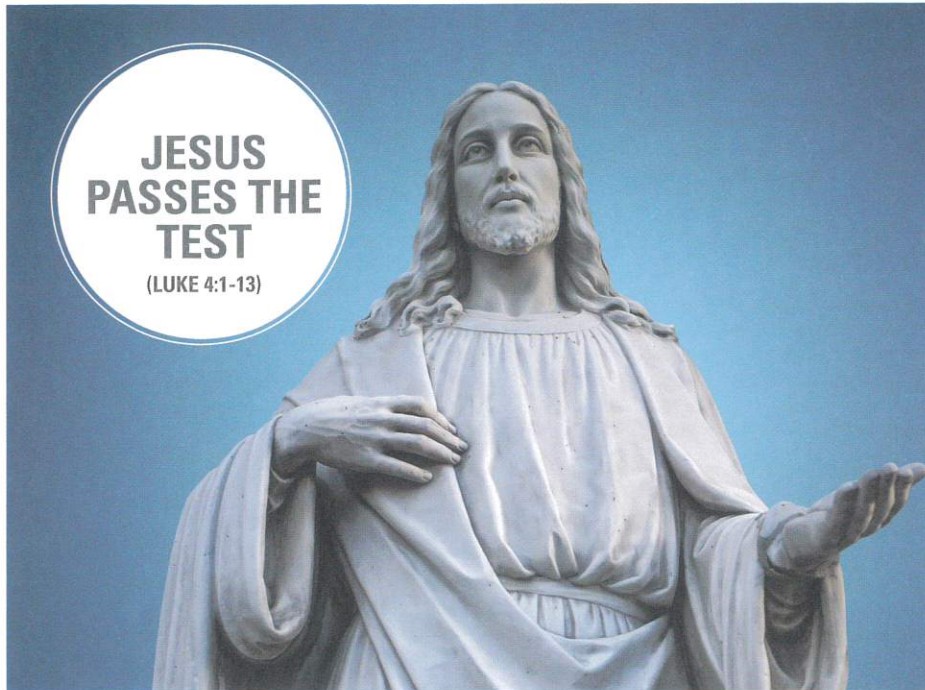
6 MARCH 2022

# Sunday Message

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

THE WORD

Year C • Psalter Week 1



On this first Sunday of Lent, we are taken back to the prelude to the ministry of Jesus. The Gospel tradition begins with the figure of John the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus, then Jesus being tested.

Luke and Matthew present a dramatic confrontation between Jesus and the devil. But we might note that Luke tells us in our Gospel reading today that it is the Spirit who sets up this encounter; Jesus is not ambushed in the wilderness, but rather the devil is acting, in a sense, as God's agent, to find out how Jesus understands what it means to be the Son of God. He has been revealed as such at his baptism, but will he use this knowledge as a kind of short-cut to being the Messiah people are expecting, or will he be the Son that God has in mind?

The three tests present Jesus with a choice: he can use his divine power for his own advantage or to attract a popular following. In either case, his mission is doomed. Or, he can be the Son and Messiah whom God intends, and the proof of that is not human success, but the cross. We will reflect on the final and crucial test at the end of Lent, in Holy Week. Our Gospel reading hints at this, when it ends with the ominous warning that "the devil left him, to return at the appointed time" – that is, at the Last Supper, when the story of Jesus' Passion begins. ■

## REFLECT

For many people, Lent is an endurance test: we decide on a penance, usually giving up something, then follows six weeks of struggle to keep to that decision, much as we may make our new year resolutions, and very often with similar success – or lack thereof. But there is more to the idea of penance. First of all, it is to make us more conscious of God in our lives: it is meant to remind us of the Lord so that, if we deny ourselves something, we are meant to reflect on

why we have given it up, to remind ourselves of Jesus' sacrifice of himself for us, and to encourage us to deepen our relationship with God, so that at the end of Lent we are closer to God than at the beginning.

Lenten penance, self-denial, is not primarily an exercise in willpower or the opportunity to lose weight. We may well decide that it is a good opportunity to adopt a healthier lifestyle, but perhaps we might always begin by thinking about

## LEARN

The Gospel text speaks about Jesus being tested rather than tempted.

Jesus is being tested as to what he understands by his being the Son of God, as revealed at his baptism, which immediately precedes this scene.

The final test in Luke's account takes place in Jerusalem.

This sequence reflects Luke's geographical understanding of Jesus' journey to the holy city and to the cross.

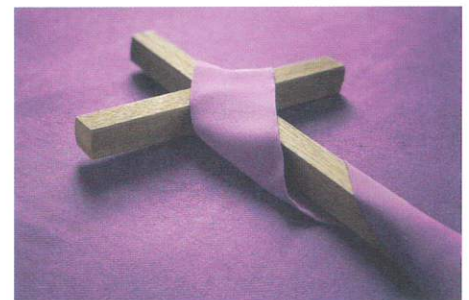
## SAY

**We do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from God's mouth.**

(see Matthew 4:4)

## DO

Decide on your Lenten penance; but remember every time you perform it to think of Jesus and his love for you.



ourselves as disciples of Jesus and reflecting on whether we might adjust our behaviour and attitudes so that we live out our Christian vocation more fully.

The three traditional aspects of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. First is *prayer*, communion with the Lord; *fasting*, self-denial, comes next; and then *almsgiving*, the giving of the money we have saved to those in need, is one result of our Lenten penance. ■

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

When he calls on me, I will answer him;  
I will deliver him and give him glory,  
I will grant him length of days.

**COLLECT**

Grant, almighty God,  
through the yearly observances of holy Lent,  
that we may grow in understanding  
of the riches hidden in Christ  
and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

**FIRST READING** Deuteronomy 26:4-10

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Moses said to the people: "The priest shall take the panner from your hand and lay it before the altar of the Lord your God. Then, in the sight of the Lord your God, you must make this pronouncement:

'My father was a wandering Aramaean. He went down into Egypt to find refuge there, few in numbers; but there he became a nation, great, mighty, and strong. The Egyptians ill-treated us, they gave us no peace and inflicted harsh slavery on us. But we called on the Lord, the God of our Fathers. The Lord heard our voice and saw our misery, our toil and our oppression; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with mighty hand and outstretched arm, with great terror, and with signs and wonders. He brought us here and gave us this land, a land where milk and honey flow. Here then I bring the first-fruits of the produce of the soil that you, Lord, have given me.' You must then lay them before the Lord your God, and bow down in the sight of the Lord your God."

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM** Psalm 90

Response:  
**Be with me, O Lord, in my distress.**

1. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High and abides in the shade of the Almighty says to the Lord: "My refuge, my stronghold, my God in whom I trust!" (R.)
2. Upon you no evil shall fall, no plague approach where you dwell. For you has he commanded his angels, to keep you in all your ways. (R.)
3. They shall bear you upon their hands lest you strike your foot against a stone. On the lion and the viper you will tread and trample the young lion and the dragon. (R.)
4. His love he set on me, so I will rescue him; protect him for he knows my name. When he calls I shall answer: "I am with you." I will save him in distress and give him glory. (R.)

**SECOND READING** Romans 10:8-13

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans.

Scripture says: The word, that is the faith we proclaim, is very near to you, it is on your lips and in your heart. If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. By believing from the heart you are made righteous; by confessing with your lips you are saved. When scripture says: those who believe in him will have no cause for shame, it makes no distinction between Jew and Greek: all belong to the same Lord who is rich enough, however many ask for his help, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!  
Man does not live on bread alone  
but on every word that comes from the  
mouth of God.  
Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!**

**GOSPEL** Luke 4:1-13

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness, being tempted there by the devil for forty days. During that time he ate nothing and at the end he was hungry. Then the devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf." But Jesus replied, "Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone."

Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, "I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours." But Jesus answered him. "Scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God,  
and serve him alone."

Then he led him to Jerusalem and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. "If you are the Son of God", he said to him "throw yourself down from here, for scripture says:

He will put his angels in charge of you  
to guard you,

and again:

They will hold you up on their hands  
in case you hurt your foot against a stone."

But Jesus answered him, "It has been said:  
You must not put the Lord your God to the test."

Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left him, to return at the appointed time.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

*(all bow during the next two lines)*

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the  
Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.  
**Amen.**

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Give us the right dispositions, O Lord, we pray,  
to make these offerings,  
for with them we celebrate the beginning  
of this venerable and sacred time.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes forth from the  
mouth of God.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Renewed now with heavenly bread,  
by which faith is nourished, hope increased,  
and charity strengthened,  
we pray, O Lord,  
that we may learn to hunger for Christ,  
the true and living Bread,  
and strive to live by every word  
which proceeds from your mouth.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE**

May bountiful blessing, O Lord, we pray,  
come down upon your people,  
that hope may grow in tribulation,  
virtue be strengthened in temptation,  
and eternal redemption be assured.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

The call to experience Lent as a journey of  
conversion, prayer and sharing of our goods,  
helps us – as communities and as individuals  
– to revive the faith that comes from the  
living Christ, the hope inspired by the breath  
of the Holy Spirit and the love flowing from  
the merciful heart of the Father.

*Pope Francis*