

LENT 2021: Our Hope Renewed

1st Sunday of Lent



The Temptation in the Wilderness ~ Briton Rivière

*“The Spirit drove Jesus out
into the wilderness and
he remained there for forty days,
and was tempted by Satan.”*

Opening Prayer

Lord God on this first Sunday in Lent,
we remember the trials and temptations of your son Jesus Christ in his journey
through the wilderness, and how he triumphed over all.

In our prayers we think of the difficult journeys in life encountered by so many
people in the world.

We pray that in their different times of need, they may find discernment to see
their way ahead, and strength to overcome whatever problems they face.

We pray that faith may be deepened in this period of Lent, and all may walk in
the light of the Lord.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings for the First Sunday of Lent - Year B

First Reading: Genesis 9:8-15

Psalm: Psalm 24(25): 4-6,7b-9

Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:12-15

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty
days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels
looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed
the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God
is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

Lectio Divina

Reading

Take your time and read the passage. Get a sense of what it is saying. Read the
passage a second time. Listen for any words or phrases that strike you, and listen
in your heart. Be attentive to detail. Note versus or phrases that stand out to you.
Where to understand meaning and background.

In this passage... My favourite verse was... I noticed...

Reflecting

Read the passage again, slowly. As you pause on the words or phrases that strike you, take time to consider what the word, phrase, or passage means, particularly its connection to your life. Imagine being present to hear the passage or witness the story.

This reminds me of... If I were there... I can connect this story to...

Responding

Read the passage again, slowly. Consider now how God has spoken to you in this passage and respond back to him. You may want to consider how this passage is asking you to act differently. Thank God for his word. Ask him to lead you into deeper understanding.

Dear Jesus... Thank you God for... Please help me understand...

Remaining

Now take some time to simply remain in the presence of God. Quiet expression of love between you and God. Note what God is trying to teach you through the passage and time of prayer.

I think Jesus is teaching me... Lord, I love you for... I believe...

Reflection

In the verses preceding our Gospel passage today, Jesus is Baptised by John in the River Jordan. His Baptism was different to those who were Baptised before Him, and his Baptism began to fulfil what John had foretold. As He is emerged in the waters of the River Jordan, a voice from Heaven declares who He is – God's beloved Son. He is affirmed as the Word Made Flesh which sets Him on His path to begin his public ministry and fulfil the promise of God.

Our Gospel reading picks up from this. Jesus is lead out to the wilderness. The wilderness is as the name suggests, a wild, barren place. He is away from religion, from society, from the temple, He is out in the margins. He is where no-one wants to go. A huge struggle begins for him, to trust God even though he does not know what is ahead. He distances himself from the idols of wealth and power which keep the poor from ever believing they were worth anything He will be against everything that diminishes life: evil, suffering, oppression both religious

and political. He will open the door to friendship with God, peace, justice, abundant life.

Mark's account of the temptations is short, with no detail. While questions may be asked as to what happened during this time, the lack of detail provides us with a greater connection. With no detail, it allows us to enter into the space, to place our lived experience of wilderness, and to connect and encounter Jesus on our own personal level. The wilderness referred to is more than likely the Judean desert where there were wild animals such as wolves, leopards, bears, desert foxes, poisonous snakes. The presence of angels signify God's protection.

John's violent imprisonment underlines what the political leaders are capable of. In that climate of violence and terror Jesus heads for Galilee, meeting with common labourers, and telling them the Good News of God's tremendous, freeing, tender love to people who had lost hope.

1. Where or what is your *wilderness* in life today?
2. When you are faced with temptation, what do you do to for support and help along the way? How does prayer help you?
3. Which of these would be most likely to strengthen your belief in God:
 - Seeing someone taking a risk for an other person;
 - Reading a text from the bible;
 - Making a pilgrimage;
 - Returning to a place where you had found peace;
 - Words of encouragement;
 - Other...?

Closing Prayer

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

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

May almighty God bless us,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.