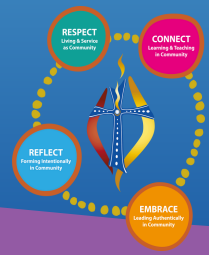


Family Prayer

First Week of Lent - March 9-15 2025

by Kirby Will: Consultant Formation - Identity and Outreach



We acknowledge the First Nations peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present, and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of First Nations peoples across the nation. We acknowledge the deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

Context - First Sunday of Lent

Each year, on the first Sunday of Lent, we journey into the desert with Jesus. This year, in Year C of the Church, we hear from Luke. We know the story of Jesus' temptation and we often focus on the interaction between Jesus and the devil. Josh Noem, author of the Lenten devotional *Lord, Show Me the Way*, invites us to consider what Jesus was doing in the desert to begin with. He says, *'Jesus wasn't going for a hike through the desert-he wasn't visiting. He entered that ecosystem with the intent to adapt to it and be shaped by it. Life isn't easy in the desert; it's an environment that quickly clarifies what's important and what is extra.'* As you read the Scripture, consider the ways in which God is calling you to adapt to, and be shaped by the Lenten environment. As you begin on the edge of the Lenten desert, may you have the courage to examine and determine what is important in your life and what is extra.



Figure 1: Jesus Tempted by Chris Cook

Scripture

Scripture: Luke 4: 1-13

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus was led by the Spirit through the wilderness where he was tempted.

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 of bread.' 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 in 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.

Reflection

Luke, as did Matthew and Mark in previous years, recounts for us that Jesus was driven out into the wilderness which is commonly accepted as the desert given the landscapes of Israel, however, wilderness comes in many forms; it can be barren like a desert, or it can be quite busy with growth and wildlife like the rainforest. Wilderness differs based on context and for each of us, our personal wilderness of Lent will be shaped by our context and not necessarily the same as those around us.

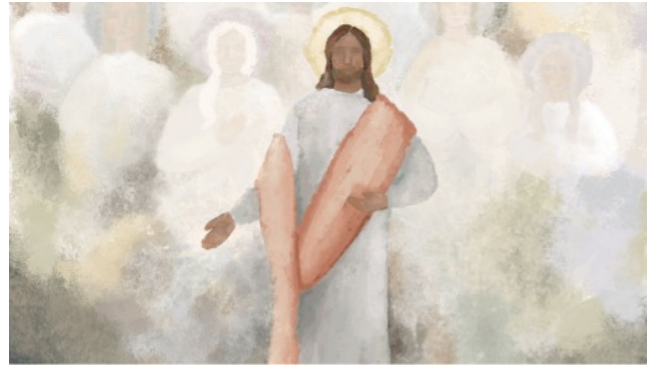


Figure 2: Host of Heaven by Emily Shay

Perhaps your wilderness this year is a different wilderness to previous years. The vastness of the wilderness can see us engaging in a self-dialogue that is often critical and can make the temptations seem the easiest way out. However, the scriptures for this week remind us of the need to trust God, no matter the situation. The Israelites had to trust God to lead them out of Egypt, the Psalm asks us to trust God to be with us and spare us, Paul reminds us that we need to trust our faith, and finally Jesus shows us that even in the hard, we must trust God to see us through.

In the Gospel reading, we hear the devil using the words of this week's Psalm, Psalm 91, to tempt Jesus on the parapet of the Temple. The response for the Psalm is Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble. The Psalm reminds us that when we invite God into our troubles, no matter their complexity, we will emerge clothed in the glory of God. It can seem difficult to invite God in, especially when our troubles seem insurmountable, but hope is what sustains us. Mary Lenaburg reminds us that *'Hope is not about wishful thinking or pretending everything is fine. Hope is standing in the middle of the storm, drenched and weary, and saying God is still God. Its trusting even when the waves crash, he is with us in the boat.'* God was with Jesus in the desert even as the devil persisted and with God, Jesus was able to overcome the trials and temptations of the forty days. When we are faced with our own trials and temptations, it can be hard to see the way forward and that is when we draw on hope. *'Hope isn't passive-it's active faith. It keeps us grounded when life feels uncertain. When we hold onto hope, we declare that God is bigger than our circumstances, and we trust Him to lead us forward'* - Mary Lenaburg.

As we begin this Lenten season, may we be people of hope, who invite God to journey with us and lead us forward as we progress through Lent.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,
as we gather in this Lenten season,
we thank you for the journey into the desert alongside
your Son, Jesus.
Help us to embrace this time of reflection and growth,
recognising our vulnerabilities and temptations we face.
May we find strength in our weaknesses and draw closer
to you through prayer and self-giving.
Guide our Lenten journeys, that we may learn to imitate
Christ's humility and love and discover the grace that
comes from facing our struggles.

Amen.

This prayer is adapted from the Diocese of Wollongong's Lenten program, Metanoia.

Call to Action

- Watch this [reflection](#) by Grace Harwood from the Archdiocese of Brisbane.
- If you haven't already, as a family choose some activities for Lent from this [list](#) that you could do together throughout the 40 days.
- Listen to Matt Maher's [Lord, I Need You](#) as a reminder of our Lenten journeys with God.
- Pray this [Lenten examen](#) from Ignatian Spirituality.