

First Reading: Deuteronomy 26:4-10
Response: **"Be with me, O Lord, in my distress"** (Ps.90:15)
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 90:1-2, 10-15
Second Reading: Romans 10:8-13
Gospel: Luke 4:1-13

Christ overcomes evil from the beginning of time. He conquers it in his incarnation, as Word become flesh. As Risen Lord, he destroys the power of sin and death in you. Temptations still relentlessly challenge us and we have to accept or refuse our salvation from God

The reading from Deuteronomy is a text of the ceremonial acceptance of God and his laws by the people. They make a profession of faith, reciting the history of God's dealings with them, how **"the Lord heard our voice and saw our misery"** (Dt.26:7) and saved his people.

It captures an important moment in history of the people. In all their trials and temptations, **"the Lord brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, with signs and wonders"** (Deut.26:8). How much do you reflect on what God has done for you?

As a believer one sees oneself under God's protection, **"in the shelter of the Most High"** (Ps.90:1) and God's angels are there to guide and protect you, **"to keep you in all your ways,"** (Ps.90:11), to watch over you **"lest you strike your foot against a stone"** Ps.90:12).

It is comforting to know that God watches over us, even in times of temptations, trial and distress: **"Be with me, O Lord, in my distress"** (Ps.90:15) We call upon the Lord's name and he answers **"I am with you (Emmanuel)"** (Ps.90:15).

The climax of God's saving grace is the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ. The Christian response is to accept and **"confess that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead"** (Rom.10:8).

This response of faith comes from hearing the Gospel. St. Paul says **"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"** (Rom .10:13).

Spiritual life is a battle field of trials and temptations. Jesus himself is led by the Spirit and the devil follows. With the use of scripture, he tempts Jesus to think materialistically, about food. Using scripture, our Lord' replies that **"Man does not live on bread alone."** (Lk:4:4).

The next temptation is to follow Satan and his gods for earthly power and glory. Jesus' way is clear: **"You shall worship the Lord your God alone"** (Lk:4:8). Jesus' way of being Messiah is not for the building of earthly kingdoms but the Kingdom of God.

Finally, is the temptation of control and sensationalism, dramatically doing things, with you in control, not God. With Jesus, you have to let God use you, not you use God. **"You must not put the Lord our God to the test."** (Lk:4:12).

Study the temptations of Jesus in the **Gospel**. See the importance of the word of God.

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of **Lent**. Ashes remind us of our humanity and Jesus shows us our destiny to eternity.

Church **Teachings** remind us of Israel in the desert with its trials and temptations and the need to trust in the Lord. Jesus, today in the desert, resists temptation and conquers evil.

Witness is based on conversion, a time for commitment, prayer, fasting and penance.

FOR THE CHILDREN

Read about Jesus in the Gospel today facing temptation and trusting in the word of God.

Teach the children about the meaning of Lent.

Explain the meaning of temptation and trusting in God. (Teaching)

Encourage the children to do something for Lent and show their trust in God. (Witness)

FOR TEENAGERS

My Present Action: *What is your understanding of temptation?*

Your Story and Vision: *What role has it played in your life? Does Lent have any connection?*

Church's Story: *Give Church's explanation about temptations and what is Lent.*

Church's Story and Yours: *How does your life compare with teachings of the Church?*

Church's Vision and Yours: *Where are you going with the Church and with the Lord?*

RCIA

Lent is a Germanic word meaning spring. It was adapted in English to denote forty days preceding Easter. In Latin it is **Quadragesima** and in Greek **Tessarakoste**, (*N.B: Pentecoste* for fifty). It is a liturgical season of the Church that not only reminds us of the People of God in the desert and of Jesus' forty day fast and temptations but also encourages us to resist temptation and resort to prayer, fasting and works of mercy.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

Reflecting upon the temptations of Jesus and trust in God, I am mindful of what happened in the Church and outside. In the Church, St. John Cassian tells us about a pious old monk, who threw himself down a well, believing that God would send an angel to catch him. His confreres lifted out his broken body and he died from his injuries a few days later.⁽ⁱ⁾ Outside the Church, more recently, a preacher in Pietermaritzburg, called on God to raise a dead man from his coffin. God of course, did not do his bidding. Such persons, Cassian describes as having a lapse of discernment (*ibid*). We may not go quite as far as these in putting God to the test, the second temptation of Christ in the desert, but how often have we expected God to do our will instead of seeking to do the will of God?

(i) JOHN CASSIAN Conferences. 'ON DISCERNMENT'. Conference Two: 5. Paulist Press, N.Y. 1985. p.65.

LITTLE ANGELINA

Angelina's mother was presented with her favourite fish, *snoek*, from the Cape. She carefully prepared it leaving her husband to watch over it in the oven. He was dutifully following instructions when a doomsday preacher arrived to warn him that the end of the world was near. In debating with the preacher he lost track of time. Angelina had to warn him that the *snoek* was on fire, declaring emphatically that "the oven was hot as hell." What really moved him was when Angelina exclaimed "And here comes Mom." What Angelina later saw, was a scene of action and language matching the end of the world. Her father had a good taste of judgement day even if it was not the *Parousia* (Last Day), which he might have preferred.

IMPORTANT WORD: "Temptation"

One of the most sacred stories could be the 'temptations of Jesus.' Such a personal experience must have come from none other than the mouth of Christ. There are moments when Jesus confided spiritual experiences with his disciples. His temptations teach us that they can come any time, even in moments of grace and highpoints of your life, as with Elijah on Mount Carmel and Jesus after his baptism in the Jordan.

Somehow there is value and meaning to temptation. It is a test of love, a moment of choice. What do you want? How much do you love God? Are you for Christ? No wonder it is the Holy Spirit that brings you to a desert situation, where you can choose to follow the Lord.

Watchword: “**You must worship the Lord your God**” (Lk.4:8)

Hebrew: ליהוה אלהיך תשתחוה LaYhova ‘Eloheyka tishetahaveh.
Greek: Κυριον τον Θεον σου προσκυνησεις. Kuriov ton Theon sou proskuneseis.
Latin: **Dominum Deum tuum adorabis.**
Spanish: **Al Señor tu Dios adorarás.**
Portuguese: **Adoraras o Senhor, tu Deus.**
French: **Adore le Seigneur ton Dieu.**
German: **Du sollst den Herrn, deinen Gott.**
Afrikaans: **Die Here jou God moet jy aanbid.**
Zulu: **Wokhuleka eNkosini uNkulunkulu.**
Xhosa: **Uze unqule iNkosi uThixo wakho.**
Sotho: **O tla kgumamela Morena Modimo wa hao.**
Irish: