

First Sunday of Lent – February 21, 2010 – Good Shepherd Parish

First Reading: Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Moses spoke to the people, saying: "The priest shall receive the basket from you and shall set it in front of the altar of the LORD, your God. Then you shall declare before the LORD, your God, 'My father was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt with a small household and lived there as an alien. But there he became a nation great, strong, and numerous. When the Egyptians maltreated and oppressed us, imposing hard labor upon us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and he heard our cry and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. He brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand and outstretched arm, with terrifying power, with signs and wonders; and bringing us into this country, he gave us this land flowing with milk and honey. Therefore, I have now brought you the firstfruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.' And having set them before the LORD, your God, you shall bow down in his presence."

Psalm: Ps 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15

R. (cf. 15b) Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
say to the LORD, "My refuge and fortress,
my God in whom I trust."

No evil shall befall you,
nor shall affliction come near your tent,
for to his angels he has given command about you,
that they guard you in all your ways.

Upon their hands they shall bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
You shall tread upon the asp and the viper;
you shall trample down the lion and the dragon.

Because he clings to me, I will deliver him;
I will set him on high because he acknowledges my name.
He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in distress;
I will deliver him and glorify him.

Second Reading: Romans 10:8-13

Brothers and sisters: What does Scripture say?
The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart -
that is, the word of faith that we preach-, for, if you
confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe
in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you
will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is
justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is

saved. For the Scripture says, No one who believes in
him will be put to shame. For there is no distinction
between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all,
enriching all who call upon him. For "everyone who
calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Gospel: Luke 4:1-13

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the
Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty
days, to be tempted by the devil. 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." Jesus answered
him, "It is written, One does not live on bread alone."
Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms
of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him,
"I shall give to you all this power and glory; for it has
been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever
I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me."
Jesus said to him in reply, "It is written: You shall
worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you
serve." Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand
on the parapet 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: With their hands they will
support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone."
Jesus said to him in reply, "It also says, You shall not
put the Lord, your God, to the test." When the devil
had finished every temptation, he departed from him for
a time.



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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the gospel be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Jesus was swept into the desert by a voice that said “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” ([Luke 3:21-22](#)). These were God’s words. Notice that they are nearly the same as what God had uttered eight hundred years before: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights, upon whom I have put my spirit; he shall bring forth justice to the nations” ([Isaiah 42: 1-4](#)). Suddenly the voice of God is speaking again to his servant, making it quite clear that Jesus is that chosen one. Was Jesus surprised to hear this? In some ways, no. He already knew in his deepest soul and all the way outwards how close he was to God. Yet he was simultaneously human, and completely so. Therefore, in another way, he was shocked. He had read and re-read the Isaiah passage above since he was at his mother’s knee. Now it all clicked into place. He was the chosen one.

Jesus needed to ponder this stunning message. He had to listen in silence and with an openness so holy that it would seem almost like emptiness. So he went to the desert. For his part, the devil had already known about Jesus, with a dumb and greedy knowledge, from the moment the Jesus-child was born. Satan knew that this great servant of God could be used for ulterior motives. His strength, his God-like holiness, the fame he would acquire, all could become a tool for subjecting the world to Satan. He slithered up to the hungry Jesus. “No point in being empty,” the sly tempter said. “Just give a Godly command and this stone will turn into bread.” In other words, You are God, aren’t you? Take whatever you want. Have a great life! *Note to reader: How do you assuage your hunger?*

Jesus answered from the scriptures. “One does not live by bread alone.” These words paraphrase Moses’ great second speech to the people of Israel: Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the Lord” ([Deuteronomy 8:3](#)). The devil, rapacious, scurried on to a second temptation, this time to glory. Join me, worship me. All the kingdoms in the world will be yours, as they already are mine. (Translation: you can be bigger than this heavenly father of yours.) Jesus answers, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him alone shall you serve” (see [Deuteronomy 6:13](#)). *Note to the reader: what do you and I worship and serve—instead of God?*

Two temptations have failed. As we know, “even the devil can quote scripture,” so he uses Psalm 91—the part about God commanding angels to guard the beloved one ([verses 11 and 12](#)). Just throw yourself off these heights, the devil suggests smoothly. God’s angels will have no choice, they will have to come save you. Take advantage of who you are. *Note to the reader: Don’t you want to show off your power sometimes?*

Jesus again answers from the same book of scripture ([Deuteronomy 6:16](#)), “You shall not tempt the Lord your God.” The meaning: God the Father is first and above all. If you can bribe him to save you, then you will seem equal to him! But you aren’t. *Note to all people: do you sometimes think you are God?*

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. What good things came out of the Israelites’ desert sojourn? Was there any other way for them to get to the Promised Land? Metaphorically speaking, is the desert a place to fear or do you find its mysteries attractive?
2. How do you proclaim that Jesus is Lord on all the small places where you live your daily life (in the parish, at work, with friends)? Do your proclamations always require words?
3. When an athlete starts to get out of shape he/she exercises to get back. Is there an analogy here for your spiritual life? How do you exercise to get into shape spiritually? What would a “flabby” spiritual life look like? How does yours look now?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another’s openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following: Father, through our observance of Lent, help us to understand the meaning of your Son’s death and resurrection, and teach us to reflect it in our lives. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen