



First Sunday of Lent † Sunday 10 March 2019

In England and Wales

Cycle of Prayer – Candidates for the Sacraments, Penitents and Wanderers

Keynote: The journey of faith – time to make choices

Book of Deuteronomy 26: 4-10

As we set out on our journey through Lent towards Jerusalem, we are reminded at the very outset that it is the Lord God who leads us, his chosen people, from a place of toil, oppression, and harsh slavery; and that God walks with us on this journey of faith. The Lord offers us the promise of protection. *‘With mighty hand and outstretched arm,’* the Lord God will lead us to *‘the land where milk and honey flow’*. Moses reminded the people of Israel: *‘The Lord heard our voice... saw our misery... the Lord God brought us out of Egypt with mighty hand and outstretched arm with great terror, signs and wonders.’* This historic journey of salvation and deliverance is the same Lenten journey of freedom that we are now entering upon. Moses urged his listeners to recognise what God was offering, and to be full of gratitude, to be faithful, and to *‘bow down in the sight of your God’*. So too may we give thanks, and resolve to follow the path of Christ to the end of the road.

Responsorial Psalm 90 (91) A song by one secure under God’s protection

Letter of Paul to the Romans 10: 8-13

Everyone is invited without distinction, whether *‘Jew or Greek’*, to *‘confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved’*. So religious faith for Paul, is not about merely external pious observances and ritual, but rather *‘the word, that is the faith we proclaim, is very near you, it is on your lips, and in your heart... for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’* There is a power about that last phrase: *‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’* Hear the words and use them.

Gospel according to Luke 4: 1-13

‘Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness.’ Luke in recording the Temptations of Jesus in the wilderness shows the devil taking Jesus on a journey that will end in Jerusalem. Inviting Jesus to worship him, the Devil says: *‘If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf...’* and later, *‘I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms...’* and again from the height of the Temple, *‘If you are the Son of God... throw yourself down from here...’*. In our own journey of faith we are likely to encounter trials similar to those experienced by Jesus. Maybe these trials will take the form of dishonesty or opportunities for personal advancement, or power. Maybe, to selfishly seek power for ourselves, in order to gain recognition in the eyes of the world. Or to test providence by avoiding the ordinary responsibilities of life, and going instead for the spectacular high risk option – the one which we might think will offer us the greatest personal profit, but ignores the needs of others, maybe even those whom we love. Temptation challenges our integrity, our fidelity to the gospel message, so how do we respond? As we start the journey of faith that is Lent, we might imitate Jesus’ response in rejecting the evil temptation: *‘You must not put the Lord your God to the test’*.

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Note –The Rite of Election may be celebrated, and the Sunday Readings from Year A may be used as directed.