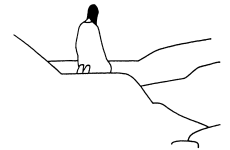


AMDG
1ST SUNDAY IN LENT
YEAR A
5 MARCH 2017



Here's a text if you've only got a minute...

The Lord God fashioned man ... breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being.

First Reading Genesis 2: 7-9, 3:1-7

Give me again the joy of your help; with a spirit of fervour sustain me. *Responsorial Psalm Psalm 50*

Jesus Christ will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift ...of being made righteous *Second Reading*

Romans 5: 12-9

The devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. "I will give you all these," he said, "if you fall at my feet and worship me." Then Jesus replied, "Be off, Satan! For Scripture says: You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone" *Gospel Matthew 4:1-11*



Does this image help me in my prayer, my life, during this season of Lent?

REFLECTIONS

What does this week hold for me and how do I feel God may be calling me?

What do I want to ask of the Lord for myself and for others?

'A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me.'

OPENING PRAYER

Grant, almighty God,
 through yearly observances of holy Lent,
 that we may grow in understanding
 of the riches hidden in Christ
 and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.

Lent is a time of preparation for Easter. But 'good things come to those who wait': Our prayer must be marked by patient perseverance. I will be tempted not to allow God's grace time to 'work'; tempted to want the 'quick fix' to change myself. Only God can reform me.

During these coming weeks I may like to prepare my place of prayer to suit the season.

Perhaps place there a small pot of earth or piece of clay to remind me of my humanity, or crucifix to help me recall Jesus' sacrifice for me, perhaps a candle to represent the 'Spirit of Life'.

Today the church calls me to ask for a spirit of repentance for the times when I have turned away from God.

Quietly reflecting on this Sunday's opening prayer, I take time to look at my life, but always in the light of the Redemption.

I say this short prayer:

'Merciful God, be with me and enlighten my mind'.



Based on Prego by St Beuno's Outreach in the Diocese of Wrexham

LDS

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: PSALM 50

R/. Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness,
In your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
And cleanse me from my sin.

My offences truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.

A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me,
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit.

Give me again the joy of your help;
With a spirit of fervour sustain me.
O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall declare your praise.

This is of the most well-known of the psalms, loved by so many: Augustine, Gregory the Great, Martin Luther and prayerfully set to music by Bach, Allegri and others.

Like the psalmist, I begin by admitting my own sinfulness. Sin is the fundamental spoiling of a person: a distortion, a disharmony, a rebellion against the will of God.

But the psalmist declares that God is: mercy, kindness and compassion. He recognises God's power to give us new life. During this healing time of Lent I ask God's Spirit to help me experience this in my everyday life.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 4:1-11

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves'. But he replied, 'Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'.

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God' he said 'throw yourself down; for scripture says: He will put you in his angels' charge, and they will support you on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone'.

Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says: You must not put the Lord your God to the test'.

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these,' he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says: you must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

The wilderness was a large area between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea; dry, very hot and dusty, with bare and jagged rocks; a lonely place of devastation. This is where Jesus wrestled with the temptation to dominate and use power over people, instead of befriending and serving them, and the temptation not to place his trust in God alone. Can I feel with Jesus in his struggle? As I imagine myself in this scene, can I identify the temptations I am struggling with now in my wilderness times – just as Jesus did? I ask for the courage I need to look at how I behave sometimes in my relationship to God and to others. I speak to Jesus from my heart and ask him to help me understand my actions and to be drawn to his values.