

Sunday 10th March 2019
First Sunday in Lent

Purple



Collect

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Deuteronomy 26:1-11 English Standard Version (ESV)

Offerings of Firstfruits and Tithes

26 ¹“When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it, ²you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. ³And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, ‘I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.’ ⁴Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God. ⁵“And you shall make response before the LORD your God, ‘A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. ⁷Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror,^[a] with signs and wonders. ⁹And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰And behold, now I bring

the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O LORD, have given me.’ And you shall set it down before the LORD your God and worship before the LORD your God. ¹¹ And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

Footnotes: a. Hebrew *with great terror*.

COMMENT: The offering of the first fruits of the harvest was one of the great festivals in Israel's temple ritual. Though the story and the liturgy probably developed much later, in this passage Moses is said to have initiated the ritual as a commandment from God. The story lifts up the fundamental concept of stewardship: offering to God the first returns of our labour as an act of worship and thanksgiving, and as a symbol of the dedication of ourselves and all our possessions to God.

Luke 4:1-13 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Temptation of Jesus

4 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ²for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. ³The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” ⁴And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” ⁵And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’” ⁹And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ ¹¹and “‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’” ¹²And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ¹³And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

COMMENT: Immediately after his baptism, the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness for a time of prayer and fasting. The so-called temptations may have come to Jesus as inner searching before he embarked on his vocation. He could have chosen any of the three tempting ways: to satisfy his own needs by feeding himself; to gain supreme power by subjecting himself to evil; or to draw attention to himself by some spectacular performance. He rejected all three. His struggles with temptation had not ended. More were yet to come as he chose the way that led to the cross.

Psalm 91 *Qui habitat* Grail Psalter

℟ Be with me, O Lord, in my distress.

¹ He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
and abides in the shade of the Almighty

² says to the Lord: “My refuge,
my stronghold, my God in whom I trust!” **℟**

³ It is he who will free you from the snare
of the fowler who seeks to destroy you;

⁴ he will conceal you with his pinions
and under his wings you will find refuge. **℟**

⁵ You will not fear the terror of the night
nor the arrow that flies by day,

⁶ nor the plague that prowls in the darkness
nor the scourge that lays waste at noon. **℟**

⁷ A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand fall at your right,

you, it will never approach;

^{4c} his faithfulness is buckler and shield. **℟**

⁸ Your eyes have only to look
to see how the wicked are repaid,

⁹ you who have said: “Lord, my refuge!”
and have made the Most High your dwelling. **℟**

¹⁰ Upon you no evil shall fall,
no plague approach where you dwell.

¹¹ For you has he commanded his angels,
to keep you in all your ways. **℟**

¹² They shall bear you upon their hands
lest you strike your foot against a stone.

¹³ On the lion and the viper you will tread
and trample the young lion and the dragon. **℟**

¹⁴ Since he clings to me in love, I will free him;
protect him for he knows my name.

¹⁵ When he calls I shall answer: "I am with you,"
I will save him in distress and give him glory.

℟ Be with me, O Lord, in my distress.

¹⁶ With length of life I will content him;
I shall let him see my saving power. **℟**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: This psalm proclaims the traditional faith that total dependence on God brings providential protection from evil. God does this graciously and mercifully because it is God's nature to do so, not as a reward for good behaviour.

Short Preface

And now we give you thanks because you give us the spirit of discipline, that we may triumph over evil and grow in grace, as we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed.

Post Communion

Lord God, you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven; by it you nourish our faith, increase our hope, and strengthen our love: teach us always to hunger for him who is the true and living bread, and enable us to live by every word that proceeds from out of your mouth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**