

## The First Sunday in Lent YEAR C FEBRUARY 14, 2016

As we move into Lent, it is tempting to make services solemn and dark, to preach hellfire and brimstone and to focus on all the evil in the world that we must oppose. This is certainly necessary, and the first week in Lent gives much to support this approach. However, there is also a lot to inspire celebration and joy. This first week in Lent offers us an invitation to a life of abundance – found in the practice of spiritual disciplines and in the freedom of taking responsibility for our own light and darkness. And it assures us of God's care and protection throughout.

May our worship teach us to confront the darkness within and without by becoming those who shine the light of Christ.

### INTRODUCTIONS

*Introductions for use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines*

#### **Deuteronomy 26 : 1-11**

The people of God are to have constantly in mind God's powerful wonders in history. In worship, they are to recite his great deeds and bring him offerings.

#### **Psalms 91:1-2, 9-16**

A psalm celebrating God's care and protection of those who dwell in God, and make God's presence their safe refuge.

#### **Romans 10 : 8b-13**

This short passage acts as a bridge between the Old testament and Gospel readings. Paul has been contrasting the historic Jewish faith with our faith in Christ. They looked at God for miraculous works, and mistakenly relied on doing good deeds to win salvation, whereas we know we are saved simply by our faith.

#### **Luke 4 : 1-13**

Jesus has to face the temptation to reveal the power of God within him by a show of mighty supernatural force. He rejects that for the ways of gentleness and compassion.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

[http://bible.oremus.org/?show\\_adj=no&passages=Deuteronomy%2026:%201-11%0Acw%20Psalm%2091:%201-2,%209-16%0ARomans%2010:%208b-13%0ALuke%204:%201-13](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Deuteronomy%2026:%201-11%0Acw%20Psalm%2091:%201-2,%209-16%0ARomans%2010:%208b-13%0ALuke%204:%201-13)

### COLLECTS OF THE DAY

#### **Collect One**

O Lord,  
who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights;  
Give us grace to use such abstinence,  
that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit,  
we may ever obey thy godly motions  
in righteousness, and true holiness,  
to thy honour and glory,

who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, world without end.

**Collect Two**

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 our Lord.

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1**

The bidding today is LORD OF LENT and the response is RENEW OUR LIVES

Let us pray.

Followers of the way of Christ, let us bring to the Lord the needs of our times.

Lord Jesus, you called us to renounce evil and we remember today that, at the start of your ministry, you were tried and tempted by the forces of evil. You resisted the chance to be popular instead of faithful;  
to choose fame instead of service and power instead of sacrifice - but you set us all an example to follow by choosing the way of the Father.  
Teach us how to recognise the approach of evil in all its forms and to be on our guard against it. You faced temptation in your life and because of this may we never be ashamed of temptation in our own lives - but save us from the weakness that gives way to it. Grant us all the strength to stand up against all that is evil and keep us firm in times of trial and temptation knowing that your support and love are always close at hand.  
Make us resolute in obeying your will and seeking your kingdom that we may stay true to you and proclaim your salvation.

Lord of Lent

**Renew Our Lives**

Lord Jesus, we pray for your blessing on all who confess belief in you that they may witness powerfully to your unselfish love and humility. We offer you our thanks that we can meet together in this church and pray openly to you. We remember and pray for those who are denied this opportunity and are persecuted for their faith. We pray for all Christians wherever they may be and may they be strengthened by the power of your love.  
Help each one of us to see our priorities and not be led astray, Too often we fail to live up to our ideals; we compromise for comfort; we become too concerned about material things and seek our own glory. We fail to put our trust in you, trusting only in our own schemes and plans. During this time of Lent help us more clearly to see the ways by which we follow you and as we come to you for refreshment and renewal help us to forget ourselves and find true happiness in serving you. As we re examine our lives through self discipline and prayer may we enter your stillness, be sensitive to your call and know your will for us.

Lord of Lent  
**Renew Our Lives**

Lord Jesus, we pray for all people who hold positions of authority that they do not misuse their power to the detriment of those they are supposed to be helping. We pray for all the world's leaders and for our own leaders who are responsible for making decisions about our future. We pray that they will be given the insight and integrity to govern wisely according to your will, being fully aware of the true needs of the people.

Lord Jesus, look with compassion on all those whose minds are full of anxiety and bewilderment and for whom everyday is one of despair. We pray for those who are experiencing severe financial difficulty at this time; many elderly people and young families trying to exist on very limited incomes: those people faced with losing their homes and those who have lost their jobs. We pray that you will turn their despair to hope and free them from fear and self hatred. Whatever the future may bring them, may they know that you are the rock on whom they depend and that your love will help to ease their burden.

Lord of Lent  
**Renew Our Lives**

We pray for all people everywhere in their varying needs. Into the gentleness of your healing love we bring before you the lonely, the hungry, those living in poverty and those without hope. We remember all those who are ill and in pain: those recovering from surgery - giving thanks for the work and dedication of our doctors and nurses: for those involved in crippling accidents. Today we pray for the victims, their families and the survivors of the Amsterdam plane crash and we offer our thanks for the work of the emergency services throughout the world.

We have in our hearts some people known only to ourselves, some known to our church and some only through the news who are in need of our prayers and we remember them in a moment of quiet.....

May your healing touch support and strengthen them and we pray that you will remove from them all that hurts, harms and hinders.

Lord of Lent  
**Renew Our Lives**

Lord Jesus, we pray that you will bless and protect our homes, our families and our friends. Help us to build bridges of tolerance and understanding between the different generations. May our homes be havens of peace and rest – a place to call our own and a community in which we can feel safe and secure.

Help us to be mindful of those who have no homes, families or friends. Make us grateful for all that we have so that we may use every endeavour to ensure that every person has a home to call his own and feels wanted within his own community.

We pray for the children and young people connected to our church through the various groups and especially for those who are beginning to sense the wonder, mysteries and difficulties of life. We ask that you will hold them in your love. May they, through the good influence of parents, families and the church, grow into a fuller understanding of your love and purpose. Help each one of us to respond to their needs. Give us patience and compassion, and help us to offer them our time and our experience with true sincerity and love.

Lord of Lent  
**Renew Our Lives**

We pray for all those who are mourning the loss of loved ones that you will comfort and strengthen them in their time of need.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which no darkness can quench. We remember before God all those who have died and light a candle to symbolise the light of Christ, which eternally shines and brings hope. Today we pray for and remember.....

Confident in the promise that those who believe in you will live though they have died, we give you thanks for all who have left their earthly body and now share with you the joys of heaven.

Lord of Lent  
**Renew Our Lives**

Be with us Lord as we go out in your name:

may the lips that have sung your praises always speak the truth;

may the ears which have heard your word listen only to what is good

And may our lives as well as our worship be always pleasing to you.

Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your son, Our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE    2**

Loving and Compassionate God, you know that the battle of good and evil rages within and around us, and that our ancient foe tempts us with his deceits and empty promises. We pray that you would keep us steadfast in your Word and, when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was tempted as we are tempted - but resisted the wiles of the evil one.... Lord hear our prayer....

Father, in those moments when our weaknesses and our strengths are tested, fill us with your holy presence that we may always remember whose we are. Keep from us the temptation to give up on seeking to do your will, and shield us from the despair that doubts your goodness. Help us to remember that you are the one who is able to move the rock aside, the one who gives new life.... Lord hear our prayer....

Lord, we pray to you for healing and courage and grace to live on. We ask this both for ourselves and for others...

...Lord hear our prayer....

O Lord our God, listen to the voice of your church, calling to you from the desert of this world. Protect us with your strong hand and outstretched arm, that, nourished by the bread of your word and fortified by your Spirit we may proclaim the good news of your love to all people in word and deed, even as Jesus showed us. We ask it in his name. Amen

## POST COMMUNION

Lord God,  
you renew us with the living bread from heaven.  
Nourish our faith,  
increase our hope,  
strengthen our love,  
and enable us to live by every word  
that proceeds from out of your mouth;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## PRAYERS

God of wilderness and water,  
your Son was baptized and tempted as we are.  
Guide us through this season,  
that we may not avoid struggle,  
but open ourselves to blessing,  
through the cleansing depths of repentance  
and the heaven-rending words of the Spirit. Amen.

Artist of souls,  
you sculpted a people for yourself  
out of the rocks of wilderness and fasting.  
Help us as we take up your invitation to prayer and simplicity,  
that the discipline of these forty days  
may sharpen our hunger for the feast of your holy friendship,  
and whet our thirst for the living water you offer  
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

God of the covenant,  
in the glory of the cross  
your Son embraced the power of death  
and broke its hold over your people.  
In this time of repentance,  
draw all people to yourself,  
that we who confess Jesus as Lord  
may put aside the deeds of death  
and accept the life of your kingdom. Amen.

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- God of the living,  
through baptism we pass from the shadow of death  
to the light of the resurrection.  
Remain with us and give us hope  
that, rejoicing in the gift of the Spirit  
who gives life to our mortal flesh,  
we may be clothed with the garment of immortality,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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- Beloved friends, in this season of repentance and healing,  
we accept God's invitation to be ever-mindful of the needs of others,  
offering our prayers on behalf of God's community in the church and the world.

*Intercessions*

Fill us with your strength  
to resist the seductions of our foolish desires  
and the tempter's vain delights,  
that we may walk in obedience and righteousness,  
rejoicing in you with an upright heart. Amen.

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- God of deliverance and freedom,  
you taught the people of Israel  
to acknowledge that all things  
come from your bountiful hand.  
Deepen our faith  
so that we may resist temptation  
and, in the midst of trial,  
proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord. Amen
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- Lord - listen to our prayers for ourselves at this time - bring
  - to our minds the places we have compromised the truth for that
  - which is convenient to us - the times we have shut our eyes and
  - ears and hearts to the needs of others - the times we have
  - indulged ourselves to our own detriment... - Help us dear God to
  - know that you forgive these things - and give us strength to
  - resist them in the future... Lord hear our prayer....
- Lord, listen to our prayers for others at this time - for those
  - who hunger for bread - but only find stones - for those who seek
  - justice - but can find no advocate who will help them -- for
  - those who are in danger and have no one watching over them....
  - Lord hear our prayer....
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- Lord - speak to us in the silence of our hearts - show us the way
  - to go.....
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- We pray to you in the name of Jesus - who taught us to come to
- you saying, OUR FATHER...
- Richard Fairchild

**BENEDICTION & THREEFOLD AMEN**

Go in peace - love and care for one another in Christ's name;  
- and may almighty God strengthen you through all that you endure,  
- may his love sustain in you a Spirit of peace and joy in the midst of  
adversity  
- and may his grace and his healing power be evident through your life and  
ministry  
both this day and forevermore. - Amen

**LECTIONARY NOTES 1**

**REFLECTIONS ON THEME:**

What is interesting about the readings for this week is that the focus, rather than being on Jesus' temptation, is on God's care, protection and provision for God's people. When the temptation narrative is placed in that context, our focus shifts dramatically – and

importantly – away from fear of failure or succumbing to evil, and on to God’s resources that are at our disposal to keep us strong and faithful. Perhaps the great temptation of this week in the lectionary is to make it all about evil and its attack on us and our world. The Lectionary, however, rightly calls us to make this week about God – God’s care, God’s Word, God’s protection, God’s provision – which means that we can rest assured that whatever we may face, “the best of all is ‘God is with us’” as Wesley said.

### **CONNECTING WITH LIFE:**

**GLOBAL APPLICATION:** With little scratching of the surface, the three temptations of Jesus are no different than the ones we wrestle with in the world today – power and influence, wealth and consumption, personal appetites and greed. Are there any of the big justice issues that don’t fall into one of these general categories? But, it is important for us to focus on God’s care and protection, or we can easily fall into the trap of fighting this evil on its own terms. Jesus refuses to do so. Trusting in God, and immersing himself in God’s word, Jesus simply embraces a different set of values – self-giving, humility and servanthood, fasting and self-control. Even in the big global issues, simply working to create communities of trust in God’s ways that live out these alternative values is a significant way to contribute and to push back the forces of evil. How can your community embody the values of Christ more visibly and publicly?

**LOCAL APPLICATION:** There are so many things at issue in this week’s readings, and similarly in our lives today: issues of identity; issues of security; issues of power; issues of appetite and consumption. It is out of these issues – and the knowledge that it is only “under the shadow of God’s wing” that we can hope to face them satisfactorily – that the three Lenten disciplines emerge – fasting (to confront our consumption and appetites); giving of time, abilities and resources (to confront our love of power and pride); prayer (to confront our self-dependence and security issues). As individuals, and as faith communities, embracing these practices – not just in Lent – is the easiest way to confront the evil within and without. As Mother Teresa famously said: “It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness.”

### **SERMON OUTLINE**

#### **Luke 4:1-13 tempted by the devil...**

A vivid account of Jesus’ encounter & conflict with Satan

**1. the Desert** - vast area - 35 x 15 miles called **Jeshimmon** - “**Devastation**” - wild, barren, deadly dangerous terrain...

**Tom Harpur:-** “In 1969 Californian Bishop James Pike was seeking the Dead Sea Caves - got lost - his body was later found at foot of a precipice” over which he had fallen while wandering demented by lack of water & food.” How did Jesus feel after *40 days & 40 nights* - suffering from hunger & heat exhaustion?

**2. The Devil** - arch-enemy of God - *the prince of this world* - a real & deadly foe to be reckoned with... cf **1 Peter 5.8:** *be sober, be vigilant* - always on your guard - *your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion*

**3. The Decisions** J had to make - how to win people for God & the Kingdom of Heaven.

**a) to provide for the starving** - *he was hungry* - *tell this stone to become bread* (3) tempted to meet his own needs physically, + would attract 1000’s by providing free food - eg. feeding of 5000. But **Deut 8.3** reminds us: *Man does not live on bread alone* – feed on the spiritual food of JC

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**b) to prefer Satan** - world dominion - *all yours if you & worship me... > worship the Lord your God & Serve him only (Deut 6.13)* God's Way is the Way of the **Cross** - not **Compromise!** *Choose this day who you will serve: Joshua*

**c) to perform the spectacular** - *> the highest point of the temple - throw yourself down - drop of 450 ft, but angels will catch you before you hit the bottom (Psalm 91) > reply: Do not put the Lord your God to the test. (Deut 6.16)* Simply trust in Him & in His eternal purposes....

By Norman Porteous

### ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

**Sin, like ashes in our eyes - Sermons that Work, Episcopal**

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2013/01/30/1-lent-c-2013/>

**Lent 1 - The Buechner Blog**

<http://frederickbuechner.com/content/weekly-sermon-illustration-lent>

**Luke 4 - Temptation**

<http://deeperdisciple.blogspot.com/2007/02/february-25-sermon-temptation-luke-41.html>

**Wilderness Tests - from the best of Lutheran tradition**

<http://www.lstc.edu/chapel/sermons/?a=sermon&id=39>

**The Word is near you - Sermons that Work, Episcopal**

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2010/02/21/1-lent-c-2010/>

**Faith and the importance of temptation**

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/c-le01se.php>

**The Easy Way and Christ's Way**

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/c-le01sm.php>

**Pushing Against The Rock**

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/c-le01sn.php>

### CHILDREN

**Worshipping with Children, Lent 1 - Carolyn C. Brown**

Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary

<http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/year-c-first-sunday-in-lent-february-17-27.html>

**Story for Children's Worship and Family Activity, Lent 1C - Larry Broding**

A Catholic Resource for the Lectionary

<http://www.word-sunday.com/index.html>

**Marked With A Cross**

Follow up on Ash Wednesday - scroll down

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/c-le01sm.php>

**Joining Jesus For The Journey**

[www.churchnewsireland.org](http://www.churchnewsireland.org)



<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/c-le01sn.php>

**HYMN SUGGESTIONS**

I Know Whom I Have Believed  
I Cannot Tell Why He Whom Angels Worship  
Be Thou My Vision  
Saviour, Like A Shepherd Lead Us  
Heart Word  
How Long?  
Thy Word (ouTube video)  
Blessed Be Your Name (YouTube video)  
Your Grace Is Enough (YouTube video)  
Everlasting God (YouTube video)

**Please commend this resource to colleagues - they simply send an email to [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com) with the message Passwords in the title**