

**READINGS & PSALM**

Genesis 2 : 15-17, 3 : 1-7

Romans 5 : 12-19

Matthew 4 : 1-11

Psalm 32

**INTRODUCTIONS**

*These may be included in the Parish Magazine, in the weekly service sheet, or by the lector as an introduction to the readings.*

**Genesis 2 : 15-17, 3 : 1-7**

Our readings at the beginning of Lent are all concerned with doing right or wrong, and knowing the difference. In the ancient tale of how evil came into the world, the first human beings in the Garden of Eden succumbed to temptation.

**Romans 5 : 12-19**

Paul's words are complicated to hear, as he draw new meaning from the old story of Adam. Humanity has been innately sinful since the beginning of time, but through one new man, Jesus, we are now not condemned for our sins. God's gift of righteousness offers us the possibility of a new and free life.

**Matthew 4 : 1-11**

In the first garden of the world, Eve could not resist the temptation to please herself and not God. When Jesus faced the temptation to bring in his kingdom by using the levers of worldly power, he was strong to resist. He always chose God's ways, not man's.

**PRAYERS**

Almighty God,  
whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit  
to be tempted by Satan;  
Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations;  
and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us,  
let each one find you mighty to save;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.  
*1979 Book of Common Prayer*

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.  
*International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL)*

God of love, you gave your son Jesus strength in the desert. Grant that we may also have the strength to do what is right and to stand up for what we believe in, even when we are tempted by others or by what we see around us to do wrong. Amen. *Cafod*

## First Sunday in Lent - Sun 13th March, 2011

Christ Jesus, you fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. Help us to take only what we need and to say no when we are tempted by new things and more things, so that around the world everyone can have an equal share of what God has given us. Amen. *Cafod*

### PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH 1

As Jesus entered the wilderness to be tested by the devil, let us enter this season of Lent to examine our hearts. We pray, "Waiting on you," and respond, "Amen."

Let us pray for the church's witness in the world.

O Holy One, you have strengthened your church as a sign of your compassion and holiness. Direct us in this calling so that all who look on the church may catch sight of your greater goodness. We pray, waiting on you, **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who govern our country.

Sovereign God, you reveal your power on the side of the weak and disenfranchised. Help our leaders, that among the many voices calling for their attention, they might hear the voice of those who do not have the means to provide for themselves: children, the unemployed, and those who need medical or psychological care. We pray, waiting on you, **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who do not have enough to eat.

Gracious God, you desire equally that all might know you and that all may eat their fill. Be with the hungry, we pray, that in addition to your word they might have daily bread. We pray, waiting on you, **Amen.**

Let us pray for the youth in our congregation.

O God, you know what it is to be tested. We seek your presence with the youth of our parish, that amidst the tempting choices that face them, they may choose to follow you. We pray, waiting on you, **Amen.**

Let us pray for all preparing for baptism.

Faithful God, empower your servants \_\_\_\_\_, that in their own forty days of preparation they may follow the example of Christ and face that which would most keep them from your kingdom. We pray, waiting on you, **Amen.**

### PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH 2

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.

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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. This morning 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.

*By Margaret Appleton - From This is [Church.com](http://Church.com)*

**SENDING OUT**

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.

## SERMON STARTERS

### Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7:

I love the story-telling quality of this text. Growing up, going to [Camp Aldersgate](#), the then-director Rick Stackpole used to tell this story about the creation of the world, about how the turtle had to swim to the bottom of the water to pick up sand to make the land. I loved those stories, and loved camp, and was shaped by experiences there. So then, I read this story, with phrases like, "now the serpent was more crafty than any other," and I can just hear the intonation of a story-teller sharing this with people thousands of years ago. And no doubt, as we have it to read today, this story shaped the people, and their faith, as they sought to understand God at work in their world.

For other great creations stories, check out two of my favorite C.S. Lewis books: *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Magician's Nephew* and from the space trilogy: *Perelandra*.

Read closely and carefully: compare what the snake says God says, with what Eve says God says, with what God actually says. It's like a game of telephone, where the truth gets slightly altered in each telling.

Nakedness. Today, perhaps it seems no one has shame in nakedness, if we look at media images... but emotional nakedness - perhaps we fear that now more than ever. What does it mean to be naked before God? What are you ashamed of God seeing?

### Psalm 32:

Watch for the change of voice in verse 8-9. It threw me off for a couple minutes. First the psalmist is talking to God, then God to the psalmist. "I will counsel you with my eye upon you," says God. What an image! Being a [Lord of the Rings](#) fan, the big eye of *Sauron* comes to mind first, but that's not exactly how I like to imagine the eye of God! Think perhaps instead of those pretty "God's Eye" craft projects you might have completed in elementary school.

There's a **Hide and Seek** theme going on here. The psalmist talks about **hiding** and **not hiding** our sinfulness from God. But the psalmist also talks about God being **our hiding place**. God is the one seeking us. We can **hide from** God or **hide in** God. Which will it be? God will **cover** our sin.

Note the theme of *clean slates* - God is wiping out our sins.

### Romans 5:12-19:

Make sure to read the beginning of chapter 5 to pick up Paul's whole conversation here. Paul is taking about Jesus being the one through whom grace comes, just as through Adam our sin comes. I have questions about original sin and substitutionary atonement for myself, but what I like is this verse: "the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through one man's trespass, *much more surely* have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ." (emphasis added) It always makes the most sense to me to hear about the limitless nature of God's gift of grace. That "*much more surely*" phrase is repeated in this passage. With God, with Christ, it is always much more surely that we are given!

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"One man" is another phrase Paul repeats here. He says if one man's actions leads to death, so also one man's righteousness leads to life. Obviously he's speaking of Adam and Christ, but I think we can also apply this to ourselves: one person's actions can have significant impact, for bad or for good. We can control what kind of actions we want to share with the world: what results do you want your influential behaviour to have?

### **Matthew 4:1-11:**

Good to compare this passage with Luke and Mark's version of the temptation - Matthew has some different order to the trials, and he also fleshes out some of the scriptures that are quoted. You can decide if the differences are significant!

Jesus is tempted by the devil. It's easy to get caught up in an argument about who the devil is, if the devil exists, if the devil is a being, etc. But I think if we get stuck in that argument, we miss the actual point of the story. Point is, Jesus went through a time of testing and tempting and trial before he began his ministry. Point is, Jesus could have chosen many paths of action that would have left him better off, but instead he chose God's path. Point is, Jesus, a human, faced the same tough decisions we face, and remained faithful - so, so can we.

Jesus is tempted in three ways: in the first, he resisted using his powers to meet his own needs. In the second, he resists putting God to the test, demanding of God to meet his needs. In the third, he resists using his power to be a dynamic leader of the type that seeks fame and glory.

It's interesting - the devil tempts Christ by using the scripture from Psalms. He takes the words of the Holy Book and twists them into a wrong meaning. It's not just bad theology when we do the same things with "proof-texting" and other abuses of God's Holy Word - it's actually evil when we use the word in this way! *Beth Quick*

### **WEB SOURCES**

#### **CHILDREN**

Useful prayers, reading and Gospel reflection on Cafod site for 2011

[www.cafod.org.uk/.../4/.../Childrens+liturgy+\(A\)+16+-+1st+Sun+Lent.doc](http://www.cafod.org.uk/.../4/.../Childrens+liturgy+(A)+16+-+1st+Sun+Lent.doc)

Talk - Resisting Satan's temptation. Uses Simple Simon says.

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/who-says.html>

Talk - using a chocolate bar as a 'way into' temptation.

[http://www.sermons4kids.com/temptation\\_of\\_christ.htm](http://www.sermons4kids.com/temptation_of_christ.htm)

A Bible story lesson which could provide a talk.

<http://childrenschapel.org/biblestories/temptation.html>

#### **READINGS**

"Next Sunday's readings: 1st Sunday of Lent" by John Pridmore in Church Time, 2008

<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=50846>

The Text this Week - Matthew 4

<http://www.textweek.com/mtlk/matt4a.htm>

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

## SERMONS

The temptations - Episcopal Sermons that work. It does!

[http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons\\_that\\_work\\_57421\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons_that_work_57421_ENG_HTML.htm)

Training days - an introduction on Olympic skating leads into the concept that Jesus was training in the wilderness for his ministry and mission.

[http://day1.org/924-training\\_days](http://day1.org/924-training_days)

Promises, promises - based on Matthew and Genesis passages

<http://bethquick.com/sermon2-13-05.htm>

### **Sermons - Matthew 4 : 1-11**

Sermon outline. 1. Jesus was tempted by the wrong use of power. That was the first temptation. 2. Jesus was also tempted by the wrong way to popularity. That was the second temptation. 3. Finally, Jesus was tempted by the wrong kind of partnership. That was the third temptation.

[http://www.sermons.org/sermons/new\\_testament/matthew/matthew\\_4\\_1-11.htm](http://www.sermons.org/sermons/new_testament/matthew/matthew_4_1-11.htm)

Basic exegesis and sermon starter which applies the three temptations to pertinent areas of modern church life. The temptation story gives us three insights into the business of serving our Lord.

<http://www.lectionarystudies.com/studyg/lent1ag.html>

The testing grounds of faith - a US Lutheran sermon.

<http://www.predigten.uni-goettingen.de/archiv-7/050213-5-e.html>

Two "Sermons from Seattle". The first can involve the preacher in dressing up and there is a video which shows this sermon being delivered in this way.

[http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series\\_a\\_isadore\\_isaac\\_isin.htm](http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_a_isadore_isaac_isin.htm)

The second is on Satan Sunday. The preacher claims that the first Sunday of Lent is always Satan Sunday in the life of the church.

[http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series\\_a\\_satan\\_sunday.htm](http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_a_satan_sunday.htm)

The Tempter, the tease and the trial - good use of quotations by CS Lewis. Lutheran so its exegetical in part, but well earthed with incidents from everyday life.

[http://www.lectionary.org/Sermons/Molin/Matt/Matt%2004.1-11\\_TempterTease.htm](http://www.lectionary.org/Sermons/Molin/Matt/Matt%2004.1-11_TempterTease.htm)