

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent.

**Lesson:** The temptation of Jesus according to the gospel of St Mark 1:12-15

**Objective:** Drawing nearer to God through self-introspection.

**Duration:** 1hr

**Display:** Purple table cloth, a crucifix and a candle and a bible.



During Lent, we seek to strengthen our resolve to resist temptation. However, God does not expect us to do this on our own. God helps us, giving us the Holy Spirit in Baptism. God also gives us the community of the Church to help us. What can we do during Lent to accept the help God gives us to resist temptation?

In Mark's Gospel, we are told that Jesus went into the desert immediately after his baptism, led by the Spirit. Jesus' public ministry in Galilee begins after his temptation in the desert. Mark's Gospel makes a connection between the arrest of John the Baptist and the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Jesus' preaching about the Kingdom of God is in continuity with the preaching of John the Baptist, but it is also something new. As Jesus announces it, the Kingdom of God is beginning; the time of the fulfilment of God's promises is here.

The fact that Jesus spent 40 days in the desert is significant. This recalls the 40 years that the Israelites wandered in the desert after being led from slavery in Egypt. The prophet Elijah also journeyed in the desert for 40 days and nights, making his way to Horeb, the mountain of God, where he was also attended to by an angel of the Lord (1 Kings 19:4-8). Remembering the significance of these events, we also set aside 40 days for the season of Lent.

In Mark's Gospel, the desert marks beginning of Jesus' battle with Satan; the ultimate (final) test will be in Jesus' final hours on the cross. In a similar way, our Lenten observances are only a beginning, a preparation for and a reinforcement (strengthening) of our ongoing struggle to resist (fight) the temptations we face in our lives. During Lent, we are led by the Holy Spirit to remember the vows of Baptism in which we promised to reject sin and to follow Jesus. Just as Jesus was ministered to by the angels, God also supports us in our struggle against sin and temptation. We succeed because Jesus conquered sin once and for all in his saving death on the cross.

Personal reflection:

Briefly pause for silent reflection. And ask yourself;

1. As I enter this Lenten journey, what are my areas of temptations which I need to repent?
2. What can I do this Lent to deepen my trust in God as my only source of strength and peace?

Suggested readings:

Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 333; 538-5341; 1427.

**Prayer.**

**Come, my Light, and illumine my darkness.**

**Come, my Life, and revive me from death.**

**Come, my Physician, and heal my wounds.**

**Come, Flame of divine love, and burn up the thorns of my sins,  
kindling my heart with the flame of thy love. Amen.**