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1st Sunday of Lent - 6 March 2022

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6 March 2022

First Sunday of Lent

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

Our Gospel places us in the front row as we watch the devil tempt Jesus. The reading is a meditation on the humanity of Jesus and his fidelity to God's will. This matches well the first reading which underpins our ongoing thanksgiving for all that God has wrought. We open into Lent uncovering the faithfulness of God and seeking to be clear about our own response

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you came so that we could resist temptation in all its guises.
Lord, have mercy.

You help us to know God in a new way.
Christ, have mercy.

You show us how to deny ourselves.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

The oration

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

Commentary

This prayer is first encountered in the tradition as a sixth to seventh century oration for the first Sunday of Lent, a place it retains to this day. This opening collect for the season establishes a framework for pursuing the discipline of the season. In this it states the commonplace yet seeks that this discipline become more and more an established part of the Christian life. Lent is a 'holy' time. While this holiness is from the penitential emphasis the season lends to the celebration of Sunday itself, more so it is because its reference is the resurrection. The yearly observances are not an

end in themselves but serve to heighten our receptivity for the mysteries that God has worked amongst creation. Consequently, the aim of our observances is not simply self-control. Rather it is towards our growth in being able to stand under the paschal mystery and becoming more receptive to the riches wrought by Christ. The annual nature of the cycle is a reminder of our need for ongoing transformation into richer believers, more completely taken up and remade in Christ. Growth in understanding is necessarily complemented by right action. Again, this is more than obedience. Our worthy conduct brings out the effects of the riches hidden in Christ. These are acts of building the reign of God. Their orientation is towards our growth in love.

First Reading

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

We live in the land that God has given us.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15.

Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.

This psalm is one that, when learnt by heart, can be a constant prayer in times of need. Musical settings enable memorisation and place the psalm in the heart. The psalmist gives us the words to cry out to God, the one who always hears our prayer.

Second Reading

Romans 10:8-13

With confessing lips and believing hearts, we call upon the name of the Lord.

Gospel Reading

Luke 4:1-13

The temptations of Jesus are a reminder of his humanity, and his life lived under the guidance of the Spirit.

Reflection

Our first reading on the first Sunday of Lent sets before us one of the most foundational readings in the Hebrew bible, a reading that underpins our theology of Eucharist. Yes, it is that central!

It is bookended by two instructions about Israelite worship concerning the first fruits. We will come back to them. The central part of the reading concerns salvation from

slavery. Behind it is that most potent of words in Jewish and Christian theology: 'remember'. Notice how the text works. It begins with the ancestors, recounting a story from the past: "My father was a wandering Aramean ... he became nation great, strong and numerous". As the narrative is told, however, a change comes on the text. The tense moves from the past – my father – to the present. All of a sudden we are in the story – the Egyptians maltreated 'us' ... 'we' cried to the Lord. This is not historical narrative. The story being told here is almost 1000 years in the past for the writer and readers of the Book of Deuteronomy. Rather, it is an action of liturgical memory. The faithful in worship recall that the salvation that operated in Egypt, freeing the people from slavery, is still operative here and now, freeing us from slavery. This is the meaning that Jesus brings to the Last Supper, where he charges to Christian community to 'remember' him in the blessing and consuming of bread and wine.

Our Lenten worship, then, opens with the admonition that we are saved in Christ, a central aspect of every Eucharist.

What are the first fruits? We no longer live in agrarian times when the first of the harvest was gifted to the Lord of the harvest. But we do live in times when the harvest itself is being put at risk, and our 'dominion' over the earth is setting in danger the meaning of creation itself. Our Deuteronomy text, with its rich eucharistic and liberation imperatives also carries a reminder that the fruits of the earth are not only for humanity.

For Paul, conversion is all encompassing. It is of word and deed, mouth and heart. It is both change of heart and confession of faith as an integrated action. There is a more radical edge to this as well. The Apostle will let no human barriers or cultural differences, or division sully this integration of faith and life. When he writes it is equally so for Jew and Greek, Paul is proclaiming a radical equality before God: the life of faith is a discipleship of equals.

In this, our profession of faith in salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ is a commitment to the radical equality of all before God. For Christians this is the abolition of racism, discrimination against the poor, gender inequity, and the offer of a freedom for all to live fully in Christ. Pope Francis brings a contemporary poignancy to this. We who profess Christ in word and action, in confession and conversion, are challenged by the connection between ecological degradation and poverty, by the unequal distribution of the goods of the earth, and by the cost of this to our planet itself. It is a sobering Lenten meditation and a humbling invitation to call upon the name of the Lord.

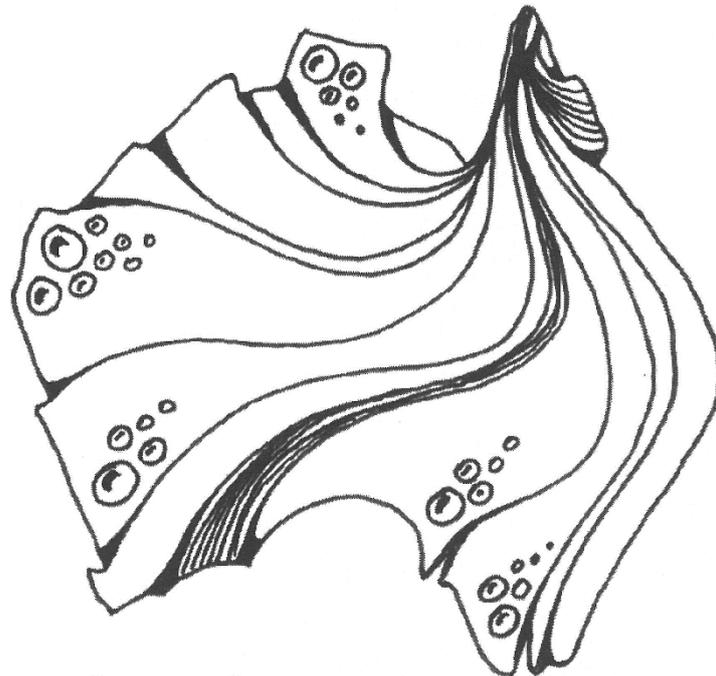
We now turn to the Gospel. With every temptation finished, the devil retreats. The first battle is lost, but there are others to come. The final lines of the passage are chilling in their intent, and evil and temptation will reappear within the crucifixion narrative at the death just as they are here at his preparation for ministry. Yet the temptation should be read in light of the opening sentence: Jesus was filled with the Spirit. To bring this full circle, at the Ascension that same Spirit is promised the Church (Lk 24:49). The context for the temptations is the presence of the Spirit.

This does not make the temptations any less easy to resist: power, authority, divinity all applied to meeting Jesus' needs rather than those of his mission. Jesus' mission requires fasting, trueness of purpose, trust in God not testing God. The mission is always within the context of the presence of the Spirit.

Again, it is worth retrieving the wisdom of *Laudato Si!*. The pope quotes his predecessor in a text that fits well with our understanding of the dedication of Jesus to the mission of God rather than his own interests and advancement. The text reads:

Benedict urged us to realize that creation is harmed "where we ourselves have the final word, where everything is simply our property and we use it for ourselves alone. The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognize any higher instance than ourselves, when we see nothing else but ourselves" (*Laudato Si* 6).

Where do we set the final word?



*God brought
us to a land where
milk and honey flow.*

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As we journey in this time of reflection, prayer, and fasting, let us present our needs to the Father so that the Spirit will guide and strengthen us through this period.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of the Church, especially for Pope Francis, that they will be strengthened and rejuvenated by the Holy Spirit to continue to announce the love of God for the world.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the members of the Plenary Council and for the Universal Church as we prepare for the Synod on Synodality. May they be strengthened through their Lenten practices and lead the Church to a vibrant renewal.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the secular leaders of the countries around the world that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide them in their service to uphold human rights, protect the vulnerable, and to care for our environment. We pray particularly that the distribution of vaccines for the pandemic will become more just.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the all the RCIA candidates and catechumens, that in this Rite of Election they may be enlightened by God's love as the Church embraces them and welcomes them into the faith community.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for ourselves gathered around the Lord's table. Through our prayer, and our praise, and by receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, may we be strengthened and nourished in our mission to be witnesses of Christ's love throughout this Lenten season.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Father, we praise and thank you and we know that you listen to us. Grant us these needs through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Ashes. T Conry. 209
Be not afraid. B. Dufford SJ. 449
Be with me, Lord. G Cox. 52
Be with me, Lord. M Haugen. 53
Blest be the Lord. D Schutte. 458
God of mercy and compassion. M. Hodgetts/ P Jones. 302
Grant to us, O Lord. L Deiss. 303
O God, our help in ages past. I Watts/ W Croft. 459
O Sun of Justice, fill our hearts. F C Quinn OP/ E Miller. 2
On eagle's wings. M Joncas. 452
Return to God. M Haugen. 304
Tree of life. M Haugen. 307

AOV1

Be not afraid. B. Dufford SJ. 114
Be with me, Lord. M Joncas. 116
Blest be the Lord. D Schutte. 179
On eagle's wings. M Joncas. 153
O God, our help in ages past. I Watts/ W Croft. 175

AOV2

Ashes. T Conry. 16

AOV4Kids

For the faces that I know. K Bates SM. 137

CWB

Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble. Marty Haugen. 627
Grant to us, O Lord, a heart renewed. Lucien Deiss. 698
Hosea. Gregory Norbet OSB. 715
May this Lenten discipline. James Phillip McAuley. 746
O God, creator of us all. Stanbrook Abbey. 764
The glory of these forty days. Gregory the Great, tr. Maurice F. Bell. 825

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

Again we keep this solemn fast. Ascr. Gregory the Great, tr. Peter J. Scagnelli. 285
Be with me, Lord. Marty Haugen. 286
Forty days and forty nights. George Hunt Smyttan, alt. Francis Pott. 288
From ashes to the living font. Alan J. Hommerding. 289
Grant to us, O Lord. Lucien Deiss CSSp. 291
May this Lenten discipline. James Phillip McAuley. 295
O God, creator of us all. Stanbrook Abbey. 296
The glory of these forty days. Gregory the Great, tr. Maurice F. Bell. 301
Additional selection by Chris deSilva
On eagle's wings. Michael Joncas. 654

S&S1

Be with me. Bob Hurd. 72

S&S2

Be with me, Lord. Bobby Fisher, Greg Lee and Donnie Henrickson. 266

Be with me, Lord. KenCanedo. 267

40 days. Matt Maher. 310

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 90: *Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.*

Psalm 90: C. Alexander Peloquin/Joseph Gelineau SJ. CWB 203

Psalm 91 (90): Jenny O'Brien. JOBC pg. 26

Be with me, Lord: Paul Mason. PM pg. 64

Be with me, Lord: Marty Haugen. LPC pg. 34

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Be with us (FWS) *Based on Ps 90/91* [Gathering, Gifts]

Create a new heart (FWS) *Based on Ps 50/51* [Gathering, Gifts, Recessional]

This is the time (TT) [Gathering, Recessional]

Lenten acclamation (TT) [Gospel Acclamation]

Lenten Gospel acclamation – Mass Jubilee (MJC) [Gospel Acclamation]

Turn back to God (TT/SYJ) [CHILDREN: Gathering, Recessional]

