



1st Sunday Lent, Yr C

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Our text comes after the introductory chapters of Luke's Gospel. These chapters include: John the Baptist's origins, the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity narratives, the Presentation, Jesus left in the Temple, John the Baptist's preparation for Jesus and Jesus' baptism (Lk 1:5-4:22). These chapters have defined for Luke's readers that Jesus was the Son of God – his birth was through Mary and the Holy Spirit. They have also indicated the role of Saviour that Jesus was destined to live out.

Jesus' birth was acclaimed by angels and they told the shepherds that he was 'the Messiah of God' (Lk 2:11). Simeon in the presentation declared that in the infant Jesus he had 'seen the salvation prepared for the nations' (Lk 2:30-31). At twelve years old, Jesus replies to Mary and Joseph in the Temple: 'I must be busy with my Father's affairs' (Lk 2:49b). Jesus then grew up with Mary and Joseph in Nazareth (Lk 2:51) till his time came.¹ So came Jesus' baptism at the age of thirty years, Lk 3:23, Jesus is acclaimed as the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire Lk 3:16b. Also, the Father voice, at Jesus' baptism², presents Jesus as: his Son, Lk 3:22b. Finally, Luke traces Jesus' lineage from Joseph back to Adam; Adam being a gift from God, a son, Lk 3:23-38.

► So, in our text, with the Holy Spirit empowering him³, Jesus is led to these forty days in the desert. This was to be a time for Jesus to sort out for himself his 'plans for action' i.e. how his public ministry would lead into his role as Saviour and fulfil all that had been said of him. He probably didn't know that he would be Saviour by dying on a cross, but he would have been absolutely committed to do his Father's will⁴ whatever that might turn out to be. The temptations would have defined for him what and who he would oppose⁵.

■ As we begin the forty days of Lent, we are challenged to sort out our lives as followers of Jesus. How well do we deal with temptations?⁶

Read: Luke 4: 1 – 13⁷

Meditatio: How have I experienced the empowering of the Holy Spirit? Have I sorted out my life? Have I a preferential option for the poor, as Jesus had? How does my love of Jesus shape my life? Have I had a desert experience or a 'dark night of the soul'? Have my experiences of retreats, prayer days/weekends, vigils or novenas, re-focussed me spiritually? How have I dealt with temptations? Have I been deluded by the attraction of sin? Have I given in to temptations when I have been low, depressed, deprived or disillusioned? For me are miracles possible, but magic is illusionary? Do I pray for blessings rather than easy ways out? Have I ever succumbed to opportunities for power and status? Have I ever been obsessed by something that I worshipped it like a god, e.g. money, status, control? Have I fallen prey to presumption? Do I test God by putting myself in situations of unnecessary peril? After rejecting temptations, have I felt closer to the Lord,?

Oratio: Pray that we will take time with the Lord to renew our lives of faith. Pray that we will see through the illusions of sin and temptation. Pray that will never lose sight of our role to build God's kingdom. Pray that those entrusted with power and control may they use it responsibly, and to God's glory – God the Almighty. Pray for those who pray for God's help but do not 'lift a finger' to help others. Pray for the rich and powerful, may they serve people not oppress them. Pray for the poor, may they not be deprived of the means to live a full life. Pray in thanks for the wisdom and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer — Serve others generously.

✍ Fr Joe

Luke 4: 1 - 13

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness, being tempted there by the devil for forty days. During that time he ate nothing and at the end he was hungry. Then the devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf.' But Jesus replied, 'Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone.'

Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, 'I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours.' But Jesus answered him. 'Scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God,
and serve him alone.'

Then he led him to Jerusalem and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God', he said to him 'throw yourself down from here, for Scripture says"

He will put his angels in charge of you to guard you,
and again:

they will hold you up on their hands
in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'

But Jesus answered him, 'It has been said:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left him, to return at the appointed time.¹

Notes:

1 Jesus' time came after he had grown into adulthood and John the Baptist had prepared for his coming. Jesus' 'appointed time' would come when he would face off with the Devil on the Cross.

2 Jesus' baptism opened the way for us to share God's life in our baptisms. Jesus public life began with his Baptism it would end with his Baptism on the Cross wherein he is Saviour and fulfils prophecies about himself, cf Lk 12:50.

3 Jesus' whole life was empowered by the Holy Spirit. Our lives, as his followers, are empowered by the Holy Spirit! Consider Lk 4:14a.

4 At twelve years old, Jesus declared when found in the Temple, he must be busy with his Father's affairs; he, in everything he did, was doing his Father's will.

5 Jesus was to oppose, as set out in the temptations: the reliance on superstitions or magic, the lure of power and wealth as false gods, and the attraction of power and status as a usurping of the powers and glory of God. He would oppose people or authorities who espoused any of these ways arising in the temptations. Also, he had come to overcome the Devil who had corrupted the world through sin.

6 As Jesus was tempted, so we will be tempted. The Devil is out to deceive everyone with his temptations, from Adam to Jesus, son of Joseph, to every one of us! Consider why Luke cited Jesus' lineage, Lk 3:23-38.

7 The Lenten Sunday gospels are chosen to guide our Lenten reflections and lead us to a re-commitment to our baptismal faith at Easter. These gospels are also part of the RCIA Period of Purification for the Elect which culminate with their Initiation at Easter Vigil. So, these gospels treat understandings that are basic tenets of a Christian's faith.