

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading I

[Dt 26:4-10](#)

Moses spoke to the people, saying:
“The priest shall receive the basket from you and shall set it in front of the altar of the LORD, your God. Then you shall declare before the Lord, your God,

‘My father was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt with a small household and lived there as an alien. But there he became a nation great, strong, and numerous. When the Egyptians maltreated and oppressed us, imposing hard labor upon us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and he heard our cry and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression.

He brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand and outstretched arm, with terrifying power, with signs and wonders; and bringing us into this country, he gave us this land flowing with milk and honey. Therefore, I have now brought you the firstfruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.’ And having set them before the Lord, your God, you shall bow down in his presence.”

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15.](#)

(cf. 15b) **Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.**

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, say to the LORD, “My refuge and fortress, my God in whom I trust.”

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

No evil shall befall you,
nor shall affliction come near your tent,
For to his angels he has given command about

you,

that they guard you in all your ways.

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

Upon their hands they shall bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
You shall tread upon the asp and the viper;
you shall trample down the lion and the dragon.

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

Because he clings to me, I will deliver him;
I will set him on high because he
acknowledges my name.

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in distress;

I will deliver him and glorify him.

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

reading II

[Rom 10:8-13](#)

Brothers and sisters:

What does Scripture say?

The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart —that is, the word of faith that we preach—, for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. For the Scripture says, *No one who believes in him will be put to shame.* For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Gospel

[Lk 4:1-13](#)

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil.

He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. The devil said to him,

“If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”

Jesus answered him,

“It is written, *One does not live on bread alone.*”

Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him,

“I shall give to you all this power and glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me.”

Jesus said to him in reply,

“It is written: *You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.*”

Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him,

“If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written: *He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you, and: With their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.*”

Jesus said to him in reply,

“It also says, *You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.*”

When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.

Reflection Questions

- Reading the passages slowly and reflectively, what word, phrase or idea strikes you in the readings? (circle or underline them)
- What do you think God is trying to say to you personally through these words?
- The book of Deuteronomy shares one of the most important statements of faith in the Old Testament. It was spoken every time a person gave their offering to the priest in the Temple. It reminded them of their identity and how God ‘saved’ them. Bringing the tithe (tenth) of the harvest to the temple acknowledged God’s care and provision. How could you express this religious practice of ‘tithing’? Dt 26: 12-15 invites giving to the levite (priest), the foreigner (refugee), the orphan and the widow (those without family and financial support). This is at the heart of the Lenten practice of ‘almsgiving’. How generous will you be in giving of your time, talent, money, compassion... this Lent as a way of ‘thanksgiving’ for what God has given you?
- Paul’s letter to the Romans is a careful explanation of how we are made *right* with God. Justification by keeping the ‘law’ was deeply ingrained in Jewish consciousness and history. Paul reminds us that it is faith in God’s covenantal relationship with us in Jesus that saves us. Do you ‘enjoy’ your relationship with God? What word or image describes your experience as the journey of Lent begins?
- Jesus in the desert provides us with the starting point of Lent. Consider how you can create some ‘desert’ space in your life, away from distractions and noise, to be with God and discover your ‘true’ self? What is 1 decision you can make to enter the Lenten ‘desert’?
- Careful reflection on Jesus’ temptations leads us to see a mirror conflict within ourselves between good and evil. Get bread for ‘self’. Seek power and reputation. Demand support from others. Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving are practices during Lent to deconstruct our false self and reconstruct our true self. Almsgiving enables the hungry at our door and beyond to be fed and healed. Fasting turns us from worldly consumerism to clarity of purpose and compassion for others. Prayer tunes us into God’s vision and voice. From Jesus’ temptations, which core temptation do you notice strongly at work in your life? Which Lenten practice do you need?
- What is one action that you will do to ‘livetheword’ this week?