

INTO THE DESERT!

(MARK 1:12-15)



Jesus' forty-day stay in the desert follows immediately the story of his baptism; at that event, the Spirit comes upon him and he is revealed as the Son of God.

It is this Spirit which drives him, almost violently, out into the wilderness. It is better that we appreciate this episode as Jesus "being tested", rather than "being tempted": in modern speech temptation is usually associated with sin, or at least with something wrong or not quite right. It is much more serious than that: it centres on how Jesus understands what it means to be the Son of God. Before Jesus begins his public ministry, it is important that he be put to this test. We might note that although Satan is mentioned, Satan is merely the agent, the means: it is the Spirit who subjects Jesus to the ordeal.

Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark gives us no details about Jesus' struggle, he simply reports the fact. Jesus' fast of forty days recalls those of Moses and Elijah: the mention of the number forty also evokes the memory of Israel's experience in the desert during the Exodus journey, during which the people were tested "to see what was in their heart". Wild beasts are often associated in the Bible with powers opposed to God, but there is also a positive vision of human beings living peacefully with such other creatures. Later in Mark, the evangelist will present the vision of a new creation.

Once Jesus has passed the test, he is ready to undertake his mission of proclaiming the kingdom of God and sets off into Galilee. ■

SAY

Lord, make me walk in your truth, and teach me: for you are God my saviour.

(Psalm 24:5)

LEARN

It is better to understand Jesus' experience in the desert as his being "tested" rather than "tempted".

Fasting is a means of heightening our spiritual awareness and perception.

It is the Spirit which puts Jesus to the test: Satan is simply the means by which this is achieved.

DO

Prepare a container of some sort for the money you will save from your Lenten penance. One of the practices of Lent is almsgiving; what we put aside, we are supposed to give to charity, which is the modern form of almsgiving.

REFLECT

What are you giving up for Lent? Perhaps someone has asked you this already. Many people see Lent as an endurance test: if they manage to reach Easter with their resolution intact, they can take some pride in the fact; if they have broken their resolution, they can feel downhearted and defeated – again! But this is to miss the point: such an attitude is, literally, self-centred – we are concentrated on ourselves and our own efforts, whereas

the season of Lent is all about ourselves and our relationship with God.

One of the purposes of fasting is to make us more spiritually aware: the less our body has to do, the more heightened our spiritual senses can be. If we eat or drink less and spend more time in quiet prayer, then all sorts of thoughts will arise in our mind. The lack of distraction can be very unsettling: we may be faced with all sorts of uncomfortable questions that

we would rather not think about. It might help us to remember that even Jesus had to struggle with questions about himself before he could embark on his public mission as the Son of God empowered by the Spirit. We are daughters and sons of God through baptism: this Lent, the Spirit is asking us to reflect on how we each understand that truth. Difficult, perhaps, but worth the effort. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**When he calls on me, I will answer him;
I will deliver him and give him glory,
I will grant him length of days.**

COLLECT

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.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Genesis 9:8-15

A reading from the book of Genesis.

God spoke to Noah and his sons, "See, I establish my Covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I establish my Covenant with you: no thing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again."

God said, "Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 24

Response:

**Your ways, Lord, are faithfulness and love
for those who keep your covenant.**

1. Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour. **(R.)**
2. Remember your mercy, Lord,
and the love you have shown from of old.
In your love remember me,
because of your goodness, O Lord. **(R.)**
3. The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
he guides the humble in the right path;
he teaches his way to the poor. **(R.)**

SECOND READING

1 Peter 3:18-22

A reading from the first letter of St Peter.

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which saved only a small group of eight people "by water", and when

God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels and Dominations and Powers his subjects.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!
Man does not live on bread alone,
but on every word that comes from the
mouth of God.
Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!**

GOSPEL

Mark 1:12-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. "The time has come" he said "and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

(all bow during the next two lines)

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Give us the right dispositions, O Lord, we pray,
to make these offerings,
for with them we celebrate the beginning
of this venerable and sacred time.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes forth from the
mouth of God.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

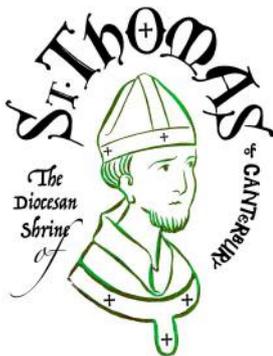
Renewed now with heavenly bread,
by which faith is nourished, hope increased,

and charity strengthened,
we pray, O Lord,
that we may learn to hunger for Christ,
the true and living Bread,
and strive to live by every word
which proceeds from your mouth.
Amen.

It is the saying of holy men that, if we wish to be perfect, we have nothing more to do than to perform the ordinary duties of the day well. A short road to perfection – short, not because easy, but because pertinent and intelligible. There are no short ways to perfection, but there are sure ones.

St John Henry Newman

NEWSLETTER



CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

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Web Site: <https://stthomasofcanterbury.com> St Thomas of Canterbury

Parish Priest: Canon Anthony Charlton email: anthonycharlton@rcaos.org.uk

Assistant Priest: Fr John Howard

email: johnhoward@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Administrator: Miss Linda Scott

St Thomas' Shop (01227 462896): OPEN SUNDAYS FROM AFTER 9.30 MASS UNTIL 12 NOON

University of Kent Chaplaincy: Fr Tom Herbst (01843 230 774) email: tjherbst@gmail.com

St Thomas' Catholic Primary School: Head Teacher: Miss Lisa D'Agostini (01227 462539)

St Anselm's Catholic Secondary School: Exec Prin: Mr M Walters; Academy Prin: Mr J Rowarth (01227 826200)

The Parish Office is Closed & Linda is working from home. Linda can access emails via the church email so please contact her this way initially.

ALL MASSES ARE LIVESTREAMED

2nd Coll: SVP

6..00pm (Vigil): People of the Parish

Sunday 21st Feb: 1st Sunday of Lent Mk 1: 12-15

8.00am: Cecil Humphery-Smith - RIP (*Angela Nichols*)

9.30am: Welfare of McKernan Family (*Hilary McKernan*)

11.00am: John O'Driscoll - RIP (*Josie Carr*)

6.00 pm: Mehlin & Mullett Families - living & deceased (*Miriam*)
RITE OF ELECTION

Monday 22nd Feb: The Chair of St Peter Mt 16: 13-19

7.30 am: Mary Kathleen Griffiths - RIP (*Anne Griffiths*)

10.30am: Church open for private prayer and adoration

12 noon: Welfare of Angela Wells (*Fr Anthony*)

6.00 pm Live streamed Prayer

Tuesday 23rd Feb: St Polycarp Mt 6: 7-15

10.30am: Church open for private prayer and adoration

12 noon: Ray Scott - RIP (1st Anniv.) (*Scott Family*)

6.00 pm Live-streamed Prayer

Wednesday 24th Feb: Feria Lk 11: 29-32

7.30 am: God's gift of Unity between Clergy & Lay People in the journey towards eternity

10.30am: Church open for private prayer and adoration

10.30am: Reconciliation

12 noon: Georgette Berge - RIP (*John Renn*)

6.00 pm Live streamed Prayer

Thursday 25th Feb: St Ethelbert Mt 7: 7-12

7.30am: Roberto and Iolanda Di Paco - RIP (Jo Carroll)

10.30am: Church open for private prayer and adoration

12 noon: Fr Patrick de Wolf - 60th Anniv. of Ordination (*Mary*)

6.00 pm Live streamed Prayer

7.30 - 8.30pm: Adoration for Young Adults with Fr John

Friday 26th Feb: Feria Mt 5: 20-26

CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY

10.30am: Funeral of the late Sylvia Guy

Church not open for morning private prayer

12 noon: Anne Hammond - birthday (*Pat Metcalfe*)

1 - 3 pm: Church open for private prayer and adoration

6.00 pm Live streamed Prayer

7.30pm: Regina Velho - RIP (*Velho Family*)

Saturday 27th Feb: Feria Mt 5: 43-48

10.30am: Reconciliation

10.30am: Church open for private prayer and adoration

12 noon: Michael Quinn - RIP (*McGille & Mellor Families*)

6.00pm (Vigil): Welfare of Tommy & Suzy Lee & Family

Sunday 28th Feb: 2nd Sunday of Lent Mk 9:2-10

8.00am: People of the Parish

9.30am: Stephen Slaughter - for peace

11.00am: Welfare of Clark Family (*Martina Clark*)

4.00 pm: Polish Community Mass

6.00 pm: Peg and Henri Lecerf - RIP (*Anne Rowe*)

PARISH MATTERS

Please remember in your prayers:

Marie Strong, Angeline Frizell, Alan Skeet, Louisa Ward, Janette Hughes, Barbara Brett, Mary Dittrich, Pat Gibson, Jenni Aldridge, Mary Reynolds, Brian Wicker, Joan Sutton, Audrey Martin, Elizabeth Gilhenny, Bill Parker, Lucy Purbrick, Josie Carr, Simon Lam, Sr Anne Bross (formerly of our parish), Pippa Swan, Fr John Slater, Jennifer Lang, Pauline Lilford, Barbara Markham, Patricia Gray, Patrick Sellars, Fr Kevin Alban O.Carm, Sr Margaret McGrath, Angela Nichols, Jean Boyce

Please pray for the repose of the souls of:

Carol Mary Kidby, Anna Hesketh, Tom Hodges, Rebecca Judge, Gertraude Katherine Brock, Vera Fletcher, Maria Daniels, Maria Prado, Hannelore Hall, Bernie Fisher, Joseph McKee, Tony Kenny, Michael Jones, Douglas Ricketts, Maurice Crosland, Patricia Collins, Andrzej Czupkowski, Chris Bateman, Pia Iannacci, Antonio Iannacci, Ellen Fitzgerald, Anna Koeller, Fr Michael Gwinnell, Ann Sexton, Paulina Manfredini, Fr Michael Boland, Fr George Webster, Theresa Ramsundar, Canon Frank O'Sullivan, Margaret Willis, Rev Paul Saunders, Sylvia Guy and Pat Gill

Please pray for those whose 1st anniversaries are this month:

Margaret Stevenson and Raymond Scott

SECOND COLLECTIONS: Our retiring collections: **This weekend, 20/21 February 2021** is for the SVP **Next weekend:** No second collection this weekend **FRIDAY, 26th February: CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY** - envelopes available in church for your offering

RETREAT FOR LENT

Archbishop John and the Diocesan Spirituality Commission are offering a Retreat for Lent, which you can follow in your own home.

Using the link below, you can watch a short video reflection each week, download prayer materials and other resources to help you make the best use of whatever time and opportunity you may have during your week.

If you are looking for a way to deepen your life of prayer this Lent, click on <http://www.southwarkdsc.org.uk/followme> where you can also sign up to receive materials directly to your email.

CONTACTING THE PARISH OFFICE. Please use only the email canterbury@rcaos.org.uk to contact the Parish office as the Parish Administrator, Linda, does not have access to any other email addresses. Thank you

During February, please pray for all **unborn babies and women facing crisis pregnancies.**

From Fr Anthony ...

This weekend is the fourth and fifth day of Lent. How is your Lent going? Perhaps you have not yet decided what you are going to do. How will I pray? How will I fast? How will I give alms? All these activities are a turning the focus away from ourselves and turning towards our loving Father and his son Jesus, and our love for our brothers and sisters. This is our time to prepare ourselves for the celebration of the great feast of Easter. This Sunday evening at 6pm Mass we are including a Rite of Election. This is when those who are to be baptised at Easter and to be received into full communion at Easter are called to the sacraments. Normally this happens at the Cathedral but because of Covid restrictions this year it will take place in the parish. The Rite of Elections closes the period of catechumenate proper and marks a period of final, more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation during which those to be baptised (catechumens) and those who are to be received into full communion are encouraged to follow Christ with greater generosity. This year there are two young people who are to be baptised and two people to be received in the full communion with the Catholic Church. We also have one other who was baptised Catholic has never been confirmed or made their first Communion. We can journey with these catechumens and candidates through our own Lenten practice and at Easter we will renew our own baptismal promises. We too are involved in being purified and being open to the light of the Spirit and come to deepen our relationship with Christ.

In the gospel today, Jesus is led by the Spirit to spend forty days in the wilderness. Here he was prepared, through testing to begin the work of the Father. We cannot go to any lonely place to pray and fast. We have been told to "stay at home and protect the NHS and save lives." But we can create our own Lenten wilderness. Here we are invited to identify ourselves with Jesus and make a choice for God and gain the devil's temptations. To be tempted means to being tried and tested like a contestant in the boxing or wrestling ring. Satan is the name given in scripture to the chief enemy of God. Lent is thus the season when we are tested and prepare ourselves to renew our baptismal promises at Easter. Let us pray for grace and strength as the Spirit leads us to a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Canterbury Street Pastors are on the look out for new recruits. For more information see the poster in the Narthex or email Andrew Pantling, (Coordinator), at coordinator@canterburystreetpastor.org.uk or call him on 07557533420.

The Canterbury Street Pastors team hold weekly prayer sessions online for the work of Street Pastors and the city. They meet every Saturday from **9pm-10pm** (new time) via Zoom.

THE FAITH COMPANION "The Faith Companion parishioner magazine online. Digital copies and subscriptions are now available at <http://www.thefaithcompanion.co.uk> or contact thefaithcompanion@gmail.com or call 01403 754808. We have now launched Christian Gifts online selling The Faith Companion candle, rosaries, journals, and a skin care range made by Benedictine monks. A free edition is available to "taste and see" at <http://www.thefaithcompanion.co.uk>. Please consider supporting our work for the Church and please pray we ask for our journey"
Bernie Daly (Supporter of The Faith Companion)

CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY: We are asked to join together to help end water poverty and provide other vital support to communities in need around the world. Please take an **envelope at the back of the church and support CAFOD through the Family Fast Day on Friday, 26 February 2021**. Donations can be placed in the collections at Mass or left at the Presbytery.

DIOCESAN ALPHA COURSE: **St Elizabeth of Portugal** parish in Richmond (Fr Stephen Langridge) is an Alpha hub parish and is hosting an Online Alpha starting next week, **February 23rd**.

All is set in place! As the Agency we would like to extend the invitation for anyone from your parish to join this Alpha Online course to just see what it's like, to be inspired, to learn, to receive – basically to support and bless each other across parish lines within our diocese and beyond. **The sign up link is: <https://stelizabethofportugal.churchsuite.co.uk/events/drbvfnag>**

Have a blessed Lent and one in Christ,
JJ Hussem (Evangelisation & outreach Advisor, Agency for Evangelisation & Catechesis, Archdiocese of Southwark)

Get our Parish Newsletter emailed directly to you by subscribing at stthomasofcanterbury.com/newsletters/
This weekly eNewsletter also shares additional information from around the Parish.