

## TEMPTATIONS

He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by satan...

Mark1:13

### REFLECTION

Yes, there is that voice, the voice that speaks from above and from within and that whispers softly or declares loudly: "You are, my beloved, on you my favor rests. "It certainly is not easy to hear that voice in a world filled with voices that shout: "You are no good, you are ugly; you are worthless, you are nobody unless you can demonstrate the opposite."

These negative voices are so loud and so persistent that it is easy to believe them. That's the great trap. It is the trap of self-rejection. The greatest trap in our life is not success, popularity or power, but self-rejection. Success, popularity and power can, indeed, be a great temptation, but their seductive power often comes from the way they are part of the much larger temptation to self-rejection. When we have come to believe in the voices that call us worthless and unlovable, then success, popularity and power are easily perceived as attractive solutions.

### PRAYER

*Lord, help me to appreciate just how much you have blessed me in so many ways.*

*Amen*

## Second Sunday of Lent

### GOD GIVES US LOVE AS WE NEED IT

Psalm 31:14-15

But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

### REFLECTION

There are two realities to which you must cling. First, God has promised that you will receive the love you have been searching for. And second, God is faithful to that promise.

So stop wandering around. Instead, come home and trust that God will bring you what you need. Your whole life you have been running about, seeking the love you desire. Now it is time to end that search. Trust that God will give you that all-fulfilling love and will give it in a human way. Before you die, God will offer you the deepest satisfaction you can desire. Just stop running and start trusting and receiving.

Home is where you are truly safe. It is where you can receive what you desire. You need human hands to hold you so you don't run away again. But when you come home and stay home you will find the love that will bring rest to your heart.

### PRAYER

*LORD, help me to learn from my boredom. Help me realize that I will be restless until my heart rests in You. Amen*

## Third Sunday of Lent

### Mark 7:36

**“Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them the more zealously the proclaimed it.”**

### REFLECTION

**Jesus told them not to tell anyone. He was not showing off for the attention of the crowd. He was pure, he wanted to heal but without the look at me factor. I find this very refreshing; to help without wanting attention. In this day and age everything is look at me, look what I have done. Jesus showed us he could heal, but it was the people he healed that spread the news, not Jesus. Jesus was a miracle worker, but wanted to be known for his message. I hope we do not lose sight of his message.**

### PRAYER

***Dear Lord, help me to remember the message, not what can Jesus do for me. Help me to help others without asking for attention. Help me to respond with kindness empathy, caring for all. Help me be the best I can be. Amen***

THE JOY OF GOD'S PRESENCE

Isaiah 49:13

“Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountain, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his suffering ones.”

REFLECTION

Money and success do not make us joyful. In fact many wealthy and successful people are also anxious, fearful, and often quite somber. In contrast, many others who are very poor laugh very easily and often show great joy.

Joy and laughter are the gifts of living in the presence of God and trusting that tomorrow is not worth worrying about. Rich people have much money, while poor people have much time. And where there is much time life can be celebrated. There is no reason to romanticize poverty, but when we see the fears and anxieties of many who have all the goods the world has to offer, we can understand Jesus' words: “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.” Money and success are not the problem; the problem is the absence of free, open time when God can be encountered in the present and life can be lifted up in its simple beauty and goodness.

PRAYER

*Dear Lord, whenever I begin to get anxious about money or success, remind me that your presence is greater than these. Amen*

**SOURCE OF OUR JOY**

**Psalm 51:12**

**“Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.”**

**REFLECTION**

**Joy does not come from positive predictions about the state of the world. It does not depend on the ups and downs of the circumstances of our lives. Joy is based on the spiritual knowledge that, while the world in which we live is shrouded in darkness, God has overcome the world. Jesus says it loudly and clearly: “In the world you will have troubles, but rejoice, I have overcome the world.”**

**The surprise is not that, unexpectedly, things turn out better than expected. No, the real surprise is that God’s light is more real than all the darkness, that God’s truth is more powerful than all human lies, that God’s love is stronger than death.**

**PRAYER**

***Lord, help me to see that I don’t have to overcome the troubles of the world by myself. Help me trust in what Jesus has already done. Amen***

## WHEN IN CRISIS, PRAY

### Luke 22:40-42

“When Jesus reached the place he said to them, “Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.” Then he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed. “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.”

### REFLECTION

Jesus knew his accusers were on the way. He knew his life was in danger at that very moment. So what did he do? He prayed, and urged his followers to pray that they; might not be put to the test of their own faith. No one, not even Jesus himself, wants suffering and pain. No one wants a time of trial that will test how much they believe in and trust God. But Jesus gave us an extraordinary example of how to pray in such circumstances: ask God for what you want, and then add, “not my will but yours be done.” To pray that God’s will be done, no matter what circumstances we are in, is to discover the great freedom Jesus found in the Garden of Gethsemane. What do you ask of the Father today? Can you pray, “not my will but yours be done?”

### PRAYER

*Father, whatever challenges to our faith we are facing, we ask that you remove them and give us peace. May your will be done. Amen*

**LOVE IS STRONGER THAN DEATH**

**Colossians 3:4**

**“When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory”**

**REFLECTION**

**I heard you call Mary Magdalene by her name and heard how you called from the shore of the lake to your friends to throw out their nets. I also saw you entering the closed room where your disciples were gathered in fear. I saw you appearing on the mountain and the outskirts of the village. How intimate these events really are. They are like special favors to dear friends. They were not done to impress or overwhelm anyone, but simply to show that your love is stronger than death.**

**O Lord, I know now that it is in silence, in a quiet moment, in a forgotten corner that you will meet me, call me by name and speak to me a word of peace. It is in my stillest hour that you become the risen Lord to me.**

**PRAYER**

***Lord, the life you have given us and the new life you have won for us are treasures that will never decay. Help us to appreciate them deeply, today and throughout the Easter Season. Amen***