

Living the Word

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

The readings during Lent each year are wonderfully arranged to lead us forward week-by-week in the history of God's promises to His people. This year they begin with the profession of faith about God's care of His people, which Israelite priests had to make when presenting their offering. Surprisingly it begins not with the promises to Abraham, but with the wanderings of the nomadic tribes down to Egypt. It was in Egypt that God made them His people, rescuing them from slavery. The decisive moment was the exodus from Egypt.

Collect for the day

O Lord who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights: give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to thy honour and glory; who livest and reignest with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

From the Fathers

"There are two different roads, one broad and easy, the other hard and narrow. And there are two guides vying with each other to attract the traveller's attention... life is an amalgam of vice and virtue... The life of the sinner presents all the pleasures of the present moment; the life of the righteous points to future benefits. The easy undisciplined way of life leads to pleasure to be enjoyed now, not later; the way of salvation is hard in the present, but promises a beautiful future."

From 'Commentary on Psalm 1' by St Basil the Great, (circa 330 - 379)

Sunday 9th March 2025

1st Sunday of Lent

Gospel: Luke 4: 1 – 13



Temptation in the wilderness

On Ash Wednesday, the Church gave us a fresh call to discipleship – to follow in the footsteps of Christ as we received the sign of the cross in ash. Today, St Luke's Gospel asks us to continue in the path of that discipleship, as we are presented with the temptations of Christ. The devil, the tempter, that subtle yet beguiling voice, offers Jesus material possessions, offers him earthly power beyond imagining, and invites him to put God to the test. Each time, Jesus rebuts temptation with words of scripture. He chooses instead the way of the cross. The fruits of His choice are ours, if we would but trust in Him. St Luke reverses St Matthew's order of the Temptations. The city of Jerusalem, therefore, becomes the centre of his account. It is Jerusalem that will be the scene for the death of Christ. That is the way He chose – the way of the Cross which ultimately leads to life.