



1st SUNDAY IN LENT
YEAR B

21st February 2021

*A Parish of the Diocese
of Motherwell.
The Bishop;
Rt. Rev. Joseph A. Toal
www.rcdom.org.uk
Scottish Charity No
SC011041*

Readings

FIRST READING

Genesis 9:8-15

God's covenant with Noah when he was delivered from the flood.

A reading from the Book of Genesis

God said to Noah and to his sons with him:

“See, I am now establishing my covenant with you
and your descendants after you
and with every living creature that was with you:
all the birds, and the various tame and wild animals
that were with you and came out of the ark.

I will establish my covenant with you,
that never again shall all bodily creatures be destroyed
by the waters of a flood;
there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth.”

God added:

“This is the sign that I am giving for all ages to come,
of the covenant between me and you
and every living creature with you:
I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign
of the covenant between me and the earth.

When I bring clouds over the earth,
and the bow appears in the clouds,
I will recall the covenant I have made
between me and you and all living beings,
so that the waters shall never again become a flood
to destroy all mortal beings.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

R. Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;
teach me your paths,
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my saviour.

R. Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

Remember that your compassion, O LORD,
and your love are from of old.
In your kindness remember me,
because of your goodness, O LORD.

R. Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

Good and upright is the LORD,
thus he shows sinners the way.
He guides the humble to justice,
and he teaches the humble his way.

R. Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

SECOND READING

1 Peter 3:18-22

The water of the flood prefigured baptism, which saves you now.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Peter

Beloved:

Christ suffered for sins once,
the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous,
that he might lead you to God.

Put to death in the flesh,
he was brought to life in the Spirit.

In it he also went to preach to the spirits in prison,
who had once been disobedient
while God patiently waited in the days of Noah
during the building of the ark,
in which a few persons, eight in all,
were saved through water.

This prefigured baptism, which saves you now.

It is not a removal of dirt from the body
but an appeal to God for a clear conscience,
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
who has gone into heaven
and is at the right hand of God,
with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

M4 4: 4b

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

GOSPEL

Mark 1:12-15

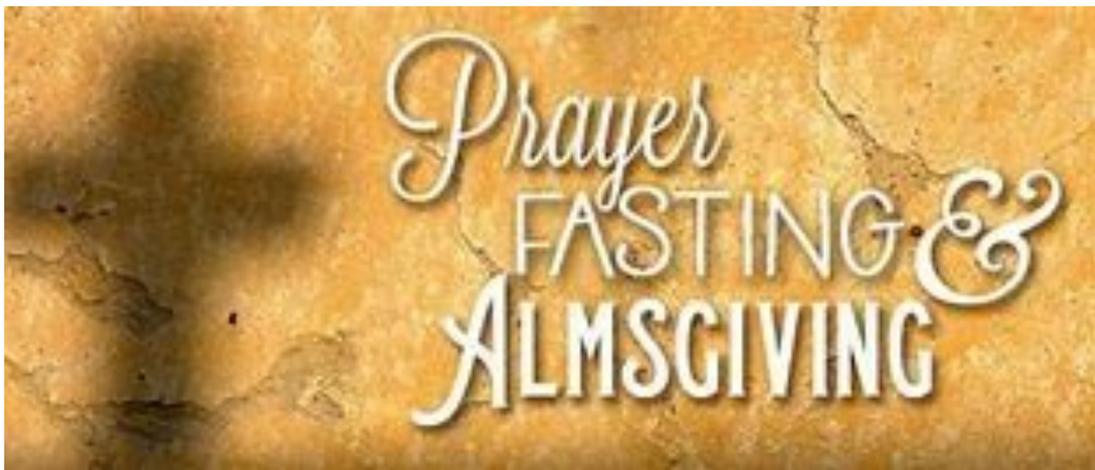
Jesus was tempted by Satan, and the angels ministered to him.



A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert,
and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan.
He was among wild beasts,
and the angels ministered to him.

After John had been arrested,
Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God:
“This is the time of fulfilment.
The kingdom of God is at hand.
Repent, and believe in the gospel.”



A CLOSER LOOK AT THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

In the foregoing story we heard that John the Baptist preached a baptism of forgiveness of sins. Jesus came from Galilee to receive the baptism. He joined the people who were aware that there was something wrong in their lives, and who wanted to be forgiven and to make a new start. Among these people Jesus will be found in his public life. That is the way God behaves. That is made clear by the fact that the spirit 'from the heavens' descends upon Jesus and that a voice 'from the heavens' says: *'You are my son, the beloved. In you I am well pleased.'* By joining the 'wrong' people and their hope to make a new start Jesus shows that he has the same DNA as God (is 'his son'). That is the moment that the spirit from the heavens 'throws Jesus out' into the desert. Surprising word: the same that will be used when Jesus will throw out evil spirits (cfr. 1:34.39.43 etc.).

By doing the Messianic work (having compassion with sinners and 'wrong' people), inspired by the holy spirit, he will be thrown out into the desert and isolated (cfr. 1:45 and in his passion!). The story of Jesus in the desert is a programmatic story: it predicts how it will go in Jesus' life.

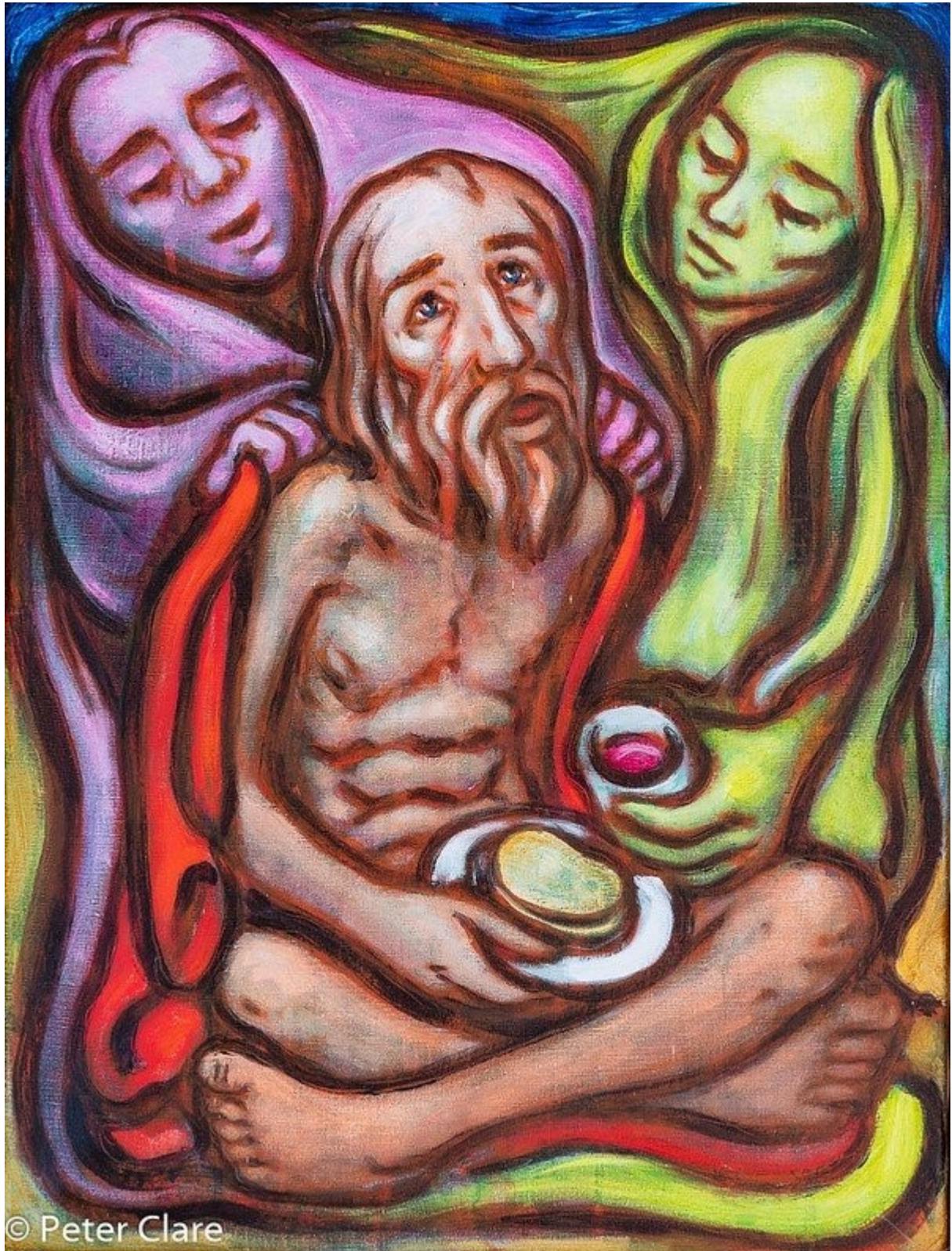
Jesus was tempted by Satan. But Mark doesn't tell what these temptations were. That as well is a programmatic word. In the course of Jesus' life there will be several moments of temptations. When they occur we will know that it is Satan's work (8:11; 10:2; 12:15; 14:38).

The number of forty days reminds us of the number of years that God's people stayed in the desert before they entered the Promised Land. The desert was the place where the people of the Bible learned who God is, the honeymoon time. Was Jesus' sojourn in the desert something like that? Did he need time to absorb..., to deal with the fact that the voice from heaven had called him *'my beloved son'*?

Jesus was with the wild animals. What does that mean? I see two possibilities. The wild beasts are a symbol of threatening as we hear for example in Psalm 22:12-13, *'Many bulls are encircling me, wild bulls of Bashan closing in on me. Lions ravening and roaring open their jaws at me.'*

But the angels in the next verse give us an occasion for another explanation. I conclude that the angels are mentioned to make clear that Jesus did not take notice of the temptations of Satan. When Jesus is unharmed in the midst of wild beasts, that reminds us of the situation of paradise before the Fall of Adam. Does Jesus transform the desert into a paradise? We will hear that as well in the course of his life (6:31-44). Both interpretations are possible.

PICTURE REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL



© Peter Clare

This is a painting of Peter Clare. A stunning painting, ‘At the end of the forty days of fasting Jesus is served by angels.’

The composition is striking. An exhausted Jesus in the centre and the angels on his left and right. He is surrounded by their presence. The angels are not pictured with wings, but with a deviant skin colour. These two angels are caring, tender women.

The pink angel throws a cloak around Jesus’ naked body. A red cloak. We hear a verse of Isaiah (61:10), *‘My soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in a cloak of saving justice, like a bridegroom wearing his garland, like a bride adorned in her jewels...’*

The green angel reaches Jesus bread and wine. The text of Mark doesn’t specify what the angels do by serving Jesus. But the Greek word for ‘serving’ is ‘diakonein’, ‘doing the work of a deacon’. What does a deacon do? In the liturgy it is the deacon who has the task/privilege to place the bread and the wine upon the altar. The angels are really ‘serving’ (‘deaconing’) by giving Jesus bread and wine!

I look at Jesus and I try to share his feelings. Being warmed and fed and looking up unto the heaven at the same time, being aware that this help was a graceful gift from God.

Looking at this picture, all the moments in my life when somebody reached me the cloak, as simple as it was, they were moments of consolation, moments that I could have felt the presence of the Lord’s love. All the moments when I was invited at a table, they were moments where I could have experienced how the Lord’s love is present in..., through the human gesture of the people around me.

by Fr Dries van den Akker SJ



THE DAILY “EXAMEN” IN THE MIDST OF COVID

In this present pandemic there is much talk in the media and all around us about life afterwards and how this will or will not be affected by the experiences we have lived through during these months: losses of friends or family members, restrictions on movement, travel and visits, enforced isolation, the dangers of infection, being confined to one place, working from home, and so forth. Looking to the future, people are talking about whether the pandemic has changed us and, if so, how? What has it shown us about the way we lived before it struck? Are we going to go back to the same or live differently? If differently, why and how and, crucially, what are we using as a guide to the new life?

It is worth exploring the possibility that Covid-19 may be offering us the grace of a particular time and place. And in connection with that I want to outline a way in which the Ignatian examen might furnish a prayerful method of reflection to guide us into the future. Such a reflection might have the following elements.

A general prayer of thanksgiving for gifts received, in recognition that ‘all that is good and every gift descend from on high...as rays descend from the sun, and waters from a fountain’ (Spiritual Exercises §237).

- A prayer to the Holy Spirit for enlightenment and guidance in this period of reflection.
- Memory: calling to mind the gifts received in particular places and over a particular period of time during this pandemic, with a prayer of thanksgiving.
- Reflection: how have I responded to these gifts of grace? A prayer of sorrow if I have in any way neglected or abused them.
- Reflection: from my experience so far, can I identify a grace associated with this time of pandemic and the particular places in which I have lived?
- Reflection: how might I accept and respond to this grace in such a way that it helps to give shape and direction to life in the future?
- A prayer of thanksgiving for blessings received. It is unlikely of course that the answers to these questions will come at once. Waiting on God in patient silence is a central element in contemplative prayer. However, repeated gently over time, the examen, I would suggest, allows an awareness of grace offered in particular times and places to emerge, albeit slowly, and enlarges and strengthens one’s capacity to respond to it courageously, generously and wisely going into the future. *David Lonsdale*

Remember there are many resources to foster your prayer and spiritual life during this health emergency. Please continue to check our parish website and Facebook page for new materials. Each week I post a video with a little reflection on the Sunday Gospel. Also check out our Links page on the website and you will be directed to other useful sites. Remember our twitter account too— [@saintaths](#). Some beautiful prayers and reflections can be accessed there.

Our diocesan website also has online prayer resources—go to www.rcdm.org.uk. There is also a closed Facebook group you might wish to join—Contemplative Theology. All you have to do is ask to join. There are also Twitter accounts you may find helpful: [@LectioMotherwel](#), [@rcmotherwell](#) and [@motherwellRE](#) Recently a new Facebook page has been opened: Motherwell Diocese Adult Formation. You'll find material there aimed at deepening our understanding of the faith.

The Liturgy of the Hours, the prayers and readings of the Mass and much more can be found at www.ibreviary.com

Beautiful reflections for all seasons and times can be found at www.thesacredbraid.com

Another good resource is <http://www.catholicireland.net> Reflections on the readings of the Mass, suggestions for children's faith formation and lots more.



Pope Francis' prayer intention for February: Violence Against Women We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

This month's Lucky Numbers Draw: 1st No 16 Helena Paterson £125; 2nd No 51 Grace Broom £75; 3rd No 65 Ian Kelly £50.

Please contact Eddie Kelly at treasurer@stathanasiuscarluke.org for your winnings

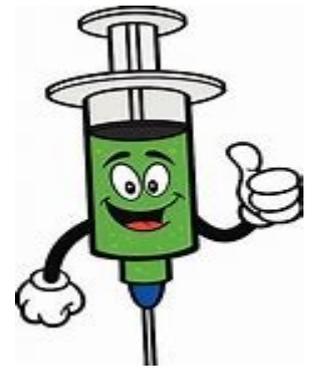


A new camera is in the process of being installed in the church which will give better picture and sound quality.

The installation will be completed early this coming week after which

Mass and Services can be accessed only from the homepage of the parish website. We will no longer be using Facebook. We'll let you know when the new camera is up and running and how to switch to the new system.

The vaccination process which began last Thursday has been going well. I hope those of you who have now been vaccinated found the hall welcoming and the jag not too sore. There is a lot of traffic going in and out of the car park so please be careful entering and exiting and while on foot.



Bishop Toal has sent a Pastoral Letter for Lent which can be accessed on the homepage of the website. Also take a moment to read the message from Marion O'Hara who is our parish SCIAF representative.

Also on the homepage is a lot of resources which you may find useful during this holy season. Please consider joining our Zoom reflections the first four Sundays of Lent , 7-7.30pm. More information can be accessed also on the homepage.

SUNDAY TAKEAWAY: *In these times of trouble, when everything seems fragile and uncertain, it may appear challenging to speak of hope. Yet Lent is precisely the season of hope, when we turn back to God who patiently continues to care for his creation which we have often mistreated (cf. [Laudato Si'](#), 32-33; 43-44). Saint Paul urges us to place our hope in reconciliation: "Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20). By receiving forgiveness in the sacrament that lies at the heart of our process of conversion, we in turn can spread forgiveness to others. Having received forgiveness ourselves, we can offer it through our willingness to enter into attentive dialogue with others and to give comfort to those experiencing sorrow and pain. God's forgiveness, offered also through our words and actions, enables us to experience an Easter of fraternity. Pope Francis*

HOLY MASS: Vigil of Sunday: Saturday, 6pm; **Sunday:** 11am. **Monday-Friday:** 10am. **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:** **Saturday** 5.30–5.55pm and on request.

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Chairman of the Parish Pastoral Council: Mr Ronnie Cook. Parish Treasurer: Mr Eddie Kelly (email: treasurer@stathanasiuscarluke.org)