

**Meditation for the
20th and 21st February 2021**

First Sunday of Lent

The Gospel according to Mark 1, 12 -15

To begin the season of Lent, Sunday's liturgy invites us to contemplate Jesus straight after his baptism. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus has just heard the voice coming from heaven confirming that "You are my dearly loved son, and you bring me great joy." (Mark 1, 11) And the Holy Spirit goes straight to work. It is astonishing to see what the Spirit of God does: hurrying to start Jesus moving, pressing him even, right into the desert. This desert isn't the romantic place of camel rides and postcard landscapes; this desert is dry, it is too hot in the day and too cold at night. It is a radical place: the senses are tested, all social life has gone. And yet this radical place is also a receiving place, where discoveries are made as well as inner journeys... It is an impressive lesson from God, who journeys with Jesus from the confirmation of his identity as the beloved son to a deepening of his relationship with the Father.

Take the time today to listen again to the promise of our Baptism: "You are my beloved son, you are my beloved daughter. I find my joy in you." This word from God is spoken to me personally: what does hearing it do to me? Starting from this living word's energy, where is the Spirit of God urging me? For me, what is this desert, this radical place where I can let God teach me?



Jesus remained 40 days in the desert, tempted by the devil, among the wild beasts and attended to by angels! This one short phrase describes Jesus' entire physical and spiritual experience. Let's start with this story of temptation. Unlike in Matthew and Luke's Gospels, Mark says nothing about the sort of temptation that Jesus experiences in the desert. It seems what is important is to help us understand that Jesus, the Son of God, is entirely human, just like us. Like us, he has different desires, like us he has to discover and learn what is attuned to his relationship with the Father, with others and with the whole of creation. The whole of creation is there, present in the wild beasts and the angels serving him. This means that Jesus will reject everything that isn't in line with God's Spirit, all temptation.

*What happens in my own desert?
What does temptation look like for me? For me, where or when do I stray from the true path of my relationship with God, with others, with the whole of creation?
Can I identify the wild animals and the angels that serve me?*

After the experience in the desert and the inner struggle, Jesus leaves for Galilee to announce the Gospel of God, the Good News. His message is twofold: firstly it's to do with time, today is the day, now is the time, its not the time now to plan the future, to say "next year", with or without Covid, we can align ourselves with God's time now. Secondly it has to do with God's closeness. His Kingdom is here. And Jesus further invites us to align ourselves with this Kingdom, that is to say, to convert and to believe!

God comes near me today. What does that invite in me?

What do I want to reply to the Lord? With what act, word, prayer?

Sr Anne Peyremorte

"If you knew the gift of God!"

Having meditated on the Word of God, what gift of God have I received for this coming week:

- you are my beloved son, my beloved daughter
- God's spirit urges me
- Being in the desert
- God's Kingdom is at hand
- Other:

How do I want to respond to this gift?

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