

COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 6 MARCH 2022- 1st Sunday of Lent

COLLECT

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Psalm 91: 1-2, 9-16

- 1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High ♦
and abides under the shadow of the Almighty,
- 2 Shall say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my stronghold, ♦
my God, in whom I put my trust.'
- 9 Because you have made the Lord your refuge ♦
and the Most High your stronghold,
- 10 There shall no evil happen to you, ♦
neither shall any plague come near your tent.
- 11 For he shall give his angels charge over you, ♦
to keep you in all your ways.
- 12 They shall bear you in their hands, ♦
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
- 13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder; ♦
the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
- 14 Because they have set their love upon me,
therefore will I deliver them; ♦
I will lift them up, because they know my name.
- 15 They will call upon me and I will answer them; ♦
I am with them in trouble,
I will deliver them and bring them to honour.
- 16 With long life will I satisfy them ♦
and show them my salvation.

Deuteronomy 26: 1-11

First Fruits and Tithes

26 When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, ² you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. ³ You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, 'Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us.' ⁴ When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, ⁵ you shall make this response before the LORD your God: 'A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. ⁶ When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, ⁷ we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸ The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; ⁹ and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me.' You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. ¹¹ Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

Luke 4: 1-13

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, **2** where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. **3** The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.' **4** Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone."' "

5 Then the devil^[a] led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. **6** And the devil^[b] said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. **7** If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' **8** Jesus answered him, 'It is written,

"Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.' "

9 Then the devil^[c] took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, **10** for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you,
to protect you",

11 and

"On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

12 Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' " **13** When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

A Reflection from Hannah...

The actions and words of Volodymyr Zelenskyy have inspired millions this past week. When he replied to the offer of an airlift out of Ukraine, he said:

'The fight is here. I need ammunition, not a ride.'

I wonder whether President Zelenskyy knew how he would respond before the invasion happened, or whether it was only in the moment of temptation that he discovered that he had the grit to stay alongside his people, to suffer with them and to stand ,shoulder-to-shoulder?

Perhaps none of us knows how we would respond to a threat on the scale Ukraine is facing until the moment is upon us. History tells us that there can be surprises in both directions when a time of crisis comes. We hope we would discover that we have the courage, the resolve, the guts to stand up for our beliefs and face the danger. After all, that is the example we follow as disciples. Cast out into the desert, Jesus faced temptations that spoke to his ego, promising power, comfort and riches- an apparently easy path at the expense of everyone else. Christ resisted, and instead stands in solidarity with us, suffers with us and is the fullness of Immanuel.

This Lent, we are invited once again to draw near to God who is already nearer to us than we can ever appreciate. In giving up something, or taking up something, we seek to eliminate the many distractions around us, that clutter up our ability to be still and be present to the divine love that holds us all. As the Ash Wednesday Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer so powerfully puts it:

*Through fasting, prayer and acts of service
you bring us back to your generous heart.
Through study of your holy word
you open our eyes to your presence in the world
and free our hands to welcome others
into the radiant splendour of your love.*

As we do this in the context of a world in turmoil, and amidst the heart-breaking images coming out of Ukraine, may our stillness help us to see the world afresh through God's eyes, to turn and repent, to change in ways that build up the common good and ascribe dignity to our neighbour. May we be, as Jesus was when he went into the wilderness, full of the Holy Spirit and wholehearted servants of the Lord.