

**The Temptations in the Desert
(1st Sunday of Lent, Year C)****Deuteronomy 26:4-10—Confessing the Exodus from Egypt**

1. Salvation History: 1st Readings for Lent (chosen to tell the story of salvation)
2. Abraham: “a wandering Aramean was my father... he went down into Egypt” (26:5)
3. Exodus: “the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand...” (26:8)

Psalm 91—A Prayer for Deliverance from Evil

1. Divine Protector: “No evil shall befall you...” (vv. 1-10)
2. Guardian Angels: “his angels... will guard you in all your ways” (v. 11)
3. Battle w/Satan: “tread on the adder/the serpent (NAB ‘dragon’)” (v. 13; cf. Gen 3:15)

Jewish Tradition: Psalm 91 a Psalm of Exorcism

David, son of Jesse... wrote psalms: ...songs to perform over the possessed: four. (*11QPsalms^a* [11Q5] 27:2; see *11QApocryphal Psalms* 6:1-14 [11Q11], citing Psalm 91)

They do not recite a verse of Scripture over a wound on the Sabbath. And *that formula which they recite against the demon...* is prohibited... *And lo, it has been taught*: “They would recite a psalm for the suffering in Jerusalem”? And what is that *psalm of the afflicted* (Hebrew, *shir shel peganim*, lit. “song of demoniacs”)?... “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty” (Ps. 91:1) until “because you, O Lord, are my refuge” (Ps. 91:9). (Jerusalem Talmud, *Erubin* 10:11).

Romans 10:8-13—Confess with Your Lips and Believe in Your Heart

1. Words & Heart: “confess with your lips and believe in your heart” (10:9)

Luke 4:1-13—The Temptations of Jesus in the Desert

1. Why 40 Days and 40 Nights? Testing, purification, preparation (Gen 7-8; Exod 16:35)

<i>Fall of Adam</i>	<i>Triple ‘Lust’</i>	<i>Jesus in the Desert</i>	<i>Ash Wednesday</i>
1. <u>Good for Food</u>	Lust of Flesh Pleasure	Turn stones into bread	When you fast...
2. <u>Delight to Eyes</u>	Lust of Eyes Possessions	All kingdoms of world	When you give alms
3. <u>Make One Wise</u>	Pride of Life Pride	<i>If you are Son of God</i>	When you pray
(Genesis 3)	(1 John 2:16)	(Luke 4:1-11)	(Matt 6:1-6, 16-18)

The Living Tradition and the Liturgy of the Hours

1. Lent: Church “unites herself” to “the mystery of Jesus in the desert” (CCC 539)
3. Liturgy of the Hours: Psalm 91 recited after Evening Prayer (Sundays/Solemnities)

Antiphon: “Night holds no terrors for me sleeping under God’s wings.”

Introductory Verse: “I have given you the power to tread upon serpents and scorpions” (Luke 10:19)

Psalm 91: Recited in Full

Final Prayer:

Lord,
we have celebrated today
the mystery of the rising of Christ to new life.
*May we now rest in your peace,
safe from all that could harm us,
and rise again refreshed and joyful,
to praise you throughout another day.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

On Solemnities (not on Sunday)

Lord,
*we beg you to visit this house
and banish from it
all the deadly power of the enemy
May your holy angels dwell here
to keep us in peace, and
may your blessing be upon us always
We ask this through Christ our Lord¹*

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (1st Sunday in Lent, Year C)

1. What is the significance of the “forty days” in Jesus’ time in the desert? What does it mean for the “forty days” of Lent?

2. Why does Satan quote Psalm 91 in his battle with Jesus in the Desert?

3 Read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* section on the Temptations of Jesus (see CCC 538-40). What lessons can we take away from the temptations of Jesus in the desert for our forty days of Lent?

¹ *The Liturgy of the Hours: According to the Roman Rite* (trans. ICEL; 4 vols. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1975), 3.1272-75.

For Further Study

1. Pablo Gadenz. *The Gospel of Luke*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 92-96.
2. Arthur A. Just, Jr. *Luke*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament III. Downers Grove: IVP, 2003. Pp. 72-77.