

The Old Testament: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Reader: A Reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

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, 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. 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.” When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, 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. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. 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; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. 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. 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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Epistle: Romans 10:8b-13

Reader: A Reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

“The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel: Luke 4:1-13

After his baptism, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, 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. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’” Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil 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. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” Then the devil 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, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’” Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Psalm 91:1-2,9-16

- 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, *
abides under the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 He shall say to the Lord,
“You are 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 habitation,
- 10 There shall no evil happen to you, *
neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.
- 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; *
you shall trample the young lion and the serpent
under your feet.
- 14 *Because he is bound to me in love,
therefore will I deliver him; *
I will protect him, because he knows my Name.*
- 15 *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; *
I am with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and bring him to honor.*
- 16 *With long life will I satisfy him, *
and show him my salvation.*

The First Sunday in Lent—Year C

Welcome to our church. On this first Sunday in Lent, the church's liturgy is designed to catch our attention, facing us with the most important issues of Christian commitment and living.

Today's scriptures present us with our solidarity with one another in Christ, and with God's people through the ages. We are part of a people with a story to tell and a song to sing. That story's beginning is recounted in the first reading today in the form of the ancient Israelite confession of faith. This is not read as an interesting account of the salvation of strangers. It is the story of God's first action in our salvation. We are a part of that people, having become members in our baptism. We are to begin our own story by remembering Abraham, our first ancestor in the faith, and by recounting the story of our brothers and sisters in the faith who were saved from Egyptian slavery.

The reading from Romans affirms our unity with the people of faith in all ages, regardless of status or race or culture.

Finally, in the story of the Lord's testing (temptation) we see Jesus as the beginning of the new Israel. The old Israel, in its wilderness wandering, failed these three tests—temptations—to use God merely as a means for acquiring food and power and riches. The scriptures Jesus quotes against Satan come from those three times in the story of Israel's wilderness experience. Israel's failure, which is part of our story, is turned around in Jesus and becomes a saving triumph for Israel, for us who are made one Body in Christ in Baptism and Eucharist, and for those who are preparing to be baptized at Easter.

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