

Believing in the power of small actions of love: signalled in the 'yeast', 'seeds', 'salt' 'light' – all gentle things which work slowly but powerfully

After this ordeal he emerges with a vision of what he is called to do, and what to avoid. He heads north to Galilee to draw people with the Good News of God's tremendous, compassionate love for them and to encourage them to choose ways of love.

7. Concluding Prayer

Our brother Jesus,
You set our feet on the way
and sometimes where you lead
we do not like or understand.

Bless us with courage where the way
is full of dread

Bless us with graceful meeting where
the way is lonely

Bless us with good companions where
the way demands a common path

Bless us with night vision when we
travel in the dark

Bless us with humour – we cannot
travel lightly weighed down with gravity

Bless us with humility to learn
from those around us

Bless us with decisiveness when we
must move with speed

Bless us with lazy moments, to stretch
and rest and savour

Bless us with love given and received.

Lead us into exile
Until we find that on the road
Is where you are
And where you are is home.

Bless us, lead us, love us
Bring us home
Bearing the Gospel of life.

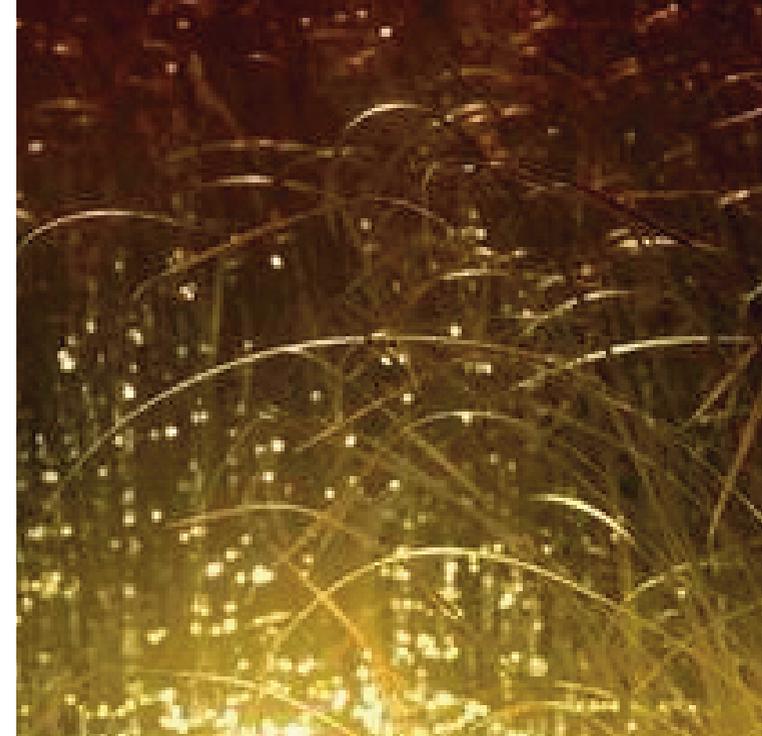


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Catching Slivers of Light
First Sunday of Lent 2019



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1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Gracious God, when the struggles of life hem us in on every side, open us to the freedom of your presence that can help us see beyond every restriction, every limit that binds us.

O God, give us the wisdom to see the subtle ways people can be enslaved and the courage to speak for those who have no voice, until they find their own. We ask this for the sake of your love.

When we wake to yet another day of wonder and joy in the beauty of your creation, Give us the heart to keep our needs simple, our desires soft, our wills pliable, so that we never participate in the exploitation of the earth, which is the work of your hands

2. Gospel text Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” Jesus answered: “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”

The devil then led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the Kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will be yours.”

Jesus answered: “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord God and serve him only’”

The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. For it is written:

‘He will command the angels concerning you to guard you carefully; They will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’

Jesus answered: “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until the appointed time.

3. Quiet Moment

People can read over the story again and pick out a word or short phrase that strikes them and say it out loud. When everyone has had a chance to speak, people can silently listen to what God is saying to them in their hearts linking it with themselves, their community, society/world. Then some sharing.

NB Not a time for argument.

4. Reflection questions for Luke 4:1-13

1. The basic levels of human needs which we all have are for shelter, safety, food, water, rest. What challenge does this statement raise?
2. What do you want to be true to for the whole of your life?

5. Prayers

Mentioning the people/situations we want to pray for....

6. Background Notes for Luke 4:1-13

Jesus had lived with 30 years of crippling taxes, peasants losing land, crucifixions and simmering violence. He knew the anger, resentment and disillusionment around. At the moment of his baptism by John, the Spirit dormant within him stirred. His heart was filled with the desire to follow what his beloved Father wanted. The interlude in the wilderness illustrates the temptations that constantly shadowed him – 40 years in Hebrew code signifies one’s whole life-to choose easier, more attractive ways of winning people:

- To be able to offer people inexhaustible material resources, free
- To demonstrate limitless personal power and dazzle them into following
- To bowl them over with extraordinary signs no one else has ever performed.

He rejects these fake promises; instead he accepts the condition of his humanity and recognises the resources that are within his reach:

Sharing resources

Approaching people with respect and love and freedom

Seeking justice, not exploitation or abuse