

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 50)

ANTIPHON: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

RESPONSE: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

LECTOR: Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offence. O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. **R.**

LECTOR: My offences truly I know them; my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done. **R.**

LECTOR: A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **R.**

LECTOR: Give me again the joy of your help; with a spirit of fervour sustain me. O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory! No one lives on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

Or

The Lord will conceal you with his pinions, and under his wings you will trust.

TODAY'S READINGS Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

NEXT WEEK (2nd Sunday of Lent, Year A) Genesis 12:1-4; Psalm 32; 2 Timothy 1:8-10; Matthew 17:1-9

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*A nourishing
desert*



22 February 2026 1st Sunday Lent Year A

Vast, bare and silent, the desert is a place of spare and rugged beauty. It is also very confronting: an arid, barren environment with extreme temperatures, searing heat by day and freezing cold by night.

The desert may serve as a metaphor for our experiences of desolation, when we are stripped bare of our confidence and must face our most vulnerable selves. Even though Jesus was the Son of God, there were no doubt moments when he was led into the desert when he experienced desolation, when he thought that God was absent or silent.

When faced with grief, loss, or hardship, we may find it difficult to persist in faith. Even waiting for God may seem like an added – even an unbearable – burden. But, as Simone Weil, in *Waiting for God*, reminds us: “we cannot take a step toward the heavens;” instead, we find that, in God’s immense love for our frail humanity, “God crosses the universe and comes to us.” God comes to us!

The three temptations faced by Jesus present examples of situations where we in our own lives may be tempted to rely on ourselves to overcome some very basic human challenges: the need to fill our hunger, the desire to be powerful or influential, and the need to feel safe and secure.

In his responses, Jesus teaches us not to succumb to the temptation to compensate for our human weaknesses by focusing on satisfying our desires. Instead, he invites us to lean ever

more closely on God and to let God begin to work within us with great love and tenderness and fashion us every more closely in God’s image.

Jesus shows us that, even at our lowest ebb, God fills every hunger and quenches every thirst. He reminds us that any influence we may wield comes not from being powerful but by walking with others in humility, solidarity and love. He reminds us to remain steadfast; for we can rest secure in the trust that God embraces our every vulnerability.

Through God’s transforming presence, we can begin to experience the desert not as a place of despair or desolation, but as a place of deep encounter with God and transformation. Stripped bare of everything superfluous to our needs, and utterly dependent on God, we become open to a profound conversion of heart and real growth.

When Anthony, one of the early Desert Fathers, emerged twenty years after his time in the desert, his brothers were surprised to see that he was not haggard, but instead looked well and was radiant with inner peace.

Amidst the suffering of any desert into which we are led, let us pray for the grace to respond as Jesus did – to open ourselves utterly to God. Let us awaken to the divine within and around us and respond to him, to the beauty of his creation, and to each other in an entirely new, grace-filled and life-giving way.

Sophie Clements
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