

First Sunday of Lent
Gospel reading: Mark 1:12-15

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him. After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. *"The time has come" he said "and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News."*



Reflection:

At the beginning of Lent we hear the call that introduces the message of Jesus: 'Repent and believe in the Good News.' These next few weeks will be a time of refreshment, a time of repentance that prepares us for Easter when we will renew our commitment to believing in the Good News of God's love.

The proclamation of the Good News of God contains four points: i) The waiting is over. ii) The Kingdom of God has come. iii) A change of life. iv) Belief in the Good News.

The challenge that is put to us not just this week but every time we gather is to believe the good news. We are not being told to perform heroic deeds of self-sacrifice or to overcome and master our sinfulness; no, we are being challenged to really hear and believe that through baptism we have become children of God and that God says to each of us: 'You are my beloved.' It is hard to really accept this and there are many voices

that try to convince us that it is not the truth. So Lent is a wonderful opportunity to rediscover our worth and the wonder of coming to life in Christ.

Our Response:

Lord, we pray today for all those whom your Spirit has driven out into the wilderness:

- who have been betrayed by a loved one;
- who have lost their job with no hope of getting another;
- who find themselves in prison;
- who have just learnt that they are terminally ill.

The days seem long to them, they feel battered by demons, surrounded by wild beasts.

Lord, send them your angels to look after them.

Lord, during the course of the year we turn our eyes to many ugly things about ourselves:

- our meanness and envy;
- the hurts we have not forgiven;
- the desire to take revenge.

During this Lent, let your Spirit drive us into the wilderness and keep us there for forty days, where we will face up to the demons within us and the wild beasts tearing at us, knowing all the time that your angels are looking after us.



Lord, we thank you in the name of all those for whom this Lent will be a season of grace, when Jesus will come into their lives. They will know that the moment they were running away from has finally come, a life of holiness will seem within their grasp, they will turn away from their sin and give themselves trustingly to the new vision you have brought them to.

Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank for the word that has enabled us to understand better the will of the Father. May your Spirit enlighten our actions and grant us the strength to practice that which your Word has revealed to us. May we, like Mary, your mother, not only listen to but also practise the Word. You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.