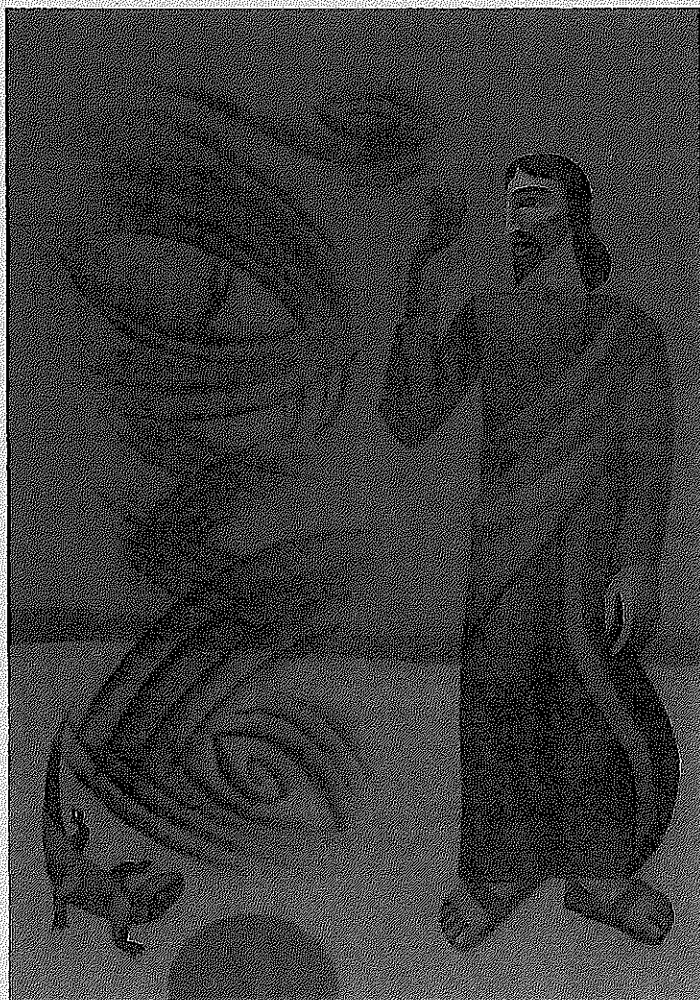


FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



Deliver Us

O saving God,
who led your Chosen People
to a land flowing with milk and honey,
nourish your Church during its Lenten fast
and rescue it from the snares of death.
Lead us out of the desert of temptation
and deliver us from evil when we call upon
your Holy Name.
May we too, find shelter in you, Almighty
One of Israel,
so that, saved from distress, we might share
in the promise of Easter.
Grant us courage when we are faced
with fear
and faith when confronted by doubt.
May our hearts forever radiate
the joy of Jesus the Christ
and remain steadfast in the face
of temptation.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, February 14, 2016 Temptations

Today's Readings: Deuteronomy 26:4–10; Psalm 91:1–2, 10–11, 12–13, 14–15; Romans 10:8–13; Luke 4:1–13. What comes to mind when you think about the desert? It is often depicted as a wasteland and a land filled with danger. After the Exodus, our ancestors wandered for forty years in the desert, often losing faith and turning away from God. Temptations lure us because they seem glamorous or easy. Often, giving in to unhealthy temptations isolates us from God's love and we are consumed with our selfish desires.

The Gospel tells us that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the devil. Reflecting on Jesus' responses to the devil, we learn that, in the face of temptation, he remains obedient to God. Jesus is forced to discern

God's will and grow closer to the Father through prayer and fasting. The image of the desert often indicates a place for prayer, listening, and quiet presence. In this season, we must take time to enter the desert, trusting that the Holy Spirit will help reveal our brokenness and lead us to listen attentively to God and respond openly to God's invitation. It might be helpful to spend a moment each day writing in a journal about those things, ideas, or persons that tempt you to turn away from God and your call to be a faithful witness. It is not always easy to name temptations, but like the Israelites, we too will be led to the Promised Land and share in God's bounty. Jesus is the path to truth and freedom. What is he asking of you?