

This Week's Readings

First Reading: Deuteronomy 26: 4-10

A prayer of thanks to God for having given his people the land he promised them.

Second Reading: Romans 10: 8-13.

If we confess Jesus to be the Lord, we shall be saved.

Gospel: Luke 4:1-13.

Jesus refuses to be deflected from his mission.



Points for Reflection

Today, as we begin the season of Lent, the Church wants us to think again about the great, fundamental facts of our Christian life. The Church wants us to reflect on the relationship between God and the people of the Old Testament, between God and his Son, and between God and ourselves. This Sunday's three Readings remind us of these three relationships.

The **First Reading** shows the relationship between God and the Old Testament people. It recalls that, after Israel had gone down into Egypt, where the people were mistreated and enslaved, God brought the people out of slavery in the exodus in order to lead them into the Promised Land. The exodus was the great saving event of the Old Testament. God revealed himself thereby as Saviour of his people. Before the people entered the Promised Land, however, they wandered in the desert for forty years. There they faced grave temptations, and for the most part they failed God. They were selfish, thinking only of themselves and their own welfare. They wanted God to feed them, and, even after he did so miraculously, they were not satisfied. They murmured against God and wanted to put him to test, to have him prove his might and his power. They lacked trust. And, despite all that God had done for them, many fell into idolatry and worshipped false gods.

The words we read in the First Reading are actually a profession of faith. The people were to recite this profession of faith as a motive to keep them from failing God as their ancestors had. And yet down through their history the chosen people failed God again and again in the face of temptation.

Then **Jesus** came as the new Israel, the chosen One of God. In himself he summed up the whole purpose and meaning of the chosen people, and

fulfilled and completed all that they should have been, and more. Like the chosen people Jesus was led into the desert, and there he spent, not forty years, but forty days. There he underwent temptations similar to those of the Israelites. The devil tempted Jesus to be selfish: "*Command this stone to become bread.*" The devil was trying to get him to think only of himself, to use his power for his own convenience and comfort. The devil tempted Jesus to put God to the test, to have God prove his might and his power by saving Jesus from destruction in a leap from the parapet of the temple. The devil even tempted Jesus to idolatry by saying: "*All this will be yours, if you worship me.*"

Yes, Jesus did undergo temptations similar to those of the Israelites in the desert, but where the Israelites had failed, Jesus was triumphant. Jesus showed that his relationship with his Father was based on loving obedience. That loving obedience indeed led Jesus to die on the Cross, but it was through that death that God exalted him and led him into the Promised Land, the life of perfect happiness and glory in heaven.

What of our relationship with God? We are the new chosen people of God. He wants to lead us into the promised land with Jesus, but for a while we must wander in the desert of this world. Here we, too, undergo temptations. We are enticed by the devil to be selfish, to think only of ourselves, our welfare and our convenience. When our wants and wishes are not satisfied, we are tempted to put God to the test, to demand that he show his power and his might by healing the ills of our society and by solving our own problems. We are even tempted to turn from the true God to worship false gods, such as materialism, pleasure, expedience and laziness.

We will fall victim to these temptations only if we

forget all that God has already done for us and what he promises in the future. God has saved us in Jesus Christ, and, as he raised Jesus from the dead and exalted him because of his loving obedience, so God will raise us and lift us up to his kingdom if we have the same loving obedience as Jesus. That is our faith, and it should be a motive to keep us from failing God. St Paul, in the **Second Reading** today, reminds us of the power of faith: *"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*

Lest we become selfish and concerned only with ourselves, during this Lenten season we should be more generous in works of charity. Lest we give in to the temptation to put God to the test, to demand that he show his power, we should prepare with gratitude and joy for the paschal feast, the mystery of our salvation in Jesus Christ. Finally, lest we become worshippers of modern false gods, we must be more fervent in prayer. By doing so, we will avoid the failure of the Israelites, and will share in the triumph of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

---Charles E. Miller
"Communicating Christ"

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Secretary: Miss Tse Choi Ping Office hours: Mon-Fridays: 9.00am – 1.00pm; 2.00pm – 6.00pm Saturdays: 10.00am – 12 noon Sundays: 8.45am – 12 noon	Confessions: Sundays before Mass; Weekdays on call
Parish Council Chairlady: Miss Candy Chan Tel: 23265322	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Thursdays: 2.30 pm 1 st Thursday of the month 8.00 pm

Kids' Corner

Colour the picture below based on today's Gospel reading.

