



PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TO THE PONTIFICAL GOOD FRIDAY HOLY LAND COLLECTION

First Sunday of Lent:

THE JOURNEY OF LENT - FACING TEMPTATIONS

High above the city of Jericho in the Judean desert is the Mount of Temptation. It is here the Gospel of Luke recounts that after Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, the devil "took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world." (Lk 4:5) Currently, a Greek Orthodox monastery is carved into the side of the mountain in the spot where Jesus was once tempted.

Jericho is an important city in the history of Israel, from the conquest of the Israelites under Joshua's command to Jesus' many appearances in that city. Today, this region is located in the West Bank and is home to many Palestinian Christians who are aided directly by the Good Friday Collection, which provides funds for the numerous apostolates of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.

Driven into the desert by the Spirit, Our Lord faces three temptations from Satan. In the first, he is tempted to give in to his great hunger after 40 days in the wilderness, but He replies with a reminder of what true hunger means: *the longing for God*. In the second, He is tempted by the promise of dominion and power in the world; but again, Jesus replies that such earthly allures are mere illusions. He replies to the devil with a passage from Deuteronomy 6:13: "You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve." Finally, the third temptation proposes to test God Himself. But Jesus rejects the offer by reminding Satan that one should not test the Lord God. Christ was enticed to submit Himself to a power that could offer him much personally, but in the end all the promises are only lies and illusions.

The three temptations can be found in our own lives as well. We are distracted by material needs and forget to desire and long for the Bread of Life, the only bread that will truly feed us. We are drawn toward earthly power and accomplishment (our fifteen minutes of fame) and neglect to seek and proclaim the only lasting kingdom and to serve the only eternal King. And how often in our lives do we test God and place demands upon Him rather than ask what His will should be in our lives? As Pope Benedict XVI observed on Ash Wednesday in 2010: "Overcoming the temptation to place God in submission to oneself and one's own interests or to put Him in a corner and converting oneself to the proper order of priorities, giving God the first place, is a journey that every Christian must undergo."

The Christians who live under the shadow of the Mount of Temptation are not immune to these temptations. Christians worldwide are asked to give hope to our brothers and sisters in Christ by being generous in their Lenten almsgiving through support to the Good Friday Collection.



Mount of Temptation in Jericho, West Bank

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