

## FOR THE WEEKEND OF FEB. 21-22, 2026

First Sunday of Lent

### Gospel Reading

Mt 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry.

The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread."

He said in reply, "It is written:

'One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple,

and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written:

'He will command his angels concerning you'  
and 'with their hands they will support you,  
lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'"

Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence,

and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me."

At this, Jesus said to him, “Get away, Satan! It is written:

‘The Lord, your God, shall you worship  
and him alone shall you serve.’”

Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

### **Intercession**

Lord, help us to remember to be grateful for your blessings in times of joy and call on you for strength in times of distress. May we find ways to share these blessings and strength with those in need, such as supporting the Catholic Ministry Appeal.

### **Copy for Bulletin Announcement**

If we think the devil is a make-believe “boogie man,” a comical cartoon villain who whispers into our left ear while angels whisper into our right, then the Gospel dispels this notion. The devil exists. He is crafty (he quotes Scripture to Jesus). He is persistent (he tries three times to get Jesus to bow to him). He can subtly lead us down seemingly harmless paths with small sins – the white lie here, the flash of anger there. He can also launch aggressive assaults when we are weak and vulnerable.

He tries this with Jesus, who was susceptible after 40 days of isolation, prayer, and fasting. Fully human, Jesus understands our weakness. He was born and baptized as we were born and baptized. He grew up, like all of us do. He learned a trade from Joseph, just as our parents have taught us important lessons. And like us, he is tested by Satan. But he is not tempted. That is the difference. Our Lord never strays from the Father’s plan for him, not with the devil in the desert and not with his crucifixion at Calvary.

This Lent, let us remain ever vigilant to the devil’s attempts to draw us away from God. Let us explore different ways to pray, perhaps saying the rosary on our evening walk. In addition to observing Friday’s abstention from meat, we can fast from criticizing others. And supporting the Catholic Ministry Appeal – almsgiving – is a powerful way to share our blessings with those in need.

### **Copy for Pulpit Announcement**

With the beginning of Lent, we, the Church, prepare to celebrate Christ’s victory over sin and death on Easter Sunday. We will spend the next six weeks abstaining from meat on Fridays. We will fast from food on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday and perhaps other things, like sweets, alcohol, television, and online shopping, throughout Lent. We will spend extra time in prayer, and we will look for ways to be of service to others.

Similarly, Jesus retreated into the desert for 40 days of prayer and fasting to prepare for his ministry that would end with his crucifixion. During this time of vulnerability, the devil tries to tempt him, offering him food when he is hungry, appealing to his pride, and promising worldly power. Each time, Jesus relies on the word of God for guidance and strength. When we are tested by the traitorous devil, we can look to Scripture to distinguish God's authentic voice from the devil's false promises. Spending time this Lent immersed in the Word of God will help us say "no" to Satan and "yes" to God.

In addition to fasting and prayer, we can prepare for Christ's passion and resurrection through almsgiving, such as supporting the Catholic Ministry Appeal. Please prayerfully consider making a gift to our appeal part of your Lenten journey to Christ.

### **Social Media Post/Content**

Photo: Jesus in prayer.

Header: "The Lord, your God, shall you worship, and him alone shall you serve."

– Matthew 4:10

Copy: Keep God foremost in mind when you make choices! "No one can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). When you share the gifts that God has given you with others through the Catholic Ministry Appeal, you recognize that He is the Lord of your life.