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Pontifical Good Friday Holy Land Collection

First Sunday of Lent: Tempted to Sin? Just Say No!

The Gospel passage of the Temptation of Jesus is a stark contrast to every person’s struggle with temptation and sin. Jesus is able to resist the cunning enticements of the devil, unlike Adam & Eve, who succumbed to disobedience and their desires to be “like God” (Gen 3:5). Too often we put our desire for pleasure, power and prestige before our love for God. As Jesus shows us, it is only through our obedience to His Word that we will truly be “like God” and reflect His likeness.

Christian pilgrims who have visited the Mount of Temptation near Jericho in the Judean wilderness witness the barren and harsh surroundings of the place where Jesus spend forty days in the desert after his baptism by John the Baptist. The Greek Orthodox monastery that is carved in the side of the mountain serves to mark the



The Greek Orthodox Monastery of the Temptation sits on the mountainside high above the Judean desert near Jericho

Help For Holy Land Christians

Franciscan Good Friday Collection:

www.myfranciscan.org

Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem:

www.holysepulchre.net

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem:

www.lpj.org

holy site where Jesus prayed and had his confrontation with the devil. Palestinian Christians, whose families have lived in this harsh land since the time of Christ, also face the same temptations as Jesus. They are caught in the cruel reality of cultural, economic and political strife that makes daily life a constant struggle. Poverty caused by lack of opportunities for education and employment result in difficulties feeding, sheltering and clothing their families. The shifting political powers of this region lend a constant aura of unrest and uncertainty and the real threat of violence on a daily basis. The humiliation that must be endured by these hardships is always a temptation to despair.

As we begin our Lenten journey, it is an opportune time to take stock of the temptations that we are faced with on a daily

basis and what we are doing to look past our own selfish desires and look towards the needs of others. Do we look too much for pleasure and gratification from material goods and sensible pleasures as a substitute for our relationship with God and with our neighbor? Is the desire for power over others at home, work and in the community creating an unhealthy balance in the time we give to prayer, worship and charitable acts? Has the desire for honor and prestige created a “treadmill effect” that has us running away from God, our Creator, instead of running towards Him? A solid remedy for these temptations is to resolve during this Lent to spend time in prayer and fasting to give hope to our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land and to give alms to support their urgent needs through the Pontifical Good Friday Collection.