



Please Give Generously to the
Good Friday Holy Land Collection

First Sunday of Lent: Facing Temptations—the Journey of Lent

Every day, pilgrims from around the world make their way by car or bus into the arid and harsh Judean Desert to the Mount of Temptation to meditate on the very events recounted by Luke on this first Sunday of Lent. Currently the site of a Greek Orthodox monastery carved into the side of the mountain, this holy place just outside of Jericho is believed to be where Jesus was driven into the desert after his baptism. 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 by the Good Friday Collection that gathers funds for the numerous apostolates of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.



The Mount of Temptation as it sits behind Good Shepherd Parish, Jericho, Palestine

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

Our Lord, driven into the desert by the Spirit, faces three temptations from Satan. In the first, Jesus is tempted to succumb to his great hunger after 40 days, 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 power over the world, and He replies that such earthly dominion is an illusion, and only through the Cross will the world be able see the truth, the path to eternal life. Finally, the third temptation would test God Himself. Jesus rejects the offer by reminding Satan that God is not to be tested.

Christ was enticed to submit Himself to a power that could offer only lies and illusions. The three temptations are found in our own lives. We are distracted by material needs and forget to 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 in 2010 on Ash Wednesday observed, “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. They are certainly vulnerable to a temptation to despair – to give up hope as their daily lives are filled with difficulty and strife. Christians worldwide are asked to give hope to our brothers and sisters in Christ by being generous in their Lenten almsgiving through the Good Friday Collection.