



PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TO THE PONTIFICAL GOOD FRIDAY HOLY LAND COLLECTION

First Sunday of Lent:

THE JOURNEY OF LENT – FACING TEMPTATIONS

Pilgrims who travel to the site of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan Valley can see the Mount of Temptation, which lies in the Judean hills high above Jericho to the west. There they can meditate on the very events recounted by St. Matthew on this first Sunday of Lent. Currently the site of a Greek Orthodox monastery carved into the side of the mountain, the Mount of Temptations is believed to be where Jesus was driven into the desert after his baptism. Today, this region is in the West Bank and is home to many Palestinian Christians who are directly helped by the Good Friday Collection that gathers funds for the numerous apostolates of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.

Jesus is driven into the desert by the Spirit, and there he faces three temptations by Satan. In the first, He is tempted to give in to his great hunger after 40 days of fasting; but His response is a reminder of what true hunger means: the longing for God. In the second, Satan tempts Him with the promise of power over the world, and He replies that earthly dominion is an illusion, that only through the Cross will the world be able to see the path to eternal life. Finally, the third temptation would test God Himself. But 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. These three temptations are also found in our own lives. We are distracted by material desires and forget to long for the



The Orthodox Monastery on the Mount of Temptation.

Bread of Life, the only bread that can truly feed us. We are drawn toward earthly power and accomplishment and we neglect to seek and proclaim the only lasting kingdom and serve the only eternal King. As Pope Benedict XVI once 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. 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.

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