

Sunday Readings Reflections of 2/14/2016

Reading 1 Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Lent is more than a season of preparation for Easter. It is a time for the Christian community to repent and be reconciled with God and one another. It is a time of journeying with and praying for the catechumens who will be initiated into the Church at the Easter Vigil. We also pray for those baptized candidates who will be confirmed and/or will be receiving the Eucharist for the first time. Finally, it is a time to appreciate and profess our faith, as God's people do in today's first reading. As they celebrate a liturgy of thanksgiving, Moses retells the story of the marvelous way God guided and saved them. He reminds the people that God sees their suffering and hears their cry for help.

Reading 2 Romans 10:8-13

Just as Moses wanted the people to express their faith, Paul calls on the Christians of Rome to "confess with their lips that Jesus is Lord." He reminds them and us that we must truly believe that Jesus rose from the dead if we hope to be saved. Through Jesus, God's great mercy embraces us and makes us "justified," or right with God.

Gospel Luke 4:1-13

Lent is a period of forty days during which the whole Church renews itself through prayer and fasting. Today we are reminded that the Israelites wandered for forty years in the desert after God led them out of captivity. We are now observing the forty days of Lent. During the Easter Triduum, we will celebrate being led from slavery into freedom.

According to today's gospel, Jesus retreated to the desert for forty days to prepare for his mission after being baptized by John the Baptist. Luke dramatically describes what happened to Jesus while he was alone in that deserted place. The devil tempts Jesus with promises of bread (a symbol for material comforts), of power (authority over others), and of false glory (to be gained by daring to test God). But Jesus defeats the devil by defending himself with God's word from the Old Testament. Even then the devil does not give up. He "awaits another opportunity" to tempt Jesus.

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