

Our Sunday Reflection

Lent 1 February 22nd 2026



An Acclamation for the Season

This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son. He is the sacrifice for our sins, that we might live through him.

Preparation

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world, and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Our Confession

The sun of righteousness has dawned with healing in his wings. Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection. In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing. In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven. In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ

May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord. **Amen.**

The opening prayer

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

The Psalm Psalm 32 *We say the psalm aloud*

Happy the one whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.
Happy the one to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, and in whose spirit there is no guile.
For I held my tongue; my bones wasted away through my groaning all the day long.
Your hand was heavy upon me day and night; my moisture was dried up like the drought in summer.
Then I acknowledged my sin to you and my iniquity I did not hide.
I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and
you forgave the guilt of my sin.
Therefore, let all the faithful make their prayers to you in time of trouble;
in the great water flood, it shall not reach them.
You are a place for me to hide in; you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with songs of deliverance.
'I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; I will guide you with my eye.
'Be not like horse and mule which have no understanding; whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle,
or else they will not stay near you.'
Great tribulations remain for the wicked, but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.
Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord; shout for joy, all who are true of heart.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Scripture Reading Genesis 2.15-17 and 3.1-7

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' ² The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³ but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

At the end of the reading we say:

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Gospel Matthew 4.1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' ⁴ But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."' ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."' ⁷ Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."' ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; ⁹ and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."' ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

At the end of the reading we say:

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

A Reflection for the day

Following baptism at the Jordan river Jesus is 'lead' by the Spirit into the wilderness and tempted by the devil.

Jesus had no need for a baptism of repentance as John indicated when he came to the Jordan river (unlike the masses of Jerusalem and Israel who also gathered there). However, as Messiah, Son of Man and prophet of God Jesus is baptised and declared to be, as Israel had been when God delivered the people through the waters of the Red Sea, God's beloved Son. And as Israel was led by the Spirit, in the pillar of cloud and fire, through the wilderness for 40 years, so Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Spirit for 40 days.

Both Israel and Jesus are tested in the wilderness! Israel's testing is specific to their calling. It involved trusting God for daily bread; learning to trust the lead and defence of God rather than depending on their own agencies; and rather than construct their own god to worship (as all the nations had) to worship God, though unseen, yet ever with them. All this helped to forge the identity of being God's chosen people, a light in the darkness, revealing hope for all the nations that they too, if they followed the Lord's way, would have peace with their fellow human neighbours and with creation.

Jesus has his personal calling as messiah and his testing specifically reveals this calling, and also to give foundation to his vocation ahead. This is not a Superman figure before us, one with capabilities beyond our world which he veils until required. Here is the Son of Man, like all humanity able to be distracted from God's calling, able to be tempted by the little voice within to ignore our true nature, calling and vocation come to each and all through baptism.

Jesus faced, as Adam and Eve did in the garden, the option to follow a single command or succumb to a single temptation – with devastating results. Unlike Adam and Eve, Jesus does not enter into conversation with the 'voice' which we all know ends up with our being convinced that 'it is only a little thing, and one little bite will never matter'; yet from small seeds grow huge bushes – one bite is all it takes!

Jesus sees through the trap, he is committed to living off God's word, trusting God completely without setting

up trick tests to put God on the spot. He is committed to his baptismal calling to loving and serving God alone, and in like manner those who are neighbour. But this 40-day period was not the end of the temptation to be distracted from his baptismal calling and vocation to love and serve God. The temptations would come again and again, from the voice within and from friends and family, right to the moment of his death.

The temptations we face daily, as well as at critical times in our lives, may not be of the order that Jesus faced. However, they have the same end goal, to distract us from our baptismal calling and vocation to love and serve God alone, and in like manner those who are neighbours. We each have a glorious, if costly, vocation and the 'enemy' will do all to distract us and thwart God's good purpose for each of us.

Jesus, as the beloved Son, who calls us brothers and sisters and enables us to know God as father, sets the life pattern for us and gifts us to a defence against the one who would distract us from our calling. He shows us that conversation with the 'voice' within will always end in trouble and alienate us from God. Our calling is a simple one to remain with eyes fixed on God, with the word of God in our hearts and ready on our lips. Our vocation is simple also, to trust God and his purposes for all humanity and to allow the light of the Spirit within us to grow in intensity so that it shines in the world about us giving hope to all. And when the 'voice' of our enemy speaks up, within us or through friends and family, to distract us from our vocation and lure us away from the love and service of God, back into darkness we are simply say 'no', and again 'no', and once more 'no'!

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers

We make our intercessions

As we start this season of Lent let us pray that our faith will grow and develop.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

Strengthen Michael and Fiona our Bishops, and all laity and clergy who seek to serve us in this diocese. May they be filled with the Spirit and speak with authority. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We Pray for Our King, Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have the Spirit of wisdom to lead us through this difficult time in our world! *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the hungry and starving, that the available food may be used for the benefit of all.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may serve Christ in one another and seek the common good. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the sick, suffering and dying and we give thanks and pray for those who use their skill to care for them. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Hear us as we remember those who have died..... According to your promises grant them a share in your eternal kingdom. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

The Collect

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Conclusion

Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.
as a shield overshadow me.
me, Christ over me;
Christ beside me on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me. Amen.

Christ,
Christ under