

'TESTING OUR RESOLVE' ~ 'JOIN IN THIS FRIDAY'
1st Sunday Lent - HOMILY 18 FEBRUARY 2018

As some biblical scholars suggest, we can translate the Greek "peirazein" by "being tested" or "being tempted" in English.

In today's Gospel, the New Revised Standard Version NRSV translates the word as "tempted". In Mark 1:12-15 it reads:

"And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'"

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke give THREE temptations. Mark doesn't.

LET US REFLECT ON 'BEING TESTED' – OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

OLD TESTAMENT - ABRAHAM, MOSES, ELIJAH

There is a significant background in the Old Testament for being tested, including Abraham, Moses and Elijah.

- ABRAHAM

We remember the account in Genesis 22 of **Abraham** being tested by God. Abraham was then promised

"I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offering as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore."

- MOSES

The covenant with God takes more detailed shape in Exodus 34.

Moses, after 40 years of being **tested in the wilderness**, arrives at Mount Sinai. He resolves to follow God's direction.

God says,

"I hereby make a covenant... Observe what I command you today."

The Ten Commandments are a part of that covenant.

- ELIJAH

We remember the journey of 40 days by **Elijah** in 1 Kings 19:1-8.

After being **tested**, he sets out on another test

"for forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God."

It is at Horeb that God explains to Elijah that the Israelites have broken their covenant with God and God commissions Elijah to go to his people.

NEW TESTAMENT – GOSPEL OF MARK

In Chapter 1, Jesus has been baptised and God has declared his favour.
Now for training, whereby his resolve is tested.
Facing the power of evil and not giving in to evil.
An intensive 40 days of being tested.

Jesus knows the history of God's covenant with the Israelite people.
Jesus knows the significance of being tested.
Jesus knows the history of the 40 years and of the 40 days.
Jesus doesn't walk away from the testing.

The experience gained will assist him in his public ministry.
Through the angels, God protects Jesus throughout the time of being tested.

HOW DOES GOD WATCH OVER US?

OUR RESOLVE THIS LENT

HOW DOES GOD TEST OUR RESOLVE?

WHAT IS OUR RESOLVE?

WHAT ARE THE WILD BEASTS WE FACE TODAY?

HOW DO WE LEARN TO FACE THE BEASTS IN OUR LIVES?

Facing the beasts, for example,
of poverty, abuse, discrimination, egotism.

WHAT IS THE SIMPLICITY OF THE WILDERNESS IN OUR LIVES?

A wilderness that is not cluttered with possessions and self-centredness.

HOW DO WE BEFRIEND THE WILDERNESS IN OUR LIVES?

During the last four days in the Catholic Church in Australia,
the first four days of Lent, we have had the opportunity in church and at home
to commemorate Days of Lament and Reparation for the sexual abuse committed in the
Church.

WHAT IS OUR RESOLVE NOW TO FOLLOW THROUGH?

We began our Lenten Journey on Ash Wednesday, receiving the ashes.

WHAT IS OUR RESOLVE THIS LENT?

THANK YOU IN A SPECIAL WAY

Thank you in a special way to those who have prepared and those who participated in

- the parish Liturgy of Lament and Sorrow yesterday
- the Friday evening Prayer Vigil and blessing of the Healing Stone in our prayer garden.
When the plaque arrives in about two weeks, it will be attached to the Stone in solidarity with all who have been abused sexually, psychologically, emotionally and spiritually by church, by family and by society.
- the home prayer for survivors and their families.

- the Ash Wednesday Masses and Services.
- the start of the Lenten discussion groups

DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING FOR PEACE THIS FRIDAY.

On many occasions Pope Francis has invited people to pray for peace.

In tragedies, war, international and domestic crises.

On November 23 last year, he was presider in St. Peter's Basilica.

for the [Prayer for Peace in South Sudan and in the Democratic Republic of Congo](#).

Pope Francis does not want the people of these nations to be forgotten in these desperate times.

He draws an international focus on them again.

On this coming Friday, February 23rd, Pope Francis has invited us to undertake a [DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING FOR PEACE](#).

Not only For Catholics.

Pope Francis invites all religious traditions and all people of goodwill to join the practice and intention of this day.

He explained

"Faced with the tragic protracted situations of conflict in different parts of the world, I invite all the faithful to take part in a special Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace".

To those who believe in God, he asked that:

"Everyone, in their own conscience, before God, should ask 'what can I do for peace?'"

A particular focus will be responding to the cries and anguish of the children, youth, women and men who suffer violence in South Sudan and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and their desire for peace in their nations.

Further to this request, Pope Francis said,

"each one of us can say 'no' to violence in their own way".

The Vatican added that all religious traditions are invited to share

"moments of prayer, fasting and reflection, according to their own traditions and in their own places of worship".

In our parish community we particularly pray for the villagers that we support in South Sudan.

We also pray for the people we don't know, who are crying out for peace around the world, including DRC and South Sudan, Syria and Iraq, northern Nigeria and Yemen.

**AT HOME, AT SCHOOL, AT WORK OR WHEREVER WE ARE THIS FRIDAY,
WHAT IS OUR PERSONAL RESOLVE TO SAY NO TO VIOLENCE?
WHAT IS OUR RESOLVE, BEFORE GOD, TO BE PEACE-MAKERS?**

Let us say **NO TO VIOLENCE** in significant ways this Friday
as we pray and fast for peace.
Strengthened by Jesus and his Good News,
what could be significant ways to say No to Violence?
We may need time earlier this week to reflect and prepare for Friday.

The Gospel today says:

*'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;
repent, and believe in the good news.'*

With the help of God,
may we direct our **resolve** to love God and to love our neighbour,
face the wild beasts within and without,
find more deeply the simplicity of the wilderness,
and live out the Good News during this Lenten journey of 40 days.

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/021818.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook18022018>]

[Image Next Page: Christ in the Wilderness - Ivan Kramskoy 1872 - Public Domain]

'Testing Our Resolve'

**“He was in the wilderness for
forty days.”**



**Testing Our
Resolve**

GOSPEL OF MARK

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