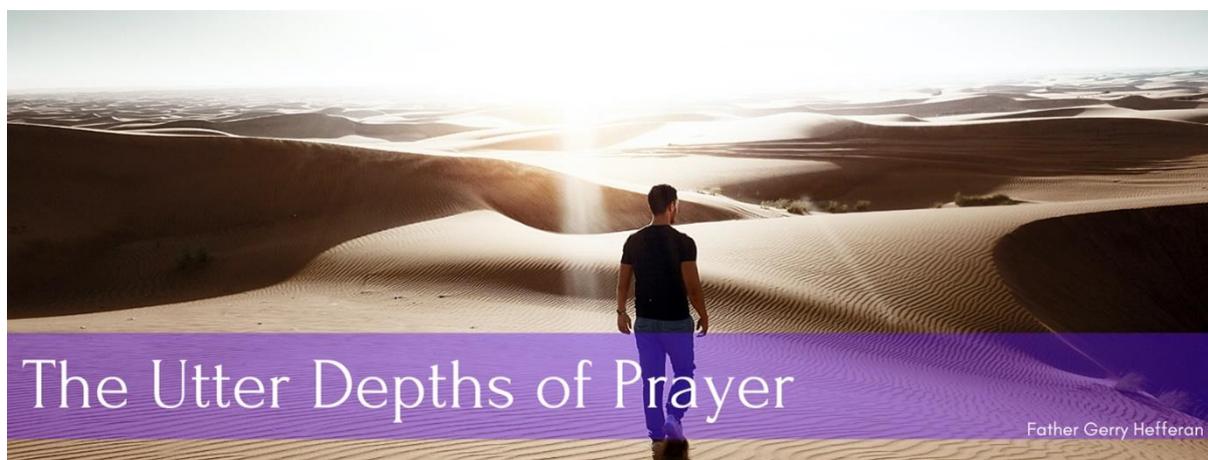


THE UTTER DEPTHS OF PRAYER

1st SUNDAY OF LENT – 6 MARCH 2022



HOW WAS FRIDAY FOR YOU?

As we went about our daily lives, its commitments and responsibilities, cleanups and adjustments after the recent floods, its blessed moments and preparations for the weekend, our Lenten journey, and our daily prayer for the people of Ukraine, Russian military surrounded the largest nuclear plant of its type in Europe and attacked it.

The Ukrainian **Zaporizhzhya** plant has six nuclear reactors. A fire caused damage to the training area at the compound during the assault.

ONE OF THOSE PSALM 130 MOMENTS

It was one of those Psalm 130 moments for those who knew about it.

A moment when we feel powerless and pray from our very depths to God.

Psalm 130 begins:

*“Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!”*

A few verses later it says:

*“I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.”*

Feeling powerless, some who heard about it, stopped and prayed.

Sometime after the battle was over, the International Atomic Energy Agency gave an update on the Zaporizhzhya power plant and each of the six reactors.

The United States Ambassador to the United Nation, Linda Thomas-Greenfield explained how close it was to a major nuclear disaster.

[Video/text of Ambassador's address <https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-by-ambassador-linda.../>]

“By the grace of God, the world narrowly averted a nuclear catastrophe last night. We all waited to exhale as we watched the horrific situation unfold in real time. I applaud the ability of the Ukrainian operators to keep all six reactors in safe conditions while under attack and to report, as they were able to, to their nuclear regulator... We are gravely concerned that the Ukrainian operators are now doing their jobs under extreme duress. Russia’s attack last night put Europe’s largest nuclear power plant at grave risk. It was incredibly reckless and dangerous. And it threatened the safety of civilians across Russia, Ukraine, and Europe... Russian forces are now 20 miles, and closing, from Ukraine’s second largest nuclear facility. So, this imminent danger continues. We narrowly avoided a disaster last night. The international community must be unanimous in demanding Russia’s forces stop their dangerous assault.”

GOSPEL OF LUKE 4:1-13

In today’s Gospel there is intensity.

Jesus inspires us by his 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness.

Jesus is tempted by the devil, but Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, never submits to the devil. Jesus never surrenders to temptation.

In response to the 1st temptation, Jesus quotes the Word in Deuteronomy 8:3

In response to the 2nd temptation, Jesus quotes the Word in Deuteronomy 6:13

In response to the 3rd temptation, Jesus quotes the Word in Deuteronomy 6:16

We are all face these temptations in some way.

THE FIRST TEMPTATION - POWER

‘The devil said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.’

Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, “One does not live by bread alone.” ‘

THE SECOND TEMPTATION - AUTHORITY

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

And the devil said to him,

‘To you I will give their glory and all this authority;

*for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please.
If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.'*

*Jesus answered him, 'It is written,
"Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."*

THE THIRD TEMPTATION - MISSION

*Then the devil took him to Jerusalem,
and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him,
'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,
for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you",
and "On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."*

*Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."
When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.'*

THE TEMPTATIONS AND OURSELVES

Jesus trusted in the Father.

In overcoming the temptations in life, we need to trust in God.

Let us now reflect on the three temptations again.

- To misuse and abuse his **power** by turning the stone into bread.
- To misuse and abuse his **authority** by seeking to possess and dominate the kingdoms of the world.
- To misuse and abuse his **mission** by challenging the Father to conform to him.

We see how President Putin abuses his power, authority and mission.

He abuses the Russian people, and he abuses the Ukrainian people.

Do we serve God, or do we serve our ambitions?

Are we humble like Jesus, or do we believe that the world revolves around us?

The Gospel challenges each of us.

I find it helpful to remember the temptations by using the word MAP.

The desert experience becomes a map for our Christian way of life.

- **M for Mission**
- **A for Authority**
- **P for Power**

Let us pause and identify

- Our **mission** and the temptations to abuse it.
- Our **authority** and the temptations to abuse it.
- Our **power** and the temptations to abuse it.

[pause and pray]

The responses of Jesus are again repeated:

Deuteronomy 8:3 *"One does not live by bread alone."*

Deuteronomy 6:13 *"Worship the Lord your God and serve only him."*

Deuteronomy 6:16 *"Do not put the Lord your God to the test."*

We are all face these temptations in some way.

Let us pray for our Lenten journey this year.

Let us pray that we be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray that we live our mission, authority and power responsibly.

Let us now pray a prayer for the people of Ukraine.

Father Gerry

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/030622.cfm>

Out of the depths I cry to you,
O Lord.
Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive to the
voice of my supplications!

If you, **O Lord**, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with you, so
that you may be revered.

I wait for the **Lord**, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope; my soul waits
for the **Lord** more than those who
watch for the morning, more than
those who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the **Lord**!
For with the **Lord** there is steadfast
love, and with **Him** is great power to
redeem.
It is **He** who will redeem Israel from
all its iniquities.

PSALM 130
www.stjosephsbrackenridge.com

