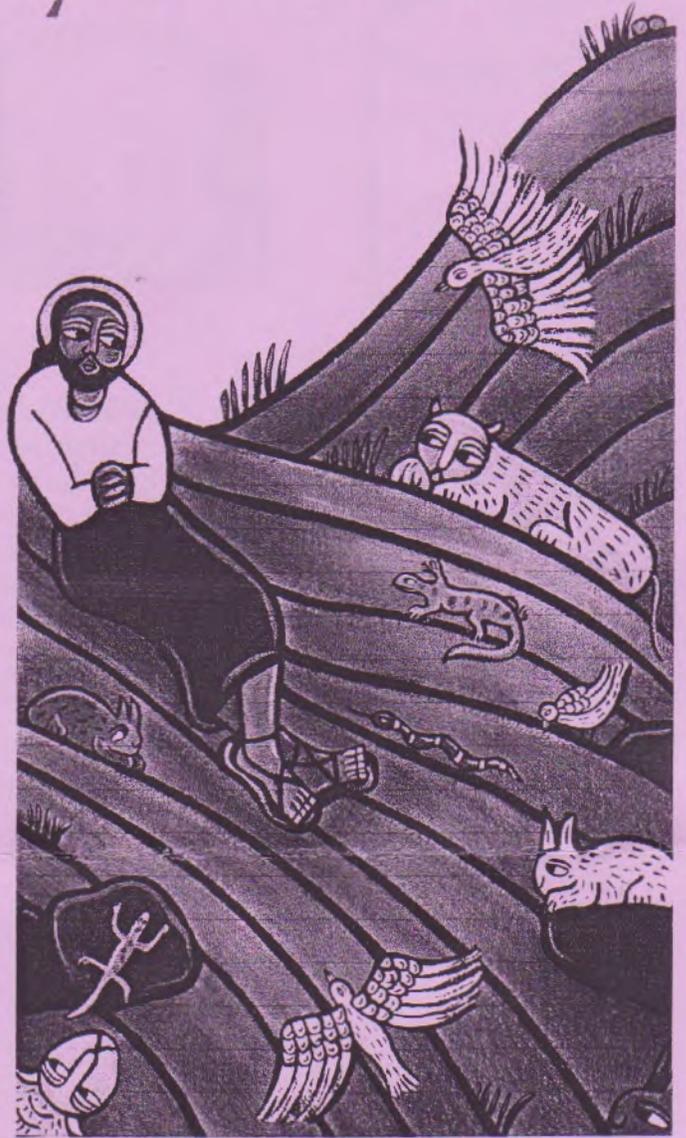


# First Sunday of Lent

## Prayer for Help with Temptations

God our Father,  
you who sustained Jesus through  
powerful temptations  
when he was alone and hungry,  
stand with us as we struggle  
with our temptations.  
Help us learn from his model:  
that with your grace we can overcome any evil,  
that we have within us Christ's strength,  
that nothing can destroy our inmost core.  
Teach us to seek, as Christ did,  
the nourishment of your word  
and your daily protection,  
instead of material fulfillment.  
May we keep you enshrined in our hearts  
and serve your kingdom.  
We ask this through the same Christ our Lord.  
Amen.



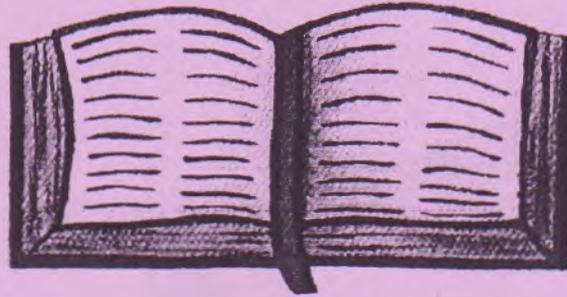
## Sunday, March 13, 2011 Turn and Trust

Today's Readings: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11. As ashes were signed on our foreheads Wednesday, we heard the words "Turn from sin; trust the Good News." What does that mean? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that sin is "an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; . . . failure in genuine love for God and neighbor." Sin results from our attachments to things (CCC, 1849).

In today's Gospel, Jesus turns from the destructive voice of the devil to the life-giving voice of his Father. He speaks to us out of his desert experience of sin and death, saying, in essence, "Turn away from sin and evil and toward God." Are

we haunted by past shame or worries about the future? Are we tempted by attachments that we know will cause harm? Are we still angry about something from years ago? Lent means springtime: it is an opportunity to slough off like a snakeskin all that deadens us. It is also a time to turn to the God who made us, who redeemed us, and who lives in us. Jesus showed that the prince of this world had no hold on him, and so we must know that we belong to God, not to all that tempts or threatens us. Jesus invites us to belong completely to him. The only way forward is to trust in the God who has been faithful before and can be trusted again. Can we step toward that life source this Lent?

# This Week at Home



## Monday, March 14

### Comfort in the Desert—A Prayer Space

The final phrase of Sunday's Gospel is often overlooked: "and angels waited on him." After Jesus' ordeal, the presence of the divine is still with him. Perhaps angels attend all our lonely desert experiences. Where we sense the least comfort, there it abounds. How can we become more aware of God's love waiting on us? Create a prayer space in your home where you can pray, reflect, and do spiritual reading. A corner of a room will do. You'll need a chair and a little table with a violet cloth (violet is the liturgical color for Lent), a candle, Bible, and perhaps a cross or holy image. Let this be a place of refuge where you can feel God's presence attending you. Today's Readings: Leviticus 19:1–2, 11–18; Matthew 25:31–46.

## Tuesday, March 15

### Lenten Fast

From what shall we fast this Lent? The old practice of giving up candy, coffee, or cigarettes was almost too easy. It only addressed one side of ourselves, the physical. This year, try fasting from negative put-downs, anxiety, time wasted on fluffy entertainment, or games that are beneath us. For a *real* challenge, unplug the television. Substitute compliments, trust, time spent in quiet reflection or reading. That will make it seem like a *breeze* to forego the candy bar! Today's Readings: Isaiah 55:10–11; Matthew 6:7–15.

## Wednesday, March 16

### Lenten Almsgiving

Operation Rice Bowl is a long-standing Lenten tradition, sponsored by Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Put money saved from more elaborate meals in the organization's small cardboard box to benefit needy people in over one hundred countries. At the CRS Web site (<http://orb.crs.org>), you can see an interactive map of nations served by the project, stories of individuals it helps, meatless recipes from around the world, and ways to donate. If your parish isn't participating, do so at home. Today's Readings: Jonah 3:1–10; Luke 11:29–32.

## Thursday, March 17

### Optional Memorial of Saint Patrick

Say this prayer, attributed to Saint Patrick, alone or with family members:

Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Today's Readings: Esther C:12, 14–16, 23–25; Matthew 7:7–12.

## Friday, March 18

### First Be Reconciled

How wisely Jesus teaches us to attend to our conflicts with others before we approach worship. He even tells us to leave the altar to settle the cause of disagreement so that it will not block our prayer. Advice from secular mental health experts is similar: not forgiving can drain and de-energize the wounded; clinging to an insult can shadow an otherwise happy life. If we took Jesus' wisdom to heart, we could be more available to God's love and live more gratefully, freely, and joyfully. Today's Readings: Ezekiel 18:21–28; Matthew 5:20–26.

## Saturday, March 19

### Solemnity of Saint Joseph

Both of today's two options for the Gospel describe Joseph's dilemmas. In Matthew, he agonizes over what to do about Mary, his pregnant fiancée. In Luke, Joseph and Mary lose their son Jesus in the temple. Joseph's proximity to Jesus on earth hardly guaranteed bliss; in fact it brought hard challenges, and his faithful response is a model for us. Today's Readings: 2 Samuel 7:4–5a, 12–14a, 16; Romans 4:13, 16–18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18–21, 24a or Luke 2:41–51a.



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 Keeping the Seasons

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