

## Growing through Lent

### Notes on the Bible readings

● Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness after his baptism for 40 days of prayer and fasting. During this 'spiritual boot camp', the devil tempts him to toughen him up for the challenges ahead. These final three temptations are the greatest after 40 days of tempting. Despite the devil's promises of food, power and security, Jesus stands firm, drawing inspiration from the Scriptures, and doesn't give in to him. He recognises the devil's deception and knows that he must endure to honour God and show that ultimately, good will overcome evil.

● On this first Sunday of Lent, the passage encourages us to rethink our worldly priorities. Luke is famous for his empathy for the poor and disempowered (cf. the Magnificat), and here he challenges our attitudes to material possessions, power and security. Luke wants his readers to recognise that wealth, human power and security may satisfy in the short term, but eternally we need more. 'One does not live by bread alone' (v.4) – we need a relationship with God and to feed on his Word to ensure our true sustenance.

● The order of temptations is different in Matthew's Gospel, with the test of power coming after security, whereas Luke seems to emphasise security by placing it last. What things tempt us away from fully relying on God? How can we rethink our priorities so that they are more in line with God's vision of a just and generous world?

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) and click on PostScript.



### Questions for reflection

- ▶ If you saw this happening, why might it be surprising?
- ▶ How important to you are wealth, status and security?
- ▶ How does your faith challenge your priorities?



### A prayer of approach

*Give us the refuge we need, O loving God,  
refuge beneath your wings.  
Protect us from all that we fear, O faithful God,  
by shielding us from danger.  
Guard us from temptation, O gracious God,  
that we may choose the right path.  
Be with us, and make your presence known,  
O compassionate God, on every step of life's journey.  
In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen.*

### A prayer for others

*To those who exercise power,  
to decision makers in politics, business and industry,  
to those who have wealth,  
and to all whose lives affect the lives of others:  
grant wisdom and compassion.  
To the vulnerable and the weak,  
to those with little or nothing,  
to those subject to the will of others,  
and to the very young and the very old:  
grant wisdom and compassion.  
To us as we look at what we have,  
to us as we consider what to do,  
to us as we relate to the world,  
and to us as we seek to be faithful to you:  
grant wisdom and compassion.  
In the Saviour's name, we pray.  
Amen.*

### Live your faith

At the end of each day, reflect on the choices you have made. Be honest with yourself about any temptations you have faced, and how you dealt with them.