

HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH METCALFE, ON.

MARCH 6, 2022

LENT ONE

Reverend Michael Fleming

Fr. Michael: As we begin our forty days of preparation for the festival of Easter, we acknowledge that our sacred space and the places in which we live lie on the unceded territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin peoples.

People: **May we live together on this land which the Creating God has granted us in harmony, hope and reconciliation.**

Fr. Michael: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: As God's children called and gathered, we pray – Almighty God

People: **to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: Together, three times we pray

People: **Holy God, holy and mighty, holy immortal one, have mercy on us.**

Fr. Michael: Let us pray... Dearest Lord, help us to live lives of faith that are devoted to you. We want to have hearts that pursue you and your desires before anything else. You said that if we sought you with all of our hearts, we would find you. We long to behold your beauty and to know your heart even more. Align our wills with yours and help us to keep your commandments; in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Almighty God, whose son Jesus fasted for forty days in the wilderness and was tempted as we are but did not sin, give us grace to discipline ourselves in submission to your Spirit that, as you know our weaknesses, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen

Reader: A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy (26: 1-11)

When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us." When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, you shall make this response before the Lord your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of

the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me." You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house. The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: Saving Spirit, as you gathered us in the wilderness and led us to a land flowing with milk and honey, gather us before your Word and lead us into your Wisdom so we may be equipped to serve your Son Jesus. Amen (from Knowing-Jesus.com)

Reader: Psalm 91: 1-16

You who shelter in the shadow of El Shaddai's wings shall abide in the secret place of God's presence. You will say to the Lord, "You are my refuge and the home of my heart. You are my God and I trust in you." God will keep you from falling into traps and will deliver you from plagues of destruction. The Lord will cover you with his wings and gather you to his breast. The Lord's faithful love will surround you with protection.

People: **You need not fear the terror that stalks in the night nor the threats aimed at you during the day, nor the evil that lurks in the darkness, nor the destruction that strikes in broad daylight. Though thousands fall into evil around you, evil shall not come near you.**

Reader: You shall see the violent reap their just reward. But you, who have made the Holy One your habitation, shall find in Yahweh the refuge you need. No evil shall befall your soul, no plague come near to your dwelling. El Shaddai will order angels to guard you in all that you do. They will hold you by the hand and keep you from stumbling into danger. You will tread underfoot all that threatens to harm you.

People: **Because you cling to God in loving trust, the Lord will surely deliver you. Yahweh knows your name and understands your heart and will protect you and be with you in every kind of trouble. El Shaddai will clothe you with dignity and help you to walk in freedom. You will be satisfied with long life and you will see the fullness of the Lord's saving power.**

Reader: A reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Rome (Romans 10: 8-13)

"The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: Father, we thank you that you have told us that whoever calls on your name will be saved. Thank you for your perfect plan of salvation. We praise your holy name that you sent Jesus to be our salvation, to die on a Cross, and to rise again on the third day.

(from Stephen M. Fearing 2021)

Holy Gospel

Fr. Michael: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the blessed St. Luke (St. Luke 4: 1-33)

People: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. 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.'" 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.'" 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.

Fr. Michael: The Gospel of Christ.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Homily

One thing I learned very quickly when Sharon turned me from a homebody into a world traveller is that there are certain places I adore and certain places in the world I am less than enthusiastic about. - like cities! Oh, don't get me wrong- I would return again and again to Paris or Rome or New York, but on the whole, unless there is something really interesting or spectacular an urban space offers, I would probably want to give it a pass. I have discovered that I am more at ease and at peace in out-of-the-way places.

Each desert I have visited has offered unique landscape and every one of them has held hidden surprises and mystery for me – the Anzio Barrego in southern California with brilliant wildflowers that last only 2 or 3 days, the open sky of the prairie in Saskatchewan which invites me to just dance and pirouette in the grandness of it all; the islands of the Galapagos with its volcanic blackness and strange flora and fauna; the solitude and silence of the hills outside Iqualuit and the lichen-carpetted rocks edging to the Arctic Ocean; - each speaks to me of the mystery and incredible creativity of the Creating One and I return always filled with a renewed sense of awe and wonder and gratitude that I have the resources and the relative health to go to those desert places where I find my resting place.

Today, we hear in the gospel narrative the moment when Jesus' life changes for ever. He has left his kith and kin in Nazareth and come to the banks of a narrow, shallow and silt-laden river because he has heard that his cousin John is doing some pretty interesting stuff – preaching and warning of the coming dark days and of the hope for the resurrection of the world under the leadership of the long-awaited Messiah. Jesus is somehow drawn from the safety and security of everything he knew to a future which is totally unknown and unpredictable. Yet somehow, he feels compelled to follow wherever that Voice leads him and now he stands before John and answers John's invitation to a baptism for forgiveness by

wading into the muddy waters. As he is pushed down beneath the surface, as the sun disappears from his vision, he hears the Voice which has guided him thus far on his journey whisper within him, "You are my Son whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Rising from the waters, Jesus stumbles to the bank, takes his staff and, without even a thank you or a goodbye, turns from the Jordan and walks away. His back is to the past for he now walks into the future which begins in a desert place.

While in the wilderness of the Jordan, Jesus encounters the totality of the world and is offered everything that the world claims is of value and importance- power and dominion over lands and peoples; a name which will be feared by most and loved by few; riches and treasure beyond measure; a name above all names before which even the greatest emperor or pharaoh will bow and kneel. All that is required, he is told, is to abandon the Creating One and join hands with the forces of darkness. It is that simple, the evil says – let God go and become one with me and all this and more than you can ask or imagine will be yours. The temptation to abandon the One who calls is at times overwhelming, but in the heart of darkness, Jesus discovers that he is not alone. Sometimes the presence of his Father comes with a blinding flash of knowing. More often, it comes in the gentle presence which I call the great AHA of God – in the desert primrose that somehow finds nurture and life as it sends its fragile roots into the cracks of the stone walls of the dry wadi stream beds which lie sterile and empty most of the time; in the scuttling of small lizards just on the periphery of his vision to remind him that there is life in the midst of the of the emptiness; in the way the first light of pre-dawn sneaks across the hilltops and kisses him awake to a new day of encounter with the dark forces and with the promise of wholeness and completeness in the arms of the One who made all things and saw that all was good. In this desert time, this time of testing and trial, Jesus came face to face not only with the external forces which drive the world – he came face to face with his inner being, with his soul. He met and subdued his human desires – for fame and fortune, for honour and respect, for self-reliance and self-assurance. In the overwhelming silence, he is able to , as his forebearer David said, "be still" and know God . When it was over, he emerged a new person – now no longer wondering about who he was and what is mission in life was – he now understood at the very core of his essence, his being that he and his heavenly Father were One, united on a journey through the world which would lead to Jerusalem, to a dark garden of betrayal, to death and entombment but ultimately to resurrection and wonders beyond imagination.

Today, we are called by God to enter a wilderness place where we can rest in the love of the Father, feel the presence of the arms of the Carpenter and cuddle down in the warm embrace of the ultimate power of Love so that we may stand with the Marys and Salome before the emptiness which once caccooned a man and cry with such a mixture of joy, awe, sorrow and wonder, "He is risen. Alleluia! And we are Easter man and women. On Wednesday of this week, we gathered in our sacred space to receive the badge of our pilgrimage, the ashes of confession and absolution so that we could begin our desert time, our wilderness journey with, as the psalmist says, clean and contrite hearts." I urge all of us to find a time, a place where we can scrunch ourselves down between rocks in the wilderness, as I once did in the very desert place where Jesus wandered, and just spend some time in contemplation and conversation with the One who, taking our hand, says to each and every one of us and to us as a family of faithfilled pilgrims, "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of the world...and fear not, for I and my Father are with you until the end and beyond imagination. Amen

Fr. Michael: Faith means betting your life that something is true. For two thousand years, the Christian community has affirmed the Truth as we have said, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty,

People: **creator of heaven and earth**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He 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,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father He will come again

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

Fr. Michael: Sheltering God, you are our refuge and our fortress in you we place our trust and our very being. Since before time's dawning you have created us and crafted us for a purpose, to join you in your jubilant acts of life and love, to plant seeds of righteousness and justice, to care for and nurture the earth and all her creatures, to dance and join creation's everlasting praise. We have eternally resided in the presence of your protection and enjoyed the fruits of your providence. How wonderful it is that you call us your children! How undeserving we are of this grace-filled gift.

People: **We thank you for our creation and we pray to you, Lord our God.**

Fr. Michael: We give thanks for your Son Jesus – the fruition of your love-song for us, your children. Creation sings the praises of her saviour, our Redeemer, for Jesus leads us on this Lenten path and calls us to a journey of repentance and trust. Long is the path to the Cross and long our journey with Christ before us, send your Spirit to surround us with your protection, as we move into the darkness of Lent.

People: **We thank you for your protection and we pray to you, Lord our God.**

Fr. Michael: May we be strengthened by Christ's struggle with temptation and uplifted by his story of his encounter and trial with Satan in the wilderness. We thank you for stories in the Scriptures which remind us that Jesus stands in solidarity with his people and is for us in our times of joy and sorrow, in our moments of despair and elation, in our times of plenty and our times of want.

People: **We thank you for your continuing presence in our lives and we pray to you, O Lord.**

Fr. Michael: We thank you for the gift of creation and for calling us to share in the stewardship of all. We thank you for the Church and pray that she may shine as a beacon of light in the darkness of this Lenten time. We pray especially today for The Parish of Huntley and their priest The Reverend Canon Baxter Park and for Holy Trinity Metcalfe and our priest Fr. Michael Fleming. We pray also for our sisters and brothers who sit alone and want nothing more than a tender word and a caring heart to be with them. We pray for those whose names

lie in the silence of our souls and also for our parish family, especially for Scott, Howard, Irene, Marjorie, Roy, Sarah, Kirsten, Zachariah, Jeanette and Cheryl.

People: **We thank you for calling us to ministry and we pray to you, O Lord.**

Fr. Michael: We pray for all those who are facing temptations great and small at this time: temptations of the flesh, of the mind; temptations of addiction and substance abuse; temptations of wealth and power, of self-righteousness and selfishness, of nostalgia and the fear of reshaping our futures.

People: **We thank you for the gift of vision and dreaming and we pray to you, O Lord.**

Fr. Michael: On this Lenten journey, Christ stands in solidarity with us. Because of this generous act of his, we remember today that we too are called to stand in solidarity with those in need around us – for those who are cold that they may find warm shelter in this bitter winter time; for those who have recently been hospitalized, for those suffering the effects of COVID. We pray for all those unsung front-line heroes and heroines who have quietly gone about their work, allowing us to carry on with relative normalcy in our lives.

People: **We thank you for teaching us of the joy of a generous spirit, and we pray to you, O Lord.**

Fr. Michael: Good and gracious God, as we begin another Lenten pilgrimage, we ask for the courage to follow Jesus your Son and the gift of wisdom to walk the way. Gather us, shelter us, protect us as we walk towards the Cross. Amen

(adapted from Prayers and Hymns of Stephen S. Fearing 2021)

Fr. Michael: As we move into the wilderness of Lent, we take with us all those things that burden our hearts and we confess,

People: **Most Merciful and Loving God, whose son Jesus was tempted in every way yet did not sin; we confess before you and our sisters and brothers that we have sinned – we have hungered for the things of this world which do not satisfy; we have not stood up against the face and hand of evil; we have doubted your power to protect us and your longing to love us. Forgive our lack of faith; have mercy on our weakness. Restore in us such love and trust that we may walk in your ways and delight in doing your will. Amen**

Fr. Michael: May Almighty God who sent his Son into the world so that sinners might be set free bring us his pardon, forgiveness and peace now and forever. Amen

Fr. Michael: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you**

WE SHARE THE PEACE OF CHRIST WITH ALL WHO HAVE GATHERED WITH US TODAY AND PRAY FOR SHALOM IN OUR BROKEN WORLD.

Fr. Michael: God our refuge and our strength, receive all that we offer you this new day and through the death and resurrection of your Son transform us more and more into his likeness. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

Fr. Michael: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Fr. Michael: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Fr. Michael: Holy God, lover of creation, we give you thanks and praise, for in the ocean of your steadfast love you bear us and place the song of your Spirit in our hearts. When we turn from your love and defile your earth, you do not abandon us. Your Spirit speaks through Hukdah and Micah, through prophets, sages and saints in every age, to confront our sin and reveal the vision of your new creation. Joining in the song of the universe, we proclaim your glory as we say,

People: **Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Fr. Michael: Gracious God, in the fullness of time you sent Jesus the Christ to share our fragile humanity. Through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, you open the path from brokenness to health, from fear to trust, from pride and conceit to reverence for you. Rejected by a world which could not bear the Gospel of Life, Jesus knew that death was near. His head anointed for burial by an unknown woman, Jesus gathered together those who loved him. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his friends, saying,

"Take and eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper, Jesus took the cup of wine, gave you thanks and said, "Drink this all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many. Whenever you drink it, do this in memory of me." And now as we gather at this table in response to his commandment to share the bread and cup of Christ's undying love, and to proclaim our faith as we say,

People: **Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Fr. Michael: Breathe your Holy Spirit, the Wisdom of the universe upon these gifts which we bring to you: this bread, this wine, ourselves, our souls and bodies so that we may be signs of your transforming purpose. Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, Creator of All and we bless your holy name for ever. Amen

Fr. Michael: And as Christ has gifted to his Church, so we pray,

People: **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.

WE SHARE THE GIFTS OF GOD WITH THE FAMILY OF GOD GATHERED HERE.

Fr. Michael: Faithful God, in this holy bread you increase our hope and love. Lead us in the path of Christ who is your Word of Life. We ask this in his name.

Fr. Michael: And Glory to God,

People: **whose power working in us,**

can do infinitely more

than we can ask or imagine.

**Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
for ever and ever. Amen**

Fr. Michael: Lord God our Father, Creator: we thank you for the gift of this parish of Holy Trinity, for all those who come here seeking you and for all those who minister from this sacred space. Inspire us with your wisdom to set our roots deeply and firmly in the faith, that we may be stewards of your justice. Lord God Jesus, Saviour and Redeemer, we thank you for your continuing presence in our parish family. Inspire us to seek you in Scripture, in the Sacraments and in one another that we may be faithful to your call evangelism and love. Lord God Holy Spirit, Sustainer and Renewer: we thank you for all the wondrous gifts which you have poured upon us. Inspire us to serve you in body and in spirit; help us to share our gifts of time, talents, creativity, finances and resources and open us to your life-renewing vision and power. O God – Father, Son and Spirit – we raise you, we love you, we seek you, and we strive to serve you in the name of Jesus, our Redeemer, Friend and Brother. Amen (RM Fleming)

And now, the blessing of God the Father who created us; of Jesus the Son who redeemed us and of the Spirit who guides and empowers us be with us all this day, this week and always. And may we remain in the love of Christ until we meet again. Amen

Worship follows the Holy Eucharist in the Book of Alternative Services.

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