

1st Sunday of Lent



Can we be bought? Will we give up our values for the right price? Is there an appropriate time to water down our principles? Today's readings address these situations.

The first reading tells the Israelites to remember how Yahweh had rescued them from oppression and slavery. This prayer was recited at the offering of the first fruits on the occasion of the barley harvest. In the Promised Land, the Canaanites followed a nature religion. They believed that fertility of crops, animals, and humans depended on union of gods and goddesses. The Israelites were encouraged to take part in a sexual cult. The prayer urges the Israelites not to be misled by false gods. The true God is the giver of gifts and this prayer is calculated to offset the temptation of the nature religion.

Luke compares Jesus' temptations to Israel wandering in the desert. Jesus' success is compared to Israel unfaithfulness. Luke emphasizes the manipulative power in the second temptation. God's plan had not been fully revealed, but Jesus knew that it did not consist in being bought off. The third temptation occurs in Jerusalem; in this city the final showdown between the devil and Jesus will take place. "he departed from Him until an opportune time." That would be the time of the Passion when the "power of darkness" would take charge.