



Daily Reflections

February 18, 2018

Scripture

Mark 1: 12-15

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert,
and he remained in the desert for forty days,
tempted by Satan.

He was among wild beasts,
and the angels ministered to him.

After John had been arrested,
Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God:
"This is the time of fulfillment.

The kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Our Scripture Reflection

Mark gives us the briefest of the accounts of Jesus' Temptation in the desert (compare Matthew 4 and Luke 4). He simply tells us that Jesus is tempted by Satan, exits the desert and immediately begins proclaiming the Kingdom of God. Mark's focus is on Jesus' work for our salvation.

Food for your Journey

I've been sitting here at my desk at work reading and rereading T.S. Eliot's poem "Ash Wednesday." I couldn't help it.

It's as beautiful a poem as it is hard to understand, and to me it was possibly most beautiful on about the third slow read, when I was familiar enough with the words not to stumble, but still couldn't say exactly what he was talking about. That is, I couldn't say exactly what he was talking about, but somehow I think my spiritual self was attuned to its meaning.

"Ash Wednesday" is as much a prayer as a poem, I finally realized, where Eliot longs to live a spiritual life among the temptations of this world:

Teach us to sit still

Even among these rocks,

Our peace in His will

And even among these rocks.

Today, while I contemplate which siren song I will absolutely resist (at least!) for the duration of Lent, and try to choose the one temptation that makes me weakest spiritually, I pray the prayer of "Ash Wednesday." I will sit still, in His will, and read "Ash Wednesday" just one more time. Then I'll ask angels to pull me away and help me concentrate on my worldly work.

--Colleen Hughes, "'Ash Wednesday' by T.S. Eliot: It's as beautiful a poem as it is hard to understand," March 9, 2011. Guideposts.org. Retrieved September 30, 2016.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You resisted the temptations of Satan because You were completely devoted to the will of Your Father. When I find Satan testing me during these forty days of Lent, help me to surrender my life to Your love and care. Keep me Holy, Lord. Amen