



**St. John's Parish**  
Roman Catholic Church

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# THE WORD OF GOD IS STRONGER THAN THE DEVIL

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT - MARCH 9, 2025

The Gospel of today's Liturgy, the first Sunday of Lent, takes us into the desert, where Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit, for 40 days, to be tempted by the devil (cf. Lk 4:1-13). Jesus too was tempted by the devil, and He accompanies us, every one of us, in our temptations. The desert symbolizes the fight against the seductions of evil, in order to learn to choose true freedom. Indeed, Jesus lives the experience of the desert just before beginning his public mission. It is precisely through this spiritual struggle that he decisively affirms what type of Messiah he intends to be. Not this type of Messiah, but that one: I would say that this is indeed the declaration of Jesus' messianic identity, of the messianic way of Jesus. "I am the Messiah, but on this path". Let us then look closely at the temptations he is battling.

Twice the devil addresses him, saying: "If you are the Son of God..." (vv. 3, 9). He is thus proposing to him to exploit his position: first to satisfy the material needs he feels, hunger (cf. v. 3), then to increase his power; and, finally, to have a prodigious sign from God (cf. vv. 9-11). Three temptations. It is as if he were saying, "If you are the Son of God, take advantage of it!". How often this happens to us: "But if you are in that position, take advantage of it! Don't lose the opportunity, the chance", that is, "think of your benefit". It is a seductive proposal, but it leads you to the enslavement of the heart: it makes us obsessed with the desire to have, it reduces everything to the possession of things, power, fame. This is the core of the temptations: the "poison of the passions" in which evil is rooted. Let us look within ourselves, and we will find that our temptations always have this mindset, always this way of acting.

But Jesus opposes the attractions of evil in a victorious way. How does he do this? By responding to temptations with the Word of God, which says not to take advantage, not to use God, others and things for oneself, not to take advantage of one's own position to obtain privileges. Because true happiness and true freedom are not found in possessing, but in sharing; not in taking advantage of others, but in loving them; not in the obsession of power, but in the joy of service.

Brothers and sisters, these temptations also accompany us on the journey of life. We must be vigilant — not be afraid, it happens to everyone — and be vigilant, because they often present themselves under an apparent form of good. In fact, the devil, who is cunning, always uses deception. He wanted to make Jesus believe that his proposals were useful to prove that he was really the Son of God.

And I would like to emphasize something. Jesus does not converse with the devil: Jesus never converses with the devil. He either banishes him, when he healed the possessed, or in this case, when he has to respond, he does so with the Word of God, never with his own word. Brothers and sisters, never enter into dialogue with the devil: he is more cunning than we are. Never! Cling to the Word of God like Jesus, and at most answer always with the Word of God. And on this path, we will never go wrong.

The devil does this with us: he often comes "with gentle eyes", "with an angelic face"; he even knows how to disguise himself with sacred, apparently religious motives! If we give in to his flattery, we end up justifying our falsehood by disguising it with good intentions. For instance, how often have we heard this: "I have done odd deals, but I have helped the poor"; "I have taken advantage of my role — as a politician, a governor, a priest, a bishop — but also for doing good"; "I have given in to my instincts, but in the end, I did no harm to anyone", these justifications, and so on, one after the other. Please: no compromises with evil! No dialogue with the devil! We must not enter into dialogue with temptation, we must not fall into that slumber of the conscience that makes us say: "But after all, it's not serious, everyone does it"! Let us look at Jesus, who does not seek compromises, he does not make agreements with evil. He opposes the devil with the Word of God, which is stronger than the devil, and thus overcomes temptation.

May this time of Lent also be a time of the desert for us. Let us take time for silence and prayer — just a little, it will do us good — in these spaces let us stop and look at what is stirring in our hearts, our inner truth, what we know cannot be justified. Let us find inner clarity, placing ourselves before the Word of God in prayer, so that a positive fight against the evil that enslaves us, a fight for freedom, may take place within us.

Let us ask the Blessed Virgin to accompany us in the Lenten desert and to help us on our way of conversion.

**WE CONTINUE TO PRAY WITH THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**, for the well-being of Pope Francis!

**LENT** is the liturgical season that prepares us for Christ's death and Resurrection. In this season of penitential preparation, we turn our hearts and minds to God through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

**JOURNEY THROUGH LENT** is a video series offered by the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB). The video for the First Sunday of Lent is available [here](#).

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS** will be at 10:30 a.m. in English and 11:30 a.m. in Spanish each Friday during Lent.

**EL VIACRUCIS** se rezará los viernes de Cuaresma a las 11:30 am en Español y a las 10:30 a.m. en inglés.

## ENGLISH SCHEDULE

### *First Sunday of Lent*

Saturday, March 8, 2025                      **5:00 PM**  
+Julia Naklusi

Sunday, March 9, 2025                      **9:00 AM**  
For All Parishioners Living & Deceased

Tuesday, March 11, 2025                      **11:00 AM**

Wednesday, March 12, 2025                      **11:00 AM**

Thursday, March 13, 2025                      **11:00 AM**

Friday, March 14, 2025                      **11:00 AM**

### *Second Sunday of Lent*

Saturday, March 15, 2025                      **5:00 PM**  
+Julia Naklusi

Sunday, March 16, 2025                      **9:00 AM**  
For All Parishioners Living & Deceased

## HORARIOS EN ESPAÑOL

### *I Domingo de Cuaresma*

Sabado 8 de marzo, 2025                      **7:00 PM**  
+Pedro Fernandez + Cynthia Gomez

Domingo 9 de marzo, 2025                      **11:00 AM & 1:00 PM**  
Por la Comunidad Parroquial

Martes 11 de marzo, 2025                      **12:00 PM**

Miercoles 12 de marzo, 2025                      **12:00 PM**

Jueves 13 de marzo, 2025                      **12:00 PM**

Viernes 14 de marzo, 2025                      **12:00 PM**

+Paulina Marquez

### *II Domingo de Cuaresma*

Sabado 15 de marzo, 2025                      **7:00 PM**

Domingo 16 de marzo, 2025                      **11:00 AM & 1:00 PM**  
Por la Comunidad Parroquial

**LITURGICAL MINISTERS OF HOPE RETREATS:** Three Retreat Days for Liturgical Ministers are being offered by the Diocesan Liturgy Office during this Jubilee Year of Hope. These special days of renewal, reflection, and spiritual growth are offered to deepen their commitment to serving God's people through their various ministries. The half-day retreats will provide opportunities to prepare for Easter during this Jubilee Year of Hope. All Musicians, Ministers of the Word, Children's Liturgy Ministers, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, Ministers of Hospitality, and Sacristans are invited to participate in one of these three events.

*March 22* from 10 am to 12:30 pm - Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate, Guelph, **Fr. Francisco Cruz**

*March 29* from 10 am to 12:30 pm - St. Matthew Parish, Oakville, **Fr. David Walter**

*April 5* from 10 am to 12:30 pm - Annunciation of our Lord, Hamilton, **Fr. Andrew Quarshie**

There is no cost; however, we would like people to register to determine an approximate number of people to plan for. Additional information and **registration are available** at <https://hamiltondiocese.com/events/2025/02/liturgical-ministers-of-hope-retreat-three-dates/>.

**DEACONS MOICES CABALLERO AND JOONBIN LIM** have been called to Priestly Ordination. As is the tradition in the Diocese of Hamilton, the Ordinations will take place on the first Saturday of May, this year, May 3rd, at the Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King. We are grateful to the two Deacons for their desire to serve with us in the Diocese of Hamilton. May God, who has begun this good work in them, bring it to fulfillment!