

LIVING FRATERNITY

Theme: Jesus in the desert ... are we there?

In this month of March 2026, we offer you the Gospel of Saint Matthieu as well as the commentary given by Pope Francis during the Angelus of March 5, 2017.

Happy thinking and sharing

Reminder: May our fraternal encounter be a moment of *privileged encounter with Jesus* who walks among us.

MARCH 2026 MONTHLY MEETING

Opening of the meeting

After the song proposed or chosen by the members of the fraternity, a prayer according to the Ritual or any other, the meeting begins.

Reflection

Let's first take the time to listen carefully to the reading that follows and to write down a word or a sentence that we will share after the reading.

Gospel (Mt 4:1-11) - Jesus tempted in the desert

At that time, Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But Jesus answered, "It is written, '*Man does not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*'"

Then the devil took him to the Holy City, placed him on the top of the Temple and said to him: "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, '*He will give orders to his angels for you,*' and, '*They shall carry you on their hands, lest your foot strike a stone* .' Jesus said to him, "It is also written, '*You shall not test the Lord your God.*'"

The devil takes him again to a very high mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. He said to him, "All this I will give you, if you fall at my feet and prostrate yourself before me."

Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship *the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.*' Then the devil leaves him, and behold, angels approached and ministered to him.

Sharing

As a result of the Gospel reading, let us share our reflections on the content that has touched us in particular. Take the time you need for a good sharing.

Continue Reading

Commentary of Pope Francis on the Gospel of Matthew 4:1-11

The first Sunday of Lent presents us with Christ whom the Spirit leads into the desert to be tempted by the devil. The natural setting of the desert, an inhospitable place if ever there was one, and therefore the opposite of Eden, is very telling. Some passages of Sacred Scripture suggest that the Jews believed in a kind of evil spirit of the desert that they called Azazel (cf. Leviticus 16:10 and Tobit 8:3). Jesus would thus be pushed into the domain of the tempter. Moreover, the desert was a place of trials for the chosen people. The Lord went there to be victorious where Israel had fallen.

Jesus fasts "forty days and forty nights". It is this fact that Lent commemorates. This act of penance of the Lord is loaded with symbols: the punishment of the flood had lasted forty days and forty nights (cf. Genesis 7:4); Moses spent forty days and forty nights, without eating or drinking, in the cloud of Sinai, praying to God for his people (cf. Deuteronomy 9:25), before handing over the Law to them (cf. Exodus 24:18); in the same way, Elijah also spent forty days and forty nights without food or drink, walking to Mount Horeb to meet the Lord there (1 Kings 19:8); and it was Israel who dwelt for 40 years in the wilderness, in trials and temptations, as a punishment for the 40 days they had spent exploring The earth on its side and without counting with God (Number 14:34)

Sharing

Let's share what you remember from the previous paragraphs. Take the necessary time.

Continue Reading

After fasting, Jesus is hungry, seemingly deprived of divine help and material strength. The tempter then wants to make Jesus fall into intemperance, in one way or another: into avarice or idolatry, where he causes men who use God or who reject him to fall in order to exalt themselves. The devil quotes, by twisting their meaning,

the Scriptures that Jesus always follows to do the will of his Father. If you are the Son of God, he says, use divine strength to repair the needy human condition that you have assumed

And, as Pope Francis tells us, the Master, by his example, gives us the solution: "Satan who wants to lead Jesus astray from the path of obedience and humiliation because he knows well that on this path evil would be routed, invites him to take the false shortcut of success and glory. Now Jesus "stops" all the poisoned arrows of the devil, with the shield of the Word of God (Mt 3:4, 7, 10) which expresses the will of the Father. Jesus responds only with the Word of God. And so, full of the power of the Holy Spirit, he wins the victory in the desert."

Continue Reading

We all know, in one way or another, this trial of the desert every day, as Benedict XVI explains to us: "Here the heart of every temptation is clearly manifested: the setting aside of God who, in the face of everything in our lives that seems more urgent, seems secondary, even superfluous and troublesome." Stress, the pursuit of human efficiency, and daily difficulties lead to us being neglected, forgotten, and even rejecting our relationship with God, or expecting a dazzling intervention that will make us react.

On the other hand, when God's will comes first, He exalts us afterwards.

Indeed, Matthew records that when every temptation was overcome, "angels came and ministered to him." God grants him with order and measure all that the devil promised him in transgression. Saint Jose Maria liked to comment on the touching end of this scene: "By making us meditate on these passages of the life of Christ, the Church reminds us that in this Lenten season when we recognize ourselves as sinners, aware of our miseries, and anxious to purify ourselves, joy also has its place. For Lent is a time of fortitude as well as of interior joy: we must take courage, since the grace of the Lord will not fail us, because God will be at our side and will send his angels to be our companions on the road, our prudent advisers along the way, the collaborators of all our undertakings

Sharing: What part of the above text speaks specifically to you? Take the time to make a good share.

Deepening the Rule and the General Constitutions

In preparing this document, we found that Article 10 of the Rule and Article 1 of the General Constitutions are links with this text.

Rule – Article 10

Uniting themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed his will into the Father's hands, let them faithfully fulfil the duties proper to their various circumstances of life¹⁷. Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to him even in difficulties and persecutions.

General Constitutions – Article 10

“Christ, poor and crucified”, victor over death and risen, the greatest manifestation of the love of God for humanity, is the “book” in which the brothers and sisters, in imitation of Francis, learn the purpose and the way of living, loving, and suffering. They discover in Him the value of contradictions for the sake of justice and the meaning of the difficulties and the crosses of daily life. With Him they can accept the will of the Father even under the most difficult circumstances and live the Franciscan spirit of peace, rejecting every doctrine contrary to human dignity

Biblical reflection and sharing

Read the text of Saint John, the text of the Passion, of Easter Sunday or the day after your meeting

Share our thoughts on this gospel with the following suggestions:

- Take a moment to reflect; underline inspiring words or expressions...
- Share your thoughts on the chosen Gospel text...

Life-Objective

In this month of March 2026, we invite you to prepare for the Eucharists of the holy days that lead us to the Resurrection of Christ ...

End of the fraternal meeting (a prayer or a song chosen by the fraternity)