

# COLORFUL SCRIPTURE

February 18, 2024

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## Create Your Own Desert This Lent

Based on Gn 9:8-15; 1 Pt 3:18-22; Mk 1:12-15

By Marianne Couture

Today's readings center on God's covenant with all creatures, his merciful desire for a never-ending relationship, and eternal salvation for each of us.

In the Gospel, Jesus goes into the desert for 40 days to pray to his Father and to fast (eating little or nothing) before he begins his public ministry of teaching, forgiving, healing, and proclaiming the Good News of God's love for everyone.

Mark's Gospel account about Jesus' temptations in the desert is much shorter and less detailed than the versions according to Matthew and Luke.

The Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the desert. There he is tested by Satan, but protected by God the Father through his angels. Mark simply says Jesus passed the test and is ready to begin his ministry.

This past Wednesday (Ash Wednesday) we began Lent – 40 days to prepare our hearts for Jesus and the feast of Easter and Jesus' Resurrection to preserve life in heaven for us. It is time for more prayer, changes in mind and heart, growth in learning about Jesus, fasting, abstaining from meat on Fridays, sacrifice, and unselfishly sharing Jesus' love with others.

**Prayer:** Pray the Rosary. Pray the Stations of the Cross. Say thank you to God for his many blessings. Pray for others. Go to confession.

**Learning about Jesus:** Spend time each day reading the Bible to learn about Jesus' teaching, his miracles, his apostles and the early church. Read about the lives of the saints and what they did to follow Jesus.

**Sacrifice, sharing and silence:** Avoid television for one day each week, or even for a whole week, and spend more quality family time together. Limit your use of technology (computers, all other electronic media, telephones, etc.) during Lent. Donate some of your allowance to help stock your parish food pantry. Donate gently-used clothing to your parish clothing drive.

Make your own symbolic desert by putting some sand and small rocks in a bowl and placing it in your prayer space at home. During Lent, spend more quiet time with Jesus in your "desert" prayer space!

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