

Lectionary readings: Deuteronomy 26: 1-11; Psalm 91: 1-2, 9-16; Romans 10: 8b-13; Luke 4: 1-13 (First in Lent)

For reflection and prayer

- **Deuteronomy 26:** *'And he brought us to this place, gave us this land flowing with milk and honey.'* (v9 The Message) Try to define what 'this place' is for you. A place of peace, contentment, turmoil, confusion, suffering? A place where you know yourself loved by God? Whatever 'this place' is for you, let it lead you into prayer. For the people of God it was a place of rejoicing, a time of celebration, for they had much to thank God for. They had been led into a land of abundance; God's gift to them offered very generous provision. We each have that abundance within us, and so, wherever we find ourselves, God is present in all His fullness. The important thing is to acknowledge where we are, to be honest about where we are and find God's presence with us, tapping into His abundance within us.
- **Psalm 91:** Here are two verses for us to reflect on from 'Psalms for Praying'. *'Those who dwell in the shelter of Infinite Light, who abide in the wings of Infinite Love, will raise their voices in praise: My refuge and my strength; in You alone will I trust.'*
- **Romans 10:** The message is not a doctrine or a dogma, but a Person - Jesus. God has revealed Himself in Jesus. God loves us dearly and wants us to embrace Him as He has embraced us. This means opening our whole being to Him - body, mind and spirit. God acts towards each one of us with incredible generosity. He has nothing but love in His heart for each one of us; and

He wants us to enter into a deep, intimate, loving relationship with Him.

- **Luke 4:** Jesus was led into the desert after his baptism and spent 40 days alone with God, wrestling with His God-given role - 'You are my beloved Son' - and how He would fulfil it. Jesus knew He couldn't live on material things alone; He came from God and His home is in God. He needs to feed on God and encourage others to do likewise. How much time do we spend alone with God, listening to Him, seeking to live in God's way, not our own? The second temptation has to do with power and fulfilling other people's expectations. Jesus resists this way of winning the world. He will worship only God and the power He chooses is the power of Love, the way of humility, the way of peace, the way of poverty of spirit. The world in which we live knows little of this way. Is this the kind of path we are choosing day by day? God says to us, as He did to Jesus, 'You are my beloved child.' We need to reflect on the person God wants us to be and live out of our belovedness. The third temptation was to offer proof to people of who Jesus was. People are still demanding that today. If only God would perform a miracle to prove His existence, then people would believe in Him. But God invites us to respond to Him in faith, the only miracle the miracle of God's love which transforms us and reveals God to the world. Let's spend time alone with God this Lent, opening ourselves to His love, remembering who we truly are - God's beloved one - and living out of that identity, no matter what it costs, bringing God into all our decisions and choices and relationships. This is the miracle the world is waiting to see - the miracle of a changed life.