

**1. Read** — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

**2. Meditate** — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

**3. Pray** — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

**4. Contemplate** — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.  
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**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

# Quick Connect

**What is the Gospel saying? Mark 1:12-15** — Page 1

**What is the Church saying Past and Present?** Pages 1-3

**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## Gospel Reading – Mark 1:12-15 – Roman Missal – Cycle B

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.”

### Spiritual Reading *From Saint Augustine*

We have heard in the gospel how the Lord Jesus Christ was tempted by the devil in the wilderness. Certainly Christ was tempted by the devil. In Christ you were tempted, for Christ received his flesh from your nature, but by his own power gained life for you; he suffered insults in your nature, but by his own power gained glory for you; therefore, he suffered temptation in your nature, but by his own power gained victory for you. If in Christ we have been tempted, in him we overcame the devil. Do you think only of Christ’s temptations and fail to think of his victory? See yourself as tempted in him, and see yourself as victorious in him. He could have kept the devil from himself; but if he were not tempted he could not teach you how to triumph over temptation.

### 40 for 40 - Lesson and Discussion

*“he remained in the desert for forty days”*

In the liturgical year we celebrate the Nativity, the Epiphany, the Baptism of the Lord, and the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple (Candle Mass). At each of these events in the life of our Lord, proclamations or announcements were made in regard to who Christ is and what He would do?

### At each of the events listed above who speaks about Jesus and what do they say?

At the Nativity we see that the shepherds said, “Let us go, then to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made know to us.”[1] The angels sign the Gloria, which we repeat in Mass, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”[2] At the Epiphany the three wise men pay Him homage. At the Baptism of the Lord, the voice of God proclaims, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”[3]. Finally in the Presentation of the Lord, both Simeon and Anna give a prophecy. Simeon says, “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according

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to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples, a light from revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.”[4] Anna says, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted.”[5]

**What does all this say about Jesus?** Jesus is the Lord. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Jesus is the long awaited King. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is the Light for the Gentiles who lie in darkness. Jesus is the Glory of the chosen people of Israel. Jesus is the Rule, the measure by which we fall or rise. Jesus, His teachings, His Church will be contradicted. So in just 40 short days in the liturgical year (Nativity to the Presentation of the Lord), we know who Jesus is and what is said about Him, but yet He has done nothing yet. His ministry of three short years has yet to begin. Excitement should build within us as we wait to see Jesus fulfill all that is said about Him.

**What is the first thing Jesus does?** “The three Synoptic Gospels tell us, much to our surprise, that the Spirit’s first command leads him into the desert ‘to be tempted by the devil’ (Mt 4:1). The action is prefaced by interior recollection, and this recollection is also, inevitably, and inner struggle for fidelity to the task, a struggle against all the distortions of the task that claim to be its true fulfillment. It is a descent into the perils besetting mankind, for there is no other way to lift up fallen humanity. Jesus has to enter into the drama of human existence, for that belongs to the core of his mission; he has to penetrate it completely, down to its uttermost depths, in order to find the ‘lost sheep,’ to bear it on his shoulders, and bring it home. The Apostles’ Creed speaks of Jesus’ descent ‘into hell.’ This descent not only took place in and after his death, but accompanies him along his entire journey.”[6] After 40 glorious days of Christmas in which we hear about who Jesus is and what Jesus will do, we enter into the stark reality of the 40 days in the desert in which Jesus “walks the talk” and lives out His mission in an unexpected way, going straight to the core, attacking the enemy directly and thus rescuing humanity. “Now since the children share in blood and flesh, he likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life. Surely he did not help angels but rather the descendants of Abraham; therefore, he had to become like his brothers in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.”[7] Let us imitate Jesus. He “became like his brothers in every way,” and thus entered the desert to be “tested through what he suffered.” We enter into the desert of the 40 days of Lent to imitate Jesus and become like Him in every way.

**What are some practical things we can do to become like Him?**

Here are seven commitments we can live out which will help us live life to the full and begin to enter into the depth and richness of what Christ

and His Church has to offer. If all seven things are followed the commitment takes a minimum of 40 minutes per day. We can build a habit by committing to 40 minutes for 40 days. If we commit we will be able to see growth in spiritual formation and the interior life as we become more like Jesus.

**1. Read the daily readings and make an act of spiritual communion (15 minutes).** The daily readings may be found at usccb.org. The Act of Spiritual Communion is found on any Link to Liturgy Evangelization Prayer Card or online.

**2. Read about the Saint of the Day (3 minutes).** There are many good Saint of the Day books and plenty of websites, blogs and widgets where you can read the Saint of the Day. One site is catholicculture.org. In referring to the Saints we say the “Life of the Saints”. There is one Life, that they lived and one Life that we should live, that is the Life of Christ. “Follow the saints, because those who follow them will become saints.”[8] Saint Ignatius of Loyola’s conversion in life came about through reading the Life of the Saints. He was so inspired by the Saints, that He changed the course of his life and eventually founded the Society of Jesus, the Jesuit Order. The Saints will also inspire us to make the necessary changes in our life so that we can mold our life to “the Life”. “I tell you, when I think of them [the Saints], I feel myself inflamed by tremendous yearning.”[9]

**3. Pray the Liturgy of the Hours, begin with Night Prayer, including a good examination of conscience (15 minutes).** You can purchase Shorter Christian Prayer or Christian Prayer at your local Catholic bookstore or check out Liturgy of the Hours online. You can view Night Prayer at ebriefary.com.

**4. Pray the Rosary; begin with a decade a day, going through each of the 20 mysteries, twice in 40 days (5 minutes).** You can announce the mystery and then pray one Our Father, ten Hail Marys and a Glory Be; or you could pray the Scriptural Rosary. Please look for the Scriptural Rosary Sheet on the main page of this packet.

**5. Make a Morning Offering, giving God your prayers, works, joys and sufferings of the day (2 minutes).** There are several types of Morning Offerings which may be found online. The Link to Liturgy evangelization cards also have a Morning Offering.

**The second two do not talk a time commitment but rather is the attitude in which you should pray the first five!**

**6. Remember your end, ultimately heaven and prepare now for your vocation.** Consecrate yourself to Mary each day by saying the short Totus Tuus prayer or something similar: I belong to you entirely, and all that I possess is yours, I take you into everything that is mine, give me your heart Mary. Mary is the model of perseverance, prayer and purity. You can remember MP3 (Mary, Perseverance, Prayer, and Purity).

**7. LOOK for the activity of the Holy Spirit daily and be not afraid to RESPOND!**