

St Luke the Evangelist, Blackburn South & St Timothy's, Forest Hill



ONE MISSION, TWO CHURCHES



First Sunday of Lent, Year A - 22nd Feb. 2026

Gen 2:7-9,3:1-7, Psalm 50(51):3-17, Romans 5:12-19 ·

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship 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 left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him.



Meditation: *Are you ready to follow the Lord Jesus and to go with him wherever he leads you? Jesus did not choose his own course or path in life, but followed the will of his Father in heaven.*

After Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist at the River Jordan, he was led by the Spirit of God to withdraw into the wilderness of Judea - a vast desert wilderness that was mostly uninhabitable and full of danger. Danger from scorching heat by day and extreme cold at night, danger from wild animals and scorpions, plus the deprivation of food and scarcity of water.

Preparing mind, heart, and will to serve God: *Why did Jesus choose such a barren, lonely place for a sustained period of prayer and fasting? What compelled Jesus to seek solitude, away from his family and friends, for such a lengthy period? Was it simply a test to prepare him for his mission? Or did Satan want to lure him into a trap? The word tempt in English usually means to entice someone to do what is wrong or forbidden. The scriptural word used here also means test in the sense of proving and assessing someone to see if they are prepared and ready for the task at hand. We test flight pilots to see if they are fit to fly under all conditions, including times of adverse turbulence, storms, and poor visibility. In like manner God tests his people to see if they are ready to follow and serve him without reservation or compromise.*

Jesus resisted the devil and obeyed the voice of his Father: *Jesus now freely enters the wilderness in order to regain Paradise for the lost children of God. Jesus refuses food to show his dependence on the bread of heaven, the word of God, that would sustain him not only in his physical hunger, but in his hour of temptation as well. When Satan tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread, Jesus replied with the words of Scripture, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). Where did Jesus find the strength to survive the desert's harsh conditions and the tempter's seduction? He fed on God's word and found strength in doing his Father's will. Satan will surely tempt us and he will try his best to get us to choose our will over God's will. If he can't make us renounce our faith or sin mortally, he will then try to get us to make choices that will lead us, little by little, away from what God wants for us.*

Strength from God in resisting temptation: *Jesus was tempted like us and he overcame sin not by his own human effort but by the grace and strength which his Father gave to him. He had to renounce his will for the will of his Father. He succeeded because he wanted to please his Father and he trusted that his Father would give him the strength to overcome the obstacles that stood in the way. Luke says that Jesus was "full of the Holy Spirit" (Lk 4:1). When tempted by the devil Jesus did not try to fight his adversary on his own human strength. He relied on the power which the Spirit gave him. Jesus came to overthrow the evil one who held us captive to sin and fear of death (Heb 2:14). His obedience to his Father's will and his willingness to embrace the cross reversed the curse of Adam's disobedience. His victory over sin and death won for us not only pardon for our sins but adoption as sons and daughters of God. How can we overcome sin and gain freedom over our unruly desires and the lies of Satan and the world? The Lord Jesus gives us his Holy Spirit to help us in our weakness (Romans 8:26) and to be our guide and consoler in temptation and testing (1 Cor 10:13). The Lord gives grace to the humble who acknowledge their dependence on him (James 4:6) and he helps us to stand against the lies and attacks of our enemy, Satan, who seeks to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8-10; Eph 6:10-18). The Lord Jesus is ever ready to pour out his Spirit upon us that we may have the strength and courage we need to resist sin and to reject the lies and deceits of Satan. God wants us to "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim 6:12) with the power and strength which comes from the Holy Spirit. Do you rely on the Lord for your strength and help?*

The Temptation of Christ by Ary Scheffer (1854), © National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
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Parish Office tel: 03 9412 8499; Presbytery tel: 03 9877 2292

St Luke the Evangelist, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South

Email: foresthill@cam.org.au | Web: sttimothys.org.au / Email: blackburnsouth@cam.org.au | Web: blackburnsouth.org.au

Parish Priest

Fr Alex Chow

Parish Secretary

Sonya O'Farrell

Wednesdays,

Thursdays & Fridays

10am – 2pm

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SUNDAY MASS

Saturday Vigil: 5pm (SL)

Sunday: 8:30am (SL)

10:30am (ST)

WEEKDAY MASSES

Tues. 6:30pm (SL)

Wed. 9.15am (ST)

1st Wed Mass of Anointing @10am

Thurs. 9.15am (ST)

Fri. 9.15am(SL*),

6.30pm (ST)

Sat. 9.15am (SL*)

*Rosary after Mass

RECONCILIATION

SL: Tues 5:30 - 6:10pm

Sat 9:45 - 10:15am

Sat 4:30 - 4:50pm

ST: Fri 5:30 - 6:10pm

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT & EVENING PRAYER

SL: Tues 5:30 - 6:30pm

ST: Fri 5:30 - 6:30pm

HOSPITALITY AFTER MASS AT ST. LUKE'S

Second weekend of each month - bring a plate to share (optional)

Young Adult Group -

Third Wednesday of every month, at 7pm, at St Luke's Presbytery



COMING SOON: 30 APRIL 2026

Thinking about life, purpose, and what really matters. If you're asking big questions about faith or simply curious — you are very welcome. **ALPHA** (adults) and **ALPHA Youth** (ages 13–17) offer a relaxed, no-pressure space to connect with others, enjoy a free dinner, watch engaging short videos, and have honest conversations about life and faith. Come as you are, bring your questions, and see where the conversation leads. No pressure, no strings attached.

Email us at Alphastlukesbbs@gmail.com

We'd love to see you at Alpha!

Next Week's Daily Readings 23 Feb - 1Mar

MONDAY Feb 23 Lev 19:1-2, 11-18
Ps 18:8-10, 15 Mt 25:31-46

TUESDAY Feb 24 Is 55:10-11
Ps 33:4-7, 16-19 Mt 6:7-15

WEDNESDAY, Feb 25 Jonah 3:1-10
Ps 50:3-4, 12-13, 18-19
Lk 11:29-32

THURSDAY Feb 26 Esther 4:17
Ps 137:1-3, 7-8 Mt 7:7-12

FRIDAY Feb 27 Ezek 18:21-28
Ps 129: Mt 5:20-26

SATURDAY Feb 28 Deut 26: 16-19
Ps 118:1-2, 4-5, 7-8 Mt 5:43-48

SUNDAY Mar 1 Gen 12:1-4
Ps 32:4-5, 18-20, 22: 2 Tim 1:8-10
Mt 17:1-9

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

ALTAR SERVING MINISTRY

Are you interested in assisting as an altar server? If so, or if you have any questions about this ministry, please contact Chris Lim on 0419 470 267

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST

21 and 22 FEB

Steve Kilroe-Smith
Peter McKeown
Volunteer

28 FEB and 1 MAR

Mia Perang
Greg McKeown
Michelle Chen

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST

Lynda Kilroe-Smith
Melina Barcellona
Susan Chen

Anne Lobo
Margaret Gearon
Laura Cigana

SLIDE OPERATORS

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST

Choir
David Prabha
Lee Min Yee

Choir
Megan McLean
Manny Gonzalez

SL WELCOMERS 21 - 22 FEB

5pm Libby Theodore
8.30am Margaret Gearon
10.30am Volunteer

SL CHURCH CLEANING

28th Feb - Bernard's team
Bernard O'Malley, Joanne Nolan,
Melina Barcellona & Anne Allsopp

SL CHURCH FLOWERS

No flowers for Lent

ST CHURCH FLOWERS

No flowers for Lent

ST COUNTERS

This week Team 3:
Mary Choy & Eileen Chang
Next week Team 4:
Pabs Gonzales & Seng Chan

SL WELCOMERS 28 Feb - 1 Mar

5:00pm Edna Lee
8.30am Marie Pekish
10.30am Volunteer

ST CHURCH CLEANING

27th Feb
Theresa Patrick
& Joelle Roussety

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

All who are sick, especially Brian Koh, Brian McHugh, Suzy Bookluck, Sr June Dunford, Emilio Moreno Garcia, Kevin Ryan, Agatha Wink, Chris Leach, Dora Leung, Hazel Greal, Josephine Alexander, Grace Dimattina, Kit Bing Fan, Kathryn Holmes, Stewart Davis, Mark, Margaret Hayes, Charmaine Bancroft, Marilene Japour, Paciencia Cabral and all those parishioners unable to be among us this weekend.

All who have died, and those whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Lex Strohaker, Anne Dempster, Isabella Young, Tom Macrory, Harold Leach, Frances McGrath, Giovanna Di Totto, John Byrne, Maddalena Iaccarino, Paul Blanchfield, Errol Flynn, Mary Miller, Carlos Arciaga, Clem Rabel, Lulu Oracion, Francis Dalmau & Augusto Monzon. May they rest in peace.

POPE LEO'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR FEBRUARY:

For children with incurable diseases. Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR LENT:

St Luke's, Blackburn South: Tuesdays @ 5.30pm including confession & adoration, followed by 6.30pm Mass and Fridays at 3pm (followed by the Divine Mercy Chaplet)

St Timothy's, Forest Hill: Fridays @ 5.30pm including confession & adoration, followed by 6.30pm Mass.

MERCY NIGHT: Tuesday, 24th March at 7pm at St Luke's after the 6.30pm Mass. Come, reflect and experience an evening of God's merciful and forgiving love in God's presence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available with visiting priests.

PARISH & SCHOOL FETE: Our first fete meeting was held this week and the plans are underway. Dates for the next two meetings are Thurs. 19th March and Thurs. 23rd April, both at 7pm in the St Luke's parish hall kitchen. More volunteers are very welcome to join us, as many hands make light work!

SAFEGUARDING ESSENTIALS TRAINING: All church volunteers must complete this training which can be done online via this link: [Safeguarding Essentials training module | Melbourne Catholic](#) Please email your certificate to the parish office when you receive it.

TAI CHI CLASSES: Blackburn Tai Chi Academy holds classes on Monday evenings at St Luke's Parish Hall at 7.30pm. Tai Chi is an art to train physical and mental well being. It offers flexibility, balance, concentration, health, and energy. It suits all ages. For enquiries, please call John on 9802 2910 or 0422 924 265.

Resources

MELBOURNE CATHOLIC: [Forgiveness, the gateway to Lent](#)

MAJELLAN MEDIA: [Lent Begins](#)

STEWARDSHIP CORNER:

The First collection is for the priest and retired priests.

The Second collection is for parish expenses.

Please note that collection totals will no longer be published each week in the newsletter. Presbytery and Church donations will be reported on a monthly basis at all weekend Masses. To donate regularly via envelope, credit card or bank account, please contact the parish office.

Parish Groups & Contacts

Volunteers and Rosters:

Kelvin & Susan Chen (ST),

Margaret Gearon (SL)

Baptism Preparation: *Fr Alex*

Parish Collection Preparers

ST: Barry Silvester &

Michael Kawalevski

Parish Safeguarding Committee

Fr Alex, Sonya O'Farrell,

Darren McLean & Janette Clark

Parish History

SL: Margaret Gearon

Parish Accountant

Bernard Negline

SL & ST: Hall Hire

Sonya O'Farrell @ 9877 2292

Church Sacristan

ST: Roster of Parishioners

SL: Greg Grant

Church Cleaning & Flowers

SL: Megan McLean

ST: Susan Chen

Church Linen: *SL: Beryl Chelliah*

Parish Garden Maintenance

ST: Des Connors & Leo Watson

SL: Darren McLean

Parish Choirs

ST: Miguel Ilagan

SL: Fr Alex

Bible Timeline: *Chris Lim*

ALPHA: *Lynda Kilroe-Smith*

Young Adult Ministry:

Sarah Santilli & Jersy Soesanto

RCIA: *David West*

St Vincent de Paul Conference

For Assistance: 1800 305 330

(Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)

ST: John McCoy

SL: Margaret Gearon &

Steve Kilroe-Smith

Entrance Antiphon: When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.

Response to the Psalm: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Gospel Acclamation: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory! No one lives on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Eucharistic Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

ST TIMOTHY'S: Sunday 22nd Feb. & 8th March at the 10.30am Mass at St Timothy's. This will run on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month.



ST LUKE'S: Saturday 8th March at the 5pm Mass at St Luke's. This will run on the 2nd Saturday of each month.

Parents are welcome to accompany their children. No prior registration required. Please contact the parish office if you have any questions.

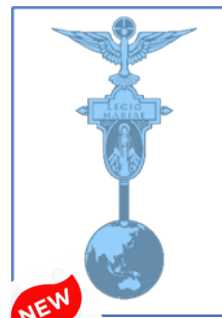
SACRAMENTAL DATES FOR 2026

First Reconciliation - May 26th & 27th from 3.30 to 5.30pm

Confirmation - June 25th @ 6pm

First Eucharist - August 1st @ 5pm

Parents of children who do not attend Catholic schools are asked to contact the parish office asap to enrol in preparation sessions for any of the above sacraments.



LEGION OF MARY

We are planning to start a Legion of Mary praesidium at St Luke the Evangelist and St Timothy's Parish. We plan weekly meetings which include saying the rosary, prayers, allocution by the Spiritual Director, and planning apostolate work such as home and aged care visits by members, under the guidance of the Parish Priest, Fr Alex. If you are interested to join or find out more, please contact Lucy Ferris at lucyfe1112@gmail.com or 0419 591 423



First Sunday of Lent
21–22 February 2026

UNITE AGAINST POVERTY
this Lent

Project Compassion 2026 shares four stories from around the world. We'll meet Sisilia from Tanzania, Monoranjon from Bangladesh, Manaini from Fiji and Ahmad from Gaza.

Each of this year's stories highlights unique challenges, yet they are united by the determination to rise above adversity and to build brighter, more hopeful futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

Please donate today.

You can support Project Compassion 2026 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code.

Or online at: www.projectcompassion.org.au/donate

Or by calling: 1800 024 413

Thank you for standing with us, as we Unite Against Poverty this Lent.



RITE OF ELECTION @ St Patrick's Cathedral, 22 Feb 2026
Andrew Fowler and Isaac Cheng

RITE OF ELECTION @ St Luke's, 28 Feb 2026 - Graeme Robertson

RITE OF ELECTION @ St Timothy's, 1 March 2026 - Dewen Ling

Please pray for the catechumens and candidates as they prepare for reception into the Catholic church at Easter.

ACYF Reunion (Year 9 - 25 years) 28 Feb

Were not our hearts burning? ACYF pilgrims, it's time to take the next step. Join us for the biggest ACYF reunion ever, as we come back together to reflect on where we met Jesus and discover what's next on our journey as disciples. It's a time for reflection, Adoration, testimonies, small group conversations and opportunities to take the next step.

Note: Parents/guardians of under-18 participants will be required to 'sign in' and 'sign out' their children. Sign-in commences at 9.00am.

When: Saturday, 28 February 2026, 10am - 3pm
Location: Mary Glowrey Building, Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy Vic 3065.

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1534804>



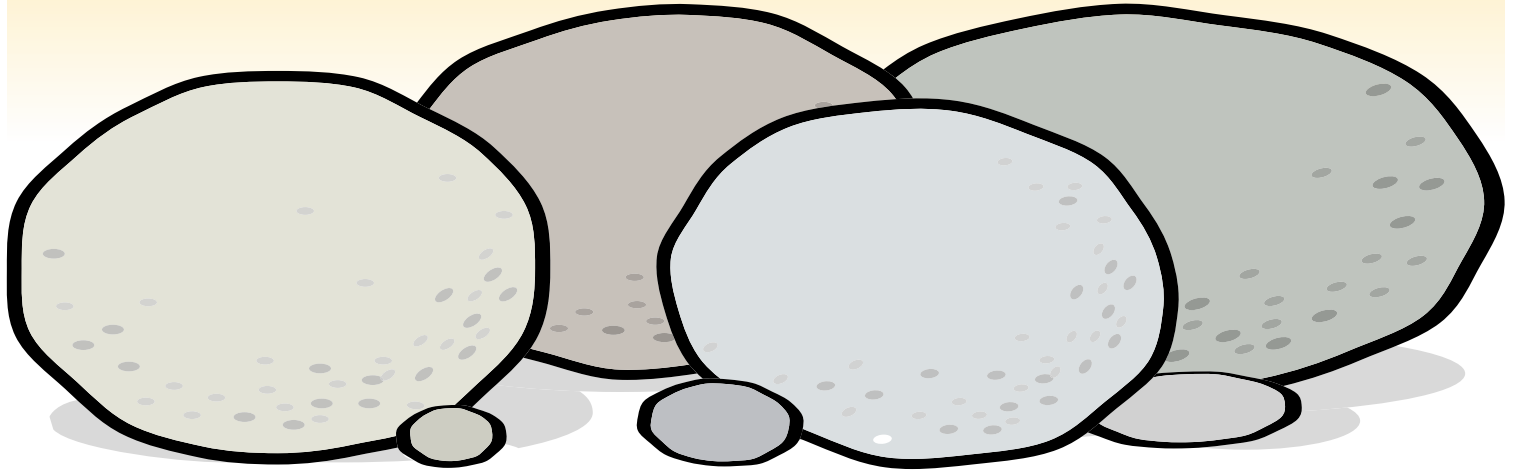
Jesus is tempted in the desert

LENT



1st Sunday of Lent, Year A

In the desert, Jesus faced some tough choices but was able to make the right ones. What are some of the tough choices that we face in our day to day lives?



How did Jesus respond to temptation?

Hey Jesus!
If you're so hungry,
why don't you turn
these stones
here into bread?

Hey Jesus!
I bet that if you jump
off the temple,
God will send
some angels to
catch you!

Hey Jesus!
See all those
kingdoms?
They're yours!
And all you have to
do is bow down
and worship ME!
Too easy!



Join up the
fruit to complete
the text maze:
"Lead us not into
temptation."

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – 22 FEBRUARY 2026



COLLECT

Grant, almighty God,
through the yearly observances of holy Lent,
that we may grow in understanding
of the riches hidden in Christ
and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

Straight after his baptism by John, Jesus goes on retreat. Emerging from the water, he was anointed by the Holy Spirit and received an affirmation from the Father in heaven. This sets a new direction for his life. Where will it lead him? Retreat is a time of reflection and discernment. He goes out alone into the desert where he confronts his demons and prepares himself for his God-given mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. In facing his temptations, Jesus is clarifying in his own mind what options for his ministry he should rule out.

Lent is a time for us to reflect on how best we embrace the gospel and follow Christ. It is a time for us too to purify our aims and our motivation. Before adults are initiated at the Easter Vigil, they make their baptismal promises. The rest of the Church is also given the opportunity to renew their baptismal promises. The first part of the baptismal commitment is to renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his empty show. Then we profess our faith in God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Today's readings help to prepare for our renunciation of sin.

A reading from the book of Genesis

2:7-9, 3:1-7

The Lord God fashioned man of dust from the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being.

The Lord God planted a garden in Eden which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. The Lord God caused to spring up from the soil every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden.

The serpent was the most subtle of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made. It asked the woman, 'Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?' The woman answered the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden. But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, "You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death".' Then the serpent said to the woman, 'No! You will not die! God knows in fact that on the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.' The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was desirable for the knowledge that it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realised that they were naked. So they sewed fig-leaves together to make themselves loin-cloths.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 50:3-6, 12-14, 17

R. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin. **R.**

My offences truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done. **R.**

A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **R.**

Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me.
O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall declare your praise. **R.**

First Reading

We start at the very beginning with the myth of the creation of the world. God is forming the first human and breathes life into him. God plants a beautiful garden for him, centred on the mysterious 'tree of life/tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. Eden is perfect.

Then we get the myth of the serpent/Satan who makes wrongdoing look so very attractive. The human beings yield to temptation. Satan and his temptations return in the gospel, but Jesus, the second Adam, rejects the lures put before him by the devil.

Myths are graphic stories (not in any way historical or scientific) that speak a sacred truth about reality as we know it. The myths in this reading acknowledge the goodness of God the Creator and offer a tale to explain the origin of evil in our world. They should be read with a sense of wonder because they touch upon the sacred, but with the lightness of fantasy because they concern what pre-dates any human experience.

The dialogue between the serpent and the woman offers a great opportunity for dramatic flair. Exploit it for the sake of the message.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 50/51 is one of the most beautiful of the penitential psalms (there are six of them)

The psalm expresses a clear but quiet recognition of sin and guilt before God. The cantor/reader should try to evoke a tone of quiet meditation in which the assembly can examine their conscience.

But note that forgiveness and renewal are clearly proclaimed as God's gift. It is by God's kindness and compassion that sin is blotted out and washed away. The pure heart and steadfast spirit are God's gift to us. This should be proclaimed with joy and confident hope. So, we conclude by declaring our praise of God!

It is a most appropriate psalm to sing at the beginning of Lent.

**A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Romans 5:12-19**

Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. [Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law. Adam prefigured the One to come, but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift. The results of the gift also outweigh the results of one man's sin: for after one single fall came judgement with a verdict of condemnation, now after many falls comes grace with its verdict of acquittal.] If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.

[Short Form: omit text in brackets.]

**A reading from the holy Gospel
according to Matthew 4:1-11**

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says:

Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down; for scripture says:

Second Reading

This rather dense theological argument from St Paul sits very comfortably between the first reading and the gospel. In the first reading from Genesis, we see the human beings (Adam and Eve) yielding to the temptations of the serpent. In the gospel, we see Christ (sometimes called the 'second Adam') resisting the temptations of the devil. This is the basis of the lengthy list of contrasts set out by Paul.

The first man (Adam) is associated with sin, disobedience, death, the fall, condemnation. The new man (Christ) is associated with grace, obedience, life, being raised up, justification.

The whole of Paul's argument goes back and forth between these contrasts. The shorter version does this quite clearly; the longer version probably just complicates it for the hearer. The reader should emphasise the contrasts.

In this case, one should probably not try to avoid the "man-man" language, though the NRSV does helpfully recast the text using "one-one".

Gospel

At his baptism, Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit and receives the blessing of the Father. This event, it seems, formalises Jesus' discernment that he is to undertake the life-changing mission of proclaiming the coming of God's kingdom. Before he begins, the Spirit leads him into the desert for a time of retreat. This period of fasting and listening in prayer helps him to clarify what his mission will involve.

It is presented in the gospels in terms of temptation by the devil. Can he use his divine powers to provide for his own human needs and comfort? Should he use it to provide protection and rescue when needed? Can he use it to rule the world and its peoples? In each case, Jesus says no. He sees his ministry in terms of humble vulnerability and the service of those in need. He will use his God-given power to heal the sick, to reach out to those who have been pushed to the margins.

The vivid narrative exchange between Jesus and the devil offers a reading with drama and movement.

He will put you in his angels' charge, and they will support you on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'

Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these', he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

May bountiful blessing, O Lord, we pray,
come down upon your people,
that hope may grow in tribulation,
virtue be strengthened in temptation,
and eternal redemption be assured.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down on us and remain with us for ever.

Amen.

(Adapted from the Prayer over the People for 1 Lent, Roman Missal p. 243)



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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST PAUL

TO GREECE & TURKEY (WITH ROME OPTION)



20TH APRIL –
3RD MAY 2026

LED BY
FR ALEX CHOW

14
DAYS

PACKAGE PRICE: AU\$ 8,490*
per person (twin share)

OPTIONAL SINGLE
ROOM SUPPLEMENT:

AU\$ 1,150

FULLY
ESCORTED

*Conditions apply. Subject to change.
Price estimated based on group
size of 20 pilgrims. Actual pricing
will be known in late May 2025.

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'Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres'. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love'

(Ephesians 4:2)

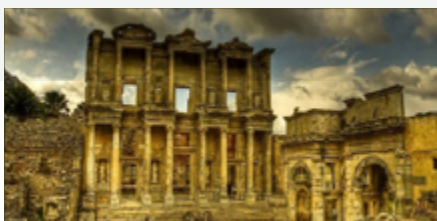
Such passionate, life giving, encouraging and hopeful words written by St Paul the Apostle. Come and join us for an extraordinary pilgrimage of Greece and Turkey and (optional Rome extension) as we follow the footsteps of St Paul and experience the contexts in which these passionate letters were written. It will be an opportunity of spiritual renewal, deepen our relationship with God as we reflect and experience the incredible journey of Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

REGISTER FOR AN INFORMATION SESSION at 7pm ON THURSDAY, 5th JUNE

* Enjoy full travel briefing * Meet your fellow Pilgrims * Have your questions answered

CONTACT FR ALEX OR OLIVE TREE TRAVEL TO REGISTER & GET THE DETAILS



NEXT STEPS

1. Register your interest and obtain a booking form from Fr Alex or Olive Tree Travel or by [CLICKING HERE.](#)
2. To secure your place, a deposit of \$500 per person is payable by 16th June 2025 (unless sold out prior)
3. Final balances will be due by late February 2026.



Ph. 1300 550 830 or 03 8488 9696
info@olivetretravel.com.au www.olivetretravel.com.au
103A Gardenvale Road, Gardenvale Victoria 3185



DAY 1 MONDAY 20TH APRIL

DEPART AUSTRALIA

Depart Melbourne this evening on your Emirates flight to Dubai. On arrival, transfer to your connecting flight to Athens.

DAY 2 TUESDAY 21ST APRIL

ARRIVE ATHENS

Arrive in Athens today. Athens is the thriving capital of Greece but more importantly, we have entered into the world of the New Testament where St Paul and his companions established the first Christian communities throughout his four missionary journeys. On arrival in **Athens** we will be met and transferred to our centrally located hotel for the remainder of the day at leisure. Athens overnight (D)

DAY 3 WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL

ATHENS - CORINTH – ATHENS

Journey out to **Ancient Corinth** where the Apostle Paul lived for almost two years, teaching the people the Word of God and converting many. We visit the ancient ruins and see the site where he preached the Gospel from the **Rostrum**. Also visit the Peirene fountain, and the 6th century BC **Temple of Apollo** before an outdoor Mass in this stunning pilgrimage setting. Finally we come to **Cenchreae**, the ancient port from where Paul said farewell to the believers and departed for Ephesus (Acts 18:18). Return to Athens in the late afternoon for dinner and overnight. (BD)

DAY 4 THURSDAY 23RD APRIL

ATHENS

When St Paul first came to Athens it was predominantly a city that worshipped pagan gods. St Paul was taken before the city council at the Areopagus Hill, a rough outcrop of limestone rock from which he preached the Gospel message to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:16-21). We begin our day with a tour of **Christian Athens** including the **Acropolis**, the **Areopagus** where St Paul delivered his famous sermon about the identity of "the Unknown God" (Acts 17:15-34) and the **Parthenon**. Continue for a visit the **Ancient Agora** and a bus tour to see the highlights of the city including the Kallimarmaro Stadium, dating back to 330 B.C. and restored for the first modern Olympic Games held here in 1896. Visit to the New Acropolis museum. Enjoy dinner and overnight in Athens. (BD)

DAY 5 FRIDAY 24TH APRIL

ATHENS – METEORA – KALAMBAKA

Depart this morning and travel north to the small town of **Kalambaka** built at the foot of the majestic grey rocks of **Meteora**. Marvel at this unique phenomenon of nature – 24 perpendicular rocks where 600 years ago Byzantine monks chose to worship God and build their Monastic community of Meteora. We visit two of the Byzantine Meteora monasteries. Among striking scenery and perched on top of huge rocks, the ageless monasteries of Meteora seem to be suspended in mid-air. The monasteries contain beautiful Byzantine art and offer an insight to the mystic world of the monks still residing there. Mass this evening, will be held in a private room at the hotel before dinner and overnight in Kalambaka (BD)

DAY 6 SATURDAY 25TH APRIL

KALAMBAKA – VERGINA – VERIA – THESSALONIKI

Depart this morning to **Vergina**, the first capital of the Macedonian Kingdom. Here we visit the "Vergina findings", treasures of Ancient Macedonia and the tomb of King Philip II of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great. A few minutes away is Veria, located on the ruins of **Ancient Beroea**, is one of Apostle Paul's stops. Here we see the Byzantine mosaic in the monument commemorating his preaching. Continue our drive to Thessaloniki. Dinner & overnight in Thessaloniki. (BD)

DAY 7 SUNDAY 26TH APRIL

THESSALONIKI

Today is for Thessaloniki exploration. Welcome to Greece's second city, founded in 315 BC, and where St Paul preached during the winters of 49-50AD and wrote the two epistles to the ancient Thessalonians. See the ramparts of the city, the triumphal Arch of Galerius and the Roman Agora where St Paul once preached. We shall visit St Demetrios' Church with its valuable mosaics and frescoes and will drive up to the upper town, which offers a marvellous view of the city. We will also have the chance to celebrate Mass at the Catholic Church. Dinner & overnight in Thessaloniki. (BD)

DAY 8 MONDAY 27TH APRIL

PHILIPPI – KAVALA – THESSALONIKI

Arise and journey along the ancient route of the Apostle Paul to nearby Philippi, named after Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. It was here that St Paul won his first European convert, a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:12-40). Visit the Baptistery of Lydia for a beautiful outdoor Mass on the River Zygaktis, and renew

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our Baptismal vows. Visit the market place (where St Paul and St Silas were brought before the rulers) and the cistern which tradition identifies as the place where St Paul was imprisoned. We will also see the famous Acropolis, Basilica and the theatre. It was here that he established the first Christian Church in Europe. Visit the Octagonal church, an early Christian monument thought to be built on the site where St. Paul had established a house of prayer. Finally, we drive to the port in Kavala (Neapolis in New Testament times), where Paul landed with Timothy, Silas, and Luke. Return to your hotel in Thessaloniki for dinner and overnight. (BD)

DAY 9 TUESDAY 28TH APRIL **THESSALONIKI – IZMIR (SMYRNA) - KUSADASI** This morning, we depart Thessaloniki Airport for our flight to Izmir (via Istanbul or Athens). Upon arrival we will be met by our Turkish guide and commence our touring programme by visiting the Ruins of Ancient Smyrna, one of the 7 Churches. After the Agora visit we will drive to the coastal city of Kusadasi. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. (D)

DAY 10 WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL **EPHESUS PILGRIMAGE**
 Today we visit the famous city of Ephesus. Ephesus, as we will see, is in a very good state of preservation and the overall existing view of this ancient city will make it evident that she was a wealthy, cultural, and commercial centre in the 1st century. Paul's preaching in the area resulted with the uproar of the Guild of Silversmiths and the evangelisation of the whole province of Asia. Highlights include the ancient temple to the Roman Emperor, the 'slope' houses, the Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian, the Fountain of Trajan, the brothel, and the large theatre in which the riot of Acts 19 took place. Not far from the theatre, we visit the Church of St Mary, where it is said that Mary spent the later years of her life. Celebrate Mass. Finally you will visit the restored remains of the 6th century Basilica of St John at Celcuk where a small church was originally built over the tomb of St John the Evangelist. Return to your hotel in Kusadasi for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 11 THURSDAY 30TH APRIL **KUSADASI - ISTANBUL** After breakfast at the hotel, we will depart for Izmir Airport to catch our flight at 10:00AM. On arrival, we will be met and transferred to old city to visit Basilica Cistern, the largest of several hundred ancient cisterns that lie beneath the city. We'll also get to see one of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. This afternoon visit the Byzantine Hippodrome, the Blue Mosque and nearby Hagia Sophia (meaning 'Holy Wisdom'). Built in 548 AD, Hagia Sophia was the greatest Church in Christendom until 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire. Onwards then to the Grand Bazaar, with over 4000 exotic tiny shops. Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 12 FRIDAY 01ST MAY **ISTANBUL**
 Commence the day with a special morning cruise along the Bosphorus River, where you will sail past the Ottoman Palaces, Byzantine fortresses, Beylerbeyi Palace and Suleiman's Mosque. An opportunity to celebrate Mass at a Catholic Church. Enjoy a brief visit to Topkapi Palace. After the visit, transfer to our hotel for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 13 SATURDAY 02ND MAY **ISTANBUL - AUSTRALIA**
 End your pilgrimage with a transfer to Istanbul Airport for your departure flight to Dubai. Transfer to your connecting flight back to Melbourne. (B)

DAY 14 SUNDAY 03RD MAY **ARRIVE AUSTRALIA**
 Arrive back to Melbourne this evening with wonderful memories from your pilgrimage!

**

Itinerary subject to change **

Interested in continuing the Footsteps of St Paul and visiting other amazing sites in Rome?

Instead of flying straight home from Istanbul, we will hold a limited number of seats out of Rome, allowing pilgrims to enjoy an independently arranged Rome Pilgrimage in the Eternal city and surroundings as organized with/by Fr Alex Chow.

Fr Alex has lived in Rome as a seminarian for 4 years. Fr. Alex has offered to assist pilgrims in finding

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modest but clean and comfortable accommodation. The Roman stay will consist of the following (depending on time availability):

1. Sites of St Paul: Basilica of St Paul Outside the Wall, Tre Fontana (where St Paul was imprisoned and executed), via Ostiense (where St Peter and St Paul met in Rome)
2. 3 major Pontifical Basilica: Basilica of St Peter, Basilica of Mary Major, Basilica of John Lateran
3. Churches of Saints of the Roman Canon: St Cosmos and Damian, St Clement, St Agnes in Agony, St Cecilia, St Bartholomew
4. Beautiful Rome: Colosseum, Rome Forum, Pantheon, Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, Piazza di Popolo, etc...
5. Churches of the Passion of Jesus Christ: Church of the Holy Steps, Basilica of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, Basilica di Santa Prassede (Column of the Flagellation)
6. Elegant Churches: San Luigi dei Francesi (Caravaggio - calling of Matthew), Basilica of Saint Mary of Minerva (the tomb of St Catherine of Siena), Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria (Bernini's dramatic carving "The Ecstasy of Teresa."), Chiesa del Gesu.

****Olive Tree Travel will arrange your flight from Istanbul – Rome****

PRICE INCLUSIONS:

- Emirates Flight from Melbourne to Athens via Dubai and then return Istanbul to Melbourne via Dubai
- One way flight from Thessaloniki to Izmir
- One way flight from Izmir to Istanbul
- 11 nights in total: 7 nights in Greece and 4 nights in Turkey in hotel accommodation in twin share rooms.
- Breakfast and Dinner daily. Breakfasts and Dinners at hotels unless otherwise specified.
- All tips, gratuities and portorage (where available)
- Whisperer headsets
- All guiding and entrance fees as per the itinerary.
- Air-conditioned coach

NOT INCLUDED:

- Drinks with meals
- Travel insurance
- Incidentals, laundry
- Lunches
- Turkey Visa – currently US\$66 and obtained privately before departure

HOTELS (OR SIMILAR):

• Hotel Luwian	Athens	3 nights
• Hotel Amalia	Kalambaka	1 night
• Hotel Imperial Plus	Thessaloniki	3 nights
• Korumar Hotel	Kusadasi	2 nights
• Port Bosphorous Hotel	Istanbul	2 nights

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3. Final balances will be due by late February 2026.

WHO TO CONTACT:

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 South and St Timothy Forest Hill
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By
Olivia
Dawson