
Freedom and Desire



Lent 1



Rural project run by CRS which includes women's empowerment, education and nutrition.

READING - LUKE 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority

and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.”

Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”

The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you
to guard you carefully;
they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

REFLECT

What do we truly desire? Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. A desolate and harsh environment and probably a place in which most people avoided spending time unless they had to. It was a place where humans have to ‘face themselves’ and recognise the forces or desires that drive them. Temptations are precisely temptations because they tap into our desires. They reveal what really matters to us and what matters to us is not necessarily bad unless it is what we are beholden to; what are our driving motivations; what is ruling us. In other words what is our God. So, it was with Jesus in the wilderness. He was confronted with a range of temptations that tapped into who he was and his calling.

Whether it is basic needs and appetites or the desire for power and status, they are all to be servants of God and used for the good of others and ourselves. That is the point. God created us as desiring creatures with passions that drive us. These desires, if owned rather than owning us and brought to God, enable us to live free, rich and full lives. God wants us to live in freedom, not being slaves to our desires but fully ourselves living the lives that we are given, with hopes and dreams and lived realities. Desires are part of what it means to be human – we all desire freedom to live life with our basic needs met and a promising future for our children.

CRS works in Kolkata to help bring that freedom to some of the most disadvantaged people living there. Nari Dana is the name given to the women’s empowerment programme. It means freedom bird and it seeks to

empower vulnerable women to escape a life caught in poverty, forced labour or trafficking. It enables the women to build a future for their children having provided for their basic needs. It allows them to fulfil their own desires and seeks to bring freedom.

RESPOND

What do you desire for yourself? What stops us being fully ourselves with freedom to love others and live the life we are given?

Use clenched hands as a focus for what desires entrap us, often time and again.

Open them out as a way of offering our desires to God and for the Spirit to free us from the power of temptations that come our way.

What do you desire for others?

Clench your hands again and think of the women who are trapped by poverty in Kolkata.

Open them and ask God to work through CRS in bringing them freedom to choose how to live and to work towards building a future for their families.

PRAYER

Lord of life, we pray for fullness of life.

For ourselves.

For others.

For our world.

We resolve to live life in all its fullness.

We seek to enable others to live life in all its fullness too. Amen.

For further information about the work of CRS go to: [https://
www.cathedralreliefservice.net](https://www.cathedralreliefservice.net)

For further information about Friends of CRS UK go to: [https://
www.cathedralreliefservice.net/supporters/ukfriends/](https://www.cathedralreliefservice.net/supporters/ukfriends/)