

# **A Lenten Wilderness Journey: The Wilderness, A Place of Struggle**

Wednesday, March 9: 7-8:30 p.m.

Children's Center, 2nd Floor Rotunda

## **Overview: For Reflection**

In Lent, we hear the scripture story of Jesus being sent into the wilderness, after being filled with the Holy Spirit. Lent is a time of being laid bare by the Tempter and later attended to by Angels. Wilderness conjures many images: wild, untamed, uninhabited, expansive, dangerous, stark, unknown, overwhelming. Is it possible to say, the wilderness is a place where things are revealed that can't be discovered elsewhere?

Whenever we experience a significant spiritual time of wrestling with God or a tempter, we, like Jesus, are living in the wilderness.

**A pivotal thought for tonight's reflection and discussion is the idea of Jesus's wilderness experience that serves to strengthen, encourage, clarify, and challenge our own spiritual journey. We gather together to find the resources to embrace that journey.**

### **SCRIPTURE:**

- **Mark 1:12-13**

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness,<sup>13</sup> and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

- **Luke 4:1-14**

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,<sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted<sup>[a]</sup> by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.<sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'<sup>[b]</sup>"<sup>5</sup> The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.<sup>6</sup> And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to."<sup>7</sup> If you worship me, it will all be yours."<sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'<sup>[c]</sup>"<sup>9</sup> 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."<sup>10</sup> For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully;<sup>11</sup> they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."<sup>12</sup> Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'<sup>[d]</sup>"<sup>13</sup> When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.<sup>14</sup> Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside

### **READING: When We Struggle**

Go slowly. Consent to it. But don't wallow in it.  
Know it as a place of germination and growth.

Remember the light and take an outstretched hand if you find one.  
Exercise unused senses. Find the path by walking it.

Practice trust. Watch for dawn.

- *The Time of Trial*, Marilyn Chandler McEntyre

### **QUESTIONS: The Wilderness Struggle, Session I**

1. When you think about wilderness as a place, what images and emotions come to mind?
2. When you imagine wilderness as an inner experience, what images and emotions come to mind ?
3. If you are able, please share a story about a time in the past, or a time now of wilderness for you? Briefly explain the circumstances.

How were/are you changed by that experience, favorably or not?

4. What can we embrace from Jesus's wilderness experience that strengthens, encourages, clarifies, or challenges our own spiritual journey.

### **A WILDERNESS COLLAGE**

In your mind's eye, see this page as your personal white board: a blank canvas.

Write a word, draw an image, or paste an imaginary photo that conjures up your summary thought about wilderness with its struggles and temptations, as a part of own spiritual journey.

**Group Discussion: Childrens Center Classroom (Neighborhood 3 & 4) at 7:25 p.m.**

**Please proceed to Neighborhood 3 & 4 to gather with fellow participants for tonight's discussion of the Lenten Wilderness Journey.**