

Possible Prayer of Church for Lent-1 Invocabit Sunday * February 22nd 2026

Let us pray to the LORD who hears the voice of His people, sees our misery and delivers us with a mighty hand and outstretched arm.

Heavenly Father, You promised to overcome the devil by the Seed of the woman, Your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith in His victory, that we may endure every temptation and at last share in His eternal salvation. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Heavenly Father, Your Son trampled the serpent underfoot and freed us from sin and death by His own death on the cross. Protect and preserve all called to preach Christ and Him crucified. Command Your angels to guard them in all their ways and bear them up for the sake of Jesus. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Heavenly Father, our first parents fell into sin, rebelled against You and despised one another. Inspire the families of Your Church to live in sacrificial love toward one another and in faith toward You, that they may receive Your temporal and eternal benediction. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Heavenly Father, since we sojourn in the wilderness of this earth, look upon our desire for peace, and by Your mighty power defend us and our nation against all our enemies. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Heavenly Father, though we deserve nothing of Your kindness, You have shown Yourself to be the strength of the weak, the healer of the sick and the hope of those who mourn. Hear us on behalf of those who are troubled in mind or body, the dying and those who grieve [*especially Our Savior & Faith Prayers*] ... and all we each name and keep in our hearts in *personal prayer*. Sustain them [all] through their afflictions and pain, heal them according to Your gracious will, and deliver them at the last to everlasting life in Christ. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Heavenly Father, though we are unworthy of a place at the table of our Lord, You have bid us to come and eat of His flesh and blood. Give us faith that we may come in repentance to receive this blessed food for everlasting life. Unite us in doctrine and holy living, that we may show forth this harmony in witness before the world. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Heavenly Father, give us confidence in Christ our Mediator's ceaseless intercessions, that in every time of need we also would draw near to Your throne of grace, call to You and await Your gracious answer. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Into Your hands, O LORD, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our LORD. **Amen.**

LENT-1A INVOCAVIT Matthew 4:1-11 TSUNAMIS OF TEMPTATIONS 3.13.11 WC

"For as by the one man's disobediences, all were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."

12/26/04 BOX.DAY TSUNAMI The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, triggered by a 9.1-9.3 magnitude earthquake off Sumatra, Indonesia, on December 26, is the deadliest in recorded history, causing an estimated **228,000–230,000 deaths** across 14 countries.

3/11/11 TOHOKU TSUNAMI [Just over six years later, March 11, 2011] In Tōhoku region [northeastern Honshu,] Japan severe earthquake also triggered a massive tsunami and that triggered also a major nuclear accident. Final death toll estimated at over **19,000**.

40 DAYS [& 40 NIGHTS] Today's assigned Gospel focuses on the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. It draws a parallel between Jesus' forty days and our forty days [of Lent]. Of course, Jesus' Lent was unlike any Lent we can engineer for ourselves. His fasting was unlike any fast we can cook up; His temptations embraced every way in which we are tempted, yet with this one important exception: He did not sin. Jesus went one on one with the devil and won, **not** with a show of divine strength, but **solely with the Word**. He did it with His divine hand literally tied behind His back. He did it to rescue fallen humanity from the clutches of the devil, to make enmity with the ancient serpent on His way to His head-crushing victory on the Cross.

NATURE [WINS] vs. MAN For all of our reliance on technology and the hope that science and good civic organization can save you, the harsh reality is that we are no match for natural forces. And that's about as far as the unbeliever can go or even needs to go. It's Man vs Nature, and in the end **Nature always wins**, and the tidal wave that washes away your city is a reminder of how insignificant you are in the natural scheme of things.

DOES GOD PROTECT US[?] It's not so easy for the believer, however. We believe that God is merciful and gracious. We believe that He not only created all things in the beginning, but He also created each of us personally, and that He watches over, cares for and provides for His creation. He defends us from all danger; **He guards and protects us against all evil**. Not a bird falls from the sky apart from His notice. He clothes the lilies of the field and knows the number of hairs on your head as well as the number of your days. So when something like this happens, we begin to wonder if there really is anyone in charge of all this. Did this escape God's notice? Did He cause it? Why didn't He stop it from happening?

MAN vs. [EVIL] MAN The events of 9/11 were a bit easier to wrap our minds around. Evil men with an evil religion did this. Man's inhumanity can always be explained by reference to man's inhumanity. Japanese people could probably better understand Hiroshima and Nagasaki than they can comprehend this. Those were acts of war. But the brutal, relentless forces of nature are quite another thing. If nature is so wondrously and

intelligently designed, and **we are the apple of God's eye and the crown of His creation**, then why does nature seem hell bent on destroying us? And, **Where is God in all of this?**! And what about when it happens to us?

JŌB

The book of Job deals with this, though not in any way that is satisfying to those who want simple answers. Job suffers horribly at the hands of the devil. He loses health, wealth, and family for no apparent reason. Job's friends try to offer an explanation for God, but they're dead wrong. They think God is angry with Job. They're wrong. God is pleased as punch with Job and is holding him up to the devil as an example of faithfulness in the midst of suffering. **Job never gets an explanation from God.** When God finally appears on the scene in the late chapters, He offers no apology, no explanations. He simply says, *"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know. Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt?'"*

WHEN WAVES CRASH

And what about when they don't halt, the waves keep coming and swamp your city and sweep away everything in an instant? **Anyone who tries to explain this in terms of God is either a fool or a liar.** God offers no explanations, nor should we attempt to fill in the silence. [Like Job's friends] We'd be way off the mark. God tells us when confronted with tragic loss of life, whether by men or accident, *"Repent, lest something worse happen to you."* That's what Job did. He repented. *"Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know."*

BIRTH PANGS

Jesus spoke of earthquakes and natural disasters as the "birth pangs," the labor contractions of the new creation being born. Not the death throes, though that's what they look and feel like to us. Painful and difficult, but in the end there is good news. new birth. Life.

ST. PAUL WRITES...

Apostle **Paul** wrote similarly in the book of **Romans** [8:18 & ff.] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ... ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

WHOSE FAULT[?]

Does God cause it? **No.** Does God intervene? Obviously **not**, at least not to the extent of protecting us from earthquake, flood and fire, not to mention war, pestilence and famine. Pick your death. What He does instead is work good through such things, through **all** things, through the good, the bad, and the ugly. The earthquake the flattens your house and the tidal wave that washes it away. **God is still there in the still small voice.**

TRUMPS ALL IN JESUS

He trumps all things through the death and Resurrection of Jesus, who absorbed all of the world's Sin and decay into Himself and took it all to His grave in order to raise it up for good. God was in Christ, His Son, reconciling all things to Himself in Jesus' death. That death is the Tragedy that embraces all tragedies, the Disaster that redeems all disasters natural and man-made. And it is only through that redeeming death of Jesus that we can view events like that of this past week as the birth pangs of the new creation rather than death throes of the old.

NO EXPLANATIONS

This is not an explanation. There are no explanations. Science can tell us what happened, and there is much to study and learn. But no one can say why it happened, except that the whole **creation is subjected to decay and destruction.** But that was and is nothing compared to the power of the Word.

[LET'S] GET TO THE STORY

And that brings us to Jesus' Temptation in the wilderness. Fresh from His Baptism, Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness. **The way of the Cross goes through the wilderness.** He is tempted by the devil, the father of lies, the source of all evil. The devil comes to Jesus in His moment of weakness and vulnerability. He's hungry, thirsty, tired. That's when the devil pounces **on you - when you are** weak, hungry, exhausted.

POWER/CELEBRITY/GLORY

Jesus is tempted by **power**, by **celebrity**, by **glory**. He is tempted to use His power to destroy stones to make bread. He is tempted to make headlines by jumping off the top of the temple and being caught by angels. He is tempted to compromise His mission in exchange for the glitter and glory of this world.

PASS/ES THE TEST

He is tested and **found worthy**. He meets the test even "with His Divinity tied behind His back." He repels the devil with nothing but **the Word**. Same thing you and I have as baptized believers. The Word. **The Truth of God repels the insidious lie.** The Word crushes the old evil foe with the death of Jesus.

NOT HOW GOD LOVES...

The devil would have you believe that God is not in control, that God is not merciful and gracious, that God does not love the world or He would prevent every tragedy and disaster from happening. But that's **not** how God loves the world. He loves the world by sending His Son to do battle with the devil, the darkness, the death. He conquered and in Him **we more than conquer** so 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 Christ Jesus our LORD.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." [Psalm 46: IJ'N, Amen. SDG