

16. 2. 70  
15. 3. 73 (330 adp)

Gelineau Ps 90 TAPE LENT PREFACE

In Lent last year, I used a Canadian sung version of Ps 90 (or 91, if you follow the Hebrew and Authorized Version numbering) to open & close Nidday Prayer. This year, again with Ps 90, I'm using a modern chant - in fact, the original modern simple chant, that of Fr Joseph Solineau, in its English adaptation to the stress-rhythm. Grail, translation of the Ps. This singing version hasn't really caught on as much as it could & should in English - perhaps English-speakers are too imbued with the rhyming jangle of what have become our popular hymns and can't take to the rather unfamiliar pattern of stress-rhythm, easy though it is for speaking and singing once you get the feel of it. Ps 90 is perhaps not the best there. psalm for Lent, but it is used a lot in the liturgy this week, and verses of it occur <sup>as</sup> refrains & so on throughout the breviary at this season. For many people it is the most consoling of all the psalms, and small wonder - for it assures us in several quaintly assorted images that, no matter what the danger is, → we have only to ask: God is waiting, longing, to be asked. It's a psalm that develops the traditional teaching of the O.T. wisdom-writers on the divine protection given to the person who is upright and just - the divine promise at its end <sup>takes it for granted</sup> ~~supposes~~ that the faithful man will meet with trouble, difficulty & distress but that God will deliver him from it. It's a psalm of confidence and trust in God's continuing protection of His people, in whatever way they may call upon Him - it's interesting that 4 different names of God, which appear in the O.T., are all used in the opening verses: the English preserves this nicely. Q: Ps 90

Perhaps the appropriateness of Ps 90 for the time of Lent is more apparent now. But there is <sup>the other I mentioned,</sup> (another) link <sup>which is underlined in the scripture readings for [yesterday] the first Sun. of Lent.</sup> You should have recognized, in Ps 90, a quotation used by the devil in the Temptations of Jesus when He spent 40 days in prayer and fasting in the desert, His Lent. This episode, as it's described in the three <sup>first</sup> gospels provides the gospel reading for the first Sunday in Lent - this year it was St Mark also, as usual, is very brief: "The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for 40 days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him". What St Mark is alluding to here is really the struggle between evil and good in the world, into which Jesus comes and is involved, and in which He is the victor, destroying the power of evil by His cross and resurrection. Although the scholars say St Mark's brief account is complete in itself and shouldn't be complemented by Matt. & Luke or considered as an abbreviation of them, there does seem to be at least an allusion to Ps 90 in the words St Mark uses. The Temptation of Jesus was the <sup>immediate</sup> preparation and beginning of His public ministry - at the beginning of Lent, our preparation shd. be to open our hearts to the Spirit, to be led by Him: that's the exhortation of this market, by Costanzo Porta (who died 1601) 'Praeparate corda vestra Domino', Prepare your hearts for the Lord. MUSIC

Gelineau-Cantemp.  
R 147: 52:4.

PRAYER

For similar prayer in music, one of Dvorak's 10 Biblical songs, taken from the Ps. This one is "Turn Thee to me"

[RHK  
SUP.O. 279]

The Temptations of Jesus in the desert are possibly the most mysterious and puzzling event of His life recorded in the gospels: and the whole incident is obviously one of which Jesus Himself must have spoken in confidence to His apostles, for their instruction and for ours. Like many things in scripture there are different levels on which it can be studied and understood, different depths of meaning and significance. The most obvious, (tho' it's not the intention either of the evangelists or of Christ as the reasons for this strange incident in His life), is probably the parallel with the ordinary difficulties and temptations of any human life. It's possible, especially when things go well with you and in optimistic moods, to forget the presence of evil around you, the struggle that goes on in each of us all the time until we betray slowly to Him or turn irrevocably away. This reality of Christ's life on earth is one of those things in which any Christian's life will have to conform to His if He is to live in us & through us in our world. Maybe for many Christians this problem of evil doesn't consciously affect their lives — for some it certainly does, people who are in agony with Christ. We can expect difficulties, even difficulties about the faith we have in God; but in the power of Christ, as we sit, be learning all the time through meditation on God's revelation and in prayer, we know that evil has no more hold over us than we allow it to have. Facing the 40 days of Lent, facing any new venture, facing too <sup>in</sup> prayer and communion with our fellow-Catholics in HK the long work of the diocesan convention, there is a prospect of tedium, of failing to persevere in the spirit in which we begin every work with Christ. Let's remember it was the H. Sp. who led Jesus into the wilderness; and let's pray with the trust & confidence of Ps 90.