

Week One: Temptation in the Desert



CONQUERED
by **CHRIST**

2026 Lenten Meditations

With Bishop Donald J. Hying



DIOCESE of
MADISON

SMALL GROUP STUDY TIPS

PREPARATION

If you are using the **Conquered by Christ Lenten Study** with a small group, prepare for each session by downloading and printing copies of the study guide, finding the week's Gospel reading in your Bible, and setting up a laptop or TV to play Bishop Hying's video. Consider having a Crucifix and candle on the table.

SESSION STEPS

1. Allow time for introductions, hospitality, and fellowship
2. Pray the opening prayer together
3. Have a participant read the Gospel to the group
4. Spend 2-3 minutes silently meditating on the Gospel and the reflection questions, writing down words or phrases that jump out
5. Take 5-10 minutes to share insights and discuss the Gospel
6. Watch Bishop Hying's video
7. Use the questions to prompt personal reflection and group discussion (15-20 minutes)
8. Review the featured saint and weekly virtue
9. Pray the Stations of the Cross together using Bishop Hying's video





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WEEK ONE

Temptation in the Desert

OPENING PRAYER

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.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

MATTHEW 4:1-11

Read and reflect on this Sunday's Gospel. Consider the reflection questions below.
Use the space provided to write down your thoughts.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Where in your life are you being tempted to rely on yourself instead of trusting the Father?

In what ways is the devil trying to distract or discourage you from living your call as a disciple of Christ?

How does the desire for comfort, control, or recognition compete with your desire to follow Jesus faithfully?

How does Jesus' use of Scripture challenge you to deepen your prayer life and reliance on God's Word?

As you begin Lent, what concrete step can you take to place your life more fully under Christ's victory?

VIDEO REFLECTION

VIDEO ONE: TEMPTATION IN THE DESERT

Use the space below to take notes. Videos can be found at [MadisonDiocese.org/Lent2026](https://www.MadisonDiocese.org/Lent2026) or at [YouTube.com/DiocesefMadison](https://www.YouTube.com/DiocesefMadison) in the playlist called “Conquered by Christ Lenten Study”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

After watching the video, use the questions below for personal reflection and group discussion.

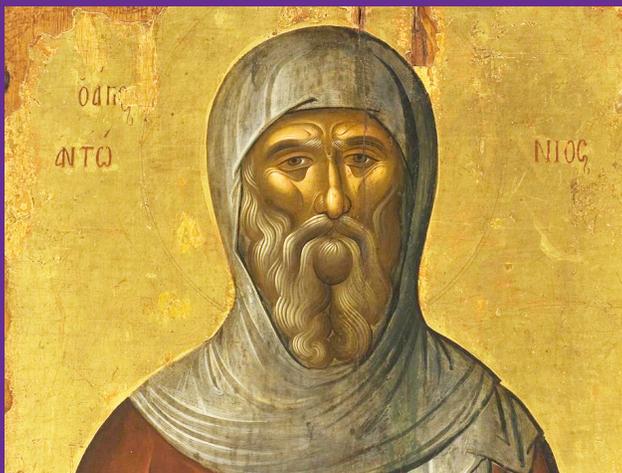
Bishop Hying calls us to “the desert within our hearts.” What prevents you from regularly seeking silence and solitude? What would it look like practically to carve out time in this “desert” in your daily life this Lent?

Bishop Hying contrasts our culture’s message to “satisfy your own desires” with Christ’s teaching that the path to freedom is the path of self-denial. When has saying “no” to something actually brought you greater freedom?

THIS WEEK'S VIRTUE

Temperance

Temperance is the virtue that orders our desires and helps us seek what truly satisfies rather than what offers temporary comfort or control. In the Temptation in the Desert, Jesus perfectly embodies temperance by resisting the urges of hunger, power, and pride, choosing instead complete trust in the Father's will. By practicing temperance, we allow Christ to conquer our disordered desires and attachments. This virtue frees us to live with greater self-control, clarity, and openness to God, strengthening us to follow Christ faithfully even in times of trial.



FEATURED SAINT

St. Anthony of the Desert

St. Anthony of the Desert (251-356) is known as the Father of Christian monasticism and a towering witness to a life wholly conquered by Christ. After hearing the Gospel call to renounce possessions, Anthony withdrew into the Egyptian desert, where he devoted himself to prayer, fasting, and radical simplicity. Like Christ in the wilderness, he endured intense spiritual trials, battling temptation and the devil with humility, perseverance, and trust in God. Anthony taught that true freedom comes through purity of heart and detachment from passing things, reminding believers to take responsibility for their sins and remain vigilant throughout life. His witness shows that prayer, sacrifice, and love for Jesus are powerful weapons against evil, making him a fitting guide for the beginning of Lent.

CLOSING PRAYER

Stations of the Cross

To conclude the session,
pray the Stations of the Cross.
Use Bishop Hying's video and
download the full guide at
MadisonDiocese.org/Lent2026

If time does not permit
praying all the Stations,
consider praying a decade
of the Rosary.