

# Succumbing to temptation

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7, Romans 5:12-19 and Matthew 4:1-11

**T**oday's readings from Genesis and Paul's letter to the Romans form a kind of history of temptation and sin, while our Gospel reading shows Christ breaking the cycle, about to triumph over death itself.

In Genesis, knowledge is the real temptation. The serpent knows how to beguile Eve: "your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil". She finds it impossible to resist the opportunity to know, even though she can't really know what knowledge is or involves.

The reading from Romans also deals with knowledge – in this case knowledge of the law. In writing that "sin is not reckoned when there is no law", Paul is tackling the thorny question of how someone who doesn't know God's Law can be deemed to have sinned. The paradox is that, although we can't escape sin and death, since we are descended from Adam, each of us is our own Adam or Eve, capable of wilfully turning away from God.

This has puzzled generations of theologians and thinkers, but perhaps, like Eve, we don't need to know. Maybe we need faith more than knowledge. Because the wonderful news is that Adam and Eve's disobedience has been written off by the more powerful obedience of Jesus, and that each time we are obedient to God's will, even in a small way, we bring the kingdom a little closer. 🍷

**Lord God, this Lent, I pray that you will teach me about temptation and sin in my life, and guide me in imitating Christ's empowering, world-saving obedience. Amen.**

## Leap into Lent

*Ricarda Witcombe continues her Lenten series.*

The word Lent comes from an old English word *lencten*, meaning springtime. It is to do with the lengthening of the days. Winter is behind us, however cold it may still feel, we have turned a corner and are facing into the light. We've seen how snowdrops and crocuses can pierce through

the hard ground with their fragile petals. Gradually over these weeks, in fields up and down the country, tiny lambs are adding their brand new voices to the world. These triumphs of life, which happen in all sorts of ways, are always miracles. They remind us that, whatever else is happening, new life is still to be found. The poet G. M. Hopkins wrote about the "dearest freshness deep down things". Could you take time this week to notice the signs of new life in the world around you, and to pray that something of that freshness might stir in your soul? 🍷



## Zero Discrimination Day

by Christine Clark

"Make some noise... speak up and prevent discrimination from standing in the way of achieving ambitions, goals and dreams." Such was the call from UNAIDS when the first Zero Discrimination Day was launched in 2014. What a wonderful message – yet how sad that this is necessary.

The day has become notable for its fight to establish

equality before the law and in practice throughout the UN. It particularly fights for the rights of those living with HIV/AIDS, but also on behalf of those in the LGBT+ community in countries that criminalise homosexuality. Additionally, it has been used by Armenian Americans in California to remember those who were killed in the Armenian Genocide of 1914-1923.

Perhaps one day no one who is deemed "different" in any way will live in fear of discrimination or unequal treatment in law or practice. Until we get there, let's use this day. Make a noise! Speak up! 🍷

**"I walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me. My foot stands on level ground, in the great congregation I will bless the Lord."**

Psalm 26:11-12