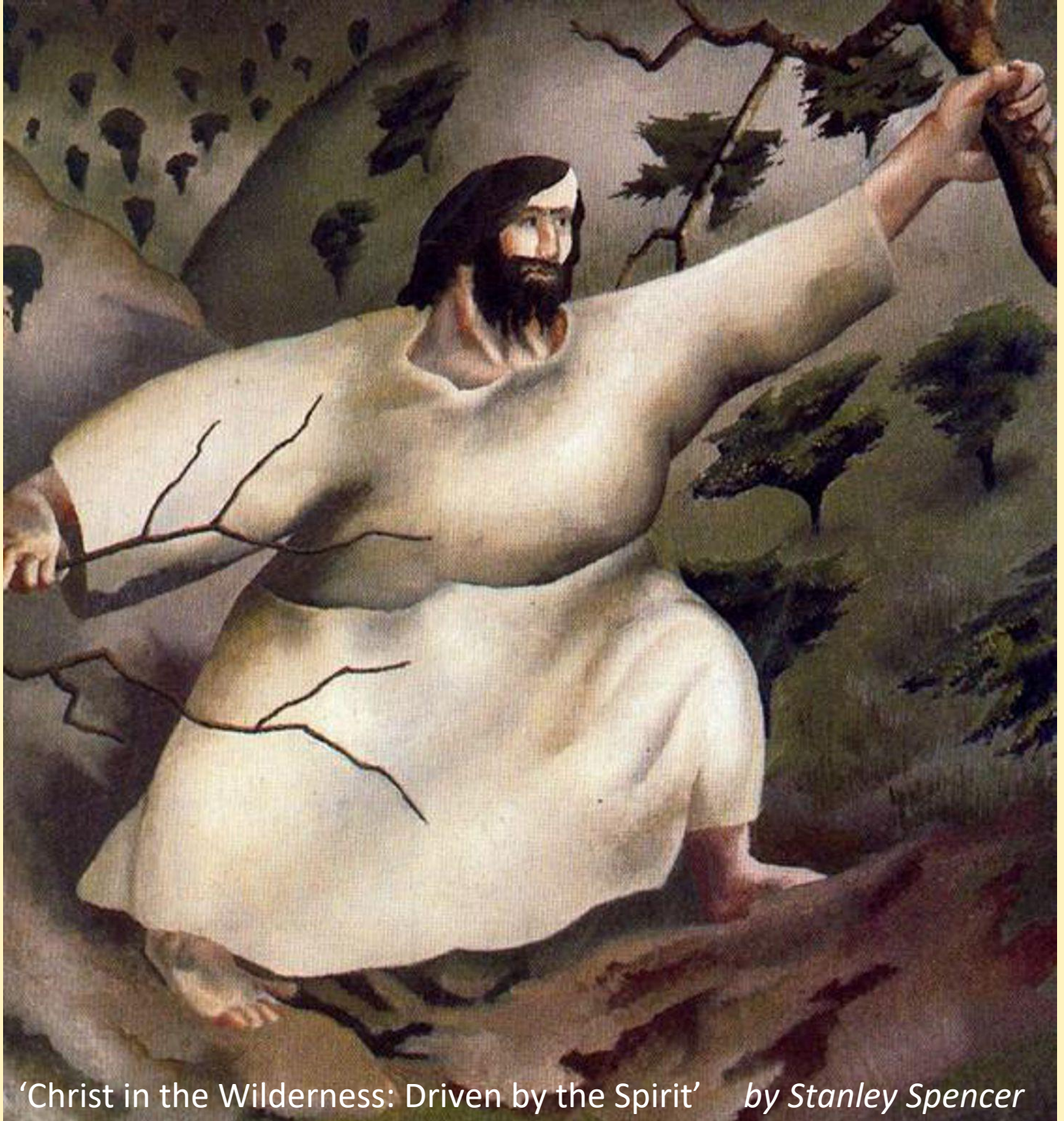


# Wilderness

*Reflecting on the wild places  
of our lives and the world*

A series of four poster reflections and poems on the gift of wild places.  
In church throughout Lent



*'Christ in the Wilderness: Driven by the Spirit' by Stanley Spencer*

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.  
He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan;  
and he was with the beasts;  
and the angels waited on him

*Mark Ch1 v12-13*

# Reflection One



‘And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness’ - *Mark Ch1 v12*

Lent is a time when we reflect on wilderness: its challenges and its gifts.

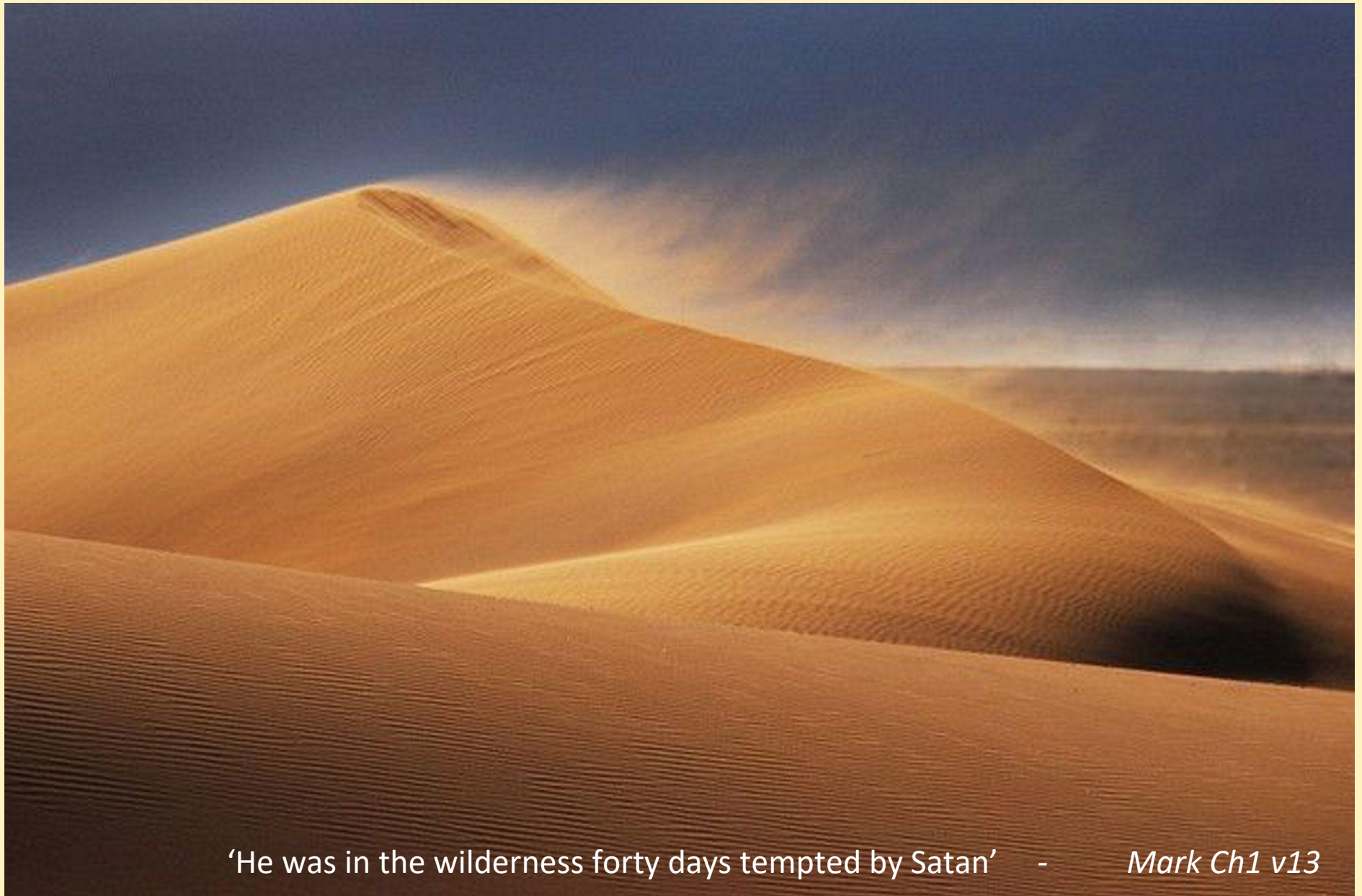
- What is your inner experience of wilderness?
- Is it in worry in the small hours of the night for example?
- How might creation's wilderness support you in these experiences?

## **The Peace of Wild Things**      *by Wendell Berry*

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.



# Reflection Two



'He was in the wilderness forty days tempted by Satan' - *Mark Ch1 v13*

The wilderness teaches us lessons we cannot learn in a classroom.

- What lessons have you learnt from your inner experiences of wilderness and the battles you have had there?
- What lessons can we learn from a fuller understanding of, engagement with and connection to the wilds of nature and its wisdom?

## **What You Missed That Day You Were Absent from Fourth Grade”**

*by Brad Aaron Modlin*

Mrs. Nelson explained how to stand still and listen  
to the wind, how to find meaning in pumping gas,

how peeling potatoes can be a form of prayer. She took  
questions on how not to feel lost in the dark

After lunch she distributed worksheets  
that covered ways to remember your grandfather’s

voice. Then the class discussed falling asleep  
without feeling you had forgotten to do something else—

something important—and how to believe  
the house you wake in is your home. This prompted

Mrs. Nelson to draw a chalkboard diagram detailing  
how to chant the Psalms during cigarette breaks,

and how not to squirm for sound when your own thoughts  
are all you hear; also, that you have enough.

The English lesson was that I am  
is a complete sentence.

And just before the afternoon bell, she made the math equation  
look easy. The one that proves that hundreds of questions,

and feeling cold, and all those nights spent looking  
for whatever it was you lost, and one person

add up to something.

# Reflection Three



'He was with the beasts' - *Mark Ch1 v13*



The wilderness announces your place in the family of things.

- Find a moment of wilderness today, somewhere in nature perhaps a place to take in a view.  
Stop; take it in; be still; receive its gifts; be connected once again.

## **‘Wild Geese’** *by Mary Oliver*

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.  
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things

# Reflection Four



‘and the angels waited on him’ - *Mark Ch1 v13*



In the wilderness courage grows as we are touched by love and set free

Angels are God's messengers, healers and bringers of justice. We receive in wild places messages with crystal clarity, moments of healing, a deep knowledge of right and wrong. The wilderness is the crucible of life and love.

## **'Touched by an Angel'**     *by Maya Angelou*

We, unaccustomed to courage  
exiles from delight  
live coiled in shells of loneliness  
until love leaves its high holy temple  
and comes into our sight  
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives  
and in its train come ecstasies  
old memories of pleasure  
ancient histories of pain.  
Yet if we are bold,  
love strikes away the chains of fear  
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity  
In the flush of love's light  
we dare be brave  
And suddenly we see  
that love costs all we are  
and will ever be.  
Yet it is only love  
which sets us free.