

Sunday 1st (A) of Lent

Gospel text (Mt 4,1-11): Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert that He be put to the test by the devil. After spending forty days and nights without food, Jesus was hungry. Then the devil came to him and said, «If you are the Son of God, order these stones to turn into bread». But Jesus answered, «Scripture says: ‘One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’».

Then the devil took Jesus to the holy city, set him on the highest wall of the temple, and said to him, «If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for scripture says, ‘God has given orders to his angels about you. Their hands will hold you up lest you hurt your foot against a stone’». Jesus answered, «But scripture also says: ‘You shall not put to the test the Lord your God’».

Then the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the nations of the world in all their greatness and splendor. And he said, «All this I will give you, if you kneel and worship me». Then Jesus answered, «Be off, Satan! Scripture says: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him alone’». Then the devil left him, and angels came to serve him.

«The Spirit led Jesus into the desert that He be put to the test by the devil»

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Today, we celebrate the first Sunday of Lent, and this “strong” liturgic time is a spiritual path leading us to participate in the great mystery of the death and

resurrection of Christ. John Paul II says «Each year, the Lenten Season is set before us as a good opportunity for the intensification of prayer and penance, opening hearts to the docile welcoming of the divine will. During Lent, a spiritual journey is outlined for us that prepares us to relive the Great Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. This is done primarily by listening to the Word of God more devoutly and by practicing mortification more generously, thanks to which it is possible to render greater assistance to those in need».

Lent and today's Gospel teach us that life is a path leading us to Heaven. But, to deserve it, we must first overcome our temptations. «Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert that He be put to the test by the devil» (Mt 4:1). By allowing him to be tempted, Jesus wanted to show us how we can fight and overcome our temptations: with our trust in God and in prayer, through grace and fortitude.

Temptations may be described as the “enemies of the soul”. In fact, they can be summarized and determined by three aspects. In the first place, “the world”: «order these stones to turn into bread» (Mt 4:3). It implies living to possess material things only.

Secondly, “the devil”: «if you kneel and worship me» (Mt 4:9). It conveys the greed for power.

And, last but not least, “the flesh”: «throw yourself down» (Mt 4:6), which means placing our confidence only in our body. St. Thomas Aquinas explains it better when saying that «the cause of temptations are the causes of concupiscence: the pleasures of the flesh, a drive for glory and the lust for power».