

TODAY'S TEMPTATIONS



The Sunday's readings open with the Genesis story of the serpent ("the most cunning of all the animals that the LORD God had made") who successfully tempted Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus was intentionally tested by Satan. After he fasted for forty days and forty nights, and being hungry, Satan tempted him by appealing to man's basic need, food: "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread."

Jesus was then tempted by pride: "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: He will command his angels concerning you and with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone."

Finally Jesus was tempted by riches and power ("all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence"): "All these I shall give to you..."

Hunger, pride, riches and power. Temptation has always plagued society. Crafty Satan has many disguises for temptation. Temptation is the lever to separate man from God.

Consider the following:

The prophets of profit entice us by creating fake values and then by appealing to the values we now deem important: the American Dream of improving one's lot in life has become the Idolatry of Money, where education is insufficient for moving ahead, but now, what were once luxuries are now necessities.

To quote the Catholic economist, E.F. Schumacher, man's values have been corrupted by the "religion of economics, the idol worship of material possessions, of consumption and the so-called standard of living..."

Ask yourself if advertising preys upon the same doubts that are in Satan's arsenal:

- We're not good enough.
- Every man for himself.
- Everyone does it.

If you feel that there is a distance between you and God, ask yourself, "Who moved?"

We can close the distance between ourselves and God. We can begin this Sunday by listening to the word of God. Because if we are bold enough to question what is the alternative to materialism, we have the answer in Sunday's readings: "One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God."

We know that committing to listening to and relying on the word of God will likely be an inadequate bulwark against Satan's wiles.

Today's Responsorial Psalm gives us the perfect prayer: "A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me" (PS 51:12).

(Readings for the 1st Sunday of Lent)



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