



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 4: 1-13

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. The devil said to him, If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread. Jesus answered him, "It is written, One does not live on bread alone." Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him, "I shall give to you all this power and glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me." "It is written: You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve." Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written: He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you, and: With their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone." Jesus said to him in reply, "It also says, You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test." When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.

Introductory Prayer:

Lord Jesus, in this season of Lent, I want to draw closer to you. I believe that you truly became one of us to save us as an act of love beyond all human understanding. I know I can count on you to carry me through each day. I know that in all circumstances you are with me. I want to love you more than myself and say "yes" to your will in every moment. I trust totally in your grace. Thank you, Lord! This Lent, I want to learn to love you as you deserve by being the person you want me to be.

Petition:

Help me, Lord, to take advantage of this Lent and draw closer to you.

1. Holiness and Temptation:

Have you noticed in the gospels that the only times we see Jesus being

tempted by the devil are those in which Christ was in prayer or was doing penance? It's when he's in prayer or fasting that he is assailed by the devil, as in today's Gospel reading or in the Garden of Gethsemane on Holy Thursday. A similar pattern frequently appears in our lives, too. We make a decision to do something good and then promptly find it hard to do. What can we conclude from this? The fact is that when we're mediocre, we run no risk of becoming holy and spoiling Satan's plans. Thus, he has no concern for us. It's when we start to strive for holiness that we will find ourselves face-to-face with temptation, because the devil begins to put all sorts of obstacles in our paths.

2. Detachment from Self:

Lent is a time for us to renew our awareness of the suffering Jesus endured for our sake. That awareness should lead us to action. In this Lenten season the Church invites us to a greater self-sacrifice. Sacrifice helps us to be more detached from the sources of temptation that can keep us from reaping the full fruits of Christ's redeeming work and from loving God with an undivided heart. That's why our Lenten sacrifice should really be something that purifies our hearts and makes us more generous with others. Our sacrifice should make us less self-centered. It should make us better followers of Christ.

3. God as Our Point of Reference:

Overcoming temptation is not an easy business. In fact, it's impossible without God's grace. When Jesus was tempted, he showed us what our reference point should be: God. All three times the devil tempted him in the Gospel, he answered by putting God's word and God's will first. In order for us to persevere in our Lenten resolutions, we must center ourselves on God and rely on his grace. That means living close to Christ in Scripture especially the Gospels. It means staying close to him in the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

Conversation with Christ:

Lord Jesus, help me to know myself better so that I can see what I need to do in order to live a holier life. Give me resolve, perseverance to keep up the good fight and carry through, and humility to seek your grace. Without you I can do nothing.

Resolution:

I will offer my Lenten sacrifice with enthusiasm and constancy today, relying on God's grace.

