



Matthew 4: 1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Introductory Prayer: I believe, Lord, that with your example and help I can overcome temptation in my life. I hope in you, Lord, because you know that I am weak, and therefore you give me your grace which is stronger than sin. I love you, Lord, and I know that love for you and for souls will give me the strength to overcome sin in my life and help others to overcome it as well.

Petition: Lord, may prayer and vigilance keep me from falling into temptation.

1. The Spiritual Is More Important than the Material: Jesus teaches us to give more importance to the spiritual than to the material. However, man is weak, and he easily considers that satisfying his material needs justifies his not doing God's will. If we don't follow Christ's advice, then being tired will be a good enough reason not to pray, being in a bad mood will be a good enough reason not to live charity, and having a great idea will be a good enough reason to act as we want, not as we are taught. The devil's strategy is to make us look more at ourselves and our needs, than to look at God, his will, and the needs of the Church and of others.

2. The Problem with Overconfidence: Jesus teaches us that our actions have to correspond with what God wants, not with what we think he wants. There is always the danger of supposing that God thinks like we do, instead of seeking with all our strength to think as he does. Remember what Christ told Peter when Peter dared tell Jesus what he had to do (to stop talking about his future suffering and death): “Get behind me Satan.” Lent is a golden opportunity for us to “turn to the Lord,” the only source of true happiness. We put our trust in God when we make him the reference point of both our troubles and our joys, and when we turn to him in prayer, including moments set aside specifically for that purpose, as well as by invocations and brief, warm, spontaneous prayers throughout the day. Do I put my trust in the Lord through these ways of prayer?

3. Only God Deserves Our Worship: Obviously, we don’t consciously deny God and worship idols. But we shouldn’t forget that our heart will be where our treasure is. If Christ is not our treasure, then we will worship ourselves, others, things, money, honors, fame... While we wouldn’t genuflect in front of our new computer or that stylish outfit we just bought, we may give these objects more importance than they deserve. That only God deserves our worship is a very demanding reality. This means that God has to be the center of our thoughts, words, desires, actions and plans. Vigilance involves constantly purifying our intentions and desires so that Our Lord continues to reign supreme in our heart, as the One from whom we came and to whom we are heading as the goal and reward of our entire life. Is Christ the King of my heart?

Conversation with Christ: Dear Lord, help me understand that prayer and detachment from material things are necessary means for overcoming temptation. Help me remember that you overcame temptation in order to teach us all how we can overcome it, too. Help me to stay vigilant and united to you through prayer.

Resolution: In a moment of temptation, I will try to remember what God wants and ask him for his help.