

First Sunday of Lent
Sunday, March 5, 2017

Be Merciful, O Lord for We Have Sinned

Matthew's version of Jesus' temptation in the desert depicts two opposing roles: the role of Jesus, and that of the tempter. As the role of tempter, we look at the first question that is proposed: *"If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread."* This subtle "suggestion" of the tempter masks a more serious intent. In it we see doubt, **"If** you are the Son of God..." and we see a subtle challenge, **"Command** that these stones..."

Comparing this with life today and in our own lives, we too can occasionally doubt God in our minds, sometimes to the point of doubting that He exists. We sometimes challenge God, wanting Him to "prove himself" to us. But this Gospel quickly reminds us through Christ's words *"You should not put the Lord [our] God to the Test."* In this Gospel, we are also reminded that not only by "our bread", or our own terms, or by our own perspective that we live, but rather, *"by on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God."* It is the Lord our God, by His word, by his **"every"** word, that truly gives us life.

Being reminded of this, let us heed His wisdom through the Lenten season, casting away those things that distance ourselves from him, that prevent us from being closer to him. It is appropriate that we should take a portion of time out of our busy lives to pause for a moment. To stop and assess, asking ourselves, "What are the things in my own life that I am not particularly pleased with? What are the things that are holding me back from having a closer relationship with God? Whatever comes to mind, make a commitment to yourself to purge those things from your life as your Lenten penance this season. May this Lenten penance that we resolve in our minds and our hearts help to cleanse us and bring us closer to Him so that we *"worship Him alone. Him alone shall [we] serve."*

Deacon Greg Maynerich