

FAITH AND REASON

The Desert: The genealogy clearly reveals the human origin of Jesus. The Temptations, especially as described by St Luke, reveal that Jesus had become like us in all things except sin. Conflict was inevitable when infinite purity entered a world paralyzed by sin. It was not simply a question of proving to the "father of lies"... "the great deceiver". Whether or not Jesus was capable of performing a miracle: the contest lay in the motive for working miracles. Therefore, the temptations were not so much personal trials as they were a Messianic struggle.

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness of Judah, into the desert. - The "Devil's Haunt" The inhabited part of Judea was on the central plateau which was the spinal column of Southern Palestine. Between it and the Dead Sea there was a dreadful wilderness 35 miles by 15 miles. It was called "Jeshimon" which means "devastation". The hills were like great dust heaps. The limestone appeared blistered and peeling. The rocks were bare and jagged. The desert which glowed like a vast furnace, extended all the way to the precipices 1200 feet high, and slipped sharply down to the dead Sea. It was there is dreadful devastation that Jesus was tempted.

The First Temptation: "If you are the son of God command the stones to become bread" The devil tempts Jesus to abandon self-denial, his life of penance, and seek instead a life of ease and comfort..... Why do without when you can have it?..... The many abuses in the modern world - drug abuse, alcohol abuse, pornography, excessive gambling; internet addiction, and any-lifestyle that leads to serious neglect of ones duties would be wholeheartedly embraced by Satan. None of this leads to the happiness people seek. In our country, we have moved from being a generation that was regarded as slightly repressed - and that is a debatable point, to a generation which proclaims "Don't be a nerd, try it, you will like it.. eat, drink, and be merry". Professor Donald Campbell, during his tenure as President of the American Psychological Association, in his keynote address said the following: "The profession of Psychology has undermined the foundation of the moral conscience of the people, and seriously affected 70% to 80% of College undergraduates by insisting that pleasure is the best guide to human behavior and growth this is scientifically untrue, it is the substitution of the ID - the pleasure principle for the principle of reason the Ego. He seriously denounced the behavioral sciences for undermining our democracy in this way.

The second temptation: "I will give you all this power and glory if you will worship me" Jesus is tempted to be a political Messiah. When people forget, or even dismiss the notion that position, power, is for service, as they frequently do, then power is inevitably abused. Exposure to public attention, association with influential and powerful people, can, and frequently does lead to an exaggerated notion of one's importance. Then the exercise of power in honest or dishonest, selfish or unselfish ways, becomes their abiding occupation. Then, what of the people and their genuine needs? "If you can walk with kings and not lose the common touch you are a man my son".

The Third Temptation: The parapet was the south-east corner of the temple area; 450 feet below in lay the Kedron Valley. "Throw yourself down, for it is written. for he will bid his angels watch over you... Jesus is tempted to make a gaudy show of the miraculous; to seek popularity, notoriety, through exhibitionism. The world is awash with all three, to the neglect of sincerity, honor, duty, country, God!.... True greatness is achieved not simply in the extraordinary moments but also in those ordinary, monotonous, tedious, difficult, perplexing, demanding, sorrowful occasions which can slowly but surely sap one's mental, physical, emotional energy.

All three temptations were an attempt to undermine the mission of Jesus as the humble, suffering Messiah foretold by Isaiah the Prophet. All three temptations which we shall also meet will undermine our life in Christ unless we accept the challenge to seek and do the will of God on these occasions.

St Cyprian of Carthage offers us his reflections on the world of his day which in many ways similar to the modern world. "If I ascend some high mountain and look out over this wide land, you know very well what I would see. Robbers on the high roads and pirates on the sea, selfishness, cruelty, misery and despair under all roofs. It is a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But in the midst of it I have found a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world.. These people are the Christians, and I am one of them. What would St Cyprian say if he were to look out over our world today? Would he see a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret? The secret being the Risen Lord who calls us to walk with him through this world, by accepting the gift of his life and the message of eternal life? St Cyprian would see a very confused troubled world, that has lost its way, and in so doing has become its own worst enemy. Who will save us from ourselves? The One who can do precisely that, Jesus, God the Incarnate!... **Fr. William C. Mooney**

The life of each and every one of us has been written. The crucifix is my autobiography. The blood is the ink. The nails the pen. The skin the parchment. On every line of that body, I can trace my life. In the crown of thorns, I can read my pride. In the hands that are dug with nails, I can read avarice and greed. In the flesh hanging from him like purple rags, I can read my lust. In feet that are fettered, I can find the times that I ran away and would not let him follow. Any sin that you can think of is written there... **Bishop Fulton Sheen**

Get used to lifting your heart to God, in acts of thanksgiving, many times a day. Because he gives you this and that. Because you have been despised. Because you haven't what you need or because you have. Because he made his Mother so beautiful, his Mother who is also your Mother. Because he created the sun and the moon and this animal and that plant. Because he made that man eloquent and you he left tongue-tied... Thank him for everything, because everything is good... **Saint Josemaría Escrivá**

A Lenten Practice For the Day

Sunday	Give up complaining...Focus on gratitude.
Monday	Give up pessimism.... Become an optimist.
Tuesday	Give up harsh judgement.... Think kindly thoughts.
Wednesday	Give up worry.... Trust Divine Providence.
Thursday	Give up discouragement... Be full of hope.
Friday	Give up bitterness.... Turn to forgiveness
Saturday	Give up hatred.... Return good for evil.

"Tuning in" to the Gospel frequencies Pope Francis at Audience: 'disconnect from TV, smart phones and connect to the Gospel in Lent' In his General Audience of 26 February 2020, Pope Francis affirmed, "Lent is a favorable time to make room for the Word of God. It is the time to switch off the television and open the Bible. It is the time to separate from mobile phones and connect to the Gospel". He explained, "When I was a child there was no television but there was the habit of not listening to the radio. Lent is a desert. It is a time to give up something, to distance ourselves from mobiles and connect to the Gospel. It is the time to give up useless words, gossip and slander and to talk to and be informal with the Lord. It is the time to dedicate ourselves to a healthy ecology of the heart, to cleanse it.

Confession: If you haven't gone to confession in a while, Lent is the perfect time to reconcile yourself with God and the Church. Most parishes have communal penance services with prayers and Scripture readings, followed by the opportunity for individual confession (a necessity for absolution of mortal sins). Or you can also make a private appointment with a priest. Preparation for confession should include an examination of conscience, which means you think back on sins you have committed since your last confession. What happens during confession depends on the priest and the person. Most people still start with the formula: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been (state the number of months or years) since my last confession."

If you can't remember the words or you don't recall how long it's been, don't worry. Just tell the priest it's been a long time, and he will guide you through the process. What you will experience is the healing gift of God's love, the chance to start over with a clean conscience, and an overwhelming sense of gratitude. **Save The Date: San Sebastian Penance Service is Monday March 27, 2023, 7:00pm**

We should recall that no man is an island, entire of itself. Our lives are involved with one another, through innumerable interactions they are linked together. No one lives alone. No one sins alone. No one is saved alone. The lives of others continually spill over into mine: in what I think, say, and do, and achieve. And conversely, my life spills over into that of others: for better or for worse. So my prayer for another is not something extraneous to that person, something external, not even after death... **Pope Benedict XVI**

The soul, enlightened by faith, judges of things in a very different way to those who, having only the standard of the senses by which to measure them, ignore the inestimable treasure they contain . . . the soul that recognizes the will of God in every smallest event, and also in those that are most distressing and direful, receives all with an equal joy, pleasure and respect. It throws open all its doors to receive with honor what others fear and fly from with horror. The outward appearance may be mean and contemptible, but beneath this abject garb the heart discovers and honors the majesty of the king. The deeper the abasement of his entry in such a guise and in secret the more does the heart become filled with love... **Fr. Jean-Pierre de Caussade**

His Will is Our Peace
Fr. William C. Mooney

Email: Fr.WCmooney@gmail.com
Appointments: (904) 315-8554
Follow on Facebook: [Faith and Reason](#)
Instagram: [faith_and_reason](#)