

Reading 1: Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7**Reading 2:** Romans 5:12-19**Responsorial Psalm:****Gospel**

Ps 51:3-6, 12-14, 17

Mt 4:1-11

Gospel Reading: Mt 4:1-11

At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." He said in reply, "It is written: One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God." Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "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." Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, you shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test." Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me." At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written: The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve." Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

Meditation:

In Lent, the Holy Spirit leads us into the desert to speak to our heart. This spiritual desert is similar to the physical desert: Temptations can be seen more clearly for what they are, without distraction; Things that seem so important in the world, such as the regard of others, fade into obscurity in the spiritual desert; and Things that seem obscure in the clutter of society, such as God's opinion of you, are critically important in the desert.

In the stark desolation of the physical desert, you can: See clearly without distraction; Live simply, in a "lean and mean" lifestyle. Only the basic necessities for survival are valuable; and Discern value clearly. We tend to overvalue the things the world affords. In the desert, a cup of water has far more value than a diamond necklace. Most of all, the desert is a place of love. In the desert the Lord allures us by pouring out His love into our heart through the Holy Spirit. The Israelites grumbled in the desert but in the Lenten desert, we will rejoice. "In the desert prepare the way of the Lord". There is great freedom and joy for those who live in the light of God's truth and goodness. Do you know the joy and freedom of living in God's light?

The spirit is totally different and distant from the flesh, even though it dwells in the body, it only reveals itself to those who accept it and live by its instructions. It was because of the action of the Holy Spirit which descended upon Jesus in a very special way during his Baptism in the Jordan that Jesus was prepared for his mission of salvation. Being filled with the Holy Spirit Jesus was tempted by Satan, but defeated him by choosing good instead of evil. The spiritual world is very real, God is spirit and He is the father of all spirits. Satan was thrown from heaven with all his followers, those who questioned the authority and will of the Most High. His kingdom of darkness is located here in the world, not to be seen physically of course, because it is spiritual. Satan is allowed to influence human beings in order to put them to the test. Everyone is tested, and everyone fails, but not all the time thanks to the help of the spirit. As a human being Jesus was also put to the test, but making use of the perfections of his humanity he overcame the evil one, in order to teach you that it is possible to defeat Satan.

In fact, it is necessary to be very alert spiritually, so that by living in a state of grace you may keep the enemy away. When you live by the desires of the flesh, your spirit is annihilated, you surrender to your passions and give yourself to Satan, you become his property. In the spirit you are tempted, but because you don't accept that subtle encounter with your spirit, you dismiss it too quickly and do not discern the inner voice that helps you. You are then convinced by the devil to do his will, not the will of God. You only have one option: renounce Satan, renounce his evil ways, listen to the voice of your spirit, repent and come to the light again. In Baptism every person is clothed with God's light, in that new state the divine influence defends the soul against the attacks of the evil one, but is powerless if the person consents to sin. By prayer and by a life in accordance to the teachings of his gospels every person regains the power that was lost and the soul becomes strong against the evil one.

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. As we desire to follow in Jesus' footsteps, we are constantly faced with temptations. How do you handle such situations?
2. How will you prepare yourself spiritually during this season of Lent?
3. What will you fast and abstain from this Lent and how?

Jesus, let me count everything as loss so that I may always consider You, and You alone, to be my Wealth.

Source: www.presentationministries.com www.theworkofgod.org

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