

Fr. Romeo Homily
March 10, 2019
First Sunday of Lent (C)

A priest was having a hard time looking for a parking space. After sneaking into a no-double parking space, he left a note on his wiper which read: "Forgive me my trespasses" – Fr. Joseph.

When he returned, a violation ticket was tucked on his wiper with the note, "I will be removed from my post if I don't book you – lead me not into temptation Father".

Every one of us is enticed by a temptation for more in life. Every temptation is custom-made for us. It is suited and fitted to the kind of person we are and to the desires of our hearts. Temptations attack us where we are weakest. Some people are easily drawn to vices like gambling, drinking, or illicit affairs. Others are prone to harbor ill will and hatred against others. There are those who are just plain lazy in life. We find people whose life revolves around their own petty, closed, greedy selves.

The Gospel shows us the Lord Jesus himself suffering from the devil's temptations. In his earthly life, the Son of God was tested in every way by the devil who sought to destroy the mission of spreading the Good News. What we can notice about Jesus is that He was strong and resolute. He resisted every tactic and fought the devil with wisdom and deep faith.

Temptations are not sins. They are experiences natural to all creatures. But temptations are dangerous. Once you say "yes", then it's no longer temptation; you have fallen into sin and have moved away from the Lord. How do we win over temptation? Let us look at the example of Jesus.

First, Jesus did not play games with the devil. He aborted temptation from the start refusing to play along. Many times, this is our biggest fault. We know our weakness but we are overconfident that exposing ourselves to it will not harm us. So we start testing and doing the things that we should not be doing. There is a wisdom in the ancient spiritual advice to "avoid

occasions of sin". Do not underestimate temptation and do not overestimate your own power. Pull the temptation from the roots. Don't play along.

Secondly, the Lord prayed. He called on God. Remember, he was in the desert with the Holy Spirit. He was there praying all the time before the temptations came. We feel weak against temptations because our prayer life, too, has been weak. How often do you pray? Do you really develop a relationship with God in prayer? The strength of Jesus came from his strong attachment to his Father.

Many of us now are more attached to the television or the cell phone or the computer than the Lord. Lent offers us the opportunity to grow in our faith through prayer and sacrifice. Let us start by asking God to train our hearts to resist the temptations that ruin our lives and the lives of the ones we love.

We need to put God first in everything so that the choices that we make will surely be for the greater glory of His name.