

Well, here we are, the first Sunday of Lent. Already four days into the Lenten Season, four days into our penitential, or better yet, reconciliatory activities in order to bring us back in line with the will of God our Father. That **SEASON** when we pray more, when we think of the poor more often, and when we give something up because – well, that's just what we do for these 40 days. 40 days of preparation; 40 days to **TURN OUR LIFE AROUND**.

Didn't we do this LAST year? And the year before that? Has anything changed in your life? Are we a BETTER Catholic today than we were last year? Is this year going to be any different?

Jesus the Christ, when he was at what had to be his most physical and mental low, having fasted 40 days in the desert following his Baptism, was approached by the devil who **tempted** Jesus to do things that, in their own relative sense are GOOD, but when are performed for the wrong attitude or disposition, are SINFUL.

"If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." The devil **ALREADY** knows that Jesus is the Son of God and that he **COULD** change the stone to bread – nothing to prove here. There's something more to bringing oneself closer to God and doing His will than satisfying one's SELF wants. Food is GOOD and it satisfies the needs of the body, but we are called to look **beyond** our **OWN** needs, both physical and spiritual.

The acquisition of POWER and WEALTH – things I'm sure we've each wanted to have at some time or another – are GOOD things to have, but to acquire them at WHAT COST! Would we sell our soul to the devil, as he was tempting Jesus to do? PRIDE and ARROGANCE are the root of all sin – placing "I", ME, in the middle of all things, to the detriment of others. Where can LOVE be if I expect to have everything, and give NOTHING in return? If **I** am the idol, what room is there for God?

How often have we heard or said as parents, "You did WHAT?? If Johnny told you to jump off the bridge would you do that too??" Okay, if the bridge wasn't too high and the water was deep enough, maybe. Having harmless fun is one thing. Placing oneself in danger, or doing inappropriate

things because we want to **impress** others is wrong. A "double-dog-dare" might teach a lasting lesson: how dumb was I to do it; or, how **wise** I was to walk away.

When it comes right down to it, temptations in themselves are NOT BAD. Jesus teaches us that we can either succumb to them for any numbers of reasons, just like Adam and Eve succumbed to their temptation in the garden, or we can look to faith and belief in God the Father that **He** knows better than we what is good for us, for our lives, and for our happiness.

WE are reasoning animals, with a soul, who can distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, and who can **CHOOSE** one or the other. During this Lenten season we can **choose** to take another look, a deeper look, at our lives, and decide if there is something that needs to change to allow us to move closer to God and to our neighbors. We can **choose** to do something that will help others in need. We can **choose** to watch videos or read books, like the Bible, that will **FEED** our need to nourish our faith. If there is something we feel we could give up and do without, like **SIN**, then we can **choose** to have a change of heart and make room for God in our lives; or, we can choose to keep our hearts closed to His almighty will and desire that we be a part of His infinite love.

As Catholics, we can change the world and lead it back to God, but not until we take steps in our own lives to move closer to God ourselves. During this season of reflection, of penance, of reconciliation, we are asked to open our hearts and ears to the Word of God, to be attentive to His nearness to us, and to place our trust in Him alone who can satisfy **ALL** our needs. Like Jesus, trust in God whose love is boundless, and may we show His love to others through the way we live our lives, not only during Lent, but thru the years to come.

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