

First Sunday in Lent
February 26, 2023

- **From the archives of Msgr. John J. Gilchrist February 25, 1995**

We have entered into the holy season of Lent, that time in the Church Year when we reflect upon the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus.

The reading from the Book of Genesis introduces us to an early tradition which links the relationship of humankind to the soil from which it was formed, as a potter molds the clay. Human nature is not a duality of body and soul; rather, God's breath brings forth a living being composed of body and soul. Upon their creation, these beings were placed in the Garden of Eden, a name which means "delight." The ancient people believed that the tree of knowledge of good and evil would confer wisdom and the tree of life would confer eternal life.

The story of the serpent and the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve is one which is known the world over. "You will become like God knowing good and evil," promised the serpent. The vice called pride took over, and innocence was lost to the whole human race. The responsorial psalm cries out, "Be Merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned." We seek the mercy of God Who in His goodness forgives us our sins and pardons our offenses.

As we begin this holy season of lent, the gospel passage which we have heard today seems most appropriate. When we turn to God in prayer and fasting the temptations which we will face are very real. Jesus knew temptation. "You are hungry, if You are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread." "If You are God, jump off the temple and the angels will protect You from the fall." "Offer me homage and I will give you the kingdoms of the world." There is no doubt that Jesus could have turned the stones into bread, that the angels could have saved Him from and fall; and that He could have destroyed the power of Satan in the world. But this was not the way it was to be. Jesus was to follow the natural progression of His life. He prepared for the beginning of His public ministry by fasting and prayer in the desert, for the path which He was to walk would be a very difficult one, and He knew it.

We are at the start of a time of penance in the Church Year and in our personal lives. Since Vatican Council II, the Church has relaxed its strict regulations regarding regulated fasting and penitence. Unfortunately, the majority of Roman Catholics have made the wrong assumption that such sacrifice has been done away with. This, of course, is not the case. The obligation for prayer and penance has been placed where it should be – upon the individual. Are we still obligated to do penance and make sacrifices? Yes, indeed, we are. What are we to do? We must look within our own hearts and determine what needs to be changed in our own lives. Only then, by prayer, fasting and

mortification will we become what we are truly called to be – the sons and daughters of God, the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ Who has given us the example which we are called to follow.

2023年2月26日 四旬期第一主日弥撒福音反思 (玛4:1-11)

如果耶稣选择了饼，而不是天主圣言；如果他选择从圣殿尖顶跳下以表明他是天主子，而不是留在十字架上；如果耶稣为了获得虚荣而选择朝拜魔鬼，而不是天主；他是谁？想一下：如果我们在旷野遇见耶稣，看到耶稣走的是魔路，有什么感觉？还有一个问题：当耶稣看到我们选择邪恶而不是天主时，他有什么感受？

为了在四旬期加强信仰，先要了解耶稣在旷野中遇到的事情。魔鬼试图通过避免痛苦和死亡来引诱耶稣成为犹太人期望的政治默西亚。这三个试探的顺序，是从地面的石头到耶路撒冷圣殿的顶峰，最后到达可以俯瞰地上所有王国的山顶；这三种诱惑展示三种控制：物质、精神和权力。当应用到基督徒身上时，就是以物质财富满足个人需要，还有以灵性骄傲施行奇迹，最后以各种邪恶手段谋取政治权力。同时对应三种错误的价值观，即拥有物质资源、灵性骄傲或政治权力的人，是天主所祝福的。进一步，反思到三个所谓神人交易：如果你让我富有，赋予我神奇力量，给我政治权力，

我就朝拜你。

事实上，耶稣用天主的话对抗诱惑；他引用申8:3来说明人活着的意义：“叫你知道人生活不但靠食物，而且也靠上主口中所发的一切言语生活。”还有申6:16所强调的“你们不可试探上主你们的天主”，以及申6:13的劝导：“你要敬畏上主你的天主，只事奉他。”

魔鬼在这里被称为“试探者”（peirazōn），在希腊文法是分词，指的是通过诱惑犯罪来测试一个人的信仰、德行或品格。根据上下文，这分词相当于引诱犯罪；也就是说，魔鬼千方百计诱使人离开天主。

当魔鬼给耶稣第一个诱惑的时机再好不过，就是耶稣已经禁食四十天，开始饥饿，然而，耶稣不想将自己交给魔鬼任其摆布；第二诱惑的地点，是在圣殿最高之处，耶稣被诱使将自己确定为奇迹术士，可是他没听从魔鬼，以神力哗众取宠，从而吸引追随者；当然，耶稣拒绝在魔鬼面前施行奇迹，因为清楚知道他来是服侍人，而非受人服侍。在第三次试探中，魔鬼要耶稣进入权力漩涡，在政治世界建立他的天国，而不是选择痛苦和死亡的十字架道路；其实，用错误手段来达到善的结果，本身就是试探。

耶稣受试探，主题是通过朝拜魔鬼来赢得世界；人常问：为什么不跟魔鬼妥协？为什么不跟邪恶势力来个交易？如果耶稣这样做了，他就不是天主子。同样，如果基督徒为了不背

十字架而走邪路，就不是天主子女，而是魔鬼门徒，目的地，肯定是地狱。

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