

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

FEBRUARY 18, 2018

MASS READINGS

MONDAY: LV 18:1-2,11-18, PS 19, MT 25:31-46

TUESDAY: IS 55:10-11, PS 34, MT 6:7-15

WEDNESDAY: JON 3:1-10, PS 51, LK 11:29-32

THURSDAY: 1PT 5:1-4, PS 23, MT 16:13-19

FRIDAY: EZ 18:21-28, PS 130, MT 5:20-26

SATURDAY: DT 26:16-19, PS 119, MT 5:43-48

NEXT SUNDAY: SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT-RDGS: GN 22, PS 116, ROM 8:31-34, MK 9:2-10

MASS INTENTIONS

MONDAY: KATHY LESTER

TUESDAY: J.D. HOUSER

WEDNESDAY: CHARLES & ROBERTA LEHNEN

THURSDAY: KATHY LESTER

FRIDAY: POOR SOULS

VIGIL: ROBERT BOHAN

7:30: CHARLES & CATHERINE SPITZNAGLE

10:00: PAUL MILLER

NOON: FOR THE PARISH

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

All members of St. Ann's parish, families-living & deceased: Ann Hubertz. (Nufer-Vogel families). Thomas & Jerry Butz. (Karen Fox, Mike & Rosemary Cavanaugh). Marian Schwartz. Marvin Anthrop. (Robert Bennett & Dick Livingston). Ken DeLion. Charles Connor. (Robert Bohan & Melvin Elliott). Jane Clapp.

GOSPEL REFLECTION:

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert,

There are times in our lives when the Spirit is very insistent that we do something for "us and for our salvation". In Jesus' case the Spirit insisted that he visit the desert for our salvation, not his. Fortunately for us he obeyed the Spirit and entered to be tempted where he emerged victorious if not a bit on the peckish side. We must learn to take seriously the promptings of the Spirit if we are to gain the upper hand in our spiritual lives and share in the victory already won for us at Calvary. Here, through prayer, fasting and works of mercy, we become sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit who wishes us to enter the desert which has always been a place of intimacy better the person and God. In this "loneliness" we discern who we really are and what God expects of us, and more importantly, what gifts and fruits God has given us in order that we might achieve what he expects. These valuable moments of time with God serve to strengthen, to enlighten, to reprove, if necessary, but always to assure us of the presence of the grace necessary to accomplish all things in the name of Christ the Victor over Sin and Death. Failure to hear the promptings of the Spirit would be comparable to missing a number of things which are absolutely important. We take for granted the varied and many small things we were taught to help us survive a single day and yet fail to listen to the one voice that is here to lead us beyond this life into the eternal glory of the Trinity. The Spirit is our companion, our guide on this journey and we need to make and take the time necessary to discern what sort of instruction we are to receive in order to do more than simply survive. The Spirit is there to make sure we complete the journey and, in the words of Jesus, enter into the place prepared for us before the foundation of the world.

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PRAYER IN TIMES OF SPIRITUAL DRYNESS

The LORD, your God, will circumcise your hearts ...that you may love the LORD, your God, with all your heart and all your soul, and so may live. (Deuteronomy 30:6)

If a soul becomes more patient in suffering and readier to endure lack of consolations, this is a sign that it is making greater progress in virtue. (St. John of the Cross)

Sooner or later in our prayers, we experience what is called dryness—a time when we have no felt sense of God’s presence. We may even think we have lost our Beloved or feel abandoned by God. In the school of prayer, few things are more important to understand than the nature and role of spiritual dryness.

There are *six significant questions* that should be asked about prayer during these desert experiences, as they are sometimes called. Three of these questions will be asked and answered in this article. The other three will be dealt with in the next article.

Question 1: What is it that praying people experience during the desert or dry periods of the spiritual journey?

The actual desert experience will vary depending on the person’s level of faith and spiritual maturity. For the beginner in prayer, spiritual dryness frequently means not just the absence of a felt sense of the presence of God but also feelings of what St. Ignatius calls desolation, that is, a state of anxiety, sadness, or loss of peace flowing from the thought that “I have lost God” or “God has abandoned me.”

On the other hand, for the person who is more mature in faith and advanced in the ways of prayer, spiritual dryness may not be an experience of desolation. It will be one which, though lacking a *felt sense* of God’s presence, may be accompanied by the conviction that: “Even though I can’t feel God’s presence (at least on the external), I don’t feel anxious, sad, or abandoned (the state of desolation). In fact, I feel peaceful.” (For more information on this topic, see *Weeds Among the Wheat* and *When the Well Runs Dry* by Jesuit Thomas H. Green.)

To believe that God is present and active despite his apparent absence can be considered one of the greatest blessings of the spiritual life. For most of us, particularly in the early years of prayer, spiritual dryness usually includes the experience of desolation (“I have lost God; God has abandoned me.”).

It is usually a time of spiritual suffering. We think we are getting the “silent treatment” from God. We call out to him all day long, but he never answers (see Psalm 22:3). Spiritual dryness is like journeying in the desert with no water in sight. Prayer is no longer exciting; rather, it is a wearying struggle. Spiritual exercises that once nourished us are now empty, and we have little or no desire to do them.

Another dimension of the desert experience may be the feeling of discouragement as we become keenly aware of our own sinfulness. (We may not yet know that one of the surest signs of growth in the interior life is a growing awareness of our own sinfulness.) We may begin to think we are regressing rather than progressing. We may begin to experience one of the great paradoxes of the spiritual life, i.e., the closer we come to God, the farther we seem to be away from him. As we get closer to the all-piercing Light of God, the more our own darkness will show itself. Our lives will appear to be hollow and mediocre. The late Fr. John Dalrymple, in his book *Simple Prayer*, writes:

It is as if I were to bring the sleeve of my coat toward the window of the room, and as I move into the light, the dust and dandruff on the sleeve become more obvious. It is not that as I moved the coat got dirtier, but that the light got brighter.

What seems to scare and hurt us most is the thought that we have lost our Beloved and that he has abandoned us (see Song of Songs 3:1-11). This thought or feeling characterizes the experience of desolation described earlier.

To sum up, it can be said that while the actual experience of the desert will be different for different people, for all of us it will mean a *felt sense* of the absence of God. And for those of us whose faith in God is still fragile, it will frequently involve the experience of desolation (the “I have lost God” feeling).

This description of spiritual dryness may give the impression that it is something experienced only by monks, religious, and exceptional, lay persons. Yet spiritual directors maintain that this experience is quite common in the lives of many average, prayerful lay people who discover somewhere in the midst of their spiritual journeys that spiritual exercises, which once nourished them immensely, now do nothing for them.

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Question 2: Why is an understanding of this dimension of prayer so important?

There are at least three reasons why some understanding of spiritual dryness is important.

First, if we do not understand the role of the desert in the spiritual life, we may quit praying in times of dryness. We may think that we have “lost God” and that our prior, positive feelings in prayer were not a gift from God but the product of our own imagination. This frequently happens. Many people experience genuine conversion and get all excited about prayer, but they quit when the well runs dry. This is sad because it is often in those moments that God wants to do his real work in such persons.

Second, lack of knowledge about the purpose of spiritual dryness may cause us to continue praying in a way that, at *this particular stage* in our spiritual journey, may be more of an obstacle rather than a help in our spiritual growth. Many people are unaware that at some stage in the spiritual journey, God may call them to become less active in prayer so that he can be more active in their spiritual transformation.



Fighting the Good Fight: Resisting Temptation By Monsignor Charles M. Mangan

+J.M.J.+

Introduction

There has been a growing interest in the various manifestations of Satan in our midst. Perhaps due to the use of social communications, we have become cognizant more than ever of the troubling increase of involvement with Satanic cults, especially among the young.

This awareness, however, does not necessarily mean that we understand any better the workings of the Devil around us. On the contrary, one could argue persuasively that with the dearth of substantive catechesis during the last forty years, Catholics may be more ignorant than ever of the Evil One and his pervasive presence.

In discussing the workings of Satan, many spiritual authors focus on two categories: 1.) Extraordinary Satanic Activity, which covers varied evil disturbances like external pain caused by demons, diabolical possession, diabolical oppression, diabolical obsession, diabolical infestation and diabolical subjugation; 2.) Ordinary Satanic Activity, which, in a word, is temptation.

Concerning the first category, for further information about extraordinary Satanic activity, one should have recourse to an approved author; if some diabolical disturbance seems present, one should approach a competent spiritual director and even the Local Bishop.

Our Three Spiritual Foes

There are valuable treatments of the important subject of temptation. This writer is especially indebted to that of the well-known French Sulpician priest, the Very Reverend Father Adolphe Tanquerey, D.D. (1854 -1932), presented in his classic *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology* (Tournai: Desclee & Co., 1930, second and revised edition, translated by the Reverend Father Herman Branderis, S.S., A.M., pages 101-119 and 427-436).

We have three spiritual foes: 1.) the flesh; 2.) the world; 3.) the Devil. The flesh is often called "concupiscence," which is the inclination to sin deep within us. The world and the Devil are external to us, but also very powerful threats to our true and lasting happiness. Here let us say a word about each, with a nod to Father Tanquerey for his assistance.

1.) We base our description of the flesh on the famous passage of Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist (+ circa 100 A.D.) in his First Letter (2:16): "For all that is in the world, the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life, is not from the Father but is from the world."

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Therefore, the spiritual foe we term the flesh may be further divided into: A.) the concupiscence of the flesh, which is the inordinate love of sensual pleasures; B.) the concupiscence of the eyes, which is all unwholesome curiosity and inordinate love of the goods of our earth; C.) the pride of life, which is excessive self-love and is accompanied by vanity.

2.) The world signifies "not the total aggregate of men upon the earth, among whom are found both choice souls and irreligious men; but the sum-total of those who oppose Jesus Christ and are the slaves of the threefold concupiscence." Identified as such are unbelievers, the indifferent, hardened sinners and those who believe and even practice their religion but do so mired in a moral laxity.

3.) The Devil is representative of Satan and the Fallen Angels. The Devil was jealous of the contentment experienced by Adam and Eve and so tempted them to sin. Ever since he was successful in the Garden of Eden, the Devil has continued his efforts against men and women, boys and girls with the hideous goal of leading all human persons away from their beloved and loving Creator.

Ordinary Satanic Activity--Temptation

Temptation comes to us from the flesh, the world and the Devil. Father Tanquerey defined temptation as "a solicitation to evil on the part of our spiritual foes." God allows us to be tempted so that we will merit Heaven, but He does not tempt us directly. Temptation is a means of purification and an instrument of spiritual progress. By temptation, we grow in humility and love of God.

Some persons are tempted frequently and intensely, while others are tempted less and without being deeply agitated.

The great Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Bishop and Doctor of the Church, taught that there are three distinct but related phases in each temptation: A.) suggestion, which is the proposal of some evil; B.) pleasure, which happens when after the moving towards the suggested evil, there is some attendant delight; C.) consent, which is when the will delights in the pleasure, willingly enjoys it and yields to it. Sin occurs only when there is consent.

Our Response to Temptation

When we overcome temptation, our souls are aided remarkably. A magnificent triumph results when temptation is shunned. Father Tanquerey isolated three things that we must do to conquer temptation: 1.) forestall temptation; 2.) battle against it; 3.) thank God after a victory and rise quickly after any fall.

1.) Vigilance and prayer are required to forestall temptation. Regarding vigilance, we assert: presumption that compels us to place ourselves unnecessarily in the midst of temptation must be avoided, as must vain terrors which increase the danger and harmful occasions of sin--persons, places, things and events. When prayer is added to vigilance, in the words of Father Tanquerey, we become "invincible. God is concerned in our success, for it is He Whom the Devil assails in us, it is His work which He would wreck in us."

2.) Resistance against temptation is indispensable. Serious temptation must be confronted: A.) promptly, without hesitation; B.) energetically, with determination and strength; C.) perseveringly, with tenacity; D.) humbly, which "attracts grace, and grace gives us the victory."

3.) Temptation vanquished means that the blessed person must render gratitude to Almighty God, for from Him derives the conquest. Sin surrendered to is an invitation to the repentant sinner "to humble himself sincerely before God, to acknowledge his incapacity to do any good, to place his trust in God, to be all the more cautious, and return to the practice of penance. A fault thus repaired will not constitute a serious obstacle to perfection."

We do not throw ourselves headlong into temptation without real necessity; however, neither do we fail to see that when God permits us to be tempted, amazing spiritual progress is possible.

Conclusion

Satan is indeed active in our world by way of temptation, but when we pray daily, receive the Sacraments (particularly Confession and the Most Holy Eucharist) worthily and often, perform acts of charity and self-denial, avail ourselves of the intercession of Our Blessed Mother and the Angels and Saints and avoid the near occasion of sin, we increase in Sanctifying Grace and overcome the temptations emanating from the flesh, the world and the Devil.

Six Ways Not to Fight Temptation

By Fr. Clayton Thompson

After making the critical decision to follow Christ, it becomes clear to many men that the Christian life is a lot like sports: there's a lot more that goes into perfecting one's game than appears at first. When a toddler is holding a football, his one task is just to get it into the hands of his dad standing a few feet away; however that happens is fine. Perfecting a pass is something altogether different. Good quarterbacks spend hours on end practicing the mechanics of passing: their grip, their stance, their shoulders, their draw, the timing of their release. Trying to teach the toddler what to do with his non-throwing hand would just confuse him; the mechanics are important, but they come later.

In the same way, after discovering that sin is empty and unfulfilling, turning away from it and living the Christian moral life seems like a pretty straightforward idea: don't do the things that Jesus says are sins. Check. However, after a bit of time and effort, we find that there's more to it than we first thought. Sin and the temptation that leads to it are more complicated than they seem. There comes a time, then, when we need to focus a little more closely and study the mechanics of avoiding temptation: the little things that lead to victory by God's grace.

For this, we turn to the advice of the spiritual giant St. Francis de Sales in his book "Introduction to the Devout Life." Francis is a masterful coach in this regard. However, addressing everything he has to say about temptation would be an epic undertaking, so I'd like to present a few helpful things that he tells us we should not do as we learn to master the mechanics of the moral life.

1. Don't love the temptation. Seems obvious, right? But, let's face it, even after we've made a clean break with certain sins, the temptation to them can still feel pretty good. Even if a guy has gotten rid of a lot of anger and outbursts of rage in his life, allowing himself to dwell on thoughts about how he would tell off those people who have made him mad can give a great sense of victory. Even though another man would never cheat on his wife, tossing around the idea of visiting the girl in the office that always makes eyes at him can feel pretty good: "I've still got it," he tells himself. Being pleased with the temptation is always the first step toward consenting to it (IV.3).1

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2. Don't put yourself in the way of temptation. This one is both a matter of foresight and honesty. First, it requires foresight: if I know that every time I get into conversations with those people at the lunch table, we end up talking about filthy things and gossiping about other people, it's my fault when I fall into backbiting and immodest conversation (IV.6). At the same time, it requires honesty: often, we put ourselves into situations because we tell ourselves that we're "beyond" certain sins. This can be true, but it's more rare than we like to think. If I've noticed that I delight in certain temptations (see #1), I need to be honest about the situations that I place myself in that lead to them. It's very simply a choice to cut the temptation off. This is what's referred to as "avoiding the near occasion of sin."

3. Don't be so anxious! Feeling tempted is not a sin (IV.3). That is, provided that we didn't cause the temptation to happen by placing ourselves in its way (see #2). If I feel envious of someone's possession and have the urge to take it when no one is looking, as long as it remains a feeling, it's just a pesky temptation (IV.3). It's when we allow ourselves to get all worked up about feeling tempted that things go bad: "Worry is the greatest evil that can befall the soul, sin alone excepted" (IV.11). When we lose our peace, we begin to believe the great lie of the Tempter that we'll never get over the feeling of fighting an uphill battle until we give in. And when that lie sets into our mind, the next step is a fall.

4. Don't give temptations a hearing. St. Francis de Sales makes a distinction between greater and lesser temptations: for example, the temptation to murder someone vs. to be short and irritable with him; to steal vs. to covet; to commit perjury vs. to tell a lie; to commit adultery vs. to not guard one's eyes (IV.8). While we must fight great temptations forcefully, with the lesser temptations, he says that our main task is just to let them pass by: to quietly remove them and not let them steal our peace (IV.9). It's the old pink elephant trick: the more we try not to think of pink elephants, the more they crowd our consciousness. When temptations arise and you recognize them, reject them and go on, not giving them any more thought. Otherwise, they become overwhelming.

5. Don't make it a game of will. When a man is specifically trying to overcome a certain sin in his life, he's often disheartened by his weakness in fighting temptations to that sin. Many times, the problem is one of perspective. If I approach the moral life saying "I'm going to prove to God how good I can be and not sin" instead of "I love God and, therefore, hate sin and want to get rid of it because it hurts my relationship with him," it's no wonder that God allows me to fall: I would think that I was my own savior. Self-reliance remains one of the greatest causes of failure here. When temptations come, the key is to trust more deeply in God's grace, to humble oneself before him, and to come to love him more (IV.11).



6. Don't remain silent. Perhaps one of the most important truths to remember when it comes to sin and temptation is that we are not alone in this fight. God is there, but so is the Evil One. The Devil is not just a fairytale; he is real and he has an impact on your life. While a great source of temptation comes from the disorder of our souls, Satan and evil spirits are intensely active in this regard, as well. One of the greatest dangers, then, is to try to fight an angelic-intelligence-turned-evil on your own (IV.7). Tell other people about your struggles: have other men that keep you accountable; have a regular confessor who gets to know your soul and understands Satan's tricks. Such openness and honesty is essential in overcoming the sins that lead to our misery. It's the little things that count in life. Mastering the mechanics of sports separates the great from the good. In the spiritual life, "good" doesn't cut it; so take a note from St. Francis de Sales and fight temptation the right way.



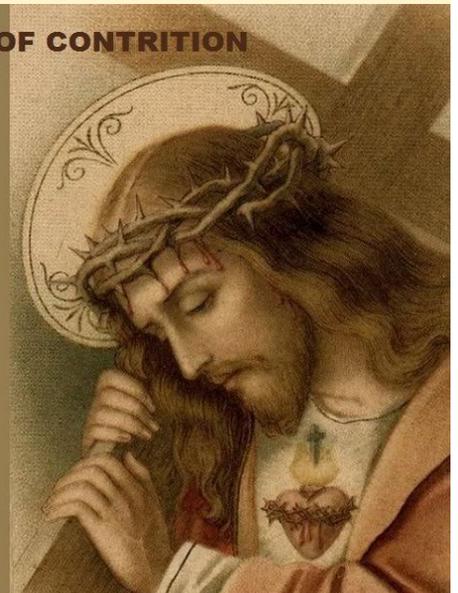
Feb 26	7:00pm	St. Mary, Frankfort
Feb 26	7:00pm	St. Francis Xavier, Attica
Mar 1	7:00pm	St. Joseph, Covington
Mar 5	7:00pm	St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Lawrence,
Mar 13	7:00pm	St. Bernard, Crawfordsville
Mar 21	7:00pm	St. Mary Cathedral, Lafayette
Mar 21	6:15pm	Church of the Blessed Sacrament

ACT OF CONTRITION

To pray it daily with love and sincerity before going to bed.

"O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins, because of Your just punishments, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin."

Amen.



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A Lent to Remember

A Lenten Encounter with Mercy

Join us for a 4-week online study at www.stannlafayette.formed.org featuring the Augustine Institute original productions *Symbolon* and *Forgiven: The Transforming Power of Confession*. *A Lent to Remember* is a beautiful presentation of the transforming power of mercy in the Sacrament of Confession. No matter what you have done, no matter how long you have been away, Jesus is waiting for you with open arms this Lent!

Week One: February 25, 2018

Forgiven: Where Are You?

Week Two: March 4, 2018

Forgiven: An Encounter with Mercy

Week Three: March 11, 2018

Forgiven: Embraced in Mercy: The Rite Explained

Week Four: March 18, 2018

Symbolon: The Paschal Mystery

Bonus Episode: For Children

For Children: How to Make a Good Confession

NOT ON FORMED YET? IT'S EASY AND FREE TO REGISTER!

- 1 Go to www.stannlafayette.formed.org and click "Register"
- 2 Enter your name, email address, and desired password
- 3 Go to Study, then *A Lent to Remember*
- 4 Use the *Symbolon* and *Forgiven* Leader Guides for discussion



Use the *Symbolon* and *Forgiven* Leader Guides for discussion

FORMED
THE CATHOLIC FAITH
ON DEMAND.

Schoenstatt Holy Hour

All are invited to the *Schoenstatt Holy Hour* with Father Cassian Sama O.P. On Tuesday, February 20, 2018 at 7pm in St Thomas Aquinas Church. It will include adoration, rosary, a homily, and benediction.

PART TIME OFFICE MANAGER OPENING

Tippecanoe County Right to Life is seeking a part-time office manager. Duties include: record keeping, general office duties, manage mail and e-mail, return phone calls, organize events and volunteers, publish newsletter, attend quarterly board meetings, etc. Approx 5-8 hours per week. To apply, submit resume and cover letter to Kevin Niebrugge and Kristy Korchnak tippcortl@gmail.com

STEWARDSHIP BY THE BOOK: It seems fitting that our readings on this First Sunday of Lent begin with the Old Testament Book of Genesis. The book was first called "Genesis" — ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ — in the Greek Septuagint translation, as it presents both the origin of the world and mankind, and in particular, the Hebrew people. The book in Hebrew was known by its opening expression, "In the beginning."

In today's particular reading from Genesis 9, we hear of God's relationship with Noah and his family. God says, "I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you." God goes on to say, "I set my bow (rainbow) in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the covenant I have made between me and you and all living beings."

As is often the case, we have lost sight of the significance of the rainbow in relation to our faith. Yet it is biblically confirmed as a sign from God. Some live in areas where rainbows are common, and others in areas where they are rare. Regardless, there is something divine about a rainbow. When you look up in the sky and see a multi-colored arc looking back at you, you should be filled with wonder. It is a reminder that we live in a world of wonder, of beauty, of adventure. A rainbow should give us hope that life really isn't just about death and taxes, but much, much more. It is a clue to the meaning of the universe and where we stand within it.

SUNDAY OFFERING

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"FIND OUT HOW MUCH GOD HAS GIVEN YOU, AND FROM IT TAKE WHAT YOU NEED; THE REMAINDER IS NEEDED BY OTHERS"

ST. AUGUSTINE