

First Sunday of Lent March 10th 2019.

THEME: TEMPTATIONS IN MY LIFE.

INTRODUCTION

Lent always begins with an account of Jesus and His TEMPTATIONS in the DESERT, as recounted for all of us here in the Gospel, we just heard. We all know what temptations in my life are like.--Temptations in my LIFE come in all shapes and sizes.

Some Temptations in my life are big ones. These are the Temptations of: SEX MONEY and POWER.

Other Temptations in my LIFE present themselves in more subtle ways. These temptations are more part of our cultural surroundings and I can catch them like the FLU,-- for example, - through SLOGANS Songs and ADVERTISING. They do not have to be right to be popular just catchy. These are subtle temptations, and diminish my fidelity to Christ.

They come with tag lines such as:” How can it be wrong, when it feels right?”—That is a justification that can be pursued by serial killers and criminals of every sort .—Something can be very wrong even fatal, and still “feel right.”

They come through song lyrics such as “ Whether I am wrong or whether I am right, I gotta be me...(REMEMBER THAT SONG...) The world’s worst dictators could say the same thing.

The best way to be myself is to be grounded in what is true and morally right .That is the person God created me to be!—After all,--, ‘Integrity’ is the coin of the ‘REALM.’

I have temptations from popular psychology,- that try to immunize me from the consequences of my actions.- A criminal who defrauded some senior citizen a long time ago tried to show his rehabilitation by remarking that :” What is important now is, that I am able to forgive myself”. It would seem that repairing the real harm done to others is more important and would lead to some self-respect.

Temptations in my life always have a surface plausibility to them , such as in the phrase “What happens in Vegas stays, in Vegas. –Does it? –Does betrayal of a marriage Vow or actions that separate s us from Christ remain in the place where they occurred or do they travel with us like a cancer on our soul?

Phrases , such as “ winning is everything”,-- and,-- “looking out for ‘Number One’ ... can disguise a contempt for the community and network of relationships which are essential to the very life we are designed to share with others.

Today,- dishonesty can disguise itself as shrewd business dealings .Marital infidelity will call itself “OPEN MARRIAGE” Gossip is passed along as concern for a friend. –An abusive temper can be excused as strategic or righteous indignation. To counteract these temptations we are given the corrective and

therapeutic season of Lent with its ancient medicines of
__FASTING __PRAYER__and -- Almsgiving.

Fasting is the great boot camp for our will power. We have become accustomed to satisfying every urge we have. Self-control must be learned .- Our culture suggests that self-denial is a kind of sin.— Fasting teaches me that control of my heart begins with control of my body. Fast and Abstinence will teach me a great deal about myself and will make me strong.

Prayer is one of the practices we all agree we should do, but we never seem to have the time for it. We are adept at episodic spurts of prayer,-- emergency spirituality,-- but not a life of communion with God. I cannot, however live my life dependent on jumper cables.- I need a good battery.-- Prayer is the energy cell of my soul.-- Sometimes, I am tempted to say that my whole day is prayer.-- It is not.-- My whole day,can be prayer, only when I know how to pray alone.

Almsgiving,-- the practice of sharing my prosperity with others, is one concrete measure of my commitment to Christ and His Church.— Empathy is cheap.—The true test of my concern for the poor, and the people in any need is found in the memos of my checkbook. The checks I write tell the real story of my priorities.

Temptations in my life are big and small and they will not go away. They will be with me for the rest of my life like the

danger of infection. –They change and mutate like the seasonal flu every year. I can however take the spiritual antibiotics of, FASTING,- PRAYER,--ALMSGIVING. I need to keep these spiritual vaccinations current. What I did for Lent as a child is not necessarily what I need to do as an adult. Lent is a time to open my eyes to the truth of my life and begin to take corrective measures to restore my spiritual health.

CONCLUSION

I need to take care of my SOUL. Our society will not do it. It is the only soul I have.

AMEN.