



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 6 March 2022

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

The Gospel of today's Liturgy, the first Sunday of Lent, takes us into the desert, where Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit, for 40 days, to be tempted by the devil (cf. Lk 4:1-13). Jesus too was tempted by the devil, and He accompanies us, every one of us, in our temptations. The desert symbolizes the fight against the seductions of evil, in order to learn to choose true freedom. Indeed, Jesus lives the experience of the desert just before beginning his public mission. It is precisely through this spiritual struggle that he decisively affirms what type of Messiah he intends to be. Not this type of Messiah, but that one: I would say that this is indeed the declaration of Jesus' messianic identity, of the messianic way of Jesus. "I am the Messiah, but on this path". Let us then look closely at the temptations he is battling.

Twice the devil addresses him, saying: "If you are the Son of God..." (vv. 3, 9). He is thus proposing to him to exploit his position: first to satisfy the material needs he feels, hunger (cf. v. 3), then to increase his power (cf. vv. 6-7); and, finally, to have a prodigious sign from God (cf. vv. 9-11). Three temptations. It is as if he were saying, "If you are the Son of God, take advantage of it!". How often this happens to us: "But if you are in that position, take advantage of it! Don't lose the opportunity, the chance", that is, "think of *your* benefit". It is a seductive proposal, but it leads you to the enslavement of the heart: it makes us obsessed with the desire to have, it reduces everything to the possession of things, power, fame. This is the core of the temptations: the "poison of the passions" in which evil is rooted. Let us look within ourselves, and we will find that

our temptations always have this mindset, always this way of acting.

But Jesus opposes the attractions of evil in a victorious way. How does he do this? By responding to temptations with the Word of God, which says not to take advantage, not to use God, others and things for oneself, not to take advantage of one's own position to obtain privileges. Because true happiness and true freedom are not found in possessing, but in sharing; not in taking advantage of others, but in loving them; not in the obsession of power, but in the joy of service.

Brothers and sisters, these temptations also accompany us on the journey of life. We must be vigilant — not be afraid, it happens to everyone — and be vigilant, because they often present themselves under an apparent form of good. In fact, the devil, who is cunning, always uses deception. He wanted to make Jesus believe that his proposals were useful to prove that he was really the Son of God.

And I would like to emphasize something. Jesus does not converse with the devil: Jesus *never* converses with the devil. He either banishes him, when he healed the possessed, or in this case, when he has to respond, he does so with the Word of God, never with his own word. Brothers and sisters, never enter into dialogue with the devil: he is more cunning than we are. Never! Cling to the Word of God like Jesus, and at most answer always with the Word of God. And on this path, we will never go wrong.

The devil does this with us: he often comes “with gentle eyes”, “with an angelic face”; he even knows how to disguise himself with sacred, apparently religious motives! If we give in to his flattery, we end up justifying our falsehood by disguising it with good intentions. For instance, how often have we heard this: “I have done odd deals, but I have helped the poor”; “I have taken advantage of my role — as a politician, a governor, a priest, a bishop — but also for doing good”; “I have given in to my instincts, but in the end, I did no harm to anyone”, these justifications, and so on, one after the other. Please: no compromises with evil! No dialogue with the devil! We must not enter into dialogue with temptation, we must not fall into that slumber of the conscience that makes us say: “But after all, it's not serious, everyone does it"! Let us look at Jesus, who does not seek compromises, he does not make agreements with evil. He opposes the devil with the Word of God, which is stronger than the devil, and thus overcomes temptation.

May this time of Lent also be a *time of the desert* for us. Let us take time for silence and prayer — just a little, it will do us good — in these spaces let us stop and look at what is stirring in our hearts, our inner truth, what we know cannot be justified. Let us find inner clarity, placing ourselves before the Word of God in prayer, so that a positive fight against the evil that enslaves us, a fight for freedom, may take place within us.

Let us ask the Blessed Virgin to accompany us in the Lenten desert and to help us on our way of conversion.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, rivers of blood and tears are flowing in Ukraine. It is not merely a military operation, but a war, which sows death, destruction and misery. The number of victims is increasing, as are the people fleeing, especially mothers and children. The need for humanitarian assistance in that troubled country is growing dramatically by the hour.

I make a heartfelt appeal for humanitarian corridors to be genuinely secured, and for access to the besieged areas to be guaranteed and facilitated, in order to offer vital relief to our brothers and sisters oppressed by bombs and fear.

I thank all those who are taking in refugees. Above all, I implore that the armed attacks cease and that negotiation — and common sense — prevail. And that international law be respected once again!

And I would also like to thank the journalists who put their lives at risk to guarantee information. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for this service! A service that allows us to be close to the tragedy of that population and enables us to assess the cruelty of a war. Thank you, brothers and sisters.

Let us pray together for Ukraine: here in the front, are its flags. Let us pray together, as brothers and sisters, to Our Lady, Queen of Ukraine. Hail Mary...

The Holy See is prepared to do everything, to put itself at the service of this peace. In these days, two Cardinals went to Ukraine to serve the people, to help. Cardinal Krajewski, the Almoner, to bring aid to the needy, and Cardinal Czerny, interim Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. The presence of the two Cardinals there is the presence, not only of the Pope, but of all Christian people who want to draw closer and say: “War is madness! Stop, please! Look at this cruelty!”.

I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and other countries. In particular, I greet the faithful from Concord, California, those from various cities in Poland, and those from Cordoba and Sobradiel in Spain. I greet the community of the French Seminary of Rome, with their relatives, the faithful of Vedano al Lambro, young people from Saronno, Cesano Maderno, Baggio and Valceresio, Diocese of Milan, and those from Papiano and Cerqueto, Diocese of Perugia. I greet the volunteer donors of the Italian State Police, as well as participants in the pilgrimage in memory of [my visit to Iraq](#), exactly one year ago.

This afternoon, along with the collaborators of the Roman Curia, we will begin the Spiritual Exercises. We keep all the needs of the Church and the human family in our prayer. And you too,

please, pray for us.

I wish you all a happy Sunday and a fruitful Lenten path! Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*

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