

Reflections

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The Three Temptations

Lent is a privileged time to put finishing touches on our life's goal and to review our objectives. Sometimes it is a painful review and it demands sacrifices. Jesus also went through that. He doubted, He searched, He was tempted throughout His life and He was imposed upon by strength and power. Let us reflect on His three temptations and we shall see that they are also our temptations.

1. The first we could call **the temptation of consumption (waste)**. "Tell these stones to become bread." That is, if you wish, you can feed everyone. They suffer, they are hungry, they have no employment – you can guarantee them the material well-being they long for. You can work miracles, You can work the "economic miracle."

He responds: "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which comes from the mouth of God." But Jesus does not ask us to become disinterested in temporal goods. In the Our Father He exhorts us to ask: "Give us today our daily bread." We have to struggle for our daily bread. We have to struggle for ourselves and for all of mankind.

What the Lord asks us is to fight against the insanity of consumption (waste) and against the illusion of believing that the happiness of mankind coincides with the goal of consumption (waste). He tells us that the heart of mankind clamors for other sustenances than those of "having (possessing)." And the parents among us know very well that their children not only need material goods, but also need of their time, their attention, their words and their love.

As a child, man needs the love of God his Father. Love from that God who has spoken and has something to tell us. While men have not heard these words and while they do not try to live them, an unsatisfied hunger will persist which converts them into under-fed and unhappy men.

We all form part of our world and society. We are all slaves to consumption (waste) in one way or another: Let us think about our car, that small god; the comfort of the home; the children's toys; books which perhaps might never be read; our clothing, etc.

We are hungry for bread. We hunger for material things. But, are we also hungry for God?

2. The second temptation of Jesus is **the temptation of power**, the temptation of using the power of his Father in personal gain. But He rejects it: "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." That is: You will not demand God to be at your service. You have to serve Him. The power of Jesus consists in placing Himself totally at the disposition of his Father in order to serve mankind.

We do not free ourselves from the temptation of using God, of placing Him at our side, that is, of putting Him in "our pocket." How many times throughout history, have not human groups, nations, governments, armies or political parties not tried to take advantage of Christians, of the Church, of God.....to fulfill their own plans!

And we ourselves, have we not often prayed the Our Father backward: "Our Father who art in Heaven, my will be done." That is, we place ourselves in the center. We make ourselves a god..... instead of Him. And how many men do not thus separate themselves from God because God has not obeyed them!

3. **The temptation of idolatry**. Perhaps we may think: this time it is not I, it is the pagans who adore idols.

But also in our world today there are many created idols: From the great idol of money which we all adore,..... a little.....more or less, to the multitude of idols before which we kneel daily: the package of cigarettes, good food, television, fashion, our body, or also our ideas and projects.

All those changing gods to which, little by little, and perhaps without our noticing, we are inclined.....incapable of living on our own feet and incapable of freely kneeling before the only God.

Questions for Reflection

1. What kind of happiness am I striving for?
2. What kind of world am I building?
3. Am I an "exploiter" of God or am I His servant and servant to my brethren?

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