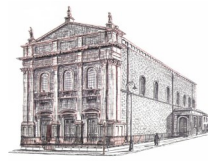




PARISH OF ST. AGATHA
20TH/21ST FEBRUARY 2021



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Jesus I Trust in You

POPE FRANCIS HOMILY:

WITH FAITH, PRAYER AND PENANCE WE OVERCOME EVIL.

Pope Francis explained how the Word of God shows us the path to live fruitfully the 40 days of Lent we have just embarked upon. The account in Mark's Gospel (Mk 1:12-15) on this first Sunday of Lent emphasises that the "Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert". There, the Pope noted, Jesus remained forty days and was tempted by Satan. The natural and symbolic reality of the desert is the place "where God speaks to the human heart and prayer is a response", he observed, but it is also the place of "trial and temptation" and the "'duel' between Jesus and the devil begins, which will end with the Passion and the Cross." At the same time, Jesus' entire existence is placed under the sign of the Spirit of God, who animates, inspires and guides him.

WE STRUGGLE AGAINST TEMPTATION AND THE SPIRIT OF EVIL

Pope Francis said that the entire ministry of Christ marks a struggle against the Evil One - whether healing from illness, liberating the possessed, and forgiving sins. While it may appear that the devil has the upper hand when the Son of God is rejected, captured and condemned to death, in reality, the Pope remarked, "death was the last 'desert' to cross" to finally defeat Satan and free us all from his power. The Pope said when we read about the desert and temptations, Christians are reminded that by following in the Lord's footsteps, our lives also are a struggle against the spirit of evil, where the devil can tempt us.

NEVER DIALOGUE WITH THE DEVIL

He said we must be fully aware of the presence of this astute enemy "who seeks our eternal condemnation, our failure, and prepare to defend ourselves against him and to combat him." He added that Jesus never dialogued with the devil. Rather, Jesus always sent him away or responded with the Word of God. We also, the Pope said, should never enter into dialogue with the devil and his temptations. At the same time, the grace of God assures us, that with faith, prayer and penance, we can defeat the enemy. In conclusion, the Pope said "We are called to walk in God's footsteps, renewing our Baptismal promises: renouncing Satan, and all his works and all his empty promises." He then encouraged us to call on the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary. (Vatican News).

DO YOU BELIEVE THE DEVIL EXISTS IN TODAY'S WORLD?

If people listening to the Gospel today (Mk 1:12-15), still believe the devil does not exist, then they have already been seduced by the father of deceit. They are calling Jesus a liar, because Jesus shows us clearly today that Satan does exist and is the cause of temptation to sin by disobeying the Word of God. The devil's mission is to infiltrate our minds, in order to get us to rebel against God's Will and His Teachings. One of the greatest tricks the devil performs in society today is to convince the world that he does not exist! This is why Jesus came into the world, to enlighten the darkness of our minds and to rescue and redeem us from the Devil's death grip. It is the devil who tries to tempt us away from Christ, leading us to a faithless life of sin.

LORD, DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Christ's Mission is to lead us away from temptation and to deliver us from the evil one. Jesus came to open our hearts to the Spirit of Truth, by bringing spiritual sight and sound to the spiritually blind and deaf. The Devil's mission is to keep people in the dark. Jesus' mission is to bring us out of that Darkness and into His Light of Enlightenment. Our Lady of Fatima in 1917, reminded the world that the devil still exists and leads many souls to Hell. She gave us a prayer to pray between each decade of the Rosary asking Jesus *to save us from the fires of Hell*. Jesus told St. Faustina of Divine Mercy, in the 1930's, that the devil still exists and deprives many souls from going to Heaven, resulting in an eternal life suffering in Hell. Our Lady of Fatima tells us that the main sin that causes the eternal sufferings for souls in Hell, is caused by their undying passion for the mortal flesh and ignoring the Passion of the immortal Spirit who gives eternal Life.

GOD'S ORDER OF GRACE

When we sin, we do the evil will of the devil, by engaging and entertaining his temptations, then giving birth to evil and unholy desires conceived in our hearts. The result of satisfying our selfish and sinful needs is to offend Jesus. If we do not think of sin as an enormous insult to Jesus and compare it to a Judas-like betrayal of His trust in us, then we will continue to sin and be indifferent to the order of Grace. He created us for the purpose not to sin and obey Him. Sin kills God's Order of Grace. We replace His Will of Love, Mercy and Purity with the evil Will of Hatred, Anger, Lust, leading to Eternal Death of the soul. We must be aware of this.

THE DEVIL ATTEMPTS TO TEMPT

The Devil tempted Jesus as he tempts us today. He tries to erupt pride and vanity in our hearts. He lied by pretending not to know the divine identity of Jesus by challenging Him three times with the words; *If you are the Son of God*, then perform for me, etc. The devil attempts to introduce his **disorder** into **God's order** of creation. For example in Matthews Gospel (4:1-11), we see that Satan wanted stones, perfectly created by God for the purpose of being stones, to be changed into something of his liking (loaves of bread). In the same way, the devil wants our souls, created and ordered by God, as holy temples, to be now imperfectly re-ordered and changed into sinful doomed unholy temples to worship the flesh and the devil. This destroys the soul's immortal ordered purpose which is to live eternally with God in Heaven. This Lent, let us give-up engaging with him and fast from sin. The Sacrament of Penance is available in St. Agatha's to those living within 5km by appointment. God bless, Fr. Brendan.