



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS *ANGELUS* Saint Peter's Square

Sunday, 1 March 2020 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good Morning,

On this first Sunday of Lent, the Gospel (cf. Mt 4:1-11) narrates that, after being baptized in the River Jordan, Jesus “was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (v. 1). Jesus prepares himself to begin his mission as proclaimer of the Kingdom of Heaven and, just as Moses and Elijah (cf. Ex 24:18; 1 Kings 19:8) had done in the Old Testament, he does so by fasting for 40 days. He enters into “Lent”.

At the end of this period of fasting, the tempter, the devil, breaks in and tries to put Jesus to the test three times. The first temptation arises when Jesus is hungry. The devil suggests, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread” (v. 3). A challenge. But Jesus’ response is clear: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (v. 4). He refers to when Moses reminded the people of their long journey in the desert, through which they learned that their lives depended on the Word of God (cf. Dt 8:3).

The devil then makes a second attempt (vv. 5-6). He becomes more astute, and he too, quotes the Sacred Scripture. The strategy is clear: if you are so confident in God’s power, then experience it. For Scripture itself affirms that you will be aided by the angels (v. 6). But also in this case, Jesus does not allow himself to be confounded, because those who believe do not put God to the test, but rather they entrust themselves to God’s goodness. Thus, to the words of the Bible that Satan interpreted for his own purposes, Jesus responds with another quotation: “Again it is written; ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God’” (v. 7).

Lastly, the third attempt (vv. 8-9) reveals the devil’s true reasoning: since the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven marks the beginning of his own defeat, the evil one wants to distract Jesus from accomplishing his mission by offering him a perspective of political messianism. But Jesus rejects the idolatry of power and human glory and, in the end, drives the tempter away, and says “Begone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you

serve” (v. 10). At this point, the angels draw near to serve Jesus, who is faithful in handing himself over to the Father (cf. v. 11).

This teaches us one thing: Jesus does *not dialogue* with the devil. Jesus responds to the devil *with the Word of God*, not with his own words. In temptation, we often begin to dialogue with temptation, to dialogue with the devil: “yes, I may do this..., then I will go to confession, then this, then that...”. We must *never* dialogue with the devil. Jesus does two things with the devil: he either sends him away or, like in this case, he responds with the Word of God. Be attentive to this: *never* dialogue with temptation, *never* dialogue with the devil.

Today too, Satan breaks into people’s lives to tempt them with his enticing proposals. He mixes his own voice to the many other voices that try to tame our conscience. Messages come to us from many places, inviting us to “allow ourselves to be tempted”, to experience the intoxication of transgression. Jesus’ experience teaches us that temptation is an attempt to walk paths that are alternative to those of God. Do this, there’s no problem, then God forgives! One day of joy for yourself ...”. “But it is a sin! — No, it is nothing”. Alternative paths, paths that give us the impression of self sufficiency, of enjoying life as an end in itself. However, all this is illusory. We soon realize that the more we distance ourselves from God, the more defenceless and helpless we feel when facing life’s big problems.

May the Virgin Mary, the Mother of he who crushed the head of the serpent, help us during this Lenten period to be vigilant when confronted with temptation, not to submit ourselves to any idol of this world, and to follow Jesus in the struggle against evil. Thus we too will be victorious as Jesus.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters! I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from various countries. In particular, I greet the young people from Formentera, the faithful from Ostuni and those from the parish of San Pio da Pietrelcina in Rome.

I hope that for all of you the Lenten journey that has just begun, will be rich in fruits of the Spirit and rich in good deeds.

I am rather saddened by the news of so many displaced people, so many men, women and children banished due to war, so many migrants seeking refuge in the world, and help. This has become very serious in recent days. Let us pray for them.

I also ask you to remember in your prayers the Spiritual Exercises of the Roman Curia, which will begin this evening in Ariccia. Unfortunately, my cold prevents me from participating this year: I will follow the meditations from here. I spiritually join the Curia and all those who are experiencing

moments of prayer, by performing the Spiritual Exercises at home.

Have a happy Sunday and enjoy your lunch! *Arrivederci!*

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