

When a when a king declares war, so do his subjects.

By Adam's disobedience, by succumbing to temptation, he declares war on God.. He and Eve and all of us after him, are sent out of paradise and death enters into our world.

Jesus came to restore life! And He does so by entering fully into our humanity and by His obedience to the Father.

Jesus made this retreat into the desert directly after His baptism in the Jordan where He is proclaimed by God to be His Son, and was attested to by the descent of the Holy Spirit.

The desert experience was a time of strengthening for His mission. The temptations where also an opportunity to say yes to the Father, by rejecting Satan and all of his evil works and all of his empty promises.

Where do we hear these words today?

In the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism and in the renewing of our own baptismal promises.

(PAUSE)

We are told that when Jesus is finished with His fast, He is hungry

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It is an opportune time for Satan to strike.

The devil is lazy. He attacks when we are at our weakest, not just physically, but spiritually. His weapons are temptation and lies.

Being tempted is no sin. If it were, Jesus could not be tempted. And we know from today's Gospel that He was tested, with temptations that went to the very core of His mission, the Salvation of the human race from the sin of Adam.

It is the Father's will that that be accomplished by His Son, in His Christ by both accepting and passing through suffering and death.

On the surface, the three temptations appear to be rather simple, but each is aimed at one particular goal: to divert Jesus from the path of suffering and from the cross itself.

Time really only allows for us to examine one of the temptations, and so we will look at the first one.

Satan says: "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread!" On Palm Sunday we will hear this same taunt, but with more clarity "If you are the Son of God,..... come down from that cross!"

This temptation speaks to His physical hunger and to ours and indeed to the hunger of the whole world.

What is more essential to us than bread? What is more necessary to our bodies than nourishment? What better way for Jesus to show Himself as the saviour than by ending hunger, ending poverty, ending inequity?

The devil is suggesting a "social messiah"; flashy in His work, powerful in His deed, purposeful and obvious in showing His power, but by our standards, not by God's.

Jesus is not indifferent to hunger, to the plight of the poor. He Himself knew great poverty and tremendous hunger. But He realizes that there is a proper order to all things.

To leave God out of the equation, even in matters of charity and compassion, is to do a good that has no lasting benefit.

This is not to say that we should not attempt to alleviate some of the sufferings of the poor, that we should not be pro-active when it comes to societies ills.....

But when we do this strictly from our humanity, the efforts will always be short living, because charity without the grace of God, sets humanity up as the saviour. Communism, totalitarianism and even democracy has failed in this respect.

What is bread without justice, housing without security, prosperity without peace?

Lent reminds us that there is a God, and that we are not him!

We are called to come out of ourselves by fasting, to place God first by prayer, and **then** to give alms, to do justice that can have a lasting effect.

(TRANSITION)

Bread and its importance follows Jesus throughout His ministry.

How is it then that Jesus will not feed the masses at this temptation but, later, readily feeds the 5000?

The 5,000 came on a journey in their spiritual poverty with hearts ready and open to hearing the word of God.

Having been nourished in their spirits, having the Kingdom of God proclaimed to them, and having turned back to God, they were disposed to receiving earthy bread, not just for the sake of filling their bellies, but so that they might be strengthened to go..... from that out-of-the-way place..... to live in the kingdom of God and to proclaim it to the world around them.

When many of them who had been fed that day followed Jesus and asked

for more bread, Jesus tells them that He is the bread of Life, whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood will live forever.

Jesus , by doing the Father's will, is able to give us **himself**, in the form of bread and wine. And this multiplication of bread is forever and without depletion. He becomes the grain of wheat that dies to produce fruit, He becomes the grape, pressed of its life to give life.

And in giving Himself, He asks us to do the same.

This is the mystery of our faith, that every time we receive this bread of life and drink from this cup of Salvation, we proclaim His suffering and His death, FOR OUR SALVATION, until He comes in Glory.

And until that time, the Sacrament is perpetual, never-ending. It is life giving to both our souls and our bodies and is meant to give life to those we encounter in their hunger for something bigger and more powerful than just physical needs. It is meant to give us what we need to change the world around us through..... the..... change..... it makes.... in us. He does not change stones to bread, but changes our hearts of stone.

The season of Lent is meant to help us to enter more deeply into this mystery. To become more aware of our own place in the sufferings of Christ, and to call us to holiness. To be strengthened by the “ word that comes from the mouth of God” we hear proclaimed, to be nourished with the bread that is Life Himself, to repent, to reject the Sin of Adam and to accept the Victory over sin by Christ.

We willingly enter this desert so that we may come out of it into the garden where Adam and Eve began, where we were always meant to be.