

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Acts of the Apostles (*Acts 19:13-15*)

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Does the Devil know You?

Understanding the Enemy. In any war, a deep understanding of the enemy is necessary before any war is waged. It is vital to know where the strength of the enemy is, where the majority of the attack needs to be targeted. The devil is a highly intelligent being. He knows who his strongest adversaries are: the followers of Christ who actively engage in the spiritual battle to win back God's kingdom in the hearts of people.

The Devil knows us. As beloved children of God through the Sacrament of holy Baptism, we can be sure the devil knows each of us by name, our strengths and weakness. Since the devil cannot harm God Himself, he directs all his energies and time into tempting God's beloved children and dragging them into eternal damnation so that they will be robbed of the glorious inheritance promised to them by God. It is not enough to know the devil existed. We need to know how he operates so that we can expose him and be vigilant against his cunning and deception.

Good packaging attracts. The Deceiver is a good promoter. Temptation usually comes camouflaged in some aspect which is appealing. For example, freedom of life choice is used to justify and promote abortion, same sex marriages, sexual relationship outside marriage, euthanasia, choice of gender of babies to be born, etc. **Gratification of the senses.** In the original order before the fall of mankind, the body (the senses) is subject to the mind which is subject to obedience to God. Thus, there is internal order and harmony within oneself and with God. However, after the fall, the original true order in a person is not maintained and the control of the senses are weakened. Through pleasure-seeking activities, entertainment and self gratification, the devil seeks to introduce impurity especially through the eyes, ears, the mind and weakness of the flesh. Through impurity, the devil seeks to destroy the temple of God which is within us (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16).

Satiated with things of this world. The devil seeks to fill up the human heart with things that bear no reference to our sanctification. As a result the earthly life of a soul is filled with a myriad of endless activities. He has no time for God and has no interest in his eternal salvation. Driven by short sightedness, he spends his energies in fulfilling own interests, not understanding that life continues after death and that whatever one does in this earthly life determines the course of one's life after death. **Discouragement and loss of hope.** A strong obstacle to progress in the holiness of a soul is discouragement. The devil knows this and works hard to convince a soul that holiness is beyond his reach after several falls from grace.

Inducement of guilt over the past / Worry about the future. The grace of God is only available for the present moment. God wants us to live fully in the present moment. God's grace is not for dealing with the past or the future. Satan knows this and tries to pull us into the past with regrets of our failures and wrong doings, and into the future with worry about the unknown. As a result, we are unable to avail of the grace offered for overcoming the temptation of the present moment. That is why the Lord tells us not to worry about our future (cf. Matthew 6:25-34), assures us of His forgiveness of our mistakes and sins of our past if we repent of them (cf. Luke 15:11-32), and comforts us with His presence with us always (cf. Matthew 28:20).

Temptations against prayer. Temptations against prayers are serious, and take different forms to discourage prayer life. This could be fatigue, sleepiness and dryness of feelings when it comes to prayer time. Perseverance and determination are needed to maintain our close relationship with God through prayers.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I know I am in spiritual warfare till the last moment of my life. Help me develop and practise humility, the greatest weapon against Satan's prideful suggestions. Let me never become self righteous by helping me examine my conscience in what I think, say and do every day. Through Your grace let me practise the virtues to withstand and overcome temptations. By my trust in God help me to live fully in the present moment no matter how bad my past was or how frightened I am of the future. Through my love for God and neighbour, help me put myself last so that Satan's attempts on me will be futile. Mary, Protectress of the Faith and Refuge of Holy love, protect me always. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.