

Commentary to the First Sunday of Lent (C)

The temptation: An opportunity more than a threat



From the analysis of biblical texts a curious fact emerges: the wicked are never tempted by God; temptation is a privilege reserved for the righteous. Ben Sirach recommends to the disciple: “My son, prepare yourself for trials. Accept all that happens to you, be patient when you are humbled because those acceptable to God are tested in the crucible of humiliation” (Sir 2:1,4-5). Misfortunes and failures put to hard test the fidelity to the Lord, but also luck and success can be a trap for the faith.

The temptation offers the opportunity to make a leap forward, to improve, purify and consolidate the choices of faith. It also involves the risk of error: “For the fascination of evil obscures true values—says the author of the Book of Wisdom—and restless desires undermine a simple heart” (Wis 4:12). Temptation is not a provocation to evil, but a stimulus to growth, a necessary step to reach maturity.

Paul assures: “God is faithful and will not let you be tempted beyond your strength. He will give you, together with temptation, the strength to escape and to resist” (1 Cor 10:13).

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds of another consoling truth: Jesus experienced our own temptations, so “he is not indifferent to our weaknesses. Having been tested through suffering, he is able to help those who are tested” (Heb 4:15; 2:18).

To internalize the message, we repeat:

“Lord, we do not ask you to spare us from difficulties and temptations, but to get out of them matured.”

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