

Homily Lent1-A6

Today's readings try to tell us something of the origin of sin, of sin itself and of how we can turn away from it and be healed.

The first reading tries to answer the mystery of the origin of sin and it is clear that sin comes from evil. Sin is not human nature as people tell you who think in a secular way. We were created as images of a loving Father, which means our human nature, which you cannot separate from our humanity, is an image of Him, and since there is no sin in God therefore there is no sin in human nature either, and if we sin and it damages our human nature, it can be wiped out and its effects are healed through baptism and confession. So as we begin Lent, please remember Jesus' encouragement last Sunday: strive to be perfect and holy, as your heavenly Father is perfect and holy.

However it is also clear from the first reading that we can be like the Father only in freedom, because He is also completely Free, and we received our freedom to choose His word and obey him or choose evil's word and disobey the heavenly Father. When we misuse our freedom and disobey the word of the Father that's when temptation becomes sin. So sin is a misuse of our true freedom.

Evil always tempts us into sin by appealing to our freedom and to our various senses which are given us to express our freedom. In the first reading evil appeals to the desire of the body: 'the woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eyes, and it was desirable...', and when Adam and Eve here the tempting words of evil they become too preoccupied with it. The problem is that if you focus too much on evil words rather than on God's word you inevitably end up acting upon the temptations. So the best thing to do when tempting thoughts come into your mind is to ignore them completely straight away, and feel your minds and hearts with the things of Heaven. St. Paul says: '... brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things!' (Phil 4:8, NIV).

We read in the Gospel reading that, just like Adam and Eve, Jesus was also vulnerable after He came out of the desert: He was hungry and evil tempted Him through His hunger: but Jesus simply focused on the things of Heaven, the Word of the Father and said: 'man does not live on bread alone, but from every thing that comes from the mouth of God.' Every time Jesus is tempted He shows that He is focused on the Father and His word, and when you even say aloud the words of Scriptures they come alive and protect you from temptations.

So what can we do? First of all you need to gain confidence that no matter for how long have you been living in sin, you can come back to the Lord, because God gives you the help for that, as St. Paul says 'where sin increased, grace increased all the more...' (Rom 5:20, NIV). So God's grace reaches out to you most of all when you live in sin. Also pray today's Psalm 50: a beautiful prayer

for Lent, and for every time when you want to have a new start in your relationship with the Father:

‘Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness,

In your compassion blot out my offence.

O, wash me more and more from my guilt

and cleanse me from my sins....’

Finally, do not focus too much on evil, but rather be focused on the things of Heaven, because evil does not like to hear about the things of Heaven.