

Mt 4:1-11; Gen 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Rom 5:12-19 The Gift

Evil abounds...

But *God Himself will set me free, from the hunter's snare* (Ps 91:3). The hunter is the devil. And his snare is our temptation.

In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had it all, and a wonderful relationship with God. But the serpent tempted Eve with pride: *[If you eat the forbidden fruit] you will be like gods who know what is good and what is evil* (Gen 3:5).

That is how temptation gets us: it looks like truth, it makes good sense, it fulfills our desire, and it gives us freedom from having to depend on God. But that's a lie.

Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Adam ate the forbidden fruit. Their disobedience destroyed the wonderful relationship they had with God.

A chain reaction of evil was set in motion, so that every person is inclined to evil (Rom 7:14-20).

But *God Himself will set me free, from the hunter's snare* (Ps 91:3). How? God promised: *I will create a new heart in you and breathe into you a new spirit* (Ez 36:26).

Like St. Paul said, if *through one man [Adam] sin entered the world, and through sin, death* (Rom 5:12), then through *the one*—the gift of God in Jesus Christ, grace and forgiveness entered the world, and through Jesus Christ, life (Rom 5:17-18).

So be not afraid. Because the gift of God: Jesus Christ, shows us how we can defeat the devil and overcome sin.

Jesus was just baptized. The heavens were opened and the Spirit of God descended like a dove upon him (Mt 3:16). *And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased"* (Mt 3:17).

The same thing happened to you: You are His beloved. And you are filled with the Spirit of God.

*Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil (Mt 4:1).* We too, have been brought into this world to face and overcome the snares of the devil.

(Notice how Jesus “hears” the voice of the devil in the quiet of the desert. In the same way, the devil puts his voice inside our mind, so we think his thoughts are our thoughts).

Satan tempts Jesus who is hungry: *If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread (Mt 4:3).* That would be the sin of pride.

We commit the sin of pride when we allow our desires to be more important than God. But Jesus says, no. Jesus loves God so much that the will of God must always come first.

Satan tempts Jesus: *If you are the Son of God throw yourself down [from the parapet of the temple] (Mt 4:6).* That would be the sin of presumption.

We commit the sin of presumption when we say, “I’ll do this sin one more time, go to confession, and surely God will forgive me.” But Jesus says, no. Jesus loves God so much, He will not put God to the test.

Satan tempts Jesus: *All these [kingdoms] I will give you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me (Mt 4:9).* That is the sin of lust for power.

We commit the sin of lust for power, when we use the gifts God has given us, only to serve ourselves. But Jesus says no. Jesus loves God so much, He will not serve another god.

Finally, the devil leaves Jesus (Mt 4:11), but not for long. On the cross, the devil’s words were echoed by those passing by: *If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross! (Mt 27:40).* Yet He stayed on the cross.

Because Jesus’ love for God was stronger than sin. That was His victory over the devil, made abundantly clear...when He cried out: *My God, my God, why*

*have you abandoned me?* (Mt 27:46; Ps 22:2). Then, *Father, into your hands I commend my spirit* (Lk 23:46).

That is the solution: love God more than sin. Love God more than sin by coming to confession and receiving His love and mercy when your sins are forgiven.

Don't worry about confessing the same sins over and over again. Keep confessing. Because when you stop confessing, you stop coming to mass and then the devil wins. As long as you stay in the fight (keep confessing) God wins!

Love God more than sin in this mass by receiving His love and mercy in the Holy Eucharist when Jesus comes to live, body and blood, soul and divinity, inside of you.

Then live like you mean it. Make the effort. And why not try something radical? Let's use our temptations against the devil. Let's use our temptations to grow in our love for God!

Make small gifts to God. For example, every time you think about visiting a porn site, say: *Lord, I'm going to make this gift to you of not visiting porn sites.* Offer it up for a loved one who has died. Then go for a walk and pray.

And, should you find yourself in "the heat of the moment," consumed by anger, or lust, or a sinful desire, and you can't think of anything else...try this:

Just start saying Our Fathers and Hail Mary's over and over again—even if it takes hours—until God finally gives you peace. He will. I guarantee it.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, You are God's gift to us, and we are His beloved.

Create in us a new heart filled with Your Holy Spirit so that we may love God more than sin and keep coming to confession. Because God Himself will set us free from the hunter's snare.