

## Homily for the First Sunday of Lent Year A

One night, **St. Padre Pio** was praying alone in his small room in the friary. Every day he used to pray his Rosary before going to bed and in a very special way he used to pray for the suffering souls. Suddenly, without warning, he heard a loud crash, his lamp shook, and the room became freezing cold.

Before he could even rise, an evil presence filled the room. The devil appeared, furious and aggressive, trying to frighten him, taunt him, and tempt him to despair.

But Padre Pio did not panic. He simply whispered, “**Jesus... Mary.**” Then he prayed calmly, “**Lord, if this is your will, give me strength.**” The devil grew louder and more violent, yet Padre Pio did the simplest, most powerful thing: He made the **sign of the cross**. Immediately the devil’s rage collapsed into silence. The room warmed again, and the evil presence vanished.

Padre Pio later explained that the devil could shout, threaten, mock, and even strike him but the devil **could not win**, because: “The devil is like a dog on a chain. He can bark, but he can bite only if we go too close.” Padre Pio’s secret was not strength, intelligence, or supernatural power; it was **humble dependence on Jesus**, and simple fidelity in the moment of temptation.

Just like Jesus, Padre Pio faced real temptations. The devil tried to frighten him, confuse him, and make him fall. And he overcame not by debate, not by argument, but by ***trust in God’s Word and fidelity in prayer***. It is a reminder for all of us that temptations are real, but **they are never stronger than God’s grace**.

This Sunday is the First Sunday of Lent. Every First Sunday of Lent, the Church gives us this Gospel, ***the temptations of Jesus***. Today’s Scriptures show us that this battle is not new, it began in the Garden, and it continues in our hearts.”

The first reading recalls the story of the fall of our first parents who disobeyed the word of God by eating the forbidden fruit. Their sinning was realized through the deception of the devil. The devil persuaded Adam and Eve to turn away from the truth and from God. As a result, many graces had been lost because of sin, and their action had an effect on the entire humanity.

In the Gospel, the devil used three temptations. The three temptations are comfort, power and pride.

**Jesus did not yield to any of the temptations. Instead, *Jesus answered every temptation with God’s word and with absolute trust in His Father. He came out stronger, not defeated, but ready to begin His mission of preaching, healing and bringing hope to the world.***

This is our lesson today. As humans, we face lots of temptations in our life. For example,

### **Temptations of the Body (Physical / Material Temptations)**

Examples: Over-attachment to food, comfort, pleasures, Laziness, addictions, greed for material things

### **Temptations of the Mind (Pride, Ego, and Recognition)**

Examples: Desire to be praised, Wanting to show off, Feeling superior to others, Thinking, “I deserve more”

### **Temptations of the Heart (Power, Control, Authority)**

Examples: Wanting to dominate others, Manipulating situations to get our way, Jealousy, anger, resentment, Choosing shortcuts for success

### **Temptations of Relationships**

Examples: Gossip, jealousy, comparing ourselves, Lack of forgiveness, Toxic friendships, Betrayal or unfaithfulness

### **Temptations of Discouragement (Spiritual Attacks)**

Examples: “God doesn’t love me, ”I can’t change, “Prayer is useless, ” “I’m too weak to become holy.”

### **Temptations of Comfort and Indifference**

Examples: Avoiding responsibility, Not wanting to pray, , Running away from challenges, “I don’t care” attitude

### **Temptations Against Faith**

Examples: Doubting God’s presence, Rejecting God’s timing, Trusting the world more than God.

*Temptation can never come to an end. We experience it every day. Jesus shows us that the way to overcome temptation is to hand our lives over to God completely, in every situation.”*

Jesus defeated Satan because *he identified with God*. St. Padre Pio did not give himself to the devil when he was tempted by the devil, because *he trusted in God’s Word and fidelity in prayer*. In the same way, We too will overcome temptation if we constantly identify with God and allow his wisdom to direct our choices as it directed Jesus. This way, victory will always be ours. Let us always remember that in every temptation, Jesus stands beside us, never against us. May Our Lord Jesus strengthen us. Amen.