

## **HOMILY by Fr. Anthony Davis**

### **“One does not live by bread alone.”**

March 10, 2019

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent (Year C)

Dt: 26:4-10, Rom 10:8-13, Lk 4:1-13

Have you ever wondered how Jesus survived, eating nothing for forty days in the wilderness? It's one of the mysteries of Scripture, indicating both the Divine and human nature of Christ when he lived on earth.

Certainly, fasting for 40 days straight isn't something that we could contemplate doing and surviving, which is why the Church had traditionally called us to fast on single days (Wednesdays and Fridays), or abstain from only certain types of food and drinks for the duration of these 40 days.

Jesus is our model and guide, but we are not expected to be perfect. Instead, with Jesus, we are to turn to God, to say, “You are my refuge and my fortress...” (Resp. Ps).

So if we are called to solidarity with Jesus in his wilderness journey, but not to a literal reliving of his 40 days of fasting, then what does God require of us during these 40 days?

The first reading (Dt: 26:4-10) tells us how we ought to offer God the first fruits of our labor, i.e. putting our commitment to God first in our budgeting process rather than last. In other words, from a Lenten perspective, it means giving God the first and best part of our day, our time, and our attention, rather than what's left over after work, errands, housecleaning, yardwork, the ball game etc...you get the picture?

And linking it with the gospel of today (Lk 4:1-13), we can say that, the temptations to turn stones into bread, to worship Satan and to leap from the pinnacle of the Temple, demonstrate three aspects of self-control:

- 1) material
- 2) civil

### 3) spiritual

Likewise, they correspond with three levels of human blessings:

- 1) material goods
- 2) political power
- 3) spiritual powers

These, in turn, correspond to three human seductions:

- 1) If you will worship me, I will make you rich
- 2) If you will worship me, I will give you political power
- 3) If you will worship me, I will endow you with magical power

Jesus dismisses the temptations by references to Deuteronomy. "One does not live by bread alone" (8:3); "Worship the Lord your God" (6:13), and "Do not put the Lord your God to the test" (6:16). Hence Jesus used two powerful weapons against the temptations: the Holy Spirit and Holy Scripture.

First, Jesus was "full of the Holy Spirit," and the Spirit helped him to survive his temptations (Lk 4:1, 4:14, 4:18). In short, the temptation is not so much the temptation of power as the temptation to compromise which the devil invites Jesus into.

Second, Jesus quoted Holy Scripture in response to all three temptations.

Thus, when we also grounded in Holy Scripture and sustained by the word of God, we will be saved.

**CONCLUSION:** Lent is not meant to be some sort of endurance race or test of physical fortitude. It is meant to be a season that draws us back, closer to our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. WE are meant to develop practices in this season that can sustain us for the rest of the year, and for years to come. We are meant to reach out, not just when the devil tempts us, but every day of our lives. WE are meant to survive, not just on bread alone, but also on the Word of God. However, you and I know that much of the living of our lives necessarily involves a measure of compromise. Political life, social life, and family life are not possible without some compromises.

Such compromises are acceptable when they are a matter of finding mutually agreeable solutions to difficulties, and when they do not involve moral principles as such. The kind of compromise that our Lord refuses is the compromise of God's truth and moral principle.

Therefore, Lent is a good time to examine our heart and to review the issue of compromises in our lives. It is a good time to name for ourselves those Christian teaching and principles that must remain beyond compromises and pretense in our personal lives and in our society.

**"One does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from God".**