

The First Sunday of Lent

By: Fr. Greg Ames

Steve Bartman. The name doesn't mean much to us; unless you are a Chicago Cub's fan. During the National League playoffs, Bartman—a Cubs fan—interfered with the ball preventing Cubs player Moises Alue from catching it. The Marlins went on to win the game and the National League series; Bartman went on to be vilified by Cub's fans, and held responsible for resurrecting some old curse that prevents the Cubs from going to the World Series. Fast forward that infamous caught ball had been bought by Grant DePorter, a restaurant owner, for \$113,000. What to do with it? The only thing that you could do with it: destroy the ball and end the curse. "The ball is baseball's anti-trophy," DePorter said. "I had a pit in my stomach for sure, because it was so expensive. But what would happen if we didn't destroy it and some Marlins fan go a hold of it? What if someone use it to psych out the Cubs next year? No, it's got to go."

Would that life be that easy. Disappointments and setbacks are part of life; sometimes we may feel we are cursed. The Hebrew people felt like that. In the first reading we hear all the things that had gone wrong in their lives, leading them to believe that they were cursed. No baseball there to smash and make things better again. Moses says, there is no curse; we've made choices. And the way to start again is not about destroying or smashing anything, but changing our hearts, making new choices.

The first Sunday of Lent sets us on our path for the rest of the season. On this first Sunday we realize there is a lot about life we cannot change. We will not always win the game. Someone will interfere and get in the way. But what we can control is the way we live, the choices we make, what is in our heart. There is a great temptation, Jesus says, to believe that we cannot be different people. That is why Jesus goes into the desert, to destroy the idea that you will always be stuck, that there is no way out, that you are doomed, cursed, to live the same old way. Jesus confronts with us, three temptations.

DOUBT At times, the world is unkind and unfair. Maybe you doubt God's concern and care. You look at your life; everyone evaluates you based on what you did, how quickly you got it done, what you have. Maybe you doubt your own goodness. Jesus understood there would

be moments of doubt in our lives; that was the agony he experience in the Garden of Gethsememe. In times of doubt, he wants you to realize you have a choice. You can allow doubt to make you a person who does not care, gives up, give in. St. Paul realized this, and that is why he tells the Romans to make this choice: call upon the name of the Lord and be saved. He did not say call upon the Lord and get what you want or never have a problem. That is where we get it wrong. In moments of doubt we have a choice: turn away or call upon the Lord, who will give us strength.

DISTRACTED One of the most outstanding things about Jesus is that he was never distracted. Even in the most trying and difficult moments, when people were yelling and begging; when his life was complicated and uncertain, he always made the choice to be in the moment. He chose to listen and pay attention not only to God, but to those right in front of him. He was never looking over his shoulder, or waiting for something, someone, better to come along. Luke writes the temptation story with the figure of a devil trying to distract Jesus: look over there look at me, don't worry about this. In trying moments, when confronted with difficult people, we have a choice: to be distracted and look away, or to be present, as hard as it is, in that moment.

DEMAND What I need, what I want, what I am entitled to, what I deserve. There are moments when it is right to think about those things; the temptation is when we make a lifestyle out of it. In the desert, Jesus shows us there comes a point where you have to realize that life is about a lot more than things; especially when some in our world don't even have the basic things we take for granted. Jesus emerges from the desert with a grateful heart, not a demanding one. He asks us to choose to emerge from this Lent the same way.

Turning to God's Word each day helps us confront the temptation to doubt, to be distracted, to demand. It is God's Word that helps us make new choices. That line from Romans sticks with me *the Word is near you*. Think for just a moment: where right now is your Bible? The answer to that question should be the first choice you make this Lent.

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Deuteronomy 26:3-10

Romans 10:6-13

Luke 4:1-13

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耶穌受試探

林思川神父

經文脈絡

教會禮儀年不論甲乙丙任何一年，四旬期第一主日的福音都是關於耶穌在曠野中受試探的敘述，今年是丙年，因此，這個主日的福音選自路加版本（路四 1-13）。這段經文的結構並非簡單，首先是一個導言，講述耶穌在曠野中遭受魔鬼的試探，接著是三段耶穌和魔鬼之間的對話，也就是三個試探，最後是簡單的結語。

導言

耶穌在受洗的時候，聖神藉著如同各自的形體降在他上邊（路三 22），從此他便被聖神充滿（參閱：路四 18），他的整個生活都是在聖神的感動與帶領下進行的。耶穌受洗之後，聖神就將他引入曠野，四十天之久受魔鬼的試探（2）。

名詞的解釋

「曠野」對以色列民族而言，具有特別的意義，當上主藉著梅瑟將他們由埃及救出時，他們曾在曠野里遭受試探與考驗四十年之久，「四十」是舊約傳統中具有高度象徵意義的數字，除了以色列子民在曠野流徙四十年之外，還有無數個與四十相關的例子（參閱：出二四 18；三四 28；列上十九 8）。「魔鬼」代表一個與人作對的、控告人的個體（參閱：約二 1）。

「試探」與「誘惑」

福音作者並沒有報導到底魔鬼來自何處？本質如何？以及四十天之久對耶穌做了什麼試探？很可能對當時的讀者而言，這類的試探是大家生活中常有的共同經驗，因此，作者認為無需多費筆墨。由於在舊約聖經傳統中，雅威也對他的子民施予試探，在這樣的背景之下我們可以推想，此處所說的「試探」並不是今日語言當中含有高度倫理以為的「誘惑」，或者引人犯罪的罪惡事項。

人生活不只靠餅

路加記載耶穌由於四十天沒有進食，因此感到飢餓，使魔鬼（再次）有了試探耶穌的機會：「你若是天主子，命這個石頭變成餅吧！」（3）在敘述層面上，這個試探回應耶穌受洗的情景：「有聲音從天上說：『你是我的愛子』」（路三 22）。魔鬼要求耶穌利用這個特殊身份所具有的特殊力量施行一個奇跡，解決飢渴問題。耶穌卻引用申命記的話回答魔鬼「人生活不只靠餅」（申八 3），強調對人而言，解除飢渴並不是最重要的問題。

唯獨朝拜事奉天主

借著魔鬼吧耶穌領導高處，使他在頃刻間看到普世萬國，魔鬼宣稱擁有者一切，並且許諾把一切權勢賞給耶穌，條件是耶穌必須朝拜魔鬼，意思是承認他為所謂的「世界之神」（參閱：格前四 4；若十二 31）。路加很可能在這段經文中，暗中隱射了在他時代十分盛行的凱撒崇拜。面對這個誘惑，耶穌再度的引用了聖經的話加以駁斥：「你們要朝拜上主，你們的天主，唯獨侍奉他。」（申六 13）耶穌藉著這句聖經的話不但回絕了魔鬼的誘惑，更同時顯示他「唯獨」朝拜上主，因為他是天主子，天主才是真正的主，並且已將一切王權賜給了他的獨生子（參閱：路一 32；詠二 7）。

不可試探上主

接著魔鬼將耶穌引到耶路撒冷，並且引用詠九一 11-12 的經文，挑釁的要求耶穌從聖殿頂端跳下去，這個試探由雙重的理解方式，第一個可能性事魔鬼願意利用耶穌盲目且錯誤的信任，而使他死亡；另一個可能則是要耶穌藉著一個不服從的行動，強求一個奇跡徵兆。耶穌再次引用申命記的話斥責這個毫無意義的話「不可試探上主，你的天主」（申六 16）人不可相反天主的計劃，而向他要求自己的力量（參閱：路十一 29-32），由於耶穌是天主子，所以很可能他也藉著這句聖經的話要求魔鬼停止試探他。

結語

這三個被特別記載的試探，代表魔鬼為破壞耶穌救援工程所進行的一切試探，既然沒有成功，魔鬼「就離開耶穌，再等待時機」（13）。魔鬼並沒有因試探失敗而完全放棄，他更是尋找各種機會，不斷的傷害阻擾耶穌（參閱路二二 28），特別在耶穌受難的時候，魔鬼更激烈的進行他的陰謀行動（參閱：路二二 53-54）。

綜合反省

整體而言，耶穌受試探的報導是引用舊約的經文編輯而成，單由這點就可以看出，我們不可把這段敘述當做客觀歷史事實來瞭解。整段敘述的目的在於使讀者確信：雖然耶穌的外在生活表現與當時人們所期待的默西亞大不相同，但是他的確是完全按著天主旨意生活的天主子。

耶穌充滿聖神，因此，他有能力對抗一切錯謬邪惡的勢力，能夠按著天主子的身份完全地服從、執行天父的使命。耶穌受試探的故事教導我們：教會以及任何一位基督徒都應該和耶穌一樣，因為我們都擁有天主聖神的恩賜，但是也正因為如此我們應該瞭解，在我們的生活與工作範圍中必定會遭到試探（參閱：路二二 40、46；格前十 11-13），然而，在面對各種試探的時候，我們有耶穌基督作為最好的榜樣。正是基於這個特殊的意義，所以教會特別安排在四旬期的開始，在教會禮儀中宣讀這段經文。