

Breaking Open the Word of Faith

Good News Reflections for the Sundays of February, 2018

by Terry A . Modica



6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 11, 2018

Read:

Leviticus 13:1-2,44-46

Ps 32:(7) 1-2, 5,11

1 Corinthians 10:31--11:1

Mark 1:40-45

Reflect:

This Sunday's second reading gives us a great motto that we should post on our bedroom mirrors so that it's the first thing we see as our sleepy eyes awaken each morning: "Whatever you do, do it for the glory of God."

Everything! Brush your teeth for the glory of God. Kiss your family "Good morning!" for the glory of God. Go to Mass for the glory of God (in other words, we don't go to church just for what we can get out of it).

Do your work for the glory of God. Drive politely for the glory of God. Shop and eat and greet others for the glory of God. Say yes to the needs of the Church for the glory of God.

And receive all that he wants to give you (the compliments, the money you earn, the answered prayers, the good times and rewards) all for the glory of God.

This should be part of our daily prayers every morning: "Holy Spirit, help me to do everything today for the glory of God. Amen!"

By making it a daily habit to start the day this way, the glory of God becomes integrated into our character. When we remember to see our activities through the lens of "whatever you do, do it for the glory of God", we become stronger in avoiding all kinds of sins. It sanctifies each moment of every day.

Often, we see religious activities as separate from our normal activities. We take "time out" from our schedules to go to church. We stop what we're doing when we want to pray. We think that only Clergy and Religious can be religious all of the time and that a layperson who is like that is a "fanatic". But why?



Why should we limit "for the glory of God" to only what is "holy" -- Mass attendance, religious rituals, prayers, the works of ministry, etc.? We can sanctify every moment by remembering that whatever we do, we want to please God with it.

Questions for Personal Reflection:

† What have you done already today that glorifies God? What is planned for later today and how can that be offered to God?

† What will you do to remind yourself daily to do everything for the glory of God?

Questions for Faith Sharing:

† Describe ways that we can glorify God in normal, everyday activities. How do you turn mundane tasks into a gift for God?

† When is it most difficult to glorify him?

† How can even our lapses into sin become blessings that glorify God?

Comments/Prayer Requests:

1st Sunday of Lent

February 18, 2018

Read:

Genesis 9:8-15

Ps 25:4-9

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:12-15

Reflect:

This Sunday's Gospel reading shows us the first thing that Jesus did after his baptismal anointing in the Jordan River: He wrestled with temptation.

His baptism had marked the moment of his complete surrender to the Father's will. As he arose from the water, he left behind his old life and began a new life of ministry.

The Father responded by telling him that he was very pleased, and the Holy Spirit filled his humanness. Jesus as God already had the Holy Spirit (one-hundred percent, he and the Spirit were the same God), but Jesus the Son, who was also fully human, now came fully alive in the Spirit. We can imagine how this experience in the Jordan River gave him the feeling of an elated spiritual high. And the next thing that happens is an attack of the devil.

The same pattern repeats itself in our lives. As soon as we experience new growth in our faith, or a new purpose for our faith, we run smack into a situation that tests the strength of our faith. However, if this didn't happen, how would we know that our faith is strong enough for our daily needs? How would we find out that we've spiritually matured? How would we know that we are ready to make a significant difference for the kingdom of God?

Sometimes without consciously thinking it, we decide that if we're going to be tested and we might lose, wouldn't it be better not to start something new? Well, that's another temptation!

Lent is the perfect time to examine the temptations that we face every day and turn them into new growth that will strengthen our faith.



Every time we face a sin and seek God's forgiveness, we become stronger. And if we take it a step farther by walking into the confessional with it, we also receive powerful graces directly from Jesus, through the priest, that will render temptations much more powerless.

And this makes us more useful to God in the mission of conquering evil in the world and helping his kingdom spread into the lives of the people around us.

Think of temptations as blessings in disguise: Use them as opportunities to purify your life, become more like Jesus, and grow powerful in the faith.

Questions for Personal Reflection:

† How well do you recognize temptation? How quickly do you rely on the faith that God has given you to say no to the devil's tricks?

† What temptation are you saying yes to right now? Are you willing to give it up as your Lenten sacrifice?

Questions for Faith Sharing:

† Describe a time when you experienced a spiritual high and then faced a strong temptation. How did you handle it?

† What role did (or will) Jesus play in overcoming this temptation?

Comments/Prayer Requests: