

The time of trial

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT - YEAR C

Dt 26,4-10; Ps 90; Rm 10,8-13; Lk 4,1-13

Reconciliation is the theme of the Sunday readings that will accompany us during this Lent, the liturgical season most appropriate to “return to ourselves” that began last Wednesday with the imposition of ashes. Let us be reconciled to God!, St. Paul will say, writing to the Corinthians. In welcoming the presence of God and his love into our lives, we can truly understand who we are, comprehend that every joy on this earth is an anticipation and a guarantee of the eternal joy of heaven, understand the profound meaning of our being, despite the hardships, the disappointments and the death that await us at the end of life. Only then can we be true to ourselves, taking our rightful place in the world. Our rebirth begins right here, with this appeal: let us be reconciled with God!

However, to have access to this grace, it is necessary to recognize its presence in our history. And this occurs, not rarely, in weakness. Was it not so even for Jesus? Let us observe him in today's Gospel: after the baptism in the Jordan River he is guided by the Spirit into the solitude of the desert for forty long days. Only at the end of this time, fatigued and weakened by fasting, was he harassed by Satan, whose temptations he resisted, acknowledging his Father and ours as the only one before whom it is permissible to prostrate oneself. His awareness of his sonship with God, of his recognition of him as his Father, passes through weakness. And was it not the same for the people of Israel? Their cry to the Almighty in time of trouble in Egypt (first reading) also passes through suffering. And it gives rise to God's response. Mysteriously, God's voice is heard in tribulation and in difficulty...

Let us prepare ourselves, brothers and sisters, to welcome his reconciling presence. And let us do it, in this Year of Mercy, making our own the words of Pope Francis: “We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. [...] Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness” (MV 2).

Stefano Stimamiglio, ssp

Prayer

Jesus, I watch you
while you are in prayer
in the desert, all alone
and entirely turned
towards your Father
and my Father.
Please, Jesus, accept me,
silent, beside you,
praying with you to your
Father and my Father
for your anxieties and mine.
Thank you, Jesus,
now I no longer feel alone
but in the mysterious
and radiant company
of your God and my God.
Amen.

