

# Put to the Test

## FIRST SUNDAY

Dt. 26:4-10

Ps. 90

Rm. 10:8-13

Lk. 4:1-13

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**T**o be tempted means to be tested. In this regard, a verse from the Book of Sirach is very illuminating: “My child, if you aspire to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for an ordeal. Be sincere of heart, be steadfast. Do not become disheartened in times of adversity” (2:1-2).

If we want to come before the Lord, recognizing how he exalts his mercy in us, then temptation is necessary because it helps us to scrutinize our sincerity of heart, our perseverance in prayer, and our courage in making choices coherent with the will of God. Temptation is the testing ground of conformity to Christ in doing the will of the Father, in entrusting ourselves to his arms, in loving in a way that generates more love through acts of charity, mercy and forgiveness.

The Tempter will persist; he will never give up, never “throw in the towel.” The more we cling to the Lord, the more the Tempter will try to undermine our resolve through the lie of “what seems to be.” He will induce us to see everything through the blurry lens of deception so that we cannot recognize the hand of God at work. Even more, he will do everything possible to convince us, through the worm of suspicion, that God is not the God Jesus revealed to us. If we belong to the Tempter, we will not be able to recognize temptations and tests because we are already his. But if his suggestions make our breath catch [in fear], then we can be joyously sure that we are not his. Even if the temptations are insistent and we feel caught in their grip, Jesus shows us the path to overcoming and conquering them: the Word of God. He responded to temptations with citations from the Word because, as Psalm 119 says: “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path (v. 105).

We cannot withdraw into ourselves because we are afraid of being defeated. Instead, we must respond to temptations with the certainty that God will never abandon us during our time of testing.

Fr. Giovanni Di Vito

### Psalm 90

*You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, say to the Lord, “My refuge and fortress, my God in whom I trust.”*

*No evil shall befall you, nor shall affliction come near your tent. For he has commanded his angels to guard you in all your ways.*

*With their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.*

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