




# TO DIE OUT OF LOVE

FIRST SUNDAY  
OF LENT  
2023

## GOSPEL Matthew 4:1-11

***“No, you will not die!”***

hisses the serpent in the Garden of Eden, but its human inhabitants do not understand and are seduced.



Beginning with the first pages of Genesis, that demonic hissing has never ceased to tempt our human nature. As if not dying is the solution to the longing for life that we all carry within us, as if avoiding death is the way to find the happiness we so diligently seek. Even the Gospel reading is Jesus' response to the very human temptation *to escape death*. A temptation multiplied endlessly in the realms of possession, religion, power—seductive answers to the fear of dying.

But when faced with death, Jesus does not try to protect himself. He dies naked, exposed, defenseless. He is not ashamed of dying, not even on the infamous wood of the cross, because if you love, you strip yourself and give yourself. The macabre dance of Calvary is also a dance of love: blood and passion, pierced hearts and tears, labored breathing and self-surrender: the grammar of love is the same as the grammar of death.

*“No, you will not die!”* hisses the serpent. *“You are all dying even now,”* replies the Master. The centurion guarding Jesus declares, *“Truly this man was the Son of God!”*

**Human beings are born anew when they recognize death as an opportunity to perpetuate love. Are we dying out of love for someone? May this be the primary question we ask ourselves as we cross the desert of Lent.**

*Fr. Alessandro Deho'*