

St. Louis Catholic Church

Thursday of the 3rd Week of Lent

Jeremiah 7:23-28

Luke 11:14-23

When I have the privilege of baptizing a new member of God's family, I am reminded that once anointed and washed clean in the living waters that I am very close to one filled with the life of God. During the ceremony the new disciple is anointed to have original sin removed and to be protected from the power of evil, Satan, in this world. Like the mute in today's Gospel, the minister touches the mouth and ears of the newly baptized that they may soon hear the word of God and proclaim the good news.

Yet we too are aware that we have free will and live in a world still influenced by the power of the devil. The devil we reject in our baptism, and that we renew our rejection at Easter, is insidious and persistent in trying to claim us for himself. We have a defense and that is to love God, be faithful and love our neighbor.

Today the devil uses many enticing weapons in the hope of destroying the love of God in our hearts. Matthew Kelly is one who reminds us today of rugged individualism, which in its false independence and pride refuses to see the necessity of depending on God for anything. Our American culture emphasizes that we are self made and lifts up those who have come up on their own and made something of their lives. We "pull ourselves up by our bootstraps", forget that life, ability, knowledge, skill, talent and so much more is ours from God. Satan will tell you--no way--you did it on your own. Be proud. Look what you have accomplished! Now enjoy the benefits. Spend, buy, and relax, play. You are great!

Another weapon is materialism and again our society feeds into this attack on our personhood. The goal of life becomes the acquiring of possessions. Those things become our gods. We all get religious when we see a big name celebrity or politician commit adultery. We condemn their infidelity against the 6th Commandment. Certainly we should be saddened. Yet so often those same people violate other Commandments and think nothing of it. Materialism can easily lead us to violate the 1st and 3rd Commandments very subtly. Don't you think Satan just smirks.

"I am the Lord your God, you shall not have strange gods before Me", and "Keep holy the Sabbath". The strange god before "the true God", is often what we own, possess and covet. Those "things" often keep us so preoccupied that we have no time to stop and go to Mass, pray, rest, spend time with family, and just be grateful. We brag about what we own, we show it off and we hail and revel in how we spent our weekend. We might take a minute to email a friend about how horrible it was that some bad person killed someone, that a thief robbed a citizen. We might say the thief is lazy, worthless and vile. We might condemn the known sex offender. Yes those deeds are wrong. They violate God's way but so does the 1st and 3rd Commandments.

At the same time have we blatantly spread a rumor, told a lie, used the GD term and disregarded attention to parents or others in authority. Satan could be SMIRKING!

Hedonism and indifference are also weapons against the human spirit created in God's image and likeness. Hedonism is all about "my pleasure" and the sexual mores of our society lend to the credence of "if it feels good, do it". In both of these assaults we are unaware of the needs of others or unconcerned about their feelings or dignity.

Complacency, seen by the Israelites in the reading from Jeremiah, reduces us to entitlement. The Israelites felt they deserved God's protection and we feel that if we are baptized and have faith that salvation is assured. Nothing more needs to be done.

The power of Satan can also tell us that we are saved, don't worry, or that we have plenty of time. Let a salesman in your house and you may likely buy his product. Let Satan in and he can utilize the destructive forces of individualism, materialism, hedonism, indifference, complacency, relativism, atheism, and entitlement to their fullest extent.

Combat the power waged against us. God is 1st. Pray daily, go to Mass, receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, read and pray the Bible, examine conscience daily, pray to St. Michael the Archangel to protect us against the wickedness and snares of the devil.

Remember God is the victor. He is a greater force than Satan. Who do we choose to follow? Just be careful that the other side is usually present when we are most successful and powerful. Pride comes before the fall. Finally, don't deny the reality of what Satan can do and that he is real.

God Bless,
Msgr. John McArthur

Key Events This Week:

1. Thursday Evening Confessions--5:00-6:00 p.m.
2. Friday is First Friday--Masses 6:15 a.m., 8:15 a.m., and 12:00 Noon
3. Friday Evening--Stations of the Cross--5:30 p.m.
4. Friday Evening--Fish Fry--Cafeteria--5:00-8:00 p.m.
5. Saturday--Men's Morning of Spirituality--ALL MEN NEED THIS
8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.--Fr. Larry Richards (great speaker)
Testimonies
Penance--Chance for Confession--Priests from all over Memphis available
Mass Bishop Steib is main celebrant
6. 40 Days for Life--Saturday 2:00-3:00 p.m. or any hour however--need presence to witness to sacredness of life
7. Sunday Commitment Sunday--Bishop's Annual Appeal
After homily/video--please bring pledge card or card with one time payment
Goal \$439,000
Goal 100% Participation