

10TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (B)
WE ARE FIGHTING A SPIRITUAL BATTLE

June 8/9, 2024

St. Paul told the Ephesians that we are not fighting flesh and blood, but the masters of the darkness in this world (Eph.6:12). This spiritual battle began when our first parents disobeyed God and followed the lies of the devil as we heard in the first reading.

Adam and Eve were not ready to accept their faults but shifted blame on others. The end result was that they lost their innocence and lost all the privileges God provided them. Their behavior brought enmity between the evil one and their descendants, that is, all human beings, especially those who choose to follow the commands of God.

When Jesus came to redeem us, the Scribes and Pharisees were not ready to accept His teachings, considering Him to be possessed by the devil. They allowed Satan to use them to distract Jesus' attention, but He made it clear that they were wrong. The evil one is rather fighting God's people and trying to deceive them as he did to our first parents.

We all have become victims of the action of Adam and Eve and are prone to sinning against God. The devil is using all kinds of means to make us forget about the goodness of God and what He has in store for us. Many a time, we give in to his tricks and yield to his demands and thus, become disobedient to God. The evil one sometimes uses our family and friends, co-workers, children, parents, and other relatives to tempt us and make us forget about the goodness of God. Jesus' own relatives were thinking He was out of His mind, because He was paying more attention to what He came to do to the extent that He did not get time to eat.

The struggle is also within ourselves. We wish to do what is good, but we are tempted to do otherwise, especially when it is easy for us to do what is wrong. When it is time to pray, we may be tempted to sleep more or postpone it to a convenient time and something may even prevent us from praying. Instead of forgiving others, the devil wants us to retaliate, or pay back evil with evil.

Pleasure of the flesh and worldly happiness are the things the devil induces people to pursue and people end up destroying themselves.

St. Paul prescribes things we can do to win the fight; we are to grow strong in the Lord, with the strength of His power; to take up all God's armor which is truth, uprightness, faith, salvation, and the word of God which is the sword of the Spirit, and to pray in the Spirit (Eph.6:10-17). St. Paul himself experienced a lot of trials but he was encouraged by what awaited him to persevere in his faith. He once lamented that the good that he wanted to do, he could not do it, but the evil that he did not want to do, that was what he would do (Rom.7:19). He saw himself in a wretched state, but he found God as his rescuer through Jesus Christ (Rom.7:24-25)

He knew that there is a dwelling built by God for all who obey God and try to live a righteous life. He did not allow his human inclinations to overcome him, but relied on the power of the Spirit.

Knowing how we can easily give in to temptation and sin, the Psalmist is asking the Lord not to look at our iniquities but to show us His mercy. He said: "If you O Lord, mark iniquities, Lord who can stand? But with you is forgiveness, that you may be revered". The Psalmist is encouraging us to move towards God "For with the Lord is kindness and with Him is fulness of redemption".

The readings make us aware that evil will be defeated at the end of everything and so we have to resist him and cast all our cares on Jesus, because He cares for us. This is what St. Peter wants us to remember: "Keep sober and alert, because your enemy the devil is on the prowl like a roaring lion, looking for someone to eat. Stand up to him strong in faith and in the knowledge that it is the same kind of suffering that the community of your brothers throughout the world is undergoing. The God of all grace who called you to eternal glory in Christ will restore you; He will confirm, strengthen and support you" (1Pet.5:8-10).

