

# Lenten

# Reflections



The Divine Intervention

**March 5, 2017**

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## Scripture

### **Matthew 4: 1-11**

At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry.

The tempter approached and said to him,

"If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread."

He said in reply,

"It is written:

One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God."

Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down.

For it is written:

He will command his angels concerning you and with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone."

Jesus answered him,  
"Again it is written,  
You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test."  
Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain,  
and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence,  
and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you,  
if you will prostrate yourself and worship me."  
At this, Jesus said to him,  
"Get away, Satan!  
It is written:  
The Lord, your God, shall you worship  
and him alone shall you serve."  
Then the devil left him and, behold,  
angels came and ministered to him.

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## **Our Scripture Reflection**

There is a bottom line essence to the three temptations of Jesus by Satan: SELF. Satan wants Jesus to satiate His hunger, to have power Himself, to have everything under His control. Self, self, self. We must learn if we truly want to be alive in this life, that we are NOT nor were we intended to be completely in control. God is in control. He is the source of our power and strength. So many addicts in recovery have learned this lesson, when will we?

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## **Food for your Journey**

There are three primary things that we have to let go of, in my opinion. First is the compulsion to be successful. Second is the compulsion to be right -- even, and especially, to be theologically right. (That's merely an ego trip, and because of this need, churches have split in half, with both parties prisoners of their own egos.) Finally there is the compulsion to be powerful, to have everything under control.

I'm convinced these are the three demons Jesus faced in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). Until we each look these three demons in their eyes, we should presume that they are still in charge in every life. The demons have to be called by name, clearly, concretely, and practically, spelling out just how imperious, controlling, and self-righteous we all are. This is the first lesson in the spirituality of subtraction. (emphases added)

--Richard Rohr, *Simplicity: The Freedom of Letting Go* (Crossroad: 2003), 42-43.

Twenty-five years after the first website went online, it is clear that we are living through a period of dizzying transition. For 500 years after Gutenberg, the dominant form of information was the printed page: knowledge was primarily delivered in a fixed format, one that encouraged readers to believe in stable and settled truths.

Now, we are caught in a series of confusing battles between opposing forces: between truth and falsehood, fact and rumor, kindness and cruelty; between the few and the many, the connected and the alienated; between the open platform of the web as its architects envisioned it and the gated enclosures of Facebook and other social networks; between an informed public and a misguided mob.

What is common to these struggles -- and what makes their resolution an urgent matter -- is that they all involve the diminishing status of truth. This does not mean that there are no truths. It simply means ... that we cannot agree on what those truths are, and when there is no consensus about the truth and no way to achieve it, chaos soon follows.

Increasingly, what counts as a fact is merely a view that someone feels to be true -- and technology has made it very easy for these "facts" to circulate with a speed and reach that was unimaginable in the Gutenberg era (or even a decade ago).

--Katharine Viner, "How technology disrupted the truth," *The Guardian*, July 12, 2016. [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com).

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## **A Prayer from the Heart**

Dear Jesus, When I fast and pray, especially during the Lenten season, it seems at times I crave that for which I am not hungry and I am distracted in my prayer. Bless me and protect me from Satan during these times so that I may live a truly holy Lent. Amen.