

*Lent...Path of conversion... "It's a time for compassion and solidarity", Pope Francis*

*"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near" (Mt 4,17).*



The gospel of the **first Sunday of Lent** describes the temptations of Jesus at the beginning of his public life. However, immediately before this, he was baptised and "saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon him" (Matthew 3:16). This meant that Jesus was not just anyone, but that the Holy Spirit was with Him. After the temptations, Jesus invited people to undergo this change when he proclaimed: "*Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near*" (Mt 4,17)

Dear friends of the ACI Family, dear Sisters,

*"Let us give all our heart to God, because it is so small and God is so great."  
Saint Raphaela Maria*

The scene of the "temptations of Jesus" is a story that should not be interpreted lightly. The temptations described are not exactly moral. The story warns us that we can ruin our lives if we stray from the path Jesus follows.

The first temptation is of decisive importance, because it can pervert and corrupt our lives at the root. Jesus is apparently offered something quite innocent and good: to put God at the service of his hunger. "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

However, Jesus reacts quickly and surprisingly: "Man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God". He will not make his own bread an absolute. He will not put God at the service of his own interests, forgetting the Father's plan. He will always seek first the kingdom of God and His justice. At all times, he will listen to His Word.

Our needs are not met just by having our bread and butter. Human beings need and long for much more. Even to save those who have no bread from hunger and misery, we must listen to God our Father and awaken in our conscience a hunger for justice, compassion and solidarity.

Our great temptation today is to turn everything into bread. To reduce the horizon of our life more and more to the mere satisfaction of our desires; to turn the obsession for greater well-being or indiscriminate and limitless consumerism, the sole ideal of our lives.

Why do we tremble at the tragic increase in the number of people committing suicide every day? Why do we remain closed in our false well-being, erecting ever more inhuman barriers so that the hungry do not enter our countries, do not reach our homes and do not knock on our doors?

Jesus' call can help us realize that man does not live by well-being alone. Human beings also need to cultivate the spirit, to experience love and friendship, to develop solidarity with those who suffer, to listen to their conscience with responsibility, to open themselves to the final Mystery of life with hope.

In friendship,

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