

REFLECTION FOR THE 1st SUNDAY OF LENT

We are on the first Sunday of Lent and today's readings remind us that we are pilgrims, and that we must recognize our reality as pilgrims in the deserts of our lives. In this pilgrimage, God goes with us, and he must be our support and with the certainty that we will reach the goal, the Promised Land, and eternal life. Therefore, as this first reading teaches us, we must live our pilgrimage grateful for the gifts that God is sowing on the paths of our existence. Let us be grateful, let us praise the Lord who continues to work his wonders in us today, to give us our daily bread. With the psalmist, let us say: *“Lord, my refuge, my God in whom I trust!”*

Meanwhile, in this pilgrimage that is our life, let us place our hope in the Lord, as St. Paul tells us in the second reading. *“Jesus is Lord, and believe your heart that God raised him from the dead, [and] you will be saved... Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame... Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”* Let us therefore commit our lives to Jesus Christ, who has promised to be with us always until the end of time. Let us always have Christ before us as our rock and our model.

In today's Gospel, Jesus Christ shows himself to be identified with our human reality, vulnerable and tempted, but always refusing proposals and values that jeopardize God's plan for the world and for His people. For Jesus, God's values always took precedence over material goods, the thirst for power, and the intoxication offered by easy success. Jesus asks his disciples to follow a similar path.

Thus, in the first temptation, Jesus tells us that *“Man shall not live by bread alone.”* Material goods cannot be the fundamental option in our lives, but rather we should listen to the Word of God and put it into practice; the word that invites us to seek the paths of peace, truth, and justice.

In the second temptation, we are invited not to let ourselves be seduced by the ways of power, not to enthrone “kings” before whom we prostrate ourselves, as if they were the ones who show us the ways to true happiness; for only God is fullness. In Christ he tells us that it is by service to one another, of love for our brothers and sisters, that we will reach the true meaning of our existence.

In the third temptation, Jesus tells us not to let ourselves be seduced by easy success, by a faith of miracles and commercial propaganda. God is not sold like toothpaste, but rather it is in the silence of everyday life, on the way of the cross, that we will find in a life of surrender to God's will that we find the true meaning of

living out our faith in Jesus Christ, our savior. This is the path he chose; this is the path he invites us to follow. He will be with us and will guide us along straight and safe paths, in the ways of God.

Amen.