

Lead us not into Temptation



The words “lead us not into temptation” from the Gospel of Matthew (6:13) wholeheartedly petition a loving God to deliver us from any circumstances that would lead us to sin.

Some translations substitute the word “temptation” with “test” suggesting a “trial” one must faithfully endure. Examples of such trials include the “testing” of Abraham’s faith as he is called to sacrifice his son (Genesis 22: 1-2), putting Job to the “test” (Job 1:6-12) or even Jesus’ entry into the wilderness to be “tested” by the Devil (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1).

As we enter the season of Lent, take a moment to reflect on what part temptations and tests play in your spiritual life.

LUKE 4:1-13

¹Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert ²for forty days, where he was tempted by the Devil. Jesus ate nothing during that time, at the end of which he was famished.

³The Devil said to Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” ⁴Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’”

⁵Then the Devil took Jesus up higher and showed him all the nations of the world in a single instant. ⁶The devil said, “I shall give you all the power and the glory of these nations; the power has been given to me, and I can give it to whomever I wish. ⁷Prostrate yourself in homage to me and it will be yours. In reply, Jesus said, “It is written: ‘You shall worship the Most High God, and God alone shall you serve.’”

⁹Then the Devil led Jesus to Jerusalem, set him up on the parapet of the Temple, and said, "If you are God's Own, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written: 'God will command the angels to guard you,' ¹¹with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" ¹²Jesus said to the Devil in reply, "It also says, 'Do not put God to the test.'"

¹³When the Devil had exhausted every temptation, Jesus was left alone. But the Devil awaited another opportunity.

FOR REFLECTION

1. Are there any particular temptations you have because you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender person in the Catholic Church? What patterns or cycles usually emerge in times of testing?
2. In the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes – "*No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to all people. You can be confident that God is faithful and will not let you be tempted beyond your means. But when you are tempted, God will also provide a way out so that you can endure it*" (1 Cor 10:13). In your experience as an LGBT person or ally, is temptation merely inevitable, or is it necessary for your growth as a disciple?
3. Which of the three temptations that Jesus experienced do you find yourself succumbing to the most: (a) The temptation to allow physical cravings rule you? (b) The temptation to give your heart to someone or something other than God? (c) The temptation to try to manipulate God? What helps you move past temptation and sin?
4. "*God humbled you with hunger and then fed you manna, which was unknown to you and to your ancestors, to teach you that you cannot live on bread alone, but on every word that flows from the mouth of Yahweh*" (Deuteronomy 8:3). Given your own understanding of perseverance and endurance as an LGBT person or ally, what do you think God is trying to teach you by leading you into the wilderness? Why do you think Jesus needed to be tempted? And why did the Devil specifically choose these three temptations (see #3) to entice Jesus?
5. A popular statement says: "*We are not sinners, but saints who occasionally sin.*" Does this statement encourage or discourage you?
6. Temptation sometimes brings shame. What shame do you carry from succumbing to temptation? Do you ever feel "filled with the Spirit," as the gospel story says Jesus was, when you are faced with temptation?

PRAYER



Abba God in heaven,
hallowed be your name!

May your reign come;
may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Give us today our daily bread
And forgive us our debts
as we forgive those
who are indebted to us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

– *Matthew 6: 9-13*