

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church
 Lent I
 February 22, 2026
 rmceely+

Get thee hence Satan

Sometimes, the Church is ever so practical.
 Here we are 4 days into our Lenten discipline
 And the Collect and the Gospel
 The processional and sermon hymns,
 All speak of the 40 days and temptation.
 Haven't we all been tempted to break our Lenten discipline?
 The topic for the day can only be; temptation.
 And we will get there in a minute but first
 There is a subtle force at work in this Holy Communion
 It is in the shadows of today's Mass.
 It is one of David's psalms: the 91st.
 Whispering from the sidelines.

You won't find it in your prayer books.
 It is a gift from the Missal as an enhancement.
 A framework.
 There are four places in the liturgy
 That act as connectors or bridges.
 They come at the beginning of the service; the introit
 Between the Epistle and Gospel; the gradual
 Between the sermon and the offertory:
 the offertory sentences
 and between the prayer for humble access
 and the presentation of the sacrament:
 the Communion sentence.
 In today's liturgy they all come from the 91st psalm.
 It is a psalm about danger and times of exposure
 Of encirclement by the powers of evil.
 Something David knew well in his lifetime.

But it is also a Psalm about security and protection
That comes from trust in God.

So very appropriate on this day.
However, the danger and encirclement that we know
Is not military as in David's time.
Rather, it is a battle waged by the devil for our souls
Harmful in this life but deadly in the next.

The devil's dangerous tactic is temptation.
The very topic of the day.
Let's consider the Temptation of Christ; today's Gospel
To see how the devil deploys temptation in our lives.

The attack is subtle.
He knows the physical vulnerability of Our Lord at the end of his
fast.
And so that is the point of the attack
The place we are most vulnerable.

We must, each of us, beware of our vulnerability.
Because that is where Satan will attack;
where temptation will be most effective.

In the battle for Jesus' soul
Satan's weapon of choice
is scripture.

In fact, an allusion to the 91st psalm
Which he will use later.

He says:

'Use your power;
change this stone into bread'

God does not want you to starve,
You'd be unable to carry out His mission.
He would want you to use your powers to save yourself
So you may save mankind.

You can do it

Change this stone into bread

That you may live and serve God.’

Satan offers temptation, a corrupt means to achieve God’s end.

Subtle.

Cunning

Deceptive.

It worked in the garden of Eden,

Adam and Eve condemning mankind to original sin

But Jesus will not be fooled.

For us the means is every bit as important as the ends.

Jesus sees the trap, steps over it; and cites Deuteronomy,

The second telling of Moses

The entire passage is this; Moses lecturing the children of Israel:

“And He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger

And fed thee with manna, . . .

That He might make thee know

that man doth not live by bread only

but by every word that proceedeth

out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live”.

Point taken:

Those who have chosen Lenten disciplines involving food

And suffer hunger

Are learning that we do not live by food alone

But by every word of God.

But isn’t it tempting to think that God wants you to eat the food

That tempting delicious morsel

you have chosen as your fast?

Satan even cites, or misquotes scripture to try to tempt you.

Satan is defeated.

But undaunted.

Next he tries to derail,
 deflect the power of the crucifixion and resurrection;
 From a high place on the temple in Jerusalem
 Satan suggests a demonstration of God's plan
 Jump, and the angels will save you
 Everyone will see the miracle
 and know that you are the Son of God,
 the Messiah,

You will instantly achieve God's plan
 A better
 Faster
 and far less painful means to His goal
 He will love you for it.
 You will be a hero.

It's classic Satan
 Trust me
 I am one of you
 Helping you and helping God
 To achieve what God wants
 The devil recites the 11th and 12th verse of the 91st Psalm:
 “He shall give his angels charge over thee,
 to keep thee in all thy ways.
 They shall bear thee up in their hands
 lest thou dash thy foot against a stone”
 ‘Leap, while all are looking
 Make the demonstration
 Show them who you are.’

Jesus goes to Deuteronomy again;
 “It is written: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”
 Do not set out a test of God.

There are no shortcuts fashioned by man
 to achieve the will of God.
 Sometimes it is the journey He puts before us
 That makes us who God wills us to be
 Sometimes that journey is hard.

Point taken.

Satan tries one last time; he offers Jesus the world.
 Which the devil can deliver.

Certainly today, we would have to say
 our world is, by and large
 in the hands of the devil.

Satan Offers Him that which God seeks
 That Jesus is King
 Jesus is the saviour

He need only bow down and worship the devil
 And all will be achieved.

Another deception

Satan again professes to be an ally.
 In disguise he seems innocuous.
 He suggests a way
 That seems to be aligned with the good,
 With God
 A better, faster and easier way
 To achieve what God wants

Another corruption of the means
 by which God has chosen to achieve His ends.

Jesus goes back to Deuteronomy:
 “Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God
 And Him only shalt thou serve”.

The epic battle was joined
 The combatants engaged
 Weapon drawn
 Forces unleashed
 But the forces of Good will always overcome the forces of evil.
 Last point taken.

Jesus warns:
 "Satan get thee hence"
 And the battle is won. For today.
 Satan was again defeated.
 But would be back
 To suffer his great defeat at Calvary
 At the cross
 Where Jesus fulfilled the Mission
 Saved mankind
 And defeated evil

The 91st Psalm concludes with God's words:

"Because he hath set his love upon Me
 Therefore will I deliver him:
 I will set him on high because he hath known My name.
 He shall call upon Me and I will answer him
 I will be with him in trouble
 I will deliver him and honor him.

With long life will I satisfy him
 And show him my salvation."

With God's help
 We will prevail
 With God's help
 We will see eternal life
 Where there is no Satan. Where there is no evil

We need only meet the temptation
That will inexorably be put in our path
With our trust in God.

“Get thee hence Satan”