

In the previous two articles we have discussed the influences of “The World” and “The Flesh”. This article is going to concentrate on “The Devil”. The Catechism of The Catholic Church states in Section 395 states the following;

*“The power of Satan is, nonetheless, not infinite. He is only a creature, powerful from the fact that he is pure spirit, but still a creature. He cannot prevent the building up of God’s reign. Although Satan may act in the world out of hatred for God and his kingdom in Christ Jesus, and although his action may cause grave injuries-of a spiritual nature and, indirectly, even of a physical nature-to each man and to society, the action is permitted by divine providence which with strength and gentleness guides human and cosmic history.”*

We can many things from this paragraph but let us focus on three things. The first thing is that the devil exists and his purpose is to cause injury ultimately to our souls. The second thing is that the devil prowls about the world seeking the ruin of souls out of hatred for God and that his influence is through both physical and spiritual means. The last point I wish to emphasize is that although the devil attempts to use the weakness of our flesh and the temptations of the world for diabolical means that nothing happens that is not permitted by God. Our joy and victory comes from knowing that ultimately God always brings good from everything to fulfill His divine plan.

The first and second point goes hand in hand. The devil DOES exist and he uses many means by which to influence the world. I have degree in Psychology and I remember when I was college one of my professors would argue that the only devil that exists is our own inner voice that places limitations on us. Well, both Church teachings and traditions say the contrary. I remember when first school shootings began with Pearl Mississippi; the boy claimed that “the devil” spoke to him. This boy also admitted to practicing in Satanic Worship. Much insight can be gained into the intentions of the enemy by reading C.S. Lewis’s “Screw tape Letters”. The book is between Screw tape, a demon in training, and the devil himself. At one point in the book, the devil explained that when the victim was in church, Screw tape was to fill his mind with thoughts of the flaws in those around him. He was to make his victim see them as all hypocrites. He was to make him focus on the whine in someone’s voice or the way they sang off key. It goes into much more detail than I can here but the point is that we must see there is a spiritual combat taking place and it is NOT with our inner voice. It is with a spirit that is superior to us as a creature. This creature has existed for thousands of years. It does not sleep, or eat or become distracted. It has studied the weakness of mankind and will focus on them to bring about the demise of your ability to fulfill God’s purpose for creating us. Why were we created? To know God. To Love God. To Serve God so that we may be with him forever in heaven.

So he attempts to influence us with tempting as well as through tarot cards, Ouiju boards, Satan or Wiccen (witchcraft), mediums that “talk” to the dead and more. What do we do: Well, first we pray for God to remove any darkness for our eyes so that with our new eyes we can see the evil influences that oppose us. We utilize confession to remain in a state of Grace so that God’s grace flows through us and gives us the strength to bear all things. We stay away from all of the fore mentioned things. These practices are not to be

taken lightly. The bible says that the devil was the most beautiful of angels. It says also that he will come as light. I often share with my young people that he is not going to show up in a pitchfork and horns. We must contemplate the lines of the act of contrition that says; "*to avoid the near occasion of sin*". We must avoid things, situations, people, books or movies that make light of evil.

The last point is one of hope. The Holy Father Pope John Paul II states "Do not be afraid". We are not to feel overcome by the enemy. It may seem we are bombarded on every side with television shows like "The Osbornes" replacing the standard of June and Ward Cleaver, the music industry has half naked women on the covers singing about sin as if it were light and not the darkness that it truly is. We are living in time of war and everyday it seems a new terrorist act has occurred, or a child has been abducted and murder and sin seems to abound. I have had some kids ask me, "If there is a God, why does he let bad things happen?" That is a good question. We must however never lose our faith; this is what the devil desires. We know that God works through every evil a better good for divine purpose. It is also my belief that God constantly wishes to work to intercede for us through His Mother and through His saints in heaven to answer our prayers. I just met a woman that told me that while her husband was driving to work, his truck broke down in the middle of nowhere. He began to walk to a farmhouse. Not far down from where his truck broke down, he discovered a newborn baby swaddled in blankets lying in the tall grass deep in the ditch. The baby is alive and well. The baby would never have been found if the man's truck broke down. There are many stories of angels and miracles that have saved people or have worked miracles. God is good. He knows best and He loves us more than we can imagine. If you ever feel persecuted or attacked, just repeat the words of St. Faustina "Jesus, I trust in you! Then do it.