



## “IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD”



Last Sunday, we heard from the Holy Gospel According to Saint Matthew (chapter IV verses 1-3) that “Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights and afterwards He was hungry. The tempter approached ...” and tempted Him; not simply with earthly food, temporal power, and Angelic protection, but with **doubt**: “*if* you are the Son of God, ...”. (That same *temptation to doubt* will surface again on Golgotha, where “those passing by reviled Him, shaking their heads and saying: “You Who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself, *if* You are the Son of God, and come down from the Cross” (Saint Matthew XXVII:39-40)).

Consideration of this annual remembrance of the depth of God’s Love, pictorially featured as it was on VIII Sunday in Ordinary Time Bulletin cover with images of the Love that allowed Himself to be tempted in a desert, sweat blood in a garden; be betrayed by a friend’s kiss, denied by a friend’s testimony by a fire, carry a cross and be crucified, sent me into the desert with Jesus from a different perspective than had hitherto been the case. More often than not, my focus had been on Satan’s tempting of Jesus and how Jesus, having resisted the temptations by the Power of the Spirit (of His baptism), strengthens us through our own Baptism, to resist temptation as well. Now that “application” is good, appropriate, encouraging, useful, etc., but in Light of Pope Francis’ Message for Lent (in which His Holiness spoke of the Word of God as a gift) and Bishop Barres’ Message for Lent acknowledging the Power of the Sacrament of Penance, I got to thinking about Confession.

For nearly nineteen years I have heard (not necessarily from one penitent): “Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been one month since my last confession and these are my sins. I have missed Mass on Sunday. I have not said my morning prayers. I have taken the Lord’s Name in vain. I have committed adultery. I have lied. I have coveted my neighbour’s goods. I have coveted my neighbour’s wife. I have used contraception. I have had an abortion.”

Now, if you were to ask any Priest – Monsignor Bennett (a Priest of fifty years), Father Alessandro (a Priest of twenty months), Father Carlos (a Priest of twenty years) – I am sure that without exception, ALL of them would tell you that rare is the case (if ever) when a penitent has knelt down in the confessional, made the sign of the Cross, and said: “Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been one month since my last confession and these are my sins. *I tempted someone* to miss Mass on Sunday. *I tempted someone* not to say their morning prayers. *I tempted someone* to commit adultery. *I tempted someone* to use contraception. *I tempted someone* to have an abortion. ... *I tempted someone to sin.*”

As you make your way with Jesus out of the desert and up the mountain on this II Sunday of Lent, you may be tempted, or may even tempt others to doubt that Jesus is the Son of God. Through the intercession of Saints Peter, John, and James it is my hope that you will have those doubts dispelled; not by the thunderous Voice of God in Heaven, but rather by that still small Voice of God within you saying: “**This Is My Beloved Son**”.

