

In the Bible the word DEVIL appears 36 times. 35 of those are in the New Testament. 4 of those 35 times are in today's Gospel.

What do we know about the devil? The devil is a liar and a deceiver. One of the greatest deceptions the devil can pull on us is to get us to think: There is no devil. We can rely on the Scriptures, Tradition and our own experience to know that there most definitely is such a reality as the devil.

The devil is not interested in our good or in our well-being. The devil is opposed to us doing God's will.

In the Gospel today, Jesus is presented with temptations by the devil.

Temptations are tests. Do we say something hurtful or complimentary, affirming?
Temptations are invitations to practice virtue. Will we engage in gossip or remain silent if we have nothing good to say about another?
Temptations are opportunities to make choices FOR or AGAINST our deepest values: will I accurately report information on my income tax returns or falsify information?

In themselves temptations are neither good nor bad. Our response to the temptations is what becomes good or evil. When we confront temptations the choices and decisions that we make are virtuous or sinful. We are honest or we lie.

In the Gospel, Jesus is aware of the temptations that the devil presents. Jesus makes choices that strengthen his desire to do God's will.

In confronting the devil's temptations, Jesus trusts in God. He relies on God's word in the Scriptures. He knows and affirms His deepest values and beliefs. Jesus is not taken in by the devil's attempts of deception and falsehood. He is true to who he is: the beloved Son of God.

Luke ends our Gospel account with: "When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him for a time." In other words, Jesus will be tempted again and again and again.

Like Jesus, we are confronted with temptations many times daily. We are tested. We are invited to practice virtue. We are presented with opportunities to make choices FOR or AGAINST our deepest values.

This week: pay attention to daily temptations. Be aware we are invited to make a choice. Pause to affirm our deepest values in our decisions.

The Good News is that Jesus is with us in our temptations. We are not alone. We can turn and rely on Him as He relied on God.

My sisters and brothers: We have heavenly support. What a gift!