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Angelus: familiarise ourselves with the Bible to rise, victorious, above temptation

The temptations of Jesus during his forty days in the desert were the theme of the Holy Father's meditation before praying the Angelus with the faithful and pilgrims present in St. Peter's Square at midday today.

The episode, narrated by St. Matthew, takes place in a precise moment in Jesus' life: immediately after His baptism in the river Jordan and before His public ministry, and He confronts His declared enemy, Satan, face to face. "The devil appeals to His title of 'Son of God' to dissuade Jesus from fulfilling His mission ... and suggests that He perform miraculous gestures – that He be a 'magician'- such as transforming stones into bread to satisfy His hunger, and throwing Himself from the walls of the temple to be saved by the angels. These two temptations are followed by a third: to adore him, the devil, to have dominion over the world".

With these three temptations, Satan seeks to divert Jesus from the way of obedience and humiliation, "because he knows that on this way evil will be defeated – and lead Him on the false shortcut of success and glory. However, the devil's poisonous arrows are all deflected with the shield of the Word of God, which expresses the will of the Father. Jesus does not say a word of His own: he responds only with the Word of God. And thus the Son, filled with the strength of the Holy Spirit, emerges victorious from comes out victorious from the desert".

"During the forty days of Lent, to follow in Jesus steps and face the spiritual combat against the Evil One with the strength of the Word of God. Not with our word, which is useless. The Word of God: that which has the strength to defeat Satan. Therefore, it is necessary to draw confidence from the Bible: to read it often, meditate on it and assimilate it. The Bible contains the World of God, which is always current and effective".

"It has been said", continued the bishop of Rome, "What would happen if we treated the Bible as we treat our mobile phone? If we always carried it with us, or at least a small pocket Bible, what would happen? If we went back to look for it when we forgot it, if we opened it several times a day; what would happen if we read God's messages contained in the Bible as we read our phone messages? The comparison is clearly paradoxical, but it makes us reflect. If we had the Word of God always in our heart, no temptation would be able to estrange us from God and no obstacle would be capable of making us deviate from the path of goodness; we would be able to overcome the daily suggestions of evil that are in us and outside us; we would be more capable of living a resurrected life according to the Spirit, receiving and loving our brothers, especially the weakest and most in need, and also our enemies".

“May the Virgin Mary, perfect icon of obedience to God and of unconditional trust in His will, sustain us on our Lenten journey, so that listen in docility to the Word of God, to undertake a true conversion of the heart”.
