



Temptations of Christ's disciples today

The temptations of Jesus: the quest for satisfaction, success and power, all these are also the temptations of every human being and of the church. They can take different forms according to cultural contexts and personal situations. Pope Francis draws our attention to the temptations that those who have dedicated their lives to the service of God's kingdom encounter today: a "spiritual worldliness", a feeling of failure, a "business mentality".

- ✿ The problem is not always an excess of activity, but rather **activity undertaken badly, without adequate motivation, without a spirituality** which would permeate it and make it pleasurable. As a result, work becomes more tiring than necessary, even leading at times to illness. Far from a content and happy tiredness, this is a tense, burdensome, dissatisfying and, in the end, unbearable fatigue.⁽⁸²⁾ At times our media culture and some intellectual circles convey a marked scepticism with regard to the Church's message, along with a certain cynicism. As a consequence, many pastoral workers, although they pray, develop a sort of inferiority complex which leads them to relativize or conceal their Christian identity and convictions... They end up being unhappy with who they are and what they do; they do not identify with their mission of evangelization and this weakens their commitment. They end up stifling the joy of mission with **a kind of obsession about being like everyone else** and possessing what everyone else possesses. (Evangelii Gaudium 79)
- ✿ This **practical relativism** consists in acting as if God did not exist, making decisions as if the poor did not exist, setting goals as if others did not exist, working as if people who have not received the Gospel did not exist...⁽⁸⁰⁾ Today's **obsession with immediate results** makes it hard for pastoral workers to tolerate anything that smacks of disagreement, possible failure, criticism, the cross. ⁽⁸²⁾
- ✿ **Spiritual worldliness, which hides behind the appearance of piety** and even love for the Church, consists in seeking not the Lord's glory but human glory and personal well-being...

It takes on many forms, depending on the kinds of persons and groups into which it seeps.⁽⁹³⁾ In some people we see an ostentatious preoccupation for the liturgy, for doctrine and for the Church's prestige, but without any concern that the Gospel have a real impact on God's faithful people and the concrete needs of the present time... In others, this spiritual worldliness lurks behind a fascination with social and political gain, or pride in their ability to manage practical affairs, or an obsession with programmes of self-help and self-realization. It can also translate into a concern to be seen, into a social life full of appearances, meetings, dinners and reception. It can also lead to a business mentality, caught up with management, statistics, plans and evaluations whose principal beneficiary is not God's people but the Church as an institution. ⁽⁹⁵⁾



- Which text reflects my personal temptations?
- What is essential for my own Christian identity? What is secondary and less important?