2026-10-25: 3rd Sunday of Paope - Overcoming the Devil [St Mark - Ft Myers, FL]

Background

During the Coptic Month of Paope, we learn on the four Sundays about Christ's Authority.

1. Week 1: Authority over Illness (Healing of the Paralytic)
2. Week 2: Authority over Creation (Catching the Multitude of Fish)
3. Week 3: Authority over Evil Spirits (Casting the Demon out of the Blind, Mute, Possessed Man)
4. Week 4: Authority over Death (Raising of the son of the widow of Nain)

These four things, humanity does not have authority over - even until today with all of the science and technology, we don't have authority over illness, over nature, over evil spirits or over death. We read a beautiful story in the Synaxarion about St Pantalemon who was a physician. And yet, when someone came to him with blindness, an illness that medicine could do nothing for, he signed him with the Cross, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the name that has authority over illness, and the blindness was healed.

It's a beautiful example of how - although we, humanity, do not have authority over these things, by the power of Christ, we can overcome! And that is the message of today's readings that focus on the Lord's authority over evil spirits.

Introduction

We read in the Catholic Epistle: "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

It sounds so simple… resist the devil and he will flee from you. But how do we resist?

St Peter says the same in his epistle: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world." (1 Peter 5:8-9)

If the devil is really roaming the earth, seeking whom he may devour, how can I resist him?

We need to know his tricks, and we need to know some remedies for them, and by God's grace and His authority, we will be able to resist.

How the Devil Tempts

1. He deceives
2. He tempts
3. He accuses

That’s why he is called the Deceiver, the Tempter and the Accuser

Deceiver

How does he deceive?

- By Twisting the Truth
  - When he told Eve in the garden: “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?“ - that’s not what God said! God said “Of every tree of the garden, you may freely eat… but of the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil, you may not eat.” - do you see the difference? He is twisting God’s words!
  - ”God wants you to be happy, so do what makes you happy” - is it true that God wants us to be happy? Of course! But He wants us to have an everlasting joy, not a fleeting joy!
  - “You only live once! So enjoy it while it lasts!” - is it true that we only live once? Yes… but we have an upcoming eternal life! Lasts forever… and actually what we do in this temporal life affects the eternal one!
- By Lying
  - God said: ”For in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.” Devil said: “You shall not surely die”
  - He is called the Liar!
  - “Sin now and repent later” - lie! How do you know how long the opportunity to repent will last? And what if it comes, but I have hardened my heart?!
  - Someone will spend time with bad company and say “I want to help change them” or even just “I can hang out with them and I won’t be affected” - the devil is lying to you. The Scripture is clear… “Do not be deceived. Evil company corrupts good morals.”
  - A youth will get involved in a relationship he is not ready for, and he will say “well we read the Bible together” or “we pray the Agpeya together” - the devil is lying to you.
- By Wrong Interpretation of the Truth
  - When the devil tried to tempt the Lord, he used Scripture! He said “It is written ‘He shall give His angels charge over you”
  - Although it is written, his interpretation of it is wrong!
  - The Bible said we shouldn’t “judge others” - but now many Christians think that means we shouldn’t call out evil! That we shouldn’t call someone to repentance! This is a wrong interpretation of the truth!
- By giving new names to sin
  - “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20, NKJV)
  - It’s not abortion, it is “pro-choice”

    - It’s not homosexuality, it is “love is love”
    - It’s not gambling, it is “harmless fun”
    - It’s not drinking, it is “social gathering”
- Warning about the current deception in AI
    - Targeting the elderly
    - Videos that you think are a real person speaking, and it’s not

What is the remedy for his deception? The Truth!

- The Holy Scripture
    - ”You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free”
    - Abide in the truth
    - Fill yourself with the truth
    - “Your words were found, and I ate them,” (Jeremiah 15)

- The Sound Interpretation of the Scripture
    - The Tradition of the Church gives us the correct meaning of the verses and stories of the Scripture
    - What Christ taught, the Disciples preached, the Fathers kept and now we receive it from the Church
    - Read commentary on Scripture - like in the Coptic Commentary app
    - Listen to Bible Studies from HE Metropolitan Youssef or Abouna Daoud Lamei
    - Attend the Bible Study in your church
    - Fill yourself with the Holy Scripture and the sound interpretation of Scripture and you will protect yourself from the deception of the devil

- Ask Questions and Seek Guidance
    - Church Servants
    - Abouna
    - Diocese Website

Tempter

Makes something seem appealing

- He does this in three ways
    - “For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” (1 John 2:16)
- This is what happened to Eve:
    - ”When she saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.” (Genesis 3:6)
    - ”Good for food” - Lust of the Flesh
    - ”Pleasant to the eyes” - Lust of the eyes
    - ”Desirable to make one wise” - Pride of Life
- This is what Christ was tempted with:
    - ”Turn these stones to bread and eat” - Lust of the Flesh

    - ”Look at all these kingdoms I will give you” - Lust of the Eyes
    - ”Throw yourself down and the angels will carry you” - Pride of Life
- All temptations that we face can fall into one of these three categories

What is the remedy for this temptation?

- Prayer and Fasting
    - “This kind cannot come out except by prayer and fasting”
    - When I bring my body to subjection in prayer and fasting, I will be able to more easily overcome the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eyes
    - I need prayer because, like we said in the beginning, the authority over the devil is not mine but it is through Christ! So I need to communicate with Him and to be connected with Him

- Flee from Evil
    - Lot was tempted in Sodom - torturing himself day and night. But he did not run from Sodom until the two angels came and told him “run for your life”
    - If Joseph had tried to reason with Potiphar’s wife, maybe he would not have overcome the temptation. But he ran away; he fled from evil.
    - Once I see something, or feel something, let me flee from evil
    - The desert fathers and saints were known to flee from praise! Because it could lead to pride!
    - Christ, Himself, fled to Egypt from the evil of King Herod
    - Cut off the means of temptation
        - ”if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out” - “if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off”
        - What does that mean?
        - If I see that an app on my phone is causing me to sin… it’s not enough to swipe to the next video… it’s not enough to close the app… let me remove the app from my phone!
        - If I see that a device in my house is causing me to sin… let me establish some boundaries. Maybe my phone doesn’t go to my room, or my laptop doesn’t enter the bedroom.
        - If I know that a certain friend causes me to sin… let me set boundaries on where we go, how much time we spend with each other, etc.

Accuser

The last tactic that the devil uses on us is to accuse us.

- I feel shame. I feel guilt. I feel hopeless. I feel that I cannot be helped. I feel that I will never overcome. I feel like how can God love me? Why would He want to? How can He even look at me?
- How will I even tell Abouna about this?
- And maybe I told him before… How can I go to Abouna with the same sin AGAIN?

- The devil wants you to stay in your shame and in your guilt. He wants you to reach a point of despair.
- This is what he did with Judas
  - Judas and St Peter both betrayed Christ. The sin was the same.
  - But the difference in them is that Judas fell into despair - he isolated himself, fell into despair and then met his end of his own will.
  - But St Peter didn't do that. St Peter went to the disciples… he went to the Church.

This is the remedy to Satan's accusation. Go to the Church. Go to the Sacraments.

- The Sacrament of Repentance and Confession
  - You know, the Lord is not counting how many times you fell.
  - He will only ask us about how many times we got back up
  - How we struggled and strived and persevered and tried very hard
  - In the Sacrament of Repentance and Confession
    - You turn your shame or guilt into "godly sorrow"
    - "For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." (2 Corinthians 7:10)
    - Then you expose your thoughts, liberating you from this thought
    - Then you receive guidance
    - Then you receive the absolution, absolving you of this sin
    - Then, having confidence in the Lord's love and forgiveness, you leave strengthened, ready to strive even more.
  - Goha's Nail
    - Exposing your thoughts will liberate you from this thought

Conclusion

The Devil is the deceiver, tempter and accuser. But we know his tricks. And we know our remedies.

1. The Holy Scripture and the Sound Interpretation of the Scripture
2. Ask Questions and Seek Guidance
3. Fasting and Prayer
4. Flee from Evil
5. Sacrament of Repentance and Confession

May the Lord grant us to resist the devil, and to overcome him by the authority that we saw in our Lord Jesus Christ today.

Revision #3
Created 2026-10-25 03:32:01 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba
Updated 2026-11-08 06:49:13 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba