

Text: Matthew 4:1-11

In my Secret Life: Temptation & Vulnerability

Jesus is about to start something new. He has been initiated through the waters of Baptism and he is in the wilderness, wrestling.

And in the words of Leonard Cohen - He is coming face to face with his secret life.

In the quiet of this place, like any moment of silence – he is tempted...

- He is tempted by the thoughts of material items – for it is our human struggle to want more, or at the very least to know we will have enough, and to fear that we will run out.
- He is tempted by the thoughts of security - to give up walking the way that will demand something and tempted to take an easier route.
- He is tempted by thoughts of Power – to control it all and have everyone's admiration.

Friends I don't know about you, but in my secret life,

I have observed that I am always shifting **between courage and fear or between confidence and self-doubt.**

I have learned that the temptation for more money, more security, more power and admiration - are hardest with my strongest strengths and weakest weaknesses.

I am grateful to Brother Curtis Almquist of the Society of Saint John the Divine for these insights. He notes that...

- We are vulnerable to temptation when we are afraid of failure – we are tempted to over-work, or to under-rest, to obsess or to control. We may not be aware of the fear, but we are aware of our behaviours.
- If we are prone to harbor resentment, we are very vulnerable. Resentment is residual anger, over something in our past. Resentment makes us compromise who we are and we are tempted with the thought 'I am going to just show them this time!'
- We are vulnerable when we lose our sense of gratitude. For when we no longer see God as the source of all good things, we are tempted to compensate. And we will feel powerless in our time of need and tempted to hide.

- And lastly when we are prone to keep secrets, we are spiritually vulnerable. Yes, we need to value privacy and keeping confidences, these are very important. But what we are talking about here is about secrets that eat us up inside, that cause us to always be on the alert. And they keep us from living fully in God's light. When we are tempted by the desire to keep things secret, to not venture out, and to never take a step of faith.

And so this we pray in the face of our temptations:

Ever-present God,
To you all hearts are open
all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hidden:
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy Name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Community Announcements:

Instructions for joining Vestry:

Our Annual Vestry is going to start at 10:45 am.

If you are on the Zoom call – stay on the zoom call, take your break, and come back to your device at 10:45.

If you are watching this on livestream and would like to join us on Zoom, then you can join the zoom meeting by copying down the meeting identification that is on the screen – it will be on the screen at the end of the service as well. Or go to our website saint-catherines.org and click on the red ribbon at the top of the screen, it has all the information for joining.

Here now a blessing:

Blessing:

May you know that you are loved by God
And may perfect love cast out fear.

May we trust God that we are exactly where we are meant to be
And May we not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
In the name of God – Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all life,
Amen.