



True Fulfillment

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

Mark 1:14–15

Jesus begins His public ministry immediately after being tempted by the devil while in the desert for forty days. As He begins His ministry, He declares: “This is the time of fulfillment.” First, the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry was, historically speaking, the “time of fulfillment,” in that the new era of the Gospel and grace had just begun. But the “time of fulfillment” of which Jesus speaks also refers to each and every time that we hear the Gospel and respond. We do this by sincerely repenting of our sins and by becoming a fuller member of God’s Kingdom. But ponder for a moment the specific word “fulfillment.” What does this mean? The word “fulfilled” can be contrasted with its opposite “unfulfilled.” To be unfulfilled is always undesirable. In this world, many people find themselves unfulfilled and try to fill this void with many things.

Interestingly, the three temptations that Jesus had just experienced in the desert are among the temptations that so many people give into during their search for fulfillment in life.

First, Jesus was hungry, and the devil tempted Him to turn stones into bread to satiate that hunger. This is a temptation to fleshly fulfillment. Second, the devil tempted Jesus to throw Himself off the pinnacle of the Temple to prove He was the Son of God. This is a temptation to fulfillment by pride—pride to convince another of one’s importance and identity. Third, the devil showed Jesus all the nations of the world and promised them to our Lord if Jesus worshiped him. This is a temptation to fulfillment by obtaining earthly wealth and power. Of course, Jesus rejected all three temptations as a way of showing that none of these truly fulfill us. And He did this just prior to the beginning of His public ministry so as to then go forth preaching the true message of fulfillment. “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

True fulfillment is only found in the Gospel, the message of Truth that Jesus shared during His three years of public ministry and then brought to completion by His sacrificial death and resurrection. Only those who heed His words and open themselves to the grace poured forth from the Cross are able to find the fulfillment that they seek.

Reflect, today, upon your own interior desire for fulfillment in life. How do you try to satiate this desire? Do you allow the evil one to trick you into thinking that fleshly desires, pride or wealth are the answer? Reject those temptations with our Lord and then immerse yourself in His Gospel message, which is the only source of fulfillment in life.

Lord of true fulfillment, You and You alone are the source of the fullness of life. I believe that with all my heart. Please give me the grace I need to reject all temptations in life and to cling only to Your holy Word and the grace given to all who follow You. Jesus, I trust in You.