

INTRODUCTION

The Gospel reading today is about spiritual combat. Its great truth is that Jesus alone has the power to do battle with evil that invades divides a home or a life .Our popular culture tends to make light of the Evil One and portray him as a cartoon character. The Gospels are much less cavalier and dismissive and see him hold the world in his grip. In fact Jesus' miracles are seen as acts of liberation as Satan is cast out and people are freed from the destructive spirit that controlled them.

The evil that we encounter in our experience of the world is much more than unhealthy living conditions, the effects of people's error, prejudice or personal dysfunctions. As we all become older, we realize that something sinister lies behind the evil that people choose to do .Structures and organizations can amplify the power of evil as well as good.

When we see the frenzy of a violent mob, the vicious and wanton slaughter that

military combat inflicts on the innocent, the malevolence of the illegal drug industry. The demonic power of Pornography, the presence of something or someone occasionally dressed as an angel of light ready to thwart every honest Gospel initiative, we acquire new respect for the Gospel accounts. We read with fresh appreciation the words of St. Paul that our battle today is not only with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers that seek the destruction of ourselves today and everything good.

Jesus came to confront the Evil One. His resurrection fulfilled the Genesis prophecy from today's first reading "He shall strike at your head." When Jesus faces the accusation that He is Himself an agent of Satan, He responds that the opposite is the case and demonstrably so. Jesus' ministry shows that the hold of evil is not absolute. He has invaded the house under Satan's control showing that the hold of evil is neither complete or final even though it may seem that way to us.

Our desire to be in communion with God means that the hold of evil is not complete. Our effort to protect life at all its stages means that the hold of evil is not complete. The struggle of a spouse to remain faithful means that the hold of evil is not complete. An individual's effort to enter a confessional means that the hold of evil is not complete. One person's sacrifice for another's well being means that the hold of evil is not complete. Every twitch of conscience means that the hold of evil is not complete.

The battle with the Evil One is not just a historical drama but a fact of everyday life for all of us here sharing human life. This is the war from which no human being is free including us. From this conflict there is no exemption, no deferment, no furlough, no retirement. In this battle there are no spectators.

What we have on our side is the fact and power of Jesus' Resurrection victory when He broke the domination of evil and rose to new and victorious life at Easter. It was like the great spiritual "Normandy Invasion". Now, Jesus proceeds to liberate town after town , soul after soul. He gives the fruit of His victory to us here His Church. The Mass And Sacraments make us strong and resilient, equipped to do battle with the Evil One that assaults our life. AMEN