



Scripture Nugget: Making a powerful stand against the evil in and around us

Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and from His mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens. Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground (Ephesians 6:10-13).

Our real enemies are Satan and the evil spirits (cf. Ephesians 6:12). St Peter tells us that the devil (Satan) is like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (cf. 1 Peter 5:8). Satan cannot touch God and so targets on hurting God's children. His sole aim is to bring God's children into eternal damnation through unrepented sin. Part of the public ministry of Jesus during His time on earth was casting out evil spirits from possessed people. In today's world evil is also manifested in other ways: evil ambition, corrupted power, violence and disregard for human life and dignity, greed for wealth and fame, hedonism, unrelenting consumerism, unchastity, extremism, intolerance, false ideologies, unruly passions, hardness of hearts, etc. Though the manifestations may be different, however, it is the same evil spirits working on human hearts and minds. The evil spirits will not go away unless a greater authority comes in and takes control. The greater authority is Jesus Christ. There is no authority in heaven or on earth that is higher than Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 28:18). That is why Jesus and those who use His Name in great faith can cast out demons from possessed people. The evil spirits cried out when Jesus approached them: *"What have You to do with us, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the appointed time?" (Matthew 8:29).*

Key to driving out evil from our lives is sincere repentance through Sacramental Confession and giving lordship of our lives over to Jesus. Sincere repentance includes sorrow for hurting God through our sins, and making a firm resolution to amend our lives. Confession has greater power than exorcism in driving out evil from human lives. Confession is a sacrament whilst exorcism is not. Exorcism merely casts out the evil spirit from a person. Confession does much more. It replenishes the sanctifying grace of the soul and restores the life and beauty of even a dead soul of a living person, which exorcism cannot do. Thus, through Confession the soul's share of the divine life of God and his/her friendship with God are restored in full. Confession is so important that Jesus instituted this sacrament soon after His resurrection, giving divine power to His Apostles to forgive sins (cf. John 20:22-23).

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, thank You for the wondrous gift of Sacramental Confession by which You do one of the greatest miracles and restore my soul to its original life and beauty by Your Precious Blood shed on the Cross. Give me the grace to receive this sacrament frequently so that my soul will always remain in a state of grace. Purify my heart and guard it with holy love and humility so that the kingdom of darkness will have no hold over me. Please take lordship over my life as I pledge my allegiance to Your commandments and Your will. Help me strengthen my interior life of prayer and sacrifices so that I will always be able to withstand the temptations of the devil. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.