

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle writes of our Lord “For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.” So we hear the Apostolic teaching of the State of Humiliation of the Christ. The One through Whom the angels were spoken into being was made a little lower than the angels.

Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, He is inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood. Led by the Spirit of God into the desert, He was tempted. That temptation was real. It caused Him to suffer. But His sufferings did not end when the Tempter left Him. The greatest sufferings were yet to come.

He suffered being tempted. So He is able to aid those who are tempted. Which is to say He is able to aid you. He knows what you endure. You are surrounded by things, God given things, that because of your fallenness you have allowed to tempt you. It is the nature of fallen man to make idols out of the good gifts of God.

The bronze serpent on the pole that brought healing to the faithful was later made the object of idolatrous worship. Luther wrote that Noah’s Ark hasn’t been found because in His mercy God is keeping it hidden, lest men worship it.

So according to your flesh you find yourself in the desert of your temptation, indeed dead already in sin. Food is necessary for the body. But it can be made an idol. So can money, or the lack thereof. So can marriage. So can physical health, beauty,

intelligence, children, friends, and even piety. Fallen men are so perverse that they can even make idols of their own religious observances. And such religion is useless, writes the Apostle.

So examine your motives. Have you helped someone else as a response to God’s grace, or to make yourself seem gracious to others? Have you given gifts to bless others, or that others know that you have given them? Has your generosity been an exercise in showing others that you have more than they do? Truth be told, in each act, no matter how well intended, fallen men soil the act with transgression.

But thanks be to God, Christ Jesus Himself has suffered, being tempted. He did not yield to the strongest of temptations. He remained holy. He remained without sin. He, by the grace of God, tasted death for everyone.

So the Apostle writes that “for the suffering of death” He is “crowned with glory.” In His mercy, in God’s great love for you in Christ, He is able to aid those who are tempted. He is able to aid you. He is able to save you.

He defeated the Tempter and his minions, that you receive the fruits of His Victory. Through death He destroyed the power of death, that your life not be one of fear or of bondage to sin or death. In Christ, you are forgiven. In Christ, you are free.

He Himself is the Propitiation for your sin. And He who was made like His brethren, made like you, brings that forgiveness, that reconciliation to God, to you this day, as His Name is

declared in the midst of this assembly, hallowed among us; as His praise is sung, and as the Spirit works trust in Him in you – which is to say that the Kingdom of God is come among us.

The Apostle, writing to the Hebrews, cites the Prophet Isaiah when he writes “Here am I and the children whom God has given Me”. But these Words He places in the mouth of Christ, God with us, God among His children, His brethren, among us this day in His Body and Blood.

He is the Apostle of the Father, sent for you. As the Father loves Him, so He loves His Church. He is the Great High Priest, your High Priest, interceding for you. And as you eat and drink, you proclaim His death until He come, a confession of Christ, who brings many sons, who brings you, to glory.

He is the Captain of your salvation, the One who by His Spirit sanctifies you, that God sees your works of faith as holy and pleasing in His sight. And God is glorified as you bear much fruit. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all One, One with Christ, One in Holy Communion. Eating and drinking Christ, His joy remains in you, that your joy be full.

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