

strength, but immediately turn your back on him and leave. Preferably, you should start talking to some other person in order to take your mind off temptation. It is often very easy to blow out one candle, but to blow out several ones simultaneously is difficult. If you blow into a major fire, the fire will come towards you.

In this season of Lent, GOD does not ask you to perform great, abnormal things to be seen by everybody, but He would be pleased if, from time to time, you offered Him minor acts of renouncement, that is to say, inconspicuous acts. GOD holds them in high esteem, because it is less directed towards self, but rather towards GOD, in order to make Him happy, surprise Him. So, when you fast, do not merely think about food or drink, but also think about many other things. Let us see how much imagination you have for GOD. Amen!

Excerpt from the sermon of 8 March 1987



Schwert-Bischof
JESU CHRISTI

**Be blessed by GOD TRINITY,
the + FATHER and the + SON
and the + HOLY GHOST. Amen!**

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**GOD-Pleasing Fast
Offering Gifts to GOD**

My dearly beloved, today we will celebrate the first Sunday of Lent. Remember what people used to understand by fasting. Many people abstained from certain food or even chastised themselves. They made sacrifices, but why? Simply because it was the season of Lent or because it was customary in Church. Is there really a need for the season of Lent, because you do not do anything in keeping with the practice of Lent throughout the year?

To live just by bringing sacrifices for 40 days is not recommendable these days. Because you may end up in a stubbornness of simply carrying out a sacrifice at the risk of becoming so self-conceited and full of self-delight. I have never thought much of bringing sacrifices which are seen by the eyes of the people. First you will be pigeonholed as someone who makes great sacrifices, you are being admired and will lose part of your reward before GOD. Secondly, you may even cause offence. All the sacrifices that you make in order to be seen by other people will lose value. CHRIST said: „Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.“ At another passage He said: „Whoever displays his good deeds publicly and is held in high esteem on earth because of them, has already received his reward in full.“

How Can I Fast?

Those who think that Lent is only meant as a time to eat less or to abstain from certain food, are misinformed. They are like those

who say: „It is by prayer alone that I will enter Heaven, that I will receive graces.“ Prayer without good deeds is not enough. If a person prayed all day long, yet at the same time violated all 10 Commandments, he would not be justified before GOD. – One should be imaginative in fasting. For instance, by occasionally keeping your mouth shut when it is not necessary to talk, though you would be tempted to, or by being silent when you could show the other person that you know about things, perhaps more than the other. You may refrain from extraordinary pleasures, from television, from the gratification of the eyes, the ears, the palate, from all kinds of relish. It does not mean, however, that one should eat bad food, for this would be a sin against the body. You can fast with all your senses, even with the sense of touch. Be inventive!

Fasting with the Tongue

As St. Francis of Sales says, there are people who, in times of fast, do not dare to moisten their tongues with a drop of water, and consequently think that they have achieved something great; whereas, at the same time, they have killed with their tongues, by criticism, malicious gossip, impious words. – The tongue is one of the most dangerous weapons, it is a scalpel or a sword. A scalpel, if used correctly, can save a person's life, in a spiritual sense also the soul's. On the other hand, the tongue can even kill. A very dangerous, yet beneficial weapon – always double-edged!

Fasting in order to Please GOD

Do not fast for your own sake, though this, too, would be all right before GOD, but in order to please GOD. You can do that with every little renouncement. And it would be good if your neighbour does not notice, only GOD and your Guardian Angel. I have always noticed that it is more valuable for GOD what I do for Him in secret than what I do for all the world to see. If GOD wants such a thing to be put on a footstool, so that it may shine as light for all, He will surely

see to it. If you yourself are not at all comfortable with your good deed being shown to all, then it was GOD who made it happen.

Fasting Gives Strength against the Devil

Fasting, an act of renouncement for this or that, has a tremendous power against the Tempter, the devil, who keeps trying to attack us. People might think that CHRIST only had to refrain from food during the 40 days in the desert. No, no, in this place everything was dreary to the eyes, too. His missionary awareness urged Him to go to the people. However, He wanted to wait for 40 days, refraining in His love from being with the children of men. That, too, was renouncement and sacrifice.

This Gospel contains something quite interesting. The Evil One, the Tempter, quotes the Scriptures four times, and he does so word for word, saying to the SON of GOD: „It is written ...“ It should urge you to be careful not to merely think that the devil is a creature who speaks but of sin, encouraging you to sin. You should notice that the devil is very learned and being a fallen angel knows Sacred Scripture inside out. This Gospel shows how well versed Satan is in the Bible. After all, he already existed before GOD created the earth and men, that is to say, life on earth.

Therefore, be on your guard when the occasional citations from Sacred Scripture cross your mind making you have doubts and anxiety about it. If you do not manage to cope with it, go to the priest or come to me and ask me about it. Do not get involved in such silent discussions, as many have fallen because they thought they could interpret Sacred Scripture. The Tempter is an angel and you will never be able to match your spiritual wits against him. Only in one respect can you be stronger than him: provided that you are in a state of grace and implore GOD, you cannot possibly fall if he wants to tempt you to sin. You will have this power unless, when brooding or being tempted, you start arguing with him, or try to struggle relying on your own
