

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Lead Us Not Into Temptation

No one, when tempted, should say, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. James 1:13

Insight

His life was slowly coming apart at the seams. His hours had been cut back at work. He didn't make that much money to begin with and now he was really hurting. His bills were mounting up. He had visited the casino several times recently in the hopes that he would win big. But he didn't, which only made his financial situation worse.

His home life suffered. He and his wife argued constantly. They argued mostly about money matters. His kids seemed to hide from him. Meals with the family were excruciating.

That's how he justified driving once or sometimes twice a week to a rundown part of town, the so-called red-light district. He felt he needed to relax and he couldn't do that at home. He soon ran out of money for his "relaxation." Yet the more he thought about it, he really was not relaxed. In fact, he felt worse. He tensed up again, afraid that his wife would somehow find out what he was doing—afraid that he was losing everything.

If only God would make life easier. He just needed more hours at work, and a wife who was more comforting. Then maybe he would not be forced to sin. He knew that he needed help.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2846–2849

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 488–489

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 596

For Reflection . . .

Conversion has an impact on our past and on our future. We are nourished by hope in God's abundant mercy.

How do you deal with temptation?

Why is there no sin too big for God to forgive?

Church Teaching

On the surface, this petition in the Lord's Prayer can be confusing. It appears as if we are asking God to refrain from leading us where we should not go—that is, giving in to temptation. But God does not tempt us, as the Scripture that opens this session proclaims.

Do Not Yield to Temptation

So what are we asking God to do in this petition? The word *lead* in the English translation of the original Greek means both "do not allow us to enter into temptation" and "do not let us yield to temptation." The Father seeks in his Son to set us free from sin and all temptation. Thus in this petition we urgently ask God to strengthen us so that we do not pursue a way contrary to God and his will.

Guide Our Hearts

The Holy Spirit, animating the Church, has been sent to assist believers as our helper and guide. The Spirit enables us to discern when we are being tempted and, in the voice of our conscience, tugs at our hearts so that we might not consent to that temptation. The Holy Spirit also prompts us to seek reconciliation through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation when we do succumb to temptation.