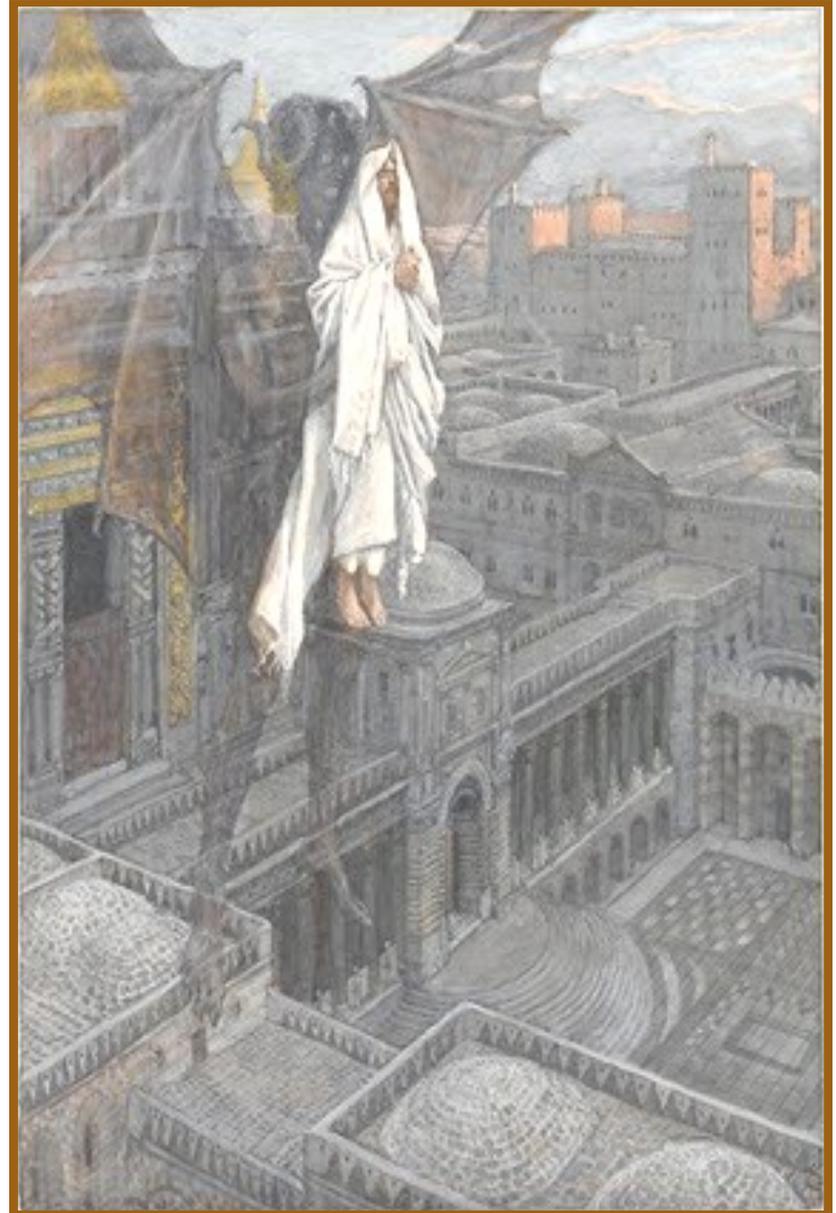


This means that there are always three influences on our thinking — there is our own human voice; there are the good inspirations suggested to us directly by God's Holy Spirit or mediated by our good angels; and there is the pressing influence from the outside but perceived by us as if from the inside which comes from the Evil One and his demons. And just as the secret agents in the human spy-world know how to infiltrate and manipulate without being discovered, so too the evil spirits of the fallen angels know how to remain undetected by us.

How do we resist? Three things: 1) First, believe what our Catholic Faith tells us about the existence and the operation of the Devil and his angels, do not think it is just mythology or a primitive kind of pre-modern psychology that we have outgrown. "Talk about the Devil as real? In this day and age!" Well, yes, we talk about him as real because he is real, regardless of the calendar date; 2) Turn to Christ -- always! -- for deliverance from the Tempter's power, it is the last petition of the "Our Father" -- "Deliver us from evil", or, as Saint Augustine points out, what is really meant is "Deliver us from the Evil *One*"; and 3) Learn to have a healthy skepticism for our own judgments and our own individualized way of thinking. Get in the habit of examining your conscience to make sure you are not rationalizing things for yourself which you would clearly recognize as being wrong for others. The proud, over-confident, and self-approving man is the most likely to be completely in the trap of our ancient Adversary, that "Father of Lies".

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## ***TEMPTATION IN THE DESERT*** ***THE "FATHER OF LIES"***



## Temptation in the Desert - the "Father of Lies"

by: Fr. Charles Higgins

"The Lord will overshadow thee with His shoulders, and under His wings thou shalt trust: His truth shall encompass thee with a shield." - Psalm 90: 4-5

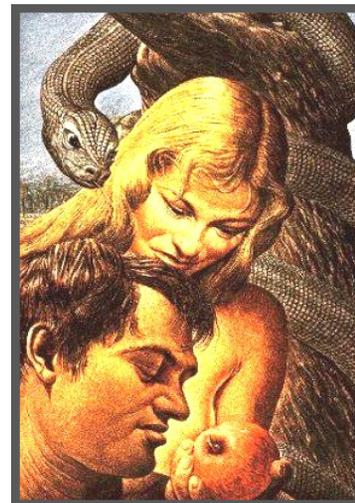
Recently, there was an obituary in the news about a very successful Soviet Communist secret agent from World War II and the Cold War. The man had been a Soviet secret agent embedded in the Iranian capital of Tehran at the time when the Big Three Allied leaders -- Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin -- met to discuss the progress of the war against Nazi Germany. So successful a Soviet agent was he that the British, unsuspectingly, hired him as one of their secret agents. The man was trained with all of the other British spies who were to be sent to infiltrate the Soviet Union. On account of him, every one of those British agents were quickly caught once inside the Soviet Union.

The obituary article went on to describe how this Soviet agent continued to operate successfully after the war and through post-war years of the Cold War. His wife was also a Soviet secret agent. The two of them were embedded in countries together, and then they would have to meet under their new aliases, and marry according to their fake identities. In the course of their spy work they ended up meeting each other and marrying six times. And they were never caught. After their careers, they were both well-rewarded and hailed as heroes of the Soviet Union. Even though they were on the other side and working against us, one nonetheless has to admire their skill and their craft, to

be able to pass for many different people over so many years, and all the while be doing the bidding of their spymasters.

Now we can look at how effective human cunning can be -- how lies can be made to look like truth and the truth lies -- and consider just how much more cunning is the spiritual intelligence of our enemy the Devil, whom Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself called, "The Father of Lies". On this First Sunday in Lent we see how Our Lord, at the beginning of His Public Life, had to confront this Master Deceiver in the Temptation in the Desert. And how subtle! How astute! This Satan is, even quoting Sacred Scripture in order to try to get Christ to sin.

We poor human creatures, left to ourselves, are no match for Satan. Only with the grace of Christ can we hope to escape his snares.



And this is what we need to understand. According to what God has revealed to us, the Devil -- fallen angelic spirit that he is -- once he had gotten our First Parents Adam and Eve to sin, he had the "right of conquest" over this earth and over the human race. It took Christ to come and reverse this, but the Devil still has the

freedom to try to infiltrate and to tempt us until Christ's final Second Coming.