

+++ *From the Pastor* +++
The First Sunday of Lent, February 22, 2015

A Meditation for the First Sunday of Lent

Hear, O God, my petition, listen to my prayer. Who is speaking? An individual, it seems. See if it is an individual: *I cried to you from the ends of the earth while my heart was in anguish.* Now it is no longer one person; rather, it is one in the sense that Christ is one, and we are all his members. What single individual can cry from the ends of the earth? The one who cries from the ends of the earth is none other than the Son's inheritance. It was said to him: *Ask of me, and I shall give you the nations as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession.* This possession of Christ, this inheritance of Christ, this body of Christ, this one Church of Christ, this unity that we are, cries from the ends of the earth. What does it cry? What I said before: *Hear, O God, my petition, listen to my prayer; I cried out to you from the ends of the earth. That is, I made this cry to you from the ends of the earth;* that is, on all sides.

Why did I make this cry? *While my heart was in anguish.* The speaker shows that he is present among all the nations of the earth in a condition, not of exalted glory but of severe trial. Our pilgrimage on earth cannot be exempt from trial. We progress by means of trial. No one knows himself except through trial, or receives a crown except after victory, or strives except against an enemy or temptations.

The one who cries from the ends of the earth is in anguish, but is not left on his own. Christ chose to foreshadow us, who are his body, by means of his body, in which he has died, risen and ascended into heaven, so that the members of his body may hope to follow where their head has gone before. He made us one with him when he chose to be tempted by Satan. We have heard in the gospel how the Lord Jesus Christ was tempted by the devil in the wilderness. Certainly Christ was tempted by the devil. In Christ, you were tempted, for Christ received his flesh from your nature, but by his own power gained salvation for you; he suffered death in your nature, but by his own power gained life for you; he suffered insults in your nature, but by his own power gained glory for you; therefore, he suffered temptation in your nature, but by his own power gained victory for you.

If in Christ we have been tempted, in him we overcome the devil. Do you think only of Christ's temptations and fail to think of his victory? See yourself as tempted in him, and see yourself as victorious in him. He could have kept the devil from himself; but if he were not tempted he could not teach you how to triumph over temptation.

—From a commentary on the psalms by Saint Augustine, bishop

