

## **Tuesday Reflection 15th February 2022**

“Lead us not into temptation”.

I am sure I am not the only one who finds this petition from the Lord's Prayer problematical, asking myself why a loving God would so much want to 'lead us into temptation' that we have to ask Him not to do it.

We do not know what Jesus's actual words were; presumably he was speaking Aramaic, and there are Aramaic versions which differ greatly from this, so perhaps the translation is at fault, and there are versions which read something like 'put us not to the test'. Even here, however, the basic problem remains.

Fortunately we have the Letter of St James to hand, which provides the First Readings at Mass this week, and today's excerpt is unequivocal: “Never, when you have been tempted, say ‘God sent the temptation’; God cannot be tempted to do anything wrong, and he does not tempt anybody.

Everyone who is tempted is attracted and seduced by his own desire” (Jas 1:13-14).

When we give into temptation, we are saying that the fleeting joy of the moment is more important than God's purpose for us - in fact, we are saying that we know better than God what is good for us, even if it is at the expense of others, for if love is prioritising the needs of others, then sin is prioritising our own desires.

This still leaves us with the problem of the words we use. Do we continue using the traditional formula, unsatisfactory though we may find it? Or do we find our own formulation? In our household we have settled on the words “Keep us strong in the face of temptation” continuing with “and deliver us from evil”.

**Michael Townson**