

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
But Deliver Us from Evil

[The devil] was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

John 8:44b

Insight

Jackie slowly made her way up the sidewalk to the entrance of the school. Her feet dragged. She didn't want to go inside. She felt everyone's eyes were tracking her reluctant progress into the building. It seemed as if they weren't trying hard at all to hide the wicked little smiles shot in her direction. Jackie didn't know who was responsible for starting the whispering campaign against her. But the gossip about her was reaching a frenzy that had her struggling to keep from crying.

She wanted to scream. She had to go to school. But for no good reason whatsoever Jackie was a target for cyber-bullying. Jackie knew she wasn't popular. It was not fashionable to be smart, to work hard and get good grades. She wasn't part of a sports team or "acceptable group." So she was picked on and harassed. Jackie fantasized how she could somehow get back at everyone in the school. The entire student body was going to be at today's pep rally. She could show them then!

For Reflection . . .

Satan attempts to influence us, turning us away from God, his plan and the mission of Christ himself.

How is it that evil gets us into its clutches?

Whom would you name, and why, as a shining example of someone who virtuously stands up to or confronts evil?

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2850–2865

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 489–490

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 597–598

Church Teaching

This petition refers to evil as an abstract concept. Believers know, however, that evil is not merely abstract. Satan is real. Behind all evil in the abstract lies evil personified, a fallen angel, who stands in opposition to God. The term "devil" derives from the Greek *diabolos*, literally meaning "to throw across," that is "to accuse, slander, or attack." Satan throws himself across or against God's goodness, love, and plan of salvation.

Protect Us from the Evil One

Satan seeks to corrupt us. But Jesus prays for his disciples at the Last Supper, asking his heavenly Father, "I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one" (John 17:15). This final petition of the Lord's Prayer parallels Jesus' own prayerful request that we, the entire community of believers, be protected from diabolic enticements.

Victory of the Cross

Jesus won for us a definitive victory over sin, death and the Evil One. Satan has been defeated by the Cross of Christ, a defeat that will be fully manifested at the Last Judgment. Until then, our free will enables us to succumb sometimes to devilish seduction.

Perhaps that is why, in the Church's tradition, a final doxology ("for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever, amen.") liturgically follows the Lord's Prayer. This doxology proclaims God's triumph, and turns our attention back to the glorification of God's name, the complete coming of his reign, and the absolute power of his saving will.