



24. February 2026
LENTEN SPIRITUAL RETREAT
Day 7: “Resist evil in the Holy Spirit!”

Today is the seventh day of our journey toward Holy Easter. In today's reading, the Lord calls us to conversion:

“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (Is 55:6–7).

Although we hope that our thoughts and actions never reach the point of being evil or wicked—God forbid!—we are always called to a deeper conversion and to leave behind anything that could separate us from God's love. While we can count on His mercy and patience, the constant call to conversion is addressed to our free will, which He Himself has given us. The Lord wants our response so that He may guide us along His paths, which often differ from our own:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Is 55:8–9)

Part of growing in the spiritual life is learning to follow the Holy Spirit's guidance attentively. When we do so, our Father can introduce us more subtly into His ways, and we will recognize them and walk in them more easily. Then we will not first have to deal with removing the obstacle of our own thoughts when they are not in harmony with the Lord's.

In today's Gospel, the whole city was stirred when Jesus entered Jerusalem, and they asked, “*Who is this?*” (Mt 21:10). The crowd answered, “*This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee.*” (v. 11).

And the Lord did not hesitate to give a powerful sign:

“And Jesus entered the temple of God and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, ‘It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you make it a den of robbers.’” (vv. 12–13).

In this passage, we find another facet of the Lord: He not only heals, liberates, and instructs with infinite kindness and wisdom, but He also zealously defends the glory of God. The Temple must not be abused. This applies to an impure link between religion and commercial interests. But it goes further: nothing that could offend the holiness of God has a place in the Temple. At this point, we must reflect on how we behave in our churches and ask ourselves whether things sometimes happen there that could arouse God's wrath. How must God have felt when an image of Pachamama was brought into St. Peter's Basilica in Rome after being venerated in the Vatican Gardens?

But it is not only the visible temple that must be freed from any abuse. The inner temple of our soul, where God wants to establish His throne, must also be purified of everything that does not correspond to this high dignity.

During this season of Lent, we can ask Jesus in a special way to purify our inner temple so that God may dwell in our hearts and fill them with His presence.

While in the Temple, Jesus healed the blind and the lame who came to Him, and the children cried out, "*Hosanna to the Son of David!*" (Mt 21:15). This provoked the indignation of the chief priests and scribes, and their hostility toward the Lord increased. Where does this hostility come from, which we find not only in the Jewish religious leaders of that time? What did Jesus do to them? He came only to fulfill the promises, to do good, and to proclaim the Kingdom of God through His words and deeds. Where, then, does the hostility toward the Lord throughout the centuries come from?

"Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and his anointed" (Ps 2:1–2).

Why do we still witness growing persecution of Christians, even within the Church itself?

Seduced by the devil, people have abandoned God's saving commandments or have given them less and less importance. As the Church teaches us, there is an inclination toward evil within us, which we often give in to. If we do not combat these evil inclinations with God's grace, they gain ground and become increasingly dominant in our lives. Added to this is the fact that we often have a false image of God—sown in us also by the insinuations and deceptions of the Evil One—so that we do not approach Him with confidence. Furthermore, today the Church hardly proclaims the Gospel with

authority, so that people are deprived of healthy spiritual nourishment and often even receive nourishment poisoned by false doctrines.

When this happens, we fall into contradiction with God's will. Then it may occur that some of God's demands seem impossible for us to fulfill, so we close ourselves off to them or even begin to show hostility. We no longer consider God's authority an expression of His love and care as a shepherd. If this happens on an individual level, it will likely happen even more with those who occupy positions of power. If they do not govern their lives and political agendas according to God's commandments, they will fall into the spiral of anti-Christian powers and become enemies of God, which would be a catastrophe for everyone.

So, as the flower of today's meditation, let us resolve to learn to listen very attentively to the Holy Spirit and allow ourselves to be purified by Him on the path to holiness, thus offering resistance to evil, both within us and around us.

Meditation on the reading of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2022/03/08/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2024/06/20/>