

# Archbishop Smith: The Invisible Enemy – Overcome!

We are hearing a lot of reference made to the “invisible enemy” that has been wreaking great havoc in the lives of people all over the world. This term refers, of course, to the COVID-19 coronavirus. It has done damage to physical health and psychological well-being for some months now. Researchers are working hard to find a vaccine to protect us against this disease, and an antidote to cure it in those who are infected.

As we enter the blessed time of Holy Week, the sacred liturgies focus our attention upon another invisible enemy, namely, Satan. The damage he seeks to create is far worse than any disease. COVID-19 attacks the body; the devil targets our soul. Unlike in the case of the virus, we know both a vaccine and a cure for the devil’s work; he has been definitively overcome by the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Like a virus, that can remain in existence and communicable even when science has found remedies for it, Satan continues to prowl, seeking to worm his way into our minds to seduce us away from Christ. This means that, as we celebrate this week the definitive victory of Jesus Christ, we recognize the need to stay always vigilant against the evil one’s treachery.

This vigilance of soul requires that, first of all, we keep in mind how evil contagion spreads so that we can be inoculated against it. Since the very beginning of humanity’s sojourn on earth, Satan has operated by means of the lie. Adam and Eve were the first to hear him say that God is not to be trusted, that He is a threat to our freedom, and that we need to – and can – take control of our own lives. When our first parents chose to believe the lie rather than the promises of God, sin – separation from God – entered the world. The evil one continues to tell us the same lie. To prevent this from having damaging effects, we can best inoculate ourselves by receiving the vaccine of truth. Here we see why a regular pattern of reading Sacred Scripture is vitally important for the health of our soul. There we encounter the Truth, which by its own radiance and splendour shields us from diabolical deception.

And what about a cure? We are still anxiously awaiting one to be announced for the coronavirus. The healing of sin was announced by God immediately after the original transgression (cf. Genesis 3:15). The antidote is divine mercy, which exploded into the world when Christ rose from the dead, and which is communicated to us now through the ministry of the Church. In our weakness, we regularly fall prey to the wiles of the devil. Yet we need never despair, because the cure is always available. When a remedy is found for COVID-19, it would be foolish for those infected not to avail themselves of it. When the far worse disease of sin weakens our soul, it would be all the more foolhardy not to call upon Christ to be healed by his mercy and forgiveness.

We continue to pray – fervently – for an end to the pandemic and the discovery of both a vaccine and antidote to the virus. We rejoice that these are already ours to protect and heal us from the infernal invisible enemy. They are given in the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. As we celebrate this Holy Week Christ’s victory over the devil, let us pray for his grace to keep us inoculated by attentive listening to his Word, and to be healed by his mercy of any sin infecting our souls.