

SEMINAR 2 Journey to the Flame of Love
THE THREE OBSTACLES



In trying to cooperate with Mary's Flame of Love, the human heart faces three great obstacles which the Church calls the world, the flesh, and the devil. This seminar awakens you to these three enemies to your Flame of Love.

What is "the World"?

1. By creating mankind, God began human history which came from Him and was to return to Him. However, when mankind sinned, human history got off the track and has become an obstacle which we call "the world".
2. This world contains a powerful culture which includes your family, neighborhood, work, school, friends and enemies. Everyone and everything in your life constitutes your culture.
3. The world presents three types of problems for the Flame of Love – distractions, temptations and persecutions.

The World's Power

Distractions

4. The world uses every possible means (television, electronic media, books and newspapers) to occupy your heart and to leave no room for the Flame.
5. Advertisers pay millions of dollars to get your attention. Inevitably, you are deeply influenced. Your thoughts and feelings are consumed by your culture.
6. In the Diary, Our Lord constantly asked Elizabeth to turn away from the world's distractions. He wanted her to turn off the entertainment. He wanted her attention for Himself at all times. If you make similar sacrifices, Mary's Flame will burn brightly.

Temptations

7. Distractions lead you to waste time. Temptations lead you to commit sin, a much greater problem. Recall the Ten Commandments. The world entices us to break all of them. Think of the many addictions. The world is ready to fulfill them all. Whatever selfish desires you have, the world is ready (for a price) to satisfy them.
8. Also, you are deeply affected by the many sinful tendencies in your culture. People all around you commit sinful acts. You don't agree with their actions or words, but they affect you. When people sin, they tempt others to sin. Even when you resist, the evil still clings to you.

Persecutions

9. Jesus warned his disciples, "If you find that the world hates you, know that it has hated me first". (Jn.15:18)
At this point, we are not persecuted like the early Roman martyrs in the Coliseum, but people let us know how they feel about our living with Jesus as King.
If we change our lives, some friends will walk away. If we act correctly, some co-workers will wonder why. Even family members can become jealous. We never know where the persecutions will come from but they will come (See Seminar 6 as the needed antidote to all three problems).

The Flesh

10. "Flesh" does not mean our body, which is good. It means all the sinful powers within our body, feelings, mind and will.
11. In all aspects, some inner disorders have the power to lead us to feel, think and act sinfully.
12. If we follow these disordered powers, our life will get completely "out of order".
13. St. Paul provides a list of these human disorders. He writes, "The works of the flesh are obvious; immorality, impurity, licentiousness, hatred, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfishness, idolatry, sorcery, dissensions, factions, drunkenness, orgies." (Gal 5:19-21). That list provides some idea of the many powers called "the flesh".
14. We must deliberately choose against these tendencies to live in the Spirit. Paul writes, "Those who live according to the flesh are concerned with the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit with the things of the Spirit." (Rom.8:5)
15. By the Flame of Love, Mary releases her powers against our disordered tendencies. Like a loving mother, she helps us to curb our selfishness. The diary asks for many little sacrifices.
16. To help us against the powers of the flesh, Our Lady stresses fasting on bread and water on Monday (until 6:00 PM). Don't be afraid. Mary will make this sacrifice very easy (like sugar-coated candy).
17. When the Holy Spirit controls these selfish disorders, we have won the greatest victory of all – over ourselves.

The Devil

18. Person is a very important word. It means a being who can know and love (like God does). In God, there are three divine Persons.
19. Angels also are persons because they have intellects and free will (like we do).
20. To enter God's Kingdom, all the angels had to use their will to make a free decision to serve God. Some angels said "yes". Others, led by Lucifer, said "We shall not serve."
21. Lucifer's angels became devils. Their "no" created a Kingdom of darkness, totally opposed to God and to all who love Him.
22. Devils are totally jealous of man. They want to keep us out of heaven (just like they are out). Although we are inferior to them, we are called to sit upon their empty thrones.

The Battlefield of Earth

23. Earth has become a battlefield. God's Kingdom of Heaven and the Devil's Kingdom of Darkness battle for the eternal possession of souls (the greatest prize).
24. To discourage us in following Jesus, Satan uses two strategies. He tempts us with forbidden pleasures (so we turn aside from God) and he fills us with fear (so we turn back from seeking God).
25. The devil tempts us by telling us that it is alright to sin. After we sin, he tells us that we cannot be forgiven.

Protection

26. The best protection against Satan is devotion to Our Lady, and especially to the Flame of Love. Another protection is frequent confession and obedience to the priest's words. This is our great Catholic gift.
27. Seminar Five explains more deeply how the Flame of Love removes Satan's powers.
28. Living the Flame of Love is a battle. Victory always comes as the soldiers stay together. So, don't wander off. Join with the others. Stay in your Flame of Love group. (That will be Seminar Six).

Conclusion

29. The Flame of Love will help us to overcome the three great obstacles. To overcome the world, we must avoid frivolous entertainment. To overcome the flesh, we must fast. To overcome Satan, we must use the Flame to blind him. (Explained in Seminar Three).

30. The easiest solution is to stay immersed in Our Lady's Flame. She will overcome these three obstacles. Understanding the Flame of Love is our next seminar.

For Discussion

1. Try to explain each obstacle in your own words.
2. What part of this seminar enlightened you the most?
3. Which obstacles seem to be your greatest difficulty?
4. What good resolution did you make?

DAILY BIBLE READING

During the week, please read the themes of the following texts that explain this seminar.

Day 1 Jesus' Three Temptations
(Luke 4:1-13)

Day 2 The World's Rejection of The Light
(John 1:5-13)

Day 3 The World's hatred of Jesus and His Disciples.
(John 17:11-19)

Day 4 The War Between Flesh and Spirit
(Romans 8:5-13)

Day 5 The Works of the Flesh and the Fruits of the Spirit
(Galatians 5:16-26)

Day 6 Jesus' Power over devils
(Luke 11:14-23)

Day 7 The Parable of the Weeds and Jesus' Explanation
(Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43)