



# Christian Art

Daily Gospel Reading and Art Reflection

Luke 11:14-23

Jesus was casting out a devil



**Saint Wolfgang and the Devil,**  
Painted by **Michael Pacher (1435-1498),**  
Painted in 1471-75,  
Tempera on wood  
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# Daily Gospel Reading

## Luke 11:14-23

Jesus was casting out a devil and it was dumb; but when the devil had gone out the dumb man spoke, and the people were amazed. But some of them said, "It is through Beelzebul, the prince of devils, that he casts out devils." Others asked him, as a test, for a sign from heaven; but, knowing what they were thinking, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is heading for ruin, and a household divided against itself collapses. So too with Satan: if he is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? – since you assert that it is through Beelzebul that I cast out devils. Now if it is through Beelzebul that I cast out devils, through whom do your own experts cast them out? Let them be your judges then. But if it is through the finger of God that I cast out devils, then know that the kingdom of God has overtaken you. So long as a strong man fully armed guards his own palace, his goods are undisturbed; but when someone stronger than he is attacks and defeats him, the stronger man takes away all the weapons he relied on and shares out his spoil."

"He who is not with me is against me; and he who does not gather with me scatters."

# Reflection on the Painting

First of all I would like to share a link to a video which was uploaded on YouTube by John Rutter. How can a composer respond to a global tragedy? He hopes his music and lyrics will reach out to the people in Ukraine: [Click here to see video.](#)

The first two sentences of today's Gospel reading mention the word 'devil' four times, and the whole reading mentions Satan and the devil eight times. It is no coincidence that we have this reading mid-way through Lent. The Devil is the master-tempter and how are we doing thus far in Lent? Do temptations slip back into our daily routines?

Our German painting from 1471, by Michael Pacher, depicts Saint Wolfgang and the Devil. The Devil is showing Wolfgang an agreement he has drafted. It states that he would help Wolfgang build his church under the one condition: 'to take the soul of the first person who steps inside it'. All the Devil wanted was the one soul; then the rest of the church and all the churchgoers would be Wolfgang's thereafter. What a temptation the Devil is proposing! But Saint Wolfgang resisted.

The painting realistically depicts the cruel temptations under which human beings are tested by the Devil and his ability to bargain with us. Looking at this painting during Lent drives home the point that we can be torn between good and evil, between doing what is right or what is wrong, between helping and passively sitting back, etc...

We also know how, after His temptation in the desert, Jesus didn't remain alone. He soon gathered disciples around Him. So today's Gospel reading may perhaps prompt us to think of a person in our circle of friends or community who is struggling with his or her burdens or temptations. Maybe we can be there to help move them away from an evil agreement as depicted in our painting...