



A Mirror for Today's Catholics

Introduction: One Name, One Eternal Warning

Among the many figures that appear in the New Testament, there are some whose presence is brief but powerful—not because of what they achieved, but because of what they failed to become. One of these names is *Demas*. In just three verses of Sacred Scripture, the Holy Spirit reveals the drama of a man who walked alongside the Apostle Saint Paul but whose love for the world eventually overshadowed his fidelity to Christ.

His story is one of the quietest and yet one of the most eloquent spiritual warnings. In a time when lukewarmness, attachment to worldly things, and superficiality in faith are increasingly common, the figure of Demas throws us a question that transcends centuries: **How easy is it to begin in grace and end in silent apostasy?**

Who Was Demas? The Brief Biblical Mentions

Demas is mentioned in **three passages in the New Testament**. From them, we can reconstruct his spiritual path:

1. Colossians 4:14

| *“Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.”*

Here, Saint Paul is imprisoned in Rome. In his letter to the Colossians, he greets the faithful and mentions Demas as part of his inner circle. He appears in good company—no less than Saint Luke, author of the third Gospel. This mention shows that Demas was **an active, recognized, and close collaborator** of the Apostle.



2. Philemon 24

“Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.”

In this very brief and personal letter, Saint Paul again includes Demas as **one of his closest collaborators**. The Apostle is once again imprisoned, and these names are those who remain faithful during difficult times. Demas is still among them. Everything suggests that, up to this point, his commitment was solid.

3. 2 Timothy 4:10

“For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica...”

This verse changes everything. In what is considered **Saint Paul’s last letter**, probably written shortly before his martyrdom, the tone is intimate, grave, and emotional. And in this context, Paul mentions the **betrayal of Demas**.

“In love with this present world”—these six words sum up a spiritual fall that, though not detailed, contains a tragic depth. Demas did not apostatize openly. We do not see him blaspheming or persecuting Christians. But he did something just as dangerous: **he grew cold, tired of the cross, and chose the world.**

The Fall of Demas: A Theological Perspective



1. Love for the World: What Does It Mean?

Saint John speaks with force:

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John 2:15)

“The world” in a theological sense does not merely refer to the material creation, but to the system of values that opposes God: pride, sensuality, selfishness, vanity, the pursuit of pleasure and power.

The sin of Demas was not simply geographical (going to Thessalonica), but **interior**. His heart **inclined toward comfort, ease, what did not require sacrifice**. And that is the drama of many souls today. Sometimes they do not deny Christ with words, but they deny Him with their lives.

2. From Collaborator to Deserter: Lukewarmness as the Prelude to Apostasy

The Catechism of the Catholic Church warns us:

“Lukewarmness is a hesitation or negligence in responding to divine love; it can imply refusal to give oneself over to the prompting of charity.” (CCC 2094)

Demas did not fall in one day. **His fall was progressive**: perhaps he began to nostalgically miss what he had left behind; began to tire of persecution; to doubt the value of suffering; to feel that life with Paul was too demanding.

This path of *cooling off* is deeply relevant today. Many Christians begin their life of faith enthusiastically, but then **love for the world, desire for human security, comfort, and self-indulgence slowly draw them away** from the radical demands of the Gospel.



3. The Choice of Thessalonica: A Symbol of the Return to Worldliness

Thessalonica was a wealthy, cosmopolitan, bustling city. For a Christian weary of apostolic rigor, going to Thessalonica was **a return to the world, like the prodigal son to the far-off land.**

We are not told that Demas committed heresy or scandalous sin. His sin was **loving the world more than Christ.** The great drama was not a spectacular fall, but **a silent retreat,** a loss of fervor.

Pastoral Application: How Many Catholics Today Follow the Path of Demas?

Demas is the **patron of those who began well... but ended badly.** How many Catholics today live the same?

- **Childhood Catholics** who abandoned the faith as soon as they became adults.
- **Parish volunteers** who stopped serving because “it no longer fulfilled them.”
- **Religious and priests** who exchanged their cross for a bourgeois and comfortable life.
- **Committed laypeople** who faded away after marriage, children, or professional success.
- **Lukewarm Catholics**, who do everything externally but have lost the fire of first love.

Demas is present in our parishes, in our families, in our own hearts. That is why it is necessary to **meditate anew on his story with the fear of God.**

Is There Redemption for a Demas? The Hope of Return

Although we have no further biblical information about him, the Church teaches that **as long as there is life, there is hope.** The prodigal son also went to a distant “Thessalonica,” but he **returned.** God’s grace never ceases to call.



Saint Ambrose said: *“God does not abandon first: it is man who leaves. But if he returns, the Father is there.”*

Demas teaches us what *not* to do, but he can also be an opportunity to **examine our own love for the world**. What place does Christ have in our lives? To what extent have comfort, success, or social acceptance replaced the Gospel in our hearts?

Practical Lessons to Avoid Repeating Demas’ Error

1. Examine Our Priorities

Do we place God first in our decisions, our work, our free time, our friendships? Or have we fallen into a “decorative” faith?

2. Do Not Trust in Our Beginnings

The fact that we were fervent yesterday **does not guarantee** our fidelity today. As Saint Paul says:

“Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.” (1 Corinthians 10:12)

3. Flee from the World—Not Physically, But Spiritually

We must be in the world **without being of the world**. This implies real renunciations: of consumption, superficiality, constant noise, vanity on social media, etc.

4. Ask for the Grace of Final Perseverance

The Church teaches this as an essential grace: to finish the race in faith. It is not enough to begin—we must **reach the end loving Christ more than anything else**.



Conclusion: Let It Not Be Said of Us What Was Said of Demas

Demas is not simply a minor biblical character. He is a reflection of **millions of souls who began well but ended badly.**

May it not be written on our spiritual gravestone: "He abandoned me, for love of this present world."

Let us ask for the grace to persevere. Even if we have fallen like Demas, **we can return like Peter, weeping bitterly, renewing our love for Christ.**

And if we are still standing, let us remember that **fidelity is not a starting point, but a daily battle.** A battle that, with the help of grace, we can win.

Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, You who accepted the abandonment of Your disciples in Gethsemane and the betrayal of so many lukewarm hearts, do not allow my soul to become another sad story of worldly love.

*Grant me the grace to love You more than comfort, more than success, more than myself.
Let my cross not be a burden I flee, but a sign I embrace to the end.*

Let me not stop halfway. Let me not be ashamed of You.

Save me, Lord, from the error of Demas!

Amen.