

**Evil shows up in many ways. Sometimes it occurs in nature. A volcano swallows up fourteen villages in the Congo. Cancer threatens the life of a young mother. Sometimes evil seems to happen by fate. A worker loses a hand on the job. A mother accidentally drops glue instead of medicine into the eyes of her 9-year old. But when a person deliberately chooses evil, it is most disturbing. Terrorists commit international crimes. A killer stalks a high school student in rural Missouri. Extra-marital sex threatens to undo committed relationships.**

**When evil enters our lives, we turn to God as children turn to a parent. We ask God to fix it, to make it all better again. Sometimes it gets better. Sometimes it doesn't.**

**There are three statements that almost every religion believes: God is all-good; God is all-powerful; and evil exists in the world. But it is easier to accept any two of those statements than it is to accept all three. If God is all-good and all-powerful, how can there be evil? If God is all-good and there is evil, how can God be powerful? If God is all-powerful and there is evil, how can God be good? Those are the questions that every major religion has to answer. And all of us deal with these questions whether we are the victims of evil or whether we commit it.**

**In Christianity, we answer the dilemma of evil with our belief in eternal life. We hold that the world we see is not everything. A spiritual life pervades the world we see and continues after death. Yes, there is evil in the world, but it has limits. God has no limits. God can bring about good by using evil or by ignoring it.**

**John the Baptist calls Jesus "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." In today's gospel, John tells us who Jesus is and why he is. He has come to take away sin, all sin, the sin of the world. Jesus conquers evil.**

**It is nearly impossible for us to eliminate evildoers, whether we try to do it as individuals or as a nation, because we all commit sin. We are all evildoers. We cannot completely eliminate evil over there because so much of it remains in here. When we confront evil in other countries, we must beware not to become evil ourselves. For example, we have no license to commit atrocities against an enemy. The people we arrest still have basic human rights. Evil will die out when we confront it with goodness, when we bring Christ to the world.**

**We confront evil first of all in ourselves. Just as we take care of our physical health through exercise and nutrition, so we can take care of our spiritual health by prayer and charity. We are the body of Christ. We can help take away the sin of the world when we remove it first from our lives.**