Disturber of the Peace

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The Church honors two saints named Macarius.

The first is Macarius the Great, to whom a demon once said, "There is one thing in which I cannot excel you. It isn't in fasting, because I never eat, a keeping vigil, because I never sleep." When Macarius asked what it was, replied, "Your humility."

The second saint remembered on this day is Macarius of Alexandria. Born in 295, he was a merchant until he was forty, when he was baptized and went to the desert to begin a life of prayer.

Even though he began his monastic effort later in life, Macarius was so conscientious in prayer that he came to have great spiritual power, and o about him gives a good example. As he was crossing the Nile on a ferry t another passenger, a military officer, noticed him. The officer was wearing his gold-braided uniform, encircled l belt, and carrying his handsome sword at his side. He said to Macarius, whose monastic clothes were simple a ragged, "You are blessed in being scorned by the world."

Macarius told the official, "Your words are prophetic, for my name is Macarius, which means 'blessed.' But if, I am happy and blessed in being scorned by the world, are you not miserable in being so obviously enslaved b world?" These words had such a profound effect on the officer that he left the military, gave his possessions to and became a solitary monk.

But the devil, always trying to disturb our peace, sometimes tries especially hard with people like Macarius. Fo time, the saint was tempted by lustful dreams and desires, and had a hard struggle to overcome them. He also struck by a longing to leave his cell and travel to faraway places, which is dangerous for any monk trying to ke-focused on God and prayer.

Macarius had to work so hard against these temptations that his efforts became legendary. He sat in a swamp himself be almost devoured by mosquitoes. He ate practically nothing, and tried, until it became impossible, to sleep. Once he spent many months walking in the desert with a heavy basket of sand on his shoulders. When monk asked him what he was doing he replied, "I am wearing out him who wears me out."

Because his efforts to overcome temptations were sincere, Macarius reached a point where the devil could no longer disturb his peace so easily. He even became able to recognize and heal others possessed by demons or afflicted by serious temptations of the devil.

Saint Paul tells us to "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (Colossians 3:15). The disturber