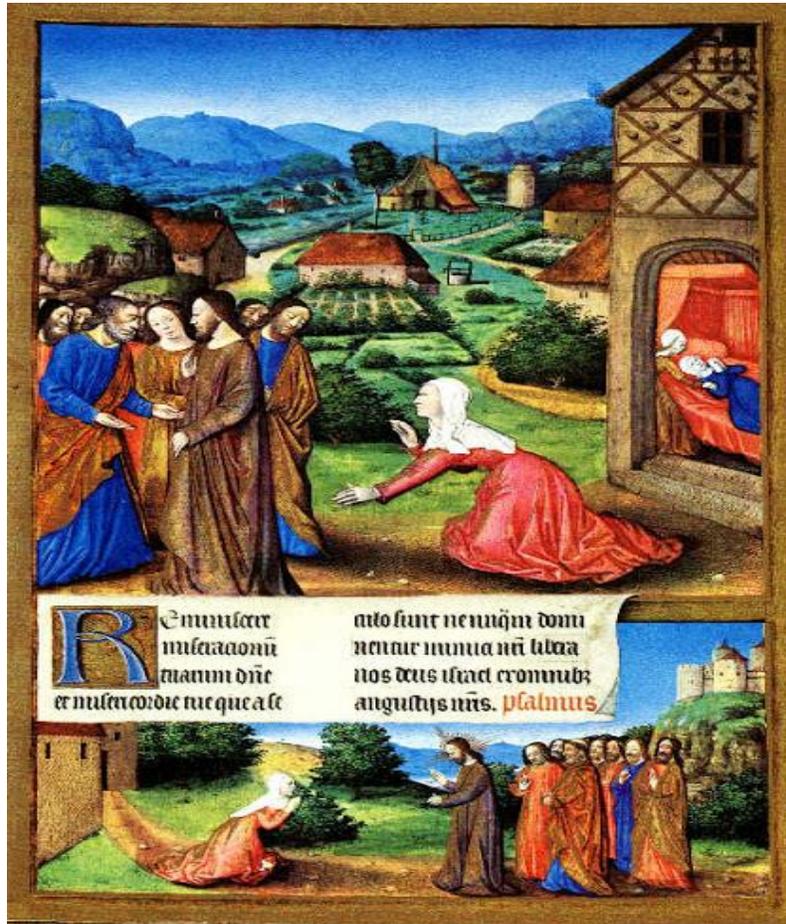


The Meditation

Second Sunday in Lent -A.D. 2016



Jesus and the Canaanite Woman- 1410

A Gothic Manuscript Illumination from a Book of Hours:
Tres Riches Heurs du Duc de Berry - France

The Collect for the Second Sunday in Lent

Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Collect for today is a beautiful, ancient prayer for God's protection. It should encourage us to think of the purpose, reason, and effect of the Father's loving care. The *purpose* is our complete salvation. That salvation includes (perhaps surprisingly to some), both body and soul. We ought not to in fact, be surprised at this, for every time we kneel at the altar rail to receive Holy Communion we hear the words of administration: "*Preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.*" The *body* as well as the *soul* is to have a part in the glorious world of the life that is to come.

There's a duality to the human constitution. We are both material and immaterial. We consist of both an *outward* part which we (and everyone else) can see, touch, and handle and, there is also an *inward* part which cannot be seen or touched at all. The one part is called the body, and the other is called the soul. There is also a third part which is sometimes spoken of, called the *spirit*, which is the highest element in the personality, but roughly, the soul is taken to include the spirit; and so the easy, twofold division is preserved.

We generally associate the body with the 'lower element' in human nature and the soul with the higher. There's no reason why we should do so, when considering the moral sphere, because both were created by God who "*saw that they were good*" (*Gen. 1*), and later in the Genesis story we are told that the corruption that entered into human nature penetrated both parts of it alike but, because the inner element of the personality is capable of more 'refined' (shall we put it), actions such as *thought, will, affection*, than is the coarser, physical, tangible, ponderable body . . . we tend to think and speak of the soul as 'higher' and the body 'lower'. This reasoning has made the two become symbols of a double nature; good and evil. Now, there may be no great harm in this popular way of speaking, as long as we remember: *First*, that in point of fact, the good and the evil are actually mixed up in both parts of our nature, and *second*; that the purpose of salvation is the rescue of both elements and the preservation of *both to everlasting life*.

The *reason* why we pray for God's protection is that we recognize our own extreme helplessness. Our Collect for today says; "*we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves*". We can make a mess of things very quickly and quite badly when left to our own devices. A perusal of a history book will certainly support this statement, or if we make a quick but honest assessment of our individual lives, we'll see things 'up close and personal', as the saying goes. We, in truth, are all like a person lying in a bed after a bad attack of the flu, incapable of summoning up enough initiative to 'get out of bed' nor of being able to persist in any continuous activity, once they have gotten even as far as getting up; both the physical and mental energy just isn't there.

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Two great men in the history of the Church understood and felt this *tragedy* (which is what it really is) with the intensity of genius. One was St. Paul who was constrained to cry out: “*For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*” (Romans: Ch. 7, Vss. 19 & 24). The other was St. Augustine of Hippo, who despaired of ever doing anything on his own initiative coined the famous prayer: “***Give what thou commandest and command what thou wilt.***”

The theological explanation of this incapacity is that it is the result of *original sin*. A long dissertation can (and has been) written on this subject, but we won't get into it at this time. Suffice it to say that original sin is like a poison that has entered into the human constitution which, like the venom injected by some species of spiders into their prey, has affected our nerve centers and paralyzed our abilities to act accordingly.

Whatever we may think of the theological explanation, it's a matter of overall general experience that mankind is indeed powerless of itself to help itself. We need some strong inducement, some incentive from outside ourselves. Even then, we are not likely to continue the effort unless the incentive that gave the start is renewed and developed to fit the changes that come with day to day life.

So we ask God to keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul.

The *effect* of our prayer then, is to be even wider than we thought. There are not only two different elements in human nature, but also two different kinds of evil. There are the adversities that may happen to the body as well as the evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul. The Collect for today is a very realistic prayer, and recognizes our desire for protection from bodily dangers as well as from moral ills.

We can really appreciate this consideration in these times in which we are living. We daily face dangers on the roads that we travel and the in strangers we meet. The instability that is enfolding throughout the world and even in our own nation, heightens the anxieties of even the most steadfast Christian. Most importantly, it is the evil that can happen to the soul. Certain key elements of morality that have stood the tests of time are being shaken by groups who have little interest or belief in Christ or God, but in their own agendas built a shifting sand of consensus; a quicksand that makes no distinction as to who it will pull down over the course of time. Such evil generated in this daily environment can easily distract and tempt the soul, which in anxiety, confusion, and weakness can be seriously distracted and waylaid. The devil really knows what he is about, make no mistake about it, he's been offering his illusions to generation after generation since the days of Eden. Only the gift of Divine Grace can protect us from the dangers of an unstable and distracted attention or an over vivid imagination (to mention only two). Thanks be to God Who is able to save both soul and body to everlasting life! In Christ lies our hope!

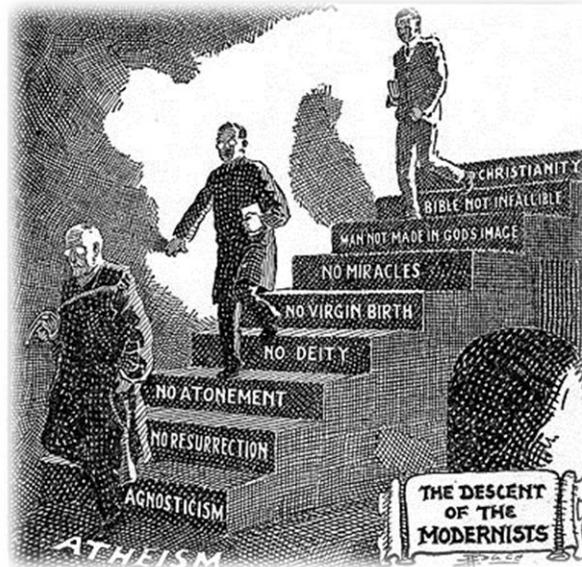
We will be tried and tempted during our Lenten spiritual journey and experience just as Jesus was during His own forty day fast in the desert. The devil, by way of our own mind and bodies

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will seek to exploit any potential weaknesses through distractions...and attractions. We mustn't be afraid for as today's Collect states: "*we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves*". We are **not** helpless nor should we be hopeless, for we will **always** have: "*an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins.*" (St. John; Ch. 2, Vss 1 & 2).

An Old depiction that illustrates things never really change in the human condition when it is left to fend for itself.

"Almighty God, who seest that we have not power of ourselves to help ourselves"



The final Step: **COMPLETE SEPARATION FROM GOD = DEATH & ETERNAL DARKNESS**

"While Jesus was kind to sinners – He did not respect their false ideas – He loved them all, but instructed them in order to convert them and save them." – St. Pius X

The Meditation is an on-line apostolate of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory in Raymond, Maine. We are Anglo-Catholic Benedictine contemplative community that follows the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, the Father of Western monasticism. We are affiliated within the Diocese of the Northeast of the Anglican Church in America (ACA), a member of the worldwide Traditional Anglican Communion.

The Meditation is a weekly on-line offering sent out free of charge to anyone who desires to receive it. Subscribers may copy and pass along the Meditation to their friends, or send us their e-addresses (with their permission) to add to our subscription list. Each edition is sent out as a BCC (Blank Copy) in respect to subscriber privacy. Contact Fr. Kevin at klamarre@maine.rr.com to subscribe.

In respect to our contemplative vocation and the animals in our rescue and rehab center, we do not have guest facilities and do not receive visitors during the winter months.

Fr. Prior Kevin is always available to hear Lenten confessions by appointment.

Visit our Webpage at: www.ourladyofsevensorrows.org

Priority Kalendar

For the week of February 21st to February 28th - A.D. 2016
In Lent

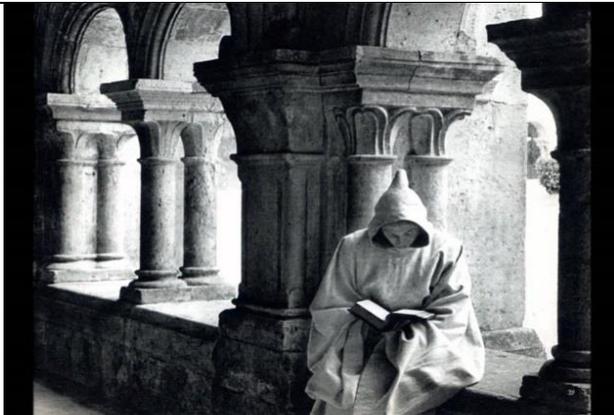
Sunday, February 21st **Second Sunday in Lent – Great Litany sung at Mass today.**
Monday, February 22nd *feria in Lent* *comm. Joseph of Aramathea, 1st cent.* *fast.*
Tuesday, February 23rd **St. Peter Damian; B. C. Doct.** *fast*
Wednesday, February 24th **St. Matthias; Ap. 1st cent.** *fast*
Thursday, February 25th *feria in Lent* *comm. St. Walburga; Abs. O.S.B. 8th cent.* *fast*
Friday, February 26th *feria in Lent* *comm St. Mechtilde; Recl. O.S.B. 12th cent.* *fast & Abs.*
Saturday, February 27th *feria in Lent* *comm. Bl. George Herbert; C. 17th cent.* *fast*
Sunday, February 28th **Third Sunday in Lent – Great Litany sung at Mass today.**

CALENDAR KEY

Ab. = Abbot, Abs. = Abbess, Abp. = Archbishop, Anc. = Anchorite, Ancs. = anchoress, Ap. = Apostle, Bl. = Blessed, Br. = Brother, Bp. = Bishop, Card. = Cardinal, C. or Conf. = Confessor, Comm. = Commemoration, Dcn. = Deacon, Doct. = Doctor of the Church, Ev. = Evangelist, H. = Hermit, LBr. = Laybrother, LSr. = Laysister, K. = King, Mat. = Matron, M. = Monk, **M.M. = Month's Mind (30 day requiem for the recently departed)**, Myr. = Martyr, N. – Nun, Obl. = Oblate, P. = Priest, P. or Po. = Pope, Pr. = Prior, Prs. = Prioress, R. = Recluse, **RM = Requiem Mortorum, (monthly requiem of the departed)**, Q. = Queen, Ven. = Venerable, Vir. = Virgin, W. = Widow.

FASTING Key: **A = Abstinence, F = Fast, F & A = Fast and Abstinence.**

RELIGIOUS ORDERS: C.O. = Congregation of the Oratory –Oratorians, C.P = Congregation of the Passion – Passionists, C.S.J. = Congregation of the Society of Jesus – Jesuits, Er. Cam. = Camaldolese Hermits, F.P.O. = Franciscans of the Primitive Observance, O. Car. = Carmelite Order, O. Cart. = Carthusian Order, O.C.D. = Order of Discalced Friars = Carmelites, O.F.A. = Augustinian Order, O.F.M. = Order of Friars Minor – Franciscans, O.F.M. Cap. = Capuchins, O.P. = Order of Preachers = Dominicans (Blackfriars), O. Praem. = Order of Canons Regular – Norbertines (White Monks), OS.B. = Order of St. Benedict – Benedictines, O.S.U = Ursulines, O.C.O. = Order of the Cistercian Observance – Trappists, O.C.S.O. = Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance = Trappists.



Evening Lenten Reading in the Cloister

An ancient monastic tradition. The abbot picks out a book for spiritual reading for each brother during Lent.

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Animal News from the Priory

The animals at the Priory are not quite sure what season we are truly in this winter. One day it is near 50 degrees and the next it is below zero. One day they go out and roll in inches of snow and then, in the blink of an eye, it is nearly gone.....and then back again.....They go from “spring friskies” to near hibernation. Hair on or off....not quite sure...All in all this has made for an interesting winter for all. We hope you are enjoying whatever weather you are experiencing and having an enlightening Lent....Real Spring will be here soon enough.

