



# The Meditation

## The Third Sunday After Easter

April 17<sup>th</sup>



**The Sending of the Twelve**  
*Painting by Duccio di Buoninsegna; ( 1255/1260 - 1318/19)*  
*Italian Tuscan painter*

## The Collect for the Third Sunday After Easter

**A** *lmighty God, who showeth to them that are in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness; grant unto all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's Religion, that they may avoid those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

The Little Chapter reading at the morning Office of *Lauds* for today quotes the words addressed by St. Peter to his Christians: “*Dearly beloved : I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wars against the soul.*” (*I Peter; Ch. 2, Vs. 11*) Our lives upon this earth are not long, the youth sees it as never-ending, and one in their eighties or nineties, ponders how it all went by so fast. Indeed, life is so short that it is over before we know where we are. Yet in a little while we shall see the living God face to face; “*For now we see through a glass darkly; but then, face to face: now? I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known*” (*I Cor. Ch 13, vs 12*). Like Christ, we are at a certain time, going back to the Father: (*a little while ye shall see me*” *St. John; Ch. 16. Vs.16*).

The period of time which we call a lifetime is merely two points in time: in one we are born, and then we die. We are merely pilgrims and strangers on our way to another world. We have no real place to call home; the country of our desires is a better, more heavenly country; “*But now they desire better country, that is, an heavenly.*” (*Heb. Ch11, Vs 16*). Therefore, we must not care too much for the things of this world, nor behave as if we were always to live here on earth. Life is precious only because it prepares us for eternity. St. Peter, in today's Epistle, gives the faithful a short rule of life, by which they can prepare for themselves an eternity of bliss. They must resist their natural appetites; their life among the Gentiles must be beyond reproach. For love of the Lord, they must bow to every kind of human authority. They are to give all men their due; to the brethren their love; to God their respect; to the king due honor ( *see I Peter; Ch. 2, Vss. 12-17*). They must let all see what they are, by their honorable behavior. Then, when the day of God's mercy comes, they will turn to Him.

Those people who have vowed themselves to the religious life, have chosen a life of penance. They have given up many things for God and for souls. The whole life of a religious must be a sign-post, showing the way to heaven to all those with whom they come in contact, or who are confided to their care ; it is then, the life of a religious (regardless of what Order they belong to), will be by its very nature, apostolic.

“*Is there not an appointed time for man upon earth? Are not his days like the days of a hireling?*” asks Job (*Job; Ch. 7, Vs, 1*). The enemies of our salvation are many and are strong. They never leave us in peace. They have no pity on our weakness, they do not even respect our elder citizens. They will besiege us to the day of our death, hoping to get the better of us. Even those living the cloistered life are not safe from their attacks, although here, we have more and better weapons with which to resist them, Vigilance is necessary, even when we have grown bent and grey after years spent in the service of God.

### 3.

We, like St. Paul say: *“But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”* (Romans Ch. 7, Vs. 23). This is a fact which must be taken into account, if we are to avoid falling into the hands of our enemies. The slightest lack of care can be fatal to us. That’s why self-denial, mortification, and self- control are so essential. St. Paul also says to us: *“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”* (Gal.; Ch. 5, Vs. 24). He goes on to warn us: *“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”* (Romans: Ch. 8, Vs.13), and he gives himself as an example saying: *“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection”* ( I Cor. Ch. 9, Vs. 27)

The law of mortification and of mystical death in Christ is so absolute that good St. Bonaventure wrote: *“Christ the King of kings, has proclaimed a law by which none but those crucified can see Him.”* This law is so general, that it makes no exceptions, and so necessary that no one can be dispensed from it. We are all obliged to bear the marks of mortification in our bodies (outwardly, inwardly, or both), *“Unless he carry that banner, none is worthy to follow the Master to be crowned.”*

Mortification alone is not sufficient; it must be accompanied by the practice of virtue. Didn’t Christ himself say, *“ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”* (St. Matthew: Ch. 16, Vs. 24).

St. Peter asks us, pilgrims and strangers, not only to resist our natural passions, but to lead a life without reproach, practicing virtue, sanctifying ourselves, and by our conduct leading others to our heavenly home. He insists especially on obedience to those whom God has set in authority over us, and on brotherly charity, the distinctive mark of Christ’s disciples. *“ Honor all men. Love the brotherhood, Fear God. Honor the king”* St. Peter writes.

Let us humbly ask our Master, that He may grant that we may employ our time on earth well; avoiding evil, controlling our selfish desires, practicing above all the virtue of charity, that we may as children of God, finally reach our one true home! Let us ask for the grace to follow Jesus, never rejecting His Cross but bearing it patiently until the day comes when we shall be glorified with Him.

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## From the Fathers of the Church

### St.Robert Bellarmine

**“Abstain:** From carnal desires- not merely sexual, but any desire which is not in accordance with the principles of redemption, such as excessive desire for honours, riches, etc. (cf. Gal. 5. 19). We must not consent to these desires – that which is meant by abstaining from them. This we must do, not from human respect or fear, but to dry up the fountain of temptation.”

#### 4.

**“The cause:** Pilgrims do not bother very much about the land through which they are passing, neither do they purchase stable goods such as houses or lands there, but only enough to support life. They spend as little as possible, they do not desire to be well-known, on the contrary, they try to pass unobserved; they remember and long for their homeland, making their way thither as soon as possible, especially if they know that their time is short and that the way into that country may be closed to them. Thus lived our Lord and the saints, careless of worldly things.

In order to know if we are on the right road as pilgrims we have only to ask ourselves if we are living an honest life, if we are constantly looking towards our fatherland and if we are increasing in the knowledge of God.

Our knowledge of God can increase either *extensively*, that is by an increase in the things we know about God, or *intensively*, by an ever deeper penetration into those things we already know. He who has but a confused notion of what is meant by God, the judgement, eternity, etc., needs to perfect himself in the knowledge of these things in order to reach love and fear. Many, even after a long life, have hardly advanced at all in their knowledge of the future life, and we must repeat to them constantly those words: Finish your journey while you still have the light, for fear darkness should overtake you (John 12. 35).

The impediments on the road are carnal desire, which blind the intellect, so that we do not reach the knowledge we should have. They can change a man into a chained beast, who is as blind as was Samson, one who is always going round in circles without reaching anything definite. We must mortify ourselves always---a difficult thing, because we are made up of soul and body.”

**“The fruit:** Kindness toward sinners---a difficult thing at times. Yet Lot could live respected in Sodom.

The conversion of sinners, who even when they murmur against the good cannot but admire them, and this is often the first preparation to receive the grace of God. How many times did St. Paul praise the patience of St. Stephen, and St. Augustine that of his mother!

The acquisition of true liberty, even though one might be the subject, a slave even. It is the liberty of the sons of God, those who are in a state of grace and so free from sin and capable of earning merits for heaven. Lastly we shall obtain the final and true liberty of the eternal joys of heaven. This is the liberty which comes from the mortification of carnal desires and which purifies our minds to know the truth which alone can make us free (John 8. 32).”

(St. Robert Bellarmine: excerpted from a Sermon given on the Third Sunday After Easter )



**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.

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## Priory Kalendar

For the week of April 17<sup>th</sup> to April 24<sup>th</sup> A. D. 2016

### In Eastertide

Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup> . . . . .Third Sunday After Easter

Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup> . . . . .*feria in Easter – tide.*

Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> . . . . .**St. Alphege (Elphege)**; *Bp. O.S.B. & Myr. 10<sup>th</sup> cent. England.*

Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup> . . . . .*feria in Easter – tide.*

Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup> . . . . .**St. Anselm**; *Abp. O.S.B. & Doct. 12<sup>th</sup> cent. Normandy & England.*

Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> . . . . .**Bl. Maria Gabriella**; *Cistercian Nun dedicated to unity, 20<sup>th</sup> cent. Italy.*

Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> . . . . .**St. George**; *Myr. 4<sup>th</sup> cent. Palestine*

Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> . . . . .Fourth Sunday After Easter

## KALENDAR KEU

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, 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.

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