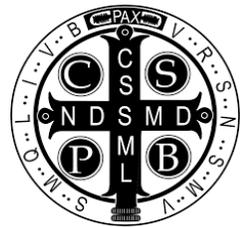
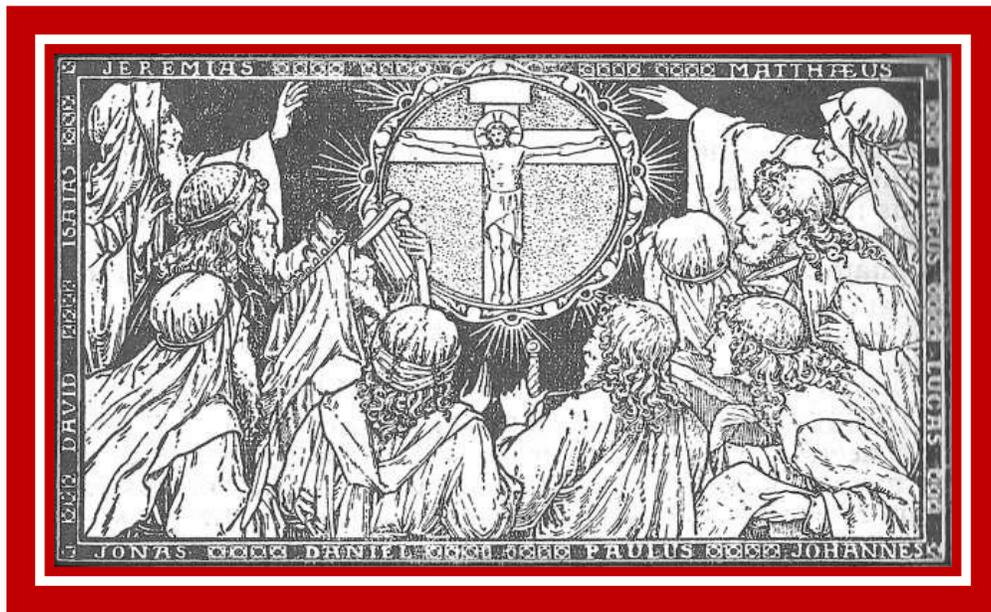


The Meditation



“ Thus says the Lord: Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is: and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.” - Jeremiah; Chapter 6, Verse 16.

March 22nd , A.D. 2015
The Fifth Sunday in Lent
(Passion-tide)



Also called;

PASSION SUNDAY

The Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews; (Chapter 9, Verses 11- 15)

1928 Book of Common Prayer – Pages 132-133
The Peoples Anglican Missal – Pages A128 – A129
St. Joseph Sunday Missal, (1958 edition) – Pages 413 - 414

CONFUSED CONVERTS

We so often come upon certain passages in St. Paul's writings that are so rich in theological sentiments and instruction that they are difficult to contain within a framework such as our Meditation format. The passage in today's Epistle is such. Its content is really abundant, although it is short! Our Holy Mother the Church saw fit to place this Epistle in just the right time of the liturgical year, like last week's Epistle. St. Paul's words for today set the stage for us as we enter into Passion-tide, (a season within a season), and puts us in mind for the great salvation-drama that is to soon come.

St. Paul, fleeing from Rome shortly after the burning of the city by the emperor Nero (in his infamous but botched attempt at "urban-renewal"), writes to a Jewish community that has embraced Christianity, and it is this letter that serves as part of today's Epistle. The location of this community of former Hebrews turned Christian is not completely certain. It would seem to be Jerusalem, because within the contents of the letter, it is taken for granted that a deep knowledge of the Law and also of the Temple ceremonies were evident. This seems to point to that small but vibrant Christian community which was organized along the lines of another synagogue in the city of Jerusalem itself.

These converts from Judaism lived in hope for the moment when the full Law of Moses would take the place of the Judaism that they had known meanwhile, they continued to attend the Temple ceremonies. Their conversion became one of starts and stops, as they struggled to discern the full message that Christ had delivered. It's very possible that they retained too much of their original Jewish beliefs, and that for some, this would lead to spiritual confusion and perhaps even apostasy as it is implied in Chapter 6 of Paul's Letter. It's also possible, as more than one scholar has offered, that these neophyte Christians may have become discouraged with the struggles that came with conversion, and also by the prevailing and darkening political climate existing in Jerusalem at the time. Jewish rebellion against Roman rule had been fermenting and growing for many years, and it was centered in Jerusalem. Flare-ups were frequent by this time. The fledgling Christian community knew all too well that open rebellion would lead to open warfare which Rome would win, in the end destroying Jerusalem, ending their community, possibly their own lives, and any hope of that city being a center of Christianity in that part of the Eastern world.

St. Paul knew, that to preach the doctrine of penance to these people would be useless, because it was too well known to them (*"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection ; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God."* – Hebrews; Ch. 6, Vs 1)

He decided to preach to them on something much more perfect.

HIGH PRIESTHOOD FROM A CROSS

This more perfect doctrine is that of the priesthood of Jesus Christ. All of the Temple rites and the priesthood, with which they were so familiar, were only so many types or shadows of the eternal priesthood of Christ. St. Paul says to them; if then you are on the point of going back to that which you had before and which you miss so much, stop yourselves, and remember that you are going backwards...towards a vacuum. He continues by saying; if you are dismayed

3.

at the thought of the destruction of all of this, know that there is a new temple and a new priesthood which is due to take the place of it all. This is now finished, and the Eternal Priesthood of Christ has taken its place. It doesn't matter if the rites and shadows of the old priesthood disappear, so long as *the reality of Christ's Priesthood has taken its place*. This right here is the argument of the whole Epistle and the little piece that we read today is composed of a few lines in which the high priesthood of the Jews is compared with *the prefect priesthood of Jesus Christ*. The theme is so rich in meaning and so opportune that we can only deal with a part of it, leaving the rest for another time when we can give more details about the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ.

The great redemptive action of this High Priesthood of Jesus Christ as suggested by St. Paul to the Hebrews can be briefly presented in three points:

1. *The first is the deliverance of all mankind (not just the Hebrews) from sin and its consequences.*

This great redemption could not be achieved within the realm of all the ancient Jewish sacrifices, but only through the death of Christ. Jesus, as the Lamb of God, took upon Himself the sins of *all mankind for all times and bore them away*. The real bondage that held mankind was cancelled by Christ when He was fastened upon the Cross. He broke all power of sin and death by His death, and rescued mankind from its slavery, making them children of God and heirs to Heaven.

2. *Christ not only fully satisfied the Justice of God by His sacrifice, but paid Him reverence and honor greater than any other that can be conceived. This was because Christ's act of self-oblation (offering) was made by the Eternal Spirit as just stated.*
3. *The great treasures of God's graces were opened by the death of Christ, and the stream of sacramental grace was permitted to flow forth for all mankind, and for all time.*

There is simply no adequate thanks that we can offer to our Great High Priest for the Sacrifice that He "*made for us once and for all on Calvary's tree*". We can please Him by joining with Him in His self-oblation to the Father. He entered as a Victim into the most holy place of Heaven, and He shows forever the marks of His Wounds to the Father. Let us join with Him in asking the Father to accept the Blood of His Son for our sins.

There is no other offering like this that we can make to Almighty God to counterbalance our debt of sin.

We can make this thanksgiving offering best of all during the Holy sacrifice of the Mass, and we should, therefore, attend not only when we are bound...but whenever the circumstances of our lives permit, at this great offering of the Holy Sacrifice. It's certainly a very pertinent and important action to think upon as we enter Passion-tide.

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Prayer for the day: *I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart. – (Psalm 119)*

4.



“Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you.”
- St. Matt; Ch. 11, Vs. 28

Don't forget to make your Lenten Confession!

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK: “This is my Body which is given for you: this cup is the New Testament in my blood, saith the Lord.” (*I Cor. 11.*)

Feasts, Fasts, and Other Things

Passion-Tide

220 SECVNDA PARS.



The instruments of the Passion

5.

The Church begins to place greater stress upon the account of Christ's redemptive death with **Passion Sunday**. She seeks to fill our minds with thoughts of His Sacred Passion. The words "greater stress" for the memory of our Saviors death is actually the main object of Christian worship. St. Paul himself says: "*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*" (*I Corinthians; Chap. 11, Vs. 26*). The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass then, is the solemn proclamation of Christ's holy death. We gather for Mass to voice our conviction: *Christ died for us, the blood of His Sacrifice flows even today for our souls, and the flesh of His Sacrifice is this very day our nourishment unto divine life.*

I use the words "greater stress" for throughout the whole of Lent the *theme of suffering* is present. It is the battle of Christ with hell, His wresteling with the devil for the souls given Him by the Father. That's one of the major veins of thought which runs through out this entire season.

Let's recall again Lent's three main phases, something I wrote last year that some of our readers may recall...here they are: *The First Sunday in Lent* – It's Christ versus the devil; Christ on the defensive. *The Third Sunday of Lent* - The strong man and the stronger One; Christ on the offensive. Palm Sunday - Christ victor and king in his sacrificial death. We must remember too, that this battle was not finished nearly 2000 years ago, but it continues even to today ... and to the end of time. This Christ, struggling, battling, winning is the *mystic Christ* in His Body the Church, and in His members, individual Christians.

So, you see, Lent is a "holy crusade" in which we all are active participants, and not merely pious bystanders!

Today marks the beginning of Passiontide, a time in which we ought to meditate (if we haven't been doing so already), more intensely on Christ's suffering. It is the time when our Lord says to us: "*When the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then they will fast.*" (*St. Matthew; Ch. 9, Vs. 15*).



The Night office of Vigils at a Carthusian Monastery

The invitatory verse at the night office of *Vigils* this morning begins with: "*Today if ye will hear the voice of the Lord, harden not your hearts.*" Holy Mother Church would have us worthily begin the great season which commemorates the sufferings of our Lord, with these words of admonition. They are an invitation, at the same time, for us to suffer and sacrifice with Christ as members of His *mystical Body*. The first responsory of *Vigils*, in very solemn terms, introduces this passion period and gives us a glimpse of Easter, only fourteen days hence,

6.

“These are the holy days of the Lord which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day at even the Lord’s Passover beginneth, and on the fifteenth day ye shall keep the Feast thereof unto the Lord, the Most High.”

Dear Friends, during the coming two weeks let us draw close to Christ in His bitter suffering, to Jesus the Man of Sorrows. Let us weep and sympathize with Him. Let us also regard Him as the conqueror upon the battlefield of Golgotha, with whom we too will be victorious. Let us see in Him the King who rules while suffering upon the throne of the Cross, with Whom we too may rule by rising above the troubles and misfortunes of life.

Let us follow, in spirit, our great High Priest as He passes into the Holy of Holies sacrificing Himself for us. He is inviting us to share in His priesthood by offering ourselves as victims.

I’ll close this installment of my humble offering with a few words from a great Benedictine spiritual writer, Dom Columba Marmion, who can tie many of the thoughts on Passiontide up better than Fr. Prior Kevin and I can:

“This freedom in which Jesus gives his life is entire. And this is one of the most admirable perfections of his sacrifice, one of the aspects that touch our human hearts most deeply . . . All is perfect in the sacrifice of Jesus—the love that inspires it, and the liberty with which he accomplishes it. Perfect, too, the gift offered: Christ offers himself.

Christ offered the whole of himself: his soul and body were bruised and broken by suffering; there is no suffering that Jesus has not known . . . The Word Incarnate knew all the sufferings that were to fall upon him throughout the long hours of his Passion. The vision awoke in his sensitive nature all the repulsion that a simple creature would thereby have experienced; in the Divinity to which it was united, his soul saw clearly all the sins of mankind, all the outrages committed against God’s holiness and infinite love.

He had taken on himself all these iniquities; he was, as it were, clad with them, he felt all the wrath of divine justice weigh upon him . . . He foresaw that for many men his blood would be shed in vain, and this sight brought the grief of his blessed soul to its climax. But, as we have seen, Christ accepted it all.” (Marmion: *Christ in His Mysteries*; pp. 126 & 252)

-Br. Chip, O.S.B.



**Feasts, Fasts, and Other Things: from “The Chipmunks Nutshell Library” is presented by
Br. A. Chip Monk, O.S.B. a munk of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory in Raymond, Maine, USA.**

Traditional Lenten Fasting Rules

Fast: The taking of only one full meal (which *may* include meat) and two smaller meatless meals that don't equal one large meal. No eating between meals, but water, milk, tea, coffee, & juices are okay. **Meat is allowed at one meal** (assuming that abstinence isn't also expected on a given day.) Traditionally everyone over 21 years of age and under 59 years of age is bound to observe the laws of the fast. Present code of Canon Law for Roman Catholics sets the ages of 18-59 as the limits.

Partial Abstinence: Meat or soup or gravy made from meat may be eaten once a day at the principal meal.

Abstinence: In both the Roman and Traditional Anglican Churches, abstinence means a refraining from eating the meat from mammals, fowl, and from soup and gravy made from them. Fish is allowed, hence, Fridays have been called "*Fish Fridays*". Traditionally, the laws of abstinence apply to all aged 7 and over.

During Lent, the *Priory weekly Kalender* as presented in the **Meditation** will list the appropriate days of fasting and its form, so it will be easy for anyone performing the Lenten Fast to know what the day calls for. Don't forget...*it's never too late* in the Lenten season to conduct a fast!

- KYRIE ELEISON - CRISTE ELEISON - KYRIE ELEISON -

The **Meditation** is produced by the Benedictine Community of

Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory
4 Shaw Road
Raymond, Maine 04071

This is a free on-line ministry of our community to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please feel free to copy and pass on this meditation to anyone you feel might benefit from it. To be placed on our weekly mailing list, please contact us at; klamarre@maine.rr.com

You can visit our website to view past editions of **The Meditation** at: www.ourladyofsevensorrows.org and go to '*Meditation*' section of the site.

PLEASE NOTE: Sunday Public Mass will resume in the Spring when temperatures permit. We will post the date of our first Mass in the Meditation.

PRIORY KALENDAR



The Fifth Sunday in Lent (now in Passion-tide)

Week of March 22nd to March 29th - A.D. 2015

Sunday, March 22nd ... 5th Sunday in Lent – Passion Sunday – community retreat continues

Monday, March 23 ... feria in Lent **Fast-Day.** –community in retreat

Tuesday, March 24 ... St. Gabriel the Archangel – **Fast-Day.** –community in retreat.

Wednesday, March 25th - The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary *Retreat concludes today*

Thursday, March 26th ... comm St. Ludger, Bp. 9th cent. – **Fast-Day.**

Friday, March 27th ... St. John of Damascus- 7th cent. - **Fast & Abstinence**

Saturday, March 28th ... comm. St. John of Capistrano - **Fast Day**

Sunday, March 29th ... PALM SUNDAY...Blessing & distributing of Palms and reading of the Passion of Our Lord at Mass today.

KALENDAR 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, M. = Monk, **M.M. = Month's Mind (requiem for the departed)**, Myr. = Martyr, N. – Nun, Obl. = Oblate, P. = Priest, P. or Po. = Pope, Pr. = Prior, Prs. = Prioress, R. = Recluse, Q. = Queen, Ven. = Venerable, Vir. = Virgin, W. = Widow,

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), O.S.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

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

NOTE: **LENTEN COMMUNITY RETREAT:** The community will be making its Lenten Retreat starting on Sunday, March 15th to Wednesday, March 25th. During this time, we will not be receiving any visitors, nor returning any phone calls, or emails. The Meditation will be sent out however.

ANIMAL NEWS

Basking in the early Spring-time Sun !



This is how our shedding horses and ponies enjoyed the one warm day that we have had. They are as happy to have survived the brutal winter as are we. Spring begins this week and warmer days are ahead so more basking is in their future! Thank you to all who have contributed to their care this winter. Horses keep warm by eating hay and we have gone through a lot more than usual due to the excessive cold so we are, as always, so grateful for the support and we wish you all a Happy Spring!

P A X