



The Meditation

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 26th, 2017 A.D.



The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes c.1630

Pushkin Museum, Moscow, Russian Federation

Painting by Bernardo Strozzi (1581-1644)

Italian Baroque painter, engineer, & Capuchin priest

The Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Great Lent - A.D. 2017



Grant we beseech thee, Almighty God: that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved. Through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Who liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Holy Ghost, One God, throughout all ages of ages. World without end. Amen.

He is with us.

We acknowledge, in today's Collect, both our wretchedness, as well as our dependence upon God's Grace through His Son for the salvation of our souls. It's a very good Collect for the Lenten season, in that it sums up the meaning of Lent quite succinctly! We are all wretched creatures, prone to sin and selfishness, but we are not beyond redemption . . . none of us, if we place our trust and hope in God's loving Son. Lent, for its austerities and penances, is also a season of *hope*. How often do we see it in that way?

Christ's presence on earth is the real strength and consolation of all Christian souls. It should inflame them with love, zeal, and the longing to bring to the Light all of that part of humanity sitting in the shadow of death: that Light for which they so desperately crave, even when they don't know it.

When Joshua took over Moses' gigantic, and to him seemingly impossible task of bringing Israel out of the desert and into the land 'flowing with milk and honey', God, in order to give him courage, promised to be with him just as He had been with Moses: "*Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*" (Joshua; Chap. 1, Vs. 9).

Jesus Himself used almost the same words when He appeared to His disciples in Galilee after His resurrection: "*And Jesus spake to them saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" (St. Matthew; Chap. 28, Vss. 18-20). A few weeks later they received the Holy Ghost, and St. Mark concludes his Gospel saying: "*And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*" (St. Mark; Chap. 16, Vs. 20).

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The Old Testament account of the entry of Israel into the land flowing with milk and honey, can also be viewed by us figuratively as the pilgrimage of the nations' entering a spiritual land flowing with the graces of God. He who leads them needs to feel God's presence and His almighty power sustaining him. He can sing with the Psalmist: "*It is thou, Lord, that keepst the lamp of my hopes still burning . . . In thy strength I will engage a host of the enemy, in my God's strength I shall leap over their defences.*" (Psalm 17; Vss. 29 & 30) *.

The Christian who lives in an intimate union with God, feels the divine strength pouring into them. Like an eagle, they rise higher and higher, never failing to return to earth, the place where they find their life's work for God. The task is given to the Christian, that the Lord Himself may live and work in them. Like the eagle, who flies on the currents of the wind, the Christian experiences both the heady heights of encounter with Christ as well as the down-drafts that the lows of life and the human experience bring. Our journey of seeking perfection is often hampered by our broken state which is part of our humanity, but we have the Sacraments of the Church, and the promises of Christ that will guide us back up whenever we feel ourselves in a free-fall. It is very important that we remember we are never alone...even when we may think otherwise! Christ's presence in us until the end of the world is three-fold: He dwells in us, in the Tabernacle at the altar, and in the Church. When we think that He may be far away from us. . . that's when He could never be any closer. That is faith!

It's important for us to always remember that our individual vocations lie in this: wherever God places us, we represent His Church. Christ is present at our work-places because we are there. Christ is present when we are teaching, because we are there teaching what the Church teaches. Christ is present when we visit the shut-in, the sick, the dying, because that's what He did and continues to do. Christ is present when we give comfort to a friend or stranger, because he did the very same. Christ is present when we, by just being ourselves, take time to listen to someone who we may not find agreeable to us, and find a way to return to them His love. Our clergy and religious have their vocations which lie in the province of their calling, but so too, do the lay-folk, who sometimes can reach out where no one else can. Last, Christ is with us, when we are alone, with our own fears, anxieties, and doubts. He who had His Gethsemanie, knows how it feels, and has re-assured us through His word that He will never abandon us.

An author wrote: "We live in interesting times". Your writer sez: *Amen, and ain't that the truth!* We could drive ourselves to distraction trying to determine what 'interesting' constitutes, but that would be a waste of time and effort, for it's doubtful there would be an agreement. Suffice it for us to admit that ***never has the presence of Jesus Christ on this earth been needed more visibly than now***, and never has the One, Holy Catholic Church been needed to stand more bravely in the breach of the abyss. Every Catholic Christian has a mission, a vocation, a duty, to imitate the Master and to share the Master with the world. Jesus gives us a share in His universal Presence when He gives us His love; a love for the poor, the sinner, those in error, and those who do not believe. His charity makes a way for itself over the world. Our love for Him, while reaching to heaven, also spans the ends of the earth, in our prayers. Wherever He places us, we

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do very well indeed, when we urge souls to join in the share of the work of Christ, as little St. Therese would put it: . . . *the work of love*.

Carried by the wings of prayer and holy desire, may we, in spirit be in every land where there are souls who seek the Promised Land, the land where Jesus Christ is food, light, strength, and salvation for all those who are seeking. May they find you, O Lord. Amen.

May you too be refreshed in both body and spirit, on this Refreshment Sunday, as you continue in your personal Lenten journey. **Benedicamus Domino!**

*Excerpted from the Vulgate translation of the Psalms for clarity.

Prory Kalendar

For the week of:

March 26th to April 2nd th - A.D. 2017

In Great Lent and Passiontide

Sunday, March 26th Fourth Sunday in Lent (Laetare Sunday) - Refreshment/ Rose Sunday

Comm. The Feast of St. Dismas, the penitent thief. See Note 1

Monday, March 27th . . . St. John of Damascus; Conf. & Doct. 8th cent. Mid-East.Fast Day

Tuesday, March 28th . . .feria in Lent...comm /St. John of Capistrano: Conf, O.F.M. 14th cent. Italy. – Fast.

Wednesday, March 29th ...feria in Lent . . .comm. Bl. John Keble; P. & Conf. 19th cent. England - F. & A.

Thursday, March 30th . . .feria in Lent.....Fast

Friday, March 31stferia in Lent comm. St. Guido; Abt. O.S.B. 10th cent, Italy.....F. & A.

Saturday, April 1stferia in Lent...Passion tide commences at First Vespers today See Note 2 - Fast

Sunday, April 2ndPASSION SUNDAY – In Passion tide

Calendar Notes

Note 1: Laetare/Refreshment/Rose/Mothering Sunday. We experience a little joy on this, the Fourth Sunday in Lent, when **rose pink** vestments replace the **violet** or **oxblood** vestments worn throughout the Lenten season. Today is called *Letare* Sunday, named after the first Latin word in the Introit Verse of the Mass for the day: “*Laetare Jerusalem...*” “*Rejoice ye with Jerusalem...*” (*Isaiah: Ch. 66, Vs. 10*). Today is also known as *Refreshment Sunday* because Holy Mother Church permits a relaxation of the Lenten Fast. The Gospel for the day is the *Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes* (*St. John; Ch. 6, Vss 1-14*). We read, in this Gospel, of the multitude that left the comfort of their homes, in the same way the faithful abandoned worldly pleasures, and Jesus refreshed them with bread and fish, which are also Eucharistic symbols. Today, the faithful are allowed to partake of refreshing food that they may have been abstaining from as part of their Lenten discipline.

Another name for today is Mid-Lent Sunday (in French: *mi-careme*), a bit inappropriate because we actually reached the half-way mark last Thursday! The name may reflect an earlier computation of the duration of Lent, or more likely, a simple transference to the Sunday closest.

Today in England, is also known as *Mothering Sunday*. It’s a little uncertain how this Sunday acquired this title, but scholars think it may have to do with the old tradition of the pope celebrating Mass at the basilica of *Santa Croce in Gerusalemme* (Holy Cross in Jerusalem) where the relics of the Holy Cross were kept, deposited there by Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great. The Epistle for the Mass quoted St. Paul’s reference to the ‘Heavenly Jerusalem’ as “mother of us all.” It became customary on this day in England, for children to present their mothers cakes made of eggs, butter, and sugar/honey; ingredients which were not otherwise used during Lent.

So, today, we take a break from our Lenten obedience, and eat refreshingly, though still with moderation. . . for our Lenten sojourn resumes on the morrow!

Note 2: If not veiled already, crosses are veiled until Veneration on Good Friday, and images veiled until ‘*Gloria in Excelsis*’ is sung on the Easter Vigil.

KALENDAR KEY

Abt. = 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/Commemorate, Dcn. = Deacon, Doct. = Doctor of the Church, Ev. = Evangelist, H. = Hermit, LBr. = Lay Brother, LSr. = Lay Sister, K. = King, Mat. = Matron, M. = Monk, **M.M. = Month's Mind (Requiem for the recently departed on the 30th day after death or burial).** Myr. = Martyr, N. = Nun, Obl. = Oblate, P. = Priest, Po. = Pope, Pr. = Prior, Prs. = Prioress, R. = Recluse, **RM = Requiem Mortuorum, (Mass and Offices for the departed once a month as designated on Kalendar).** SDcn. = Sub Deacon, Q. = Queen, Ven. = Venerable, Vir. = Virgin, W. = Widow.

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

RELIGIOUS ORDER ABBREVIATIONS: 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 = Capuchin Order, O.P. = Order of Preachers (Dominicans also called 'Blackfriars'), O. Praem. = Order of Canons Regular (Norbertines), O.S.B. = Order of St. Benedict (Benedictines), O.Ss. S. = Bridgettines, O.S.U = Ursulines, O.C.O. = Order of the Cistercian Observance (Trappists/Trappistines), O.C.S.O. = Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance (Trappists/ Trappistines).

About the Meditation and About Us

The Meditation is an online apostolate of Our [Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory](#) in Raymond, Maine, USA. We are an Anglican-Catholic Benedictine contemplative community that follows the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, the 5th century Father of Western Monasticism. We are resident within the Diocese of the Northeast (DNE), of the Anglican Church in America (ACA), a member of the worldwide Traditional Anglican Communion (TAC).

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PLEASE NOTE: In respect to our contemplative vocation and the animals in our rescue and rehab center, we do not have guest or bathroom facilities and do not regularly receive visitors. Fr. Kevin is available to hear confessions and give spiritual direction by appointment only. Please contact via email to make an appointment.

Animal News

Sr. Mary Francis, O.S.B.



Contentment

(photo by Sr. Mary Francis)

Ruthie got a new toy.....sharing is not an option.....no sir...not today!!!

PAX

