

THE MEDITATION

July 13th, A.D. 2014

The Fourth Sunday After Trinity Sunday



The Sermon on the Mount (1480-81)

by

Cosimo Rosselli (1439 - 1507)

Sistine Chapel, Vatican City.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke; Chapter 6, Verses 36 – 42.

The 1928 Book of Common Prayer, Pages 194-195

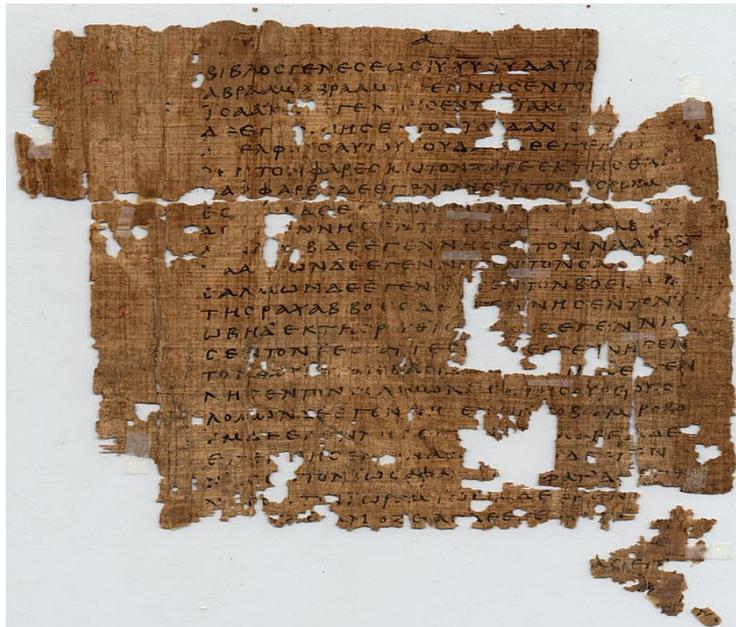
The People's Anglican Missal, Page C 61

SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL FOR THE DAY: Jesus teaches us that love and forgiveness should be unconditional, because we are all sinners.

Today's Gospel account comes to us from St. Luke and if one makes a comparison of this passage to a passage from the Gospel of St. Matthew . . . The Sermon on the Mount; (*see Matt.; Chap. 7, Vs. 1- 5*), they appear to be one in the same. St. Luke is more succinct in his accounts of our Lord's sermons, while Matthew presents more for the reader to ruminate upon. *The Sermon on the Mount* may be compared with the similar but more succinct *Sermon on the Plain* as recounted in today's Gospel by St. Luke. A concordance will show both sermons taking place at the same time, but in St. Luke's account, we read of Jesus going up a mountain, then giving the sermon on the way down at a level spot. Some Biblical scholars believe that this is the same sermon, while others hold that Jesus frequently preached similar themes in different places. Both accounts mention that a large crowd of people had gathered, so giving them a level spot to stand or sit down, while Jesus would speak to them from a rise of some sort makes sense from a practical point. It is quite possible that both accounts are speaking of the same event.

The Sermon on the Mount is the longest piece of teaching from Jesus in the New Testament, and has been one of the most widely quoted elements of the Canonical Gospels. It includes some of their best known teachings of Jesus, such as the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer. The Sermon on the Mount contains the central tenets of Christian discipleship for most Christians.

It would probably be helpful to have our Bible open to the *Holy Gospel of St. Matthew; Chapters 5, 6 & 7 (The Sermon on the Mount)* to refer to while we meditate on the Gospel for the day. That passage will add to our assigned Gospel and make its accompanying meditation a bit fuller.



*A Gospel of St. Matthew written in Greek on a papyrus sheet.
Papyrus - 1 c. 250 A.D.*

3.

Our Lord's teachings that come from the Sermon on the Mount, both correct much of the wrong interpretations the doctors of the Law have given to the Law in the past, *and* it brings out new facets that can call forth a new way of life and a truly Christian culture in the future.

Christ's teachings bridge the centuries and seek a foothold in our minds and hearts. 21 centuries later, it is no easier for our species to grasp (as a whole) His teachings and message than it was when He first spoke of them on the Mount, even though we have the benefit of time and so-called technology. Regarding the relationships between the injuring party and the party that is injured, the former teaching had been this: *"Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy."* Christ tells us, that we must love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who plot against and persecute us. That's turning the Old Law on its head!

Jesus goes on to say that forgiveness of our enemy and prayer for him(or her), are conditions for being children of our Father in heaven, who makes His sun to shine on both the good and the evil person, and sends rain on the just as well as the unjust. (refer to *Matt; Ch. 5, Vs 44-46*). If we love those who love us, what real reward is there in that? This is really just a bare minimum that anybody can do if they try. What do we do that is in any way heroic if we greet and associate only with our brethren? Even non-Christians do that much. We should not be satisfied, as followers of Christ with doing just the minimum. We can have only one ideal: *"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father is merciful . . . For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."* St. Matthew adds: *"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*
- (*Matt. Ch. 5, Vs 48*).

Christ's command to us to love, forgive, and pray for our enemies appears on the face of it an impossible thing for us to fulfill . . . even though we know in our hearts that our Lord would not give us an order that would be beyond our abilities. Perhaps the words: *"Perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"* seems so unapproachable for us . . . so impossible for us to comprehend . . . and may even frighten us some. Perhaps we are looking too concretely along the lines of the theological perfection of God. He is naturally the sum total of *all* perfections. There is no limit to His wisdom, goodness, power, love, and majesty.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

We can't be infinitely wise as our heavenly Father is, nor infinitely powerful or good; but if we can learn to forgive our enemies and others who injure us (in whatever ways we can be injured), we accomplish something very God-like . . . something that He is already doing to us.

When we sin, we become much more of an enemy to Him than any of those who offend us.

God forgives. It is His very nature to forgive, and we can share in this nature when we make ourselves carriers of His forgiveness to those who offend us. *"Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven ; give, and it shall be given unto you."* we are told today in St. Luke.

Fortunately, Jesus not only gives us the command to forgive, but He gave us His own example of effective forgiveness when He hung on the Cross. He prayed for his executioners and for all His enemies; *"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do"* (*St. Luke; Ch. 23, Vs. 24*). Christ inspires mankind throughout the ages to use forgiveness of enemies as the springboard for holiness. St. John Gualbert, whose feast we celebrate on July 12, is one such example. He was intent upon avenging his brother's murder ; changed by the grace of Christ, he embraced the assassin with forgiveness and went off living this great grace and became a saint. The day of his conversion was Good Friday!

4.

Best of all, Jesus gives us the Mass where He shares with us, not only His command to forgive, (He does in fact make forgiveness a necessary condition for offering the sacrifice worthily: “ *If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. {Matt; Ch. 5, Vs. 23-25}*). That act of forgiveness frees us from the burden brought on by the wrong, and makes our approach to God's Holy Altar all the more acceptable in His sight. We are able to approach the Divine more worthily, for we have performed a divine act.

We come to know a God, in Christianity, that is deeply personal to each one of us. He is a God of unlimited hope, a God of unlimited love, and a God of unlimited forgiveness. Would that the other great religions and those souls who have no religion hear the loving words of our Lord: “ *Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you...* ” *Hope, Love and Forgiveness ...are things that can change the world!*

Blessed Lord Jesus, make us ever more faithful to the spirit of your Mass, and to the spirit of forgiveness.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

*And is He not more ready to pardon than we to sin?
And is He not the Physician and we the sick,
the Bearer of our iniquities?*

St. Catherine of Siena - 14th cent.



The Sermon on the Mount

Out on A Limb



“There are many kinds of alms, the giving of which helps us to obtain pardon for our sins; but none is greater than that by which we forgive from our heart a sin that some one has committed against us.”

St. Augustine: from The Enchiridion, Ch. 72 - (5th cent.)

Christ came to show mercy, to reconcile to Himself those who had deliberately turned their backs on Him, to do good to those who did Him nothing but harm. Jesus is Mercy incarnate! The Love that forgives . . . and He asks us to forgive in the same measure in which He forgave. Our trespasses are forgiven us and we have a share in His salvation, on one condition – *that we forgive those who trespass against us.*

“Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”

Jesus says to us: *“I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you . . . but love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again ; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest : for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful.”* (*St. Luke; Chap. 6, Vs. 27- 36*).

I say unto you – that is to my disciples and followers. It is one of those commandments which Christ gave and which practically no-one obeys; words that touch us all when we read them, because of the charity which informs them, but which are practically put aside with a smile as “ not to be taken literally”. What fools we are if we believe and do this ! Jesus is too wise to say more than He means . . . He is too just, too exact a man.

We must ask the Lord for the grace to follow Him in that folly which is called *Divine Wisdom*. Give us what it is You ask of us, and ask of us as You will! Let us be taught by Him ; and with His help we shall be able to love our enemies, be completely unselfish and forgive from the bottoms of our hearts!

Forgiveness must *not* be an absolution given from a sense of superiority, a wise capitulation, a calculated pardon. No, *it must come from the heart* and be a sacrifice of our own self-love, for the love of Christ. One thing is for sure; it will practically always be contrary to human reasoning, which we sacrifice for the love of Jesus Christ and which we must be ready to repeat, often, if necessary. Scripture tells us: “seventy-times seven”! That meant beyond counting in those days! Shall we have the courage to persevere, if we ever get to that point... to give up our self-respect and be looked upon as fools? Quite a thing to ponder in these days of *self-assertion, personal rights, and maintaining high self-esteem!*

We must be so close to our Lord and continuously ask for humility if we are to be able to forgive as He forgave. Yet, Eternal Wisdom always forgives : folly or supernatural Love ?

We must forgive as Christ forgives . . . but as simple creatures, how do we do that? Jesus knows all. He is Judge of all. Christ is greater than man's heart, as St. John says so therefore, His judgments, coming from a greater Heart, from an infinite Love, are infinitely more to be trusted than our own. Christ judges according to His Love, and therefore He is always ready to forgive. We have only to accept His loving mercy.

Let us ask the Lord, in our infinitely smaller measure to make us as great-hearted as He is. There are times when we feel for the general good, we are obliged to judge another, but even then, may it be done with a prayer in our hearts and forgiveness asked.

Your charity, O Lord, has covered the multitude of our sins ; charity is our one hope of covering our own sins and those of others.



Out on A Limb is presented occasionally by Br. A. Raymond Crowe, O.S.B.
A monk of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory in Raymond, Maine

Br. Raymond serves the Priory as Security Officer, Photographer, Moral Theology Professor, Novice Master, Varmint Controller, and Community Practical Joker . . . not necessarily in any order!

The Meditation is produced by the Benedictine Community of
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 Visit our Website for previous editions of **The Meditation** at: www.ourladyofsevensorrows.org

SUNDAY Public MASS with the Office of TERCE: 9:00 a.m.

(The Chapel is located on the second floor of the garage building. Please enter by left side door and go up the stairs. Please keep silence upon entering the building.)

Also, Please Note: There are no Public Rest Room facilities at the Priory, please plan accordingly.

PRIORY KALENDAR

A.D. 2014

Week of July 13th to July 20th

Sunday, July 13th . . . The Fourth Sunday After Trinity . . . *Comm. St. Silas, Myr. (1st. Cent.)*

Monday, July 14th . . *St. Bonaventure, B.C.D. - (13th cent.)*

Tuesday, July 15th *Translation of St. Swithin, B. C. - (9th cent.)*

Wednesday July 16th . . . Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Note 1)

Thursday, July 17th . . *Month's Mind . . . commemoration of all the faithful departed.*

Friday, July 18th . . . *comm. Bl Robert of Stoleto, O.S.B. - (13th cent. Italy) humble penitent, hermit, & moralist.*

Saturday, July 19th . . *St. Vincent de Paul, C. - (17th cent.)*

Sunday, July 20th . . . The Fifth Sunday After Trinity- *Comm. St. Margaret of Antioch, V & M - (3rd cent.)*

KALENDAR KEY: *Ab. = Abbot, Abs. = Abbess, Ap = Apostle, Bp. = Bishop, C. or Conf. = Confessor, Comm. = Commemorate. Dcn. = Deacon, Doct. = Doctor of the Church, Ev. = Evangelist, K = King, M. = Monk, Myr. = Martyr, N. = Nun, P= Priest Po. = Pope, Q. = Queen, Vir. = Virgin, O.S.B. = Order of St. Benedict. O.C.O. = Order of the Cistercian Observance (Trappists), A= Abstinence, F = Fast, F & A = Fast and Abstinence*

NOTES

1. The Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: The title given to the Blessed Virgin Mary in her role as patroness of the Carmelite Order. The first Carmelites were hermits who lived in the Holy Land in the 12th & 13th centuries. St. Theresa of Lisieux, Doctor of the Church and one of the patrons of our community was a French Carmelite in the 19th century.

8.

We are always looking for benefactors to help financially with the animals. If you or someone that you know would like to help, simply mark your check “*for the animals*”. It will be gratefully received and deeply appreciated.

“Give us the tools, and we'll do the job ! “ - Winston Churchill

Please consider including our Animal Outreach and Rescue in your Estate Planning. Contact Sr. Mary Francis, O.S.B. For details.

Thank you



Br. Chip at the the 4th of July cook-out. . . and on the Feast of St Benedict on July 11th !

- photo by Br. Raymond

