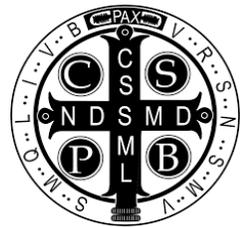


# The Meditation



*“ 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 15<sup>th</sup>, A.D. 2015 The Fourth Sunday in Lent ( Quadragesima-tide )



*Also called;*

**“ Rose Sunday, Refreshment Sunday, Laetare Sunday”**

*The Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Galatians ; (Chapter 4 , Verses 21-31 )*

**1928 Book of Common Prayer – Pages 130-131**  
**The Peoples Anglican Missal – Pages A112-A113**  
**St. Joseph Sunday Missal, (1958 edition) – Pages 396-397**

## SLAVERY or FREEDOM ?

It's not easy to try to make a useful, practical application of the Epistle for today but, as all Holy Scripture was written for our consolation and instruction, there must be a useful lesson in the message that St. Paul proclaims to us, and Holy Mother Church desires that we should profit from in today's Mass.

The situation presented to us in this portion of St. Paul's letter to the Galatians is clear. The Galatians had been led by some agitators, (most likely members of the Jewish rabbinical community in that city), to believe that they must be circumcised and observe the Law of Moses generally, in order that they be saved. St. Paul urges against this by saying, "If salvation cannot be secured except through circumcision and the Law, the Sacrifices of Christ have been in vain. That is unthinkable because the Blood of Christ has set men free."

The Christians of Galatia were being tempted to believe that Judaism was necessary for salvation, and therefore they should take upon themselves, the yoke of the Mosaic Law. Our Apostle argues that this would be the voluntary lapse of free men into slavery, and that it would imply that Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross at Calvary was a useless act. Surely, he argues, those who have tasted the sweetness of Christianity, and realized the joy of the union with Christ, will not deny the reality of the Spirit which is active within them, nor submit themselves to a soul-killing slavery that excludes all hope. St. Paul speaks from a deep personal experience in this.

We also know, like the Galatians, the joy of union with Christ, the peace of a good conscience, and the consolations of Christian hope. We too, are tempted to accept an allegiance other than that of Christ. Daily, and perhaps even hourly, forces within us, and all around us, are impelling us to give up the freedom and peace of God's service, and to accept the slavery of passion and vanity. Those who know not Jesus Christ have already easily succumbed ... and are not even aware... they bid our prayers, for we, still on our pilgrim journeys, should know that a slip can most often lead to a fall!

St. Paul, who knew the Jewish Law so very well, saw that same Law in many an instrument of sin, so that submission by the Galatians to that Law would have implied an enslavement to sin.

So, fundamentally, the question posed to the Galatians is posed to us as well. *Shall we give up the freedom which Christ purchased for us on the Cross, and accept enslavement to Satan and sin? Christian freedom means freedom from sin and from self-love. It means a rule of our higher selves over the lower. It means the power of self-control and it means the realization of strength and the joy which that realization gives.*

Christian freedom is the opposite of all license (immorality) and lawlessness. It's the glad and generous acceptance of law, the complete attuning of our own wills to God's Will, so that the imperatives of God's Law are loyally and spontaneously echoed in the will of the Christian. There is neither slavery nor compulsion in this attitude of our wills to God's Law, but instead, *reasonable service* and *supreme prudence*. God's Law holds no terror to the good, to them it seems almost to be a law which their own prudence has devised, enforced by their own wills. How upside-down the world must appear to the good Christian who follows this law! The world becomes its own restrictive prison by way of its attractions, pleasures, and so-called freedoms... so much so, that those who are captivated by the world, don't realize that they are prisoners serving a sentence that eventually will lead only to death and darkness.

### 3.

Again, the world bids our prayers, not because we are holy, but because we all live daily with our own battles that could easily undo us as well. “*Bear ye one anothers’ burdens...*”  
*Kyrie Eleison!*

## **FREEDOM PURCHASED FOR US BY CHRIST**

We are brought by grace, to a great freedom like this. Just as Hagar ( or Agar ), the slave-woman, was driven out, we must also drive out from our lives all that threatens the freedom which Christ purchased for us; all enslavement due to fear, weakness, human respect, worldly gains, and unseemly curiosity.

So, let us walk always according to the Spirit as free citizens of Christ’s Kingdom, rendering to our Lord the reasonable service of free men and women, clearly conscious of our duties as becomes our high rank and privileges! The utterance of the words: “*Civis Romanus sum*”. . . “*I am a Roman Citizen*”, in the days of St. Paul, brought all the great privileges that were allotted to that citizenship, wherever that person was in the known world. “*To be a Citizen of Christ*” brings us privileges that belong to another world, but will last eternally!

The Apostle has promised, to the “*freeman*” who walks according to the Spirit, the “*fruits of the Spirit*” which are; *Love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, loyalty, graciousness, and self-control*. “*Against such things,*” says the Apostle Paul, “*there is no law*” (*Galatians; Ch. 5, Vs. 22*). Battling against the “*fruits of the Spirit*” St. Paul pits the “*works of the flesh*” which are: “*fornication, uncleanness, profligacy, idolatry, witchcraft, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, self-seeking, factions, divisions, envyings, drunkenness, carousings, and similar things.*” (*Gal.; Ch. 5, Vs. 19-21*)

A comparison of these two lists should easily show us in which *Freedom*, and in which *Slavery* would appear.

Perhaps we can summarize the message that St. Paul offers us in today’s Epistle by contemplating the words of St. Augustine of Hippo:

“*...This is the road followed by the just and the saints, who had God for their Father and the Church for their Mother, and were faithful to both; rather, they went on steadily towards the eternal reward in the love of both parents . . . Because two parents gave us birth to death; and two brought us forth to life; Adam and Eve to death; Christ and His Church to life.*”

+ + +

**Prayer for the day:** “*I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart ; O do well unto thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word ; quicken thou me, according to thy word, O Lord.*

- *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:** *Give sentence with me, O God, and defend my cause against the ungodly people: O deliver my soul from the deceitful and wicked man : for thou art the God of my strength . . . O send out thy light and thy truth that they may lead me : and bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy dwelling-place.” - Psalm 43*

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*In these days, therefore, let us add something beyond the wonted measure of our service, such as private prayers and abstinence in food and drink. Let each one, over and above the measure prescribed for him, offer God something of his own freewill in the joy of the Holy Spirit. – St. Benedict: Rule, Ch. 49*

## Out on a Limb



By Br. Raymond A. Crowe, O.S.B.

### THE LENTEN FAST

Catholic Christians, during Lent, follow an obligation of fasting, the going without meals during the day. It's a continuation of the Jewish custom of taking a meal at sunset when fasting. Abstinence or avoiding certain foods was strictly adhered to almost heroic proportions. There were some disagreements, in the early years of Christianity, as to what could be consumed. Some abstained from eating things that lived on the earth, some avoided beasts with cloven hooves, and some ate only fish. No absolutely authoritative record was left so, it was generally accepted that the Apostles left each one to his or her own free will in the matter of the fast. The ancient Hebrew regimen was accepted as a guide, and so it came to be, that wine, flesh-meat, fish, eggs and foods made from milk (cheese and butter) were forbidden during the fast.

Those early ascetics living under a Rule ... who also lived primarily in the desert, found this regimen too severe, for they were required to be present at long choir offices as well as performing rigorous manual labors, no small thing in the desert heat. Monastic life developed, so did the fasting laws, so that from the ninth century onwards, dispensations for reasons of health became frequent for all: fish was allowed, and flesh-meat on Sundays was permitted. In the late Middle Ages to avoid breaking the monastic rule that the fast should not be broken until after the Mass which followed the Office of *None* ( the ninth hour as reckoned from sunrise, i.e. about 3 p.m.), this office was moved to midday, which is the reason why this hour is now called "noon" ( a Middle-English form of the word *None*) Monks were permitted a *collation*, a light evening meal, to prevent exhaustion. It was so-called because it was accompanied by the readings from John Cassian's Conferences (in Latin; *collationes*). This book was a record of his conversations with Egyptian desert hermits, and is a reading staple in all contemplative monastic houses. Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the other weekdays in Lent are the traditional days of discipline and self-denial and were a legal requirement throughout the Church Catholic.

## 6.

It's often quite difficult in secular society, for Catholic Christians to openly practice such acts of self-denial without appearing "*holier-than-thou*" or being considered as "*Kill-joys*" and "*Downers*" by those not familiar with such practices... which includes just about everyone today, even some who call themselves "Christians". Refusing to take business luncheons, or go to entertainments and other sacrifices during Lent may mark one as odd or open them to ridicule, but such times can also be *teaching opportunities*, that is, if the audience is receptive, or "open minded" as so many claim to be nowadays. Instead, many choose to increase their charitable *giving in their time or treasure*, or devote some *time to serious reading and study* groups, or spend what would normally be their *leisure time in prayer instead*. Whatever form this personal discipline may take, they are cautioned not to make it obvious, or parade it as a virtue. "*Rend your hearts and not your garments,*" cried Joel the Prophet. Jesus taught; "*When ye fast, anoint your forehead and wash your face, so that no one will know that ye fast, except your Father who sees all that is done in secret.*" (Matt. Ch. 6, Vss. 17-18).

Jesus related the parable of the Pharisee, who thanked God that he was not as other men because he fasted twice a week and gave away a tenth of his income, yet was inferior to the hated but humble tax-collector who could do no more than stand in the very back of the temple, beat his breast and exclaim:

"*God be merciful unto me, a sinner.*" (St. Luke; Ch. 18, Vs. 9-14).

In our hearts, we should all strive to be like the tax-collector!

### 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 Cannon 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!

*Br. Raymond A. Crowe is a monk of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory and a frequent contributor to the Meditation. Br. Raymond also serves the community as porter, watchman, photographer, and guestmaster to animal visitors and postulants.*

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](mailto:klamarre@maine.rr.com)

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

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

## PRIORY KALENDAR

### The Fourth Sunday in Lent (“Quadragesima-tide”)

Week of March 15<sup>th</sup> to March 22<sup>nd</sup> - A.D. 2015

**Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> Fourth Sunday in Lent ; ( Laetare Sunday).....** *Community Retreat Begins*  
**Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> . . . .Fast Day**  
**Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> . . . . Fast Day.....***comm St. Patrick, patron of Ireland, B & C. (5<sup>th</sup> cent.)*  
**Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> . Fast & Abst. ....***comm. St. Edward, K. & M.- England (10<sup>th</sup> cent.)*  
**Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> . . . Fast Day.....***St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*  
**Friday March 20<sup>th</sup> . . . Fast & Abstinence . . .***Vernal Equinox – Spring begins!.....comm. St. Cuthbert*  
**Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> . . . Feast of our Holy Father St. Benedict Patriarch of Monks & Nuns.**  
**Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> . . . PASSION SUNDAY – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent. -** *Community retreat continues*

**KALENDAR KEY:** Ab. = Abbot, Abs. = Abbess, Abp. = Archbishop, Anc. = Anchorite, Ans. = 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 Cannons 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

8.

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

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Wondering where Br. Chip is? He's been in his hermitage since Ash Wednesday, but has assured me that he will have something for the Meditation next week. His recent footprints at the back door may be telling us another story! Interesting. - Fr. K.L.L. +

P A X

*-Fr. Prior Kevin, Sr. Mary-Francis, and all at Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory.*