

The Epistle of the Day: 1st Epistle of St. Peter; Chapter 2 , Verses 19- 25

The 1928 Book of Common Prayer: Page 172

The People's Anglican Missal: Page C 16

St. Joseph Continuous Sunday Missal (1958 ed.): Page 496

SLAVES MADE BY LOVE

Today's Epistle was directed by St. Peter to a special class of Christians of his day: Christian slaves. It was intended to strengthen and console them by the example of their Master. It can also serve as the basis of an instruction on the duties of Catholic Christians in their various states of life, in any time . . . not just St. Peter's.

St. Peter lived during a period of history when the Roman Empire was at its height of power. Rome's armies had conquered and mastered most of the known world in the Mediterranean, and the areas not conquered by Rome were influenced by its policies for many hundreds of miles beyond Roman borders. Roman governance had brought a stability, unity, and prosperity to a large part of the world that had never been experienced before. Those who lived far removed from Roman lands also "*wanted in*" (to use a current phrase) on the great benefits of this prosperity. Trade with Rome is known to have extended all the way to India and China.

One of the realities that maintained Roman economic prosperity was the fact, that it was based upon a large labor force that was made up of slaves. Slaves represented a substantial portion of the residents within the Empire, and over time, many embraced Christianity; either through their own personal conversions, or the conversions of whole households in which the master and his wife converted. This meant the conversion of the rest of the home. The story of Cornelius the Centurion in the Acts of the Apostles (*Ch. 10*) is just one such example.

St. Peter knew very well the difficulty and the bitterness of the Christian slave's lot, yet the Apostle suggests no policy of protest, active resistance, or rebellion with the mistreated slaves. He urges them, instead, to show special loyalty in the performance of their slave-service; on the one hand, because such loyalty would increase the prestige of Christianity (love put into actions), and the other because loyal service by Christian slaves would imitate their Master, Jesus Christ. "*Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant (slave), and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*" (*Phil; Chap. 2, Vs. 6-8.*)

They are reminded that their God, became one of them, and even died the death of a slave, death upon a cross!

3.

It's a very sad fact, that in this 21st century, slavery still exists in parts of the world. Sadder still, is the fact that growing numbers of Christians have to practice their faith in surroundings in which they are despised, displaced, and even martyred simply because they are Christians. It's been stated before; these brothers and sisters of ours beg our prayers and sympathies. We are not really as removed from them as we may think, for even within our own sphere, it's become acceptable, even "fashionable" among certain so called; "*enlightened progressive elite*" to tear at, ridicule, and seek to rewrite Christian principals and morals. We bear our own burdens as Catholic Christians, in a world that has always sought to take its own course, with or without us; and so we must bear life's difficulties and duties. St. Peter's words hold a great lesson for all in whatever state of life they are in.

Christians must not waste their energies envying others who are better placed in the worldly things of life than themselves, whatever their place, position, rank or occupation may be. We should remain focused on the full performance of the duties that fall to each of us. This is the will of God, and such loyal performance of our duties can make our Christian vocations shine in a world that is slowly growing dimmer as it stumbles and searches for truth in all the wrong places. "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" (St. Matt. Chap.5, Vs.16).

The sincere and genuine Christian will not only carry out seriously and faithfully the duties of their state in life, they will also **avoid** all *envy, jealousy, and contentiousness*. They will **not** return evil for evil, nor seek satisfaction for every offence or insult. They will always remember that it is their duty and privilege to help make the Faith respected and honored, and will be constantly on guard, lest through any inaction or word of theirs "*the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.*" (I Timothy; Chap. 6, Vs.1).

Prayer for the day: "*Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for it becometh well the just to be thankful.*" - Psalm 33

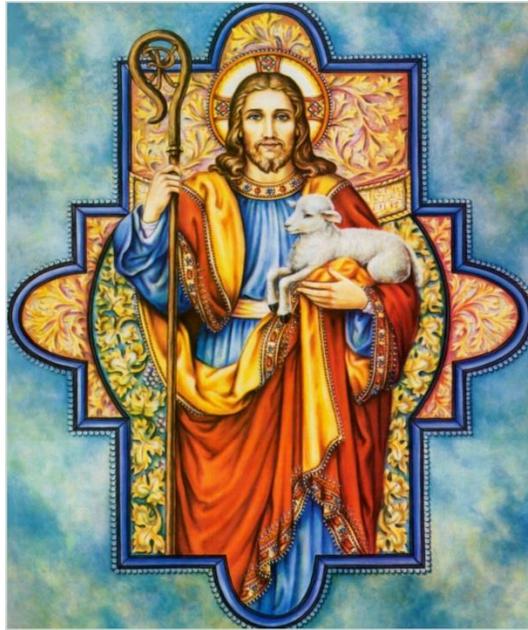


"I am the Good Shepherd"

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK: "*O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee.*" - Psalm 63

Feasts, Fasts, and Other Things

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY



The powerful image for an agrarian and pastoral society was that which depicted the Lord God as the caring shepherd. It was an Old Testament Christ, who like the boy, David, slew the lion and bear to protect his flock (*see I Samuel; Chap. Vs. 34-37*). The popular name for today is “**Good Shepherd Sunday**” because of the reference to Christ as the shepherd in both the Epistle and the Gospel for the day. The Epistle (from the First Epistle of St. Peter, says, “ *For ye were sheep gone astray ; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.* ” (*Ch 2, Vs 25*). Biblical scholars believe that this was probably an address initially made to Christian slaves, and was later included in conjunction with those who were newly baptised on Easter Eve. The Gospel, (from St. John), emphasizes the message by recounting the discourse by Jesus referring to Himself as the Good Shepherd.

The Second Sunday After Easter, in taking this theme, goes back to the meaning of the sacrifice of the Cross for, “ *The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.* ” (*St. John; Ch.10, Vs.11*). The Shepherd’s sole concern is for his flock ; there is no limit to His care for them or the sacrifice He will make for them. He will surrender His own life for their welfare. These are very strong yet implicit instructions, when viewed from the standpoint of the clergy, as to how they are to exercise their vocations with their people. *Instructors* and *candidates* for **Holy Orders** would do very well to study and think very hard on these words, for as shepherds of souls; *much will be asked and much will be expected*. The faint of heart, or those seeing the clerical state of life as ‘*easy employment*’ . . . need not apply.

5.

Christian art, in the earliest times, represented the Good shepherd in association with a sacrificing death, in contrast to the rather sentimental, modern associations that have grown up around the idea. The Christians of the second and third centuries, made crude drawings in the catacombs of Rome, of the Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep. A motif in the catacomb of Priscilla shows Christ accompanied by sheep, but bearing a goat on His shoulder, to emphasize that His care and devotion is for both those inside and outside the fold of the church.



Image of Christ as the Good Shepherd from the Catacomb of Priscilla in Rome, Italy

Christ is both the Shepherd and the sheep. He protects His flock, as the Shepherd, even giving His life for them and as the Sacrificial Lamb He takes the place of the sheep who would otherwise suffer, and He dies in order that they might live. Proof positive that the Catholic clerical state is not only one of sacrificing but sometimes *being* the sacrifice itself.

-Br. Chip, O.S.B.



A little less
talk, and a lot
more action!

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



6.

The Meditation is produced by the Benedictine Community of:

Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory
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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 Resumes on May 3rd! ☺
Mass commences at 9:00 a.m. followed by the Monastic Office of Terce.

PLEASE NOTE ALSO: There are No public restrooms so please plan accordingly.

PRIORY KALENDAR

Week of April 19th to April 26th - A.D. 2015

Sunday, April 19th ... 2nd Sunday After Easter – “Good Shepherd Sunday”

Monday, April 20th

Tuesday, April 21st ... St. Anselm; B.C.D. *O.S.B. – 12th century England*

Wednesday, April 22nd ... Bl. Maria Gabriella; *Cistercian Nun - 20th century, Italy.* (See Note 1)

Thursday, April 23rd ... St. George; *Myr. 4th cent. Patron Saint of England*

Friday, April 24th

Saturday, April 25th ... St. Mark, *Evangelist & Myr. 1st cent. Alexandria*

Sunday, April 26th 3rd Sunday After Easter

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.

7.

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 1

“I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine . . . And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd.” (St. John; Chap. 10, Vs 14)

Wednesday, April 22nd



1914 -1939

A Roman Catholic Cistercian Nun who dedicated herself and her vocation to unity. She was born and raised in Dorgali, Sardinia. Maria was remembered as a headstrong but very pious child. She entered the Cistercian order in at age 20 in 1934 and struggled with her vocation, always living in fear that she was never “good enough” to be a Cistercian contemplative. Sensing a deep call to pray for Christian unity she died in 1939 of tuberculosis. Answering our Lord’s call for unity, her community of Grottaferrata, a Trappistine monastery outside of Rome, Italy, developed a special and lasting friendship with the Anglican Benedictine Monks at Nashdom Abbey in England.



Beatified by His Holiness Pope John Paul II on January 23, 1983, Blessed Maria was also declared patron of Unity

8.

Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory holds Blessed Maria Gabriella as one of our patrons, for we too, dedicate ourselves to unity between Anglo-Catholics and Roman Catholics through, prayer, dialogue and working together, that our Lord's command:

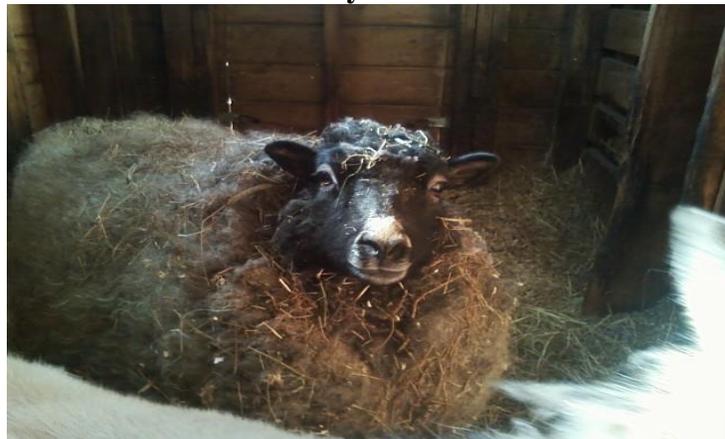
UT UNAM SINT
"That they may all be one"

...be one day fulfilled.

Animal News

... Speaking of sheep...!

Woolly Willow



Newly sheared Willow and Buttercup, the goat



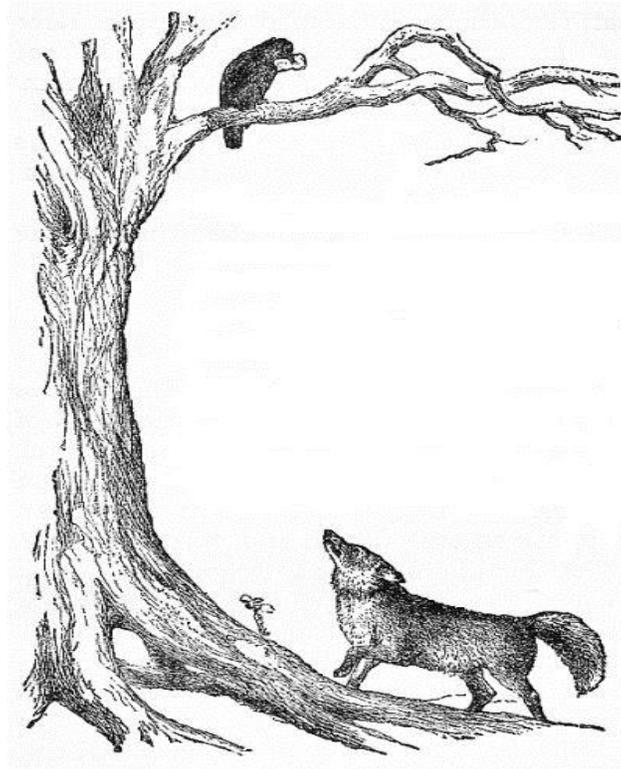
Willow, our resident sheep got her annual haircut and pedicure this week. She now feels light and beautiful again and has left Buttercup, our goat, wondering who her new roommate is.

9.

Willow is a Shetland sheep, which is a small breed, who came to us years ago, horribly abused, with her sister, Nuit. Nuit died of old age last year, and Willow just keeps on keeping on. A great lesson for us all and another sign of spring as the snow melts. These are some of the animals that you have saved and keep alive with your kind generosity.....They say thank youand so do we!

Happy Spring from the farm!

- *Sr. Mary Francis, O.S.B.*



Br. Raymond brings Francis Fox a bit of lunch

P A X