

The Meditation

Quinquagesima Sunday -A.D. 2016



Jesus heals the blind man at Jericho - 1650

Painting by Nicolas Poussin (1594 -1665)

French Classic Baroque painter

The Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth ; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Charity is love, not all love is charity.

-St. Thomas Aquinas

The word *Charity* is used extensively in both the Collect and the Epistle for today. A Theological Dictionary defines Charity: "In the New Testament, charity, *caritas* – is usually the term for love in general, primarily it is the love of God for mankind, but also the love of man, one for another, and for God. It is a fundamentally distinctive mode of love, since it is realized by the Spirit of God."

Love is eternal, because God, who is love, is Himself eternal, and He has made us eternal. Once we have given ourselves to Him, He delivers us from all that is corruptible. We become love *in the radiance of His love*; a love which will last forever . . . a continuous state of happiness which will consist in loving and being loved by the eternal God.

Holy Mother Church, in just a few days, will remind us that amidst the progression and the changes of this mortal life, one thing is certain: "**Remember O man, that dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.**" Neither science, nor the power of nations, nor all the riches of the world can change this one *unalterable fact*. Life can be extended, life support can buy a little time, but an end comes to all that live; even Lazarus, the beloved friend whom Jesus raised from the dead, at a point in time, returned to the dead.

The human race is one with creation. The Lord has said the heavens and earth will one day pass away. All that we possess in this life is merely on loan to us and sooner or later it will all fail us. We shall die and be laid in the ground, as were all who preceded us, and into the ground we shall return to the same dust from which God first drew Adam. God fashioned us with loving hands, for it was from that body, as it was modeled, that His Word would one day be made flesh. God, in the formation of Adam, formed His own Son who, after the Fall of our race, would restore it.

God loved Adam too well to condemn him to eternal death. The soul that He breathed into him was, of its nature immortal and, by its union with God, was destined to everlasting happiness. God endowed that soul, which flowed directly from Himself into Adam, with the love that was within Himself. All creation is an expression of God's love, and praises Him in its own particular way. Only mankind and the Angels praise Him and know Him in a way that is unique from all the rest of creation.

Now, mankind is not great because it holds a special place in God's creation, (although we may think it so!). Mankind is great because we know what we love and are capable of loving it. God's love, from the moment of creation, stands before each soul giving and asking. When that

3.

soul accepts it and gives its own in return, all that is not of God ceases to be of interest, and that soul knows itself to be a citizen of immortality, *above and beyond* even death itself.

The *self* no longer counts, and it stands, overwhelmed and ecstatic by the thought that God's love is in extent and depth equal to its being. It is then that Divine and human love meet, and from the melting of the two, one into the other, comes a fuller realization of *eternity*.

We join in with St. Paul's great hymn to love in today's Epistle. (*I Corinthians; Ch.13, Vss. 1-13*) We know that even if we slip back, and lose the feeling of Christ's Presence, our love is something higher and deeper than just mere feeling. Our love for Jesus is eternal so when we are given to suffering, we feel no resentment. We grow in hope. We bear all patiently because we are firmly established in the royalty of the love of the King of Kings. His Word and Holy Sacraments are His gifts to us, in order that we may remain strong, and in the event of a slip, they will help us regain our footing and persevere towards perfection.

The love of our Heavenly Father is all-merciful. He gives us His Son who took away the sins of the world. The Holy Ghost bears everything and holds us in His embrace so that we may always feel and know of the love of the Father and the Son.

Our faith placed within the love of the Blessed Trinity, becomes experience. All our hopes disappear in the fulfilment of desire, *but* we will never finish with love * because God's eternal love, has purified us that we too, have become love which will last forever.

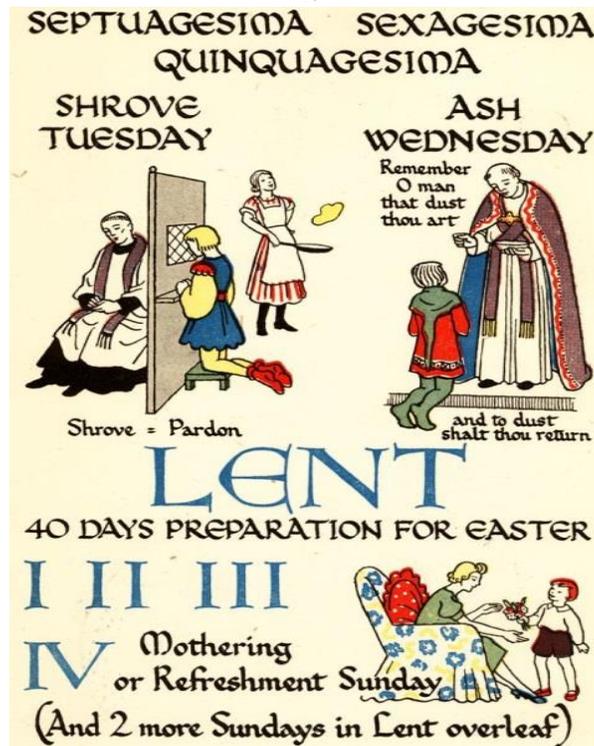
As we contemplate our preparations and plans for spiritual betterment and purification for this up-coming Lent, an important thing might be to focus on those things that distract and draw us away from the Divine Love in which all Christians souls seek to unite ,during their journey which is called life. . . a journey that even if it should last a hundred years, is still all too short a time.



**Jesus healing the Blind man at Jericho
From a late 12th century English manuscript.**

* "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." (*I Cor. Ch. 13, Vs. 8*).

4.



The Meditation is an on-line apostolate of **Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory** in Raymond, Maine. We are Anglo-Catholic Benedictine contemplative community that follows the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, the Father of Western monasticism. We are affiliated within the Diocese of the Northeast of the Anglican Church in America (ACA), a member of the worldwide Traditional Anglican Communion.

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In respect to our contemplative vocation and the animals in our rescue and rehab center, we do not have guest facilities and do not receive visitors during the winter months.

Fr. Prior Kevin is always available to hear confessions by appointment.

Visit our Webpage at: www.ourladyofsevensorrows.org



A point to ponder while standing at the Gate of Lent

“You can find a great deal of nonsense, written by people who should know better, urging the sincere seeker after perfection to play down the “negative aspects” of Christianity, and to stress the “positive values” more. Such advice, however well meant, betrays a distressing lack of understanding about some

5.

rather elementary notions. The “negative” in Christian ascetics resembles the negative in photography: i.e., the only known means of producing the *positive*. There is no doubt that we need to speak and write about the life of grace, the pure love of God, the liturgy, the sacramental system, etc. People can never hear too much about such topics, but remember this: barring a miracle that God has promised to no man, one cannot secure these “positive values” for oneself simply by reading, hearing or even meditating about them. A Christian needs self-denial, renunciation, and penance to purify himself, to possess them truly, and to make them realities in his own life. Only in proportion as he is thus purified will God’s grace work its marvels in him, in other words, unless we courageously embrace the “negative” practices of Christian abnegation, we may come to know abstractly the “positive” values set before us, but we will never actually achieve them.”

Excerpted from: Points worth Pondering by Br. Edwin, F.S.C. Bruce Pub. 1961. Chap. II : *Some Christian Axioms*

Priory Kalendar
For the week of February 7th to February 14th - A.D. 2016
In Septuagesima-Tide and Lent

Sunday, February 7th . . . Quinquagesima Sunday... *comm. St. Romauld, founder of Camaldolese Order, 10th cent. Italy.*

Monday, February 8th*feria in Septuagesima-tide.*

Tuesday, February 9thSt. Cyril of Alexandria ; *B.C.Doct. 5th cent. Shrove Tuesday*

Wednesday, February 10th . . . **ASH WEDNESDAY - Lent Begins ; Fast & Abstinence**

Thursday, February 11thSt. Scholastica - (*Feast transferred from Feb. 10th.*)

Friday, February 12th*feria in Lent**comm. St. Benedict Biscop*.....*fast & Abstinence*

Saturday, February 13th*feria in Lent*.....*comm. St. Kentigern*.....*fast day.*

Sunday, February 14th .. **Quadragesima Sunday : (1st Sunday in Lent) - great Litany at Mass sung**

CALENDAR 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, Mat. = Matron, M. = Monk, **M.M. = Month’s Mind (30 day requiem for the recently departed)**, Myr. = Martyr, N. – Nun, Obl. = Oblate, P. = Priest, P. or Po. = Pope, Pr. = Prior, Prs. = Prioress, R. = Recluse, **RM = Requiem Mortorum, (monthly requiem of the departed)**, Q. = Queen, Ven. = Venerable, Vir. = Virgin, W. = Widow.

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

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), OS.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.

Animal News from the Priory



“ From the rising of the sun to its setting, the Name of the Lord is to be praised”
Opening Verse for Vespers – Cistercian Office.

The “winter” weather, here in Maine has been more spring like and is quite confusing to the animals both wild and domestic. The lakes and ponds are relatively free of ice so fishing derbies have been cancelled. We have heard fishers singing their blood curdling “song” in the early evening, and spring birds have their own songs that they gladly share from their sunny perches during the day. The horses and dogs have been shedding and Joseph, the horse, is already enjoying the mud baths in his back yard spa. Poor Puxatony Phil even suffered the annual “snatch and grab” from the well-dressed humans to predict an early Spring. I am a farmer so I take notice of these signs from nature and her creatures but, I am also a Mainer and realize the colossal punch that February and March are quite capable of delivering. Either way, we are enjoying our winter in Maine and all that it entails. Hang on to your hats and be happy!

Thank you to those of you who have been generously helping our animals this winter. We are grateful to our Animal Angels for all you do for so many animals. There are so many animals out there that need help and with YOUR help we can care for some of them. Thank you for making life better for the ones we can save, for giving them a life. God bless you all.



Joseph in the snow... or ... This is how *We Roll* at the Priory!

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

7.

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He was only a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But I have made him my friend, and now he is unique in all the world...

You become responsible, forever,
for what you have tamed.

