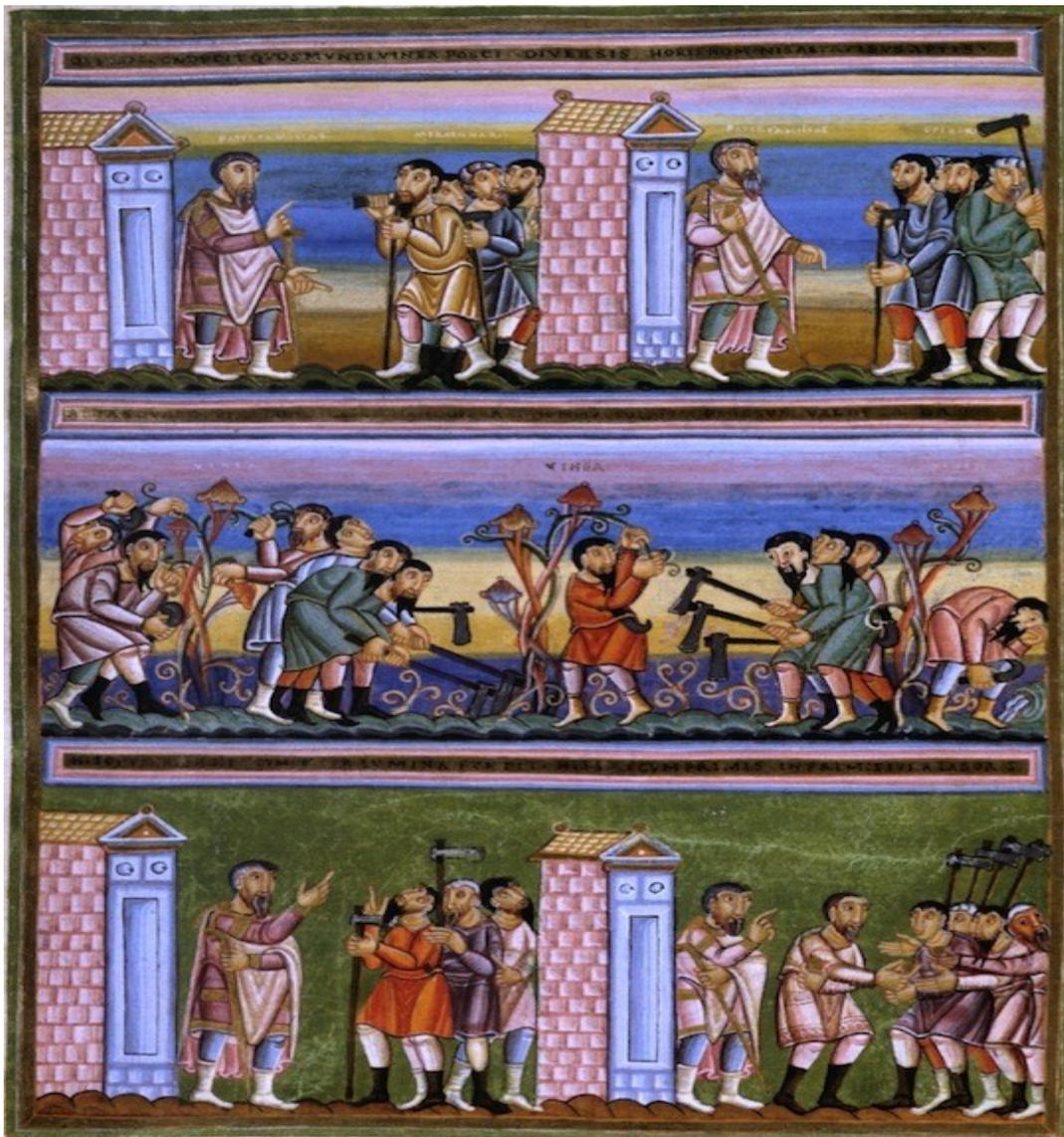


February 16th , A.D. 2014
Septuagesima Sunday

Meditation

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew; Chapter, 20 Verses 1 - 16.

(1928 Book of Common Prayer, Pages 119 - 120)
(The People's Anglican Missal, Pages A 53 – A 53)
(St. Joseph's Continuous Sunday Missal, Pages 289 - 290)



*Parable of the Landowner: illumination from the **CODEX AUREUS EPTEMACENSIS** (c. 1040)
Abbey of Echternach, Luxembourg.*

2.)

Gospel Meditation Summary: Jesus compares His Church to a vineyard to which He constantly invites workers. All receive the same wage whether they work little or long.

“ I will love thee, O Lord my strength : The Lord is my stony rock, my fortress, and my Savior.” - (Psalm 18)

I AM GENEROUS

Today's Gospel account is rendered to us in the form of a parable. In this parable, we can recognize Our Lord as the landowner who has a vineyard that needs to be tended by many laborers, if it is to bear good fruit. The Landowner (Our Lord), hires workers and agrees with them on a just wage for their days' labors. Throughout the day, new laborers are hired. In the evening they are all paid . Those who have worked all day object to being paid the same wage as those who have just come to work before quitting time. The Landowner says to them: *“Friend, I do thee no wrong : didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way : Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own ? Is thine eye evil, because I am good ?“* (i.e, Are you jealous, because I am generous?)

Jesus, of course is talking about His Church and our lives in His Church today. Why do the workers object to the Landowner giving the same wage to all? Could it be that they lose sight of Him whose work they are doing? Christ hires them. He works through them. He will pay them. The pay will far exceed the value and the amount of work done, whether it be all day, all of life, or just a short amount of time. *“ I am good ”*(I am generous), Jesus says.

Work in the vineyard of Christ, that is, *His Church*, is religion. The grumbling workers think religion is mainly for themselves. Jesus is trying to tell them (and us) that it is for *God*. Or, perhaps it is more exact to say that religion is both Christ's *and* our work together. It is our working for Him. It is spreading His kingdom. Christ once took our human form from Mary, so that he spoke with the tongue and the mouth that He received from her and did all those other blessed acts with the body she gave Him ... a human body which enclosed the Divine. Now, He wants to use us - our bodies, our hearts, our beings – in which to build up His Church.

By being a good worker in His vineyard, we can do *His* will; and in doing His will, we will in turn, bring Him more and more into our lives to perfect us. Redemption then becomes very personal to each of us.

Let us not think too much about becoming perfect at this juncture. We would do better if we were to think about Christ, and about the task of developing His Vineyard, and helping Him to bring in more members. Thoughts of our personal perfection can, for now, be absorbed in love for Jesus. If we have Him and His cause, His Kingdom, as our one great concern in life, then we shall be saved from any such foolish pitfalls as being jealous of those whom He calls late in life to membership in His Church and then eternal life.

St. John of the Cross offers a wise counsel to those who desire instruction in working the vineyard: *“ If thou wilt be perfect, sell thy will and give it to the poor in spirit ; come to Christ through meekness and humility ; and follow Him to Calvary and the grave. ”*

True love for Jesus will make us happy that He has acquired more workers to develop His Vineyard, and build up more love for Him.

3.)

Now, all this sounds very good in theory, but we know as frail and fallible human beings; “ *The sorrows of death compassed me, the pains of hell gat hold upon me*” (Ps. 18). This is the reality of our lives as Christians in a harsh and hostile world. The heat of the day... the temptations...the resistance to Christ's way of thinking from within each of us, and from without, all point to the vastness of the work that needs be done.

○ Lord Jesus, what can we do ? “ *In my affliction, I made my prayer unto the Lord, and he regarded my supplication out of the holy temple. I will love thee, O Lord my strength : The Lord is my stony rock, my fortress, and my deliverer.*” (Introit Psalm – Psalm 18).

Enter the vineyard feet first ... it's the only way. Then, one foot at a time, with the Lord at our side to support us, let us begin the day's labors in humble abandonment to the Owner of the Vineyard. That too, is the only way.

Prayer for the Day: Go ye also into the vineyard, and I will give you what is just.



The parable of the Landowner and the Workers in the Vineyard - from an old woodcut image.

“ *Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord : Lord hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well ; the voice of my complaint ; If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss ; O Lord, who may abide it ? For there is mercy with thee : Therefore shalt thou be feared.* ” (Tract Psalm for the day, Psalm 130)

“ *Blessed is the man that endureth.*”

4.)

A Prayer for the Week

O Lord God, thou just Judge, strong and patient, Thou knowest what I know not ; and therefore under all reproof I ought to humble myself, and to endure meekly. Forgive me then of Thy mercy whenever I have not so borne myself, and when again trial comes, grant me the grace of fuller endurance.

And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. - Hebrews; Ch. 6, Vs. 15

*If call'd like Abraham's child to climb
The hill of sacrifice,
Some angel may be there in time -
Deliverance shall arise !*

*Or, if some darker lot be good,
Oh, teach us to endure
The sorrow, pain, or solitude
That makes the spirit pure !*

- W.F. Irons

To endure and to pardon is the wisdom of life.

- al Koran (8th cent.)

A tree is shown by its fruit, and in the same way those who profess to belong to Christ will be seen by what they do. For what is needed is not mere present profession, but perseverance to the end in the power of faith.

- St. Ignatius of Antioch (2nd cent.)

He greatly deceives himself who thinks that prayer perfects one without perseverance and obedience.

- St. Francis de Sales (17th cent.)



Jesus teaching in parables

5.)

Feasts, Fasts, and Other Things **Septuagesima-tide, or Pre-Lent**

The Season of *Septuagesima – Tide* comprises the three weeks immediately preceding Lent. It forms one of the principal divisions of the Liturgical Year, and is itself divided into three parts, each part corresponding to a week: The first is called *Septuagesima*; the second, *Sexagesima*; the third, *Quinquagesima*. *Septuagesima* itself is the ninth Sunday before Easter.

All three are named from their principal numerical reference to Lent, which in the language of the Church is called *Quadragesima* – that is, *Forty* – because the great feast of Easter is prepared for by the *holy* exercises of *Forty Days*. The names of *Quinquagesima*, *Sexagesima*, and *Septuagesima*, tell us of the same great solemnity as looming in the distance, and as being the great object towards which the Church would have us now begin to turn all our thoughts, and desires, and devotion.

The Feast of Easter must be prepared for by a forty-days' recollected-ness and penance. These forty-days are one of the principal seasons of the Liturgical Year, and one of the most powerful means employed by the Church for exciting in the hearts of her children the spirit of their Christian vocation. It is of the utmost importance, that such a Season of penance should produce a work within our souls – the renovation of the whole spiritual life. The Church, therefore, has instituted a preparation for the holy time of Lent. She gives us the three weeks of *Septuagesima-tide*, during which she withdraws us, as much as may be possible, from the noisy distractions of the world, in order that our hearts may be more readily impressed by the solemn warning she is to give us, at the commencement of Lent, by marking our foreheads with ashes.

Septuagesima is today inaugurated in the *Roman Martyrology* by the words: “*Septuagesima Sunday, on which the canticle of the Lord, Alleluia, ceases to be said.*” On the Saturday proceeding, both the *Roman Breviary* and *The Anglican Breviary* (see the rubrics on page 400 of the *Anglican Breviary, for those who may have one.*) notes that after the “*Benedicamus*” of Vespers two Alleluias are to be added, and that henceforth it is to be omitted till Easter, and in its place “*Laus tibi Domine*” (*Praise be to Thee, O Lord*) is to be said at the beginning of the Office.

The 'farewell to the Alleluia' was last week's topic in this column and was written about in great detail, so we won't repeat ourselves on that interesting subject, but continue to delve into some of the interesting facts about *Septuagesima-tide*. We'll continue with what changes come in the liturgy at this time.

The sweet angelic hymn; *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, which we have sung every Sunday since the birth of our Saviour in Bethlehem, is also taken from us; it is only on the feasts of the Saints which may be kept during the week that we shall be allowed to repeat it.

The Night Office (of Vigils) of the Sunday is to lose also, from now till Easter, its magnificent Ambrosian hymn, the *Te Deum*.

At the end of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the deacon will no longer dismiss the faithful with his solemn *Ite Missa est'* (*Depart in Peace*), but he will simply invite them to continue with their prayers in silence with *Benedicamus Domino'* (*Let us Bless the Lord*) ... the God of mercy, who bears with us, despite our sins.

6.)

In both the *Roman Missal (The Traditional Use, a.k.a. Extraordinary Use)* and *The Anglican Missal(s)** we find that after the *Gradual* prayer of the Mass, instead of the thrice repeated *Alleluia*, which prepared our hearts to listen to the voice of God in the Holy Gospel, we shall hear a mournful and protracted chant, called on that account, the *Tract*.

The eye too, will teach us that the season we are entering into is one of mourning and penance. The Church will vest her ministers (both on Sundays and on the days in the week which are not feasts of Saints) in the sombre **Purple**. Until *Ash Wednesday*, the Church permits the deacon to wear his dalmatic, and the subdeacon his tunic; but from that day forward, they must lay aside these vestments of joy, for Lent will then have begun and our holy mother will inspire us with the deep spirit of penance, and suppressing everything of joy and pomp which she loves at other seasons, to bring into the sanctuary of Almighty God.

No one is quite sure why *Septuagesima* Sunday bears that name. Literally, *Septuagesima* means: “seventieth” in Latin, but contrary to common error, it isn't 70 days before Easter at all, but only 63. One of the most likely explanations is that *Septuagesima Sunday* and *Sexagesima Sunday* simply derived their names from *Quinquagesima* Sunday, which is 49 days before Easter, or 50 if you include Easter. *Quinquagesima* means ‘fiftieth’.

In any case, it was common for early Christians to begin the Lenten fast immediately after Septuagesima Sunday. Just as Lent today begins 46 days before Easter, since Sundays are never a day of fasting, so in the early Church, Saturdays and Thursdays were considered fast-free days. In order to fit in 40 days of fasting before Easter, therefore, the fast had to start two weeks earlier.

The naming of these Sundays found their way over to England in the Middle Ages as the various diocesan liturgies at first, drew much of their liturgical practices from the Continent, a by-product of Anglo-Norman inter-action in the 11th & 12th centuries, and then evolved into their own localized “uses”. Major cities in Medieval England such as York, Lincoln, Hereford, Bangor, & Salisbury (to name the more noted) over time developed distinctive uses, that distinguished one from another as well as those on the Continent ... but *All* were in concert with one another in the essence of liturgical worship.

So, we today, have received this wonderful, little, but important *Pre-Lenten Season* by way of the great Salisbury or *Sarum Use*. It is interesting to note that in the *Sarum Use* the three Sundays are often referred or listed by their numbers in place of their names. So, *Septuagesima* becomes **LXX**, *Sexagesima*, **LX**, and *Quinquagesima*, **L**. Here at Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory, our Kalendar draws heavily from the Medieval Sarum Use, so you will see this placement, especially in the case of brevity.

The compilers of the first *Book of Common Prayer* in 1549, saw the theological wisdom in retaining this aspect of the Medieval liturgy of the Church, and so it has come down to Traditional Anglicans in the pages of the *1928 Book of Common Prayer* as well as the various *Anglican Missals* that use the Prayer Book as their primary source.

7.)

Sadly, in 1969 the names of *Septuagesima*, *Sexagesima*, & *Quinquagesima* were removed from the Roman Liturgy in the Mass of Pope Paul VI, called *The Novus Ordo*. It is only in those places where the Traditional or ***Tridentine (Latin) Mass*** is celebrated that these venerable names still appear. The removal of these Sundays from their important place within the Universal Calendar and their placement into the Sundays of “ Ordinary Time” is a great loss to the Church, when one understands the history and the theology behind them. These three Sundays before the “official start’ of Lent are in NO WAY ordinary. Let us wisely put these three Sundays to our good use in preparing for Lent of 2014, and let us also pray for their return one day to the Church Universal.



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

* There are various editions of the Anglican Missal in use by Traditional Anglo-Catholic dioceses, parishes, and religious houses; **The Anglican Missal - American Edition, The American Missal, & The Missale Anglicanum (a.k.a. “The Knott Missal”)** to name just a few.



8.)

**Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory
4 Shaw Road
Raymond, Maine 04071**

**PLEASE NOTE: PUBLIC SUNDAY MASSES WILL RESUME IN THE SPRING.
CONVENTUAL MASSES ONLY FOR THE WINTER.**

CALENDAR

Holy days and Saints days for the week of **February 16th** to **February 23rd**, A.D. 2014 as observed at the Priory.



The householder said unto the laborers: Why stand you here all the day idle? But they answered and said unto him: Because no man hath hired us. Go ye also into my vineyard. I will give you what is just.

- Antiphon upon Magnificat –Second Vespers of Septuagesima

Septuagesima aka: LXX

Sunday, February 16th... Septuagesima (LXX) - “ Pre- Lenten Season” begins today.

Monday, February 17th**Month's Mind (note 1.)**

Tuesday, February 18thSt. Simeon, Bp. & Myr. (1st cent.)...Comm. St. Mary Bernard Soubirous, V. (19th cent.)

Wednesday, February 19th ..*Commemoratio* ; “ **S. Benedicti in spinis** “ within Benedictine Order. (**note 2.**)

Thursday, February 20th ... *Establishment of the Camaldolese Congregation of Monte Corona, Italy, 1558*

Friday, February 21st **last day in which LXX can fall**

Saturday, February 22nd Saturday of Our Lady, Mary.comm St. Peter's Chair in Rome.

Sunday, February 23rd --- Sexagesima (LX)

KEY: *Ab.* = Abbot, *Ap.* = Apostle, *Bp.* = Bishop, *C. or Conf.* = Confessor, *Dcn.* = Deacon, *Doct.* = Doctor of the Church, *M.* = Monk, *Myr.* = Martyr, *P=* Priest *Po.* = Pope, *Vir.* = Virgin,

NOTE (s):

1.) Month's Mind : Monthly day of remembrance for our blessed dead through Mass & prayer.

2.) Commemoration of the victory of our Holy Father St. Benedict when he overcame the tempter by casting himself into a bush of briars to extinguish the fires of lust that had repeatedly been sent him by the devil to try to make him break his vow of chastity. (**Second Book of Dialogues** of Pope Gregory the Great)

9.)

MISCELLENEA:

THE ANIMALS: We are always looking for benefactors to help us with the upkeep of the animals in our care. No amount is too small and each little bit helps us keep these animals, who are worthy of a life, alive and happy. We are grateful for our animal angels as are our animals. If you would like to help, or know of someone who would. please send your donation to the address above marked “For the animals” Thank you !



Winter I – by Abel Grimmer, Flemish, c. 1610.

Abel Grimmer is noted for painting many rural scenes of his day, giving us a glimpse into early 17th century life. His style seems to include a bit of whimsy within each painting! - Fr. k.l.l. +

P J X

