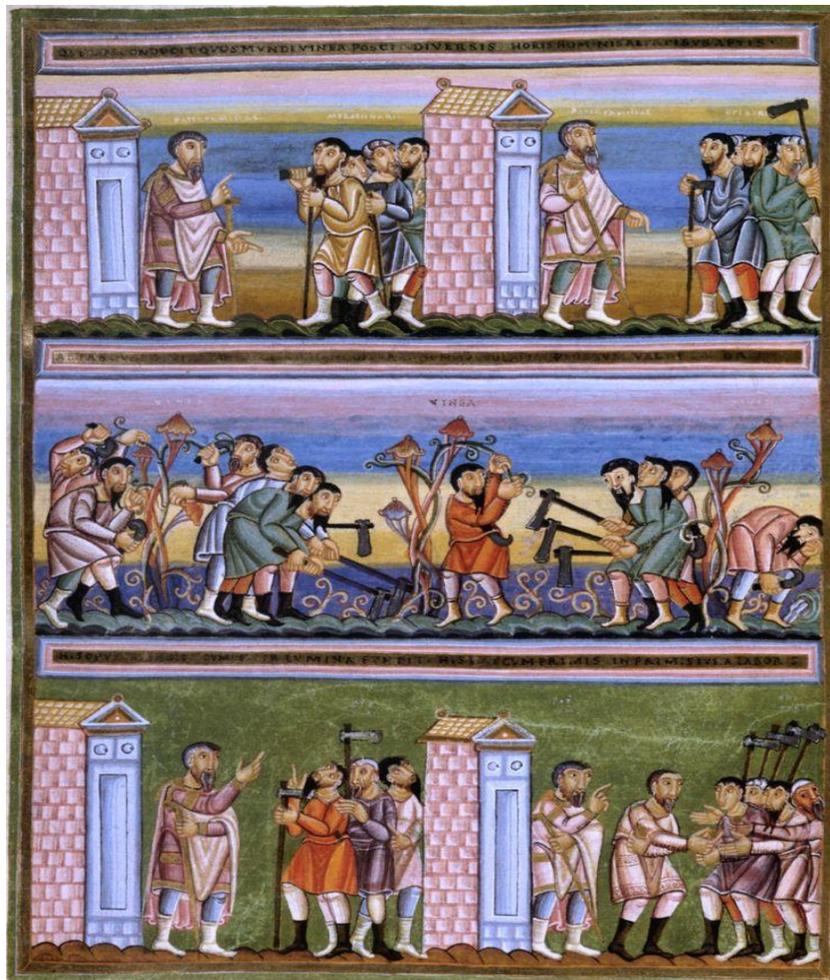


# The Meditation

## Septuagesima Sunday -A.D. 2016



The Parable of the Workers  
Sunday Gospel for Septuagesima  
Artwork from an 11<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine codex

## Collect for Septuagesima Sunday

**O** Lord, we beseech thee favorably to hear the prayers of thy people ; that we, who are justly punished for our offenses, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name ; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

The Collect for today, is a very appropriate one for our entry into the pre-Lenten season. It is a petition to our Lord, to hear our prayers despite our inherent sinfulness. There are, without a doubt, many directions that could be taken when contemplating the motivations that can result in sin. Let's look at it from the beginning...from the point of *Original Sin*. We'll start with some words from St. James: "*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*" (St. James; Chap. 1, Vss. 13-15) Let's be clear that when St. James uses the word *lust*, he is going beyond just the sensual aspect, he's also including those egotistic desires for power, riches, position, recognition, etc. The words of St. James apply to original sin as well. John Milton, the 17<sup>th</sup> century English poet wrote of original sin, that it: "*brought death into the world and all our woe.*"

St. James continues: "*Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*" *i.e.* ("with whom there can be no change, no swerving from his course" – from the Vulgate translation for clarity.) - St. James; Ch. 1, Vss 16 & 17.

Unswerving love has but one plan and that plan is salvation, as St. Paul calls it. Its single desire is *to save and to sanctify mankind*. The Creator is an absolute monarch to whom his creatures are bound in submission. Proceeding from the Creator through time and at a time of his choosing, His creatures must return to Him in eternity; a return which is *eternal salvation*. God's wisdom asks nothing of mankind but obedience and submission. "*Non serviam*" "I will not serve" are words of great and eternal folly. The unchangeable Creator respects His created, the free will which He gave to mankind when He made us in His own image and likeness, He abides by. The choice is ours, it always has been. The caveat: We should choose wisely.

Mankind yielded to temptation which came to him from within; from its own desire for knowledge and power. St. Augustine wrote: "*The devil could have not tempted man, had not his heart been already full of pride.*" How those words speak volumes about the character and history of our species! Creation became slave to sin and would have remained enslaved had not Christ renewed our race by taking upon Himself the form of a slave and a victim. Christ gave us back our kingly priesthood, and in Him all of humanity rendered to Almighty God, the honor and submission which was (and is) His due.

Blaise Pascal, a 17<sup>th</sup> century theologian and *savant*, stated that were it not for the darkest of all mysteries (the mystery of original sin) man would be an unsolvable riddle to himself. Original sin shook creation to its core. Creation denied itself in denying God and refusing to obey Him. Henceforth mankind is divided. Nature and grace are no longer one; body and soul and all their powers are at war with one another. We have lost our innocence and we became wanderers.

### 3.

St. Paul gives us a clear account of his own personal experience: “*But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*” (Romans; Chap. 7, Vs. 23) He also says: “*It is not the good my will prefers, but the evil my will disapproves, that I find myself doing*” (Rom. Ch. 7, Vs. 19... *again from the Vulgate translation for clarity.*) He writes to the Galatians: “*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary one to the other.*” (Galatians; Ch. 5, Vs 17).

We (mankind) all have a share in Adam’s fall: his sin is ours, and it’s important that we realize this. St. Bonaventure ( another great theologian and Doctor of the Church), said: “*He who does not know he has fallen will not give himself much trouble to rise.*”

We all have a share too, in Adam’s punishment, the natural inclination to sin, and fear of effort. Our continual falling away from God has been checked by Jesus Christ, who of His goodness raises us up. Our wills still work against us which should neither surprise nor discourage us. Our Lord allows this in order that we may turn ourselves with our whole hearts to Him for help and protection. This shows what we are capable of when left to ourselves and our own merits, and what we owe to the mercy of Him who took our sins upon Himself. St. Augustine of Hippo says that God, knowing the abuse man would make of his free will, draws good from evil, using as his instrument the one who does the evil. Thus God’s good will is not thwarted by mankind’s ill will, over which God triumphs by His almighty power.

Contemplating how much trouble our wills can get us into is a good start in the process of formulating our up-coming Lenten journeys. Today’s Collect sums everything up quite succinctly. We are all sinners, who will have to give account of all the rights and wrongs that we have done one day. That should not prevent any one of us from offering prayer and petition for the love and mercy of Jesus Christ, whose own journey we will soon share, a journey that He made for all sinners for all times. It is *the* journey that returns us all to our heavenly Father and His love.

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January 18<sup>th</sup> - January 25<sup>th</sup>

## **The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – 2016**



Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,  
Lead Thou me on!  
The night is dark, and I am far from home—  
Lead Thou me on!  
Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see  
The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

(John Henry Newman)

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## A Regal Visitor



**On the first day of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we are visited by a Cardinal!  
His Excellency remained with us all day.**

*(Photo by Fr. Kevin)*

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 in the Anglican Church in America, a member of the worldwide Traditional Anglican Communion.

The Meditation is a weekly on-line offering sent out free of charge to anyone who desires to receive it.

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**In regard 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.**

### Priory Kalendar

For the week of January 24<sup>th</sup> to January 31<sup>st</sup> - A.D. 2016  
In Septuagesima-Tide

Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup> . . . . . Septuagesima . . . *Pre-Lenten Season Begins.*

Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup> . . . . . Conversion of St. Paul....*Week of Prayer for Christian Unity concludes today.*

Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup> . . . . . St. Polycarp ; B & Myr. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cent.

Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> .. St. John Chrysostom; Bp. C. Doct. 4<sup>th</sup> cent.

Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup> . . . . . St. Amadeus; Ab. O. Cist, 12<sup>th</sup> cent.....*Keys of Lent*

Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup> . . . . . St. Francis de Sales ; B.C. Doct. 17<sup>th</sup> cent.

Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup> . . . . . St. Batildis ; Q. later Abs. OSB 6<sup>th</sup> cent. England & France

Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup> . . . Sexagesima Sunday

## 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



*“While we have time, let us do good unto all men” -Galatians; Ch. 6, Vs. 10*

### Old Birdhouses make good Hermitages

There are plenty of bird houses around the priory. Many have been built and we have been given them as gifts from friends over the years. There can never be enough of these little havens for the myriad of birds who live in the area. Oftentimes birds share these houses with colonies of bees who find them nice places in which to live as well. The result is a peaceful co-existence between the two species as they go about their daily business of living and finding food.

Eventually time takes its toll on a birdhouse. They begin to fall apart due to constant exposure to the elements or the pecking by the birds, or the wearing away of the paint. Br. Sylvester is adamant that they just aren't making paint like they used to. It doesn't seem to last very long. It's a debate we all wisely keep away from!

Be that as it may, birdhouses eventually wear out. That doesn't mean they no longer have a use. Br. Sylvester and Fr. Kevin will take such a birdhouse and see if it can be repaired, repainted and placed back into service. Those that are no longer solid enough to be mounted on posts are placed in comfy places on the ground to serve as hermitages for the ground-dwelling

6.

creatures. A base of a tree serves as a nice spot, so does resting on a large boulder. Little creatures, before long, are coming and going from them as permanent lodging or as temporary places to stay. Br. Chip often moves from one to another himself. He tells us he likes the change of scenery, and on occasion, enjoys seeing the world from the top of a tree when he stays at one of the hermitages located like the one in the photo. Those tracks certainly look like Chip's!

Don't throw out your sagging and dragging birdhouses. Consider placing them in spots where your local little critters can get into them. This prolongs their usefulness and gives little animals a place in which to rest and relax!



Even with the snow, the hermitage in the 'lower pasture' has a resident!

*(photo by Br. Sylvester)*

UT UNUM SINT



I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one (Lat. ut unum sint), just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

John 17.20-2

THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE

P A X

