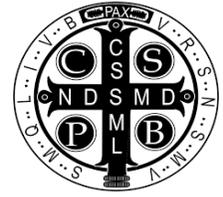


The Meditation



“ 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.

November 22nd A.D. 2015
The Sunday Next Before Advent



Purgatory - c.1610
Anniballe Carracci (1560-1609)
Italian Baroque painter

Meditation for the Last Sunday of the Church Year

“Teach us O Lord, to number our days that we may apply our hearts to thy wisdom.”

Psalm 90: Vs. 12.

Our eternity depends on our time here on earth. What we sow during our lives, we will reap at death, when each of us according to their merits and faith, is rewarded or punished. Our eternity depends upon our short and uncertain lives, every moment of which could be our last. The recent events in Paris and almost daily events everywhere should make this brutally clear to all. Superficial as we are, and let's not fool ourselves about that...we prefer to enjoy the present, rather than to think of eternity. That's something “far away” to the young, to the middle-aged immersed with the busy-ness of work and life, there's “little time to think of that”, and to the elderly, often times, the present ills and conditions are more than enough to deal with for that day. There's too much to do, too much to see, too much to have, and that other stuff is just a big ‘buzz-kill’ to the rest.

We're all tempted by pleasure, which comes in all kinds of forms. We often find it difficult, if not impossible to bridle, and to use an old term, ‘*mortify*’, our sensuality. Continual vigilance is boring. Continual attention to what we are doing, that it may be well done, becomes tiring to us. Evil is more attractive than good. The forces of today have packaged it so cleverly, that many can no longer tell the difference between the two, and when the difference is “called out”, the callers are labeled; *intolerant, narrow-minded, backward*, and anathematized with many other such appellations. One scratches their head, not being a little confounded as things appear to accelerate to higher levels of ridiculousness and incredulity.

We daily experience that of which St. Paul complains: *“I am a thing of flesh and blood, sold into the slavery of sin. My own actions bewilder me; what I do is not what I wish to do, but something which I hate . . . Of this I am certain, that no principle of good dwells in me, that is, in my natural self; praiseworthy intentions are always ready to hand, but I cannot find my way to the performance of them”* – (Romans; Chap. 7, Vss 14-18 : from the Latin Vulgate text.)

We too, confess: *“I am handed over as a captive to that disposition towards sin which my lower self contains”* - Rom. ; Ch. 7, Vs. 23).

I am a “*beggar, blind and naked*” (Apoc. Chap. 3, Vs. 17), weak in body and soul, in mind and will, able to do nothing without God's help. We begin full of courage and ardor, and we make the best of resolutions, but within a few days, and sometimes only a few hours, we commit the same faults again. It becomes easy to lose courage and despair, and God forbid, give up sometimes. Perhaps it was because we had too much confidence in *ourselves*? Perhaps we had not reckoned enough on calling upon God's help, and counted too little on His protection? Perhaps He permitted our faults and sins to humble us, and make us realize that **He alone** can make saints of us? St. Paul offers us a lesson: *“I delight to boast of the weaknesses that humiliate me, so that the strength of Christ may enshrine itself in me . . . when I am weakest, then I am strongest of all.”* (II Corinthians; Chap. 12, Vss 9 &10 ... again from the Latin Vulgate for clarity.)

3.

The saints in heaven are both our models and our allies. We form one community with them and the souls in Purgatory known as *The Communion of Saints*. The only difference between us is that they have reached the goal towards which we are still striving. They enjoy what we seek. They sing the eternal *Sanctus*, prostrating themselves before the throne of the Lamb, whose Precious Blood saved them and bought for them eternal glory.

They too had their human weaknesses, their faults, sins, and failures. They too, also felt the attraction of evil and knew the life-long struggle, but they have conquered through *penance, prayer, sacrifice, and strife*.

They were in the same circumstances as we are today, *and* they had the same means of grace. They reached the Heavenly Port by way of the Commandments, the Evangelical Councils, and the Beatitudes, and know now how great the reward is. Their whole lives were spent in the service of Christ like the Blessed Virgin Mary, the handmaid of the Lord.

They call down to us: "What we have done, you can do as well." They are our intercessors before the Throne of God, they are our helpers in time of need. They show us the way, especially the surest of all, the way of the Beatitudes. They are in Heaven because they were poor in spirit, detached from all that was not God; the meek, who bore injustice patiently. They have wept for their sins, have shed tears over the sufferings of others; they avoided all imperfections, and let nothing disturb the peace of their souls, and followed their Master in persecution and suffering, in humiliation and insults.

May Almighty and everlasting God, by the merits of Blessed Mary, St. Joseph, and all the Saints grant unto us by their intercessory prayers the abundance of grace for which we implore.

Prayer for the day: Satisfy us with thy mercy . . . so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life. *Psalm 90*



PRAYER FOR THE WEEK: With long life will I satisfy Him, and show him my salvation. *Psalm 91*

Feasts, Fasts, and Other Things

November 24th



St. John of the Cross: 1542-1591

Painting by Francesco Zurbarán, (1595-1664)

St. John was born in 1542 at Fontiveros near Avila in Spain. John served in hospital work as a youth and young man. He contemplated entering the Carthusians, but on his way to visit a local Carthusian community he came in contact with Theresa of Avila, the Carmelite mystic, and came away so impressed with her sanctity that in 1563, he joined the Carmelite Order instead. He studied for the priesthood and was ordained priest. John, in time, assisted Theresa in the reform of the Carmelite Order, an undertaking that occasioned much suffering and conflict with other members and hierarchy in the order. He, next to St. Theresa, is rightfully designated the co-founder of the *Discalced Carmelites*, a branch of the Order that practices great austerities and long hours in prayer.



Depiction of Christ crucified as drawn by St. John of the Cross

5.

John of the Cross ranks among the great teachers of mysticism. His principal works on the subject are: **The Ascent of Mt. Carmel**, **The Dark Night of the Soul**, **The Spiritual Dialogues between the Soul and Christ**, and **The Living Flame of Love**.

St. John was essentially a very gentle person, yet interiorly very intense. His writings certainly portray this intensity. This can often lead people to think that a person of this caliber is “beyond them” or unapproachable. The following incident proves otherwise. A young woman came to the church at Avila to make her confession, and learned that her confessor was Father John. She became fearful and apprehensive, but he encouraged her by saying: “*I am not so, but the holier the confessor, the gentler he is, and the less he is scandalized at other peoples faults, because he understands man’s weak conditions better.*” John, as superior in the monastery, when making his rounds during the early hours of the morning, would cough, or rattle his rosary, so that if a brother had dozed off during private prayers, the brother would awaken, lest he be caught napping. No doubt John also carried a slight smile during these times...for he too, knew the rigorous life took its own tolls on him just as well!

Toward the end of his life St. John endured much physical suffering. Once, during a period of deep prayer and meditation, he was visited by Our Lord, Who asked John what reward he wanted for so many labors, and John replied: “Lord, to suffer and be despised for Your sake!” Shortly after, while in Andalusia (in Spain), he fell grievously ill; five painful festering lesions appeared on his leg. He bore these with great patience in order to quiet the desire for further suffering for His Lord and all suffering souls. Finally, on December 14, 1591, having been fortified with the last Sacraments, he abandoned himself to the embrace of Christ Crucified, whom he constantly carried in his heart, with the words; “Into Your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.” He was 49 years old.

St. John of the Cross’s writings were studied carefully by Church scholars and theologians. They quickly became “must-reading” for not only those living under religious vows, but for all who wanted to deepen their spiritual lives. Pope Pius XI raised him to the great dignity of a **Doctor of the Church** in 1926, recognizing St. John of the Cross as one of the great teachers of the Christian Faith. He has been given the title of **Doctor of Mystical Theology**. Pope Pius, in his declaration on August 24th, 1926, said of this saint:

“Although they (*his works*) deal with difficult and learned questions, **The Ascent of Mt. Carmel**, **The Dark Night of the Soul**, **The Living Flame** and other works and letters of his abound in such great spiritual doctrine and are so adapted to the insight of readers that with merit they can be seen as a codex and a school for the faithful soul which strives to attain to a more perfect life.”

It’s very pertinent that the feast of this great saint should fall during the month of the Holy Souls, for he experienced many mystical events connected with the souls of the departed. He offered his own sufferings for the expiation of the sins of others, just as our Lord did. This might give each of us cause to ponder what we can do or should be doing on behalf of others, especially the departed? Each of us suffers something, and some...many things. We imitate our Savior, by turning those sufferings into prayer on the behalf of others and create something very positive from something perceived as negative and bad... all in the name of love.



Br. Chip, O.S.B



6.

Feasts, Fasts, and Other Things from: The Chipmunk's Nutshell Library
Presented by Br. A. Chip Munk, O.S.B. A monk of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory in Raymond, Maine, USA

The Meditation

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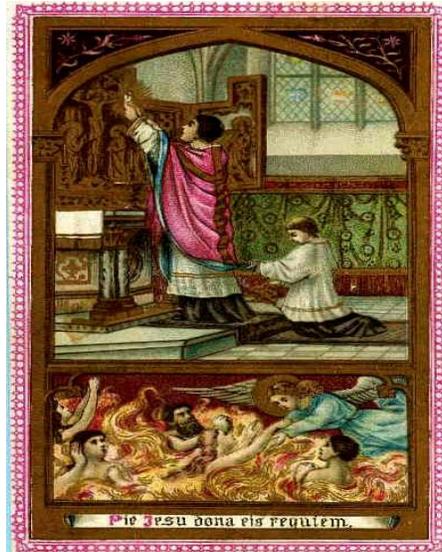
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5.



Pray for the Faithful Departed in November



O Holy Souls

A Scriptural poem

O Holy Souls
suffering still
longing, yearning,
hearts a burning,

7.

Amidst the flames,
all afire, [1]
unquenchable desire
for thy heavenly home, to bow before
our Savior's throne,
to see the Light[2]
by Whom
Light was made;
He true mercy
our ransom paid.

O holy souls
hungering, thirsting,
longing still,

yearning for
His holy hill,[3]
the new Jerusalem,[4]
o'er Who reigns
the Son of man,
Whose flesh
He humbly did assume,
in the Virgin's holy womb,[5]
to our fallen nature,
He did descend,
Alpha, Omega;
Beginning, End
First and Last,[6]
our souls repast...
Heavenly Manna,
Bread of Life,[7]
Who turns our darkness
into light [8]

O holy souls,
we pray thee still:
be still and know
that He is God;[9]
He Who dies,
upon the hill,
He Whose footsteps
thou didst trod;
Who forgave the good thief,
and Peter, too,
who didst deny,
though he swore,
that he would die,
yet, he cowered
before the crowd,

8.

the one who boasted
O so proud,
Our Lord
forgave Peter still,
He warmed his heart,
dispelled the chill;
He whose angel
freed the keeper of the keys,[10]
and penniless penitents[11]
so, He shall do to thee,
for, He has paid thy recompense.[12]

So, be patient,
O holy souls,
and persevering persevere;[13]
for, He Who has called you
is righteous...
and faithful
to His word.[14]

Footnotes: 1. Psalm 65:10, 2. John 1:3-4; Psalm 111:4 3. Psalms 14 & 23
4. Apocalypse 3:12, 21: 2 5. John 1:14; Luke 1:30-31; Galatians 4:4-5
6. Apocalypse 1:8, 21:6, 22:13 7. John 6: 51-58; Apocalypse 2:17 8. John 8:12 9. Psalm 45:11
10. Acts 12: 1-11 11. Matthew 5:3, 25-26; Luke 6:20, 12:58-59; Psalms 11:6, 68:30, 33, 34.
12. Psalm 68:5 13. Matthew 10:22, 24:13; Luke 21:19 14. Psalm 10:8; Apocalypse 19:11, 21:5.

PRIORY KALENDAR

Week of November 22nd to November 29th - A.D. 2015

In the conclusion of Trinity Season

Sunday, November 22nd . . . Sunday Next Before Advent...*comm St. Cecilia; V.& Myr. 4th cent.*
Monday, November 23rd . . . St. Clement: B. & Myr, 1st cent.
Tuesday, November 24th . . . St. John of the Cross: O. Carm. C. & Doct. 16th cent Spain
Wednesday, November 25th . . . St. Katherine of Alexandria; V. & Myr. 4th cent. Egypt.
Thursday, November 26th . . . **Thanksgiving Day - commemorate with *Missa pro Patria***
Friday, November 27th last feria in Trinity Season.
Saturday, November 28th . . . St. Baltherius; P. & Anc. O.S.B. Northumbria, 8th cent.
Sunday, November 29th . . . The First Sunday in Advent ...Great Litany suggested.





ALƆDƆAR KEƆ

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.

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. 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.

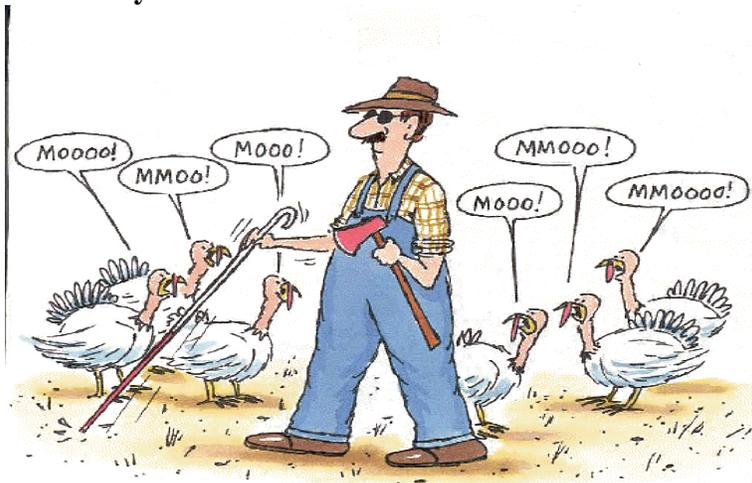
FASTING: A = Abstinence, F = Fast, F & A = Fast and Abstinence

Animal & Priory News



Oliver

Oliver is our red roan pinto Shetland pony. He came with a friend, Seamus, many years ago. They had been terribly abused by some children and teenagers. They had rocks thrown at them and were cornered in their barn and hit with sticks and whips. Seamus got over his abuse rather quickly as he was only 3 at the time. He was sent to a wonderful home where he is now well loved and happy. Oliver, though much happier and trusting, still carries the emotional scares of his former treatment. He has come a long way and will be with us for the rest of his life. He has a condition called "*string halt*" which is basically when a leg joint "catches up" and stops an animal from moving it. They hold it out to the side at a weird angle and have to wait for it to release so they can move again. They cannot bear weight and therefore cannot be ridden. He also has *founder*, which is a hoof problem. The mere fact of an animal not being able to be ridden can, very often, be a death sentence. The animal is no longer useful to a human so it must die. Thankfully we were able to get to Oliver in time and he has had, and will continue to have a happy, long, and otherwise fulfilling life. We thank our animal angels for their generous help which makes his life, and others, possible. God Bless you all!



HAPPY THANKSGIVING !

P A X