



'ORA ET LABORA'

The Meditation
First Sunday After Trinity - A.D. 2016
(May 29th)



The Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist
Print from an early 20th century Altar Missal

The Collect for the First Sunday after Trinity

O *God, the strength of all those who put their trust in thee ; Mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandments we may please thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Today's Collect encourages us to do some straightforward and honest thinking. We can begin by asking ourselves: What is our ruling passion? Does each of us have such a thing or, do any of us just drift placidly through life, attending to every job and pleasure as it comes along without much thought before or after?

There's something to be said for either state of mind. We, as adolescents and teen-agers were no doubt exhorted by our parents and school guidance counselors to get hold of our lives, get serious, make certain what we wanted to do, and then direct our all energies to that end. Our parents hoped that a sensible ambition would be our ruling passion, and we'd set a course and sail forth with all our youthful energy. On the other hand, there's some virtue in taking things calmly, in refusing to become over-anxious, in declining to be driven into what has become a near hysteria that characterizes those who go out and battle fiercely in the arena of life.

The solution to the conflict between these two points of view lies in finding a general purpose that will both give direction and at the same time prevent over-anxiety. Easy to say, but less easy to put into practice, one might say...? Not really. Purpose can be found in the Christian's aim to "*please God both in word and deed*". If our attention is concentrated on that effort, other things will be brought within it; and we shall be prepared to face the issues of life with all assurance.

It's the essence that forms the prayer of this Collect, that we should each have this aim of pleasing God. A prayer such as this has come most fittingly when we have just finished that half of the Church year which is devoted to the commemoration of the great events of our Redemption. We can now turn to the thought of putting into effect how we can best please our Lord God in thought and deeds, in our daily living

How pertinent it is that this prayer should also come at the time of graduations, when our students are completing yet another year of their education which will hopefully lay the foundations of their lives. It wouldn't be out of place to include this little prayer in any grad's card, to serve as advice of the highest kind...should one be desirous to include some meaningful words during this seasonal celebration of achievement!

The question is how are we to fulfil this very proper aim of pleasing God in all we say or do? It certainly can't be done on our own strength or merit. Good St. Paul tried that, and was reduced to the appalling realization of his own impotence, when he bewailed: "*O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?*"- (*Romans: Ch. 7, Vs. 24*). Just like St. Paul, we too, stand broken and sorrowful in our own impotence.

The only safe thing we can do is not to try and bluff it, but acknowledge at the outset, our inability. That's what today's Collect teaches us to do; "*Because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without thee...*" It doesn't matter what aspect of our nature we examine – physical, mental, or even moral – the story is the same.

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We are amazed and admire greatly the tremendous accomplishments of an athlete who can run a mile in record-breaking time, until we see that same person tossed about as a result of bad personal actions and choices in their life. We are so very proud of our modern intellectual abilities and capacities, until we remember that there are now computers that fit in the palm of our hands that can perform all the same functions that it took to safely maintain an Apollo space capsule in its journey to the moon. A person may congratulate themselves on their moral courage until they find themselves in the very act of falling victim to a subtle temptation.

The words of the General Confession echo our impotence: “*We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things we ought to have done; and there is no health in us . . . thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us.*” *

The weakness goes down to the very roots of action. *What is not of faith is sin.* The act that does not spring from a right motive is defective from the start. This is the universal consciousness of all who are honestly prepared to examine their own hearts. Left to ourselves we cannot maintain the aim of pleasing God, our human nature is just not equipped to do so, despite what current ‘progressive theological thinking’ touts.

Where, however, we are weak God is strong; and His strength is made perfect in our weakness. God comes in when self-confidence goes out. We find all the strength necessary to do whatever He desires us to do as we rely on the help of His grace. Grace simply means God’s free personal assistance; and that is available for us whenever we remember it and use it. Frequent use of the Sacraments, most especially the Holy Eucharist, will increase grace already given and strengthen our souls against all assaults that life sends our way. We are reminded of this over the past week by the commemoration of *Corpus Christi*; the great feast of Christ’s Sacred Body. We thank God in this feast, for the institution of the Eucharist, and we remind ourselves of the marvelous benefits conferred upon us in the Blessed Sacrament.

We are caught up in Christ’s eternal offering of *Himself* to the Father as we share in the Holy Mass. When we receive Our Lord, we are united with Eternity, we become one with the Blessed Trinity, we receive a great mystery that goes beyond description. Frequent reception will insure each of us, that there will be little possibility of forgetting the aim of pleasing God.

If we still fear that we may have no power to live the Commandments of God, we remember for our comfort what we receive in the Body and Blood of His Son. What is the Body but the instrument of His personality, and the Blood but His vital energy? Partaking of Holy Communion, we receive the personality of Christ in all its strength and love and beauty, as well as the vital energy to make those virtues come true within ourselves.

Here we can see what it means to say with St. Paul: “*It is no longer I that live but Christ liveth in me.*” - (*Galatians: Ch. 2, Vs. 20*).

We can have confidence that our ruling passion to please God will be satisfied when we give place to that life, and that the will of God will be done in us.

* *From the General Confession for Morning Prayer – 1928 Book of Common Prayer, Pg. 6.*



From the Fathers of the Church

St. John Chrysostom

The Eucharistic Banquet

St. John's discourse on the Eucharist is well worth sharing as it dovetails nicely with our Meditation as well as the great Feast of Corpus Christi which was celebrated this past week. - k.l.l. +

The Body of Christ, Victor over death:

“His body can no longer be dust, ashes or a captive, but free; through it I hope for heaven and the good things which await me there, immortal life like that of the angels, in the company of Christ. This is the body which, though scourged and crucified, could not be overcome by death entirely. When the sun gazed on it crucified it hid its light, the veil was rent, the stones themselves were moved and the earth trembled. This is the body which, on being opened by a lance, poured forth, like a salutary fountain, water and blood for the whole world. Do you wish to know its power, then ask the woman who was cured merely by touching his garments; ask the sea, which sustained it without sinking, ask the devil, whom it has made lose its power and strength; ask mother earth, who was anxious to return to the world that which it could not hold captive, because it was not born of her.”

Charity and fervor in the reception of the Eucharist:

“Let us approach with prudence, because just to draw near to this banquet carelessly is very dangerous, so as not to approach it is hunger and death.”

Worldly desires and the Eucharist:

“Tell me, will you not detest and cast away from you all love for earthly things, so as to enjoy only him? Do you still look at the earth, do you still love money and long for gold? And yet you desire to obtain pardon and relief? Do you not know how much God hates such worldly magnificence? Have you not seen him born in a stable, of a humble mother . . .? If we think it reasonably we shall see that this world is not worthy of us. Therefore adorn your souls, prepare your house.”

Union with Christ:

In the Eucharist:

“What shepherd is there who will feed his sheep with his own body? . . . Think how Christ was born of our substance. You will tell me that this does not refer to all, even though in a

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way it does, since, by coming in our nature, he came to all . . .and if he came to all, he came to each one. But how-you insist-do all not receive the fruit? You must not blame him who came to all for that, but those who would not receive him. He has come to all the faithful and with all he unites himself in this mystery, and those to whom he gave birth he feeds with his own flesh.”

The Unworthy:

“The blood of Christ will be demanded at your hands. Even though he who approaches unworthily were a leader of the people or a prefect, even though he wear the royal crown itself, in this you have a greater power than heThis is your dignity, your safety, and your crown. But to have been honored by God with the office of judge and then not to go before him dressed in the white garment. . . . I am speaking about sins which are known, not the hidden ones, and still I must say something even more terrible to you, namely, that it is better to admit those possessed by the devil than to permit those whom St. Paul wrote; (to the Hebrews)*, who tread Christ underfoot, who treat as a low thing the blood of the Testament and heap insults on the grace of the Holy Spirit. He who communicates in sin is worse than one possessed by the devil, because the latter is nothing but a victim of the persecution of Satan. . . . Fear God, not men; if you fear them He will laugh at you; if you fear God then even men will honor you.”

* “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” – Heb. Ch. 10, Vs. 29

- *Excerpted from St. John Chrysostom’s Homily on I Corinthians, No. 24 and Homily 83 on the Gospel of St. Matthew.*



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

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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 regularly receive visitors.

Priory Kalendar

For the week of
May 29th to June 5th - A.D. 2016

Sunday, May 29th First Sunday After Trinity *in the Octave of Corpus Christi*

Monday, May 30th *comm. St. Joan of Arc; V. 15th cent. France. in the Octave.*

Tuesday, May 31st *in the Oct.*

Wednesday, June 1st *comm. St. Nicomede; P & Myr. 2nd cent. in the Octave.*

Thursday, June 2nd *Octave Day of Corpus Christi*

Friday, June 3rd *Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . Day of Abstinence.*

Saturday, June 4th *Immaculate Heart of Mary . . . Sat. Mass & Office of the B.V.M.*

Sunday, June 5th *Second Sunday after Trinity*

Animal News from the Priory

Thursday was Spa day in the barn as everyone got their nails (hooves) trimmed. This is easier said than done with these horses/ponies due to their individual handicaps and this was the first trim here for the newest addition, Sundance. We have the most wonderful farrier, Susan Walker. She is the president of the Maine Farriers Association, is constantly taking more classes and attending seminars on natural hoof trimming and hoof correction. She is quiet and cheerful, yet efficient and goes above and beyond to help each animal be as comfortable as they can be, even getting down on her knees to trim the ponies. The horses love her and we are blessed to know her. Angels come in all guises.....even as farriers!



Happy Horses with Happy Feet !

! THREE AMIGOS !



Br. Sylvester



Br. Chip



Br. Raymond

Yes, dear friends, it's that time of year again – Graduation time. Br. Chip is on the commencement circuit as he is every year. But for the life of me, I don't know why he asked to take along Brothers Sylvester and Raymond this time. Has our little scholar lost his mind...? ! That would be the honest question to ask, but taking the high road I am going to assume he's invited his brothers to experience a bit of seeing the world. I did tell him right before they departed, that anything they do will be on him, and he replied that he could handle them. My final words were that we do not have any funds in which to bail anyone out, so they are completely on their own. I was hoping that would ring some sense into them, but as they closed the door of the car upon their departure, I thought I heard someone say with a chuckle; "*what happens on the road stays on the road!*" . . . are there angels enough in Heaven to keep an eye out on these guys and them in line . . . that answer lies in faith alone!



Perhaps it's time to start worrying.

- Fr. Kevin +



