

# Septuagesima 2022 Companion Booklet Sexagesima Week & Quinquagesima



Illustrated Liturgical Calendar for Septuagesima 2022 by liturgyofthehome.com

by Liturgy of the Home

# Sexagesima Sunday

February 20th 2022

Text taken from *The Liturgical Year* by Dom Guéranger:

The Church offers to our consideration, during this week of Sexagesima, the history of Noah and the deluge. Man has not profited by the warnings already given him. God is obliged to punish him once more, and by a terrible chastisement. There is found out of the whole human race one just man God makes a covenant with him, and with us through him. But, before he draws up this new alliance, he would show that he is the Sovereign Master, and that man, and the earth whereon he lives, subsist solely by his power and permission.

As the ground-work of this week's instructions, we give a short passage from the Book of Genesis: it is read in the Office of this Sunday's Matins.

## From the Book of Genesis.

And God seeing that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that all the thought of their heart was bent upon evil at all times,

it repented him that he had made man on the earth. And being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, he said: I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, from man even to beasts, from the creeping thing even to the fowls of the air. For it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace before the Lord.

These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just and perfect man in his generations: he walked with God. And he begot three sons: Sem, Cham, and Japheth. And the earth was corrupted before God, and was filled with iniquity. And when God had seen that the earth was corrupted (for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth), he said to Noah: The end of all flesh is come before me: the earth is filled with iniquity through them, and I will destroy them with the earth.

This awful chastisement of the human race by the Deluge was a fresh consequence of sin. This time, however, there was found one just man; and it was through him and his family that the world was restored. Having once more mercifully renewed his covenant with his creatures, God allows the earth to be re-peopled, and makes the three sons of Noah become the Fathers of the three great families of the human race.

## Commentary

This is the Mystery of the Divine Office during the week of Sexagesima. The Mystery expressed in today's Mass is of still greater importance, and the first is but a figure of the second. The earth is deluged by sin and heresy. But the Word of God, the Seed of life, is ever producing a new generation, a race of



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men, who, like Noah, fear God. It is the Word of God that produces those happy children, of whom the Beloved Disciple speaks, saying: they are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (St. John, 1. 13). Let us endeavour to be of this family; or, if we already be numbered among its members, let us zealously maintain our glorious position. What we have to do, during these days of Septuagesima, is to escape from the Deluge of worldliness, and take shelter in the Ark of salvation; we have to become that good soil, which yields a hundred-fold from the heavenly Seed. Let us flee from the wrath to come, lest we perish with the enemies of God: let us hunger after that Word of God, which converteth and giveth life to souls (Ps. xviii).

With the Greeks, this is the seventh day of their week *Apocreos*, which begins on the Monday after our Septuagesima Sunday. They call this week *Apocreos*, because they then begin to abstain from flesh-meat, which abstinence is observed till Easter Sunday.

## Collect

O God, who seest that we place no confidence in anything we do: mercifully grant that, by the protection of the Doctor of the Gentiles, we may be defended against all adversity. Through, &c.

## Epistle: (Corinthians, 11: 19-33, 12:1-9)

Brethren: you gladly suffer the foolish; whereas yourselves are wise. For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take from you, if a man be lifted up, if a man strike you on the face. I speak according to dishonour, as if we had been weak in this part. Wherein if any man dare (I speak foolishly), I dare also. They are Hebrews: so am I. They are Israelites: so am I. They are the seed of Abraham: so am I. They are the ministers of Christ (I speak as one less wise). I am more; in many more labours, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without: my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my infirmity. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for ever, knoweth that I lie not. At Damascus, the governor of the nation under Aretas the king, guarded the city of the Damascenes, to apprehend me. And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands. If I must glory (it is not expedient indeed), but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not: God knoweth), That he was caught up into paradise, and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter. For such an one I will glory; but for myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities. For though I should have a mind to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I will say the truth. But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or any thing he heareth from me. And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

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In the Gradual, the Church beseeches her Lord to give her strength against those who oppose the mission he has entrusted to her, of gaining for him a new people, adorers of his sovereign Majesty.

## Gradual

Let the Gentiles know that God is thy name:  
thou alone art the Most High over all the earth.

℣. O my God, make them like a wheel, and as  
stubble before the wind.

While the earth is being moved and is suffering those terrible revolutions which, deluge-like, come first on one nation and then on another, the Church prays for her faithful children, in order that they may be spared, for they are the elect, and the hope of the world. It is thus she prays in the Tract, which precedes the Gospel of the word.

## Tract

Thou hast moved the earth, O Lord, and hast troubled it.

℣. Heal the breaches thereof, for it is moved.

℣. That they may flee from before the bow: that thy elect may be delivered.

## Gospel (St. Luke, 8:4-15)

At that time: when a very great multitude was gathered together, and hastened out of the cities unto him, he spoke by a similitude. The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock: and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things, he cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. To whom he said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the way side are they that hear; then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing

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they should be saved. Now they upon the rock, are they who when they hear, receive the word with joy: and these have no roots; for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation, they fall away. And that which fell among thorns, are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground, are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.

## Commentary

St. Gregory the Great justly remarks that this Parable needs no explanation. since Eternal Wisdom himself has told us its meaning. All that we have to do, is to profit by this divine teaching, and become the good soil, wherein the heavenly Seed may yield a rich harvest. How often have we not, hitherto, allowed it to be trampled on by them that passed by, or to be torn up by the birds of the air? How often has it not found our heart like a stone, that could give no moisture, or like a thorn plot, that could but choke? We listened to the Word of God; we took pleasure in hearing it; and from this we argued well for ourselves. Nay, we have often received this Word with joy and eagerness. Sometimes, even, it took root within us. But, alas! something always came to stop its growth. Henceforth, it must both grow and yield fruit. The Seed given to us is of such quality, that the Divine Sower has a right to expect a hundred-fold. If the soil, that is, if our heart, be good; if we take the trouble to prepare it, by profiting of the means afforded us by the Church; we shall have an abundant harvest to show our Lord on that grand Day, when, rising triumphant from his Tomb, he shall come to share with his faithful people the glory of his Resurrection.



# Feria

February 21st 2022

Text taken from *The Liturgical Year* by Dom Guéranger:



All flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. The terrible lesson, then, which men had received by being driven out of paradise in the person of our first parents, had been without effect. Neither the certainty of death, when they would have to stand before the divine Judge, nor the humiliations which attend man's first coming into this world, nor the pains and fatigues and trials which beset the whole path of life, had subdued men's hearts or brought them into submission to that sovereign Master whose hand lay thus heavy upon them. They had the divine promise that a Savior should be given to them, and that this Redeemer (who was to be the Son of her that was to crush the serpent's head) would not only bring them salvation, but would moreover reinstate them in all the happiness and honors they had lost. But even this was not enough to make them rise above the base passions of corrupt nature. The example of Adam's nine hundred years' penance, and the admonitions he could so feelingly give who had received such proofs of God's love and anger, began to lose their influence upon his children; and when he at last descended into the grave, his posterity grew more and more heedless of what they owed to their Creator. The long life, which had been granted to man in this the first age of the world, was made but a fresh means of offending Him who gave it. When, finally, the sons of Seth took to themselves wives of the family of Cain, the human race reached the height of wickedness, rebelled

against the Lord, and made their own passions their god.

Yet all this while, they had had granted to them the power of resisting the evil propensities of their hearts. God had offered them His grace, whereby they were enabled to conquer pride and concupiscence. The merits of the Redeemer to come were even then present to divine justice, and the Lamb, slain, as St. John tells us, from the beginning of the world, applied the merits of His Blood to this as to every generation which existed before the great Sacrifice was really immolated. Each individual of the human family might have been just, as Noah was, and like him, have found favor with the Most High; but the thought of their heart was bent upon evil and not upon good, and the earth became peopled with enemies of God. Then it was that it repented God that He had made man, as the sacred Scripture forcibly expresses it. He decreed that man's life on earth should be shortened, in order that the thought of death might be ever before us. He, moreover, resolved to destroy, by a universal deluge, the whole of this perverse generation, saving only one family. The world would thus be renewed, and man would learn from this awful chastisement to serve and love this his sovereign Lord and God.

# Heria

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We find the following liturgical formula in the Mozarabic missal. Nothing could be more appropriate to the season of Septuagesima.

**Behold**, now are close at hand those days of salvation, which the cycle of the year brings round to us, and in which we desire, by the exercise of salutary abstinence, to apply a remedy to our evil doings. For, as the apostle says: This is the acceptable time, and, these are the days of salvation, wherein a spiritual cure is given to the soul that seeks it, and the evil delights of sin are rooted from the mind. Hereby, we, whose evil habits are ever forcing us to a downward tendency, are by the uplifting mercy of God, encouraged to rise above this earth; that thus, by the devout observance of what these days require, we may not only be delivered from the guilt of our sins, but may moreover deserve to be companions with the elect in eternal bliss. Amen.



# The Chair of Peter

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The calendar as Dom Guéranger knew it formerly had its primary feast of the Chair of Peter on January 18. On February 22, it celebrated St. Peter's Chair at Antioch. Because the January 18th observation is no longer kept in the 1962 calendar, we present the readings for that feast here, the only time that Peter's Chair is now commemorated each year.

We are called upon, a second time, to honor St. Peter's Chair: first, it was his Pontificate in Rome; today it is his Episcopate at Antioch. The seven years spent by the Prince of the Apostles in the second of these cities were the grandest glory she ever had; and they are too important a portion of the life of St. Peter to be passed by without being noticed in the Christian Cycle.

Three years had elapsed since our Lord's Ascension. The Church had already been made fruitful by martyrdom, and from Jerusalem she had spread into distant countries. Antioch, the first of the cities of Asia, had received the Gospel; and it was there that they who professed the faith of Jesus were first called "Christians." Jerusalem was doomed to destruction for her having not only refused to acknowledge, but also for her having crucified, the Messiah: it was time for Peter, in whom resided the supreme power, to deprive the faithless City of the honor she had heretofore enjoyed, of possessing within her walls the Chair of the Apostolate. It was towards the Gentiles that the Holy Spirit drove those Clouds, which were shown to Isaias as the symbol of the holy Apostles. Accordingly, it was in Antioch, the third Capital of the Roman Empire, that Peter first places the august

Throne on which, as Vice-regent of Christ, he presides over the Church—that new family of which all Nations are invited to become members.

But the progress of the Apostles was so rapid; the conquests they made, in spite of every opposition, were so extensive—that the Vicar of Christ was inspired to leave Antioch, after he had honored it with the Chair during the space of seven years. Alexandria, the second City of the Empire, is also to be made a See of Peter; and Rome, the Capital of the world, awaits the grand privilege for which God had long been preparing her. Onwards, then, does the Prince advance, bearing with him the destinies of the Church; where he fixes his last abode, and where he dies, there will he have his Successor in sublime dignity of Vicar of Christ. He leaves Antioch, making one of his disciples, Evodius, its Bishop. Evodius succeeds Peter as Bishop of Antioch; but that See is not to inherit the Headship of the Church, which goes whithersoever Peter goes. He sends Mark, another of his disciples, to take possession, in his name, of Alexandria; and this Church he would have be the second in the world, and though he has not ruled it in person, he raises it above that of Antioch. This done, he goes to Rome, where he permanently establishes that Chair on which he will live, and teach, and rule, in his Successors, to the end of time.

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And here we have the origin of the three great Patriarchal Sees, which were the object of so much veneration in the early ages—the first is Rome, which is invested with all the prerogatives of the Prince of the Apostles, which, when dying, he transmitted to her; the second is Alexandria, which owes her pre-eminence to Peter's adopting her as his second See; the third is Antioch, whither he repaired in person, when he left Jerusalem to bring to the Gentiles the grace of adoption. If, therefore, Antioch is below Alexandria in rank, Alexandria never enjoyed the honor granted to Antioch, of having been governed in person by him whom Christ appointed to be the supreme Pastor of his Church. Nothing, then, could be more just than that Antioch should be honored, in that she has had the privilege of having been, for seven years, the center of Christendom; and this is the object of today's Feast.

The Children of the Church have a right to feel a special interest in every solemnity that is kept in memory of St. Peter. The Father's Feast is a Feast for the whole family; for to him it owes its very life. If there be but one fold, it is because there is but one Shepherd. Let us, then, honor Peter's divine prerogative, to which Christianity owes its preservation; and let us often reflect upon the obligations we are under to the Apostolic See. On the Feast of the Chair at Rome, we saw how Faith is taught and maintained and propagated by the Mother-Church, which has inherited the promises made to Peter. Today, let us consider the Apostolic See as the sole source of the legitimate Power, whereby mankind is ruled and governed in all that concerns eternal salvation.

Our Savior said to Peter: To thee will I give the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven, that is to say, of the Church. He said to him, on another occasion: Feed my lambs, feed my sheep. So that Peter is Prince; for, in the language of the sacred Scriptures, Keys denote princely power: he is also Pastor, and universal Pastor; for the whole flock is comprised under the two terms, Lambs and Sheep. And yet there are other Pastors in every portion of the Christian world. The Bishops whom the Holy Ghost hath placed to rule the Church of God govern, in his name, their respective Dioceses, and are also Pastors. How comes it that the Keys, which were given to Peter, are found in other hands than his? The Catholic Church explains the difficulty to us by her Tradition. She says to us, by Tertullian: "Christ gave the Keys to Peter, and through him to the Church." By St. Optatus of Milevum: "For the sake of unity, Peter was made the first among all the Apostles, and he alone received the Keys, that he might give them to the rest." St. Gregory of Nyssa: "It was through Peter that Christ gave to Bishops the Keys of their heavenly prerogative." By St. Leo the Great: "If our Lord willed that there should be something in common to Peter and the rest of the Princes of his Church, it was only on this condition—that whatsoever he gave to the rest, he gave it to them through Peter."

Yes, the Episcopate is most sacred, for it comes from the hands of Jesus Christ through Peter and his successors. Such is the unanimous teaching of Catholic Tradition, which is in keeping with the language used by the Roman Pontiffs from the earliest Ages, who have always spoken of the dignity of Bishops as consisting in their being "called to a share of their own solicitude." Hence St. Cyprian does not hesitate to say that "our Savior, wishing to establish the Episcopal dignity and constitute his Church, says to Peter: To thee will I give the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven; and here we have both the institution of Bishops and the constitution of the Church." This same doctrine is clearly stated in a letter written to Pope St. Symmachus by St. Cæsarius of Arles, who lived in the fifth century: "The Episcopate flows from the blessed Apostle Peter; and consequently, it belongs to Your Holiness to prescribe to the several Churches the rules which they are to follow." This fundamental principle, which St. Leo the Great has so ably and eloquently developed (as we have seen on the Feast of the Chair at Rome, January 18th)—this principle, which is taught us by universal Tradition, is laid down with all possible precision in the magnificent Letters, still extant, of Pope St. Innocent the First, who preceded St. Leo by several years. Thus, he writes to the Council of Carthage, "that the Episcopate, with all its authority, emanates from the Apostolic See;" to the Council of Milevum, "that Bishops must look upon Peter as the source whence

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both their name and their dignity are derived;" to St. Victricius, Bishop of Rouen, "that the Apostolate and the Episcopate both owe their origin to Peter."

Controversy is not our object. All we aim at by giving these quotations from the Fathers on the prerogatives of Peter's Chair, is to excite the Faithful to be devoted to it and venerate it. This we have endeavored to do by showing them that this Chair is the source of the spiritual authority which, in its several degrees, rules and sanctifies them. Yes, all spiritual authority comes from Peter; all comes from the Bishop of Rome, in whom Peter will continue to govern the Church to the end of time. Jesus Christ is the founder of the Episcopate; it is the Holy Ghost who establishes Bishops to rule the Church—but the mission, the institution, which assigns the Pastor his Flock, and the Flock its Pastor, these are given by Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost through the ministry of Peter and his Successors.

How sacred, how divine, is this authority of the Keys, which is first given by heaven itself to the Roman Pontiff; then is delegated by him to the Prelates of the Church; and thus guides and blesses the whole Christian world! The Apostolic See has varied its mode of transmitting such an authority according to the circumstances of the several Ages; but the one source of the whole Power was always the same—the Chair of Peter. We have already seen how, at the commencement, there were three Chairs: Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch; and all three were sources of the canonical institution of the Bishops of their respective provinces; but they were all three Chairs of Peter, for they were founded by him that they might preside over their Patriarchates, as St. Leo, St. Gelasius, and St. Gregory the Great expressly teach. But of these three Chairs, the Pontiff of Rome had his authority and his institution from heaven, whereas the two other Patri-

archs could not exercise their rights until they were recognized and confirmed by him who was Peter's successor as Vicar of Christ. Later on, two other Sees were added to these first three: but it was only by the consent of the Roman Pontiff that Constantinople and Jerusalem obtained such an honor. Let us notice too the difference there is between the accidental honors conferred on four of these Churches, and the divine prerogative of the Church of Rome. By God's permission, the Sees of Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem, were defiled by heresy; they became Chairs of pestilence; and having corrupted the faith they received from Rome, they could not transmit to others the mission they themselves had forfeited. Sad indeed was the ruin of such pillars as these! Peter's hand had placed them in the Church. They had merited the love and veneration of men, but they fell; and their fall gave one more proof of the solidity of that edifice which Christ himself had built on Peter. The unity of the Church was made more visible. Obligated by the treachery of her own favored children to deprive them of the privileges they had received from her, Rome was, more evidently than ever, the sole source of pastoral Power.

We, then, both priests and people, have a right to know whence our Pastors have received their Power. From whose hand have they received the Keys? If their mission comes from the Apostolic See, let us honor and obey them, for they are sent to us by Jesus Christ, who has invested them, through Peter,

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with his own authority. If they claim our obedience without having been sent by the Bishop of Rome, we must refuse to receive them, for they are not acknowledged by Christ as his Ministers. The holy anointing may have conferred on them the sacred character of the Episcopate—it matters not; they must be as aliens to us, for they have not been sent—they are not Pastors.

Thus it is that the Divine Founder of the Church, who willed that she should be a City seated on a mountain, gave her Visibility; it was an essential requisite; for since all were called to enter her pale, all must be able to see her. But he was not satisfied with this. He moreover willed that the spiritual power exercised by her Pastors should come from a visible source; so that the Faithful might have a sure means of verifying the claims of those who were to guide them in His name. Our Lord, we say it reverently, owed this to us; for on the Last Day, he will not receive us as his Children unless we shall have been members of his Church and have lived in union with him by the ministry of Pastors lawfully constituted. Honor, then, and submission to Jesus in his Vicar! honor and submission to the Vicar of Christ in the Pastors he sends!



# St. Peter Damian

February 23rd 2022

Text taken from The Liturgical Year by Dom Guéranger:



It is the Feast of the austere reformer of the 11th century, Peter Damian, the precursor of the holy Pontiff Gregory the Seventh, that we are called upon to celebrate today. To him is due a share of that glorious regeneration which was effected at that troubled period when judgment had to begin at the House of God. The life he had led under the Monastic Rule had fitted him for the great contest. So zealously did he withstand the disorders and abuses of his times that we may attribute to him, at least in great measure, the ardent faith of the two centuries which followed the scandals of the 10th. The Church ranks him among her Doctors, on account of his admirable Writings; and his penitential life ought to excite us to be fervent in the work we have in hand—the work of our Conversion.

The following Lessons, read by the Church on this Feast, give us a sketch of our Saint's Life.

**Peter** was born at Ravenna, of respectable parents. His mother, wearied with the care of a large family, abandoned when a babe; but one of her female servants found him in an almost dying state and took care of him, until such time as the mother, repenting of her unnatural conduct, consented to treat him as her child. After the death of his parents, one of his brothers, a most harsh man, took him as a servant, or more truly as his slave. It

was about this period of his life that he performed an action which evinced his virtue and his filial piety. He happened to find a large sum of money; but instead of using it for his own wants, he gave it to a priest, begging him to offer up the Holy Sacrifice for the repose of his father's soul. Another of his brothers, called Damian (after whom, it is said, he was named), had him educated; and so rapid and so great was the progress he made in his studies, that he was the admiration of his masters. He became such a proficient in the liberal sciences, that he was made to teach them in the public schools, which he did with great success. During all this time, it was his study to bring his body into subjection to the spirit; and to this end, he wore a hair-shirt under an outwardly comfortable dress, and practiced frequent fasting, watching, and prayer. Being in the very ardor of youth, and being cruelly buffeted by the sting of the flesh, he, during the night, would go and plunge himself into a frozen pool of water, that he might quench the impure flame which tormented him; or, he would make pilgrimages to holy sanctuaries, and recite the entire Psalter. His charities to the poor was unceasing, and when he provided them with a meal, which was frequently, he would wait upon them himself.

Out of the desire to lead a still more perfect life, he became a religious in the Monastery of *Avellino*, in the diocese of *Gubbio*, of the Order of the Monks of Holy Cross of *Fontavellana*, which was founded by the blessed *Ludolphus*, a disciple of *St. Romuald*. Being sent by his *Abbot*, not very long after, first to the Monastery of *Pomposia*, and then to that of *Saint Vincent of Pietra-Pertusa*, he edified both Houses by his preaching, admirable teaching, and holy life. At the death of the *Abbot* of *Avellino*, he was recalled to that Monastery, and was made its superior. The institute was so benefited by his government, not only by the new Monasteries which he founded in several places, but also by the very saintly regula-

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tions he drew up, that he was justly looked upon as the second Founder of the Order, and its brightest ornament. Houses of other Orders, Canons, yea entire congregations of the Faithful, were benefited by Peter's enlightened zeal. He was a benefactor, in more ways than one, to the diocese of Urbino: he aided the Bishop Theuzo in a most important suit, and assisted him, both by advice and work, in the right administration of his diocese. His spirit of holy contemplation, his corporal austerities, and the saintly tenor of his whole conduct, gained for him so high a reputation that Pope Stephen the Ninth, in spite of Peter's extreme reluctance, created him Cardinal of the holy Roman Church and Bishop of Ostia. The saint proved himself worthy of these honors by the exercise of the most eminent virtues, and by the faithful discharge of his Episcopal office.

It would be impossible to describe the services he rendered to the Church and the Sovereign Pontiffs, during those most trying times, by his learning, his prudence as Legate, and his untiring zeal. His life was one continued struggle against simony, and the heresy of the Nicolaites. He purged the Church of Milan of these disorders, and brought her into subjection to the Holy See. He courageously resisted the anti-popes Benedict and Cadolaus. He deterred Henry 4th, king of Germany, from an unjust divorce of his wife. He restored the people of Ravenna to their allegiance to the Roman Pontiff, and absolved them from interdict. He reformed the abuses which had crept in among the Canons of Velletri. There was scarcely a single Cathedral Church in the Province of Urbino that had experienced the beneficial effects of Peter's holy zeal: thus, that of Gubbio, which was for some time under his care, was relieved by him of many evils; and other Churches that needed his help found him as earnest for their welfare as though he were their own Bishop. When it obtained permission to resign his dignity as Cardinal and his Bishopric, he relented nothing of his former charity, but was equally ready in doing good to all. He was instrumental in propagating many devout practices; among these may be mentioned fasting on Fridays in honor of the Holy Cross; the reciting the Little Office of our Lady; the keeping the Saturday as a day especially devoted to Mary; the taking the discipline in expiation of past sins. At length, after a life which had edified the world by holiness, learning, miracles, and glorious works—on his return from Ravenna, whither he had been sent as Legate, he slept in Christ, on the eighth of the Calends of March (February 23rd), at Faenza. His relics, which are kept in the Cistercian Church of that town, are devoutly honored by the Faithful, and many miracles are wrought at the holy shrine. The inhabitants of Faenza have chosen him as the Patron of their City, having several times experienced his protection when threatened by danger. His Mass and Office, which were kept under the rite of Confessor and Bishop, had been long observed in several Dioceses, and by the Camaldolese Order; but they were extended to the whole Church by a decree of the Congregation of Sacred Rites, which was approved by Pope Leo the Twelfth, who also added to the name of the Saint that of Doctor.



# St. Matthias

February 24th 2022

Text taken from *The Liturgical Year* by Dom Guéranger:



An Apostle of Jesus Christ, St. Matthias is one of the Blessed choir which the Church would have us honor during the Season of Lent. Matthias was one of the first to follow our Savior, and he was an eyewitness of all his divine actions up to the very day of the Ascension. He was one of the seventy-two Disciples; but our Lord had not conferred upon him the dignity of an Apostle. And yet, he was to have this great glory, for it was of him that David spoke when he prophesied that another should take the Bishopric left vacant by the apostasy of Judas the Traitor. In the interval between Jesus' Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostolic College had to complete the mystic number fixed by our Lord himself, so that there might be "The Twelve" on that solemn day when the Church, filled with the Holy Ghost, was to manifest herself to the Synagogue. The lot fell on Matthias; he shared with his Brother-Apostles in the Jerusalem persecution and, when the time came for the Ambassadors of Christ to separate, he set out for the countries allotted to him. Tradition tells us that these were Capadocia and the provinces bordering on the Caspian Sea.

The virtues, labors and sufferings of St. Matthias have not been handed down to us: this explains there being no proper Lessons on his Life, as there are for the Feasts of the rest of the Apostles. Clement of Alexandria records, in his Writings, several sayings of our holy Apostle. One of these is so very appropriate to the spirit of the present Season that we consider it a duty to quote it. "It behooves us to combat the flesh and make use of it without pampering it by unlawful gratifications. As to the soul, we must develop her power by Faith and Knowledge." How profound is the teaching contained in these few words!

Sin has deranged the order which the Creator had established. It gave the outward man such a tendency to grovel in things which degrade him that the only means left us for the restoration of the Likeness and Image of God unto which we were created is the forcibly subjecting the Body to the Spirit. But the Spirit itself, that is, the Soul, was also impaired by Original Sin, and her inclinations were made prone to evil—what is to be her protection? Faith and Knowledge. Faith humbles her, and then exalts and rewards her; and the reward is Knowledge. Here we have a summary of what the Church teaches us during the two Seasons of Septuagesima and Lent. Let us thank the holy Apostle, in this his Feast, for leaving us such a lesson of spiritual wisdom and fortitude. The same traditions which give us some slight information regarding the holy life of St. Matthias tell us that his Apostolic labors were crowned with the palm of martyrdom. Let us celebrate his triumph by the following Stanzas, which are taken from the Menæa of the Greeks.

## Hymn

O Blessed Matthias! thou, o spiritual Eden, didst flow like a full river, from the divine fountain; thou

# St. Matthias

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didst water the earth with thy mystic rivulets, and make it fruitful. Do thou, therefore, beseech the Lord that he grant peace and much mercy to our souls.

O Apostle Matthias! thou didst complete the sacred college, from which Judas had fallen; and, by the power of the Holy Ghost, thou didst put to flight the darkness of idolatry by the admirable lightnings of thy wise words. Do thou now beseech the Lord that he grant peace and much mercy to our souls.

He that is the True Vine sent thee, a fruitful branch, bearing the grapes that give out the wine of salvation. When they drank it that before were slaves to ignorance, they turned from the drunkenness of error.

Being made, O glorious Matthias, the chariot of God's Word, thou didst break forever the wheels of error, and the chariots of iniquity. By the divine power, thou didst defeat the idolaters, and destroy the pillars and the temples; but thou didst build up to the Trinity other temples, which echoed with these words: All ye people, praise Christ above all forever!

O venerable Matthias! thou, like a spiritual firmament, didst proclaim the glory of the Only-Begotten Son of God. Let us with one glad voice celebrate the praise of this Apostle, who was effulgent with the Holy Ghost; he was the fisher of them that had gone astray, the light that reflected the divine brightness, the teacher of the mysteries.

O blessed Apostle! the Savior called thee his Friend, because thou didst keep his commandments. Thou art heir to his kingdom, and thou art to sit with him, on a throne, at the last terrible day, O most wise Matthias, who didst complete the twelve of the Apostolic college.

Guided by the sail of the Cross, thou, O blessed one, didst pass over the troubled sea of life, and didst reach the haven of rest. Do thou now vouchsafe to join the glad choir of the Apostles, and beseech the infinite Judge, that he would show himself a merciful Lord unto us.

Thy tongue was a bright lamp of glittering gold, burning with the flame of the Holy Ghost. Thou didst consume all strange doctrines, thou didst quench all fire that was profane, and to them that sat in the darkness of ignorance, thou, O wise Matthias, didst show a brilliant light.

# Feria

February 25th 2022

Text taken from *The Liturgical Year* by Dom Guéranger:



God chastises the world by the deluge; but He is faithful to the promise made to our first parents, that the head of the serpent should be crushed. The human race has to be preserved, therefore, until the time shall come for the fulfillment of this promise. The Ark gives shelter to the just Noah and to his family. The angry waters reach even to the tops of the highest mountains; but the frail yet safe vessel rides peacefully on the waves. When the day fixed by God shall come, they that dwell in this Ark shall once more tread the earth, purified as it then will be; and God will say to them, as heretofore to our first parents: "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth."

Mankind, then, owes its safety to the Ark. O saving Ark, that wast planned by God Himself, and didst sail unhurt amidst the universal wreck! But if we can thus bless this contemptible wood, how fervently should we love that other Ark, of which Noah's was but the figure, and which, for now two thousand years, has been saving and bringing men to their God! How fervently should we bless that Church, the bride of our Jesus, out of which there is no salvation, and in which we find that truth which delivers us from error and doubt, that grace which purifies and heart, and that food which nourishes the soul and fits her for immortality!

O sacred Ark! thou art inhabited, not by one family alone, but by people of every nation under the sun. Ever since that glorious day when our Lord launched thee in the sea of this world, thou hast been tossed by tempests, yet never wrecked. Thou wilt reach the eternal shore, witnessing, by thy unworn vigor and beauty, to the divine guidance of the Pilot who loves thee, both for thine own sake, and for the work thou art doing for His glory. It is by thee that He peoples the world with His elect, and it is for them that He created the world. When He is angry, He remembers mercy because of thee, for it is through thee that He has made His covenant with mankind.

O venerable Ark! be thou our refuge in the deluge. When Rome's great empire, that was drunk with the blood of the martyrs, sank beneath the invasion of the barbarians, the Christians were safe, because sheltered by thee; the waters slowly subsided, and the race of men that had fled to thee for protection, thou conquered according to the flesh, was victorious by the spirit. Kings, who till then had been haughty despots and barbarians, kissed reverently the hand of the slave who was not their pastor and baptized them. New peoples sprang up and, with the Gospel as their law, began their glorious career in those very countries which the Cæsars had degraded and forfeited.

When the Saracen invasion came sweeping into ruin the eastern world, and menacing the whole of Europe, which would have been lost had not the energy of thy sons repelled the infidel horde, was it not within thee, O Ark of salvation! That the few Christians took refuge, who had resisted schism and heresy, and who, whilst the rest of their brethren apostatized from the faith, still kept alive the holy flame? Under thy protection they are even now perpetuating, in their unfortunate countries, the traditions of

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faith, until the divine mercy shall bring happier times, and they be permitted to multiple, as did of old the sons of Sem, in that land once so glorious and holy.

Oh! happy we, dear Church of God! that are sheltered within thee, and protected by thee against that wild sea of anarchy, which the sins of men have let loose on our earth! We beseech our Lord to check the tempest with that word of His omnipotence: "Thus far shalt thou come, and no further, and here shalt thou break thy swelling waves." But if His divine justice has decreed that it prevail for a time, we know that it cannot reach such as dwell in thee. Of this happy number are we. In thy peaceful bosom, dear mother, we find those true riches, the riches of the soul, of which no violence can deprive us. The life thou givest us is the only real life. Our true fatherland is the kingdom formed by thee. Keep us, O thou Ark of our God! Keep us, and all that are dear to us, and shelter us beneath thy roof, until the deluge of iniquity be passed away. When the earth, purified by its chastisements, shall once more receive the seed of the divine word which produces the children of God, those among us whom thou shalt not have led to our eternal home will then venture forth and preach to the world the principles of authority and law, of family and social rights: those sacred principles which came from heaven, and which thou, O holy Church, art commissioned to maintain and teach, even to the end of time.

We borrow from the Mozarabic missal the following eloquent appeal to divine mercy.

Graciously hear, O Lord our God, and forgetting man's iniquity, remember only thine own mercy. Graciously hear us, we beseech thee, O thou that forbiddest us to sin, that commandest us to repent, that permittest us to pray! Thy patience awaits our return to the needed repentance; thy justice inspires us with a fear of the future judgment; thy mercy shows us how we may avoid death. May our sacrifices find favor in thine eyes; our sins, pardon; our wounds, cure; our sighs, pity; our chastisements, consolation; our tears, joy; our days, peace; our duties, honor; our prayers, reward. May our petition produce its effect; our contrition, forgiveness; our consecration, the sacred mystery. May our oblation be rich unto sanctification, our fear be cast out by security, and our blessing be fruitful unto salvation; that thus in all things, by the manifold and overflowing grace of thy mercy, thou mayst bless the people, while thou givest joy to the priest. Amen.



# Feria

February 26th 2022

Text taken from *The Liturgical Year* by Dom Guéranger:



On the Saturday of the preceding week, which was devoted to the consideration of the fall of our first parents both in its own malice and its sad consequences upon us, we turned our thoughts towards our blessed Lady, who, though a daughter of Eve, was, by the special mercy of God, preserved from the stain of original sin. Let us end this week with a like act of veneration and love towards this Immaculate Queen of heaven. We, even the most saintly among us, have not only been stained with original sin; we have our actual sins to grieve over and do penance for. This should give us a higher appreciation of her, the one single member of the human family who never committed the slightest sin. Let us turn towards her, and give expression to our feelings.

We, O Mary! have corrupted our way; we have disobeyed our Lord; we have broken His law; we have preferred our own selfish gratifications to the service we owed Him: but thou wast ever filled with His holy love, and there passed not even a shadow of sin upon thy soul, O spotless mirror of justice and holiness! Virgin most faithful! The grace of thy Son ever triumphed in thy heart. Mystical rose! the fragrance of thy virtues unceasingly ascended to His throne, changing only in its daily increase of sweetness. Tower of ivory! fair beyond measure, without one spot to mar thy purity! House of gold! thou didst ever reflect the precious gifts of the Holy Ghost. Have pity, then, upon us, for we are sinners.

We have obliged our God to repent that He made us: but in thee, dear Mother, He has ever been well please. Thou art the good land, wherein His divine seed yielded its thousandfold of fruit: pray for us, that He give fresh fertility to our hearts, and root up from them the thorns, which choke the heavenly plant. We are defiled by sin; may He, through the merits of the tears thou didst shed at the foot of the cross, mercifully cleanse us. If thy divine Son have already pardoned us, there are the consequences of our sins, which still weaken and humble us, like the sores of wounds that have been cured: take us, sweet Mother of our Jesus, under the mantle of thy tender care. We have too little dread of sin; we are so often on the verge of offending our God; oh! get courage for these poor children of thine, and firmness of resolution, and ambition for holiness of life. Thy intercession must win for us that precious devotedness to God's honour, which kills self-love, the root of sin. Oh! accursed self-love, which may lead us to hell, who are now perhaps in the grace of thy divine Son!

The deluge, brought on by our sins, is hurrying its vengeance against mankind; and we, O Mary! are resolved to seek our refuge in the Ark of the Church, the safe shelter created for us by thy Jesus. But we presume to pray to thee for our brethren throughout the world. Our God has given thee a power to stay His anger, and to win for guilty mortals an extension of mercy: show this power now, for our world is provoking its Master to destroy it. If the flood-gate of His just indignation burst upon the face of our earth, millions of souls that have been redeemed by the Blood of thy divine Son would be lost eternally. If the sweet dove of peace bring her olive-branch only when that terrible justice is appeased, it would be too late for thy loving heart. Come before the deluge, O beautiful rainbow of our Father's reconciliation!

The love of a Mother, who is the very Queen of mercy, emboldens us to sue for universal mercy. Can the prayer of her, in whose purity and innocence the very God of holiness finds no blemish, be denied? Pray Him, then, to pardon us, and all sinners!

We select a few stanzas from the celebrated "Complaint to Mary," composed by the monk Euthymius. The Greek Church has inserted it in her liturgy.

## Canon

O blessed Lady! how shall I worthily lament over my impure life, and the multitude of my grievous sins? I know not how to address thee, most chaste Virgin! I tremble with fear; but do thou help me.

I will speak of my wickedness and my hateful sins; but where shall I begin? Alas! what will become of me, a wretched sinner? Do thou, O blessed Lady, have compassion on me before my departure from this life.

I, having gone in every path that sinner ever trod, how shall I find now the way of salvation, O Immaculate Virgin? Yet have I recourse to thy goodness; despise me not, for I repent from my heart.

My thoughts are ever on the hour of death, and on the dread tribunal; and yet an evil habit violently tempts me to sin. O most pure Virgin, do thou help me.

The deadly enemy of all that is good, seeing me poor and naked, without patron or protector, and most destitute of heavenly virtue, rushes forward that he may devour me. O blessed Lady! forbid him, and drive him far from me.

Alas, unhappy man! in the arrogance of my soul, I have defiled the image of God that was in me. Whither shall I now turn? Hasten to my assistance, O Virgin ever holy!

The choirs and hosts of Angels, the heavenly Powers, tremble in the presence of thy all-powerful Son, O Immaculate Mother! and I, who have noth-

ing wherein to hope, am so devoid of fear!

Suffer me not, O blessed Lady! to perish in the pit, I have fallen into, of my sins. The cruel enemy sees me struggling in despair, and mocks me. Do thou stretch forth thy hand, that can so well deliver me.

Awful is the judgment of God, unhappy senseless soul! and everlasting is the punishment. But turn thee, while yet there is time, and prostrate in prayer before the Mother thy Judge and Lord. Why wouldst thou despair?

O Immaculate Virgin! the multitude of my grievous sins has set a thick darkness around me; the eyes of my soul, and my understanding, are blinded. Wherefore, I beseech thee, quickly lead me, by the brightness of thy light, to sweet freedom from my passions.

Grant me an unceasing sorrow, O blessed Lady, and a fount of tears, that I may wash away my countless sins and wounds, and gain eternal life.

Lo! I thy servant, most sinless Virgin! approach thee in deep reverence and love, for I know the power of thy prayer. Great, indeed, with her Son, is the power of the Mother's prayer, and his heart is moved when she asks, O most blessed Mother!

O Mother worthy of the whole world's praise! thy Son will be to me a merciful and compassionate Judge. Despise me not, but let me find favor in his sight, that he may set me on the right hand of his most just tribunal; for in thee have I put my trust.



# Quinquagesima Sunday

February 27th 2022

Text taken from *The Liturgical Year* by Dom Guéranger:



The Church gives us to-day another subject for our meditation: it is the Vocation of Abraham. When the waters of the Deluge had subsided, and mankind had once more peopled the earth, the immorality, which had previously excited God's anger, again grew rife among men. Idolatry, too, into which the ante-diluvian race had not fallen, now showed itself, and human wickedness seemed thus to have reached the height of its malice. Foreseeing that the nations of the earth would fall into rebellion against him, God resolved to select one people that should be peculiarly his, and among whom should be preserved those sacred truths, which the Gentiles were to lose sight of. This new people was to originate from one man, who would be the father and model of all future believers. This was Abraham. His faith and devotedness merited for him that he should be chosen to be the Father of the children of God, and the head of that spiritual family, to which belong all the elect, both of the old and new Testament. It is necessary, therefore, that we should know Abraham, our father and our model. This is his grand characteristic:- fidelity to God, submissiveness to

his commands, abandonment and sacrifice of everything in order to obey his holy will. Such ought to be the prominent virtues of every Christian. Let us, then, study the life of our great Patriarch, and learn the lessons it teaches.

The following passage from the Book of Genesis, which the Church gives us in her Matins of today, will serve as the text of our considerations.

## From the Book of Genesis

And the Lord said to Abram: Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and magnify thy name, and thou shalt be blessed. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed. So Abram went out as the Lord had commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he went forth from Haran. And he took Sarai his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all the substance which they had gathered, and the souls which they had gotten in Haran: and they went out to go into the land of Chanaan. And when they were come into it, Abram passed through the country into the place of Sichem, as far as the noble vale: now the Chanaanite was at that time in the land. And the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him: To thy seed will I give this land. And he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. And passing on from thence to a mountain, that was on the east side of Bethel, he there

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pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east. He built there, also, an altar to the Lord, and called upon his name.

## Commentary

Could the Christian have a finer model than this holy patriarch, whose docility and devotedness in following the call of his God are so perfect? We are forced to exclaim with the holy fathers: "O true Christian, even before Christ had come on the earth! He had the spirit of the Gospel before the Gospel was preached! He was an apostolic man before the apostles existed!" God calls him: he leaves all things—his country, his kindred, his father's house—and he goes into an unknown land. God leads him, he is satisfied; he fears no difficulties; he never once looks back. Did the apostles themselves more? But see how grand is his reward! God says to him: "In thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed." This Chaldean is to give to the world Him that shall bless and save it. Death will, it is true, close his eyes ages before the dawning of that day, when one of his race, who is to be born of a Virgin and be united personally with the divine Word, shall redeem all generations, past, present, and to come. But meanwhile, till heaven shall be thrown open to receive this Redeemer and the countless just who have won the crown, Abraham shall be honored, in the limbo of expectation, in a manner becoming his great virtue and merit. It is in his bosom, that is, around him, that our first parents (having atoned for their sin by penance), Noah, Moses, David, and all the just, including poor Lazarus, received that rest and happiness which were a foretaste of, and a preparation for, eternal bliss in heaven. Thus is Abraham honored; thus does God requite the love and fidelity of them that serve Him.

When the fullness of time came, the Son of God, who was also Son of Abraham, declared His eternal Father's power by saying that He was about to raise up a new progeny of Abraham's children from the very stones, that is, from the Gentiles. We Christians are this new generation. But are we worthy children of our father? Let us listen to the apostle of the Gentiles: "By faith, Abraham, when called (by God), obeyed to go out into a place which he was to receive for an inheritance: and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith, he abode in the land, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the co-heirs of the same promise; for he looked for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

If, therefore, we be children of Abraham, we must, as the Church tells us during Septuagesima, look upon ourselves as exiles on the earth, and dwell by hope and desire in that true country of ours, from which we are not banished, but towards which we are each day drawing nigher, if, like Abraham, we are faithful in the various stations allotted us by our Lord. We are commanded to use this world as though we used it not; to have an abiding conviction of our not having here a lasting city, and of the misery and danger we incur when we forget that death is one day to separate us from everything we possess in this life.

## Collect

Mercifully hear our prayers, O Lord, we beseech thee; and delivering us from the bonds of sin, preserve us from all adversity. Through, &c.

## Epistle (I Corinthians 13 : 1 – 13)

Brethren: If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not,

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dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; Is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But, when I became a man, I put away the things of a child. We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known. And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.

## Commentary

How appropriate for this Sunday is the magnificent eulogy of Charity, here given by our Apostle! This virtue, which comprises the love both of God and our Neighbour, is the light of our souls. With out Charity, we are in darkness, and all our works are profitless. The very power of working miracles cannot give hope of salvation,

unless he who does them have Charity. Unless we are in Charity, the most heroic acts of other virtues are but one snare more for our souls. Let us beseech our Lord to give us this light. But, let us not forget, that however richly he may bless us with it here below, the fulness of its brightness is reserved for when we are in heaven; and that the sunniest day we can have in this world, is but darkness when compared with the splendour of our eternal charity. Faith will then give place, for we shall be face-to-face with all Truth; Hope will have no object, for we shall possess all Good; charity alone will continue, and, for this reason, is greater than Faith and Hope, which must needs accompany her in this present life. This being the glorious destiny reserved for man, when redeemed and enlightened by Jesus, is it to be wondered at, that we should leave all things, in order to follow such a Master? What should surprise us, and what proves how degraded is our nature by sin, is to see Christians, who have been baptised in this Faith and this Hope, and have received the first-fruits of this Love, indulging, during these days, in every sort of worldliness, which is only the more dangerous because it is fashionable. It would seem as though they were making it their occupation to extinguish within their souls the last ray of heavenly light, like men that had made a covenant with darkness. If there be Charity within our souls, it will make us feel these offences that are committed against our God, and inspire us to pray to him to have mercy on these poor blind sinners, who are our brethren.

## Gradual

Thou art God, who alone dost wonders: thou hast made thy power known among the nations.

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℣. Thou hast delivered thy people, the children of Israel and Joseph, by the strength of thine arm.

## Tract

Sing joyfully to God, all the earth: serve ye the Lord with gladness.

℣. Come in before his presence with joy; know ye that the Lord he is God.

℣. He made us, and not we ourselves: and we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

## Gospel (Luke 18 : 31 – 43)

At that time: Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: And after they have scourged him, they will put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass, when he drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out much more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus standing, commanded him to be brought unto him. And when he was come near, he asked him, Saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

## Commentary

Jesus tells his Apostles that his bitter Passion is at hand; it is a mark of his confidence in them but they understand not what he says. They are as yet too carnal-minded to appreciate Our Saviour's mission; still, they do not abandon him; they love him too much to think of separating from him. Greater by far than this, is the blindness of those false Christians, who, during these three days, not only do not think of the God, who shed his Blood and died for them, but are striving to efface from their souls every trace of the divine image! Let us adore that sweet Mercy, which has drawn us, as it did Abraham, from the midst of a sinful people; and let us, like the blind man of our Gospel, cry out to our Lord, beseeching him to grant us an increase of his holy light. This was his prayer: Lord that I may see. God has given us his light; but he gave it to us, in order to excite within us the desire of seeing more and more clearly. He promised Abraham that he would show him the place he had destined for him; may he grant us, also, to see the land of the living! But our first prayer must be, that he show us himself, as St. Augustine has so beautifully expressed it, that we may love him, and show us our own selves, that we may cease to love ourselves.



# Feria

February 28th 2022

Text taken from *The Liturgical Year* by Dom Guéranger:



The life of a faithful Christian, like that of the patriarch Abraham, is neither more nor less than a courageous journeying onwards to the place destined by him by his Creator. He must put aside everything that could impede his progress, nor must he look back. This is, undoubtedly, hard doctrine; but if we reflect, for a moment, on the dangers which surround fallen man during his earthly pilgrimage, and on what our own sad experience has taught us, we shall not think it hard or strange, that our Saviour has made the renouncing and denying of ourselves an essential condition of our salvation. But, independently of this, is it not far better to put our life under God's guidance, than to keep it in our own? Are we so wise or so strong, as to be able to guide ourselves? We may resist as we please, but God is our sovereign Lord and Master; and by giving us free-will, whereby we may either resist His will or follow it, He has not abdicated His own infinite rights to His creatures' obedience. Our refusal to obey would not make Him less our Master.

Had Abraham, after receiving the divine call, chosen to remain in Chaldea, and refused to break up the home which God had bade him leave, God would then have selected some other man to be the patriarch of His chosen people, and father of that very family, which was to have the Messiah as one of its children. This substitution of one for another in the order of grace is frequently forced upon divine justice; but what a terrible punishment it is

for him that caused the substitution! When a soul refused salvation, heaven does not therefore lose one of its elect: God, finding that He is despised by the one He called, offers the grace to another, until His call is followed.

The Christian life consists in this untiring, unreserved obedience to God. The first effect of this spirit of submission is, that it takes the soul from the region of sin and death, wherein she was wasting away her existence; it takes her from the dark Chaldea, and places her in the promised land of light. Lest she should faint on her way along the narrow path, and fall a victim to the dangers which never leave her because they are within herself, God asks her for sacrifices, and these brace her. Here, again, we have Abraham for our model. God loves him, and promises him the richest of blessings; He gives him a son, as pledge of the promise; and then, shortly after, tests the holy patriarch's devotedness, by commanding him to slay with his own hand this dear child, on whom he has been told to build his hopes!

Man's path on earth is sacrifice. We cannot go out from evil except by the way of self-resistance, nor keep our footing on good ground but by constant combating. Let us imitate Abraham: fix our eyes steadfastly on the eternal hills, and consider this world as a mere passing dwelling, a tent, put up for a few days. Our Jesus has said to us: "I came not to send peace, but the sword; for I came to separate." Separation, then, and trial are sure to be sent us; but we are equally sure that they are for our good, since they are sent us by Him who so loved us that He became one of ourselves. But this same Jesus has also said: "Where thy treasure is, there too is thy heart." Christians! can our treasure be in this wretched

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world? No, it must be in that fair land above. There, then, must we be, in desire and affection.

These are the thoughts the Church would have us meditate upon during these days, which immediately precede the forty of Lent. They will help to purify our hearts and make them long to be with their God. The noise of the world's sins and scandals reaches our ears: let us pray that the kingdom of God may come to us and to those poor sinners; for God's infinite mercy can change them, if He will, into children of Abraham. Not a day passes but He so changes many a sinner. He has, perhaps, shown that miracle of His mercy to us, and those words of the apostle may be applied to us: "You, who some time were afar off, are now made nigh (to God) by the Blood of Christ."

Let us pray for ourselves and for all sinners, in these beautiful words of the Mozarabic breviary.

**W**e beseech thee, O almighty God! that whereas our sins have angered thee against us, our prayers and praise, which thou inspirest, may propitiate and please thee: that thus, by thy mercy, the vexations of this world may not cast down our soul, nor hurtful delusion possess her, nor the darkness of unbelief surround her; but may we gleam with the light of thy countenance, wherewith thou hast signed us, and ever, by firmness in the true faith, walk in the brightness of the same. Amen.



# Feria

March 1st 2022



Text taken from *The Liturgical Year* by Dom Guéranger:

The fundamental rule of Christian life is, as almost every page of the Gospel tells us, that we should live out of the world, separate ourselves from the world, hate the world. The world is that ungodly land which Abraham, our sublime model, is commanded by God to quit. It is that Babylon of our exile and captivity, where we are beset with dangers. The beloved disciple cries out to us: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him." Our most merciful Jesus, at the very time when He was about to offer Himself as a sacrifice for all men, spoke these awful words: "I pray not for the world." When we were baptized and were signed with the glorious and indelible character of Christians, the condition required of us, and accepted, was that we should renounce the works and pomps of the world (which we expressed under the name of Satan); and this solemn baptismal promise we have often renewed.

But what is the meaning of our promise to renounce the world? Is it that we cannot be Christians unless we flee into the desert and separate ourselves from our fellow creatures? Such cannot be God's will for all, since in that same Scripture wherein He commands us to flee from the world, He also tells us what are our duties to each other, and sanctions and blesses those ties which He Himself has willed should exist among us. His apostle also tells us to use this world as though we did not use it. It is

not, therefore, forbidden us to live in, and to use, the world. Then, what means this renouncing of the world? Can there be contradiction in God's commandments? Is it possible that we are condemned to wander blindly on the brink of a precipice, into which we must at last inevitably fall?

There is neither contradiction nor snare. If by the world we mean these visible things around us which God created in His power and goodness; if we mean this outward world, which He made for His own glory and our benefit; it is worthy of its divine Author, and to us, if we but use it aright, as a ladder whereby our souls may ascend to their God. Let us gratefully use this world; go through it without making it the object of our hope; not waste upon it that love which God alone deserves; and ever be mindful that we are not made for this, but for another and a happier, world.

But the majority of men are not thus prudent in their use of the world. Their hearts are fixed upon it, and not upon heaven. Hence it was that when the Creator deigned to come into this world, in order that He might save it, the world knew Him not. Men were called after the name of the object of their love. They shut their eyes to the light; they became darkness; God calls them "the world."

In this sense, then, the world is everything that is opposed to our Lord Jesus Christ, that refuses to recognize Him, and that resists His divine guidance. Those false maxims which tend to weaken the love of God in our souls; which recommend the vanities that fasten our hearts to this present life; which cry down everything that can raise us above our weaknesses or vices; which decoy and gratify our corrupt

# Heria

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nature by dangerous pleasures, which, far from helping us to the attainment of our last end, only mislead us—all these are “the world.”

This world is everywhere, and holds a secret league within our very hearts. Sin has brought it into this exterior world created by God for Himself, and has given it prominence. Now we must conquer it, and trample upon it, or we shall perish with it. There is no being neutral; we must be its enemies or its slaves. During these three days, its triumphs are fearful; and thousands of those who, at their Baptism, swore eternal enmity to it, are enrolling themselves its votaries. Let us pray for them; but let us also tremble for ourselves; and that our courage may not fail us, let us ponder those consoling words which our Savior, at His last Supper, addressed to His eternal Father. He is speaking of His disciples, and He says: “Father! I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. I pray not, that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil.”

As an appropriate conclusion of this day, we may use this formula of the Ambrosian liturgy. It puts two truths in contrast: the spiritual indifference of worldlings, and the dread severity of God’s future judgment.

## Ingressa

(Dominica in Quinquagesima)

Sweet is this present life, but it passes away; terrible, O Christ, is thy judgment, and it endures for ever. Let us, therefore, cease to love what is unstable, and fix our thoughts on the fear of what is eternal; saying: Christ, have mercy upon us!

