

TRINITY SUNDAY
THE EIGHTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME
26 May – 1 June

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- Sun. **The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity**
May 26 **IN GOD IS EVERY KIND OF LOVE**
 From Revelations of Divine Love by St. Julian of Norwich
- Mon. **Memorial of St Augustine of Canterbury**
27 **The Message that Converted England**
 A History by the Venerable Bede (c.673- 735)
- Tues. **Tuesday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**
28 **ON THE ECCLESIAL ASPECT OF RELIGIOUS POVERTY**
 On Religious Poverty, From The Published Articles of Ernest E. Larkin, O.Carm.
- Wed. **Wednesday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**
29 **WHAT WE NEED TO ENTER GOD’S KINGDOM**
 Reflection from a Sermon by Jerome Seripando, OSA (1493-1563)
- Thurs. **Thursday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**
30 **KEEPING OUR EYES FIXED ON JESUS**
 A Reflection from a book by Anthony Bloom (1914-2003)
- MONASTIC DESERT DAY**
- Fri. **The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**
31 **AT THE CENTER OF GOD’S PLAN FOR REDEMPTION**
 Reflections developed from texts in Journeying with the Lord
 by Carlo Cardinal Martini
- Sat. **The Memorial of St. Justin the Martyr**
June 1 **ST JUSTIN, PHILOSOPHER AND MARTYR (c. 100-165)**
 From the General Audience Address by Pope Benedict XVI, 21 March 2007

Sunday

IN GOD IS EVERY KIND OF LOVE

A Reflection from Revelations of Divine Love by St. Julian of Norwich

“The eleven disciples made their way to Galilee, to the mountain to which he had summoned them. At the sight of him, those who had entertained doubts fell down in homage” (Mt. 28: 16-20). I saw the blessed Trinity working. I saw that there were three attributes: fatherhood, motherhood and Lordship—all in one God.

In the almighty Father, we have been sustained and blessed with regard to our created, natural being from before all time. By the skill and wisdom of the Second Person, we are sustained, restored, and saved with regard to our sensual nature, for he is our Mother, brother and Savior. In our good Lord, the Holy Spirit, we have, after our life and hardship is over, that reward and rest which surpasses forever any and everything we can possibly desire, such is the Spirit’s abounding grace and magnificent courtesy. Our life too is threefold. In the first stage we have our being, in the second our growth, and in the third perfection.

The first is nature, the second is mercy, and the third is grace. For the first, I realized that the great power of the Trinity is our Father, its deep wisdom our Mother, and its great love our Lord. All this we have by nature and in our created and essential being. Moreover, I saw that the Second Person, who is our Mother with regard to our essential nature, that this same dear Person has become our Mother in the matter of our sensual nature. We are God’s creation twice, in our essential being and in our sensual nature. Our being is that higher part that we have in our Father, God Almighty, and the Second Person of the Trinity is Mother of this basic nature, providing the substance in which we are rooted & grounded. He is our Mother also in mercy, for he took our sensual nature upon himself.

Thus, the phrase “Our Mother” describes the different ways in which he works, ways which are separate in us but held together in him. In our Mother, Christ, we grow and develop; in his mercy, he reforms and restores us; through the passion, death and resurrection he has united himself to our being. So does our Mother work in mercy for all the children who respond to him and obey him.

Grace works with mercy too, and especially in two ways, in the work of the Third Person, the Holy Spirit. He works by rewarding and giving. The reward is the generous gift of truth that the Lord makes to the one who has suffered and the gift is the magnanimous gesture he makes freely by his grace. It is perfect and far beyond the deserts of any creature. Let us rest in all these Divine loves.

Monday

The Message that Converted England

A History by the Venerable Bede

It was in the Isle of Thanet that Augustine and his 40 companions landed. They had brought interpreters from among the Franks and King Ethelbert of Kent had heard of the Christian religion, having a Christian wife of the Frankish royal house named Bertha whom he had married on condition that she should have freedom to hold and practice her faith unhindered, with Bishop Liuhard as her chaplain. Augustine sent messengers to Ethelbert, saying they came from Rome bearing glad news which infallibly assured all who would receive it of eternal joy in heaven with the living and true God.

On receiving this message, the king ordered them to remain on the island and gave directions that they were to be provided with all necessities until he could decide what action to take. After some days, the king came to the island and, sitting down in the open air, summoned Augustine and his companions to an audience. The monks approached the king carrying a silver cross and the likeness of our Lord and Savior painted on a board. First of all, they offered prayer to God, singing a litany and when, at the king's command, Augustine had sat down and preached the word of life to the king and his court, the king said: "Your words and promises are fair indeed, but they are new and strange to us and I cannot accept them and abandon the age-old beliefs of the whole English nation. But since you have traveled far and are sincere in your desire to instruct us in what you believe to be true and excellent, we will not harm you. We will receive you hospitably and take care to supply you with all that you need, nor will we forbid you to preach and win any people you can to your religion."

The king then granted them a dwelling in the city of Canterbury, the chief city of his realm, and he allowed them provisions and did not withdraw their freedom to preach. As soon as they had occupied the house they began to emulate the life of the apostles and the primitive Church. They were constantly at prayer; they fasted and kept vigils; they preached the word of life to whomever they could. They accepted only the necessary food from those they taught. They practiced what they preached, and were willing to endure any hardship, and even to die for the Faith they proclaimed. A number of heathen, admiring the simplicity of their holy lives and the comfort of their heavenly message, believed and were baptized. On the east side of the city stood an old church, built in honor of St. Martin during the Roman occupation of Britain. Here they first assembled to sing psalms, to pray, to say Mass, to preach and to baptize.

At length the king and others, edified by the pure lives of these holy men and their gracious promises, the truth of which they confirmed by many miracles, believed and were baptized. Thenceforward great numbers gathered each day to hear the word of God, forsaking their heathen rites, and entering the unity of Christ's holy Church as believers. While the king was pleased at their faith and conversion, he would not compel anyone to accept Christianity, for he had learned from his instructors and guides to salvation that the service of Christ must be accepted freely.

Tuesday

ON THE ECCLESIAL ASPECT OF RELIGIOUS POVERTY

On Religious Poverty, From The Published Articles of Ernest E. Larkin, O.Carm. (1922-2006)

Our real effort in concretizing poverty must be in terms of building up a poverty of spirit that is personally authentic and socially a witness. Let me suggest a few approaches.

What promotes a sound spiritual life promotes poverty of spirit. Religious practices in themselves, especially acts of self-denial, have real efficacy today as always. Cardinal Newman's words remain applicable even with our incarnational apostolic preoccupations:

I must say this ... that the comforts of life are the main cause of our want of love of God; and, much as we may lament and struggle against it, till we learn to dispense with them in good measure, we shall not overcome it. Till we, in a certain sense, detach ourselves from our bodies, our minds will not be in a state to receive divine impressions, and to exert heavenly aspirations. A smooth and easy life, an uninterrupted enjoyment of the goods of Providence, full meals, soft raiment, well-furnished homes, the pleasures of sense, the feeling of security, the consciousness of wealth — these and the like, if we are not careful, choke up all the avenues of the soul.

People who satisfy every need, who know no want or deprivation, who indulge, as Paul VI said, "in the little extras and luxuries" are less likely to be able to taste and see how good the Lord is. The emphasis today, however, should not be on practices but on personal responsibility. In the past, we seem to have begun with practices and hoped that the spirit would eventually overtake the forms. This was true in all areas of spiritual life. The young were taught, for example, that they must get permission to use things, to say "our" instead of "my." These practices were ordered to teach dependency on God (through dependency on a superior) and a non-possessive spirit (through denying private ownership). In the spirit of Vatican II should we not reverse this process and from the very beginning put the responsibility for expressing poverty in proper forms on the individual and on the community? This emphasis is positive and personalist; we do not write off achievement; we only change the emphasis. We would begin with a responsible use of things rather than self-denial as such, and endeavor to see that use as a service to a person, the Person who is Christ Jesus. This would assume that personal encounter with Christ, that experience of God which is the beginning of all true spiritual life.

Wednesday

WHAT WE NEED TO ENTER GOD'S KINGDOM

Reflection from a sermon by Jerome Seripando, OSA (1493-1563)

Jesus' teaching on patience in trials could hardly be clearer. Consider how Jesus himself explained it when asked by the Sons of Zebedee for the first places in his Kingdom. He responded by asking them whether they could drink the cup of suffering he was to drink. He was asking them, and us, to reflect on what we most deeply desire. Did their request mean that they wanted only God's will and God's reign to be effective for all, or did they ask because of some personal need they felt? When you answer this question begin by asking what you are willing to suffer for. Are you prepared to patiently bear all sorts of adversities and torments in order to win the Kingdom? But the Kingdom is simply God and God's will.

Jesus told a parable about a noble who went off to gain a kingdom and left each of his chief servants with a large sum of money that he charged them to use to make a profit. The noble symbolizes Jesus himself, who has gone to Heaven in order to bring God's reign to its fullness and completion. But he tells us he will return and question us about our management of what he gave us before he departed. In the parable, the new king rewarded the diligent but took his gifts and gave no reward to the servant who made no profit with what he had originally been given.

It is Jesus' intention that his faithful servants should daily struggle, even endure great difficulties, in order to help in completing the Reign of God here on earth. He gives us graces and gifts, and they are great ones. We have to be ready to pass through great trials in order to do his will. Jesus will return and his coming will bring judgment. We want to receive a share in the crown, and so all the riches and goods our noble leader has obtained. Only those will share the crown who will have shared suffering as well.

Let us look up to heaven and open not just our mouths in prayer but our hearts. We pray: "Your Kingdom come!" But if we seek Jesus Christ who sits at the right hand of the Heavenly Father we cannot reach him unless he first enters our hearts. To attain heaven we need the virtue of humility. To obtain a reward we need to be justified and this means having fortitude, constancy and patience. Look to yourself when you pray "Your Kingdom come." You are actually asking for five gifts. You seek the grace and favor of God. You seek union with God and God's Son Jesus Christ. You seek the virtue of humility. You seek justification from God. You seek the strength and patience to bear the struggles and persecutions of life. Let's pray for these constantly; let's ask that God's grace may bring us to the company of all the saints and angels and find our home there.

Thursday

KEEPING OUR EYES FIXED ON JESUS

A Reflection from a book by Anthony Bloom (1914-2003)

“As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, there was a blind beggar, Bartimaeus, sitting beside the road. On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout: “Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!” I believe that one of the things that prevents us from being truly ourselves and finding our way in life is that we do not realize the extent to which we are blind. If only we knew that we are blind how eagerly we would seek healing. We might, as Bartimaeus may have done, look to human help—to doctors, priests, healers and so on—until we gave up, having lost all hope “in the sons of men in whom there is no salvation”, as Scripture puts it. We might then turn to God. But even then we don’t realize what we are blind to.

What we see are visible things that seem to give us joy or prosperity or something like that. We are blinded not by the absence of sight but by the many things that are our visible world. We are blind to the fact that this world can’t fill the emptiness that is within us all. Think of our universe as ever-expanding and yet we can grasp this fact and a great deal about the universe itself. But knowing, seeing, such things doesn’t fill us within. In fact, when we turn within we find that nothing in the immensity of the universe can fill us. God alone, who has made us for himself, is the only one who can fill us and satisfy us completely.

There is a sense in which the visible universe has no “depth”. We can penetrate and understand everything in the universe, though gradually, but the knowledge doesn’t “fill” the emptiness within us. The center of a sphere is a point from which the sphere radiates in all directions. We know the fact but that is all there is to the matter. If you try to go “within” that center point you just end up back on the surface of the sphere itself. You go in a kind of circle. But there is a “depth” to the human heart and it can’t be measured, or filled, by anything in the visible, knowable universe.

The “depth” within us comes from God. What we need to grasp is the fact that only when we “see” the difference between visible reality and divine reality can we know what to seek—what we need to “see”. We are “blind beggars” painfully aware of our inability to see what we need to see to find salvation. Jesus is passing by. Will we let him go without begging for the ability to “see” divine reality? Are we willing to become blind to the visible in order to see the divine? Can we let Jesus show us where salvation and the fullness that ends our seeking really lies? We must lead one another to Jesus and to the sight we need. Only when we fix our gaze on Jesus do we become able to see. The gift he gives is faith and a faith that sets us free to seek help where it really is to be found.

Friday

AT THE CENTER OF GOD'S PLAN FOR REDEMPTION

Reflections developed from texts in Journeying with the Lord by Carlo Cardinal Martini

At the center of God's redemptive plan, we find a woman, Mary. She is the first in the human chain of believers from which the Church is born. As Mother of the Church, she is our mother and a model for all believers. We see what this means in the stories of the Annunciation and of her Visitation to Elizabeth. We repeat her "Fiat" and her Magnificat, and so we hear our call in hearing hers.

When Adam and Eve fell their first reaction was fear. But St. Paul tells us that we are now free from fear: "*Before the world was made, God chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless and to live through love in his presence*" (Eph. 1:4). We see this in Mary, who hoped in God in a way that cast out all fear. We have been predestined as was Mary and so we can be freed from fear if we believe as she did. She makes us proud to be human persons and she shows us our life and mission, as they are in faith. We have only to imitate her in saying "*I am the servant of the Lord*". As the Lord's servant, Mary goes to Elizabeth in love.

The Magnificat is the joyous hymn Mary proclaims at her encounter with Elizabeth. Feeling herself welcomed by her kinswoman, and welcomed in faith, she feels herself understood in the secret of her maternity through the Holy Spirit. So she breaks into a song of joy, exulting in God's saving works through human history and in her. God's Plan is being accomplished through her and she invites us to allow that to happen through us—through our actions mirroring her deed in coming to Elizabeth in loving help.

In the canticle, we see that the joy in Mary's heart depends on the achievement of the plan of salvation that is the coming of God in human form. "*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my savior*". She speaks as an individual person immersed in God's creation of saving history and shows us her own and our destiny in and through that history. She speaks individually but ends the song with a reference to all God's People. "*God has come to the help of Israel, his servant, mindful of his mercy.*" We are Israel exactly because we have chosen to be God's servants.

Mary has become the servant of God's People in serving its destiny. That is what we too are called to become. That is what makes the Magnificat a prophecy of the coming of the Church. Mary aims at the perfect completion of God's Plan in the realization of the Kingdom of God and invites us to imitate her. We do this whenever we step forward to help another to fulfill her or his part in God's plan. That is what she was doing by helping Elizabeth fulfill her role as John the Baptist's mother. If we knew the part that each person we lovingly help is to play in realizing this Plan we would see how our loving and living parallels Mary's. We do know it in faith and collaborate in working for peace, to put aside resentments and realize God's mercy. When we renew faith that God works through us we join Mary in the Magnificat. We are doing it now with intention. Let's do it all day long.

Saturday

ST JUSTIN, PHILOSOPHER AND MARTYR (c. 100-165)

From the General Audience Address by Pope Benedict XVI, 21 March 2007

Justin was born in about the year 100 near ancient Shechem, Samaria, in the Holy Land; he spent a long time seeking the truth, moving through the various schools of the Greek philosophical tradition.

In the first chapters of his *Dialogue with Tryphon*, a mysterious figure, an old man he met on the seashore, initially leads him into a crisis by showing him that it is impossible for the human being to satisfy his aspiration to the divine solely with his own forces. He then pointed out to him the ancient prophets as the people to turn to in order to find the way to God and "true philosophy". In taking his leave, the old man urged him to pray that the gates of light would be opened to him.

The story foretells the crucial episode in Justin's life: at the end of a long philosophical journey, a quest for the truth, he arrived at the Christian faith. He founded a school in Rome where, free of charge, he initiated students into the new religion, considered as the true philosophy. Indeed, in it he had found the truth, hence, the art of living virtuously.

For this reason, he was reported and beheaded in about 165 during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher-emperor to whom Justin had actually addressed one of his *Apologia*.

These - *the two Apologies* and the *Dialogue with the Hebrew, Tryphon* - are his only surviving works. In them, Justin intends above all to illustrate the divine project of creation and salvation, which is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the *Logos*, that is, the eternal Word, eternal Reason, creative Reason.

Every person as a rational being shares in the *Logos*, carrying within himself a "seed", and can perceive glimmers of the truth. Thus, the same *Logos* who revealed himself as a prophetic figure to the Hebrews of the ancient Law also manifested himself partially, in "seeds of truth", in Greek philosophy.

Now, Justin concludes, since Christianity is the historical and personal manifestation of the *Logos* in his totality, it follows that "whatever things were rightly said among all men are the property of us Christians" (*Second Apology of St Justin Martyr*, 13: 4).

In this way, although Justin disputed Greek philosophy and its contradictions, he decisively oriented any philosophical truth to the *Logos*, giving reasons for the unusual "claim" to truth and universality of the Christian religion. If the Old Testament leaned towards Christ, just as the symbol is a guide to the reality represented, then Greek philosophy also aspired to Christ and the Gospel, just as the part strives to be united with the whole.

And he said that these two realities, the Old Testament and Greek philosophy, are like two paths that lead to Christ, to the *Logos*. This is why Greek philosophy cannot be opposed to Gospel truth, and Christians can draw from it confidently as from a good of their own.

Therefore, my venerable Predecessor, Pope John Paul II, described St Justin as a "pioneer of positive engagement with philosophical thinking - albeit with cautious discernment... Although he continued to hold Greek philosophy in high esteem after his conversion, Justin claimed with power and clarity that he had found in Christianity 'the only sure and profitable philosophy' (*Dial.* 8: 1)" (*Fides et Ratio*, n. 38).

Justin, and with him other apologists, adopted the clear stance taken by the Christian faith for the God of the philosophers against the false gods of the pagan religion.

In a time like ours, marked by relativism in the discussion on values and on religion - as well as in inter-religious dialogue - this is a lesson that should not be forgotten.