

# FOURTEENTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

7-13 July2024

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- Sun.      **The Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
July 7    **TRUSTING IN GOD'S LOVE HERE & NOW**  
            A Reflection from Catechesis by Symeon the New Theologian
- Mon.      **Memorial of Blessed Eugene III**  
8          **PSALM 145[144]**  
            From the General Audience Address of Pope Benedict, 1 February 2006
- Tues.     **Tuesday of the 14<sup>th</sup> Week of the Year**  
9          **JESUS PREACHES AND HEALS**  
            From the Angelus Message of Pope Francis on 31 January 2021
- Wed.      **Wednesday of the 14<sup>th</sup> Week of the Year**  
10        **I HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE GRACE OF MEETING**  
            **THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE LIKE JESUS OF NAZARETH**  
            From Companions of Jesus by Fr Jon Sobrino SJ
- Thurs.    **SOLEMNITY OF OUR HOLY FATHER BENEDICT**  
11        **WHAT SANCTIFIES A PERSON**  
            A Reflection from a Sermon by Bl. Gueric of Igny
- MONASTIC DESERT DAY**
- Fri.      **Friday of the 14<sup>th</sup> Week of the Year**  
12        **PRAYING FOR HELP TO LIVE AS A MONK SHOULD**  
            A prayer composed by St. Anselm of Canterbury
- Sat.      **Saturday of the Blessed Virgin Mary**  
13        **ASPIRING AFTER THE HEIGHTS OF LOVE FOR GOD**  
            Reflections developed from On the Love of God by  
            St. Francis de Sales

Sunday

## **TRUSTING IN GOD'S LOVE HERE & NOW**

### **A Reflection from Catechesis by St. Symeon the New Theologian**

Many people never stop saying—and I have heard them myself—that if only they had lived in the days of the apostles and been counted worthy to gaze upon Christ as was then possible, they would have become holy. People who say this don't listen to the Gospel of this Sunday and, worse, don't realize that Christ speaks to them, and speaks throughout the entire world, just as he did to those who saw and spoke with Him in the flesh. We believe Christ is God. We believe the Father is always in the Son and the Son is always in the Father, and we believe that God is the same now and always and always speaks the same message and works in the sacraments in the same way. We believe the words Christ spoke through the Spirit: *"My Father is still working and so am I"*.

Do you think that merely hearing Christ's words now and being taught through them about the Kingdom and about Christ himself is not the same as having seen him in the body? But did those who saw him all believe in him? In fact, the situation is the same as it was in Christ's time, except that for us the situation is better. We are more easily led to faith, and to a deeper faith and conviction, than those who saw and heard him in the flesh. Or is your response like that of the people of Nazareth when he visited them in the flesh?

Then Christ appeared to uncomprehending people and appeared to be a person of lowly station. Now he is proclaimed as true God. Then in his body he associated with tax collectors and sinners and ate with them. Now he is seated at the right hand of God and is never in any way separated from the Father and the Spirit. We are firmly persuaded that it is Christ who feeds the entire world and we declare—if we believe—that without Christ nothing came into being. Then people of the lowliest estate held him in contempt: *"Isn't this the son of Mary and of Joseph the carpenter?"* This is the one kings and rulers now worship as the Son of the True God and himself true God. Yes, now in the faith of all, he is glorified and glorifies those who worship him in spirit and in truth, even though he may punish us when we sin. Christ transforms us from, so to speak, clay into iron.

In the flesh, he seemed no different from others. Now we believe that the formless and invisible God, without change or alteration, assumed a human form and showed himself to be a normal human being. He ate, he drank, he slept, he sweated, and he grew tired. He did everything other people do except sin. It was very exceptional for anyone to recognize him in that human body as the God who made heaven and earth. *"You, he said to Peter, "are blessed, for flesh and blood has not revealed me to you but my Heavenly Father."*

Yes, all this is always revealed to us! And it is certain that anyone who hears Christ cry out through the Holy Gospels and proclaim the will of the Heavenly Father, and yet doesn't obey him with fear and trembling, is like those who refused to believe in him when he was present in the flesh. There is reason to believe that those who now refuse to obey would regard him in the flesh not as true God but as an enemy of God—as actually happened in more than one instance. How can you fail to be grateful that God has made the path to faith so much easier for you? You only have to walk it truly. This is holiness.

Monday

## PSALM 145[144]

### From the General Audience Address of Pope Benedict, 1 February 2006

1. ... The Psalm is raised to the Lord who is invoked and described as "King" (cf. Ps 145[144]: 1), a depiction of the divine that is also dominant in other psalmic hymns (cf. Ps 47[46], 93[92]; 96[95]-99[98]).

Indeed, the spiritual center of our canticle is constituted precisely by an intense and passionate celebration of the divine kingship. The Hebrew word *malkut*, "reign", is repeated in it four times, almost as if to indicate the four cardinal points of being and of history (cf. Ps 145[144]: 11-13).

We know that this royal symbolism, which was also central in Christ's preaching, is the expression of God's saving project: he is not indifferent to human history; on the contrary, he desires to put a plan of harmony and peace for human history into practice with us and for us.

The whole of humanity is called together to implement this plan in order that it comply with the divine saving will, a will that is extended to all "men", to "all generations", from "age to age".

It is a universal action that uproots evil from the world and instills in it the "glory" of the Lord, that is, his personal, effective and transcendent presence.

2. The prayerful praise of the Psalmist, who makes himself the voice of all the faithful and today would like to be the voice of all of us, is directed to this heart of the Psalm, placed precisely at the centre of the composition. The loftiest biblical prayer is, in fact, the celebration of the works of salvation, which reveal the Lord's love for his creatures.

In this Psalm the Psalmist continues to praise the divine "name", that is, the person of the Lord (cf. vv. 1-2), who manifests himself in his historical action: indeed, his "works", "splendor", "wonderful works", "mighty deeds", "greatness", "justice", "patience", "compassion", "grace", "goodness" and "love" are mentioned.

It is a prayer in the form of a litany that proclaims God's entry into human events in order to bring the whole of created reality to a salvific fullness. We are not at the mercy of dark forces nor alone with our freedom, but rather, we are entrusted to the action of the mighty and loving Lord, who has a plan for us, a "reign" to establish (cf. v. 11).

3. This "kingdom" does not consist of power and might, triumph and oppression, as unfortunately is often the case with earthly kingdoms; rather, it is the place where compassion, love, goodness, grace and justice are manifested, as the Psalmist repeats several times in the flow of verses full of praise.

Verse 8 sums up this divine portrait: the Lord is "slow to anger, abounding in love". These words are reminiscent of God's presentation of himself on Sinai when he said: "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34: 6).

We have here a preparation for the profession of faith in God of St John the Apostle, who simply tells us that he is love: "*Deus caritas est*" (cf. I Jn 4: 8, 16).

4. Our attention, as well as being fixed on these beautiful words that portray to us a God who is "slow to anger" and "full of compassion", always ready to forgive and to help, is also fixed on the very beautiful verse 9 which follows: "How good is the Lord to all, compassionate to all his creatures". These are words to meditate upon, words of consolation, a certainty that he brings to our lives.

Tuesday

## **JESUS PREACHES AND HEALS**

**From the Angelus Message of Pope Francis on 31 January 2021**

The two characteristic elements of Jesus' action are: *preaching*, and the *thaumaturgic work* of healing: He preaches and heals. Both of these aspects stand out ... but preaching is emphasized the most; exorcism is presented as a confirmation of his singular "authority" and his teaching. Jesus preaches with his own authority, as someone who possesses a doctrine derived from himself, and not like the scribes who repeated previous traditions and laws that had been handed down. They repeated words, words, words, only words: that is how they were. Just words. Instead in Jesus' words have authority; Jesus is authoritative. And this touches the heart.

Jesus' teaching has the same authority as God who speaks. Indeed, with a single command he easily frees the possessed man from the evil one, and heals him. Why? Because his word does what he says. Because he is the definitive prophet. But why do I say this, that he is the definitive prophet? Let us remember Moses' promise: Moses says, "After me, long after, a prophet like me will come" — like me! — "who will teach you". (cf. *Dt* 18:15). Moses proclaimed Jesus as the definitive prophet. This is why he speaks not with human, but with divine authority, because he has the power to be the definitive prophet, that is, the Son of God who saves us, who heals us all.

The second aspect, healing, shows that Christ's preaching is intended to defeat the evil present in humankind and the world. His word is pointedly directed against the kingdom of Satan: it puts him in crisis and makes him recoil, obliging him to leave the world. Touched by the Lord's command, this possessed man is freed and transformed into a new person. In addition, Jesus' preaching conforms to a logic that is contrary to that of the world and of the evil one: His words reveal the upheaval of a mistaken ordering of things.

Jesus is authoritative, who attracts people by his authority, and also the prophet who liberates, the promised prophet who is the Son of God who heals. Do we listen to Jesus' words, which are authoritative? Always, do not forget, carry a small copy of the Gospel in your pocket or in your bag, to read throughout the day, to listen to that authoritative word of Jesus. And then, we all have problems, we all have our sins, we all have spiritual afflictions; let us ask Jesus: "Jesus, you are the prophet, the Son of God, the one who was promised to us to heal us. Heal me!" Asking Jesus to heal our sins, our ills.

*Wednesday*

## **I HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE GRACE OF MEETING THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE LIKE JESUS OF NAZARETH**

**From Companions of Jesus by Fr Jon Sobrino SJ**

In El Salvador I have been given the grace of meeting thousands of people like this Jesus of Nazareth. I recall Fr Rutilio Grande and Archbishop Oscar Romero. I remember my Jesuit confreres martyred in UCA University, along with their housekeeper Julia Elba and her daughter Celina. I remember the four American women, Ita, Maura, Dorothy and Jean, as well as many hundreds of lay people and campesino men and women.

It is well known that the murder of the Jesuits, because of its magnitude and international repercussions, and the historical moment when it occurred, undoubtedly helped bring about a negotiated end to the war. This salvation is real. This means, by their life and death, these martyrs have opened a track in history along which it is easier to travel...hunger and thirst for justice for the crucified people...tireless analysis and condemnation of the truth about their crucifixion, and steadfastness and fidelity ... in seeing them taken down from the cross.

These martyrs, men and women were believers, Christians. I do not mention this here as something obvious to be taken for granted, but as something that was central in their lives. When we spoke in our Jesuit community about matters of faith, our words were sparing but really meant. We spoke about the kingdom of God and the God of the kingdom, the Christian life as the following of Jesus, we spoke of the Historical Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth.

In the university, where my late brothers taught, we recalled our Christian inspiration as something central, as what gave life, direction, force and meaning to all our work, and explained the risks that this life involved. There was always plain speaking about the kingdom of God and the option for the poor, derived from the Gospel. The Christian inspiration of the university was never just rhetoric when these Jesuits talked about it, and people understood that this was the inspiration of our lives.

It is important to know, that in spite of the risks of preaching the Gospel, the Good News to the poor, the reality was full of joy. Joy. That a Jesuit priest might be assassinated the same way as a poor peasant, that ironically is a source of joy. That is what we were called to do, trying to make the suffering of others our own suffering. And also, and this is the irony that the joys of others might be our own joys too. That is what the Gospel option for the poor means in El Salvador and elsewhere.

Thursday

## WHAT SANCTIFIES A PERSON

### A Reflection from a Sermon by Bl. Gueric of Igny

*“God sanctified him through faith and meekness”*, says the Book of Wisdom. The actual subject of this verse is Moses but it is fitting to apply it to our Holy Father Benedict because he too was for so many a teacher and guide to salvation. Both Moses and Benedict are our teachers because neither lived otherwise than he taught. This wouldn't have been possible if both hadn't had the two virtues of faith and meekness. Consider their examples.

What could be more notable than a faith that scorned wealth and power, even as a youth? Both preferred to suffer the hardships of the world for the sake of God rather than live for personal gain or pleasure. What could be holier than their meekness? Benedict refused to be provoked even by those who tried to kill him with poisoned wine, and Moses was said to be the meekest of all on earth. I remember reading that Benedict's gentleness held even for those who spoke against him or tried to do him harm.

This didn't mean that either lacked a burning zeal to overcome sin. If this had been absent they would have sunk into tepidity. They realized that the meekness of peacefulness must be sprinkled with the salt of zeal for justice and right. We must seek meekness but at the same time burns with faith and zeal for right.

Apply these lessons to yourself. We too will be sanctified through faith and meekness. Our meekness, however, will remain unblemished only if faith leads it. Faith too must be true and unblemished, then, and it is so only if it is living and vigorous. Benedict and Moses weren't afraid even of kings. The reason is that they considered ordinary things as nothing compared with the things of God. Faith gives two special gifts. It speaks penetratingly of the future and gives a keen perception of present things. It does the first through hope and the second by reason of trust in God's providence.

Faith sees what is not yet present and what for now is invisible because it lays hold of the good things to come as if they were already present. It makes them exist in every heart that is faith-filled. For instance, it discloses the presence of God in all things and places. This is what Scripture means when it says, *“The just one lives by faith”*. But let us be mindful that this is *“faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things that are not apparent”*.

If we push God behind our backs, as if we had no faith, we put aside the fear of God. Then we are left with our attention fixed on empty things. But how terrible that will make the Last Day! Living faith stands before God anxious only to see God's will. It stands at Judgment with serenity and beholds God's glory with joy. Let us be watchful, then, and stand firm in faith. The person whom faith arouses through fear of the Lord isn't able to slumber due to negligence. The one whose faith establishes in hope, can't falter through lack of confidence.

But everything must be done in love. Then indeed will it be said that faith and meekness sanctify us, as it did our Father Benedict. Our faith engenders love. It is by our love that we will be meek and holy like Jesus and we will stand in the presence of God with him forever!

*Friday*

## **PRAYING FOR HELP TO LIVE AS A MONK SHOULD**

**A prayer composed by St. Anselm of Canterbury**

Holy and blessed Benedict, the grace of Heaven has made you rich with a full blessing of goodness, not just to raise you to glory but that many others be drawn to that same blessedness. Wondering at your life, stirred by your counsels, instructed by your gentle teaching, I call to you, blessed of God, for help. For I profess to lead a life of continually turning to God, as I promised by taking the name and habit of a monk. But my conscience convicts me as a liar to God, O Holy Father Benedict! I beg you not to be scandalized by my many faults but to have pity more than I deserve.

I pledged to serve under your leadership, however feeble a soldier I might be. You have accepted my pledge and placed me under your tutorship, however slow a pupil I might prove. I vowed to live according to your Rule, however carnal a monk I might prove. My perverse heart is as dry and cold as a stone when it comes to deploring the sins I have committed. But when it comes to resisting the occasions of sin I am pliant. My mind is swift to study what is useless and slow even to think of what is good. How slow I am to recall the virtues and with what difficulty do I try to practice the? How long it would take to tell the whole story of my gluttony, laziness, inconstancy, impatience, vainglory, detraction and disobedience. Sometimes my sins drag me hither and thither mocking me, and at other times they come in a mob and trample me underfoot in triumph.

O blessed Benedict, see indeed how bravely this soldier fights and what marvelous progress is made in your school of the Lord's service! What a marvelous monk I am! Yes, you see a false monk, lost to virtue and burdened with sin. Where shall I turn?

Jesus, my good Lord! Look at my afflictions and my trouble and forgive all my sins! Hear, O Lord, don't cast me off or forsake me. Lead me and help me to do your will. Let my life at least attest what my heart and mouth confess so freely but don't live. Hear the voice of my prayer, my Lord and my God. By the merits and intercession of Holy Benedict, your dear friend, my master and leader, help me.

And you, my good leader and gentle master and dear father, Blessed Benedict, I pray by the mercy that God has shown to you and the mercy you have shown to so many others, that you have compassion on me. Lift up one who is cast down! Strengthen one who wavers! Lead and protect me in the battle against sin. Bring me to victory and lead me to the heavenly crown. Do it by that charity which you are so anxious for us to take as our rule of life. Make it your care that we may be truly willing, and effectively able, to do all that we ought. We long to glory before the face of God, who lives and reigns forever. Help and lead us and teach us to love the Father and one another as Jesus has loved us.

*Saturday*

## **ASPIRING AFTER THE HEIGHTS OF LOVE FOR GOD**

**Reflections developed from On the Love of God by St. Francis de Sales**

How do you imagine Mary's love for God? Think, for instance, of her sleep. How would you imagine sleep being a way of loving God? Did Mary give rest to her body so that she might regain strength to serve God better as a result? Doing that is assuredly a wonderful act of charity. As St. Augustine says, "Charity places upon us an obligation to love our bodies properly". They are necessary for doing good works for God. Indeed, Christians must love their bodies as living images of the incarnate savior, as though they had been raised with Jesus from the same stock and belonging to him by blood as well as free choice. Above all, this holds if we have renewed our alliance with Him by the real reception of the divine body of our Redeemer in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

What devotion Mary must have shown in loving her own body, not only because of its humble goodness but because it was the living source of our Savior's body and belonged to him in the strictest sense with such marvelous closeness. She might have said to herself as she went to bed: "Take your rest now, ark of the covenant and vessel of sanctity in which God finds a throne".

And think of the dreams she might have had! Did she dream that she still held you, our Savior, in her womb, as she actually had for nine months? Did she dream that Jesus was nursing at her breast? Did she dream he was sleeping on her breast as he once had? In saying this we notice that sleep can be a kind of ecstasy. It needn't be filled with evil imaginings. Perhaps like Joseph of old Mary dreamed of the future joy and greatness of heaven. Perhaps she saw herself clothed with the sun and having the moon under her feet, as Scripture pictures her. Perhaps she dreamed herself totally encompassed by her Son's glory and crowned with the life that belongs to God's saints. Or perhaps like Jacob, she saw the progress and the fruit of the redemption brought about by her Son.

How can anyone picture the immense wonders and delights of Heaven? Could Mary have dreamed of conversations she would have with that dear child of hers in glory? Perhaps she dreamed as Solomon did when the Lord came to ask him what he sought. Solomon made such a marvelous declaration that he seemed to speak as though awake. Perhaps her heart was watchful in just this way as she slept. Perhaps she was simply "awake to Christ", rather as St. John the Baptist was when Mary brought Jesus to him and Elizabeth and he leaped for joy. We can't know what she dreamed nor can we limit what God can do for those He loves and chooses.

I like to think of the heart of the Virgin as though it were made of asbestos. It was perpetually on fire with the love of God and yet was never burnt up, so to speak, or damaged. The sacred flames of Divine Love need never perish nor go out, and they only make hearts more perfect because they burn within. We can imagine ourselves loving our God and our Savior as Mary loved. We long to be beloved of God just as she was, and we long to use all that we are and have in loving our God, as we may believe Mary did. To think of her is to think only of ways in which we too may love our God with all our heart.