

FOLLOW CHRIST THROUGH HOLY WEEK

DAILY HOLY WEEK RITUAL
4. WEDNESDAY in HOLY

Prayers & Rituals



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THE TWELVE APOSTLES



PILLARS OF THE CHURCH



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1. THE APOSTLES

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THE TWELVE APOSTLES

As we enter the heart of Holy Week and approach the Last Supper, the Passion and the Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ, it well worth pausing to look briefly at the men who had followed Him, who had been trained by Him and who would, in each in how own way, let Him down when it mattered the most.

If Isaias can say, in his day, of the future Christ who will suffer and die in a few days: *“By his bruises we are healed”* (Isaias 53:5), then we also say that by the mistakes of the Apostles during these momentous days, we are instructed—as the saying goes: *“There but for the grace of God go I”*.

In this opening chapter, we will cast a glance at all the Twelve Apostles and no more. In the next chapter we will look at St. Peter and Judas Iscariot, who each betrayed their Master, but with different outcomes and consequences.

WHO WERE THE TWELVE APOSTLES?

The Twelve Apostles of Jesus were the foundation stones of His church, and they were prefigured by the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

Several even wrote portions of the New Testament—notably, Matthew, John, Peter, Paul, James and Jude.

In Apocalypse 21:14 we are told that the twelve foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem will have in them the names of the Twelve Apostles. It is evident, therefore, that God attaches great importance to these 12 men.

TWELVE APOSTLES LIST

In alphabetical order

- ▶ Andrew
- ▶ Bartholomew or Nathanael
- ▶ James, the Elder
- ▶ James, the Lesser or Younger
- ▶ John
- ▶ Judas
- ▶ Jude or Thaddeus
- ▶ Matthew or Levi
- ▶ Peter or Simon Peter
- ▶ Philip
- ▶ Simon the Zealot
- ▶ Thomas

After the betrayal and suicide of Judas, he was replaced by another man who was elected to the college of Apostles

- ▶ Matthias

In addition, we have Our Lord later converting Saul of Tarsus, who became...

- ▶ Paul

The following biographical information about the 12 original Apostles of Jesus uses the New Testament accounts along with the most respected legends and traditions. We do not mean to infer, that legend and tradition constitute historical fact. We do feel, however, that they do have value in the study of the lives of these men who "...turned the world upside down..."

ANDREW

Andrew was the brother of Peter, and a son of Jonas. He lived in Bethsaida and Capernaum and was a fisherman before Jesus called him. Originally he was a disciple of John the Baptist (Mark 1:16-18). Andrew brought his brother, Peter, to Jesus (John 1:40).

He is the first to have the title of what could be called a *"Home and Foreign Missionary"*. He is claimed by three countries as their Patron Saint—Russia, Scotland and Greece. Many scholars say that he preached in Scythia, Greece and Asia Minor.

Andrew introduced others to Jesus. Although circumstances placed him in a position where it would have been easy for him to become jealous and resentful, he was optimistic and well content in second place. His main purpose in life was to bring others to the Master.

According to tradition, it was in Achaia, Greece, in the town of Patra that Andrew died a martyr. When Governor Aepeas' wife was healed and converted to the Christian Faith, and shortly after that the Governor's brother became a Christian. Aepeas was enraged. He arrested Andrew and condemned him to die on the cross.

Andrew, feeling unworthy to be crucified on the same-shaped cross as his Master, begged that his be different. So, he was crucified on an X-shaped cross, which is still called Saint Andrew's cross and which is one of his apostolic symbols. A symbol of two crossed fish has also been applied to Andrew, because he was formerly a fisherman.

BARTHOLOMEW OR NATHANAEAL

Bartholomew Nathanael, son of Talmai, lived in Cana of Galilee. His apostolic symbol is three parallel knives. Tradition says he was a missionary in Armenia. A number of scholars believe that he was the only one of the Twelve Apostles who came from royal blood, or noble birth. His name means Son of Tolmai or Talmai (2 Kings 3:3). Talmai was king of Geshur whose daughter, Maacah, was the wife of David, mother of Absalom.

Bartholomew's name appears with every list of the Apostles (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13). This was not a first name, however; it was his second name. His first name probably was Nathanael, whom Jesus called *"An Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile"* (John 1:47).

The New Testament gives us very little information about him. Tradition indicates he was a great searcher of the Scripture and a scholar

in the law and the prophets. He developed into a man of complete surrender to the Carpenter of Nazareth, and one of the Church's most adventurous missionaries. He is said to have preached, with Philip, in Phrygia and Hierapolis; also in Armenia.

The Armenian Church claims him as its founder and martyr. However, tradition says that he preached in India, and his death seems to have taken place there.

He died as a martyr for his Lord. He was skinned alive with knives.

JAMES THE GREATER OR ELDER

James, the Elder, Boanerges, son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of John the Apostle; a fisherman who lived in Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem.

He preached in Jerusalem and Judea and was beheaded by Herod, AD 44 (Acts 12:1-2).

He was a member of the 'Inner Circle of Three'—Peter, James and John—so called because they were accorded special privileges.

The New Testament tells us very little about James. His name never appears apart from that of his brother, John. They were an inseparable pair (Mark 1:19-20; Matthew 4:21; Luke 5:1-11).

He was a man of courage and forgiveness—a man without jealousy, living in the shadow of John, a man of extraordinary faith. He was the first of the Twelve to become a martyr. His symbol is three shells, the sign of his pilgrimage by the sea.

JAMES THE LESSER OR THE YOUNGER

James, the Lesser or Younger, son of Alpheus, or Cleophas and Mary, lived in Galilee. He was the brother of the Apostle Jude. According to tradition he wrote the Epistle of James, preached in Palestine and Egypt and was cruci-

fied in Egypt. James was one of the little-known Apostles.

Some scholars believe he was the brother of Matthew, the tax collector. James was a man of strong character and one of the most fiery type.

Tradition tells us that he also died as a martyr and his body was sawn into pieces. The saw became his apostolic symbol.

JOHN

John Boanerges, son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of James, the Apostle. He was known as the Beloved Disciple. He was too a member of the 'Inner Circle of Three'.

A fisherman who lived in Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem, he was a member of the Inner Circle. He wrote the Gospel of John, I John, II John, III John and Revelation.

He preached among the churches of Asia Minor. Banished to the isle of Patmos, he was later freed and died a natural death. John was one of the prominent Apostles.

He is mentioned in many places in the New Testament. He was a man of action; he was very ambitious; and a man with an explosive temper and an intolerant heart—yet he was eventually changed into an Apostle of Love, who would incessantly say: "*My children, love one another!*"

His second name was Boanerges, which means "Son of Thunder"—which in some way reflected his temperament. He and his brother, James, came from a more well-to-do family than the rest of the Twelve Apostles.

Since his father had hired servants in his fishing business (Mark 1:20) he may have felt himself above the rest. He was close to Peter. They were acting together in the ministry. Peter, however, was always the spokesman for the band.

John mellowed with time. At the latter part of his life, he had forgotten everything, including his ambition and explosive temper, except his Lord's command of love.

It is said that an attempt was made on his life by giving him a chalice of poison from which God spared him. At another time, they tried to kill him by boiling him to death in a cauldron of oil—and again he came out of ordeal unscathed. He finally died of natural causes. A chalice with a snake in it is his symbol.

JUDAS

Judas Iscariot, the traitor, was the son of Simon who lived in Kerioth of Judah. He betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and afterwards hanged himself (Matthew 26:14,16).

Judas, the man who became the traitor, is the supreme enigma of the New Testament, because it is so hard to see how anyone, who was so close to Jesus, who saw so many miracles and heard so much of the Master's teaching, could ever betray Him into the hands of His enemies.

His name appears in three lists of the Twelve Apostles (Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:19). It is said that Judas came from Juda, near Jericho. He was a Judean and the rest of the Apostles were Galileans. He was the treasurer of the band of Apostles and among the outspoken leaders.

It is said that Judas was a violent Jewish Nationalist, who had followed Jesus in hope that, through Him, his nationalistic flame and dreams might be realized. No one can deny that Judas was a covetous man and, at times, he used his position as treasurer of the band to pilfer from the common purse.

There is no certain reason as to why Judas betrayed his Master; but it is not his betrayal that put Jesus on the cross—it was our sins. His apostolic symbol is a hangman's noose, or a money purse with pieces of silver falling from it.

Who replaced Judas Iscariot?

Matthias was selected to replace Judas as recorded in Acts 1:15-26. The other man who was also in consideration was named Joseph, or Barsabas, and surnamed Justus. Lots were cast and eventually Matthias was chosen.

Acts 1:24-26 records the following, *“And they prayed and said, ‘You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place!’ And he was numbered with the remaining Eleven Apostles.”*

The Bible is sparse on additional details relating to Matthias, but it does say that Matthias was with Jesus since His baptism until his resurrection. Besides the book of Acts, Matthias isn't mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. According to historical sources Matthias lived until 80 A.D. and spread the Gospel on the shores of the Caspian and Cappadocia.

Tradition maintains that Matthias was stoned at Jerusalem by the Jews, and then beheaded.

JUDE OR THADDEUS

Jude (Judas), Thaddeus, or Lebbeus, son of Alphaeus or Cleophas and Mary. He was a brother of James the Younger. He was one of the very little-known Apostles and lived in Galilee.

Tradition says he preached in Assyria and Persia and died a martyr in Persia.

Jerome called Jude “Trinomious” which means *“a man with three names.”* In Mark 3:18 he is called Thaddeus. In Matthew 10:3, in some Bible translations, he is called Lebbeus. His surname was Thaddeus. In Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13 he is called Judas the brother of James. Judas Thaddeus also was called Judas the Zealot.

By character he was an intense and violent Nationalist with the dream of world power and domination by the Chosen People. In the New

Testament records (John 14:22) he asked Jesus at the Last Supper, “Lord, how is it, that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not to the world?”

Jude Thaddeus was interested in making Christ known to the world. Not as a suffering Savior, however, but as ruling King. We can see plainly from the answer Jesus gave him, that the way of power can never be substituted for the way of love.

It is said that Jude went to preach the Gospel in Edessa near the Euphrates River. There he healed many and many believed in the name of the Master. Jude went from there to preach the Gospel in other places. He was killed with arrows at Ararat. The chosen symbol for him is the ship because he was a missionary thought to be a fisherman.

MATTHEW OR LEVI

Matthew, or Levi, son of Alpheus, lived in Capernaum. He was a publican or tax collector. He wrote the Gospel that bears his name. He died a martyr in Ethiopia.

The call of Matthew to the apostolic band is mentioned in Mark 2:14, Matthew 9:9; and Luke 5:27-28. From these passages, we learn that Matthew also was called Levi. It was a common custom in the Middle East at the time of Christ for men to have two names. Matthew’s names mean “a gift of God.” The name Levi could have been given to him by Jesus.

It is likely that James the Lesser, who was one of the Twelve Apostles, was Matthew’s brother, also the son of Alpheus. Although we know little about Matthew personally, the outstanding fact about him is that he was a tax collector. The Bible calls him a publican, which in Latin is Publicanus, meaning engaged in public service, a man who handled public money, or a tax gatherer.

Of all the nations in the world, the Jews were the most vigorous haters of tax gatherers. To

the devout Jew, God was the only one to whom it was right to pay tribute in taxes. To pay it to anyone else was to infringe on the rights of God. The tax collectors were hated, not on religious grounds only, but because most of them were notoriously unjust.

In the minds of many honest, Jewish men, these tax collectors were regarded as criminals. In New Testament times they were classified with harlots, Gentiles and sinners (Matthew 18:17; Matthew 21:31, 33; Matthew 9:10; Mark 2:15,16; Luke 5:30).

Tax collectors had been known to assess duty payable at impossible sums and then offer to lend the money to travelers at a high rate of interest. Such was Matthew. Yet, Jesus chose a man all men hated and made him one of His men—something He would later do with Saul of Tarsus. It took Jesus Christ to see the potential in the tax collector of Capernaum.

Matthew was unlike the other Twelve Apostles, who were all fishermen. He could use a pen and write, and by his pen he became the first man to present to the world, in the Hebrew language, an account of the teaching of Jesus—the Gospel according Matthew.

It is clearly impossible to estimate the debt that Christianity owes to this despised tax gatherer. The average man would have thought it impossible to reform Matthew, but to God all things are possible. Matthew became the first man to write down the teachings of Jesus. He was a missionary of the Gospel, who laid down his life for the Faith of his Master. The apostolic symbol of Matthew is three money bags, which reminds us that he was a tax collector before Jesus called him.

PETER

Simon Peter, son of Jonas, was a fisherman who lived in Bethsaida and Capernaum. He did evangelistic and missionary work among the Jews, going as far as Babylon. He was a member of the ‘Inner Circle of Three’ and authored

the two New Testament epistles which bear his name. Tradition says he was crucified, head downward, in Rome.

In every Apostolic list, the name Peter is mentioned first. However, Peter had other names. At the time of Christ, the common language was Greek and the family language was Hebrew. So his Greek name was Simon (Mark 1:16; John 1:40, 41). His Hebrew name was Cephas (1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:5 and Galatians 2:9). The Greek meaning of Simon is rock. The Arabic meaning of Cephas is also rock.

By trade, Peter was a fisherman. He was a married man (1 Corinthians 9:5) and his home was Capernaum.

Jesus probably made His headquarters there when He visited Capernaum. Peter was also a Galilean as was typical of many of the other Apostles.

Josephus described the Galileans this way, *“They were ever fond of innovation and by nature disposed to change and delighted in sedition. They were ever ready to follow the leader and to begin an insurrection. They were quick in temper and given to quarreling and they were very chivalrous men.”*

The Talmud says this of the Galileans, *“They were more anxious for honor than for gain, quick-tempered, impulsive, emotional, easily aroused by an appeal to adventure, loyal to the end.”* Peter was a typical Galilean.

Among the Twelve, Peter was the leader. He stands out as a spokesman for all the Twelve Apostles.

It is he who asked the meaning of the difficult saying in Matthew 15:15. It is he who asked how often he must forgive. It is he who inquired about the reward for all of those who follow Jesus. It is he who first confessed Jesus and declared Him as the Son of the Living God. It is he who was at the Mount of Transfiguration. It is he who saw Jairus' daughter raised to life. Yet, it is

he who denied Christ before a maiden. He was an Apostle and a missionary who laid down his life for his Lord.

It is true, Peter had many faults, but he had always the saving grace of the loving heart. No matter how many times he had fallen and failed, he always recovered his courage and integrity.

Peter was martyred on a cross. Peter requested that he might be crucified head downward for he was not worthy to die as his Lord had died. His apostolic symbol is a cross upside down with crossed keys.

PHILIP

Tradition says that disciple Philip preached in Phrygia and died a martyr at Hierapolis. Philip came from Bethsaida, the town from which Peter and Andrew came (John 1:44). The likelihood is that he, too, was a fisherman. Although the first three Gospels record his name (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13), it is in the Gospel of John that Philip becomes a living personality.

Scholars disagree on Philip. In Acts 6:5, we have Philip as one of the seven ordained deacons. Some say this is a different Philip. Some believe this is the Apostle. If this is the same Philip, then his personality came more to life because he had a successful campaign in Samaria.

He led the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ (Acts 8:26). He also stayed with Paul in Caesarea (Acts 21:8) and was one of the major figures in the missionary enterprise of the early church.

The Gospel of John shows Philip as one of the first of many to whom Jesus addressed the words, *“Follow Me.”* When Philip met Christ, he immediately found Nathanael and told him that *“we have found him, of whom Moses ... and the prophets, did write.”* Nathanael was skeptical. But Philip did not argue with him; he simply answered, *“Come and see.”*

This story tells us two important things about Philip. First, it shows his right approach to the skeptic and his simple Faith in Christ. Second, it shows that he had a missionary instinct.

Philip was a man with a warm heart and a pessimistic head. He was one who would very much like to do something for others, but who did not see how it could be done. Yet, this simple Galilean gave all he had. In return God used him.

It is said that he died by hanging. While he was dying, he requested that his body be wrapped, not in linen, but in papyrus, for he was not worthy that even his dead body should be treated as the body of Jesus had been treated.

The symbol of Philip is a basket, because of his part in feeding of the five thousand. It is he that stressed the Cross as a sign of Christianity and victory.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Simon, the Zealot, one of the little-known followers called the Canaanite or Zelotes, lived in Galilee. Tradition says he was crucified.

In two places in the King James Version he is called a Canaanite (Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18). However in the other two places he is called Simon Zelotes (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13).

The New Testament gives us practically nothing on him personally, except that it says he was a Zealot. The Zealots were fanatical Jewish Nationalists who had heroic disregard for the suffering involved and the struggle for what they regarded as the purity of their faith. The Zealots were crazed with hatred for the Romans.

It was this hate for Rome that finally brought about the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in 70 AD, provoking Roman retaliation. The famous Jewish historian, Josephus, says the Zealots were reckless persons, zealous in good practices and extravagant and reckless in the worst kind of actions.

From this background, we see that Simon was a fanatical Nationalist, a man devoted to the Law, a man who started-out with bitter hatred for anyone who dared to compromise with Rome.

Yet, Simon clearly emerged as a man of faith. He abandoned all his hatred for the faith that he showed toward his Master and the love that he was willing to share with the rest of the Apostles and especially Matthew, the Roman tax collector—towards whom he would, as a Zealot, have had bitter hatred.

Simon, the Zealot, the man who once would have killed in loyalty to Israel, became the man who saw that God will have no forced service. Tradition says he died as a martyr. His apostolic symbol is a fish lying on a Bible, which indicates he was a former fisherman who became a fisher of men through preaching.

THOMAS DIDYMUS

Thomas Didymus lived in Galilee. Tradition says he labored in Parthia, Persia, and India, suffering martyrdom near Madras, at Mt. St. Thomas, India.

Thomas was his Hebrew name and Didymus was his Greek name. At times he was called Judas. Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us nothing about Thomas except his name. However, John defines him more clearly in his Gospel.

Thomas appeared in the raising of Lazarus (John 11:2-16), in the Upper Room (John 14:1-6) where he wanted to know how to know the way where Jesus was going.

In John 20:25, we see him saying unless he sees the nail-prints in Jesus' hand and the gash of the spear in His side he will not believe. That's why Thomas became known as "Doubting Thomas".

Thomas became certain by doubting. By nature, he was a pessimist. He was a bewildered man. Yet, he was a man of courage. He was a man who could not believe until he had seen.

He was a man of devotion and of faith.

When Jesus rose, he came back and invited Thomas to put his finger in the nail prints in his hands and in his side. Here, we see Thomas making the greatest confession of faith, “My Lord and my God.” Thomas’ doubts were transformed into faith.

Thomas was always like a little child. His first reaction was not to do what he was told to do and not to believe what he was asked to believe. The good news to him was always too good to be true.

By this very fact Thomas’ faith became great, intense and convincing. It is said that he was commissioned to build a palace for the king of India, and he was killed with a spear as a martyr for his Lord. His symbol is a group of spears, stones and arrows.

PAUL OF TARSUS —THE ‘THIRTEENTH’ APOSTLE

In addition to the newcomer that the Holy Ghost selected to replace Judas, we also have a ‘thirteenth’ Apostle selected by Our Lord from Heaven—Paul of Tarsus, originally named Saul. Paul calls himself an Apostle in his writings: “*I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God*” (1 Corinthians 15:9). He was accepted as such by the other Apostles.

In the mid-30s to the mid-50s AD, he founded several churches in Asia Minor and Europe. Paul took advantage of his status as both a Jew and a Roman citizen to minister to both Jewish and Roman audiences. Fourteen of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament have traditionally been attributed to Paul. Paul was beheaded in Rome, around the mid-60s AD, during the reign of Nero.

HOW DID THE TWELVE APOSTLES DIE?

- ✠ **ANDREW** — Crucified on an X-shaped cross.
- ✠ **BARTHOLOMEW OR NATHANAEL** — Flayed alive with knives.
- ✠ **JAMES THE GREATER OR ELDER** — First apostle martyred. Thrown from roof of the Temple in Jerusalem, then beheaded.
- ✠ **JAMES THE LESSER OR YOUNGER** — Sawn in pieces.
- ✠ **JOHN** — They tried to boil him in oil, but he survived. Died of natural causes on the isle of Patmos.
- ✠ **JUDAS ISCARIOT** — Hung himself.
- ✠ **JUDE THADDEUS** — Killed with arrows.
- ✠ **MATTHEW** — Martyred in Ethiopia (it is not known if he was burned, stoned, or beheaded).
- ✠ **PETER** — Crucified upside-down.
- ✠ **PHILIP** — Died by hanging.
- ✠ **SIMON THE ZEALOT** — Crucified
- ✠ **THOMAS** — Killed with a spear.
- ✠ **MATTHIAS** (The replacement for Judas) — Stoned then beheaded.
- ✠ **PAUL** — Beheaded.

PETER

JUDAS



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2. CHARACTERS OF THE PASSION: PETER & JUDAS

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PETER: A LESSON ON FALLING AND RISING

The most interesting drama in all the world is the drama of the human soul. Were it not endowed with freedom, it might go out to war and enterprise alone and unheeded; but master of its choice, unlike the sun and stones, it can use time and things to decide its destiny, its eternity, and its judgment. Though there are many phases to these dramas, perhaps the most interesting of them all is the psychology of a fall and resurrection.

LOSS OF FAITH

More concretely, how do some souls lose their Faith, and by what steps do they later on recover it? The answer to such questions is to be found in the story of the Apostle Peter, whose name appears first in the Gospel narrative, and who might appropriately be called "*The Fisherman Philosopher*," for he asked Divine Wisdom more questions than any other of His followers. For example: "*To whom shall we go?*" "*Where are you going?*" "*Why cannot I follow you?*" "*What shall this man do?*"

To this searching intellectualist of Galilee, who was born Simon and whose name was changed to Peter, and who from the bitterness of his spirit cried out: "*Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man,*" we go to study the steps by which he fell and the stages by which he returned. There seem to have been five stages in Peter's fall.

1. Neglect of prayer
2. Substitution of action for prayer
3. Lukewarmness
4. The satisfaction of material wants, feelings, and emotions.
5. Human respect

1. NEGLECT OF PRAYER

No soul ever fell away from God without giving up prayer. Prayer is that which establishes contact with Divine Power and opens the invisible resources of Heaven. However dark the way, when we pray, temptation can never master us. The first step downward in the average soul is the giving up of the practice of prayer, the breaking of the circuit with divinity, and the proclamation of one's own self-sufficiency.

The night that Our Blessed Lord went out under the light of a full moon into the Garden of Gethsemani to crimson the olive roots with His own blood for our redemption, He turned to His disciples and said: *"Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak"* (Matthew 26:41).

Withdrawing from these three disciples about as far as a man could throw a stone—how significant a way to measure distance the night one goes to death—He prayed to His Heavenly Father: *"My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt"* (Matthew 26:39).

When Our Blessed Lord came back the last time to visit His disciples, He found them asleep. A woman will watch not one hour or one night, but, rather, day after day and night after night in the presence of a peril threatening her child.

These men slept. If they could sleep on such an occasion, it was due to the fact that they had no adequate conception of the crisis through which Our Savior was passing, no consciousness of the tragedy that was already upon them. Finding them asleep, Our Blessed Lord spoke to Peter and said: *"...What? Could you not watch*

one hour with me?" (Matthew 26:40). Peter had given up both watching and praying.

2. THE SUBSTITUTION OF ACTION FOR PRAYER

Most souls still feeling the necessity of doing something for God and the Church turn to the solace of activity. Instead of going from prayer to action, they neglect the prayer and become busy about many things. It is so easy to think we are doing God's work when we are only in motion or being fussy.

Peter is no exception. In the turmoil of the arrest of Our Blessed Lord which followed, Peter, who had already been armed with two swords, allows his usual impetuosity to get the better of him. Slashing out rather recklessly at the armed gang, what he strikes is not a soldier at all, but a slave of the High Priest.

As a swordsman Peter was a good fisherman. The slave steps aside, and the blow aimed at the crown of his head merely cuts off his ear. Our Blessed Lord restored the ear by a miracle, and then turning to Peter said: *"...Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword"* (Matthew 26:52). Divinity has no need of it. He could summon twelve legions of angels to His aid if He wished. The Church must never fight with the weapons of the world.

The Father had offered the Son the cup, and no one could hinder His drinking it. But Peter, giving up the habit of prayer, substituted violence toward others, and all tact was lost as devotion to a cause became zeal without knowledge.

Far better it would be to take a few hours from active life and spend it in communion with God, than to be busy about many things while neglecting the one thing that is necessary for peace and happiness. No such activity is a substitute for watching and praying an hour.

3. LUKEWARMNESS

Experience soon proves that religious activity without prayer soon degenerates into indifference. At this stage souls become indifferent. They believe one can be too religious, too zealous, or “*spend too much time in church.*” Peter exemplifies this truth.

A few hours later, Our Blessed Lord is led before His judges—and one is almost inclined to say: “*May God forgive us for calling them judges.*”

As that sad procession moves on in the unutterable loneliness where the God-man freely subjects Himself to the evil darts of others, the Gospel records: “*And Peter followed Him from afar.*” He had given up prayer, then action, and now he keeps his distance. Only his eyes remain on the Master.

How quickly the insincerity of action without prayer proves itself! He who was brave enough to draw a sword a few hours before now strays on behind. Christ, who once was the dominating passion of our life, now becomes incidental in religion.

We still linger as from force of habit—or perhaps even from remorse of conscience—in the footsteps of the Master, but out of the range of both His eyes and His voice. It is in such moments that souls say: “*God has forgotten me,*” when the truth is that it is not God who leaves us, it is we who stray on behind.

4. SATISFACTION OF MATERIAL WANTS, FEELINGS, AND EMOTIONS.

Once the divine fades in life, the material begins to assert itself. The excessive dedication to luxury and refinement is always an indication of the inner poverty of the spirit. When the treasure is within, there is no need of those outer treasures that rust consumes, moths eat, and thieves break through and steal. When the inner beauty is gone, we need luxuries to clothe our nakedness.

It is only natural, therefore, to find that in the next stage of his decline, Peter should be satisfying his body. He does not go into the courtroom. He remains outside with the servants; and in the expressive language of Sacred Scripture: “...when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sitting about it, Peter was in the midst of them” (Luke 22:55).

There is a process going on in Peter, but it is hardly progress, for it is a downward movement—walking, standing, sitting. That is exactly what Peter did. Walking: “He followed Him from afar.” Standing: He went into the court and stood among the people. Sitting: He sat by the fire that the enemies of Christ had built. Luxury had replaced fidelity. Never before was anyone so cold before a fire!

5. HUMAN RESPECT

The last stage in the fall is human respect, when we deny our faith or are ashamed of it under ridicule or scorn. A worldly religion will get on well with the world, but not a divine one. As Our Lord warned: “When they persecute you in one town, flee to another. Amen, I say to you, you will not finish the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes” (Matthew 10:23).

As the blaze of that fire lighted up the face of Peter, it was possible for bystanders and those who came into the court to see his face. At that very moment when Our Blessed Lord in court was taking an oath proclaiming His divinity, Peter was taking an oath, too—not to reaffirm that Christ was the Son of the Living God, but rather to deny it.

There was the clamor of officers and the saucy laughter of a servant maid, who said: “This man too was with Jesus of Nazareth.” Peter denied it. Then, another maidservant said that he was one of them, but he denied it again, saying: “...Woman, I do not know him” (Luke 22:57). Perhaps an hour passed, and then one of the men said to him: “...Surely you are one of them; for you are also a Galilean” (Mark 14:70). “...even your speech gives you away” (Matthew 26:73).

Peter became angry at their repeated affirmations, and with an atavistic throwback to his fisherman days when his nets became tangled in Galilean waters, he cursed and swore again, saying: "...I do not know this man about whom you are talking" (Mark 14:71).

Human respect had gotten the better of Peter. How often others know what we ought to do, even when we have forgotten. How touchy are those consciences that have abandoned their God! How sensitive they are to even the memory that they once had the faith! Many a time I have heard such souls say: "Do not talk about it! I want to forget it." But we can never forget—even our speech betrays that we had been with the Galilean.

So if these are the steps away from the faith, what are the steps back to its embrace? They are:

1. Disillusionment
2. Response to grace
3. Amendment
4. Sorrow

1. DISILLUSIONMENT

Since pride is a capital sin, it follows that a first condition of conversion is humility: The ego must decrease, God must increase. This humiliation most often comes by a profound realization that sin does not pay, that it never keeps its promises, that just as a violation of the laws of health produces sickness, so a violation of the laws of God produces unhappiness.

This is signified in Peter's case by the fulfillment of a prophecy made by Our Lord to Peter the night of the Last Supper. Having warned His apostles that they would be scandalized in Him that night, Peter boasted: "I will lay down my life for you" (John 13:37). And Our Lord answered: "...Will you lay down your life for me? Amen, amen, I say to you, the cock will not crow before you deny me three times" (John 13:38).

A few hours later, at the very moment that Peter cursed and swore that he knew not Christ,

there came through the halls of the outer chambers of Caiaphas' court, the clear and unmistakable crowing of a cock. Even nature is on God's side. We may abuse it in our sins, but in the end it will abuse us. How right was Thompson when he characterized nature as having a "traitorous trueness, a loyal deceit; in fickleness to me, in loyalty to Him."

The crowing of the cock was such a childish thing. But God can use the most insignificant things in the world as the channel of His grace: the vow of a child, a word over the radio, the song of a sparrow. He will even press into the business of conversation the crowing of a cock in the dawning of the morning. A soul can come to God by a series of disgusts.

2. RESPONSE TO GRACE

The next step in the return to God after the awakening of conscience through the disillusionment of sin is on God's part. As soon as we empty ourselves, or are disillusioned, He comes to fill the void. "...No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). And Saint Luke tells us: "And the Lord turning looked on Peter" (Luke 22:61).

As sin is an aversion to God, grace is the conversion to God. Our Lord does not say: "I told you, you would fall." He does not desert us though we desert Him. He turns, once we know we are sinners. God never gives us up.

The very word used here to describe the look of Our Lord is the same word used the first time Our Lord met Peter—the meaning being that "He looked through" Peter. Peter is recalled to the sweet beginnings of His grace and vocation. Judas received the lips to recall him to fellowship.

Peter received a look with eyes that see us, not as our neighbors see us, not as we see ourselves, but as we really are. They were the eyes of a wounded friend, the look of a wounded Christ. The language of those eyes we shall never understand.

3. AMENDMENT

As sin begins with the abandonment of mortification, so conversion implies return to it. The king in Hamlet asked: "Can one be forgiven and retain the offense?" There are such things as occasions of sin, namely, those persons, places, and circumstances that dry rot the soul.

Peter's conversion would not be complete unless he left that arena where maidservants, slaves, and human respect combined to make him deny the Master. No longer will he warm himself by fires, nor sit passively while his Judge is judged. The Scripture records his amendment or purgation in the simple words: "And going forth." All the trappings of sin, the ill-gotten goods, the human respect he won, all these are now trampled underfoot, as "he goes out."

4. SORROW

But this leaving of the tabernacles of sin would not be enough were there not sorrow. Some leave sin only because they find it disgusting. There is no real conversion until that sin is related to an offense against the Person of God. "Against Thee have I sinned," says Scripture, not against "Space-time," or the "Cosmic Universe," or the "Powers Beyond." Have a sorrow that regrets offending God because He is all good and deserving of all our love, and you have salvation.

Fittingly, therefore, do the evangelists write: "And Peter going out, wept bitterly" (Luke 22:62). His heart was broken into a thousand pieces, and his eyes that looked into the eyes of Christ, now turn into fountains. Moses struck a rock, and water came forth. Christ looked on a rock, and tears came forth. Tradition has it that Peter wept so much for his sins that his cheeks were furrowed with their penitential streams.

Upon those tears the face of the Light of the World rises, and through them comes the rainbow of hope, assuring all souls that never again will a heart be destroyed by flood of sin so long as it turns to Him Who is the Ark of Salvation, the Love of the Universe.

This closes the story of the most human of humans in the Gospels, who one moment is on the top of a wave walking the sea and the next moment beneath it drowning and shrieking: "Lord! Save me!" One instant he says he will die with Our Lord; an hour later he denies that he knows the One for whom he would die.

Who is there who has not within himself or herself felt those same conflicting elements—willing the good, doing the wrong—and, in the language of Ovid: "seeing and approving the better things of life, but following the worse."

Peter is the supreme example of the Gospel warning: "...whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). In no one else is better told the fallacy of humanism, understood as self-sufficiency of a person without God, or the utter inadequacy of our own reason and our own strength to get us out of the mess we are in without periodic renewals of divine grace that come to us from God.

Because Peter is so much like us in our conflicts, he is, therefore, our greatest hope. The other apostles wrote less out of their experience than Peter. The Epistle of Paul to Timothy is exhortation; the Epistle of John is a call to brotherhood; the Epistle of James is for a practical religion; but the Epistle of Peter is the summary of his former self and might be called the "epistle of courage." In every line, in every word of that revealed document, we find Peter using his dead former self as the stepping stone by which he mounts to newness of life.

To the Peter who was sinking beneath the waves, he, the new Peter, speaks courageously: "...who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:5-7).

Now who is going to harm you if you are enthusiastic for what is good? But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Peter 3:13-15).

No wonder Our Divine Lord, Who knows all souls in their inner being, chose as the head of His Church not John who had never denied, and who alone of all the apostles was present on the hill of Calvary, but rather chose Peter who fell and then rose again, who sinned and who then was forgiven amidst lifelong penance, in order that His Church might understand something of human weakness and sin, and bear to the millions of its souls the Gospel of hope, the assurance of divine mercy.

Fittingly, then, when Peter came to the end of his lease on life, he asked not to be crucified as was Our Blessed Lord with head upright, but with head downward in the earth. Our Lord had called him the Rock of His Church, and the rock was laid where it should be—deep in the roots of creation.

On that very spot where the man of courage was crucified upside down, with his stumbling feet toward Heaven, there now rises the greatest dome that was ever thrown against the vault of Heaven’s blue, the dome of the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome. Around it in giant letters of gold, we read the words Our Lord spoke to Peter at Caesarea Philippi: “...thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

Many a time I have knelt under that dome and its inscription and looked down below its many altars to the tomb where is buried that Rock who made Rome eternal, because he the fisherman came to live there. No one, I suppose, has ever bent a suppliant knee to that first vicar of Christ’s Church, to whom Our Lord said that a sinner should be forgiven, not seven times, but

seventy times seven, without understanding in hope what Peter knew so well: “If you had never sinned, you never could call Christ ‘Savior.’”

“Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee, wheresoever thou goest” (Josue 1:9).

JUDAS: A LESSON ON THE DANGERS OF SELF PITY

The expression “fallen away” or “lapsed” refers to those who, at one time blessed with grace and intimacy with the Divine, later abandon it. Our Lord referred to them in the parable of the Sower: “They have no root; they last only for a time. Then when tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away” (Mark 4:17).

No one yet has ever left the Body of Christ or His Church for a reason, but many have left it for a thing. The thing may differ: It may be pride, wealth, flesh, or the thousand-and-one substitutes for Divinity. This truth can best be illustrated by a study of Judas, the one man in the Gospels who left Our Lord for a thing, and of whom Our Lord said: “It would be better for that man if he had never been born” (Matthew 26:24).

One day a babe was born at Kerioth. Friends and relatives came with gifts for the babe, because he was a child of promise. Not so far away another Babe was born in the village of Bethlehem. Because He, too, was a child of promise, friends came with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Both babes grew in age, and one day the man of Bethlehem met the man of Kerioth at the parting of the waters, and Our Lord chose Judas as His Apostle.

He was the only Judean among the apostles; and since the Judeans were more skilled in administration than the Galileans, Judas was given the apostolic purse. Probably he was nat-

urally best fitted for the task. To use a person for what he is naturally fitted is to keep him—if he can be kept—from apostasy and alienation and dissatisfaction. But at the same time, life's temptations come often from that for which we have the greatest aptitude.

There must be first an inward failure, however, before there can be an outward one. Judas was avaricious. Avarice is a pernicious sin, for when other vices grow old, avarice is still young.

The covetousness of Judas revealed itself particularly in Simon's house when an uninvited guest, a sinful woman, broke in at dinner and poured ointment over the feet of Our Lord and then wiped it away with her hair. And the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

Judas was at dinner that day. Judas knew how near the Lord's betrayal was. Mary, that woman, knew how near His death was. Putting on the mask of charity, Judas simulated anger that such precious ointment should be wasted: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief and held the money bag and used to steal the contributions." (John 12:5-6).

Our Lord did not affront Judas, who affronted Him. There is something inexpressibly sad and yet so patient, gentle, and tender in the words of Our Lord: "Leave her alone" (John 12:7). Surely there could be no waste in a ministry to Divine Love.

There will always be souls like Judas who are scandalized at the wealth offered to Christ in His Church. If a man can give jewels to the woman he loves without scandal, why cannot the soul pour out its abundance to the God it loves in tribute of affection?

Our Lord praised the woman, saying she had anointed Him for His burial. Judas was shocked! So He was going to die! A short time later, on Wednesday of Holy Week, Our Lord told the apostles what would happen. Judas heard Him

say: "You know that in two days time it will be Passover, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified" (Matthew 26:2).

Christ would be crucified. That was certain. In the general cataclysm Judas must rescue something to solace his acquisitive spirit. "Then one of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you?' They paid him thirty pieces of silver" (Matthew 26:14-15). Eight hundred years before Zechariah prophesied: "'If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, let it go.' And they counted out my wages, thirty pieces of silver" (Zecharias 11:12). He who took the form of a servant was sold for the price of a slave.

The next evening on the occasion of Our Lord's Last Supper when He made His Last Testament, and left to us that which on dying no man ever has been able to leave, namely Himself, the Savior again spoke about His betrayal: "...One of you is about to betray me" (Matthew 26:21). The disciples looked at one another saying: "Is it I, Lord?" "Is it I?"

No conscience is pure in the sight of God; no one can be sure of his innocence. Judas then asked: "Is it I, Rabbi?" The Lord answered: "Thou hast said it." And Judas went out and "it was night." It is always night when one turns his back on God.

A few hours later Judas led a band of brigands and soldiers down the hill of Jerusalem. Though there was a full moon that night, the soldiers did not know whom they were to apprehend, so they asked Judas for a sign. Turning to them, he said: "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him" (Matthew 26:48).

Crossing over the brook of Kedron and into the Garden, Judas threw his arms around the neck of Our Lord and blistered His lips with a kiss. One word came back: "Friend." Then the question: "Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48).

It was the last time that Jesus spoke to Judas. Judas had the right to the fatted calf, but he preferred the golden one.

Only Judas knew where to find Our Lord after dark. Soldiers did not know. Christ in His Church is delivered into the hands of the enemy from within. It is the bad Christians who betray.

The greatest harm to the cause of Christ is not done by enemies, but by those who have been cradled in her sacred associations and nourished in the faith. The scandal of the “fallen away” provides opportunities for enemies who still are timid. The enemies do the bloody work of crucifixion, but those who have communed with Christ prepare the way.

Judas was more zealous in the cause of the enemy than he was in the cause of Our Lord. Those who leave the Church in like manner seek to atone for their uneasy consciences by attacking the Church. Since their consciences will not leave them alone, they will not leave the Guide of their consciences alone.

The Voltaire who left the Church was the Voltaire who scoffed. Their hatred is not due to their unbelief, but their unbelief is due to their hatred. The Church makes them uneasy in their sin, and they feel that. If they could drive the Church from the world they could sin with impunity.

But why betray with a kiss? Because the betrayal of Divinity is such a heinous crime that it must always be prefaced by some mark of affection. How often in discussions of religion we hear a word of praise about Christ in His Church and then a “but” which begins the slur.

The human things we can attack without excuse; they need no pretended love to sheathe the sword that kills. But in the presence of the Sacred and the Divine, one must feign affection where affection should be unfeigned.

How many there are who attack its beliefs only because, as they say, they would keep its doc-

trine pure. If they assail its discipline, it is because they want to preserve a liberty or even a license that they believe essential to piety. If they accuse the Church of not being spiritual enough, it is because they claim to be defenders of the highest ideals—though none of them ever tell us how spiritual the Church must be before they would embrace it. In each instance, hostility to Divinity is preceded by a deference toward religion: “Hail, Rabbi,” and he kissed him.

No sooner was the crime done than Judas was disgusted. The deep wells of remorse began surging up in his soul; but like so many souls today, he took his remorse to the wrong place. He went back to those with whom he trafficked. He had sold the Lord for thirty pieces of silver, or in our money about seventeen dollars.

Divinity is always betrayed out of all proportion to its real worth. Whenever we sell Christ, be it for worldly advancement, such as those who give up their faith because they cannot get anywhere politically with a cross on their backs, or be it for wealth, we always feel cheated in the end.

No wonder Judas took the thirty pieces of silver back to those who gave it to him, and sent the coins ringing and rolling and jingling across the Temple floor saying: “I have sinned in betraying innocent blood” (Matthew 27:4).

He no longer wanted what he once wanted most. All the glamour was gone. Not even those to whom he returned the money wanted it. The money was good for nothing, except to buy a field of blood. Judas made restitution of his money; however, souls are not saved by giving up what they have, but by giving what they are.

Being disgusted with sin is not enough. We must also be repentant. The Gospel tells us: “Then Judas, his betrayer, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, deeply regretted what he had done” (Matthew 27:3). But Judas did not repent in the true sense of the word. Rather, he

had a change of feeling. He repented, but not to Our Lord; he repented unto himself.

The latter is only self-hatred, and self-hatred is suicidal. To hate self is the beginning of self-slaughter. Self-hatred is salutary only when associated with the love of God.

Disillusionment and disgust may be a step toward religion, but it is not religion. Some think they love God because life did not keep all its promises, or because their dreams did not come true. They longed for an earthly part, and it turned out to be a mirage. They begin to see the vanity of the world. Depressions, sorrows, sickness, war, disappointments, have gradually weaned them from the world.

They no longer get much enjoyment from the world. They have no prospects of ever recovering their youth, so they turn to a mild hatred of sin. They confuse wisdom with satiety. They think they are pure because they are no longer tempted. They judge virtues by the vices from which they abstain. They care very little for the approval or disapproval of the world. Old friends are no longer interesting; new friends cannot be found.

The result is that in the course of time they turn to religion as a solace. They begin to keep the commandments because they have no strong motive for not doing it. They give up drink and other vices that may ruin their health. Their good is the good of inertia; they are like icebergs in the cold streams of the north. Because such people are full of anxiety, complexes, and fears, they begin reading Freud and learn that their emotions must in some way be sublimated. They repent, but they repent unto themselves. They are sorry for their lot, but not sorry for having offended God.

And when did the betrayal of Judas begin? The first record that we have in the Gospels of Judas falling was the day when Our Blessed Lord announced that He would leave Himself to the world in the Eucharist. Inserted in that marvelous story of this great sacrament is the sugges-

tion that Our Lord knew who would betray Him. Our Lord had just announced that He would continue His Presence in the world hidden under the form of bread.

In His own majestic words He heralded that union with Him would be more intimate than the union between the body and the food we ate: "Just as the living Father has sent Me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on Me will have life because of Me... whoever eats this Bread will live forever" (John 6:57-58).

Our Lord, knowing what went on in human souls, added: "But there are some of you that believe not." And the Gospel adds: "Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the who would betray him" (John 6:64).

The actual betrayal came the very night Our Lord gave that which He promised He would give for the life of the world, namely, the Holy Eucharist.

No story in all the Gospel so much reveals the power of a single passion to enwrap, enchain, possess, and degrade a person's character as the tragedy of the traitor Apostle. What religious associations could have been better than those of Judas, who received into his mind, memory, and heart the impress of the one incomparable Life with its thousand radiant rays of wisdom and charity?

It is we, then, who know Him, who possess His truth and His life, who can injure Him more than those who know Him not. We may never act the traitor's part in a big way, but through insignificant signs: like the kiss of Judas, by a silence when we should defend, by fear of ridicule when we should proclaim, by a criticism when we ought to witness, or by a shrug of the shoulders when we ought to fold our hands in prayer. Well indeed may the Savior then ask us: "Friend, will you betray Me with a kiss?"

Judas went down into the valley of Ennom—the valley of ghastly associations, the Gehen-

na of the future. Over the cold, rocky ground he walked, amidst the jagged rocks between gnarled and stunted trees, which looked just like his twisted and tortured soul. There was only one thought in his mind: to empty himself of himself.

Everything seemed to bear witness against him. The dust was his destiny; the rocks were his heart; the trees, particularly, seemed to speak—their branches were as accusing arms and pointing fingers; their knots as so many eyes. The leaves seemed to shake in protest against making them the instrument of his vain destruction. They seemed almost to whisper that all other trees of its kind would tremble in shame until the final day of the Great Assize.

Taking a halter from his cincture—and how that cincture reminded him of Peter's cincture whence swung the keys of Heaven—he threw it over a strong limb and fastened one end of the halter about his neck. The winds seemed to bring him the echo of words he heard a year before: "Come to me all you who labor and are heavily burdened and find rest for your souls." But he would repent unto himself, not to God.

And as the sun darkened, two trees made history on opposite sides of Sion—one the tree of Calvary and hope; the other, the tree of Ennom and despair. On one hung Him Who would unite Heaven and earth, and on the other hung him who willed to be foreign to both.

And the pity of it all was that he might have been Saint Judas. He possessed what every soul possesses: a tremendous potential for sanctity and peace. But let us be sure that whatever be our sins, and regardless of the depths of our betrayal, there is ever a Hand outstretched to embrace, a Face shining with the light of forgiveness, and a Divine Voice that speaks a word to us, as it did with Judas even unto the end: "Friend."

PETER & JUDAS



THE



MYSTERY

OF

TEMPTATION



TEMPTation
TEMPORary
pleasure

3 THINGS TO DO WHEN TEMPTED



GENESIS 39:1-12

devotiontoourlady.com wishes you a blessed & grace filled Holy Week

3. THE MYSTERY OF TEMPTATION

from devotiontoourlady.com

In the spiritual life, there are difficulties and there are also dangers: occasions of sin and obstacles to good. Job said that human life is temptation. St. Peter said that the devil goes about like a roaring lion, looking for a chance to devour us. Yet St. Peter also tells us: "You shall greatly rejoice, if now you must be, for a little time, made sorrowful in various temptations" (1 Peter 1:6).

Here is an extract from C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, which is a book that presents an exchange of letters from two devils, Screwtape being the uncle and master tempter, and the other his nephew, a beginner in the field of temptation. The master tempter, Screwtape, writes to his apprentice nephew:

"Never having been a human (oh, that abominable advantage of the Enemy's!), you don't realize how enslaved they are to the pressure of the ordinary. I once had a patient, a sound atheist, who used to read in British Museum. One day, as he sat reading, I saw a train of thought in his mind beginning to go the 'wrong way' towards the Enemy [God].

"The Enemy, of course, was at his elbow in a moment. Before I knew where I was I saw my twenty years' work beginning to totter. If I had lost my head and begun to attempt a defense by argument, I should have been undone.

"But I was not such a fool. I struck instantly at the part of the man which I had best under my control, and suggested that it was just about time he had some lunch. The Enemy presumably made the counter suggestion (you know how one can never quite overhear what He says to them?) that this was more important

than lunch. At least I think that must have been His line, for when I said, "Quite. In fact much too important to tackle at the end of a morning," the patient brightened up considerably, and by the time I had added "Much better come back after lunch and go into it with a fresh mind," he was already halfway to the door.

"Once he was in the street the battle was won. I showed him a newsboy shouting the midday paper, and a No. 73 bus going past, and before he reached the bottom of the steps I had got into him an unalterable conviction that, whatever odd ideas might come into a man's head when he was shut up alone with his books, a healthy dose of "real life" (by which he meant the bus and the newsboy) was enough to show him that all "that sort of thing" just couldn't be true. He knew he'd had a narrow escape, and in later years was fond of talking about that inarticulate sense for actuality which is our ultimate safeguard against the aberrations of mere logic. He is now safe in Our Father's house [Hell]."

THE BENEFITS OF TEMPTATION

The Imitation of Christ has some very sound advice and encouragement on temptations:

"So long as we live in this world we cannot escape suffering and temptation. Whence it is written in Job: "The life of man upon earth is a warfare" (Job 7:1). Everyone, therefore, must guard against temptation and must watch in prayer lest the devil, who never sleeps but goes about seeking whom he may devour, find occasion to deceive him. No one is so perfect or so holy but he is sometimes tempted; man cannot be altogether free from temptation.

"Yet temptations, though troublesome and severe, are often useful to a man, for in them he is humbled, purified, and instructed. The saints all passed through many temptations and trials to profit by them, while those who could not resist became reprobate and fell away.

"There is no state so holy, no place so secret that temptations and trials will not come. Man

is never safe from them as long as he lives, for they come from within us — in sin we were born. When one temptation or trial passes, another comes; we shall always have something to suffer because we have lost the state of original blessedness.

"Many people try to escape temptations, only to fall more deeply. We cannot conquer simply by fleeing, but by patience and true humility we become stronger than all our enemies. The man who only shuns temptations outwardly and does not uproot them will make little progress; indeed they will quickly return, more violent than before.

"Little by little, in patience and long-suffering you will overcome them, by the help of God rather than by severity and your own rash ways. Often take counsel when tempted; and do not be harsh with others who are tempted, but console them as you yourself would wish to be consoled.

"The beginning of all temptation lies in a wavering mind and little trust in God, for as a rudderless ship is driven hither and yon by waves, so a careless and irresolute man is tempted in many ways.

"Fire tempers iron and temptation steels the just. Often we do not know what we can stand, but temptation shows us what we are. Above all, we must be especially alert against the beginnings of temptation, for the enemy is more easily conquered if he is refused admittance to the mind and is met beyond the threshold when he knocks.

"Someone has said very aptly: "Resist the beginnings; remedies come too late, when by long delay the evil has gained strength." First, a mere thought comes to mind, then strong imagination, followed by pleasure, evil delight, and consent. Thus, because he is not resisted in the beginning, Satan gains full entry. And the longer a man delays in resisting, so much the weaker does he become each day, while the strength of the enemy grows against him.

“Some suffer great temptations in the beginning of their conversion, others toward the end, while some are troubled almost constantly throughout their life. Others, again, are tempted but lightly according to the wisdom and justice of Divine Providence Who weighs the status and merit of each and prepares all for the salvation of His elect.

“We should not despair, therefore, when we are tempted, but pray to God the more fervently that He may see fit to help us, for according to the word of Paul, He will make issue with temptation that we may be able to bear it. Let us humble our souls under the hand of God in every trial and temptation for He will save and exalt the humble in spirit.

“In temptations and trials the progress of a man is measured; in them opportunity for merit and virtue is made more manifest. When a man is not troubled it is not hard for him to be fervent and devout, but if he bears up patiently in time of adversity, there is hope for great progress. Some, guarded against great temptations, are frequently overcome by small ones in order that, humbled by their weakness in small trials, they may not presume on their own strength in great ones” (The Imitation of Christ, Book 1, chapter 13).

TAKING THINGS TOO EASY

History also shows that any civilization, whenever it gave into the temptation of sinking itself into the arms of comfort, softness and ease, finally ended up collapsing. Man needs a certain dose of a ‘Spartan’ existence in order to maintain an upright and solid backbone to his spiritual, material, physical existence.

We are all in need of penance; whether we think we are good or bad. For God judges differently to man. We judge merely on the surface, but God, who notices the loss of one single hair from our head, and takes note of every idle word we utter, also takes into account everything that contributes to our sins.

For some are tempted more frequently, others less frequently; some are tempted with great vehemence, others lightly; some have many souls praying for them, others have few praying for them; some may have a natural temperament that will open them up to more temptation, others have a naturally strong blend of temperaments that help them resist temptation; some are hated more by the devil, others hated less; some are trying hard to be spiritual and will thus attract the devil’s attention and temptations, others are lukewarm, and so they are partially doing the devil’s work for him.

AIDING AND ABETTING THE DEVIL

The devil is behind many temptations and spiritual diseases, but, ultimately, it is our cooperation with the devil’s temptations and lack of cooperation with God’s suggestions, that makes us sin or become lukewarm. So let us be perfectly honest and admit our lukewarmness. If you go to a doctor, but will admit to no illness and say nothing of your symptoms, or perhaps lie about them—then don’t expect to be given the correct remedy or even any remedy.

LEARNING FROM OUR LADY

Let us take a lesson from one of MANY temptations undergone by Our Lady, as related in the The Mystical City of God, by the Venerable Mary of Agreda, where she states that the devil, seeing Our Lady’s incredible holiness, tried to derail her with a onslaught of different kinds of temptations, among which was a temptation of avarice.

“At one point the devils had organized a massive onslaught of temptation against the Mother of God. One of attacks was to tempt her to the sin of avarice. They offered to her great riches, gold, silver, and most precious gems and in order that these might not seem empty promises, thy placed before her a great quantity of these riches, although they were only apparent; for they thought that they could exert greater influence on her will by actually presenting these objects before her.

“They accompanied this offer with many deceitful words and told her that God had sent her all this for distribution among the poor. When they saw that all this had no effect upon her, they changed their tactics and urged, that, since she was so holy, it was a great wrong that she should remain so poor.

“It was more reasonable that she possess these riches, than that they remain in the hands of wicked sinners, for this would be an injustice and a disarrangement of the Divine Providence that the just be visited with poverty, while God’s wicked enemies abound in riches and affluence” (Venerable Mary of Agreda, Mystical City of God, Vol. 2, “The Incarnation”).

“The most prudent Lady, although she possessed divine wisdom, never undertook to argue with these enemies, as in truth nobody should; for they battle against the manifest truth and will not admit defeat.

The most holy Mary made use of some words of the Holy Scriptures and repeated them with serene humility. On this occasion she selected the words of the 118th Psalm: “I have acquired for my heritage and for my riches the keeping of thy testimonies and thy laws, my Lord.” In this most wise manner she rejected and overcame the temptation, to the confusion and torment of these agents of iniquity” (Venerable Mary of Agreda, Mystical City of God, Vol. 2, “The Incarnation”).

Neither was St. Joseph spared temptations against the poverty that God had placed upon his shoulders: “The demon suggested a feeling of restlessness to St. Joseph, irritating and disgusting him against his poverty” (Venerable Mary of Agreda, Mystical City of God, Vol. 2, “The Incarnation”).

OUR LORD PRAYS TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION

In His Agony in the Garden, Our Lord was tempted to give up! He response was prayer—a remedy that He also tried to suggest to His

Apostles, but they would not listen: “ ‘Pray, lest ye enter into temptation! And He was withdrawn away from them a stone’s cast; and kneeling down, He prayed ... And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow. And He said to them: ‘Why sleep you? Arise! Pray! Lest you enter into temptation!’” (Luke 22:40-46).

Prayer is a primary source of grace; and without grace we cannot fight the temptations offered to us by the devil, the world and the flesh. Lack of prayer means lack of grace; and lack of grace means lack of strength; and lack of strength means lack of effort; and lack of effort results in lukewarmness.

It is, above all, necessary to persevere in prayer till death, and never to cease to pray. This is what is inculcated by the following passages of Scripture: “We ought always to pray” (Luke 18: 1). “Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times” (Luke 21:36). “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thesalonians 5:17). Hence the Holy Ghost says: “Let nothing hinder thee from praying always” (Ecclesiasticus 18: 22).

These words imply, not only that we should pray always, but also that we should endeavor to remove every occasion which may prevent us from praying; for, if we cease to pray, we shall be deprived of the divine aid, and shall be overcome by temptations.

Perseverance in grace is a gratuitous gift, which, as the Council of Trent has declared, we cannot merit (Ses. 6, cap. xiii); but St. Augustine says, that we may obtain it by prayer. Hence Cardinal Bellarmine teaches that “we must ask it daily, in order to obtain it everyday.” If we neglect to ask it on any day, we may fall into sin on that day.

THE “TRUMP-CARD” OF THE DEVIL

The so-called “trump-card” of the devil’s pack of temptations is despondency or discouragement. He tried that card on Our Lord in the Agony in the Garden. Despondency is an insidiously dangerous temptation. Here are the reasons why.

DESPONDENCY AND DISCOURAGEMENT COME DISGUISED

Despondency or discouragement is the most dangerous temptation that the enemy of our salvation can employ. In other temptations he attacks some one virtue in particular, and shows himself openly: by despondency he attacks them all, but covertly. The snare is readily perceived in other temptations: one finds in religion, often even in reason, principles which condemn them. The knowledge of the evil, to which we cannot blind ourselves, conscience, and the truths of religion which are awakened, serve as helps to sustain us.

But in despondency there is nothing to lean upon: we feel that reason does not suffice to enable us to practice all the good that God requires of us. On the other hand, we dare not hope to receive from God all the help we need to overcome our passions; thus we become discouraged and nearly reduced to despair, the very point to which the devil tries to lead the despondent soul.

THEY HAVE MANY DISGUISES

In other temptations we clearly perceive that it is wrong to allow the mind to dwell upon them; but in despondency, which disguises itself under a multiplicity of forms, we see strong motives for yielding to the feeling which we do not look upon as a temptation.

This feeling, however, makes us imagine that perseverance in the practice of virtue is impossible, and it leaves the soul liable to be overcome by all its passions. It is therefore of the utmost importance to avoid this snare.

HIDING BEHIND A MASK

The most fatal effect of despondency is that the soul that yields to it does not view it as a temptation. With the devil's astute and malicious help, we can almost convince ourselves that we are so bad that we deserve no mercy nor any

help from God. We think that we are being just in thinking this way—we do see nothing wrong with it.

This false feeling seems to wear the mask of humility—except that true humility is but a stepping stone to Hope and Mercy, as is seen in the sentiments of the Good Thief alongside Jesus on the Cross, and in Mary Magdalen weeping at His feet at the banquet. Hope and confidence in God are as much a commandment as Faith and the other virtues.

EXAMPLES OF THE SAINTS

St. Monica prayed for many years before she obtained from God the conversion of her son, the future St. Augustine (though he was far from being a saint at that time). He was living with a mistress with whom he had fathered a child. Yet, despite all contrary indications and temptations to discouragement, St. Monica continued to pray with perseverance and confidence.

OUR “TRUMP-CARD”

St. Louis de Montfort recalls an exorcism by the great St. Dominic, to whom Our Lady gave the Rosary, wherein the devils were forced to admit the following:

“Listen, you Christians. This Mother of Jesus is most powerful in saving her servants from falling into Hell. She is like the sun which destroys the darkness of our wiles and subtlety. It is she who uncovers our hidden plots, breaks our snares, and makes our temptations useless and ineffective.

We have to say, however, reluctantly, that no soul who has really persevered in her service has ever been damned with us; one single sigh that she offers to the Blessed Trinity is worth far more than all the prayers, desires, and aspirations of all the saints.

We fear her more than all the other saints in Heaven together, and we have no success with her faithful servants” (St. Louis de Montfort, *The Secret of the Rosary*, “Thirty-Third Rose”).

THE ROSARY

15 Meditations on Wednesday of Holy Week

**“But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.”
(Luke 2:19)**



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4. MEDITATIONS FOR HOLY WEDNESDAY

The Church and the Saints tell us that there is nothing more profitable than the meditation of the Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Holy Week is that central and poignant scene in Christ's life on Earth. Holy Week and the Passion are like husband and wife. They go together, they live together, they think as one, they act as one. It is recommended that, during Holy Week, you stay with the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary for each day of the week—even if you say 10, 20, 30, 40 or more decades a day. To help you in that regard, here are some meditations to ponder for each of the fifteen decades of the Rosary. Each day's ritual will try to have meditations that reflect that particular day's events and happenings.

FIRST MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY “SIN IS A BETRAYAL OF GOD”

O how we take sin so lightly! When we die, we will then see the gravity of sin. Our catechisms say that sin is the greatest evil in the world—not just Mortal Sin, but also Venial Sin!

How would we feel if our family, relatives and friends, colleagues, neighbors, acquaintances and strangers offended us without fail each day of the week, each hour of the day?

God has to put up with 7 billion people offending Him on a daily basis! Is it small wonder that He will soon be doing about it?

God is merciful, but He is not a doormat for sin. Mary Magdalen was a great sinner who profited from His mercy, but Jesus said to her: “Go and sin no more!”

To the sick man who had lain by the poolside in Jerusalem hoping for a cure, after He had cured him, *“Jesus findeth him in the temple, and saith to him: Behold thou art made whole: sin no*

more, lest some worse thing happen to thee!” (John 5:14).

Yet we multiply, wantonly, sin upon sin in our stupid complacency and heartless inconsideration. Holy Scripture warns: *“Be not without fear about sin forgiven, and add not sin upon sin!”* (Ecclesiasticus 5:5).

SECOND MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY
“BETRAYAL BY A LACK OF PRAYER”

Prayer is a loving conversation with God and those in Heaven. Our Lord said that where our treasure is, there too is our heart. We were told not to put our heart in mammon, but in God. When we spend more time talking with the world or talking about the world, then we are betraying God.

No soul ever fell away from God without giving up prayer. Prayer is that which establishes contact with Divine Power and opens the invisible resources of Heaven. However dark the way, when we pray, temptation can never master us.

The first step downward in the average soul is the giving up of the practice of prayer, the breaking of the circuit with Heaven and the proclamation of one’s own self-sufficiency. *“Hey Lord! See! I can do things without having to pray!”* But in doing so, we forget the truth that Our Lord announced at the Last Supper: *“Without Me, you can do nothing!”* (John 15:5).

THIRD MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY
“WE OPEN THE DOORS TO TEMPTATION”

The night that Our Blessed Lord went out under the light of a full moon into the Garden of Gethsemani to crimson the olive roots with His own blood for our redemption, He turned to His disciples and said: *“Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak”* (Matthew 26:41).

Withdrawing from these three disciples about as

far as a man could throw a stone—how significant a way to measure distance the night one goes to death—He prayed to His Heavenly Father: *“My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt”* (Matthew 26:39).

When Our Blessed Lord came back the last time to visit His disciples, He found them asleep. A woman will watch not one hour or one night, but, rather, day after day and night after night in the presence of a peril threatening her child.

These men slept. If they could sleep on such an occasion, it was due to the fact that they had no adequate conception of the crisis through which Our Savior was passing, no consciousness of the tragedy that was already upon them. Finding them asleep, Our Blessed Lord spoke to Peter and said: *“...What? Could you not watch one hour with me?”* (Matthew 26:40).

Peter had given up both watching and praying. Our Lord had not. When the crunch came—Our Lord stood His ground, while the Apostles fled.

FOURTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY
“ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS, BUT WORDS MUST COME FIRST”

There are “men of action” who relegate prayer to second place. They like the quotes: *“Actions speak louder than words!”* and *“Faith without works is dead!”*

One common trait that you will find among these folk is PRIDE. They are like children who want to run before they can walk. They want to write books before they learn how to spell. They are often putting the cart before the horse.

If you have ever read the book *Soul of the Apostle*, by Dom Chautard (if not, you ought to), you will remember how he speaks of the primacy of prayer and the interior life.

Everything comes from within. Actions follow ideas. Works must follow prayers. To run into

action and works without prayer is either an act of pride or presumption or both. What do you not understand about Our Lord's words: "*Without Me, you can do nothing!*" It is not mere poetry, but reality!

FIFTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY
"THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD, BUT PRAYER IS MIGHTIER THAN THE PEN"

We, children of the modern world, are apt to deify technology and the vast amount of information available to us through that technology—whether it be finding answers on the internet, help from power tools and electric appliances, health from modern medicine, and all that we need from the money that we have, etc.

It is almost as though we no longer need—or rarely need—God. He is only there for emergencies, when our earthly gods cannot deliver!

Yet prayer brings about far more than we can imagine. One day we will see all the things that have come under the umbrella or sponsorship of prayer—and we will blush. For we attribute many things to ourselves, and not our petitions to God (or the kindness of God giving, even when neglect to ask)!

That is why we are told: "*Pray without ceasing ... We ought always to pray, and not to faint ... To him that knocketh, it shall be opened*" (1 Thesalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1; Luke 11:10).

SIXTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY
"BETRAY OF WORLDLINESS"

30 pieces of silver to the very rich was very little. To the very poor, it was a lot. 30 pieces of silver was, in terms of days of wages for a skilled laborer—wages for 120 days: which is about half a years wages. The silver pieces referred to in the New Testament are most likely what we call "*the Shekel of Tyre*". It had a value of 4 drachms, or what's called a "tetradrachm."

One drachma was a soldiers daily wage, which would be approximately \$50 to \$60 in today's money. So we can estimate that each tetradrachm (being four drachmas) is about \$200 to \$240, and so we're looking at about \$6,000 to \$7,200 (though this is a pretty rough estimate).

We also see thirty shekels of silver as pertaining to slaves. In Exodus 21:32, thirty shekels of silver is the amount paid to one whose slave has been gored by an ox.

Though not thirty, Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver in Genesis 37:28. And Hosea bought back his adulteress/harlot wife, Gomer, for fifteen pieces of silver.

So we see numerous examples of life being sold for silver, but how can we put that in today's terms?

They say "*everyone has their price*" and Judas seemed to price Jesus pretty low. Yet that is what we do when we "*sell Jesus in exchange for the pleasures of sin*".

How much money does it take to get drunk? Certainly not the 30 pieces of silver or \$6,000 to \$7,000 Judas got! How much does it cost to buy street drugs? Much less than Judas got? How much for a 'dirty' magazine? How much does it cost to destroy someone's reputation through gossip? How much does it cost to have an impure thought? People betray Jesus for far less these days, in comparison to what Judas got!

SEVENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY
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EIGHTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY
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NINTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY

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TENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY

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ELEVENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY

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TWELFTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY

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THIRTEENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY

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FORTEENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY

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FIFTEENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY WEDNESDAY

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THE ROSARY

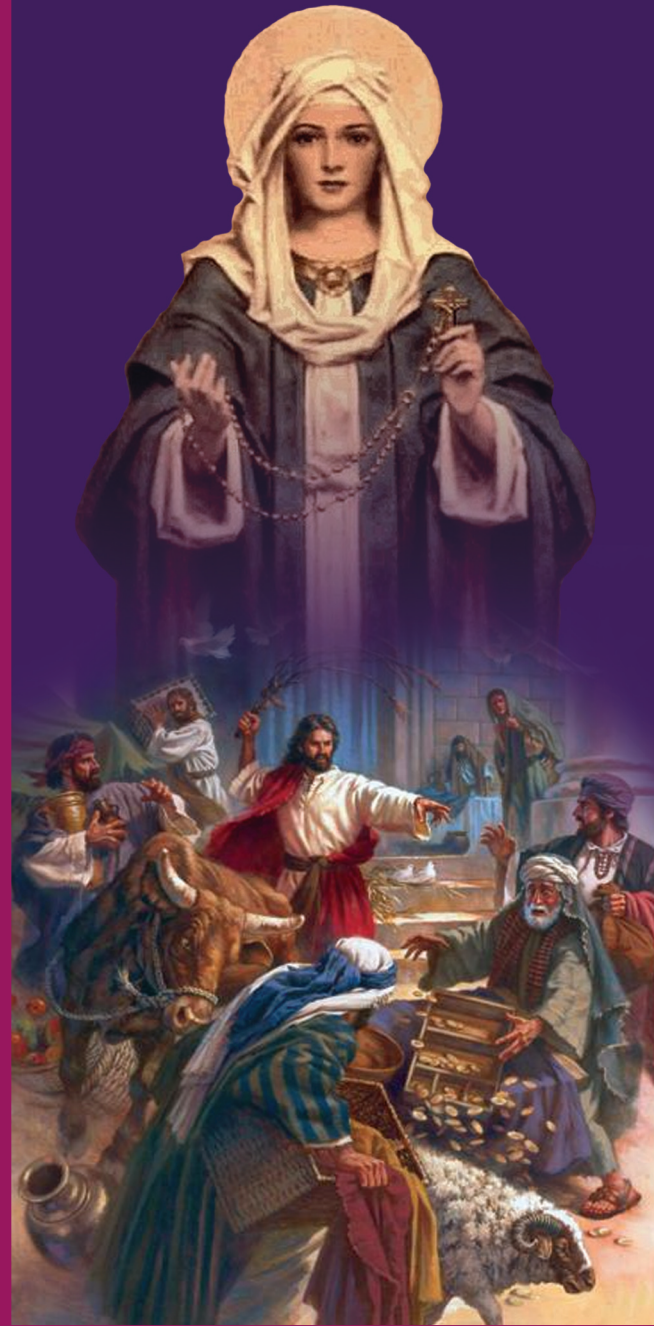
15 Meditations on Wednesday of Holy Week

**“But Mary kept all these
words, pondering them
in her heart.”**

(Luke 2:19)



HOLY WEEK ANGELUS



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5. THE ANGELUS

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THE ANGELUS

- V.** The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
R. And she conceived of the Holy Ghost.
HAIL MARY....etc.
- V.** Behold the Handmaid of the Lord.
R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.
HAIL MARY....etc.
- R.** And the Word was made flesh.
V. And dwelt amongst us.
HAIL MARY....etc.
- R.** Pray for us O holy Mother of God.
V. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech Thee O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord. **R.** Amen.

A PRAYER OF UNITY

In rural parishes, when the parish Angelus bell tolled at noon, a person could scan the many fields and see people stopped in their tracks as they prayed the Angelus. In those days, the Angelus was so much a part of rural life that as soon as the first toll of the bell was heard, the horses stopped themselves without having to be told to do so by their drivers. What a wondrous sight it must have been to look out over the fields and, there, see your neighbor praying the same prayer you were praying at the same time of the day—giving a little token and a sense of feeling of unity in Faith.

IT COMES IN “THREES”

Since the Angelus is divided into three parts, we

will have three parts to the article. Firstly, the spiritual part; then the historical part; and finally the practical part or its usage.

The Incarnation is a central dogma of the Faith. It is the launch-pad of the act of our Redemption and Salvation. It the foundation of all that follows. It is a mind-blowing event, where God humiliates Himself to take on our flesh and our nature. For us to reduce ourselves to the level and nature of tiny bug, is not even anywhere near the 'reduction' undergone by God in becoming man. It is something that we rightfully and justly should remember each day.

The Angelus reminds us of the Annunciation and Incarnation, when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary with great, if somewhat startling, news! As we read in Chapter One of Luke's Gospel, (Luke 1:26-38) God wished Mary, truly a model of humility, to be the Mother of His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ!

GENUINE HUMILITY

When we pray the first mystery of the Holy Rosary—the Annunciation—we often announce that the fruit of this mystery is humility. Mary's humility was genuine. As St. Alphonsus Liguori notes in his classic work *The Glories of Mary*, "*her only desire was that her Creator, the giver of every good thing, should be praised and blessed.*"

When Mary calls herself the handmaid, or the servant, of the Lord, in the Angelus (from Luke 1:38) it is with inspiring humility and sincerity. She thought of herself first and foremost as God's servant, seeking glory, not for herself, but rather for Him. Mary was happy to have God work through her. As she expressed it most famously in the canticle the Magnificat, "*My soul magnifies the Lord and my Spirit rejoices in God my Savior*" (Luke 1:46-47).

St. Paul echoed this wonderful sentiment when he wrote that "*he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord*" (2 Corinthians 10:17). In so doing, Mary became, as St. Augustine put it rather poetically, a "heavenly ladder, by which God came into the world," descending from Heaven to Earth, to be-

come flesh in her womb. This brings to mind the line from Matthew's Gospel: "*Whoever humbles himself shall be exalted*" (Mathew 23:12).

"YES" TO GOD — "NO" TO THE WORLD

The Angelus pays tribute to a crucial aspect of Mary's role in the Incarnation, when it quotes from Luke's Gospel "*be it done to me according to thy word*" (Luke 1:38). This wonderful event could not have happened without her consent, without what is known as her fiat. By saying "yes" to God in allowing herself to become His mother, she showed us the ultimate example of trust in our Creator!

TOO TOUGH?

Do you think that having that kind of Faith is too daunting a task? Think about the ways in which God calls each of in our daily lives. Do we say "yes" when Christ wants to work through us, in showing His love to others? Or when He asks us to be graceful in trying and testing situations? Mary knew that the Messiah would be a "Man of Sorrows"—to accept being His Mother, meant that this was not going to be walk in the park or a picnic! This was going to mean trouble, real trouble; together with suffering, real suffering. Prayer and meditation on Mary's reaction, to the invitation in the Annunciation, can help us to do His will.

LOVE IS A UNION OF WILLS

Speaking of God's word, the Angelus completes its short summary of the Incarnation with the moving reference to our Lord from John's Gospel: "*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*" (John 1:14). As we read in the letter to the Hebrews, Christ was like us in all things but without sin (Hebrews 4:15). St. Bernard noted that our Lord came to show us His love, so that He might then experience ours—that we might say to Him, "Be it done unto me according to Thy word"—for love is a union of wills; it is wanting what the beloved wants.

HOLY WEEK
PRAYERS TO
BE SAID
BEFORE AND
AFTER
MEALS



6. PRAYERS TO BE SAID BEFORE AND AFTER MEALS

Psalm 21:1-12

There are two versions to choose from:

- (1) The modern English "You and Your"
- (2) The traditional "Thee and Thou"

BEFORE MEALS

ALL MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

LEADER: In the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

ALL: Of those that are in Heaven, on Earth, and under the Earth! For He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Then is said the following psalm.

Version 1

ALL: My God, my God, why have You forsaken me, far from my prayer, from the words of my cry? O my God, I cry out by day, and You answer not; by night, and there is no relief for me.

Yet You are enthroned in the holy place, O glory of Israel! In You our fathers trusted; they trusted, and You delivered them. To You they cried, and they escaped; in You they trusted, and they were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, not a man; the scorn of men, despised by the people. All who see me scoff at me; they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads: *"He relied on the Lord; let Him deliver him, let Him rescue him, if He loves him."* You have been my guide since I was first formed, my security at my mother's breast. To You I was

committed at birth, from my mother's womb You are my God. Be not far from me! For I am in distress! Be near, for I have no one to help me!

Version 2

ALL: O God my God, look upon me! Why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins. O my God, I shall cry by day, and Thou wilt not hear: and by night, and it shall not be reputed as folly in me. But Thou dwellest in the holy place, the praise of Israel. In Thee have our fathers hoped: they have hoped, and Thou hast delivered them. They cried to thee, and they were saved: they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded.

But I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head. "He hoped in the Lord, let Him deliver him: let Him save him, seeing He delighteth in him!"

For Thou art He that hast drawn me out of the womb: my hope from the breasts of my mother. I was cast upon Thee from the womb. From my mother's womb thou art my God! Depart not from me! For tribulation is very near: for there is none to help me!

LEADER: No one lives on bread alone.

ALL: But on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

LEADER: A time of penance has been granted us.

ALL: To atone for our sins and heal our souls.

LEADER: For our sake Christ was obedient, accepting even death.

ALL: Death on a cross.

LEADER: The eyes of all creatures look to you to give them food in due time.

ALL: You give it to them, they gather it up; you open your hand, they have their fill.

LEADER: Let us call on the name of the Father, Who always takes care of His children.

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ALL: Our Father . . . but deliver us from evil. Amen.

LEADER: Bless us O Lord

ALL: And these Thy gifts which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

AFTER MEALS

ALL MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

LEADER: In the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

ALL: Of those that are in Heaven, on Earth, and under the Earth! For He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

LEADER: Lord, you have fed us with Thy gifts and favors.

ALL: Fill us with Thy mercy, for Thou art merciful and Thy mercies are above all Thy works.

LEADER: For the sake of Thy holy Name, O Lord

ALL: Reward those who have been good to us and give them eternal life. Amen.

LEADER: Our compassionate Lord has left us a memorial of His wonderful works.

ALL: He has given food to those who fear Him.

LEADER: God is blessed in all His gifts

ALL: And holy in all His works.

LEADER: We give Thee thanks almighty God

ALL: For all Thy benefits, Who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.

LEADER: May the souls of all the faithful departed

ALL: Through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.