

VIGILS READINGS—GETHSEMANI ABBEY

May 20-26, 2018

Seventh Week in Ordinary Time

Sunday, May 20, 2018

A reading about the spirit of love and unity, by William of St. Thierry.¹

Love is nothing other than a vehement, well-ordered will.

So, then, love-worthy Lord, you love yourself in yourself when the Holy Spirit, who is the Love of the Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father, proceeds from the Father and the Son. And that love is so great that it is unity, and the unity is such that it is oneness of substance—that is the Father and the Son are of the same being.

And you love yourself in us by sending the Spirit of your Son into our hearts; in the sweetness of love and the ardent good will that you inspire in us, the Spirit cries: "*Abba, Father*" (Rm 8.15). Thus do you make us love you; or rather, it is thus that you love yourself in us. We could only hope before, but now, through the inspiration of your grace and the Spirit of adoption, we have confidence that whatever the Father has is ours; and through the grace of our adoption we invoke you by the very name with which Jesus addresses you who is your only Son by nature.

You love us, because you make us love you; and we love you because we receive from you your Spirit who transforms us into the purity of your truth and into the

¹"De Contemplando Deo", cited in Emile Mersch, The Whole Christ, Milwaukee 1938, 445-446.

truth of your purity, in perfect conformity with your love. This produces so great an attachment and union, such enjoyment of your sweetness, that our Lord, your Son, called it Unity, saying: "*That they may be one in us,*" and so great a dignity and glory that he immediately added: "*as I and you are one*" (Jn 17.21-22).

We love you, or you love yourself in us; we by our affections, you by your power. And you make us one by your unity, that is, by your Holy Spirit, whom you have given to us.

Just as for the Father, to know the Son is nothing else than to be what the Son is; and as for the Son, to know the Father is nothing else than to be what the Father is; and as for the Holy Spirit, to know and to comprehend the Father and the Son is nothing else than to be what the Father is and what the Son is, so too for us (who were created in your image, who have seen that image disfigured by Adam, and who see it renewed each day by Christ), so for us to love God, to love and fear God and to observe the commandments, is nothing else than to be with God and to be one spirit with God. For to fear God and keep God's commandments is the whole law.

O adorable, awesome, and most blessed God, give us this Spirit. "*Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth*" (Ps 103.30). Long enough has this cataclysm continued, long enough has been the punishment of the children of Adam. Bring your Spirit upon the earth. Let us be sanctified by your holiness, and let us be united by your unity.

Monday, May 21, 2018

The Blessed Virgin and the Church From the Document on the Church from Vatican II
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The predestination of the Blessed Virgin as Mother of God was associated with the incarnation of the divine word: in the designs of divine Providence she was the gracious mother of the divine Redeemer here on earth, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord. She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ, she presented him to the Father in the temple, shared her Son's sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace.

This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix. This, however, is so understood that it neither takes away anything from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficacy of Christ the one Mediator.

No creature could ever be counted along with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer; but just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by his ministers and the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is radiated in different ways among his creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source.

The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary, which it constantly experiences and recommends to the heartfelt attention of the faithful, so that encouraged by the maternal help they may all the more closely adhere to the Mediator and Redeemer.

By reason of the gift and role of her divine motherhood, by which she is united with her Son, the Redeemer, and with her unique graces and functions, the Blessed Virgin is also intimately united to the Church. As St. Ambrose taught, the Mother of God is a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity, and perfect union with Christ. For in the mystery of the Church, which is itself rightly called mother and virgin, the Blessed Virgin stands out in eminent and singular fashion as exemplar both of virgin and mother. In her life the Virgin has been a model of that

motherly love with which all who join in the Church's apostolic mission for the regeneration of humankind should be animated.

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

JOSHUA AS A PROPHET AND FIGURE OF JESUS, from a Book by Damasus Winzen [1](#)

The Book of Joshua is not only an end, the fulfillment of God's promise to give his people a home, but also a beginning: it is the first of the books of the Old Testament that describe the political development of the Israelitic nation, and show how the people lived up to their part of the covenant with God by keeping the law. Joshua is a "beginning" in the sense this word always has in sacred history, whose author is the "I am who I am." It is comprehensive and universal, containing the entire future development and foreshadowing the end. We do not find in Joshua a mechanical registering of events exactly as they took place during the first period of infiltration of the Israelitic tribes into Canaan. It selects and sees the events which it relates in the light of the purpose, the "end" of the history of the chosen people. This history is essentially "prophetic."

It is different from the history of the gentile nations, because it has as its objective the establishment of God's kingdom among peoples. The history of the gentile nations is one continuous effort to obtain prosperity and glory for themselves. Consequently they are not being guided by the light of divine wisdom. Their history is, in their own eyes, a matter of chance and luck and fate. They trust in soothsayers and diviners to guide them, blindly led by the blind. Divine wisdom, on the contrary, chooses the prophets to make God's will known to his people. "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren--him you should heed." (Deut 18:15) Our Lord's contemporaries see this famous prophecy of Moses' fulfilled in Christ, calling him "the Prophet" (Jn 6:14). Jewish scholars refer it to the prophets who in every period of Jewish history are the successors of Moses, beginning with Joshua, and continuing with Samuel, David, Elijah, etc...

Joshua is, therefore, the first of the prophets, and as such he immediately points to the last: Jesus. They have, in fact, the same name, because Jesus is the Hebrew form of Joshua. It is the first name in the Old Testament formed with the name of God--Yahweh--and it means "God will liberate" or "God will give room." The name

is, therefore, in itself a prophecy. It indicates that the conquest of the promised land under Joshua is more than a political event, that it foreshadows a spiritual liberation, the true nature of which is revealed when the same name is given to our Lord. The angel announced to Joseph: "She [Mary] shall bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sin" (Mt 1:21). Jesus fulfills what Joshua has prefigured. In the beginning of his public life as saviour he goes to the banks of the Jordan, and at the spot where the ark of the covenant stood when Joshua together with his people passed through the river, he receives from St John the baptism of penance. Instead of standing on dry ground, as Joshua had done, he is immersed in the water to typify his death. Jesus opens the passage into the land of liberty from sin by dying for the sins of the people. He is the Lamb which takes away the sins of the world. Joshua's courage is fulfilled in Christ's charity.

[1](#) PATHWAYS IN SCRIPTURE by Damasus Winzen OSB (Word of Life, Ann Arbor MI 1976) pp.88-89.

Wednesday, May 23, 2018

A reading about the wisdom of the monastic way, from a sermon by Bl. Gueric of Igny. [1](#)

“Blessed indeed is the one who continues in wisdom with steadfast faith.” Now to achieve this wisdom of continuing in wisdom, it is important, I think, not readily to allow restlessness or any kind of slight provocation to keep you away from any of the exercises of wisdom: the divine office, private prayer, lectio divina, the appointed daily labor or the practice of silence. For the praises of wisdom are sung at the completion of the Office. “My lips will rejoice,” says the Holy Man, “when they have sung to you.” As for private prayer, you know from daily experience that it too is better at the end than at the beginning. This is so that you may have confidence in the advice of the Lord, given so often and recommended by so much example, to be persevering in prayer.

Again when you sit down to read and you do not really read, or if before you even begin to read you put the book down again, what good do you think that will do you? If you do not continue with the Scriptures so as to become familiar with them through assiduous study, when do you think they will open themselves to you? He who has love of the world, we are told, to him shall understanding be given and he

will abound; but he who has not, what knowledge he may have by way of natural endowment, will be taken away from him because of his negligence.

Then with regard to manual work, surely you have learned enough about this, have you not, to know that, like the wage given to workers, consolation is often reserved to the end of the work?

And of course when we come to silence a promise is given by the Prophet when he says: "In silence and in hope shall your strength be." For if you cultivate holiness in silence and, following the advice of Jeremiah, you wait in silence for the salvation of the Lord, then secretly in the midst of the silence the all-powerful Word of God will leap down to you from his royal throne. The waters of Siloe which flow silently will inundate the valley of your quiet and peaceful heart like a gently flowing stream. And this you will experience not once but many times, if only your silence is the cultivation of holiness, that is, if you meditate on holiness so that you may continue in the Scriptures as I have suggested and in your mind consider the all-seeing eye of God.

Meditate on these things, continue in them so that your progress may be made manifest. If therefore you want to continue in wisdom, meditate diligently on holiness. "You have desired wisdom," he says, "keep holiness and God will give her to you."

[1](#)*Liturgical Sermons*, vol. 2, Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1971, p. 5.

Thursday, May 24, 2018

THE WAR OF JOSHUA, from a Book by Damasus Winzen³

After the defilement brought on the Israelites by Achan has been removed, Joshua is able to conquer Ai, the second town in Canaan to fall to the Israelites. The inhabitants are put to the sword and the king is "hanged on a tree (i.e. crucified) and left until evening, but at sunset Joshua ordered his body to be taken down from the tree." (8:29) In the attack on Ai the Israelites use violence for the first time in their

³PATHWAYS IN SCRIPTURE, by Dom Damasus Winzen (Word of Life, Ann Arbor MI, 1976) pp. 93-94.

campaign to conquer Canaan. The battle against the five kings follows, and the defeat of the "kings of the north"; "and Joshua took and put to the sword and destroyed all the cities round about, and their kings"(11:12).

This war of extermination had nothing in common with the colonial wars which the white race fought during the last three centuries against practically all the rest of humanity. During the white conquest of colonial empires whole nations were sacrificed to the white race's skill in exploiting nature. The war of Joshua was directed against idolatry and sin. Recent excavations have proved the Canaanite culture at the time of the Hebrew invasion had reached its lowest level and found itself in a state of complete moral corruption. One should not forget that temple-prostitution, child-sacrifices, and such were public institutions in these little city-states. Their extermination through Joshua is the demonstration of the absolute opposition between the holiness of God and human sin. The wages of sin is death, because the living God is holy, and he hates sin. It is the plant which the heavenly Father has not planted and which, therefore, shall be rooted up (Mt 15:13).

There is no essential difference between Joshua and the messiah of whom David speaks:"the Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make of your enemies your footstool. The Lord at your right hand has broken kings in the day of his wrath; he shall fill ruins, he shall crush heads in the land of the many" (Ps.110:1,5-6). But the messiah Jesus has revealed a spiritual principle, here expressed in terms of war to be carried on by everyone in his own heart, when he said: "He that loves his life shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world, keeps it unto life eternal" (Jn 12:25). True to his teaching, he has fulfilled Joshua by carrying the burden of our sins in his own body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live in justice. The difference between the book of Joshua and the New Testament is not that the former belongs to a more primitive stage of the ethical development of the human race, in which violence is still considered a legitimate means of spreading religion, while the latter is pacificistic, but that Joshua hangs the evil kings on the tree, while Jesus takes on the likeness of sin and takes upon himself the death of the kings of Canaan. The difference between Joshua and Jesus is, therefore, that in Jesus charity has fulfilled justice, and death has been swallowed up in life.

Friday, May 25, 2018

[A Reading About the Descent of the Holy Spirit, by The Venerable Bede.¹](#)

In order to proclaim to the world the glory of the indivisible Trinity, the Holy Spirit descended appropriately at the third hour. And since it was said "They were persevering in prayer," they quite rightly received the Holy Spirit at the hour of prayer, so that it might be shown to readers that it is not easy to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit unless the mind is raised from material things by concentration on the things which are above. Now we read that three times a day Daniel bent his knees and prayed, and the church understands these to have been the third, sixth, and ninth hours. Also the Lord sent the Holy Spirit at the third hour, he himself ascended the cross at the sixth, and he yielded up his soul at the ninth. He thus saw fit to enjoin there same hours preeminently upon the rest of us and to sanctify them.

I will pour forth of my spirit on all flesh. The word effusion shows the lavishness of the gift, for the grace of the Holy Spirit was not to be granted, as formerly, only to individual prophets and priests, but to everyone in every place, regardless of sex, state of life, or position. The prophet subsequently explains what all flesh may be, saying, Your sons and daughters will prophesy and so forth, and I will give prodigies in heaven above and signs on the earth beneath - prodigies in heaven when with the Lord's birth a new star appeared, and with his ascending of the cross the sun was dimmed and heaven itself was covered with darkness; signs on the earth when, with the Lord's breathing forth of his spirit, the earth trembled violently, broke open sepulchers, split apart rocks, and brought forth alive again the bodies of many of the saints who had fallen asleep.

Blood and fire and vapor of smoke - the blood of the Lord's side; the fire of the Holy Spirit; the vapor of compunction and tears, because just as smoke is produced from fire, so vapor is produced from the ardor of the Holy Spirit. And as for blood flowing in a vigorous stream from the Lord's dead flesh, because this is contrary to the nature of bodies it remains for us to believe that this was done for a sign. A sign of what, to be sure, if not of our salvation and the life which is born from his death? It is also possible to understand the fire as the enlightening of the faithful, and the vapor of smoke as the blindness of the Jews who did not believe. Whence also when about to give the law the Lord descended in fire and smoke because through the brilliance of his manifestation he enlightened the humble, and through the murky smoke of error he dimmed the eyes of the proud.

[1The Venerable Bede:Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles](#), The Venerable Bede, Tr. Lawrence T,Martin. Cistercian Publications, 1989

Saturday, May 26, 2018

JOSHUA AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM, from Pathways in Scripture by Dom Damasus Winzen¹

The whole purpose of the conquest of Palestine by Joshua is the establishment of the kingdom of God. Therefore an altar is built as soon as a firm foothold has been gained in the land, of unhewn stones to indicate that whatever serves God should be untouched by violence and corruption. One God, one country, one people, one altar: this fundamental principle of the kingdom of God seems to be endangered when the tribes living east of the Jordan build an altar for themselves. All Israel is ready to fight against them, until the eastern tribes explain that this altar is not being used to offer sacrifices, but only serves as a reminder to them that they also have the right to offer, and that they also "have a part in the Lord". In these tribes living outside the holy land, Israel in exile is prefigured; their altar is an anticipation of the synagogue which takes the place of the temple. God's mercy is not limited

by geographical border lines; his altar is wherever there are hearts to adore him. Thus the altar east of the Jordan represents all those who, although they have not been incorporated into the Church "physically" through the sacraments, have nevertheless the sincere intention, in good faith, to serve God, who is the God in heaven and on the earth below...

In the last two chapters (23-24) Joshua renews the covenant, impressing upon the minds of the Israelites that the love of God, which has given them a land in which they had not labored and cities to dwell in which they had not built, does not take away from the freedom of choice. They have to decide whom they want to serve: the God of their fathers or the gods of the Amorites. When they choose to serve the God of their fathers he tells them that they will not be able to serve the Lord, but he and his house, they will serve the Lord. A true prophet, Joshua sees the apostasy of Israel, but also the loyalty of Jesus and his house, the Church.

[1](#) PATHWAYS IN SCRIPTURE, by Dom Damasus Winzen, (Word of Life, Ann Arbor, MI 1976) pp. 95-96.

END OF READINGS