

SUN 04.26.20 3rd Sunday of Easter

A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke by a 12th century Author [1](#)

Their eyes were opened and they knew him when he broke the bread.

When bread is broken, it is in a way diminished, or “emptied”. By breaking understand the virtue of humility, by which Christ – even he who is the bread of life – broke, diminished, and emptied himself. And by emptying himself he gave us knowledge of himself.

The hidden Wisdom of the Father, and a treasure whole and concealed – what are they? Break your bread for the hungry, Lord, the bread that is yourself, so that human eyes may be opened, and it may not be regarded as a sin for us to long to be like you, knowing good and evil. Let him who from the beginning wished to strive after or grope for you in your undiminished state, know you through the breaking of bread.

Break yourself that we may learn to break our own selves, for you are not known through the breaking of bread. Balaam heard the words of God and saw visions of the Almighty, but he fell with open eyes because he did not know the Lord through the breaking of bread. It is the same today: you see many studying the Scriptures, teaching in cathedrals, preaching in churches, but their works do not agree with their words. With words they claim to have a knowledge of God, but with their deeds they deny it, because God cannot be known except through the breaking of the bread.

And in fact, the Lord became our bread and we are his bread. He condescended to eat his bread with sweat on his brow, so that we might eat with joy. If you want to know him, break yourself as he did, because anyone who claims to abide in Christ ought to live as he lived. The kingdom of God lies not in words, but in power.

Break yourself, then, by the labor of obedience, by the humiliation of repentance. Bear in your body the marks of Jesus Christ by accepting the condition of a servant, not of a superior. And when you have emptied yourself, you will know the Lord through the breaking of bread. True humility opens our eyes, “breaking” and diminishing the other virtues which might blind us with a spirit of pride, and teaching us that of ourselves we are nothing. And when we humble ourselves by self-contempt, so much the more do we grow in the knowledge of God.

[1](#) Journey with the Fathers – Year A – New City Press – 1992 – pg 60

Simplicity of heart, from the writings of St. Br. Rafael Annaiz Baron.

¹

I see, Brother, that the path you follow is the simple life. God does not require more of us than simplicity without and love within. The truth is that the real pathways of God are very easy and very simple when we walk along them full of the spirit of trust and with free hearts fixed on God.

Happy, indeed, is the Trappist who is not merely a Trappist externally, but whose interior life is marked by the simplicity that makes the real Trappist.

People of the world could think us somewhat complicated. I do not know how to explain myself, but I have come to realize what Jesus means when he says: "Unless you become as little children..."

The ways of the Lord are simplicity; his yoke is easy and his burden is light. We die to the world in order to be born to God. The self-denial of a life of silence and solitude blossoms into the exuberant joy of a heart which counts its blessings in terms of simplicity and integrity. Those who follow Christ, do so along the way of the Cross. I think that when we love the Cross all is gained.

God always lets his light shine on anyone who loves and seeks him in simplicity. We have to find our way along many winding paths before we arrive at the simple straight one. What causes us more distress than complicating things! How we human beings love to complicate everything for ourselves! Unless we keep ourselves under control by the practice of virtue, repeatedly, with our complicated way of existing we drive far from us everything that is simple.

Time and again, we fail to grasp the greatness hidden deep down in an act of simplicity. We want to seek greatness in complexity and think that only when things are difficult have they anything worthwhile to offer.

Perhaps I am not making myself clear, but I do see clearly now that what I previously saw as confused and complicated is really clear and simple. Virtue, God, Interior Life - difficult values to live out! It is not that I have attained

¹ Liturgical text, *Generalizia Cistercensi S.O.*, Rome, 1993

virtue, nor that my knowledge of God and my life in the spirit are totally clear, but that I have seen that to achieve something in these matters I need to be free from complexity and contortion, from clever speculation and technicalities.

I have seen that we reach God by just the opposite. True knowledge of Him comes through simplicity of heart and integrity. An act of love is not difficult at all. What is really hard is the effort to attain knowledge of God by penetrating his mysteries. The act of love brings us to God; the other way leads us nowhere.

Virtue, yes, it's for saints. Rather difficult to put into practice, certainly, but not quite like entering a competition or taking up a course of higher studies. Sometimes the simple resolve is enough, even the mere engagement of the will. Why, at times, do we miss out on virtue? Because we are not simple; because we complicate our objectives, because the weakness of our will makes everything we desire seem difficult. We pander to this weakness when we let our will satisfy itself with what is pleasant, consoling, distracting and, oftentimes, plain passion.

If anybody were to spell out to me what I had to do to be holy and pleasing to God, I think that, with the help of God and his Blessed Mother, I would do it.

With Jesus at my side nothing seems difficult to me, and the path to holiness seems simpler every time I look at it. Better -- it seems to consist in going forward and leaving things behind rather than in acquiring anything new, stripping back to simplicity rather than adding things on.

In so far as we go forward turning our back on so much inordinate love of creatures and of ourselves, it seems to me that we are drawing closer to that one real love, that sole desire, that unique aspiration of this life: the true holiness which is God.

TUE

04.28.20

The Third Sermon for Easter - by Bl. Gueric of Igny 2

“Blessed and holy is he who has a share in the first resurrection”. Christ is the first-fruits of them who sleep, the firstborn from the dead, who by his own resurrection. Which is the first of all, consecrated for us both the first resurrection of our souls and the second of our bodies. In his own body, which he raised from the dead, he inaugurated for our souls the mystery of rising and gave our bodies a first example of it. For our souls Christ’s single resurrection prepared a twofold grace of resurrection: day by day they come to life again from the death of sin through the working of this mystery, and today especially they arise from the torpor of sleep through the devotion which joy brings. For who is so slothful or lukewarm that when he hears today those words full of every joy: “The Lord has risen”, he is not wholly aroused to exultation, does not wholly come to life again and recover his warmth of spirit? Indeed, we read, “my heart and my flesh have exulted in the living God”, I who had fallen wholly into grief and despair when I looked upon the dead Jesus. It is with no mean profit to faith, no slight dividend of joy that Jesus comes back to me from the tomb; he is recognized as the living God who a little while before was mourned as a dead man. My heart was sorrowing for him as slain, but now he is alive, and not only my heart but also my flesh exults on his account, assured through him of its own resurrection and immortality. “O my soul, I have slept and I have arisen”, Christ says. Do you also arise who are asleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten you.

Brethren, this is the day which the Lord has made; let us exult and rejoice in it. Let us exult in the hope it brings, that we may see and rejoice in its light. Abraham exulted that he might see the day of Christ, and by this token he saw and rejoiced.

You too, if you keep watch at the doors of wisdom, steadfast at its threshold, if you stay awake through the night with Magdalen at the entrance of his tomb, if I am not mistaken you will experience with Mary how true are the words we read of the Wisdom which is Christ: “She is easily seen by those who love her and she is found by those who seek her. She anticipates those who desire her and shows herself to them first. He who, as soon as it is light, keeps watch for her will not have to toil, for he will find her seated at his doors”. So did Christ, Wisdom himself, promise in the words: “I love those who love me, and they who from early morning keep watch for me will find me”. Mary found Jesus in the flesh. For this she was keeping watch. Over his tomb she had come to

mount guard while it was still dark. You who no longer ought to know Jesus according to the flesh but according to the spirit, will be able to find him spiritually if you seek him with a like desire, if he finds you likewise vigilant in prayer. Say then to the Lord Jesus with the desire and affection of Mary: "My soul has longed for you during the night, my spirit too, deep within me; from early morning I will keep watch for you." Say with the voice of the Psalmist: "God my God, for you as soon as it is light I keep watch, my soul is athirst for you". And see if it is not your lot to sing with him: "We have been filled early in the morning with your mercy; we have exulted and been delighted."

WED 04.29.20 St Catherine of Siena

A Reading from the Dialogues of St Catherine of Sienna 3

Do you know what course I follow, once my servants have completely given themselves to the teaching of the Gentle loving Word? I prune them, so that they will bear much fruit – cultivated fruit, not wild. Just as the gardener prunes the branch that is joined to the vine so that it yield more and better wine, but cuts off and throws into the fire the branch that is barren, so do I the true gardener act. When my servants remain united to me I prune them with great suffering so that they will bear more and better fruit, and virtue will be proved in them. But those who bear no fruit are cut off and thrown into the fire.

These are the true workers. They till their souls well, uprooting every selfish love, cultivating the soil of their love in me. They feed and tend the growth of the seed of grace that they have received in holy baptism. And as they till their own vineyards, so they till their neighbor's as well, for they cannot do the one without the other. You already know that every evil as well as every good is done by means of your neighbors.

You, then, are my workers. You have come from me, the supreme eternal gardener, and I have engrafted you onto the vine by making myself one with you.

Keep in mind that each of you has your own vineyard. But every one is joined to your neighbor's vineyards without any dividing lines. They are so joined together, in fact, that you cannot do good or evil for yourself without doing the same for your neighbors.

All of you together make up one common vineyard, the whole Christian assembly, and you are all united in the vineyard of the mystic body of holy Church from which you draw your life. In this vineyard is planted the vine, which

is my only-begotten Son, into whom you must be engrafted. Unless you are engrafted into him you are rebels against holy Church, like members that are cut off from the body and rot.

It is true that while you have time you can get yourselves out of the stench of sin through true repentance and recourse to my ministers. They are the workers who have the keys to the wine cellar, that is, the blood poured forth from this vine. (And this blood is so perfect in itself that it cannot be deprived of its benefits through any fault in the minister.)

It is charity that binds you to true humility – the humility that is found in knowing yourself and me. See, then, that it is as workers that I have sent you all. And now I am calling you again, because the world is failing fast. The thorns have so multiplied and choked the seed so badly that it will produce no fruit of grace at all.

I want you, therefore, to be true workers. With deep concern help to till the souls in the mystic body of holy Church. I am calling you to do this because I want to be merciful to the world as you have so earnestly begged me.

Thursday 04.30.20

Continuing the Third Sermon for Easter – by Bl. Gueric of Igny 4

Keep watch then, brethren, intent in prayer; keep watch and carefully guard your actions; especially since the morning of that day which has no sunset has already shone upon us. For already eternal light has come back to us from the nether regions, more serene and more pleasing, and the morning has given its welcome to the restored Sun.. Keep watch, I say, that the morning light may rise for you, that is Christ, whose coming forth has been made ready light the dawn, ready to renew often the mystery of the morning of his resurrection for those who keep watch for him.

But we read, “for you who fear my name the sun of justice will rise”. And “he who walks in justice will see with his own eyes the king in his beauty”. Now this is the beatitude of the life to come, but to a certain extent it is granted also for consolation in the present life, as Christ’s resurrection clearly demonstrates. For by many proofs throughout forty days Wisdom demonstrated to us that he goes about seeking men worthy of him, and in his way he shows himself to them with glad countenance, and comes to meet them with all discretion. For in order that Jesus might show himself to be that Wisdom of which these things were written, and in order to manifest corporally on this day what he does not cease

to do spiritually day by day – happily to show himself along the paths of justice – he came today to meet the women on the way as they were returning from the tomb, and he showed himself along the way to the two disciples who were going to Emmaus.

Let them hear and rejoice who walk in the ways of justice. Let them hear, I say, for Jesus deigns to meet and manifest himself not only to those who devote themselves to contemplation but also to those who justly and devoutly walk the ways of action. Many of you, if I am not mistaken, recognize what you have experienced; often Jesus whom you sought at the memorials of the altars, as at the tomb, and did not find, unexpectedly came to meet you in the way while you were working. Then you drew near and held on to his feet, you whose feet slothfulness had not held back for desire of him. Do not then be too sparing of your feet, brother, in the ways of obedience and in the coming and going which work demands, since Jesus did not spare his feet on your account even from the pain of the nails, and he still allows the work of your feet to be rewarded or revealed by the embrace and kiss of his own feet. What a consolation it will be also if he joins you as a companion on the way and by the surpassing pleasure which his conversation gives takes away from you all feeling of toil, while he opens your mind to understand the Scriptures which perhaps you sat and read at home without understanding.

So let the spirit of us all rise and come to life again, whether to watchfulness in prayer or to constancy in work, so that by a revived and lively alacrity each may prove himself anew to have received a share in Christ's resurrection.

FRI 05.01.2020 St Joseph the Worker

The true meaning of work: a reading from an address of St. John Paul II to the workers of a shipyard near Sorrento, South Italy. ⁵

The feast of St. Joseph, patron and model of workers offers us the opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of work. In fact, it is not enough just to work, even though it is already quite a feat to satisfy that basic human right. It is necessary to know the why and wherefore of working, beyond the immediate benefits which derive from it. By means of their work human beings commit themselves, not only for their own sake but also for others and with others.

⁵ **A**The Church is on the Side of the Human Person®, reprinted in *L'Osservatore Romano* 12 (1233), 25 March 1992.

Each person collaborates in the work of others and for their good. They work in order to provide for the needs of their family, community, nation, and ultimately all humanity.

Let us look at the figure of St. Joseph, the just man, the spouse of Mary and Jesus= foster father. The Gospel presents him to us as a worker. In fact, in defining Jesus= social identity, it was said of him: Is he not the carpenter=s son? For him his work as a carpenter was not merely a way of contributing to the support of the Son of God and his Virgin Mother, but created the environment for the life of the Holy Family itself. Thus work entered into the mystery of the incarnation, becoming an instrument of redemption. At the workbench where he plied his trade together with Jesus, Joseph brought human work closer to the mystery of the Redemption. This must be the starting point if we want to understand the deepest meaning of human work. God himself wanted to make it his own.

The Marxist system, which promised equality and justice, uprooting God from human hearts, has fallen in Eastern Europe, while new problems are looming on the horizon for those peoples. No one can be sanguine in the face of a capitalistic system when it is closed in on a radical capitalistic ideology...which refuses even to consider the reality of human alienation and which blindly entrusts their solution to the free development of market forces (*Centessimus annus*, n. 42). In the fact of all the dangers of human alienation which are found in the culture and economy of today=s world, the Church does not hesitate to declare her choice: she is always on the side of the human person, but especially when the person is neglected, mistreated and scorned, because the human person seen in the light of Christ is the Church=s principal way. Before considering human work in its objective aspect, it should be seen in its subjectivity: it is the human person who gives meaning to work. Workers are not, nor can they ever be, mere wheels in the machinery. Through work they fulfill their existence as the image of God, live their vocation to collaborate with the Creator, and experience the saving power of the paschal mystery. In work and through it man and woman fulfill their specific human vocation. The State and society, all of us, that is, are obliged to recognize this dignity and nobility of theirs. [In another encyclical] I wrote: A society in which the right to work is systematically denied, in which economic policies do not allow workers to reach satisfactory levels of employment, cannot be justified from an ethical point of view, nor can that society attain social peace (*Centessimus annus*).

To the human, spiritual, economic, social and cultural dimensions of work, then, you should add the Christian dimension, which finds a living example in St. Joseph, the Virgin Mary, and Jesus Christ, himself a worker. Work finds its ultimate reference in the Creator who, as Genesis teaches us, was finished with the work being done and, as St. John states, is at work until now. Therefore, no

one can succeed in properly understanding the dignity of work, on the part either of the worker or society, unless they consider it in this light. That is why in the Church's tradition it has constantly been associated with prayer: *ora et labora*.

SAT 05.02.2020 St Athanasius

A reading of St. Athanasius on the Letter to the Philippians. ⁶

It is not a dark saying but a divine mystery. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; but for our sakes afterwards the "Word was made flesh." And the term in question, "highly exalted", does not signify that the substance of the Word was exalted, for He was ever and is "equal to God", but the exaltation is of His humanity. Accordingly, this is not said before the Word became flesh; that it might be plain that "humbled" and "exalted" are spoken of His human nature, for where there is humble estate, there too may be exaltation; and if because of His taking flesh "humbled" is written, it is clear that "highly exalted" is also said because of it. For of this was human nature in want, because of the humble estate of the flesh and of death.

Since then the Word, being the Image of the Father and immortal, took the form of a servant, and as man underwent for us death in His flesh, that thereby He might offer Himself for us through death to the Father; therefore also, as man, He is said because of us and for us to be highly exalted, that as by His death we all died in Christ, so again in the Christ Himself we might be highly exalted, being raised from the dead, and ascending into heaven, "whither the forerunner is for us entered, not into the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

But if now for us the Christ is entered into heaven itself, though He was even before and always Lord and Framer of the heavens, for us therefore is that present exaltation also written. And as He Himself, who sanctifies all, says also that He sanctifies Himself to the Father for our sakes, not that the Word may become holy, but that He Himself may in Himself sanctify all of us, in like manner we must take the present phrase, "He highly exalted Him", not that He Himself should be exalted, for He is the highest, but that He may become righteousness for us; and we may be exalted in Him, and that we may enter the gates of heaven, which He has also opened for us, the forerunners saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory

⁶ *Orations Against the Arians*, Parker & Co., pp. 238-239.

shall come in." For here also not on Him were shut the gates, who is Lord and Maker of all, but because of us is this too written, to whom the door of paradise was shut. And therefore in a human relation, because of the flesh which He bore, it is said of Him, "Lift up, O ye gates", and "shall come in", as if humanity were entering; but in a divine relation on the other hand it is said of Him, since the "Word was God", that He is the "Lord" and the "King of Glory". For as Christ died and was exalted as man, so, as man, is He said to take what, as God He ever had, that even this so high a grant of grace might reach to us.