

MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED

MARCH 5, 2017

SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

Seven Lasts Words of Christ Part I

St. Maximilian once described “the Cross is the school of love.” St.

Francis De Sales called “the cross the academy of love.” Seizing on the wisdom expressed in the quotes from St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. Francis DeSales, I think it is

important that each Catholic take time to explore the Gospel

If we are honest with ourselves, we realize that we spend a lot of time reacting to others instead of being who we want to be.

accounts of Jesus’ death in many different ways. One ancient way the Church has helped its members do this is through a devotion that focuses the Christian on the last Seven Words of Christ. I invite you therefore to reflect with me on these last seven words.

1. Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34

Growing up, I use to think that turning the other cheek was a sort of wimpy and passive action. Now, I see that turning the other cheek has nothing to do with being wimpy and passive. When we turn the other cheek, we are telling others that they can do their worse to us and we will still remain the same loving person that we have always been. If we are honest with ourselves, we realize that we spend a lot of time reacting to others instead of being

who we want to be. For example, I want to be a loving person, but when someone cuts me off while I am driving, there are times that I stop being a loving person and I become an anger filled

person. Jesus loves us no matter what we do to Him. We can spit on

Him, whip Him, strip Him naked, nail Him to a cross, and He will still love us and pleads our cause to our Father in heaven: “Father forgive them.”

Archbishop Fulton Sheen in his book: *The Cross and the Beatitudes: Lessons on Love and Forgiveness* connects these last words of Jesus on the Cross to our Lord’s beatitude about meekness. “How different this is from the beatitude of the world! The world blesses not the meek, but the vindictive; it praises not the one who turns the other cheek, but the one who renders evil for evil; it exalts not the humble, but the aggressive. Social and political forces have carried that spirit of violence, struggle for power, and the clenched fist to an extreme the like of

1st Sunday of Lent Lectionary: 22 Gospel MT 4:1-11

Spiritual Reflection: I think it is important to make a distinction between sin and temptation. Temptations in themselves are neutral. They are neither good or bad. It is what we do with them that turns out to be morally good or bad for example, I may be tempted by anger when I see an injustice. If I give into the temptation and return violence for violence, then I have sinned or if I do nothing I have sinned. If, however seeing the injustice I work to correct it or to shed a light upon it I have not sinned. I have done good. I might be tempted to give into gluttony and eat an extra slice of pizza and if I do I have sinned but if I do not than I have practiced the virtue of temperance.

Spiritual Questions:

1. Why was it important for Jesus to be tempted?
2. What is the difference between temptation and sin?
3. What does giving into temptation do to our relationship with God?
4. What does overcoming temptation do to our relationship with God?
5. What are some best practices for dealing with temptation?

which the world before has never seen... To correct such a warlike attitude of the clenched fist, Our Lord both preached and practiced meekness."

2. Jesus replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43).

It is interesting that Jesus' declaration of universal forgiveness is followed by a specific act of forgiveness. Jesus had professed that He was willing to forgive everyone and now he had a specific opportunity to demonstrate it. I have come to believe that it is always easier to say that I want to be a forgiving person and that it much more difficult to actually be a forgiving person.

Often the people we that are in need of our forgiveness are closer

than we can imagine. It is often our siblings, parents, children, etc. We declare our desire to forgive others at Mass especially at the Our Father and the Sign of Peace but do we really make an effort when we go home to do so?

Jesus offers paradise to the repent thief despite the fact that the thief had nothing. He like Jesus was probably stripped of every worldly possession. God's mercy is always free. He loves us so much. All that He asks of us is that we ask Him for it so because He respects our freewill. The other thief did not receive the gift of paradise because he never asks for it. He is so caught up in blaming others for his problems that he misses out on the opportunity to change the direction of his life around.

Another insight one can glean from this short encounter

between the Good Thief and Christ is that paradise is found when both of them focus on the other. The good thief defends Christ and tries to feel what Christ must be feeling, as an innocent man being put to death in such a horrible way. Jesus, despite all His suffering is not turned inward on himself but is instead focused on helping the repent thief reach heaven. The non-repent thief chooses only to think about himself.

Let us finish this week's reflection with a quote from St. Leo the Great: "No one, however weak, is denied a share in the victory of the cross. No one is beyond the help of the prayer of Christ. His prayer brought benefit to the multitude that raged against him. How much more does it bring to those who turn to him in repentance."

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Lent & Easter Prayer

As I was thinking what prayer to use this week, this song kept coming to mind.

"Lead Me To The Cross"

Savior I come
Quiet my soul remember
Redemption's hill
Where Your blood was spilled
For my ransom
Everything I once held dear
I count it all as loss

[Chorus:]

Lead me to the cross
Where Your love poured out
Bring me to my knees
Lord I lay me down
Rid me of myself
I belong to You
Lead me, lead me to the cross

You were as I
Tempted and trialed
Human
The word became flesh
Bore my sin and death

Now you're risen

Everything I once held dear
I count it all as loss

[Chorus]

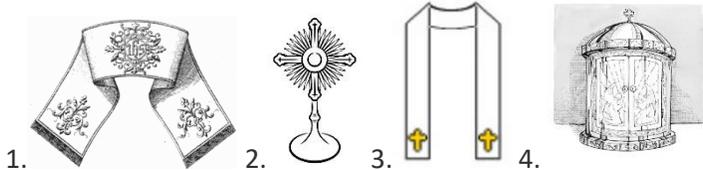
To your heart
To your heart
Lead me to your heart
Lead me to your heart

CATHOLIC TRIVIA

Last Week Answers:

1. In what city was Jesus born? Bethlehem
2. How many books are in the New Testament? 27
3. What type of insect did John the Baptist eat in the desert? Locust
4. Who were the first apostles called to follow Jesus? Peter, Andrew, James, & John

This Week's Trivia: I.D. The Following Items



Epiphany
Fish Fries
4:30-
7PM

Fridays
March 3
March 10
March 24
March 31
April 7



CATHOLIC HUMOR

Catholic Laughs

A bartender notices that every evening, without fail, one of his patrons orders three beers. After several weeks of noticing this pattern, the bartender asks the man why he always orders three beers. The man says, "I have two brothers who have moved away to different countries. We promised each other that we would always order an extra two beers whenever we drank as a way of keeping up the family bond." Several weeks later, noticing that the man

Spiritual Adoption

Spiritual Adoption 1-2 Month

I am asking you to spiritual adopt a child who is in danger of being aborted by praying the following prayer every day for the child.

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of [baby's name] the unborn baby that I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion." - Prayer of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

You can also keep track of your spiritual baby's progress by checking out the informational articles below each month.

1 Month since Conception –Developing Baby "My heart is beating!"

Your spiritually adopted baby has been quite active over the past month. Already your baby is 10,000 times bigger than at conception. Your baby has developed the foundations of his brain, spinal cord, and nervous system by the 20th day. His heart began to beat on the 21st day, pumping blood through its own circulatory system and the blood type can be different from his mother's. Your baby is most vulnerable during the next month of being aborted. Pray that the Lord of Life might move the heart of his mother to give him the most precious gift of all -- the gift of life.

only ordered two beers, the bartender said, "Please accept my condolences on the death of one of your brothers. You know, the two beers and all..." The man replied, "You'll be happy to hear that my two brothers are alive and well... It's just that I, myself, have decided to give up drinking for Lent."

CATHOLIC QUOTES

Labor without stopping; do all the good works you can while you still have the time. --Saint John of God

Love the poor tenderly, regarding them as your masters and yourselves as their servants. - St. John of God

Special Lenten Holy Hour

I am also excited to announce that we will be having a special Holy Hour each Sunday of Lent at Epiphany from 6PM-7PM. These Holy Hours will carry with them a special reflection on the Seven Last Words of Christ. Please see the schedule below.



Sunday

March 5th

March 12th

March 19th

March 26th

April 2nd

April 9th

Words of Christ

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.

– Luke 23:34

Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.

– Luke 23:43

Woman, behold your son, Son behold your mother.

- John 19:26-27

My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?

– Matthew 27:46

I thirst

-John 19:28

It is finished. - John 19:30

Father into your hands I commit my spirit -Luke 23:46

Meditation

Fr. Michael Rennie

Fr. Bill Kempf

Msgr. Gregory Mikesch

Fr. Ralph Houlihan S. J.

Fr. Tom Miller

Msgr. John Borcic

7 Catholic Reasons 4 Fasting

1) From the beginning, God commanded some fasting, and sin entered the world because Adam and Eve broke the fast.

2) For the Christian, fasting is ultimately about fasting from sin.

3) Fasting reveals our dependence on God and not the resources of this world.

4) Fasting is an ancient way of preparing for the Eucharist—the truest of foods.

5) Fasting is preparation for baptism (and all the sacraments)—for the reception of grace.

6) Fasting is a means of saving resources to give to the poor.

7) Fasting is a means of self-discipline, chastity, and the restraining of the appetites.