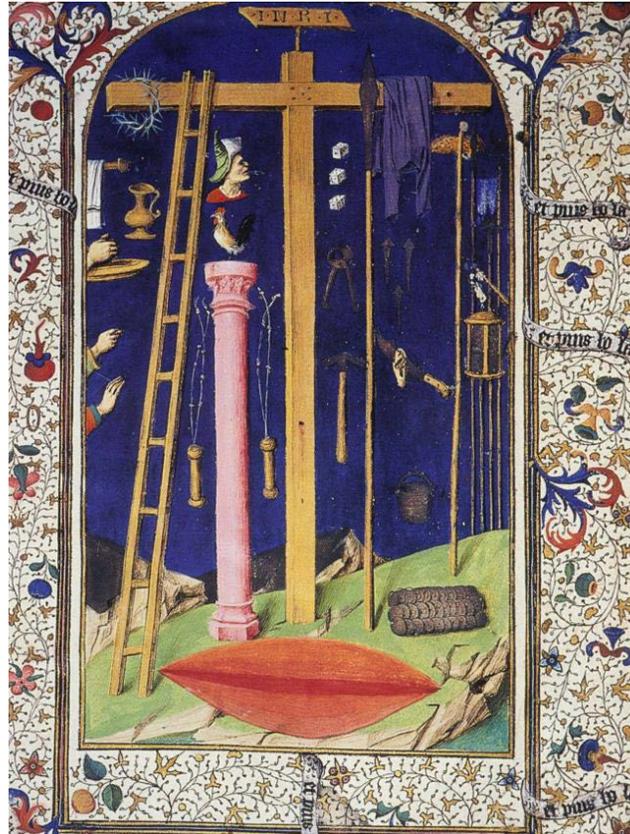


Matins Readings for the Lenten Feasts of the Mysteries of the Passion of Christ



Contents

Feast of the Prayer of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane	2
The Feast of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ	6
Feast of the Holy Crown of Thorns.....	9
The Feast of the Most Sacred Lance and Nails	13
The Feast of the Holy Winding Sheet (or Holy Shroud)	17
The Feast of the Holy Five Wounds	21
The Feast of the Precious Blood	24

Feast of the Prayer of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane

Tuesday or Friday after Septuagesima

Lessons from Matins

First Lesson.

The Lesson is taken from the of Tobias (xii. 8.)

Prayer is good with and to lay up alms rather than to lay up stores gold. For alms doth deliver from death, and the same it is which purgeth away sin, and causeth to find mercy and everlasting life. But they that work sin and iniquity are enemies of their own soul. Therefore I show you the truth, and will not keep an hidden matter from you. When didst pray with tears, and bury the dead, and leave thy dinner, and hide the dead in thine house by day, and bury them by night, I did bring up thy prayer before the Lord. And because thou wast accepted with God, it was needs that temptation should try thee.

Second Lesson.

The Lesson is taken the Epistle of the Blessed Apostle James (v. 16)

Pray one another, that ye may be healed, the fervent prayer. Of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain upon the earth, and it rained not by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save his soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Third Lesson.

The Lesson is taken from the Epistle of the Blessed Apostle Paul to the Hebrews (v. 5.)

Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest, but He That said unto Him:” Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee.” (Ps. ii. 7.) As He saith also in another place: “Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek (ps. cix. 4.) Who, in the days His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, was heard. in that He feared. And though He was the Son of God, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He is become the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all them that obey Him—called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedek.

Fourth Lesson.

The Lesson is taken from the Treatise upon the Lord's Prayer written by the Holy Martyr Cyprian, Bishop Of Carthage. (On the Lord's Prayer)

The Lord hath indeed taught us to pray, not by words but also by deeds. He Himself prayed oftentimes, and right earnestly, and showed us by the witness His Own example, what we are behoven to do; as it is written: "And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed." (Luke v. 16.) And again: "And it came to pass in those days that Jesus went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke vi. 12) If He prayed Who was without sin, how much are sinners beholden to pray. And if He remained sleepless all night in unceasing prayer, how much more ought we to watch by night in common prayer? The Lord prayed and besought, but not for Himself— what had the Innocent One to ask Himself?

But it was for us sinners that He prayed, as Himself when He saith unto Peter: Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed thee, that thy faith fail not." (Luke xxii. 31, 32.) And a little while after, He prayed to the Father for all, saying: Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word, that they all may one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in Us." (John xvii. 20, 21.)

Fifth Lesson.

The Lesson is taken from the Commentary upon the Epistle to the Hebrews, Written by St Anselm, Archbishop Of Canterbury (v.)

He offered up prayers like a true High Priest. That He prayed we read oftentimes in the Gospel, especially in that according to Luke, who draweth Him in His Priestly character. But even as all things which He did in the Flesh, His prayers and supplications were for men. Through all His life He prayed to the Father touching the Resurrection of His Own Flesh, and our salvation, and at the last moment before He suffered, He offered up supplications, that is, prayers most beseeching and most vehement, with the utmost passion and tenderness of His Heart, when, "being in an agony He prayed more earnestly, and His Sweat was as it were great drops of Blood falling down to the ground." (Luke xxii. 44.) These prayers and supplications He offered up unto the Father, Who met Him half-way by hearing Him. He offered them up unto Him That was able to save Him from death, that is, to raise Him up again — unto Him He knew that He was able to Save Him, that is, to make Him so that He could die no more and suffer no more, by delivering Him from death, so that His Soul was not left in hell, did His Flesh see Corruption in the grave. (Ps. xv. 10.)

Sixth Lesson.

And these prayers and supplications He offered up with strong crying, that is, with the keenest and liveliest yearning of godly desire, as when, being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly, and even with tears, for in that lengthened prayer we must believe that He shed Tears as well as those drops of Blood which trickled down His Body in the place of sweat. And He was

heard, for in rising again, He received that for which He had asked. He was heard, that is, He in especial was heard in a sense of thoroughness in which no other hath ever been heard, since, after the throes of the struggle were over, the Father exalted Him above everything created. Moreover, He was heard on account of reverent submission, which meaneth either that He was heard because as the Son of God reverent submission was due to His wishes, or else that He was heard because of His reverent submission to the Will of God, in that He feared and honored the Father above all. Or again, may understand that He was heard, because His reverent submission merited that He be heard. The out-pouring of His Blood may in itself be called a strong cry, wherein He was heard on account of His reverent submission to such suffering. His reverent submission in that case lay in this, that having never done any evil, He was willing to suffer, simply out of love.

Seventh Lesson.

The Lesson is taken from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (xxii. 39.)

At that time: Jesus came out, and went, as He was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And so on.

Homily by St Ambrose Bishop of Milan (Bk x. Comm. on Luke xxii.)

“Remove this Cup Me ”—the Man shrank death, the God remained unshaken in the counsel His Own Will. We must needs die to this world that we may rise again to that in accordance with God’s sentence, the law the curse may work itself out by our return to the dust of the earth from whence we are taken.

“Not My will, but Thine be done.” In these words our Lord signifieth by “My will ” His human will, and by the Father's will, His Own Divine Will. The wills of men are temporal, the Will God is eternal. There is not Will of the Father and another Will of the Son. There is but one Will, where there is but one God. Learn, nevertheless, from the example of Christ, to be resigned to God’s Will, and not to choose that which best pleaseth thyself, but that which thou knowest will best please God.

Eighth Lesson.

Then, let us consider the special meaning Of His different expressions. “My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” (Matth. xxvi. 38.) So also elsewhere He saith: “Now is My Soul troubled.” (John xii. 27.) It was not He Who had taken the Manhood unto God Who was troubled, but the Manhood Which He had so taken. The soul of man is able to be moved by divers feelings, but not so God. “The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak.”(Matth. xxvi. 41.) That which was exceeding sorrowful was not Himself but His Soul. The Eternal Wisdom was not sorrowful, the Divine Being was not sorrowful, but the human Soul of Jesus was sorrowful. He had taken into the Godhead a Soul but a Soul of the same nature as mine. I am not deceived into thinking that it was one thing, when it seemed another. Sorrowful He seemed to be, and sorrowful He was—not at the thought Of His Own sufferings, but of our sins.

Ninth Lesson

Then He saith: "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." (Matth. xxvi. 31.) He was sorrowful because He was leaving us orphans. But how resolutely He was giving Himself up to die is sufficiently clear by what followed, when He went to meet those that sought Him, when He calmed the agitated, when He nerved the timid, when He received the traitor himself with the condescension of a kiss. Neither is it other than the truth to say that He was sorrowful for their sakes who were hunting Him down, since He knew what a punishment they were to undergo for that unutterable crime. And because of all these things He said: "Let this cup pass from Me!" It was not that the Divine Son Of the Divine Being was afraid to die, but He would not that even wicked men should perish on His account.

The Feast of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ *Tuesday or Friday after Sexagesima*

Lessons from Matins

First Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Epistle of the Blessed Apostle Paul to the Romans (v. 8.)

God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in through Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the atonement. For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and bounty, and righteousness, shall reign in life through Jesus Christ.

Second Lesson

Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness Of One, [the gift] came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous. Then, the law entered that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded grace did much more abound, that, as sin hath reigned unto death even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Third Lesson (vi.)

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in Sin, that grace may abound? God forbid; how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? For we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also in the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.

Fourth Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Sermons of St. Augustin, Bishop of Hippo (41st on the Passion)

Dearly beloved brethren, the awful solemnity of the Lord's sufferings is proclaimed unto us even by the circumstances of the day itself whereon they took place, that day whereon the dumb elements were dumb no longer. Let the light of faith make the tongues of men tell of that agony, whereon the silence of darkness was eloquent. Our Lord was weighing out the ransom of the Cross, as upon the ransom of a balance, the price of our salvation, and by the payment of one death He Who had made all, bought all, and became the restorer of all. For let us have no

hesitation in believing that He bought the whole world, when He paid more than the whole world was worth, since the inestimable value of the price paid infinitely exceeded the value of the object redeemed. One scale was weighed against the other, but when it was done, they hung not evenly. He Who had no sins of His own, by His merits took away the sins of others. This victim of goodness alone fell, that He might lift up others, and since He alone owed nothing, He alone was able to spend His superabundance in charity for debtors.

Fifth Lesson

And now judge from this, if He hath paid for us so high a price, what interest He will have from us. On this day [on which He suffered] the words of the prophet were fulfilled: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, I hid not my face from shame and spitting." (Isa. 1.6.). He took our evil, that He might give us His good. From the extent to which He loved man after his fall, we may understand how He was pleased to love him before he sinned. When thou seest what was the worth of thy ransom, let it make thee feel some shame for sin. Behold the Holy One scourged for the sake of a sinner, the Eternal Wisdom mocked for the sake of a fool, the Truth murdered for the sake of the liar, the Righteous One condemned for the sake of a criminal, the Merciful One tortured for the sake of the cruel, the Harmless One filled with bitterness for the sake of the wretch, the Gentle One given gall to drink, the Innocent One doomed for the sake of the guilty, Life dying for the sake of the dead.

Sixth Lesson

Senseless nature shuddered at the sin of man. The rebel work of His hands would not acknowledge Him, but the quaking earth bore witness that He was Lord of the world, and the shrinking sun confessed that He was the King of heaven. His [natural] Body was clad in a purple robe, for the blood of His martyrs is the stately robe of His [mystical body the] Church. The crown upon His Head was a crown of thorns, for the sharp prickles of our sins, by the remission whereof He claimeth the glorious title of Redeemer, are likened unto thorns and thistles. (Gen. iii, 18.) And now let us try to treat Him otherwise than He was treated then, to treat Him so that the lives of His members may form a crown for Him. Upon the Cross He saith: "I thirst," (John xix. 28,) that thirst was for unbelieving souls to believe in Him; but on the contrary they put to His mouth the astringent vinegar of deadly sin, whereinto they have turned by malice the wine of wisdom given unto them by God. The veil of the Temple was rent in twain, for the Synagogue lost her crown, the old rites were abolished, and the fact of one Church for all humanity stood revealed. The graves were opened, for death rightly lost her rights.

Seventh Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Holy Gospel according to John (xix. 28.)

At that time: Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. And so on.

Homily by St. John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople. (On John, 84)

“Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, said: I thirst” – even in this one word making a fulfillment of Scripture. And now see here the spite of those that were there; we, although we had countless enemies, who had grievously assailed us, if we saw them at the point of death, would be touched with some feeling of compassion. But those beings were nowise touched with some feeling of compassion. But those beings were nowise touched, but rather excited; they cracked their jests upon Him, “and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His Mouth”- this was why the hyssop was added, because to give them a draught of hyssop is a way to put to death felons. Seest thou in what a calm of unruffled strength He went through all this? And then “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said: It is finished. And He bowed His Head and gave up the ghost.”

Eighth Lesson

It commonly is after death the head falleth, but here the Head fell before death, whereby the Evangelist showeth that He was [exalted as] Lord above [the nature] of all others. The Jews had now swallowed the camel, and proceeded to strain out the gnat; having accomplished the great murder, they discussed a point about the honoring of a day. “Because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the Cross on the Sabbath-Day, the Jews besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.” What they did fulfilled a prophecy, for thereby was another made clear. “Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him, but when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they break not His legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His Side.” Willing, with a vile and iniquitous willingness to do the Jews a pleasure, that man outraged his Redeemer even in death.

Ninth Lesson

But rest Thou still, O Thou Whom my soul loveth! They thought to do it wickedly, but they did a service to the truth. “For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled: ‘Not a Bone of Him shall be broken,’ and again, another Scripture saith: ‘They shall look on Him Whom they pierced.’” Nor was it done for this alone, but it was afterward a mean to faith for Thomas and them that were with him. And yet again, another great mystery was here established, for “forthwith came there out Blood and Water.” Not idly nor perchance sprang forth that twofold Fountain, for the Church, like her great Head, “came by Water and Blood; not by Water only, but by Water and Blood.” (1 John v.6.) What this meaneth the baptized do know, for they have been born again of water, and fed on Flesh and Blood. Hence come the Sacraments, so that as often as though drunkest of that wondrous Cup, thou dost as good as suck out of the opened Side.

Feast of the Holy Crown of Thorns

Friday after Ash Wednesday

Lessons at Matins

First Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (liii).

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? And he shall grow up as a tender plant before him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground: there is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him: Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and his look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed.

Second Lesson

All we like sheep have gone astray, everyone hath turned aside into his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth: he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth. He was taken away from distress, and from judgment: who shall declare his generation? because he is cut off out of the land of the living: for the wickedness of my people have I struck him.

Third Lesson

And he shall give the ungodly for his burial, and the rich for his death: because he hath done no iniquity, neither was there deceit in his mouth. And the Lord was pleased to bruise him in infirmity: if he shall lay down his life for sin, he shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in his hand. Because his soul hath laboured, he shall see and be filled: by his knowledge shall this my just servant justify many, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Fourth Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Sermons of St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux (2nd for Twelfth Day)

“Go forth, o ye daughters of Zion.” You we address as daughters of Zion, O worldly souls, frail, sickly children, daughters and not sons, beings in whom there is no muscle, and no manliness. Go forth from your dream of carnal sensuality to understand something with your mind. Go forth from your bondage to the lusts of the flesh, unto the freedom of spiritual intelligence. Go forth out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father’s house, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, that crown of want and woe. But albeit his stepmother crowned him with a crown of woeful thorns, he is yet to

be crowned by his household with a crown of righteousness, when “the Son of Man shall send forth His Angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend,” (Matth. xiii. 4,) when “the Lord will enter into judgement with the ancients of His people,” (Isa. iii. 14,) and “the world shall fight with Him against the unwise.” (Wis. V. 21.) The Father also crowneth Him with a crown of glory, as saith the Psalmist: “Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, o Lord,” (Ps. viii. 6.) Daughters of Zion! Behold Him with the crown wherewith His mother crowned Him!

Fifth Lesson

(42nd Sermon on the Song of Songs.)

Brethren, from the first moment of my conversion, I took care to gather a bundle of my Lord’s troubles and griefs, and put them between my breasts, to make up for the sheaf of merits which I knew I had not. I will tell how abundantly sweet was the smell of this bundle of myrrh. As long as I live, even for ever and ever, I will never forget those mercies whereby I was called to life. I have kept this healthy bundle by me, and no one will ever take it away from me, but it shall lie between my breasts. I have decreed that to think of these troubles and griefs is real wisdom; in them I have determined to find perfect righteousness, full knowledge, plentiful salvation, and abundant merit. From these His troubles and griefs I drink sometimes a draught of healthy bitters, and from the same again I draw the sweet oil of comfort. It is the thought of these troubles and woes of His that cheereth me when I am afflicted, and maketh me grave when it is well with me. As the pilgrim walketh along the King’s Highway of this present life, in joy and in sorrow, it is the memory of the woes of Jesus that keeps him moving straight and saveth him from the dangers that threaten him upon the one hand or upon the other. These griefs are what will gain my pardon from the judge of all the earth; He Who is dreadful to the mighty is shown by these griefs to be meek and lowly, manifesting as the Forgiving One, yea, One that a man may take ensample by, Him who is exalted above all Princes and dreadful among the kings of the earth.

Sixth Lesson

Therefore are these His griefs oftentimes in my mouth, and God knoweth that they be always in my heart. My pen useth to write of them, as is manifest. The highest flight of my philosophy is this, to know Jesus, and Him crucified. I do not ask, like the Bride, where He lieth to rest at noon, (Cant. i. 6,) since I have the joy to embrace Him as He lieth between my breasts. I ask not where He feedeth at noon, since I see Him on the Cross a Savior. On the Cross He is glorious, at my breast He is sweet; on the Cross, my Bread; at my breast, my milk, milk which filleth the bellies of sucklings, and the paps of mothers, and therefore He shall lie betwixt my breasts. Do ye also, dearly beloved brethren, do ye also gather you a bundle of this beloved myrrh, even the woe of Jesus, put it in the core of your heart, put it to guard the door of your breast, that it may lie betwixt your breasts also. If ye have before your eyes Him Whom ye bear

about, the sight of the Lord's afflictions will make your own lighter to carry, through the help of Him Who is the Bridegroom of the Church, and Who is above all God, blessed forever. Amen.

Seventh Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Holy Gospel according to John (xix. 1.)

At that time: Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His Head. And so on.

Homily by St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux. (50th on divers matters.)

Daughters of Zion, behold King Solomon, not here called "the Preacher," or Y'dydyah (the delight of the Lord). By these three names was that King called, and therein is he a figure of our true Solomon, Jesus Christ, Who was Sh'lomoh, that is, "the Peaceful One" in His exile here, who will be Koheleth, that is, "the Preacher" when He delivered the last doom, and Who is Y'dydyah, that is, "the delight of the Lord" as the Universal King-gentle in his exile, righteous in His judgement, glorious in His kingdom; lovely in His exile, dreadful in His judgement, worshipful in His kingdom. Behold Him now "with the crown wherewith His Mother crowned Him." This was a crown of mercy, and therein He may be followed. But His step-mother also crowned Him with a crown of sorrow, and therein He was made a reproach. By His step-mother I mean the Synagogue which showed herself not as His mother, but as His step-mother.

Eighth Lesson

His household will crown Him with a crown of righteousness, and therein will He be dreadful. His Father crowneth Him with a crown of glory, and therein He is lovely. Let sinners gaze upon Him in His crown of sorrow, the crown of thorns, and let the pricks thereof enter into themselves. Let the daughters of Zion, the souls that love Him, gaze upon Him in His crown of mercy, and follow in His steps. The wicked shall gaze upon Him in His crown of righteousness, and they shall perish. The Saints shall gaze upon Him in His crown of glory, and they shall be blessed forever. Others also that have followed Him shall be crowned after Him, but that by earnest working by the help of His grace. He alone was crowned by His mother, Who alone, with every emotion duly ordered, cam forth out of His mother's womb, like a Bridegroom out of his chamber.

Ninth Lesson (Homily of the Lenten Feria)

Continuation of the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (5:43-48; 6:1-4)

In that time, Jesus said to his disciples: You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy. And so on.

Homily by St. Jerome, Priest at Bethlehem. (Bk. i, Comm. on Matth. v and vi)

But I say unto you: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." There are many who judge of the commandments of the Lord by their own weakness, and not by the strength of His Saints; and so deem Him to have commanded things impossible. These are they who think that not to hate their enemies is all that they are able to do; and that to command us to love them,

is to command more than man's nature can bear. It behoveth them to know, that this which Christ commandeth is not impossible, albeit perfect. This is what David did in respect of Saul and Absalom; the martyr Stephen also prayed for his enemies, even while they were stoning him; and Paul could wish that himself were accursed from Christ for his persecutors. Rom. ix. 3. And this, Jesus Himself did, as well as taught, when He said: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34.)

That ye may be the children of your Father Which is in heaven. If he that doeth the commandments of God becometh a son of God, then is he not a son by nature, but by his own choice. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. He that soundeth a trumpet before him, when he doeth alms, is an hypocrite. He that disfigureth his face, when he fasteth, to the end that he may show the emptiness of his belly in his looks, he also is an hypocrite.

He that prayeth in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that he may be seen of men, is an hypocrite. From all which, we gather that an hypocrite is one which doeth anything that he may have glory of men. To me also it seemeth that he which saith unto his brother: "Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye", (vii. 4) that he also is an hypocrite; for he proposeth to take upon him that office for vainglory's sake, that he himself may appear righteous. Therefore the Lord saith unto him: "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye." Thus we see that it is, not the doing good, but the motive which moveth us to do good, which will meet with reward from God; and, if thou stray but a little from the right way, it is of small moment whether thou wander to the right hand or to the left, when once thou hast lost the straight path.

The Feast of the Most Sacred Lance and Nails *Friday after the First Sunday of Lent*

Lessons at Matins

First Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Book of the Prophet Zechariah (xii. 10.)

Thus saith the Lord: I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace, and of prayers: and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son, and they shall grieve over him, as the manner is to grieve for the death of the firstborn. In that day there shall be a great lamentation in Jerusalem like the lamentation of Adadremmon in the plain of Mageddon. And the land shall mourn: families and families apart: the families of the house of David apart, and their women apart: The families of the house of Nathan apart, and their women apart: the families of the house of Levi apart, and their women apart: the families of Semei apart, and their women apart. All the rest of the families that remain apart, and their women apart.

Second Lesson

In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: for the washing of the sinner, and of the unclean woman. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will destroy the names of idols out of the earth, and they shall be remembered no more: and I will take away the false prophets, and the unclean spirit out of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that when any man shall prophesy any more, his father and his mother that brought him into the world, shall say to him: Thou shalt not live: because thou hast spoken a lie in the name of the Lord. And his father, and his mother, his parents, shall thrust him through, when he shall prophesy. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be confounded, every one by his own vision, when he shall prophesy, neither shall they be clad with a garment of sackcloth, to deceive: But he shall say: I am no prophet, I am a husbandman: for Adam is my example from my youth.

Third Lesson

And they shall say to him: What are these wounds in the midst of thy hands? And he shall say: With these I was wounded in the house of them that loved me. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that cleaveth to me, saith the Lord of hosts: strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn my hand to the little ones. And there shall be in all the earth, saith the Lord, two parts in it shall be scattered, and shall perish: but the third part shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined: and I will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say: Thou art my people: and they shall say: The Lord is my God.

Fourth Lesson

The Lesson is taken from a Sermon by Pope Innocent VI. (Decree concerning the Feast of the Spear and the Nails.)

We are behooven so to glory in the most holy sufferings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as to count out one by one all the mysteries and merits of His Suffering, and even to glory in every one of their soul saving instruments. Among such mysteries is notable the fact that the Savior on the Cross, after that He had given up the Ghost, bore that His Side should be pierced with a spear, to the end that in the stream of Blood and Water which forthwith came thereout, there might spring forth, one, and stainless, and virgin, His Bride, and our holy mother, the Church. O how blessed is that gap in the Sacred Side, whence have rushed for us so many and so great streams of mercy! Happy for us was the lance whose work was to do us such good, and to ass such another glory to such a victory!

Fifth Lesson

In the opening of that Side, the lance opened for us the gates of the kingdom of heaven. In wounding Him who was dead already, (John xix. 33,34,) the lance closed our wounds, and gave us life and health. In piercing Him Who was harmless, (Heb. vii. 26,) the lance, by His Blood, purged our sins of their harmfulness; in trickling down with that most holy Water, it flooded away from our eye the beam which had made us blind, and washed us clean in the waves of God's mercy. For us are also sweet the nails wherewith the Savior was fastened upon the Cross. We must clearly remember that theirs it was not only to be smeared with the sinless Blood, not only to bear up the weight of the Great Victim of Atonement, but to open for us, in the salvation-bringing Wounds, sweet wells of the goodness of God; by going through His Hands, to free our hands from the manacles of sin, and, by boring His Feet, to draw our feet out of the snares of death.

Sixth Lesson

Than the Cleft in that Side, and the Wounds in those Hands and Feet what is there holier? What is there more lifegiving? – out of them floweth salvation, and in them the souls of believers may for ever find health. The Lance and Nails heretofore mentioned, and other instruments employed in the life-giving Sufferings of Christ, are everywhere to be held in reverence of all His faithful people, and solemn Offices concerning His Sufferings themselves are held and kept in the Church; but We, nevertheless, hold it meet and convenient that a special Festal Office should be held and kept concerning these things in particular, especially in those places where the instruments themselves are asserted to be still preserved; and We desire by these Offices and Indulgences more particularly to provoke the earnestness in godliness of such of the faithful as please themselves with the belief that they have any such Relique in their possession.

Seventh Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Holy Gospel according to John (xix. 28.)

At that time: Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith: I thirst. And so on.

Homily by St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. (120th Tract upon John.)

“One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His Side, and forthwith came thereout Blood and Water.” The Evangelist speaketh carefully. He saith not that he smote the Side, nor yet that he wounded It, nor yet anything else, but “pierced” – “pierced” It, to fling wide the entrance unto life, whence flow the Sacraments of the Church, those Sacraments without which there is no entrance into the life which is life indeed. That Blood, Which was shed there, was shed for the remission of sins, that Water is the Water that mantleth in the cup of salvation. Therein are we washed, and thereof do we drink. Of this was it a type when it was said unto Noah: “The door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof... and of every living thing of all flesh shalt thou bring into the ark... to keep them alive.” (Gen. vi. 16, 19.) This is a figure of the Church.

Eighth Lesson

Thus it was that the first woman was made from the side of her husband while he slept, and she was called Eve, which is, being interpreted, “Life,” “because she was the mother of all living.” (Gen. iii. 20.) This name set forth a great good, before it became associated with the bitter fruit of a great evil. And here we have the second Adam bowing His Head, and the deep sleep of death falling upon Him upon the Cross, and He sleepeth that the Lod God may take a thing out of His Side, and make thereof a wife for Him. O what a death was His, which quickeneth the dead! What is cleaner than His Blood? What more health-giving than His wounding? “For these things were done, that the Scripture might be fulfilled: ‘Not a Bone of Him shall be broken,’ – and again, another Scripture saith: ‘They shall look on Him Whom they pierced.’”

Ninth Lesson (Homily of the Lenten Feria)

Continuation of the Holy Gospel according to John (v. 1-15)

In that time was a festival day of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And so on.

Homily of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (17th Tract on John)

Let us see what is mystically signified by that one infirm man whom alone the Lord, keeping to a mysterious unity, chose out of so many sufferers, to be the subject of His healing power. He found in him a certain number of years of sickness. He had had an infirmity thirty and eight years. How this number is proper rather to weakness than to health, will now be the subject of a few careful remarks. I bespeak your attention; the Lord will be present, that I may speak fitly, and you may understand. The number forty is put before us as hallowed, and, in a way, perfect. I think that your love knoweth this God's Scriptures often and; often witness it. Ye well know that a Fast of this number of days is hallowed. Moses fasted forty days. Elias did the same. And our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself fasted this number of days complete. Moses

representeth the Law, Elias the Prophets, and the Lord the Gospel. And therefore these three appeared on the Mount of the Transfiguration. There the Lord showed Himself to His disciples with His Face shining as the sun, and His raiment glistening; and He stood between Moses and Elias; as it were, the Gospel receiving testimony, on the one hand from the Law, and, on the other, from the Prophets.

Whether, therefore, it be in the Law, or in the Prophets, or in the Gospel, the number of forty is recommended to us for Fast-days. The great and general Fast is this to abstain from the iniquity of the world, and her forbidden pleasures. This is the perfect Fast, that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. After such a Fast, what is the Feast that followeth? Hear what the Apostle saith in continuation Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. (Titus ii. 12, 13.) We, then, make our pilgrimage in this world a Lent, by living good lives, and abstaining from her iniquities and her forbidden pleasures. But at the end of this life-long Lent there will be an Easter indeed. We look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ When that hope is realized, when that faith is swallowed up in knowledge, then indeed shall we receive every man a penny. In good sooth, it is true that every labourer in the vineyard will get his wages witness that Gospel which I believe ye have not forgotten, (Matth. xx. 16) and which it is not my business to quote again as if ye were ignorant children. Now, the word used in the original for this penny which the labourers received is denarion. And the derivation of the word denarion is the numeral decem, ten. There are forty days in Lent, and if we add ten, we get fifty. So do we toil in fasting for the forty days of Lent before Easter, and then, when we have, as it were, received our reward, we keep holiday for the fifty days of Eastertide.

Remember how I remarked that the man healed by our Lord at the pool of Bethesda had had an infirmity thirty and eight years. I wish to explain why this number of thirty-eight is proper rather to weakness than to health. Love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. xiii. 10;) to the fulfilling of the law belongeth in every work the number forty. But in love we have given us two precepts Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matth. xxii. 37-40.) When the widow gave all she had for an offering to God she gave two mites (Mark xii. 42;) the inn-keeper received two pence wherewith to cure him that had fallen among thieves (Luke x. 35;) Jesus abode for two days among the Samaritans (John iv. 40), that He might establish them in love. When, then, anything good is spoken of as two, the two great divisions of love are the chief mystic interpretation. If, then, the law is fulfilled in the number forty, and it is not fulfilled if there be lacking the two precepts of love, what wonder is it that he was infirm who lacked two of forty?

The Feast of the Holy Winding Sheet (or Holy Shroud) *Friday after the Second Week of Lent*

Lessons at Matins

First Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (liii.)

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? And he shall grow up as a tender plant before him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground: there is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him: Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and his look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed.

Second Lesson

All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth: he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth. He was taken away from distress, and from judgment: who shall declare his generation? because he is cut off out of the land of the living: for the wickedness of my people have I struck him. And he shall give the ungodly for his burial, and the rich for his death: because he hath done no iniquity, neither was there deceit in his mouth.

Third Lesson

And the Lord was pleased to bruise him in infirmity: if he shall lay down his life for sin, he shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in his hand. Because his soul hath laboured, he shall see and be filled: by his knowledge shall this my just servant justify many, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I distribute to him very many, and he shall divide the spoils of the strong, because he hath delivered his soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked: and he hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors.

Fourth Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Sermons of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan. (On Luke xxiii.)

What is the meaning of this, that, not His Apostles but Joseph, and as saith John, Nicodemus, performed the burial of Christ? The one was a just and bold man, the other a master in Israel. Such it beseemed Christ to have to lay Him in the grave even He from Whom all justice

and all rule proceed. Hereby no ground is left for dispute, and the Jews are confuted by witnesses from their own midst. For had the Apostles buried Him, they might have said that He had been taken away, rather than buried. The just man covereth the Body of Christ with linen, the guileless anointeth it with ointment. These distinctions we find not idle, for the clothing of the Church is the righteousness of her Saints (Apoc. xix. 8), and guilelessness bringeth her grace.

Fifth Lesson

Do thou, if thou also wilt be just, clothe in the mind's eye the Body of the Lord, with that glory which is Its Own. Though thou believest It to have been dead, in thy faith cover It with the fulness of the Godhead Which belongeth unto It. Anoint It with myrrh and aloes, that thou mayest be a good savor of Christ. The linen which the just Joseph gave was fine, and perchance the same as the great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air, figures of the Gentiles, which appeared unto Peter. (Acts x. 11,12.) With Christ was mystically buried in that ointment of spikenard the Church, who bindeth together in her Communion all peoples, how divers soever they be.

Sixth Lesson

This Joseph is called by Luke just, and by Matthew rich. And well is he called Rich which receiveth the Body of Christ. By receiving the source of all riches, he bade farewell to lack of faith. He that is just is rich. A just man therefore wrapped the Body in the linen, while an Israelite "brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred-pound weight," – that is to say, the measure of perfect faith. "Then took they the Body of Jesus, and wound It in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury" – (John xix. 38-42,) wound it, not in the nooses of treachery, but in the bands of loyalty. And they laid It in that garden, whereunto the Church is so oftentimes compared, because of the manifold and divers fruits of good works and flowers of grace which do grow in her.

Seventh Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Holy Gospel according to Mark (xv. 42.)

At that time: When the even was come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable Counsellor, which waited for the kingdom of God, came, and so on.

Homily by the Venerable Bede, Priest at Jarrow. (For Tuesday in Holy Week.)

The Greek word "*Paraskeue*," used by the Evangelist, signifieth "the Preparation," and was the name by which the Greek-speaking Jews were used to call Friday, as being the day whereon those things were got ready which would be needed during the rest of the Sabbath, even as it was anciently commanded concerning the manna: "*On the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.*" (Exod. xvi. 5.) Even thus is it written that on Friday "*God created man.*" (Gen. i. 27.) And "*thus the heavens and the earth*

were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.” (ii. 1-3.) And He was pleased to call the seventh day the Sabbath, that is to say, the Day of “Rest.” (Exod. xx. 10.) In like manner also did the crucified Savior complete upon Friday the work of the new creation, and “when... He had received the vinegar, He said: *It is finished*” – even as it were “*The evening and the morning are about to be numbered as the sixth day, and My work whereby I have re-made the world, I have ended.*” And on the seventh day, the Sabbath Day, He rested from all His work which He had made, awaiting in the grave till the eighth day should come, for him to rise again.

Eighth Lesson

“*Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable Counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the Body of Jesus.*” Very honorable was this Joseph in the eyes of the world, but his honor now is because of his good work toward God. It was meet that he who laid the Lord in the grave should by his good life have earned such a ministry, and by the power of his honorable position in the world should have been able to obtain it. A person unknown or obscure would not have been able to go unto the President and to obtain from him the Body of the Crucified.

Ninth Lesson (Homily of the Lenten Feria)

The Lesson is taken from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (xxi:33-46)

In that time, Jesus said to the multitude of Jews and the chief priests: Hear ye another parable. There was a man an householder, who planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round about it. And so on.

Homily by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan. (Bk. ix on Luke xx)

Many derive diverse spiritual meanings from the term vineyard, but Isaias giveth us to know that the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth is the house of Israel. (v. 7). Who but God planted that vineyard? He it was that let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country; not that the Lord, Who is everywhere present, moveth from place to place; but because He is nigh unto them that seek Him, and from such as regard Him not He standeth afar off. For a long time He tarried away, lest He might seem to ask too early for the fruits of His vineyard. For where kindness is greatest, there ingratitude is worst.

Therefore it is well written in Matthew, for our instruction, that He hedged it round about, that is, He girded it with the fortifications of His own Divine protection, that it might not easily lie open to the ravages of spiritual wild beasts. And digged a wine-press in it. What sense are we to put upon the wine-press, unless it be that the Psalms are here described under that title, because in them the mysteries of the Lord's Passion flow over like new wine, working under the power of the Holy Ghost? Whence also, they upon whom the Holy Ghost was outpoured were

deemed to be drunken (Acts ii. 13.) God therefore digged a wine-press, whereinto the reasonable grapes of inward fruitfulness poured their spiritual richness.

And built a tower that is, He raised up the goodly structure of the Law. And so this His vineyard, thus fortified, furnished, and garnished, He gave over to the Jews. And when the time of the fruit drew near, He sent His servants to the husbandmen. Well doth He call it the time of the fruit, not the time of the in-gathering. For the Jews yielded Him no fruit; the Lord had no ingathering from that vineyard of which He said: When I looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes. (Isa. v. 4.) Not that wine that maketh glad the heart of man, not with the new wine of the spirit, reeked that wine-press, but with the blood of the Prophets, brutally shed.

The Feast of the Holy Five Wounds *Friday after the Third Sunday of Lent*

Lessons at Matins

First Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (liii.)

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? And he shall grow up as a tender plant before him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground: there is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him: Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and his look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed.

Second Lesson

All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth: he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth. He was taken away from distress, and from judgment: who shall declare his generation? because he is cut off out of the land of the living: for the wickedness of my people have I struck him. And he shall give the ungodly for his burial, and the rich for his death: because he hath done no iniquity, neither was there deceit in his mouth. And the Lord was pleased to bruise him in infirmity.

Third Lesson (lxiii. 1.)

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength. I, that speak justice, and am a defender to save. Why then is thy apparel red, and thy garments like theirs that tread in the winepress? I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me: I have trampled on them in my indignation, and have trodden them down in my wrath, and their blood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, the year of my redemption is come. I looked about, and there was none to help: I sought, and there was none to give aid.

Fourth Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Sermons of St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux. (Book on the Passion, Ch. 41.)

After much mocking by Jews and Gentiles, after much Blood-shedding, Jesus is taken, and His Hands and Feet pierced with hard nails, and so our Savior, the gentle Jesus, is nailed to

the tree of the Cross. Look there, and gaze upon the roses of bloody suffering- how they shine- the marks of that love greater than which hath no man. Suffering and love strive together whether the one shall be more excellent for bloodiness or the other for fieriness.

Fifth Lesson

Lo with what red flowers doth blossom that noble Vine, our ruddy Jesus! Look if anywhere on His Body thou wilt not find those bloody roses. Look into one Hand and then into the Other, and thou wilt find a rose in Either. Look at one Foot and then at the Other- are thy not rosy? Look at the Gash in His Side and That hath Its rose too- but a rose pink rather than red this time, by reason of the Water; as saith the Evangelist: "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His Side, and forthwith came thereout Blood and Water."

Sixth Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the same. (On the Passion of the Lord.)

Look down, O Lord, Holy Father, from Thy Sanctuary, even from heaven Thy dwelling-place, and behold this Most Holy Oblation Which our Great High Priest, Thine Holy Child, the Lord Jesus doth offer unto Thee for the sins of His brethren; and take not vengeance upon us for the multitude of our iniquities. Know now, O Father, whether this be Thy Son Joseph's coat or no. Alas! An evil beast hath devoured Him, and trampled Him in his fury and stained all His raiment. Behold in five places It is rent grievously.

Seventh Lesson

The Lesson is taken from the Holy Gospel according to John (xix. 28.)

At that time: Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith: I thirst. And so on.

Homily by St. Cyril, Pope of Alexandria. (Book xii. Commentary on John.)

The brutality of the Jews had already outraged Christ to the full; cruelty had nothing left to desire; and now at the last moment the Most Holy Flesh of Christ suffereth a pain springing naturally from Itself. That Flesh, fevered by many and divers tortures, felt thirst. Great pain hath the property of producing strong thirst, since by some natural law which I cannot explain, it drieth up as by heat the liquids of the body and as it were setteth on fire the inward parts.

Eighth Lesson

"It is finished." Jewish outrage against God was finished; the power to inflict torture was finished. What had the Jews left unattempted, or cruelty left undone? Did any pain or insult remain uninflicted? Rightly did He say: "It is finished." But He was come to be the Lord of the dead as well as of the quick, and the hour was now calling Him to go and preach to the imprisoned spirits in the netherworld. He accepted even death for our sakes and bore in His own Flesh that suffering common to all our nature. When they saw that the Head of Jesus had fallen, and deemed Him to have already given up the Ghost, they held it pains wasted to break His Legs.

Howbeit, forasmuch as they were not quite sure that He was dead, they pierced His Side with a spear, and there burst forth Blood mingled with Water, the image and the first-fruits of the mystic Thank Offering and of holy Baptism, for holy Baptism is indeed a thing of Christ and from Christ, and the virtue of the mystic Thank Offering proceedeth unto us from His holy Flesh.

Ninth Lesson (Homily of the Lenten Feria)

The Lesson is taken from the Holy Gospel according to John (iv. 5.)

At that time: Jesus cometh therefore to a city of Samaria, which is called Sichar, near the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. And so on.

Homily by St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. (15th Tract on John)

Jesus, wearied with His journey, the mysteries are beginning now. It is not for nothing that Jesus is wearied. It is not for nothing that the Mighty One of God is wearied. It is not for nothing that He is wearied Who Himself giveth Rest to all them that are weary and heavy-laden. It is not for nothing that He is wearied Whose absence prostrateth us, and Whose presence maketh us to be strong.

Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well and it was about the sixth hour. There is a depth in all these details they all have something to say for us to learn. Upon them we gaze. Knock, saith the Lord, and it shall be opened unto you. Let us knock then and, O, may He open to me and to you, even He Who hath spoken to us those words Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (Matth. vii. 7.) It is for thy sake that Jesus was wearied with His journey. We find the strength of Jesus, and we find Jesus weak; yea, strong and weak. Strong, for In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God the Same was in the beginning with God. Wouldest thou know again how that the Son of God is strong? All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made, made without effort. (John i. 1-3.) What then is stronger than He by Whom all things were made without effort? Wouldest thou know His weakness? The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us. Christ, strong, made thee; Christ, weak, redeemed thee. Christ, strong, made all things out of nothing; Christ, weak, so wrought that that was made perished not. His strength hath made us, and His weakness saved us.

He then, being Himself made weak, is strength to all such as are weak, gathering them together, to use His own figure, even as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! (Matth. xxiii. 37.) Consider now, my brethren, in what bondage is an hen to her chickens. There is no other bird in whom motherhood is unmistakable. We watch the sparrows building their nests under our eyes; we see swallows, and storks, and pigeons building theirs every day. But, unless we actually see them in their nests, we know not if they have little ones, or no. But the hen's motherhood is so much a part of herself, that even if at the minute we see not her children the chickens following after her, nevertheless we see by her ways if she be a mother.

The Feast of the Precious Blood

Friday after the Fourth Sunday of Lent

Lessons at Matins

First Lesson

Lesson from the letter of St. Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews (ix. 11)

But Christ, being come an high priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hand, that is, not of this creation: Neither by the blood of goats, or of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? And therefore he is the mediator of the new testament: that by means of his death, for the redemption of those transgressions, which were under the former testament, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Second Lesson

For where there is a testament, the death of the testator must of necessity come in. For a testament is of force, after men are dead: otherwise it is as yet of no strength, whilst the testator liveth. Whereupon neither was the first indeed dedicated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been read by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying: This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you. The tabernacle also and all the vessels of the ministry, in like manner, he sprinkled with blood. And almost all things, according to the law, are cleansed with blood: and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Third Lesson (x. 19)

Having therefore, brethren, a confidence in the entering into the holies by the blood of Christ; a new and living way which he hath dedicated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and a high priest over the house of God: Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with clean water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering (for he is faithful that hath promised), and let us consider one another, to provoke unto charity and to good works

Fourth Lesson

From the Sermons of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (Homily 84 in John, cap. 19)

Wouldest thou hear the power of the Blood of Christ? Then let us look at the figure thereof, let us call to mind the old type, and tell the story written in the ancient Scriptures. The Egyptians would not let God take away Israel His firstborn, And Moses said: Thus saith the Lord: About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill, and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it anymore. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast that ye may know how that the Lord hath put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. (Ex. xi. 4-7.) Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them: Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families and kill the Passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood. and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel and on the two side-posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. (xii. 21-23.) And could the blood of a sheep save a man Yea, in good sooth not because it was blood, but because it represented in a figure the Blood of the Lord.

Fifth Lesson

The statues of monarchs, mindless and speechless images though they be, have sometimes been an helpful refuge to men endowed with soul and reason, not because they are works of the brazier's skill, but because the likeness they bear is a King's. And just so did this unconscious blood deliver the lives of men, not because it was blood, but because it foreshadowed the shedding of the Blood of Jesus. On that night in Egypt, when the destroying Angel saw the blood upon the lintel and on the two side-posts, he passed over the door, and came not in unto the house. Even so now much more will the destroyer of souls flee away when he seeth, not the lintel and the two side-posts sprinkled with the blood of a lamb, but the mouth of the faithful Christian, the living dwelling of the Holy Ghost, shining with the blood of the True Messiah. If the Angel let the type be, how shall not the enemy quail before the Reality? Wouldest thou hear more of the power of that Blood I am willing. Consider from what source it wellet, from what fountain it springeth. Its fountain is the Heart of the Lord, pierced for us upon the Cross. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him but when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His Legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His Side, and forthwith came thereout Blood and Water, (John xix, 32-34), whereof One is a figure of Baptism, and the other of the Sacrament of the Altar. One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His Side the veil of the Temple of His Body was rent in twain. (John ii. 19-21, Matth. xxvii. 51.) O how glorious is the treasure that is laid open to me therein How noble the riches that it is my joy there to have found!

Sixth Lesson

And so was it done concerning that Lamb: the Jews killed a sheep, and I have learned the value of the sacrament. From the Side flowed forth Blood and Water. I would not, O my hearer, that thou shouldest pass by the depths of such a mystery as this without pausing; for I have yet a mystic and mysterious discourse to deliver. I have said that the Water and Blood shewed forth symbolically baptism and the sacraments. For from these, holy Church was founded by the laver of regeneration, and the renovation of the Holy Ghost. Through baptism, I say, and through the sacraments, which seem to have issued from his Side. It was therefore out of the Side of Christ that the Church was created, just as it was out of the side of Adam that Eve was raised up to be his bride. This is the reason why Paul saith, no doubt in allusion to his Side: We are members of his Body, and of his bones. For even as God made the woman Eve out of the rib which he had taken out of the side of Adam, so hath Christ made the Church out of the Blood and Water which he made to flow for us out of his own Side.

[The following was added to the sixth lesson after this Feast was assigned to the month of July: On the occasion of the nineteenth centenary of the accomplishment of the redemption of mankind, as a fitting celebration of this ineffable blessing, Pope Pius XI decreed an extraordinary Jubilee. During that year the Supreme Pontiff, wishing that the fruits of the Precious Blood of Christ, the Lamb without spot, might redound more abundantly upon mankind and that the minds of the faithful be impressed with more vivid recollections of this same Blood as the price of their redemption, elevated the Feast of the Most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ to the rank of a double of the first class, to be celebrated as such every year by the universal Church.]

Seventh Lesson

From the Holy Gospel according to John (John 19:30-35)

At that time: When Jesus had received the vinegar, He said: It is finished. And He bowed His Head, and gave up the ghost. And so on.

Homily by St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (120th Tract on John)

One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His Side, and forthwith came thereout Blood and Water. The Evangelist speaketh carefully. He saith not that he smote the Side, nor yet that he wounded It, nor yet anything else, but pierced It, to fling wide the entrance unto life, whence flow the Sacraments of the Church, those Sacraments without which there is no entrance unto the life which is life indeed. That Blood which was shed there was shed for the remission of sins, that Water is the water that mantleth in the cup of salvation. Therein are we washed, and thereof do we drink. Of this was it a type when it was said unto Noah: The door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof and of every living thing of all flesh shalt thou bring into the ark to keep them alive. Gen. vi. 16, 19. A figure this of the Church. Thus was it that the first woman was made from the side of her husband while he slept, and she was called (Eve, which is, being interpreted,) Life, because she was the mother of all living. Gen. iii. 20. This name set forth a great good, before it became associated with the bitter fruit of a great evil. And here we have the Second Adam bowing His Head, and the deep sleep of death falling upon Him upon the Cross,

and He sleepeth, that the Lord God may take a thing out of His side, and may make thereof a wife for Him. O what a death was His, which quickeneth the dead! What is cleaner than His Blood? What more health-giving than His wounding?

Eighth Lesson

Enarr. in Psalm 95, n. 5 Then were being held bondsmen to the devil, slaves to evil spirits. But they have been redeemed from that bondage. They had been able to sell themselves, but they were not able to redeem themselves. A Redeemer came and paid the price for them. He shed His Blood, and at that cost bought the world. Ye ask what He bought Look what He paid, and ye shall see what He bought. Christ's Blood was the price. What is His Blood worth? What, but the whole world What but all men They are very unthankful for His redemption, or very proud, who say that It is only precious enough to buy the Africans, or that they themselves are so precious that It was shed only for them. Let there be an end to such conceit, an end to such vainglory. What He paid, He paid for all.

Ninth Lesson (When Celebrated in July)

(Sermon 31, alias 344) That Blood was his own, and thereby he redeemed us. Yea, it was to this end that he took Flesh and Blood, namely that he might shed his Blood in order to redeem us. If thou wilt accept it, the Blood of thy Lord was given for thee. If thou wilt not accept it, it was not given for thee. For perchance thou sayest: My God had Blood, with which he redeemed me, but now since he hath suffered, he hath given it all; what hath remained to him, that he may also give any of it for me? This is a great thing, because he gave once, and he gave for all. The Blood of Christ is salvation to him that doth accept it, punishment to him that doth not accept it. Why therefore dost thou hesitate to be set free from the second death, thou who dost not wish to die? By this thou art set free, if thou art willing to take up thy Cross, and follow the Lord; for he took up his Cross and sought his servant.

Ninth Lesson (When Celebrated on the Friday before Passion Sunday)

Continuation of the Holy Gospel according to John (John 11:1-45)

At that time, there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and Martha her sister. And so on.

Homily by St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. (49th Tract on John)

Ye remember that in our last reading we learnt how that the Lord escaped out of the hands of them which took up stones to stone Him, and went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized. John x. 31, 39, 40- While, then, the Lord still tarried there, Lazarus was sick at Bethany, which was a town near to Jerusalem. It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His Feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore his sisters sent unto Him. We know already whither it was that they sent, for we know where Jesus was He was gone away again beyond Jordan. His sisters sent unto Him,

saying: Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick, in order that, if He so pleased, He might come and free him from his sickness. But Jesus healed not, that He might afterward quicken.

What therefore sent his sisters to say? Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick and no more. They said not: Come, for Jesus loved him; and to tell Him that he was sick was enough. They dared not to say: Come, and heal him, they dared not to say: Speak the word where Thou art, and it shall be done here. And wherefore should they not have said this if they had the faith which won the Centurion so much praise? He had said: Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. (Matth. viii. 8.) But they said none of these things, only: Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. It is enough that Thou shouldst know it. Thou art not one that lovest and leavest.

But some man will say: How shall Lazarus be a type of the sinner, and yet the Lord so love him?

Let such an one hear the words of the same Lord, which He said: I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners. (Matth. ix. 13.) For if God had not loved sinners, He had not come down from heaven to earth. When Jesus heard that, He said: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Such a glorification is no increase of majesty for Him, but of profit for us. He therefore meaneth to say: This sickness is not unto death, but for the working of a miracle, the which being wrought, if men will thereby believe in Christ, they shall escape the real death. Note especially how the Lord doth in this place declare Himself to be God, as it were by implication, for the sake of some which say that He is not the Son of God.