



## SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

### THE ANGELUS

V. The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary

**R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.**

V. Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

**R. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen**

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord

**R. Be it done unto me according to Thy word**

*Hail Mary etc...*

V. And the Word was made flesh

**R. And dwelt amongst us**

*Hail Mary etc...*

V. Pray for us O holy Mother of God

**R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ**

V. Let us pray; Pour forth we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that as we have known the Incarnation of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of an Angel, so by His Cross + and Passion may we come to know the glory of His Resurrection. Through Christ Our Lord.

**R. Amen.**

### ASPÉRGES

Aspérges me. Dómine, hyssópo, et mundábor: lavábis me, et super nivem dealbábor.

*Miserére mei, Deus, secúndum magnam misericórdiam tuam. P. Glória Patri, et Fílio, et Spirítui Sancto. S. Sicut erat in princípío, et nunc, et semper; et in sæcula sæculórum. Amen.*

Aspérges me. Dómine, hyssópo, et mundábor: lavábis me, et super nivem dealbábor.

V. Osténde nobis, Dómine, misericórdiam tuam.

**R. Et salutáre tuum da nobis.**

V. Dómine, exáudi oratiónem meam.

**R. Et clamor meus ad te véniat.**

V. Dóminus vobíscum.

**R. Et cum spírítu tuo.**

V. Orémus. Exáudi nos, Dómine sancte, Pater omnípotens, ætérne Deus, et míttre dignéris sanctum Angelum tuum de cælis, qui custódiat, fóveat, prótegat, vísitet, atque deféndat omnes habitántes in hoc habitáculo. Per Christum

*Thou shalt sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall become whiter than snow.*

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy. [Psalm 50] P.Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.*

*As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

*V. Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy.*

***R. And grant us Thy salvation.***

*V. O Lord, hear my prayer.*

***R. And let my cry come unto Thee.***

*V. The Lord be with you.*

***R. And with thy spirit.***

*V. Let us pray. Hear us, O holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, and vouchsafe to send Thy holy Angel from heaven, to guard, cherish, protect, visit and defend all that are assembled in this place: Through Christ our Lord.*

Dóminum nostrum. **R. Amen**

**INTROIT Psalm 43. 23-26**

Exsúrge, quare obdórmis, Dómine? exsúrge, et ne repéllas in finem. Quare fáciem tuam avértis, oblivísceris tribulatióem nostram? adhaésit in terra venter noster: exsúrge, Dómine, ádjuva nos, et libera nos. Ps. 43. 2 Deus, áuribus nostris audívimus: patres nostri annuntiavérunt nobis. V. Glória Patri. Exsúrge...

**COLLECT**

Deus, qui cónspicis quia ex nulla nostra actióne confidimus: concéde propítius; ut contra advérsa ómnia, Doctóris géntium protectióne muniámur. Per Dóminum.

**EPISTLE 2 Corinthians 11. 19-33; 12. 1-9 Lectio Epistolae beati Pauli Apostoli ad Corinthios**

Fratres: Libénter suffértis insipiéntes: cum sitis ipsi sapiéntes. Sustinétis enim si quis vos in servitútem rédigat, si quis dévorat, si quis áccipit, si quis extóllitur, si quis in fáciem vos cædit. Secúndum ignobilitátem dico, quasi nos infirmi fuérimus in hac parte. In quo quis audet (in insipiéntia dico) áudeo et ego. Hebraei sunt, et ego: Israélitæ sunt, et ego: Semen Ábrahæ sunt, et ego: Ministri Christi sunt (ut minus sápiens dico) plus ego: in labóribus plúrimis, in carcéribus abundántius, in plagis supra modum, in mórtibus frequénter. A Judaéis quínquies quadragénas, una minus, accépi. Ter virgis cæsus sum, semel lapidátus sum, ter naufrágium feci, nocte et die in profúndo maris fui: in itinéribus sæpe, periculis flúminum, periculis latrónum, periculis ex genere, periculis ex géntibus, periculis in civitáte, periculis in solitúdine, periculis in mari, periculis in falsis frátribus: in labóre et ærúmna, in vigíliis multis, in fame et siti, in jejúniis multis, in frígore et nuditáte: præter illa quæ extrínsecus sunt, instántia mea quotidiána, sollicitúdo ómnium Ecclesiárum. Quis infirmátur, et ego non infirmor? quis scandalizátur, et ego non uror? Si gloriári opórtet: quæ infirmitátis meæ sunt, gloriábor. Deus et Pater Dómini nostri Jesu Christi, qui est benedíctus in saécula, scit quod non méntior. Damásci præpósitus gentis Arétæ regis, custodiébat civitátem Damascenórum, ut me comprehénderet: et per fenéstram in sporta dimíssus sum per murum, et sic effúgi manus ejus. Si gloriári opórtet (non éxpedit quidem), véniam autem ad visiónes et revelatiónes Dómini.

**R. Amen**

*Arise, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? arise, and cast us not off to the end. Why turnest Thou Thy face away, and forgettest our trouble? our belly hath cleaved to the earth: arise, O Lord, help us and deliver us. Ps. 43. 2 We have heard, O God, with our ears: our fathers have declared to us. V. Glory be to the Father. Arise, why sleepest Thou, O Lord?*

*O God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do: mercifully grant that by the protection of the Doctor of the Gentiles we may be defended against all adversities. Through our Lord.*

*Lesson from the Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians.*

*Brethren, You gladly suffer the foolish: whereas yourselves are wise. For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take from you, if a man be lifted up, if a man strike you on the face. I speak according to dishonor, as if we had been weak in this part. Wherein if any man dare (I speak foolishly), I dare also. They are Hebrews, so am I. They are Israelites, so am I. They are the seed of Abraham, so am I. They are the ministers of Christ (I speak as one less wise), I am more: in many more labors, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea: in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren: in labor and painfulness, in much watching, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness; besides those things which are without, my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is scandalized, and I am not on fire? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my infirmity. The God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for ever, knoweth that I lie not. At Damascus the governor of the nation under Aretas the king, guarded the city of the Damascenes, to apprehend me: and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands. If I must glory (it is not expedient indeed) but I will come to the visions and*

Scio hóminem in Christo ante annos quatuórdecim, sive in córpore néscio, sive extra corpus néscio, Deus scit, raptum hujúsmodi usque ad tértium cælum. Et scio hujúsmodi hóminem, sive in córpore, sive extra córpus néscio, Deus scit: quóniam raptus est in paradísium, et audívit arcána verba, quæ non licet hómini loqui. Pro hujúsmodi gloriábor: pro me autem nihil gloriábor, nisi in infirmitátibus meis. Nam, et si volúero gloriári, non ero insípiens: veritátem enim dicam: parco autem, ne quis me exístimet supra id quod videt in me, aut áliquid audit ex me. Et ne magnitúdo revelatiónum extóllat me, datus est mihi stímulus carnis meæ, ángelus sátanæ, qui me colaphízet. Propter quod ter Dóminum rogávi, ut discéderet a me: et dixit mihi: Súfficit tibi grátia mea: nam virtus in infirmitáte perficitur. Libénter ígitur gloriábor in infirmitátibus meis, ut inhábitet in me virtus Christi.

**R. Deo gratias**

#### **GRADUAL Psalm 82. 19, 14**

*Sciant gentes quóniam nomen tibi Deus: tu solus Altíssimus super omnem terram. V. Deus meus, pone illos ut rotam, et sicut stípulam ante fáciem venti.*

#### **TRACT Psalm 59. 4, 6**

*Commovísti, Dómine, terram, et conturbásti eam. V. Sana contritiónes ejus, quia mota est. V. Ut fúgiant a fácie arcus: ut liberéntur elécti tui.*

#### **GOSPEL St. Luke 8. 4-15**

*In illo témpore: Cum turba plúrima convenírent, et de civitátibus properárent ad Jesum, dixit per similitúdinem: Exiit, qui séminat, semináre semen suum: et dum séminat, áliud cécidit secus viam, et conculcátum est, et volúcris cæli comedérunt illud. Et áliud cécidit supra petram: et natum áruit, quia non habébat humórem. Et áliud cécidit inter spinas, et simul exórtæ spinæ suffocavérunt illud. Et áliud cécidit in terram bonam: et ortum fecit fructum céntuplum. Hæc dicens, clamábat: Qui habet aures audiéandi, áudiat. Interrogábant autem eum discípuli ejus, quæ esset hæc parábola. Quibus ipse dixit: Vobis datum est nosse mystérium regni Dei, céteris autem in parábolis: ut vidéntes non vídeant, et audiéntes non intélligant. Est autem hæc parábola: Semen est verbum Dei. Qui autem secus viam, hi sunt*

*revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body I know not, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth, such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth: that he was caught up into paradise, and heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter. For such a one I will glory: but for myself I will glory nothing but in my infirmities. For, though I should have a mind to glory, I shall not be foolish: for I will say the truth: but I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth from me. And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing, thrice I besought the Lord that it might depart from me. And He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. **R. Thanks be to God***

Let the Gentiles know that God is Thy name: Thou alone art the Most High over all the earth. V. O my God, make them like a wheel, and as stubble before the wind.

Thou hast moved the earth, O Lord, and hast troubled it. V. Heal Thou the breaches thereof, for it has been moved. V. That they may flee from before the bow: that Thine elect may be delivered.

At that time, when a very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities unto Jesus, He spoke by a similitude: The sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock: and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it choked it. And other some fell upon good ground: and being sprung up yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things, He cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And His disciples asked Him what this parable might be. To whom He said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables: that seeing they may not see, and hearing may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside are they that hear: then the devil cometh

*qui audiunt: deinde venit diabolus, et tollit verbum de corde eorum, ne credentes salvi fiant. Nam qui supra petram: qui cum audierint, cum gaudio suscipiunt verbum: et hi radices non habent: qui ad tempus credunt, et in tempore tentationis recedunt. Quod autem in spinas cecidit: hi sunt, qui audierunt, et a sollicitudinibus, et divitiis, et voluptatibus vitæ euntes, suffocantur, et non referunt fructum. Quod autem in bonam terram: hi sunt, qui in corde bono et optimo audientes verbum retinent, et fructum afferunt in patientia.*

**R. Laus tibi, Christi**

**OFFERTORY Psalm 16. 5-7**

*Pérfice gressus meos in sémitis tuis, ut non moveantur vestigia mea: inclina aurem tuam, et exaudi verba mea: mirífica misericórdias tuas, qui salvos facis sperantes in te, Dómine.*

**SECRET**

*Oblatum tibi, Dómine, sacrificium, vivíficet nos semper, et múniat. Per Dóminum. R. Amen*

**PREFACE OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY**

*Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutäre, nos tibi semper et ubique grátias ágere: Dómine sancte, Pater omnípotens, ætérne Deus. Qui cum unigénito Fílio tuo, et Spíritu Sancto, unus es Deus, unus es Dóminus: non in unius singularitate persónæ, sed in unius Trinitate substántiæ. Quod enim de tua glória, revelante te, crédimus, hoc de Fílio tuo, hoc de Spíritu Sancto, sine differentia discretiónis sentimus. Ut in confessióne veræ sempiternaèque Deitátis, et in persónis proprietas, et in esséntia únitas, et in majestáte adorétur æquálitas. Quam laudant Ángeli, atque Archángeli, Chérubim quoque ac Séraphim: qui non cessant clamare quotidie, una voce dicentes:*

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON Psalm 42. 4**

*Introibo ad altäre Dei, ad Deum qui lætificat juventútem meam.*

**POSTCOMMUNION COLLECT**

*Súpplícés te rogámus, omnípotens Deus: ut quos tuis réficis sacraméntis, tibi étiam plácitis móribus dignánter deservíre concédas. Per Dóminum. R. Amen*

and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. Now they upon the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no roots: for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard and, going their way, are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.

**R. Praise be to Thee, O Christ**

Perfect Thou my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps be not moved: incline Thine ear, and hear my words: show forth Thy wonderful mercies, Thou who savest them that trust in Thee, O Lord.

May the sacrifice offered to Thee, O Lord, ever quicken us and protect us. Through our Lord.

**R. Amen**

It is truly meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God. Who, together with Thine only-begotten Son, and the Holy Ghost, art one God, one Lord: not in the oneness of a single Person, but in the Trinity of one Substance. For what we believe by Thy revelation of Thy glory, the same do we believe of Thy Son, the same of the Holy Ghost, without difference or separation. So that in confessing the true and everlasting Godhead, distinction in persons, unity in essence, and equality in majesty may be adored. Which the angels and archangels, the cherubim also and seraphim do praise: who cease not daily to cry out, with one voice saying:

I will go in to the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth.

We humbly beseech Thee, almighty God, to grant that they whom Thou dost refresh with Thy sacraments, may worthily serve Thee by lives well-pleasing to Thee. Through our Lord.

**R. Amen**

## TODAY'S REFLECTIONS

**Genesis Ch VI:** *This awful chastisement of the human race by the Deluge was a fresh consequence of sin. This time, however, there was found one just man; and it was through him and his family that the world was restored. Having once more mercifully renewed his covenant with his creatures, God allows the earth to be re-peopled, and makes the three sons of Noah become the Fathers of the three great families of the human race.*

*This is the Mystery of the Divine Office during the week of Sexagesima. The Mystery expressed in to-day's Mass is of still greater importance, and the first is but a figure of the second. The earth is deluged by sin and heresy. But the Word of God, the Seed of life, is ever producing a new generation, a race of men, who, like Noah, fear God. It is the Word of God that produces those happy children, of whom the Beloved Disciple speaks, saying: they are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God [St. John, 1. 13]. Let us endeavour to be of this family; or, if we already be numbered among its members, let us zealously maintain our glorious position. What we have to do, during these days of Septuagesima, is to escape from the Deluge of worldliness, and take shelter in the Ark of salvation; we have to become that good soil, which yields a hundred-fold from the heavenly Seed. Let us flee from the wrath to come, lest we perish with the enemies of God: let us hunger after that Word of God, which converteth and giveth life to souls [Ps. XVIII].*

*In the Introit of this day's Mass, the Church brings before us one who seeks to be loosed from his sins, and calls on God for help and assistance. Arise, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, and cast us not off to the end: why turnest thou thy face away, and forgettest our trouble? Our belly hath cleaved to the earth: arise, O Lord, help us and deliver us. O God, we have heard with our ears; our Fathers have declared to us. (Ps. XLIII. 23. 25.) Glory be to the Father, &c. In the Collect, the Church expresses the confidence she puts in the prayers of the great Apostle St. Paul, that zealous sower of the divine Seed, who laboured more than the other Apostles in preaching the Word to the Gentiles.*

**THE EPISTLE:** *The Epistle is that admirable passage from one of St. Paul's Epistles, in which the Great Apostle, for the honour and interest of his sacred ministry, is necessitated to write his defence against the calumnies of his enemies. We learn from this his apology, what labours the Apostles had to go through, in order to sow the Word of God in the barren soil of the Gentile world, and make it Christian.*

**Why is St. Paul mentioned in the Mass of this day, and why is this epistle read?** Because in Rome the Station or Church service is held on this day in the Church of St. Paul and because the Church continues to encourage us to work according to the example given by St. Paul who, with the grace of God, accomplished and suffered so much; also because we should labor for the honor of God and the salvation of our souls and faithfully cooperate with the grace of God.

**Why, at the beginning of this epistle, does St. Paul say so much in his own praise?** Not out of ambition for honor and glory, but to honor God, and for the love and advantage of the Corinthians, who allowed themselves to be deceived by mercenary impostors and false prophets; that he might make public the craftiness of those deceivers who assumed the appearance of the true apostles, as Satan took the form of a good angel. To shame these, and to remove the obstacles they had placed in the way of the gospel, St. Paul was obliged to reveal to the Corinthians the things he had performed and endured in propagating the holy gospel. -By trials and sufferings is the true apostle known; the false apostles, the hirelings, as Christ calls them, only care for their own bodies, for

temporal advantages, not for the salvation of souls. We see this exemplified in our days by the heretical missionaries who, when there is suffering, when there is martyrdom, take to flight, for their eyes are directed only to the present life and a large income, while the Catholic missionaries rejoice if, for Christ's sake, and for the salvation of souls, they are permitted to suffer, and made worthy to endure the cruel death of the martyr.

**Of whom does St. Paul relate such marvels?** Of himself, but from humility and modesty he does not say so; fourteen years before, forty-four years after the birth of Christ, St. Paul was rapt to the third heaven, that is, to the abode of happy spirits; but to preserve him in humility God permitted Satan to use the concupiscence of the flesh, which is like a sting in the body of man, as a temptation to the apostle, and by which he was continually tormented.

*In the Gradual, the Church beseeches her Lord to give her strength against those who oppose the mission he has entrusted to her, of gaining for him a new people, adorers of his sovereign Majesty. Whilst the earth is being moved, and is suffering those terrible revolutions, which, deluge-like, come first on one nation and then on another, - the Church prays for her Faithful Children, in order that they may be spared, for they are the elect, and the hope of the world. It is thus she prays in the following **Tract** which precedes the Gospel of the Word.*

**THE GOSPEL:** *St. Gregory the Great justly remarks, that this Parable needs no explanation. since Eternal Wisdom himself has told us its meaning. All that we have to do, is to profit by this divine teaching, and become the good soil, wherein the heavenly Seed may yield a rich harvest. How often have we not, hitherto, allowed it to be trampled on by them that passed by, or to be torn up by the birds of the air? How often has it not found our heart like a stone, that could give no moisture, or like a thorn plot, that could but choke? We listened to the Word of God; we took pleasure in hearing it; and from this we argued well for ourselves. Nay, we have often received this Word with joy and eagerness. Sometimes, even, it took root within us. But, alas! something always came to stop its growth. Henceforth, it must both grow and yield fruit. The Seed given to us is of such quality, that the Divine Sower has a right to expect a hundred-fold. If the soil, that is, if our heart, be good;- if we take the trouble to prepare it, by profiting of the means afforded us by the Church;- we shall have an abundant harvest to show our Lord on that grand Day, when, rising triumphant from his Tomb, he shall come to share with his faithful people the glory of his Resurrection.*

**Why is the Word of God compared to a seed?** Because from the word of God germinates the fruit of good works, as from good seed grows good fruit; as it is impossible, therefore, for an unsowed field to produce good fruit, so is it impossible for man without the seed of God's word to produce good fruits of the spirit.

**Why does Christ cry out in the parable: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear?** Because of the importance and necessity of the doctrine which was contained in the parable. For to hear the word of God is absolutely necessary for salvation, as the Apostle indicates: How shall they believe him (Jesus) of whom they have not heard? (Rom. X. 14.) Jesus calls those happy who hear the word of God and keep it. (Luke XI. 28.) And on this subject St. Augustine says: "Be assured, my brethren, that as the body becomes weakened by want and hunger, and wastes to a mere shadow, so the soul that is not nourished by the word of God, becomes shrunken, worthless and unfit for any good work."

**Whence comes so much cockle of evil, when the seed of God's word is so abundantly sowed?** Because, as Christ says, the seed falls now by the wayside, now upon a rock, now among thorns,

seldom upon good soil, that is to say, those who hear the word of God are as a highway, over which many distracting thoughts are traveling which tread down the scattered seed, or, like fowls of the air devour it; they are like rocks, hardened by their prejudices or repeated crimes, so that the divine word cannot take root; again, they are so overgrown by the thorns of worldly cares, the constant desire for wealth and riches, and sensual delights, that even if they receive the seed, it is unable to grow and bear fruit.

*Inspired by this hope, and full of confidence in Him, who has once more thrown his Seed in this long ungrateful soil, let us sing with the Church, in her **Offertory**, these beautiful words of the Royal Psalmist:- they are a prayer for holy resolution and perseverance. The visit, which our Lord makes to us in the Sacrament of his Love, is the grand means whereby he gives fertility to our souls. Hence it is, that the Church invites us, in the **Communion-antiphon**, to draw nigh to the Altar of our God; there, our heart shall regain all the youthful fervour of its best days.*

### **ON THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD**

The word of God is compared, by the Prophet Jeremias, to a hammer which crushes hearts as hard as rocks, and to a fire that dries up the swamps of vice, and consumes inveterate evil habits. (Jer. XXIII. 29.) The Psalmist compares it to thunder that makes all tremble, a storm-wind that bends and breaks the cedars of Lebanon, that is, proud and obstinate spirits; a light that dispels the darkness of ignorance; and a remedy that cures sin. (Ps. XXVIII. 3. 5., CXVIII. 105.) St. Paul compares it to a sword that divides the body from the soul, that is, the carnal desires from the spirit; (Hebr. IV. 12.) the Apostle James to a mirror in which man sees his stains and his wrongs. (Jam. I, 23.) the Prophet Isaias to a precious rain that moistens the soil of the soul and fertilizes it; (Isai: LV. 10. 11.) and Jesus Himself compares it to a seed that when it falls on good ground, brings forth fruit a hundredfold. (Luke VIII. 8.) One single grain of this divine seed produced the most marvellous fruits of sanctity in St. Augustine, St. Anthony the Great, in St. Nicholas of Tolentino, and others; for St. Augustine was converted by the words: "Let us walk honestly as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy." (Rom. XIII. 13.) St. Anthony by the words. If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." (Matt XIX. 21.) Nicholas of Tolentino was brought to Christian perfection by the words: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. (I. John II. 15.)

**How should we prepare ourselves to be benefited by the word of God?** We must be good, well-tilled soil, that is, we must have a heart that loves truth, desires to learn, and humbly and sincerely seeks salvation; we must listen to the word of God with due preparation and attention, keep the divine truths we have heard, in our heart, frequently consider and strive to fulfil them.

**What should be done before the sermon?** We should endeavor to purify our conscience, for, as St. Chrysostom demands; "Who would pour precious juice into a vessel that is not clean, without first washing it?" We should, therefore, at least cleanse our hearts by an ardent sorrow for our sins, because the spirit of truth enters not into the sinful soul; (Wisd. I. 4.) we should ask the Holy Ghost for the necessary enlightenment, for little or no fruit can be obtained from a sermon if it is not united with prayer; we should listen to the sermon with a good motive; that is, with a view of hearing something edifying and instructive; if we attend only through curiosity, the desire to hear something new, to criticize the preacher, or to see and to be seen, we are like the Pharisees who for such and similar motives went to hear Christ and derived no benefit therefrom. "As a straight sword goes not into a crooked sheath, so the word of God enters not into a heart that is filled with improper motives." We should strive to direct, our minds rightly, that is, to dispel all temporal thoughts, all needless distraction, otherwise the wholesome words would fall but upon the ears,

would not penetrate the heart, and the words of Christ be fulfilled: They have ears, and hear not.

**How should we comfort ourselves during the sermon?** We should listen to the sermon with earnest, reverent attention, for God speaks to us through His priests, and Christ says to them: Who hears you, hears me. (Luke X. 16.) We must listen to the priests, therefore, not as to men, but as to God's ambassadors, for every priest can say with St. Paul: We are ambassadors for Christ, God, as it were, exhorting by us. (II. Cor. V. 20.) "If," says St. Chrysostom, "when the letter of a king is read, the greatest quiet and attention prevails, that nothing may be lost, how much more should we listen with reverence and perfect silence to the word of God?" The word of God is, and ever will be, a divine seed, which, when properly received, produces precious fruit, by what priest soever sowed; for in the sowing it matters not what priest sows, but what soil is sowed. Be careful, also, that you do not apply that which is said to others, but take it to yourself, or the sermon will be of no benefit to you. Are you free from those vices which the preacher decries and against which he battles? then, thank God, but do not despise others who are perhaps laboring under them, rather pray that they may be released and you preserved from falling into them. Keep also, from sleeping, talking, and other distractions, and remember, that whoever is of God, also willingly hears his word. (John VIII. 47.)

**What should be done after the sermon?** We should then strive to put into practice the good we have heard, for God justifies not those who hear the law, but those who keep it, (Rom. II. 13.) and those who hear the word of God and do not conform their lives to it, are like the man who looks into the mirror, and having looked into it goes away, and presently forgets what manner of man he is. (Fam. I. 23. 24.) To practice that which has been heard, it is above all necessary that it should be kept constantly in mind, and thoughtfully considered. St. Bernard says: "Preserve the word of God as you would meat for your body, for it is a life-giving bread, and the food of your soul. Happy those, says Christ, who keep it. Receive it, therefore, into your soul's interior, and let it reach your morals and your actions."

That food which cannot be digested, or is at once thrown out, is useless; the food should be well masticated, retained, and by the digestive powers worked up into good blood. So not only on the day, but often during the week, that which was heard in the sermon should be thought of and put into practice. Speak of it to others, thus will much idle talk be saved, many souls with the grace of God roused to good, and enlightened in regard to the evil they had not before seen in themselves and in future will avoid. Let us listen to others when they repeat what was said in the sermon. Heads of families should require their children and domestics to relate what they have heard preached. Let us also entreat God to give us grace that we may be enabled to practice the precepts given us.



**SEPTUAGESIMA**



**Sexagesima**



**Quinquagesima**