

**Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
10 September 2017**

“But I say: Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh...” Gal. 5:16-7

In today’s liturgy, we are given passages from the scriptures which remind us of the great struggle we have in life between the flesh and the spirit. In the Epistle (Gal. 5:16-24), St. Paul tells us that those who give in to bodily desires will suffer the slavery of sin: ***“Now the works of flesh are manifest, which are immorality, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, jealousies, anger, quarrels, factions, parties, envies, murders, drunkenness, carousing, and suchlike.”*** Gal. 5:19-21 But those who live according to the spirit and aim at adorning the soul will enjoy the fruits of the Holy Spirit: ***“But the fruit of the Spirit is: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty and continency.”*** Gal. 5:22 In today’s Gospel (Mt. 6: 24-33), taken in part from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us that we cannot serve two masters: ***“No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*** Mt. 6:24 These two masters, ***“God and mammon,”*** are the same as the ***‘spirit’*** and the ***‘flesh’***; they represent the basic struggle which all men have in life. As man is made up of body and soul, and as the body knows through the senses and the soul through the mind, there ***“arises in each person a double source of knowledge or appetite, that of the body and its passions which desire that good from the senses, and that of the soul, which wills the good known to the mind.”*** (*The Preacher’s Encyclopedia*, p. 106) Both the Epistle and the Gospel give us the only resolution possible for those who follow Christ. St. Paul tells us: ***“And they who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires.”*** Gal. 5:24 Jesus tells us not to worry about the desires of the body but seek the things of God: ***“But seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things will be given you besides.”*** Mt. 6: 33

Joys of the Spirit

For those are infused from the strength of character that only the Holy Spirit can give to His beloved spouses. Dom Prosper Gueranger in his book, *The Liturgical Life Vol. 13*, comments on how the Spirit fills His bride with His spiritual fruits: ***“The bride, who came from the top of Sanir and Hermon that she might be crowned (cf. Cant. 4:8), knows not the servitude of Sinai (cf. Gal. 4:24-6), still less is she under the slavery of the senses. On the mountain, where her tent is fixed for ever (cf. Is. 2:2), her Spouse, has broken the fetters of the Jewish Law, and that more galling chain which tied all people down—the network of sin that covered all the nations of the earth (cf. Is. 25:7). She the bride is queen; her sons kings (cf. I Pt. 2:9), the milk whereon she feeds them (cf. Is. 66: 8-12) infuses liberty within them (cf. Gal. 4:31). Filled with the holy Spirit, who is their glory and their strength (cf. Rom. 8:14, 26), they have the Lord of hosts looking on them, as they bravely engage in battles such as princes should fight (cf. Eph. 4:8, 6:12). Satan, too, has beheld their glorious struggles, and his kingdom has been shaken to its foundation (cf. Jn. 12:31). Two Cities now divide the world between them (St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*); and the holy city, made up of vanquishers over the devil, the world and the flesh, is full of admiration and joy at seeing that the noblest of the nations flock to her (cf. Is. 60:5). The law which reigns supreme within her walls is love, for the holy Spirit, who rules her happy citizens, takes them far beyond the injunctions or prohibitions of any law. Together with charity, there spring up joy, peace, and those other fruits, here enumerated by the apostle (cf. Gal. 5:22); they grow spontaneously from a soil which is saturated with the glad waters (cf. Ps. 64:11) of a stream, which is no other than sanctifying Spirit, who inundates the city of God”*** (cf. Ps. 45:5). Gueranger, p. 329-30.

“Born of the Spirit, they are Spirit”

Dom Gueranger continues with the true liberty of the spiritual souls: ***“Flesh and blood have had no share in their divine birth (cf. Jn. 1:12). Their first birth being in the flesh, they were flesh, and did the works of death and ignominy mentioned in the Epistle, showing at every turn that they were from the slime of the earth (cf. Gen. 2:7); but, born of the Spirit, they are spirit (cf. Jn. 3:6), and do the works of the spirit, in spite of the flesh which is always part of***

their being (cf. II Cor. 10:3). For, by giving them, of His own life, the Spirit has emancipated them, by the power of love, from the tyranny of sin (cf. Rom 8:2) which held dominion over their members (cf. Rom. 7:28); and, having been grafted on Christ, they bring forth fruit unto God (cf. Rom. 7:4). Gueranger, p. 330-1

Myrrh of Suffering

Dom Gueranger reminds us that the joys of the spirit are not possible without suffering. This is why St. Paul reminds us: *“And they who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires.”* Gal. 5:24. This is why Dom Gueranger speaks of the suffering which is offered to the bride by her beloved spouse: *“Even when the trials of purification are all over, the place of meeting is invariably that which the inspired Canticle calls the Mount of myrrh (cf. Cant. 4:6), which is but another name for suffering. Myrrh is the first fragrant herb culled by the divine Word in the mystic garden; nay, it is the only one He expressly mentions. Myrrh distils from the bride’s hands, and her fingers are full of it (cf. Cant. 5:5); her Spouse is the bouquet she clasps to her heart, but that bouquet is one of myrrh (cf. Cant. 1:12); and His lips are as lilies dropping choice myrrh (cf. Cant. 5:18).”* Gueranger, p. 335-6 Only those who share in the sufferings of Christ will share in His glory

“No man can serve two masters.” Mt. 6:24

If we wish to be united with God, as we have just seen in the *Canticle of Canticles*, then we need to serve God alone. If we love the world, especially money which will bring us this world’s goods in abundance, we will be serving the world and not God. Dom Gueranger comments on the covetous man by quoting the Old Testament: *“nothing is more wicked than the covetous man...; there is not a more wicked thing than to love money.”* *Ecclus.* 10:10 Too much solicitude for this world’s goods shows a want of trust in God. This is what Jesus tells us of when he says: *“Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, what you shall eat; nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life a greater thing than the food, and the body than the clothing. Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you of much more value than they.”* Mt. 6:25 In order to achieve union with God and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, even in this life, we need to be detached from

everything in this life which could prevent us from going to God. *“No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”* Mt. 6:24 Those who *“have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires”* (Gal. 5:24) and seek God alone and His kingdom will be given the fruits of the Holy Spirit in this life and the kingdom of heaven in the next life: *“But seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things will be given you besides.”* Mt. 6: 33

Addendum

How to attend Holy Mass

“The Holy Mass is a prayer itself, even the highest prayer that exists. It is the sacrifice, dedicated by our Redeemer at the Cross, and repeated every day on the altar. If you wish to hear Mass, as it should be heard, you must follow with eye, heart, and mouth all that happens at the altar. Further, you must pray with the Priest the holy words said by him in the Name of Christ and which Christ says by him. You have to associate your heart with the holy feelings which are contained in these words, and in this manner you ought to follow all that happens at the altar. When acting in this way, you have prayed Holy Mass.”

His Holiness, Pope St Pius X