

## Seventh Sunday after Pentecost 23 July 2017

***“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is life everlasting in Christ Jesus.” Rom. 6:23***

Fr. Gabriel of St. Magdalene in his book of meditations, *Divine Intimacy*, comments on today’s readings: “Both the Epistle (Rom. 6:19-23) and the Gospel (Mt. 7:15-21) for today speak of the true fruits of the Christian life and invite us to ask ourselves what fruit we have produced so far. *‘When you were servants of sin,’* says St. Paul, *‘you brought forth fruits of death, but now, being made from sin and become servants of God, you have brought your fruit of sanctification.’*” (cf. Rom. 6:22) Fr. Gabriel, p. 711-12. In today’s Gospel, Jesus also speaks of bearing fruit as a sign of a good soul: *“By their fruits you will know them. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.”* Mt. 7:16-18. What accounts for the bad fruit? Jesus has redeemed us all with His Precious Blood in our Baptism, but not everyone has understood the liberty of the children of God. Some have believed in false prophets whose fruits are bad: *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”* Mt. 7:15. Those who misuse their freedom become servants of sin and death by following false prophets of a worldly doctrine of pleasure and greed.

### **Jesus delivers us from sin**

Dom Prosper Gueranger in his book, *The Liturgical Year, Vol. 11*, comments on today’s Epistle. He assures us we have been delivered from original sin and the devil: **“Sold under sin, by our first parents even before we had seen the day, and branded with the infamous stigma, our whole life belonged to the cruel tyrant. He is a master who is never satisfied with our service; he is a merciless exactor; there is scarce an hour that he does not make us feel his power over the members of our body; he does not allow us to forget that our body is his slave. But, if the life of a slave is under his master’s control, death comes at last and sets the soul free; and as to the body, the oppressor can claim nothing, once it is buried. Now, it was on the cross of the Man-God, who, as the apostle so strongly expresses it, was made sin (cf. Rom. 6:11) because of our sins, that guilty human nature was considered by God’s**

**merciful justice to have become what its divine and innocent Head was. The old man that was the issue of Adam the sinner has been crucified; he has died in Christ; the slave by birth, enfranchised by this happy death, has had buried under the waters of Baptism the body of sin, which carried in its flesh the mark of its slavery....the sacred stream has not only washed away the defilement of this degraded body, but it has also set it free from the those members of sin, which are the evil passions. These passions were the powers of iniquity—that is, power which deformed, and turned into uncleanness, those faculties and organs wherewith God had endowed us, that we might fulfil all justice unto sanctification. At the moment of our Baptism the strong-armed tyrant forfeited his possession of us; that Baptism was a death which set his slave free.”** Gueranger, p. 175-6. This new freedom is to what St. Paul is referring: ***“But now set free from sin and become slaves to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and as your end life everlasting. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is life everlasting in Christ Jesus.” Rom. 6:22-23***

***“By their fruits you will know them.” Mt. 7:16***

There seems little doubt that today’s Gospel should be applied to those who did not believe in Jesus. This is why Jesus compares people to good and bad fruit. Those who listen to His word are the good fruit; those who oppose Him and teach others to do so are the bad fruit. ***“By their fruits you will know them.” Mt. 7:16*** The bad fruit are the ***“wolves in sheep’s clothing”*** who lead people away with the false teachings. This is why Jesus says: ***“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”*** Mt. 8:15. Jesus is directing these words to the teachers of the law during His time who by their office appeared ***“in sheep’s clothing”*** and looked good on the outside, but within they were filled with treachery to destroy souls with their false teachings. Dom Gueranger comments on them: ***“False prophets and false Christs are numerous in Israel since the true Messiah, whom the prophets foretold, has been ignored, and treated by His own people as the prophets themselves had been.”*** Gueranger, p. 182 ***“By their fruits you will know them.” Mt. 7:16*** ***“Under sheep’s clothing, which they wear that they may deceive simple souls, the apostles of falsehood ever betray their real nature. The artful language they use, and the flatteries they utter for gain’s***

sake, cannot hide the hollowness of their words. They separate themselves from the flock of Christ,..." Gueranger, 187. They are the bad fruit that come from a bad tree. We know the tree by its fruit. *"Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit."* Mt. 8: 16-18

### **Obey the Commandments**

In case anyone did not understand what good and bad fruit had to do with His teaching, Jesus clearly states that one needs to do His will which means to keep His Commandments: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father in heaven shall enter the kingdom of heaven."* Mt. 8:21 As in Jesus' time, so today, there are many who pretend to work for God but are really *"false prophets."* They teach in Jesus' Name and they may even prophesy in His Name, but they do not keep His Commandments. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of this bad fruit: *"Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully."* Jer. 48:10 No wonder St. John would also be strong in his condemnation of *"bad fruit"*: *"He who says he loves God and does not keep the commandments is a liar and there is no truth in him."* I Jn. 2:4 These *"false prophets"* have returned to their father, the devil, a murderer and a liar from the beginning (cf. Jn. 8:44), and they have become slaves of sin and death. Those who keep God's Commandments are the good fruit who will inherit the kingdom because they have kept God's Word and have produced fruit unto life everlasting.

### **The New Evangelization in the Church**

*"Without faith it is impossible to please God."*

Heb. 6:11

God wants us to believe in Him and His Son Jesus Christ redeemed by His death on the Cross and established His Church on Peter and the other Apostles as a means of salvation. As there are so many Catholics who have lost their faith and there are so many people who are not Catholics, the Church has called for a *"New Evangelization"* for our time. You might wonder how this *"New Evangelization"* should be conducted in these times. It should be done as it was in early days of the Church As in days long ago, when the pagan world was evangelized, the Apostles and their successors preached the necessity of believing in Jesus Christ and joining His Church by being

baptized. *"Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned."* Mark 16:15-6

*"...thou are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church..."* Mt. 16:18 Jesus Christ founded His Church on St. Peter: *"And I say to thee, thou are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."* Mt. 16: 18-19. Only the Catholic Church can trace its origin back to St. Peter and Jesus Christ. All other churches were founded by men! The Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis I, is the successor of St. Peter and the Vicar of Christ on earth. Jesus promised that the gates of hell (untruth) shall not prevail against His Church. Only the Catholic Church has the fullness of truth. Jesus promised that whatever the Church teaches on earth will be approved by Him (in heaven).

### **Addendum**

#### **Solemn Teachings of Jesus Christ**

Jesus wanted all to be baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. How many religions do not believe in the Blessed Trinity of three Divine Persons (Father, Son and Holy Ghost) in one God? Many do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They also do not believe in Sacraments which were instituted by Jesus to give grace. Jesus said, *"I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world....Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you shall not have life in you."* John 6:51 and 54 On Easter Sunday night, Jesus also promised his Apostles that they would be able to forgive sins: *"Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."* John 20:22 St. Anthony Mary Claret said: **"It is not that everyone has to be a Catholic per se, but where else are they to get their sins forgiven."** The great English author and convert to Catholicism, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, said, **"I wanted a Church in which my sins could be forgiven."**

People in the world need to hear these truths which were uttered by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They need to realize that only the Catholic Church was founded by Him and that He wants all to believe in His words and listen to His Church which teaches in His name. We all need to proclaim these truths for where else can souls gain eternal salvation except in the Catholic Church? *(to be continued next week)*