



Adsum

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LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

The holy season of Lent begins the Church's solemn preparation for the glorious feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and there are many spiritual and doctrinal aspects of Lent which we should consider, in order to properly benefit from this penitential season.

The first aspect of Lent is primarily spiritual. It pertains to the history of Lent, its purpose and principal end. The second aspect of Lent is primarily doctrinal and reminds us of the evil consequences of sin—the original sin of our parents, Adam and Eve, and the actual sins which we ourselves commit.

When and by whom was the season of Lent instituted? Many of the early Fathers of the Church, in particular, St. Jerome, Pope St. Leo the Great, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and St. Isidore of Seville, confirm that the season of Lent was instituted by the Apostles themselves from the very commencement of the Church. They legislated a universal fast for the ever growing flock of Christ to serve as a spiritual preparation for Our Lord's Resurrection from the dead. The Apostles determined that, as the number forty (40) was a very significant number both in the Old and New Testaments, this solemn penitential season should also consist of 40 days.

For when Almighty God first cleansed the world from sin by the Great Flood in the days of Noah, it rained 40



Blessing of Ashes on Ash Wednesday



days and 40 nights. Likewise, when Moses and the Israelites wandered in the desert on their journey to the Promised Land, they traveled 40 years in the barren wilderness. Finally, we have the perfect example of Christ Himself, Who fasted for 40 days in the desert before He embarked on His public life.

The concept of fasting is quite explicit in the teachings of Our Lord. In the Gospel of St. Matthew, we read that the disciples of St. John the Baptist one day approached Jesus and asked Him:

“Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but thy Disciples do not fast?” And Jesus said to them, “Can the children of the bridegroom mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast.” (Matt. 9:14-15)

Many other examples from Sacred Scripture demonstrate the spiritual good derived from fasting. On one occasion during Our Lord's life here on earth, the Apostles found themselves in a very embarrassing situation. They attempted to exorcise a possessed man and were unable to succeed. When Jesus had arrived on the scene, He instantly cast the devil out and later told His Apostles:

“This kind (of demon) is not cast out but by prayer and fasting.” (Matt. 17:20)

In the Acts of the Apostles, we find the Apostles combined prayer with fasting as a spiritual preparation for ordination of priests:

When they had ordained to them priests in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:22)

As they were ministering to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them: "Separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them." Then they, fasting and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away. (Acts 13:2-3)

Our Holy Mother the Catholic Church takes Our Lord's words seriously:

"But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast." (Matt. 9:15)

The laws of the Church in regard to the ecclesiastical fast are as follows: on a day of fast, only one full meal is allowed, with two smaller meatless meals (collations), sufficient to maintain one's strength, but the two small collations together would not equal another full meal. These laws of fast bind under pain of serious sin, all those who are between the ages of 21 and 59, and who are not lawfully excused. In this legislation, we see the great prudence of the Catholic Church and how well balanced are the demands placed upon the faithful. When the years of important physical growth ordinarily have ended, the Church obliges Her young adults at the age of 21 to begin to fast, and when adults ordinarily enter upon the age of declining health, the Church terminates this obligation at the age of 59. Those lawfully excused from the fast are the ill or convalescent persons in delicate health, pregnant or nursing women, and hardworking people who, because of the fast, would not be able to carry out their occupation (farmers, millworkers, stone masons, etc.) provided they actually work a great part of the day. Furthermore, professors, teachers, students, preachers, confessors, physicians, judges, lawyers, etc., are excused if fasting would hinder them in their work.

If there is any question on an individual occasion as to the fast, the faithful can always have recourse to their confessor.

The purpose of fasting is best summarized by St. Thomas Aquinas:

Fasting is practiced for a threefold purpose. First, in order to bridle the lusts of the flesh, wherefore the Apostle says: "In stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned" (2 Cor. 6:5,6), since fasting is the guardian of chastity. For, according to Jerome: "Venus is cold when Ceres and Bacchus are not there." That is to say, lust is cooled by abstinence in meat and drink. Secondly, we have recourse to fasting in order that the mind may arise more freely to the contemplation of heavenly things: Hence it is related (Dan. 10) of Daniel that he received a revelation from God after fasting for three weeks. Thirdly, in order to satisfy for sins: wherefore it is written (Joel 2:12): "Be converted to Me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping and in mourning." The same

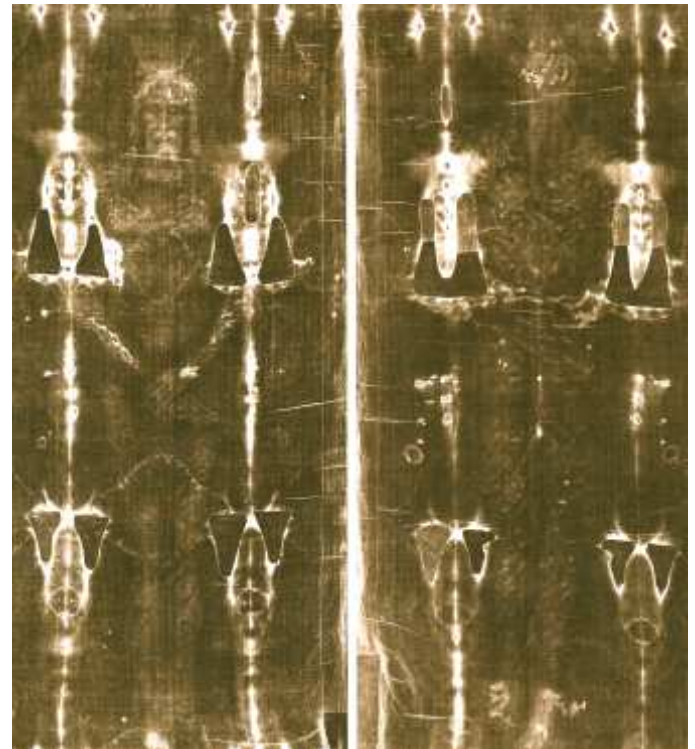
is declared by Augustine in a sermon (De Orat. et Jejun): "Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one's flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, quenches the fire of lust, kindles the true light of chastity." (*Summa Theologica*, Question 147, Article I)

The second aspect of Lent to be considered is the evil of sin—both original sin and actual sin. Sin is defined as any thought, word, deed, desire, or omission forbidden by the law of God. When our first parents, Adam and Eve, had sinned, they grievously offended Almighty God. For although their act of eating of the forbidden fruit was a finite act in itself, their offense was against an Infinite Being—God. This offense not only deprived them and their offspring of the preternatural gifts, the consequences of which were ignorance, suffering, death, and a strong inclination to sin, but also and most importantly, deprived Adam and Eve and their offspring of that most precious of gifts—sanctifying grace—by which man shares in the very life of God within his soul. St. Paul says:

"By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12)

When man commits sin, especially mortal sin, he also offends the Divine Majesty and inflicts spiritual injury to the soul (spiritual death in the case of mortal sin). It was to atone for the sins of mankind that Jesus Christ sacrificed His Life on the Cross.

If we would truly appreciate the sufferings and death of Our Lord, we need to seriously meditate on the Passion. One of the means to accomplish this is to consider the sacred image of Christ Crucified as seen on the Holy Shroud of Turin. This blood-stained linen accurately identifies the wounds inflicted on Our Lord according to the Holy Gospels.



Life of St. Patrick from the Roman Breviary

We can see for ourselves the multiple marks of the scourges across His Sacred Body, the wounds caused by the thorns circling His Head, the marks of the nails in His Hands and Feet, and finally the large wound in His Sacred Side.

The great tragedy in our times is that the majority of mankind lives as if there were no God, no Commandments, no such thing as sin. But let us not look at the majority of mankind, let us look at ourselves. When we have the misfortune to commit sin, we cannot claim ignorance. Our Lord cannot say to us as He did so on the cross:

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do! (Luke 23:34)



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So, as we begin our solemn preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord—the greatest feast of the entire ecclesiastical year—let us join to our prayers, meditations, and spiritual readings, the wholesome penance of fast and abstinence. Those who are not obliged to fast should take on some special sacrifice that will be particularly mortifying to their fallen human nature, which is so inclined to sin.

Finally, as we do penance during this season of Lent, let us remember the words of Our Lord to His followers:

When you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face. That thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father Who is in secret: and thy Father Who seeth in secret, will repay thee. (Matt. 6:16-18)

With my prayers and blessing,
Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI

Patrick, called the Apostle of Ireland, whose father was Calphurnius, and whose mother was Conchessa, a relative, it is said, of St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, was born in greater Britain, and as a boy several times fell into captivity with the barbarians. When in their hands he was employed as a shepherd, he already gave signs of future holiness; for, filled with faith and the fear of God and the spirit of love, he would diligently rise before dawn, in snow, and frost, and rain, to pour forth prayers to God. It was his custom to pray to God a hundred times during the day, and a hundred during the night. After his third deliverance from slavery he entered the clerical state, and applied himself, for a considerable time, to the study of sacred works. Having made several very trying journeys through Gaul, Italy, and the islands of the Tyrrhenian Sea, he was finally called by God to work for the salvation of the Irish; and having a commission from the blessed Pope Celestine to preach the Gospel, and being consecrated bishop, he proceeded to Ireland.

It is a marvel how much this apostolic man had to endure in this mission; how many evils, how many hardships and labors, how many enemies. But, favored by the mercy of God, that land which up to now had worshipped idols, soon brought such fruit from Patrick's preaching that it was afterwards called the Island of the Saints. Very many people were regenerated in the holy font by him; bishops and many clerics were ordained; rules were drawn up for virgins and widows living in continency. By the authority of the Roman Pontiff, he appointed Armagh as the chief metropolitan see of the whole island, and enriched it with relics of saints, brought from Rome. Moreover, Patrick so shone forth, adorned by God with heavenly visions, with the gift of prophecy, and great signs and wonders, that his fame became more and more celebrated, and spread itself far and wide.

Besides his daily care of the churches, his invincible spirit never slackened to recite every day the whole Psalter, together with the Canticles and Hymns, and two hundred prayers; that he knelt down every day three hundred times to adore God; and that at each Canonical Hour of the day, he signed himself a hundred times with the sign of the cross. He divided the night into three parts: first, he repeated the first hundred Psalms, and genuflected two hundred times; the second was spent in reciting the remaining fifty Psalms, standing in cold water, with his heart, eyes, and hands lifted up to heaven; the third he gave to a little sleep, stretched upon a bare stone. Remarkable for his practice of humility, like the Apostles, he did not abstain from manual labor. At length, worn out by his incessant cares for the Church, glorious in word and work, in extreme old age, he fell asleep in the Lord, after being strengthened with the divine mysteries. He was buried at Down, in Ulster, in the fifth century of the Christian era.

Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

The Freezing of Sacred Species

Question: Chemists tell us that when wine freezes, a chemical change takes place. If that is true, it would seem that in the event that the consecrated species of wine freeze, the Real Presence ceases. If, then, an accident of this nature occurs when a priest is celebrating Mass, should he consider that Our Lord is no longer present under the frozen species and accordingly consecrate more wine or perhaps re-consecrate the contents of the chalice after the species have been thawed out?

Answer: The rubrics of the Missal are quite explicit on this matter: “If in the winter the Blood is frozen in the chalice, the chalice shall be wrapped in heated cloths; if that would not avail, it shall be placed in hot water near the altar, provided the water does not get into the chalice, until it thaws out” (De Defectibus, X, 11). Evidently the Church is convinced that the Real Presence abides even in the frozen species, since the Missal refers to them as “the Blood” and there is no provision made for a repetition of the consecration of the wine after the species have been thawed out.

To the difficulty adduced by the questioner, based on the findings of chemistry, the answer is that Our Lord instituted the sacraments in such wise that the norms for judging the requirements for their validity are to be sought in the judgment of the ordinary person rather than in the technical principles of science. Now, when wine is frozen, the ordinary person still refers to it as wine and considers that it has undergone no substantial change. Applying this concept to the Holy Eucharist, we conclude that, whatever the chemists may say, the freezing of the consecrated species is not to be regarded as a substantial change, and accordingly that it does not cause the cessation of the Real Presence. For this reason, when the species have been thawed out, the priest is to continue the Mass without consecrating a new quantity of wine or re-consecrating what was consecrated previously.

Revival of Extreme Unction

Question: If a person who has received Extreme Unction afterward commits a mortal sin, and then goes to confession, must he receive Extreme Unction again (even in the same danger of death) in order to obtain the effects of this sacrament when the hour of death arrives?

Answer: According to the more common teaching, Extreme Unction cannot be validly repeated as long as the person remains in the same danger of death. (Cf. Aertnys-Damen, *Theologia moralis* [Turin, 1947], II, n. 549; Prummer, *Manuale theologiae moralis* [Friburg Brix., 1936], III, n. 582). At any rate, such a repetition is illicit, because of the explicit prohibition of the Church (Can. 940, § 2). Hence, one who has sinned mortally after receiving Extreme Unction can receive its spiritual benefits again only through a revival of the sacrament after his return to sanctifying grace. It is the more common view that in the situation described by the questioner, Extreme Unction does revive (Cf. Kilker, *Extreme Unction* {St. Louis, 1927}, p. 50).

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