

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost, 2008

“Show, O Lord, Thy ways to me, and teach me Thy paths, — Direct me in Thy Truth, and teach me; for Thou art God my Saviour.”

(Ps 24:4–5)

Perhaps the best introduction to the living word of God, to get a liking for reading the Sacred Scripture, is the Book of Psalms. Remember that the whole of the Bible is one book of which God is the author. He uses human instruments to present His word in the manner best suited to His people. Psalm 24 is a prayer for grace, mercy and protection against our spiritual enemies. I have prayed it in the Divine Office every Tuesday for more than 63 years. Yet it was only two weeks ago that these words appeared to leap at me from the pages; so that I returned to Psalm 24 several times that day. It begins with the words *“To Thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul. In Thee, O my God, I put my trust.”*



That should express our attitude when we are present at Holy Mass, for in the prayers at the foot of the altar (the beginning of the Liturgy) the priest prays: “Send out Thy Light and Thy Truth: they have led me and brought me unto Thy holy hill, even unto Thy tabernacles.” It is a prayer expressing the desire to go up to the Altar, of joy in doing so and drawing near to God, leaving aside all that estranges or separates from Him. His Holy Hill is Calvary; and the Mass is our taking part in that eternal Holy Sacrifice. Learn to pray the Psalms; five minutes to fifteen minutes a day; for God is mystically present in His Living Word, and through praying the Psalms He will lead you little by little to know Him better and to love and serve Him.

The Venerable Francis Mary Paul Libermann, founder of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost and the Most Pure Heart of Mary, offers this spiritual advice:

“Fear and narrowness of heart are most injurious to souls — on the contrary, we should always have in ourselves and show to others confidence in the immense mercy of our heavenly Father; in the infinite merits of our Lord, Jesus.”

“Contention, which is always bad, consists in striving to acquire a virtue, a supernatural good, by mere natural efforts.

“We must always live with total dependence on the merits Christ gained for us in His Sacrifice on the Cross always to remain simply in the presence of God in a pure spirit of faith. The true presence of God consists on fixing on Him alone all our desires and affections. Thus we shall never lose His holy presence; we shall live before Him, even when we do not think of Him. One who continually perseveres in the sole desire of being agreeable to God in all things and of never finding his entire satisfaction in any creature, is always in mental prayer even when his mind is obliged with objects ... such as study and recreation. I believe this is the interpretation of the words of St Luke, ‘that we ought always to pray and not to faint’. The prophet says: “This thing I commanded them, saying, ‘Hearken to My voice, and I will be your God and you will be My people ... and walk ye in all the way that I have commanded you that it may be well with you.’”¹

The most perfect example of what I have been saying is the Queen of Heaven, who is the Mother of us all. On Friday last the Church rejoiced in celebrating her glorious Assumption which St John Damascene describes like this:

“Today the sacred and living ark of God, she who conceived the Creator in her womb, comes to rest in the temple of the Lord not made by human hands, ... today the Eden of the new Adam receives the living paradise in which our condemnation was dissolved, in which the tree of life was planted.”

And St Peter Canisius:

“For we can see that no other day was so happy and joyful for Mary herself, if we rightly contemplate the new happiness of soul and body granted to her on that day. As previously her soul and body had wonderfully rejoiced in the living God, now they did so as never before; she could now say with full right, ‘He has regarded the humility of His handmaid; for, behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; because He who is mighty has done great things for me.’”

In our Blessed Mother we will always find a wonderful help in times of sorrow and affliction — as at all times of life; Let us resolve to remember her feasts, her glories — and rejoice in them by being faithful to the mysteries of her divine Son which she reveals to us in her devotion of the Rosary.

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¹ Jer. 7:3