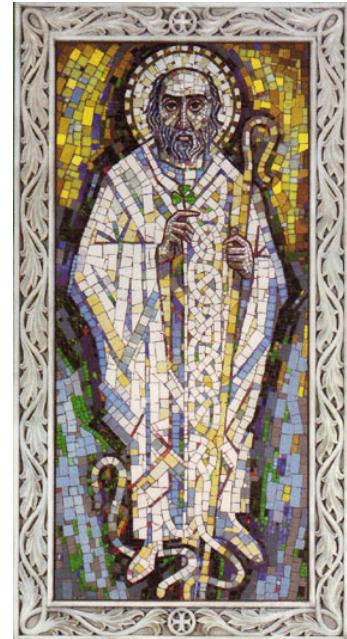


Passion Sunday, 2008

“If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe Me? He that is of God heareth the words of God.” Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.”
(John 8: 46)

It is God who is speaking to us, even today, in the Sacred Scriptures; it is for us to seek for what He is telling us. The words are clear enough: and they do apply to the whole of mankind, ourselves included. Pope St Gregory, in his homily on those words of Christ says: “Then let each one ask himself, ‘Do I take the words of God to heart?’ In this way he will know to whom he belongs.” Now Christ is the same, today, yesterday and forever; and Christ is the Head of that mystical body the Church, to which He has given His word that He will be with us to the end of time; and it is Christ who chooses His vicar on earth as shepherd and guide of the faithful, and His words to Peter and the Apostles echo down the centuries: *He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me.* Thus, our Lord Himself is speaking to us through His Church; and this, every day that passes. The Vicar of Christ, the Pope, fulfils his teaching office through encyclical letters; Apostolic letters and Constitutions; *Motu proprio* and such like; and then at his weekly public audience which at the present time is a lesson in sacred scripture and Catechetics. There is, too, his daily address at the midday Angelus. In this way, Christ continues to teach us through the means which He established and which enjoys the guarantee of His authority.



Some weeks ago, I mentioned saintly Mother Theresa humbly declaring in respect of the wonderful works of charity she founded: “You see what Jesus can do with nothing.” And God has always provided the means by which mankind may know what He is saying to us in every age. It is up to us to take full advantage of whatever means He provides; and these days the wonders of advanced technology are available to us.

Now no feasts may be celebrated on the days which fall between Palm Sunday to the end of the Octave of the Resurrection. This provides us with a God sent opportunity to offset the blasphemous mockeries of St Patrick's Day parade; for the holyday is celebrated this year on Saturday March 15th. It is for all Christians to fill their churches on that day and to celebrate the feast of our great Apostle and Patron as a truly religious festival. We must ignore the worshippers of the golden calf who will desecrate the first Monday of Holy Week with a parade that is a flagrant offence against God and the glorious Christian heritage brought to us by St Patrick and his fellow missionaries. Remember that any Christians who willingly take any part in that parade, even as bystanders, are cooperating in the blasphemous mockery which it

always displays; and RTE have already given a preview of the ugliest blasphemous mockery of St Patrick which will figure in that anti-Christian commercial procession.

Indeed during Passiontide the Church is at pains to make us re-live with her the events which went before and surrounded our Saviour's sufferings and death. Before applying to our souls the fruits of grace in the celebration of our Redeemer's resurrection, she desires to make us follow Him step by step in the dire struggle He suffered in the redemptive sacrifice of the Cross which secured our salvation. It is only in union with His sufferings on the Cross that our personal effort at self-correction and reparation will be rendered effective and of value in God's eyes.

Then let us make one great effort to observe the remaining days of Lent by prayers and sacrifices which show our sincere repentance. Let us be fervent in the traditional devotions of the "Holy Forty Days": our daily Rosary; the Stations of the Cross; visits to the Blessed Sacrament in reparation for the coldness, indifference, and the many sacrileges of this secularist age. Our blessed Mother as Mother of sorrows followed in her divine Son's footsteps to stand at the foot of His Cross, her Immaculate Heart perfectly united to the Sacred Heart of her divine Son — one with Him in the sufferings of the great sacrifice for our redemption. She is always willing and ready to help us to find that union with her Son in those hours of anguish and on to the glorious triumph of His rising from the dead.

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