



MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD of JESUS PARISH

*A Roman Catholic Personal Parish
for the Extraordinary Form
in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.*

Septuagesima Sunday

February 16, A.D. 2025

Mass Schedule

Sundays: 8am, 11am
Monday: 12 Noon
Tuesday: 12 Noon & 7pm
Wednesday through Friday: 12 Noon
1st Friday of Month: 12 Noon & 7pm
Saturday: 9am

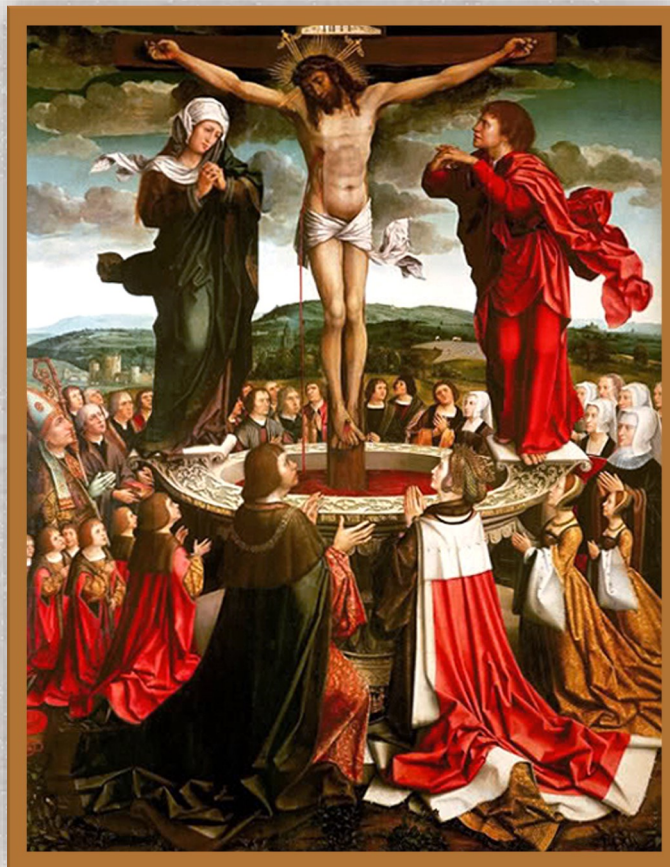
Confession Schedule

Sundays: 7-8am; 10-11am
Monday-Friday: 11:15-11:45am
Tuesdays: also 6:15-6:45pm
Saturday: 8-8:45am

Please consult the Liturgical Schedule on page 2 for particular modifications to this standard schedule.

Clergy & Staff

Canon William Avis, *Pastor*
pastor@mpboj.com
Canon Ross Bourgeois, *Parochial Vicar*
canon.bourgeois@institute-christ-king.org
Geraldine Redic, *Business Manager/Safe Environment*
businessmanager@mpboj.com
Gail Buchman, *Administrative Assistant*
office@mpboj.com
Charles R. Friend, *Budgets & Financial Reporting*
temporalaffairs@mpboj.com
John Rokosz, *Music Director*
music@mpboj.com
Jeannine M. Goelz, *Office Coordinator*
volunteer@mpboj.com
Jack Aul, *Project Superintendent*
projectsuper@mpboj.com
George Wright, *ERT/Usher Coordinator*
usher-ert@mpboj.com
Michael Eyler, *Catechism Administrator*
catechism@mpboj.com



Contact Information

Parish Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9am-2pm
3250 California Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
Phone 412-761-1508
Fax: 412-761-6454
Email: office@mpboj.com
Website: mostpreciousbloodparish.org or
mpboj.com

Pennsylvania Childline (report suspected child abuse)
1-800-932-0313
Protection of Children and Youth (diocesan office)
1-888-808-1235



Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest

Veritatem Facientes In Caritate—Furthering the Truth in Charity

Liturgical Schedule

Sunday, February 16, 2025

Septuagesima Sunday, 2nd Class—Violet

8AM LMO + Deceased Members of Dudek & Schulte Families (Walter & Maggie Schulte)

11AM HM *Pro populo*

Processional: *To Jesus Christ Our Sovereign King* (pg. 89)

Recessional: *Come Holy Ghost* (pg. 57)

Monday, February 17, 2025 *Infant King Novena begins*

Votive Mass of the Holy Trinity, 4th Class—White

12PM LM + Our Parents—Wrabey & Werner (Jerry & Peggy Wrabley)

Tuesday, February 18, 2025

St. Simeon, 4th Class—Red

12PM LM Spiritual & Temporal Welfare of the Raszewski Family (Karl Raszewski II)

7PM LM + Maximilian & Alice Callaghan (Judith Callaghan)

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Votive Mass of St. Joseph, 4th Class—White

12PM LM Irene O'Grady (Mark & Susan Schurdak)

Thursday, February 20, 2025

Votive Mass of the Blessed Sacrament, 4th Class—White

12PM LM + Bernadette Trojecki (Matthew & Kelly Keeny)

8PM Holy Hour of Adoration

9PM Compline

Friday, February 21, 2025

Votive Mass of the Passion, 4th Class—Red

12PM LM + Robert G. Kuntz (Donna Turcsanyi)

Saturday, February 22, 2025

Chair of St. Peter at Antioch, 2nd Class—White

Commemoration of St. Paul the Apostle

9AM LMO Recovery of Rev. Timothy Deely (Tom & Carol Nypaver)

Sunday, February 23, 2025

Sexagesima Sunday, 2nd Class—Violet

8AM LMO *Pro populo*

11AM HM Living & Deceased Members of the Thimons & Grant Families (Dan & Megan Thimons)

Processional: *Lord Jesus, Think on Me* (pg. 77)

Recessional: *Faith of Our Fathers* (pg. 59)

LM = Low Mass; LMO = Low Mass with Organ; HM = High/Solemn Mass

Our Weekly Offerings

Sunday, February 9, 2025

Offertory\$12,050.00

Parish Appeal 2025\$335.00

Attendance: 8AM 497; 11AM 365; Total 862

Parish Group News

RESPECT LIFE GROUP (RLG) The Gospel of Life is at the heart of this group. RLG promotes a culture of life through three working subcommittees of Legislation, Education, and Advocacy. Contact Brenda Briola at respectlife@mpboj.com or 724-650-5767 for info.

CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS will next meet on **Saturday, March 1st, beginning with the 9AM Mass. Next month's topic will be "On the Holy Eucharist".** Please contact christianmothers@mpboj.com for more information. All adult women are welcome to attend.

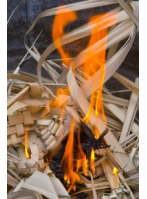
SURSUM CORDA-YOUNG ADULTS GROUP is a nationwide

initiative to foster the spiritual lives of Catholic adults, AGES 18–35, at Institute apostolates. To sign up for the mailing list and receive notice of future events, text **Corda** to 84576 and choose "SC Pittsburgh." For more information, contact José Piñero at 863.450.5143 or sursumcorda@mpboj.com.

Sursum Corda Conference - Friday, Feb. 28 @ 6:30 p.m. at the Parish Center. Bishop Waltersheid will be speaking on "The role of the Blessed Mother in the history of the Church and in our lives." Dinner and drinks provided, cash donations gratefully accepted.

Bring out your palms

The parish is collecting your blessed palms to burn for use on Ash Wednesday (March 5). Please place your old palms in the collection bins located in the church entrances by **March 2nd.**



Safe Environment Volunteer Needed

Our parish has been blessed with a large growth in the number of parishioners since its inception on July 1st, 2019. Along with that growth comes the need for more volunteer assistance with the many tasks the parish must perform. One such task is ensuring parish employees and volunteers are current with their diocesan Safe Environment clearances. Most work can be accomplished on your home computer, with occasional trips to the Parish Office to handle paperwork. If you are able to volunteer during the week to help with this important work, please contact the Business Manager (businessmanager@mpboj.com) to express your interest.

OLSH Speaker Series Feb. 19

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart High School's Speaker Series will next present Dr. Shannen Dee Williams on Wed., Feb. 19 at 7:00 p.m. Her presentation, "America's Real Sister Act: Black Catholic Nuns in United States History" will survey the long and rich history of Black Catholic nuns in the nation. The event is free and open to the public. Seats can be reserved at www.olsh.org/speakerseries.



40 DAYS FOR LIFE

March 5 - April 13

You can protect mothers and children by joining this worldwide mobilization to pray and fast for an end to abortion!

Through prayer and fasting, peaceful vigils and community outreach, 40 Days for Life has inspired 1,000,000+ volunteers!

With God's help, here are the proven results in 30 coordinated campaigns:

- Over **25,000** saved babies
- More than **150** closed facilities
- More than **250** converted workers

Here's how to take part in 40 Days for Life in our community:

- **Vigil location:** Outside Planned Parenthood, 933 Liberty Ave
- **Vigil hours:** 7:30 am to 4:30 pm daily
- **Local contact:** Nikki Bruni, nbruni@40daysforlifepgh.com, 412-926-9413

Learn more ... get involved ... and sign up for prayer times by visiting our campaign at 40daysforlife.com/Pittsburgh.

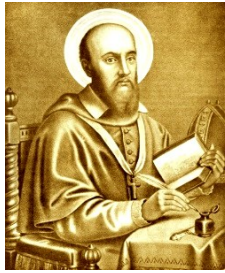
You can also visit our blog site at 40daysforlifepittsburgh.com to see what our vigil looks like in Pittsburgh.

Introduction to the Devout Life

By St. Francis de Sales

Temptations, and the Difference Between Experiencing Them and Consenting to Them *(Book 4, Chapter 3)*

Picture to yourself a young princess beloved of her husband, to whom some evil wretch should send a messenger to tempt her to infidelity. First, the messenger would bring forth his propositions. Secondly, the princess would either accept or reject the overtures. Thirdly, she would consent to them or refuse them.



Even so, when Satan, the world, and the flesh look upon a soul espoused to the Son of God, they set temptations and suggestions before that soul, whereby— 1. Sin is proposed to it. 2. Which proposals are either pleasing or displeasing to the soul. 3. The soul either consents, or rejects them. In other words, the three downward steps of temptation, delectation, and consent. And although the three steps may not

always be so clearly defined as in this illustration, they are to be plainly traced in all great and serious sins.

If we should undergo the temptation to every sin whatsoever during our whole life, that would not damage us in the sight of God's majesty, provided we took no pleasure in it, and did not consent to it; and that because in temptation we do not act, we only suffer, and inasmuch as we take no delight in it, we can be liable to no blame. Saint Paul bore long time with temptations of the flesh, but so far from displeasing God thereby, He was glorified in them. The blessed Angela di Foligni underwent terrible carnal temptations, which move us to pity as we read of them. Saint Francis and Saint Benedict both experienced grievous temptations, so that the one cast himself amid thorns, the other into the snow, to quench them, but so far from losing anything of God's Grace thereby, they greatly increased it.

Be then very courageous amid temptation, and never imagine yourself conquered so long as it is displeasing to you, ever bearing in mind the difference between experiencing and consenting to temptation—that difference being, that whereas they may be experienced while most displeasing to us, we can never consent to them without taking pleasure in them, inasmuch as pleasure felt in a temptation is usually the first step towards consent. So let the enemies of our salvation spread as many snares and wiles in our way as they will, let them besiege the door of our heart perpetually, let them ply us with endless proposals to sin—so long as we abide in our firm resolution to take no pleasure therein, we cannot offend God any more than the husband of the princess in my illustration could be displeased with her because of the overtures made to her, so long as she was in no way gratified by them. Of course, there is one great difference between my imaginary princess and the soul, namely, that the former has it in her power to drive away the messenger of evil and never hear him more, while the latter cannot always refuse to experience temptation, although it be always in its power to refuse consent. But how long soever the temptation may persist, it cannot harm us so long as it is unwelcome to us.

But again, as to the pleasure which may be taken in temptation (technically called delectation), inasmuch as our souls have two parts, one inferior, the other superior, and the inferior does not always choose to be led by the superior, but takes its own line—it not unfrequently happens that the inferior part takes pleasure in a temptation not only without consent from, but absolutely in contradiction to the superior will. It is this contest which Saint Paul describes when he speaks of the "law in my members, warring against the law of my mind," and of the "flesh lusting against the spirit."

Have you ever watched a great burning furnace heaped up with ashes? Look at it some ten or twelve hours afterwards, and there will scarce be any living fire there, or only a little smoldering in the very heart thereof. Nevertheless, if you can find that tiny lingering spark, it will suffice to rekindle the extinguished flames. So it is with love, which is the true spiritual life amid our greatest, most active temptations. Temptation, flinging its delectation into the inferior part of the soul, covers it wholly with ashes, and leaves but a little spark of God's Love, which can be found nowhere save hidden far down in the heart or mind, and even that is hard to find. But nevertheless it is there, since however troubled we may have been in body and mind, we firmly resolved not to consent to sin or the temptation thereto, and that delectation of the exterior man was rejected by the interior spirit. Thus though our will may have been thoroughly beset by the temptation, it was not conquered, and so we are certain that all such delectation was involuntary, and consequently not sinful.

The Little Sisters Thank You

The Little Sisters of the Poor thank you for your generosity and kindness during their visit to the parish on January 26th. They raised \$5,290.71 for their mission!

Help Needed: Church Cleaning Crew

Cleaning the church is fun and rewarding and a great way to meet people and make a difference keeping God's house clean. While we do have paid weekly cleaning in the church, there are many extra projects that need to be done on a regular basis which the cleaning service does not provide.

Due to veteran members of the cleaning crew moving or not being able to come on Saturdays, we need to regroup and build up the cleaning crew base again.

Families of high schoolers are encouraged to adopt one Saturday a month to help us get the church clean and ready for Sunday.

Each Saturday, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass, the following tasks need to be done by the team. We wrap up by noon, or earlier if there is a wedding.

- Candles and lighting sticks restocked at each candle rack.
- Communion kneelers wiped and straightened.
- Pews vacuumed or swept. (We have a backpack vacuum.)
- Vacuum carpets including main altar and side altars, remembering to empty vacuum dustbin, so it is ready for the next use. (We have two vacuums.)
- Empty trash cans from restrooms, entryways, and sacristies. Dispose of trash in dumpsters.

Special Projects: Once per month. One of these could be your special monthly service project!

- Vacuum under and dust the radiators.
- Clean Choir loft.
- Clean pews with Murphy's Oil Soap and kneelers with Mr. Clean.
- Vacuum confessionals.
- Clean confessionals inside and outside with Murphy's Oil Soap.
- Clean sanctuary woodwork, and lockers in the ambulatory, with Murphy's Oil Soap.
- Organize cleaning supplies.
- Sweep/wet mop steps from choir loft to basement.
- Dust window wells and tops of heaters.

Benedictus Subscriptions

For those who love using the Benedictus booklets during Mass and at home for spiritual reflection, please be aware that the cost of each booklet is increasing to \$7 beginning this month. These beautiful booklets are provided by the Institute of Christ the King for your use. If you are able to donate to offset the actual cost, please place your donation in the Benedictus box at the side entrance.

To All of Our Guests...

The Canons and faithful of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish welcome you to our parish and to the Traditional Mass, celebrated in accordance with the classical Roman Liturgy. This personal parish was established by Bishop David Zubik on July 1, 2019, the feast of *The Most Precious Blood of Jesus*. Our parishioners come from all over the diocese for the prayerful tranquility of the Traditional Mass.

According to liturgical tradition, Holy Communion is received on the tongue, kneeling at the communion rail. Reception of Holy Communion is the sign of Divine and Ecclesial unity, so only practicing Catholics, free from mortal sin and who have observed the Eucharistic fast, may present themselves for Holy Communion. Visitors who are not of the Catholic Faith are welcome to join in prayer, but are requested not to receive Holy Communion. Those who need a low gluten Host should inform the usher as they approach the Communion rail, at the end of the distribution line for Holy Communion.

For more information about the parish, contact the Parish Office at 412-761-1508.

The pastoral care of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish is provided by
THE INSTITUTE OF CHRIST THE KING SOVEREIGN PRIEST.



MOST PRECIOUS
BLOOD of JESUS PARISH

General Information

Bulletin Announcements: Requests for proposed bulletin announcements must be submitted **ten days in advance** of the publication date. Submit to bulletin@mpboj.com.

Mass Intentions: The Parish Mass Intention Registry is currently CLOSED. Mass intentions are accepted at specific periods in the year and announced in the bulletin. Instructions and forms are available during those periods.

Parish News: The parish uses **Flocknote** to circulate news and information. Please text MPBOJ to 84576 from your cell phone and follow the instructions, or check the parish website (MPBOJ.com) for more information.

Parish Materials/Events: At both church entrances, there are racks containing church forms, reading materials and prayer cards. Please feel free to take what you need, but do not leave any materials without explicit permission from the Pastor. Parish events publicized on the bulletin boards at both entrances. If you are involved in an event that you would like to publicize or schedule, please provide a copy of the notice or request to office@mpboj.com for approval.

On Line Contributions: Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish greatly appreciates all donations and contributions. If interested in making on-line contributions via Faith Direct, please visit: membership.faithdirect.net/PA678 or call 866-507-8757.

Catholic Faith Formation and Spiritual needs: For those seeking to join the Catholic faith, or who wish spiritual direction, please call the Parish Office for information.

Rosary: The Rosary is publicly recited one-half hour before most parish Masses.

Sacramental Information

Penance: The parish offers the sacrament of penance forty-five minutes prior to each Mass. Confessionals are located on the Epistle (right-hand) side of the church, with a sign indicating where to stand for the line. There is an accessible confessional located on the right side of the double confessional, where the kneeler can be lifted for easy access. Both sides of the double confessional may be occupied at the same time. Start your confession when you hear the priest's blessing.

Infant Baptism: Baptism should be administered within two weeks of birth. Please call the Parish Office prior to the baby's birth, to begin arrangements.

Holy Matrimony: Couples planning to marry at the parish must contact the Parish Office at least six months in advance, to schedule an appointment to begin marriage preparation instructions.

First Holy Communion and Confirmation: School age students receive First Holy Communion and the sacrament of Confirmation as part of our Catechism Program. Please see the parish website for registration instructions.

Extreme Unction/Anointing of the Sick: If you need the assistance of a priest for someone who is dying, please contact the Parish Office at 412-761-1508. If after hours, listen to the prompts and select option #1.

Funerals: The funeral home should directly contact the Parish Office to make Mass and burial arrangements.

Sacramental Records/Letters of Good Standing: To obtain sacramental records or a letter in good standing, please contact the Parish Office at 412-761-1508 for instructions.

Safety Awareness

In an effort to make Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish a safe place for all parishioners and visitors alike, please be mindful of our urban neighborhood and the constant traffic. If visiting the parish for Mass or a social event, parents should ensure their children's safety by maintaining prudent watch and supervision of their children at all times. When children are registered and/or involved in a parish related activity overseen by a parish program manager (e.g., Children's Choir; Catechism; altar server practice), at least one parent/guardian must remain on site for the duration of the program.

Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish reserves all copyrights to the contents of the bulletin.

Septuagesima from *The Liturgical Year* by Dom Guéranger

THE HISTORY OF SEPTUAGESIMA

The Season of Septuagesima comprises the three weeks immediately preceding Lent. It forms one of the principal divisions of the Liturgical Year, and is itself divided into three parts, each part corresponding to a week: the first is called *Septuagesima*; the second, *Sexagesima*; the third, *Quinquagesima*.

All three are named from their numerical reference to Lent, which, in the language of the Church, is called *Quadragesima*, - that is, *Forty*, - because the great Feast of Easter is prepared for by the holy exercises of *Forty Days*. The words *Quinquagesima*, *Sexagesima*, and *Septuagesima*, tell us of the same great Solemnity as looming in the distance, and as being the great object towards which the Church would have us now begin to turn all our thoughts, and desires, and devotion.

Now, the Feast of Easter must be prepared for by a forty-days' recollection and penance. Those forty-days are one of the principal Seasons of the Liturgical Year, and one of the most powerful means employed by the Church for exciting in the hearts of her children the spirit of their Christian vocation. It is of the utmost importance, that such a Season of penance should produce its work in our souls, - the renovation of the whole spiritual life. The Church, therefore, has instituted a preparation for the holy time of Lent. She gives us the three weeks of Septuagesima, during which she withdraws us, as much as may be, from the noisy distractions of the world, in order that our hearts may be the more readily impressed by the solemn warning she is to give us, at the commencement of Lent, by marking our foreheads with ashes.

This prelude to the holy season of Lent was not known in the early ages of Christianity: its institution would seem to have originated in the Greek Church. The practice of this Church being never to fast on Saturdays, the number of fasting-days in Lent, besides the six *Sundays* of Lent, (on which, by universal custom, the Faithful never fasted,) there were also the six Saturdays, which the Greeks would never allow to be observed as days of fasting; so that their Lent was short, by twelve days, of the *Forty* spent by our Savior in the Desert. To make up the deficiency, they were obliged to begin their Lent so many days earlier.

The Church of Rome had no such motive for anticipating the season of those privations, which belong to Lent; for, from the earliest antiquity, she kept the Saturdays of Lent, (and as often, during the rest of the year, as circumstances might require,) as fasting days. At the close of the 6th century, St. Gregory the Great, alludes, in one of his Homilies, to the fast of Lent being less than Forty Days, owing to the Sundays which come during that holy season. "There are," he says, "from this Day (the first Sunday of Lent) to the joyous Feast of

Easter, six Weeks, that is, forty-two days. As we do not fast on the six *Sundays*, there are but thirty-six fasting days; which we offer to God as the "tithes of our year." [The sixteenth homily on the Gospels.]

It was, therefore, after the pontificate of St. Gregory, that the last four days of Quinquagesima Week, were added to Lent, in order that the number of Fasting Days might be exactly Forty. As early, however, as the 9th century, the custom of beginning Lent on *Ash Wednesday* was of obligation in the whole Latin Church. All the manuscript copies of the Gregorian Sacramentary, which bear that date, call this Wednesday the *In capite jejunii*, that is to say, *the beginning of the fast*; and



Expulsion from Eden

Amalarius gives us every detail of the Liturgy of the 9th century, tells us, that it was, even then, the rule to begin the Fast four days before the first Sunday of Lent. We find the practice confirmed by two Councils, held in that century [Meaux and Soissons]. But, out of respect for the form of Divine Service drawn up by St. Gregory, the Church does not make any important change in the Office of these four days. Up to the Vespers of Saturday, when alone she begins the Lenten *rite*, she observes the rubrics prescribed for Quinquagesima Week.

Peter of Blois, who lived in the 12th century, tells us what was the practice in his days. He says: "All Religious begin the Fast of Lent at Septuagesima; the Greeks, at Sexagesima; the Clergy, at Quinquagesima; and the rest of Christians, who form the Church militant on earth, begin their Lent on the Wednesday following Quinquagesima." [Sermon 13] The secular Clergy, as we

learn from these words, were bound to begin the Lenten Fast somewhat before the laity: though it was only by two days, that is, on Monday, as we gather from the Life of St. Ulric, Bishop of Augsburg, written in the 10th century. The Council of Clermont, in 1095, at which Pope Urban II presided, has a decree sanctioning the obligation of the Clergy beginning abstinence from meat at Quinquagesima. This Sunday was called, indeed, *Dominica carnis privii*, and *Carnis privium Sacerdotum*, (that is, *Priests' Carnival Sunday*,) - but the term is to be understood in the sense of the announcement being made, on that Sunday, of the abstinence having to begin on the following day. We shall find, further on, that a like usage was observed in the Greek Church, on the three Sundays preceding Lent. This law, which obliged the Clergy to these two additional days of abstinence, was in force in the 13th century, as we learn from a Council held at Angers, which threatens with suspension all priests who neglect to begin Lent on the Monday of Quinquagesima Week.

This usage, however, soon became obsolete; and in the 15th century, the secular Clergy, and even the Monks themselves, began the Lenten Fast, like the rest of the Faithful, on Ash Wednesday.

There can be no doubt, but that the original motive for this anticipation - which, after several modifications, was limited to the four days immediately preceding Lent, - was to remove from the Greeks the pretext of taking scandal at the Latins, who did not fast a full Forty days. Ratramnus, in his *Controversy with the Greeks*, clearly implies it. But the Latin Church did not think it necessary to carry her condescension further, by imitating the Greek ante-lenten usages, which originated, as we have already said, in the eastern custom of not fasting on Saturdays

Thus it was, that the Roman Church, by this anticipation of Lent by Four days, gave the exact number of *Forty Days* to the holy Season, which she had instituted in imitation of the Forty Days spent by our Savior in the Desert. Whilst faithful to her ancient practice of looking on the Saturday as a day appropriate for penitential exercises, she gladly borrowed from the Greek Church the custom of preparing for Lent, by giving to the Liturgy of the three preceding weeks a tone of holy mournfulness. Even as early as the beginning of the 9th century, as we learn from Amalarius, the *Alleluia* and *Gloria in excelsis* were suspended in the Septuagesima Offices. The Monks conformed to the custom, although the Rule of St. Benedict prescribed otherwise. Finally, in the second half of the 11th century, Pope Alexander II enacted, that the total suspension of the *Alleluia* should be everywhere observed, beginning with the Vespers of the Saturday preceding Septuagesima Sunday. This Pope was but renewing a rule already sanctioned, in that same century, by Pope Leo IX, and which was inserted in the body of Canon Law [Cap. *Hi duo*. De consec. Dist. 1].

Thus was the present important period of the Liturgical Year, after various changes, established the Cycle of the Church. It has been there upward of a thousand years. Its name, *Septuagesima* (*Seventy*), expresses, as we have already remarked, a numerical relation to *Quadragesima* (*the Forty Days*); although, in reality, there are not seventy but only sixty-three days from Septuagesima Sunday to Easter. We will speak of the mystery of the name in the following Chapter. The first Sunday of Lent being called *Quadragesima* (*Forty*), each of the three previous Sundays has a name expressive of an additional ten: the nearest to Lent being called *Quinquagesima* (*Fifty*); the middle one, *Sexagesima* (*Sixty*); the third, *Septuagesima* (*Seventy*).

As the season of Septuagesima depends upon time of the Easter celebration, it comes sooner or later, according to the changes of that great Feast. The 18th of January and the 22nd of February called the *Septuagesima Keys*, because the Sunday, which is called *Septuagesima*, cannot be earlier in the year, than the first, nor later than the second, of these two days.

THE MYSTERY OF SEPTUAGESIMA

The Season, upon which we are now entering, is expressive of several profound mysteries. But these mysteries belong not only to the three weeks, which are preparatory to Lent; they continue throughout the whole period of

time, which separates us from the great Feast of Easter.

The number *seven* is the basis of all these mysteries. We have already seen how the Holy Church came to introduce the season of Septuagesima into her Calendar. Let us now meditate on the doctrine hid under the symbols of her Liturgy. And first, let us listen to St. Augustine, who thus gives us the clue to the whole of our Season's mysteries. "There are two times," says the Holy Doctor: "one which is *now*, and is spent in the temptations and tribulations of this life; the other which shall be *then*, and shall be spent in eternal security and joy. In figure of these, we celebrate two periods: the time '*before Easter*' and the time '*after Easter*.' That which is '*before Easter*,' signifies the sorrow of this present life; that which is '*after Easter*,' the blessedness of our future state. Hence it is, that we spend the first in fasting and prayer; and in the second, we give up our fasting, and give ourselves to praise." [Enarrations; *Psalms* 148]

The Church, the interpreter of the Sacred Scriptures, often speaks to us of two *places*, which correspond with these two *times* of St. Augustine. These two places are Babylon and Jerusalem. *Babylon* is the image of this world of sin, in the midst whereof the Christian has to spend his years of probation; *Jerusalem* is the heavenly country, where he is to repose after all his trials. The people of Israel, whose whole history is but one great type of the human race, was banished from Jerusalem and kept in bondage in Babylon.

Now, this captivity, which kept the Israelites exiles from Sion, lasted seventy years; and it is to express this mystery, as Alcuin, Amalarius, Ivo of Chartres, and all the great Liturgists tell us, that the Church fixed the number of *Seventy* for the days of expiation. It is true, there are but sixty-three days between Septuagesima and Easter; but the Church, according to the style so continually used in the Sacred Scriptures, uses the round number instead of the literal and precise one.

The duration of the world itself, according to the ancient Christian tradition, is divided into seven ages. The human race must pass through seven Ages before the dawning of the Day of eternal life. The first Age included the time from the creation of Adam to Noah; the second begins with Noah and the renovation of the earth by the Deluge, and ends with the vocation of Abraham; the third opens with this first formation of God's chosen people, and continues as far as Moses, through whom God gave the Law; the fourth consists of the period between Moses and David, in whom the house of Juda received the kingly power; the fifth is formed of the years, which passed between David's reign and the captivity of Babylon, inclusively; the sixth dates from the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, and takes us on as far as the Birth of our Savior. Then, finally, comes the seventh Age; it starts with the rising of this merciful Redeemer, the Sun of Justice, and is to continue till the dread coming of the Judge of the living and the dead. These are the Seven great divisions of Time; after which, Eternity.

In order to console us in the midst of the combats, which so thickly beset our path, the Church, - like a beacon shining amidst the darkness of this our earthly abode, - shows us another *Seven*, which is to succeed the one we are now preparing to pass through. After the Septuagesima of mourning, we shall have the bright Easter with its *Seven* weeks of gladness, foreshadowing the happiness and bliss of Heaven. After having fasted with our Jesus, and suffered with Him, the day will come when we shall rise together with Him, and our hearts shall follow Him to the highest heavens, and then after a brief interval, we shall feel descending upon us the Holy Ghost, with His *Seven* Gifts. The celebration of all these wondrous joys will take us *Seven* weeks, as the great Liturgists observe in their interpretation of the Rites of the Church:- the seven joyous weeks from Easter to Pentecost will not be too long for the future glad Mysteries, which, after all, will be but figures of a still gladder future, the future of eternity.

Having heard these sweet whisperings of hope, let us now bravely face the realities brought before us by our dear Mother the Church. We are sojourners upon this earth; we are exiles and captives in Babylon, that

city which plots our ruin. If we love our country, - if we long to return to it, - we must be proof against the lying allurements of this strange land, and refuse the cup she proffers us, and with which she maddens so many of our fellow captives. She invites us to join in her feasts and her songs; but we must unstring our harps, and hang them on the willows that grow on her river's bank, till the signal be given for our return to Jerusalem [Ps. 125]. She will ask us to sing to her the melodies of our dear Zion: but, how shall we, who are so far from home, have heart to *sing the Song of the Lord in a strange Land?* [Ps. 136]. No, - there must be no sign that we are content to be in bondage, or we shall deserve to be slaves forever.

These are the sentiments wherewith the Church would inspire us, during the penitential Season, which we are now beginning. She wishes us to reflect on the dangers that beset us, - dangers which arise from our own selves, and from creatures. During the rest of the year, she loves to hear us chant the song of heaven, the sweet *Alleluia!* - but now, she bids us close our lips to this word of joy, because we are in Babylon. *We are pilgrims absent from Our Lord* [II Cor. 5:6]; - let us keep our glad hymn for the day of His return. We are sinners, and have but too often held fellowship with the world of God's enemies; let us be-

come purified by repentance, for it is written, that *Praise is unseemly in the mouth of a sinner* [Ecclus. 15: 9].

The leading feature, then, of *Septuagesima* is the total suspension of the *Alleluia*, which is not to be again heard upon the earth, until the arrival of that happy day, when, having suffered death with our Jesus, and having been buried together with Him, we shall rise again with Him to a new life [Col. 2: 12].

The sweet Hymn of the Angels, *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, which we have sung every Sunday since the Birth of our Savior in Bethlehem, is also taken from us; it is only on the Feasts of the Saints, which may be kept during the week, that we shall be allowed to repeat it. The night Office of the Sunday is to lose, also, from now till Easter, its magnificent Ambrosian Hymn, the *Te Deum*; and at the end of the Holy Sacrifice, the Deacon will no longer dismiss the Faithful with his solemn *Ite, Missa est*, but will simply invite them to continue their prayers in silence, and *bless the Lord*, the God of mercy, who bears with us, notwithstanding all our sins.

After the Gradual of the Mass, instead of the thrice repeated *Alleluia*, which prepared our hearts to listen to the voice of God in the Holy Gospel, we shall hear but a mournful and protracted chant, called, on that account, the *Tract*.

That the eye, too, may teach us, that the Season we are entering on, is one of mourning, the Church will vest her Ministers, (both on Sundays and the days during the week, which are not Feasts of Saints,) in the somber *Purple*. Until Ash Wednesday, however, she permits the Deacon to wear his dalmatic, and the Subdeacon his tunic; but from that day forward, they must lay aside these vestments of joy, for Lent will then have begun, and our holy Mother will inspire us with the deep spirit of penance, by suppressing everything of that glad pomp, which she loves, at other seasons, to bring into the Sanctuary of her God.

PRACTICE DURING SEPTUAGESIMA

The joys of Christmastide seem to have fled far from us. The forty days of gladness brought us by the Birth of our Emmanuel are gone. The atmosphere of Holy Church has grown overcast, and we are warned that the gloom is still to thicken. Have we, then, forever lost Him, we so anxiously and longingly sighed after, during the four slow weeks of our Advent? Has our divine Sun of Justice, that rose so brightly in Bethlehem, now stopped His course,



Destruction of Jerusalem and Exile into Babylonia

and left our guilty earth?

Not so. The Son of God, the Child of Mary, has not left us. *The Word was made Flesh* in order that He might *dwell among us*. A glory, far greater than that of His Birth, when Angels sang their hymns, awaits Him, and we are to share it with Him. Only, He must win this new and greater glory by strange countless sufferings; He must purchase it by a most cruel and ignominious death: and we, if we would have our share in the triumph of His Resurrection, must follow Him in the Way of the Cross, all wet with the Tears and the Blood He shed for us.

The grave maternal voice of the Church will soon be heard, inviting us to the Lenten penance; but she wishes us to prepare for this *laborious baptism*, by employing these three weeks in considering the deep wounds caused in our souls by sin. True, - the beauty and loveliness of the Little Child, born to us in Bethlehem, are great beyond measure; but our souls are so needy, that they require other lessons than those He gave us of humility and simplicity. Our Jesus is the Victim of the divine justice, and He has now attained the fullness of His age; the altar, on which He is to be slain, is ready: and since it is for us that He is to be sacrificed, we should at once set ourselves to consider, what are the debts we have contracted towards that infinite Justice, which is about to punish the Innocent One instead of us the guilty.

The mystery of a God becoming Incarnate for the love of His creature, has opened to us the path of the *Illuminative Way*; but we have not yet seen the brightest of its Light. Let not our hearts be troubled; the divine wonders we witnessed at Bethlehem are to be surpassed by those that are to grace the day of our Jesus' Triumph: but, that our eye may contemplate these future mysteries, it must be purified by courageously looking into the deep abyss of our own personal miseries. God will grant us His divine light for the discovery; and if we come to know ourselves, to understand the grievousness of original sin, to see the malice of our own sins, and to comprehend, at least in some degree, the infinite mercy of God towards us, - we shall be prepared for the holy expiations of Lent, and for the ineffable joys of Easter.

The Season, then, of Septuagesima is one of most serious thought. Perhaps we could not better show the sentiments, wherewith the Church would have her children to be filled at this period of her year, than by quoting a few words from the eloquent exhortation, given to his people, at the beginning of Septuagesima, by the celebrated Ivo of Chartres. He spoke thus to the Faithful of the 11th century [12th Sermon for Septuagesima]:

"We know, says the Apostle, that every creature groaneth, and travaileth in pain even till now: and not only it, but ourselves, also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body [Rom. 8:22,23]. The creature here spoken of is the soul, that has been regenerated, from the corruption of sin, unto the likeness of God: she groaneth within herself, at seeing herself made subject

to vanity; she, like one that travaileth, is filled with pain, and is devoured by an anxious longing to be in that country, which is still so far off. It was this travail and pain that the Psalmist was suffering, when he exclaimed: Woe is me, that my suffering is prolonged! [Ps. 119:5]. Nay, that Apostle, who was one of the first members of the Church, and had received the Holy Spirit, longed to have, in all its reality, that adoption of the sons of God, which he already had in hope; and he, too, thus exclaimed in his pain: I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ [Phil. 1:23]... During these days, therefore, we must do what we do at all seasons of the Year, - only, we must do it more earnestly and fervently: we must sigh and weep after our country, from which we were exiled in consequence of having indulged in sinful pleasures; we must redouble our efforts in order to regain it by compunction and weeping of heart... Let us now shed tears in the way, that we may afterwards be glad in our country. Let us now so run the race of this present life, that we may make sure of the prize of the supernal vocation [Phil. 3:14]. Let us not be like imprudent wayfarers, forgetting our country, and preferring our banishment to our home. Let us not become like those senseless invalids, who feel not their ailments, and seek no remedy. We despair of a sick man, who will not be persuaded that he is in danger. No: let us run to our Lord, the Physician of eternal salvation. Let us show Him our wounds, and cry out to Him with all our earnestness: Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak: heal me, for my bones are troubled [Ps. 6:3]. Then, will He forgive us our iniquities, heal us of our infirmities, and satisfy our desire with good things [Ps. 102:3,5]."

From all this it is evident, that the Christian, who would spend Septuagesima according to the spirit of the Church, must make war upon that false security, that self-satisfaction, which are so common to effeminate and tepid souls, and produce spiritual barrenness. It is well for them, if these delusions do not insensibly lead them to the absolute loss of the true Christian spirit. He that thinks himself dispensed from that continual watchfulness, which is so strongly inculcated by our Divine Master [Mk. 13:37], is already in the enemy's power. He that feels no need of combat and of struggle in order to persevere and make progress in virtue, (unless he have been honored with a privilege, which is both rare and dangerous), should fear that he is not even on the road to that Kingdom of God, which is only to be won by *violence* [Mt. 11:12]. He that forgets the sins, which God's mercy has forgiven him, should fear his being the victim of a dangerous delusion [Ecclus. 5:5]. Let us, during these days, which we are going to devote to the honest unflinching contemplation of our miseries, give glory to our God, and derive, from the knowledge of ourselves, fresh motives of confidence in Him, who, in spite of all our wretchedness and sin, humbled Himself so low as to become one of us, in order that He might exalt us even to union with Himself.