

The Liturgy of the Ember Day fasts possessed originally a distinctly festive quality, and was partly a festival of thanksgiving for the harvesting of the fruits of the season. These rustic feasts originated at Rome. The liturgy of this week has kept to a great extent unchanged its early festive character, which recalls so vividly the rural feasts of ancient Rome at the close of the vintage. The idea of a special preparation for the solemn Ordinations represents a later addition, which, however, dates from the time of Gelasius I.

The station on Ember Wednesday is, as a rule, at St. Mary Major, and the three Lessons in the Mass are a survival of the ancient Roman liturgical use, which recalls those very early times when, to the two Lessons from the Law and the Prophets, customary in the synagogues of the Dispersion, the Apostles added a third lesson taken from the Gospels. The passage from the Gospel of St. Mark (9:16-28) teaches that humble prayer and fasting, spiritualize our nature, which is thus raised to a supernatural state, and render it invulnerable to the fatal blows of Satan.

INTROIT Psalms 80: 2-5

Exsultáte Deo, adjutóri nostro: jubiláte Deo Jacob: súmite psalmum cúndum cum cíthara: quia præcéptum in Israë́l est, et júdicium Deo Jacob. (Ps. 80: 6)

Testimónium in Joseph pósuit illud, cum exíret de terra Ægýpti: linguam, quam non nóverat, audivit. Glória Patri et Fílio et Spíritui Sancto, sicut erat in princípío, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculórum. Amen. Exsultáte Deo, adjutóri nostro: jubiláte Deo Jacob: súmite psalmum cúndum cum cíthara: cáníte in infítio mensis tuba, quia præcéptum in Israë́l est, et júdicium Deo Jacob.

(after Kyrie eleison)

Flectámus génua.

R. Leváte.

COLLECT

Misericórdiæ tuæ remédiis, quæsumus, Dómine, fragilitas nostra subsístat: ut, quæ sua condióne attéritur, tua deméntia reparétur. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

LESSON Amos 9: 13-15

Hæc dicit Dóminus Deus: Ecce, dies véniunt: et comprehéndet arátor messórem, et calcátor uvæ mitténtem semen: et stillábunt montes dulcédinem, et omnes colles culti erunt. Et convértam captivitátem pópuli mei Israë́l: et ædificábunt civitátes desértas et inhabitábunt: et plantábunt véneas et bibent vinum eárum: et fácient hortos et cómedent fructus eórum. Et plantábo eos super humum suam: et non evéllam eos ultra de terra sua, quam dedi eis: dicit Dóminus, Deus tuus.

GRADUAL Psalms 112: 5-7

Quis sicut Dóminus, Deus noster, qui in altis hábitat, et humilia réspicit in cælo et in terra? Súscitans a terra ínopem et de stércore érigens páuperem.

Dóminus vobíscum

R. Et cum spírítu tuo.

COLLECT

Præsta, quæsumus, Dómine, familiæ tuæ supplicáti: ut, dum a cibis corporálibus se ábstinet, a vítiis quoque mente jeiúnet. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

For St. Joseph of Cupertino

Deus, qui ad unigénitum Fílium tuum exaltátum a terra ómnia tráhere disposuísti: pérfice propítius; ut, méritis et exémplo seráphici Confessóris tui Joséphi, supra terrénas omnes cupiditátes eleváti, ad eum perveníre mereámur: Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

LESSON 2 Esdras 8: 1-10

In diébus illis: Congregátus est omnis pópulus quasi vir unus ad platéam, quæ est ante portam aquárum: et dixérunt Esdræ scribe, ut afférret librum legis Moysi, quam præcéperat Dóminus Israéli. Attulit ergo Esdras sacérdos legem coram multítudine virórum et mulierum, cunctisque qui póterant intelligere, in die prima mensis séptimi. Et legit in eo apérte in platéa, quæ erat ante portam aquárum, de mane usque ad médiam diem, in conspéctu virórum et mulierum et sapiéntium: et aures pópuli erant eréctæ ad librum. Stetit autem Esdras scriba super gradum lígneum, quem fécerat ad loquendum. Et apéruit librum coram omni pópulo: super univérsum quippe pópulum eminébat: et cum aperuísset eum, stetit eis pópulus. Et benedixit Esdras Dómino, Deo magno: et respóndit omnis pópulus: Amen, Amen: élevans manus suas: et incurváti sunt et adoravérunt Deum proni in terram. Porro levítæ siléntium faciébant in pópulo ad audiéndam legem: pópulus autem stabat in gradu suo. Et legérunt in libro legis Dei distíncte et apérte ad intelligéndum: et intellexérunt, cum legerétur. Dixit autem Nehemias, et Esdras sacérdos et scriba, et levítæ interpretántes univérso pópulo: Dies sanctificátus est Dómino, Deo nostro, nolíte lugére et nolíte flere. Et dixit eis: Ite, comédite pínguia et bíbite mulsum, et míttite partes his, qui non præparavérunt sibi: quia sanctus dies Dómini est, et nolíte contristári: gáudium étenim Dómini est fortitúdo nostra.

GRADUAL Psalms 32: 12, 6

Beáta gens, cujus est Dóminus Deus eórum: pópulus, quem elégit Dóminus in hereditáte sibi. Verbo Dómini cæli firmátum: et spírítu oris ejus omnis virtus eórum.

GOSPEL Mark 9: 16-28

In illo témpore: Respóndens unus de turba, dixit ad Jesum: Magíster, áttuli fílium meum ad te, habéntem spírítum mutum: qui, ubicúmque eum apprehénderit, allídit illum, et spumat et strídet déntibus et aréscit: et dixi potés, ut eum pínderes. Sed si quid vis, ádjuva nos, misértus nostri. Jesus autem ait illi: Si potes credere, ómnia possibília sunt credénti. Et contínuo exclámans pater pueri, cum lácredulitátebat: Credo, Dómine: ádjuva incredulitátem turbam, comminátus est spírítui immundo, dicens illi: Surde et mute spírítus, ego præcépio tibi, exi ab eo: et ámplius ne intróas in eum. Et exclámans et multúm discérens eum, éxiit ab eo, et factus est sicut mórtuus, ita ut multi dicerent: Quia mórtuus est. Jesus autem tenens manum ejus, elevávit eum, et surréxit. Et cum introísset in domum, discípuli eum: Quare nos non potuímus eicere eum? Et dixit illis: Hoc genus in nullo potest exíre nisi in oratióne et jejúnio.

OFFERTORY Psalms 118: 47,48

Meditábor in mandátis tuis, quæ diléxi valde: et levábo manus meas ad mandáta tua, quæ diléxi.

SECRET

Hæc hóstia, Dómine, quæsumus, emúndet nostra delicta: et ad sacrificium celebrándum, sanctitórum tibi córpora mentérsque subdficet. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

For St. Joseph of Cupertino

Laudis tibi, Dómine, hóstias immolámus in tuórum commemoratióne Sanctórum: quibus nos et præsentibus éxui malis confidimus et futúris. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

COMMUNION 2 Esdras 8: 10

Comédite pínguia et bíbite mulsum, et míttite partes his, qui non præparavérunt sibi: sanctus enim dies Dómini est, nolíte contristári: gáudium étenim Dómini est fortitúdo nostra.

POSTCOMMUNION

Suméntes, Dómine, dona cæléstia, supplíciter deprecámur: ut, quæ sédula servítute, donánte te, ut, quæ sédula servítute tuo múnere, capíamus, dignis Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

For St. Joseph of Cupertino

Refécti cibo potúque coelésti, Deus noster, te súpplices exorámus: ut, in cujus hæc commemoratióne percépsimus, ejus muniamur et préciibus. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

Rejoice to God our helper: sing aloud to the God of Jacob: take a pleasant psalm with the harp; blow the trumpet in the beginning of the month, for it is a commandment in Israel, and a judgment to the God of Jacob. (Ps. 80: 6) He ordained it for a testimony in Joseph, when he came out of Egypt: he heard a tongue which he knew not. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Rejoice to God our helper: sing aloud to the God of Jacob: take a pleasant psalm with the harp; blow the trumpet in the beginning of the month, for it is a commandment in Israel, and a judgment to the God of Jacob.

Let us kneel.

R. Arise.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, that our weakness may be upheld by Thy healing mercy, so that what of itself is falling into ruin may be restored by Thy clemency. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

Thus saith the Lord God: Behold the days come, when the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seeds, and the mountains shall drop sweetness, and every hill shall be tilled. And I will bring back the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall build the abandoned cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine of them; and shall make gardens, and eat the fruits of them: and I will plant them upon their own land: and I will no more pluck them out of the land which I have given them; saith the Lord thy God.

Who is as the Lord our God, Who dwelleth on high, and looketh down on the low thing in heaven and in earth? Raised up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill.

The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to Thy suppliant household, that while they abstain from bodily food, they may likewise refrain from sin in their minds. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

O God, Who didst purpose to draw all things unto Thy only-begotten Son when He was lifted up from the earth, mercifully grant that we, by the merits and example of Thy seraphic confessor Joseph, being lifted above all earthly desires, may be worthy to come unto Him. Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

In those days all the people were gathered together as one man, to the street which is before the water gate, and they spoke to Esdras the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. Then Esdras the priest brought the law before the multitude of men and women, and all those that could understand, on the first day of the seventh month. And he read it plainly in the street that was before the water gate, from the morning until mid-day, before the men and women, and all those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book. And Esdras the scribe stood upon a step of wood, which he made to speak upon. And he opened the book before all the people, for he was above all the people; and when he had opened it, all the people stood. And Esdras blessed the Lord the great God, and all the people answered: Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands: and they bowed down, and adored God, with their faces to the ground. Now the Levites made silence among the people to hear the law; and the people stood in their place: and they read in the book of the law of God distinctly and plainly to be understood; and they understood when it was read. And Nehemias, and Esdras the priest and scribe, and the levites who interpreted to all the people said: This is a holy day to the Lord our God; do not mourn nor weep. And he said to them. Go eat fat meats and drink sweet wines, and send portions to them that have not prepared for themselves; because it is the holy day of the Lord, and be not sad, for the joy of the Lord is our strength.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord: the people whom the Lord hath chosen for His inheritance. By the word of the Lord the heavens were established: and all the power of them by the spirit of His mouth.

At the time, one of the multitude answering said to Jesus: Master, I have brought my son to thee, having a dumb spirit. Who, wheresoever he taketh him, dasheth him, and he foameth, and gnasheth with the teeth, and pineth away; and I spoke to thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not. Who answering them, said: O incredulous generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him. Immediately the spirit troubled him; and being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming. And he asked his father: How long time is it since this hath happened unto him? But he said: From his infancy: And oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire and into waters to destroy him. But if thou canst do any thing, help us, having compassion on us. And Jesus said to him: If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And immediately the father of the boy crying out, with tears said: I do believe, Lord: help my unbelief. And when Jesus saw the multitude running together, he threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him: Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him; and enter not any more into him. And crying out, and greatly tearing him, he went out of him, and he became as dead, so that many said: He is dead. But Jesus taking him by the hand, lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples secretly asked him: Why could not we cast him out? And he said to them: This can go out by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

I will meditate on Thy commandments, which I will love exceedingly and lift up my hands to Thy commandments, which I have loved.

May this sacrifice, we beseech Thee, O Lord, cleanse our sins away, and sanctify the bodies and minds of them that serve Thee unto celebrating the sacrifice. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

We offer Thee sacrifices of praise, O Lord, in commemoration of Thy saints, by whom we trust to be delivered both from present and from future evils. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

Eat fat meats, and drink sweet wine, and send portions to them that have not prepared for themselves; because it is the holy day of the Lord; for the joy of the Lord is our strength.

As we receive Thy heavenly gift, O Lord, we humbly pray: that Thy bounty be dutifully hold, of that Thy bounty too may we worthily keep. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

Refreshed with celestial food and drink, O our God, we humbly beseech Thee that we may be defended by the prayers of the saint whose feast we commemorate, and of whom we have received these blessings. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.