

EMBER WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT

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The solemn fast of the three days in Ember Week, originally peculiar to the Roman Church, was afterwards borrowed by the other Latin dioceses. St. Leo I explains the Ember Days saying that, especially at the end of the year, it is fitting that we dedicate the first fruits to the Divine Providence.

An ancient tradition reserved the ordinations of priests and deacons to the month of December, and the faithful – following a custom introduced by the Apostles themselves – felt constrained to unite with the bishop in prayer and fasting, in order to call down from God an abundance of priestly gifts upon the heads of those newly chosen to minister at the altar.

Originally, on the days of the stational processions, when the great Litany was sung on the way, the Introit was omitted, and the Pope, on reaching the church, recited the Prayer after the last Kyrie. The deacon first invited the faithful to prostrate themselves so that they might pray for a while in secret, the *Flectamus genua*; then, after a few moments spent in prayer, he gave the signal to get up again, the *Levate*, and the Pontiff summed up the petitions of the assembly in a brief formula – *collecta* – and presented them to God.

INTROIT Isaiah 45: 8

Roráte, cæli, désuper et nubes pluant justum: aperiátur terra, et gérminet Salvatórem. (Ps 18: 2) Cæli enarrant glóriam Dei: et ópera mánuum ejus annúntiat firmaméntum. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen. Roráte, Cæli, désuper et nubes pluant justum: aperiátur terra, et gérminet Salvatórem.

COLLECT

Orémus.
Flectámus genua.
Leváte.

Præsta, quæsumus, omnípotens Deus: ut redemptiónis nostræ ventúra solémnitates, et præsentis nobis vitæ subsidia cónferat, et ætérnæ beatitúdinis præmia largiátur. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

LESSON Isaiah 2: 2-5

In diébus illis: Dixit Isaías prophéta: Erit in novíssimis diébus præparátus mons domus Dómini in vértice móntium, et elevábitur super colles, et fluent ad eum omnes gentes. Et ibunt pópuli multi, et dicent: Veníte et ascendámus ad montem Dómini, et ad domum Dei Jacob, et docébit nos vias suas, et ambulábimus in sémitis ejus: quia de Sion exíbit lex, et verbum Dómini de Jerúsalem. Et judicábit gentes, et árguet pópulos multos: et conflábunt gládios suos in vómeres, et lanceas suas in falces. Non levábit gens contra gentem gládium: nec exercebúntur ultra ad prælium. Domus Jacob venite, et ambulémus in lúmine Dómini Dei nostri.

GRADUAL Psalms 23: 7, 3, 4

Tollíte portas, principes, vestras: et elevámini portæ æternáles: et introíbit Rex glóriæ. Quis ascéndet in montem Dómini? aut quis stabit in loco sancto ejus? Innocens mánibus et mundo corde.

Dóminus vobíscum.

Et cum spiritu tuo.

COLLECT

Festína, quæsumus, Dómine, ne tardáveris, et auxiliúm nobis supérnæ virtútis impénde: ut advéntus tui consolatióibus sublevéntur, qui in tua pietáte confidunt: Qui vivis et regnas, cum Deo Patre in unitáte Spíritu Sancti, Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum.

LESSON Isaiah 7: 10-15

In diébus illis: Locútus est Dóminus ad Achaz, dicens: Pete tibi signum a Dómino Deo tuo in profúndum inférni, sive in excélsum supra. Et dixit Achaz: Non petam, et non tentábo Dóminum. Et dixit: Audíte ergo domus David: Numquid parum vobis est, moléstos esse homínibus, quia molésti estis et Deo me? Propter hoc dabit Dóminus ipse vobis signum. Ecce virgo concípiet, et páriet filium, et vocábitur nomen ejus Emmánuel. Butyrum et mel cómedet, ut sciat reprobáre malum, et eligere bonum.

GRADUAL Psalms 144: 18, 21

Prope est Dóminus ómnibus invocántibus eum: ómnibus qui ínvocant eum in veritáte. Laudem Dómini loquétur os meum: et benedicat omnis, caro nomen sanctum ejus.

GOSPEL Luke 1: 26-38

In illo témpore: Missus est Ángelus Gábriël Deo in civitátem Galilææ, cui nomen Názaireth, ad Vírginem desponsátam viro, cui nomen erat Joseph, de domo David, et nomen Vírginis María. Et ingræssus Ángelus ad eam, dixit: Ave, grátia plena: Dóminus tecum: benedicta tu in muliéribus. Quæ cum audisset, turbáta est in sermóne ejus: et cogitábat qualis esset ista salutátio. Et ait Ángelus ei: Ne tímeas Maria, invenísti enim grátiam apud Deum: ecce concípies in útero, et paries filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum. Hic erit magnus, et Filius Altíssimi vocábitur, et dabit illi Dóminus Deus sedem David patris ejus: et regnabit in domo Jacob in ætérnum, et regni ejus non erit finis. Dixit autem Maria ad Ángelum: Quómodo fiet istud, quóniam virum non cognósko? Et respóndens Ángelus, dixit ei: Spíritus Sanctus supervéniet in te, et virtus Altíssimi obumbrábit tibi. Ideóque et quod nascétur ex te Sanctum, vocábitur Filius Dei. Et ecce Elisabeth cognáta tua, et ipsa concepit fílium in senectúte sua: et hic mensis sextus est illi, quæ vocátur stérilis: quia non erit impossibile apud Deum omne verbum. Dixit autem María: Ecce ancílla Dómine, fiat mihi secúndum verbum tuum.

OFFERTORY Isaiah 35: 4

Confortámini, et jam nolite timére: ecce enim Deus noster retríbuet júdicium: ipse véniet, et salvos nos faciét.

SECRET

Accépta tibi sint, quæsumus, Dómine, nostra jejúnia: quæ et expiádo nos tua grátia dignos efficiant, et ad sempitérna promíssa perdúcant. Per Dóminum nostrum Iesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

PREFACE OF ADVENT

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutáre, nos tibi semper, et ubique grátia ágere: Dómine sancte, Pater omnípotens, ætérne Deus: per Christum Dóminum nostrum. Quem pérdito hómínium géneri Salvatórem miséricors et fidélis promísisti: cujus véritas instrúeret íncios, sánctitas justificáret ímpios, virtus adjuváret infirmos. Dum missúrus es, et dies affúlget liberatiónis nostræ, in hac promissionóum tuárum fide, piis gáudiis exultámus. Et ideo cum Ángelis et Archángelis, cum Thronis et Domínationibus, cumque omni militia cæléstis exércitus, hymnum glóriæ tuæ

Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just: let the earth be opened and bud forth a Savior. (Ps. 18: 2) The heavens show forth the glory of God: and the firmament declareth the work of His hands. Glory 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. Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just: let the earth be opened and bud forth a Savior.

Let us pray.
Let us kneel.

Arise.

Grant, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that the coming solemnity of our redemption may both confer upon us assistance in this present life and bestow the rewards of everlasting blessedness. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

In those days, the prophet Isaías said: In the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go, and say: Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge the Gentiles and rebuke many people: and they shall turn their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into sickles. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation: neither shall they be exercised any more to war. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord our God.

Lift up your gates, O ye princes: and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates: and the King of glory shall enter in. Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? The innocent in hands and clean of heart.

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Hasten, we beseech Thee, O Lord, tarry not: and grant us the help of Thy heavenly power, that they who trust in Thy loving kindness may be relieved by the consolations of Thy coming. Who lives and reigns, with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

In those days the Lord spoke to Achaz, saying: Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, either unto the depth of hell, or unto the height above. And Achaz said: I will not ask, and I will not tempt the Lord. And He said: Hear ye therefore, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to be grievous to men, that you are grievous to my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel. He shall eat butter and honey, that He may know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good.

The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless His holy Name.

At that time the Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace: the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying: and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God: behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the Angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the Angel answering, said to her: The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren; because no work shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.

Take courage, and now fear not: for behold our God will bring judgment: He Himself will come and will save us.

May our fasts, we beseech Thee, O Lord, be acceptable unto Thee, and by expiating our sins, make us worthy of Thy grace, and bring us to Thine everlasting promises. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

It is truly meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times and places give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, through Christ our Lord; for in Thy mercy and fidelity Thou hast promised Him as Savior to the lost race of men, to instruct the ignorant with His truth, justify the wicked with His holiness, and help the weak with His power. Now that the time draweth nigh that He Whom Thou art to send should come, and the day of our liberation should dawn, with faith in Thy promises, we rejoice with holy exultation. And therefore with the Angels and Archangels, with the