

Saturday of the Second Week of Advent

The Liturgical Year

Dom Prosper Gueranger

Come, let us adore the King our Lord, who is to come.

From the Prophet Isaias - Chapter 25

Oh Lord, Thou art my God. I will exalt Thee, and give glory to Thy name: for Thou has done wonderful things, Thy designs of old faithful. Amen. For Thou has reduced the city to a heap, the strong city to ruin, the house of strangers to be no city, and to be no more built up for ever. Therefore shall a strong people praise Thee, the city of mighty nations shall fear Thee. Because Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress: a refuge from the whirlwind, a shadow from the heat... And the Lord of hosts shall make unto all people, in this mountain, a feast of fat things, a feast of wine, of fat things full of marrow, of wine purified from the lees. And He shall destroy in this mountain the face of the bond with which all people were tied, and the web that he began over all nations. He shall cast death down headlong for ever: and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from every face, and the reproach of his people he shall take away from the whole earth: for the Lord has spoken it. And they shall say in that day: Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have patiently waited for him, we shall rejoice and be joyful in his salvation.

Yet a little while, and the conqueror of death will appear, and then, in the joy of our hearts, we will say: *Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; we have patiently waited for Him; this is He, and we will rejoice and be joyful in His salvation.* Let us, therefore, prepare the way of the Lord that we may receive Him worthily; and in this work of our preparation, let us have recourse to Mary. Saturday is the day which is sacred to her; she will the more readily grant the prayers said to her upon it. Let us consider her in her grand privilege of being full of grace, carrying in her womb Him whom we so long to possess.

If we ask her by what means she rendered herself worthy of such an immense favour, she will tell us that in her was simply fulfilled the prophecy, which the Church so continually repeats during these days of Advent: 'Every valley shall be filled up.' The humble Mary was the valley blessed by the Lord: a valley beautiful and fertile, in which God sowed the divine wheat, our Saviour Jesus: for it is written in the psalm, that the valleys shall abound with corn. Oh Mary, it is thy humility that drew down upon thee the admiration of thy Creator. If, from the high heaven where He dwells, He had perceived a virgin more humble in her love, He would have chosen her in preference to thee: but no, it is thou that didst win His predilection, Oh mystic valley, ever verdant and lovely in thy flowers of grace. We that, like high hills, are so proud and such sinners, what shall we do? We must look on this our God, who comes to us in infinite humility, and then humble ourselves out of love and gratitude.

Oh blessed Mother, obtain this grace for us. Pray for us that henceforth we may submit ourselves to the will of our Lord as thou didst, when thou didst speak those admirable words: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord: may it be done to me according to thy word!'

Prose in Honour of the Blessed Virgin
(Taken from the Cluny missal of 1523)

Gabriel, sent from heaven, faithful bearer of the word, holds sacred converse with the holy Virgin.

In the inner chamber he discloses the good and sweet word; and inverting the name of Eve, Eva becomes Ave, his salutation Hail!

The covenant made, instantly there was present the Word made flesh; and yet the pure Maid a Virgin still for ever.

Parent like no other; Mother, yet not losing the treasure; giving birth to her child, yet not in pain or travail.

Unheard-of prodigy, 'tis so indeed, and all thou, my soul, can do is to believe it: we have not power to loose the latchet.

It is the great, the wondrous portent of the burning bush; let him that would approach, take off the sandals from his feet.

A dry branch, with not one drop of dew, once yielded a flower and fruit; it was a new law, a new way: so was it when the Virgin brought forth her Son.

What a blessed Fruit, a Fruit of joy, not of woe.

There will be no Adam deceived, if men but eat of this.

He is our Jesus, the good Jesus, lovely burden of a lovely Mother! He who has a throne in heaven, has a stable for his birth-place!

May he, that for our sake was thus born, wipe away all our guilt; for our sojourn here is full of dangers. Amen.

Prayer From The Mozarabic Breviary
(For the Friday of the third week of Advent)

Who, Oh God, Thou Son of God, who can search into Thy ways, and tell how Thou was born of a Virgin, when Thou came from heaven, or by what paths Thou didst return thither? And therefore since Thou alone knows all things, Thou whose name is beyond the ends of the earth; grant us so to think and speak of Thee as to be guiltless of error: that so Thou, who, high in power, dost come down to lowly things and love them, may make us worthy of Thy gifts. Amen.