

ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT NEWSLETTER

HOLY WEEK NOTES NO. 124

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FROM BISHOP DOLAN

My dear Friends,

At some point in Paschaltide, between May Crowning and St. Joseph's Solemnity, our cold, wet spring gave way to hot, humid summer. With it the last of the lilies expired, but not our memories of Holy Week, its graces and crosses and triumphs.

This year's "holy high point" was calm and well ordered, recollected and quite devout. We present some pictures for your edification, and ask you to picture with us the many sacrifices, small and great which went to make up the annual solemn commemoration of the Sacrifice of our Redemption.

Our two stalwart Holy Week women were with us, as usual, all week for the Altar of Repose and more, and two seminarians came from Florida. All of the good singers, however, went to Fr. Saavedra in Detroit this year, who admirably restored Queen of Martyrs' solemn Holy Week. Thus it was that we had to let some of the fancier singing go, but God gave us several sweet surprises in return.

Our laymen did an impressive job with the Tenebrae Lamentations, and so much more. (How much, even at a minimum, must be practiced and prepared!) Fr. Cekada did surprisingly well on the Exsultet, quite steady and solid, considering the vocal exertions of the past days, and the early hour of Saturday's Vigil. On Good Friday I reprised my favorite role of the St. John Christus. Its basso profundo seems to suit me, and although I tend to wander musically, I usually end up on the right note, or in its neighborhood.

Fr. McGuire told us on St. Joseph's Solemnity that the head of the Holy Family got him through the Mass of the Presanctified, whose rubrics run towards non-intuitive. I'm sure good St. Joseph helped all of us all week long, not only for rubrics but also for recollection.

Rev. Mr. Vili Lehtoranta, the last Catholic from Finland, was ordained a subdeacon during the long and moving Easter Vigil. Its five hours' watch at the Holy Sepulchre passes quickly, all too quickly. Our first Finn helped us quite a bit throughout Holy Week and Eastertide, and returns this August for further training preparatory to his St. Gertrude Day Ordination.

Easter Week, beginning Sunday afternoon and continuing throughout the Octave, is generally *terra desolata* anymore throughout Christendom. This is understandable, due to fatigue, distance and modern man's short attention span, and



Upon returning from the beautifully adorned Altar of Repose, Bishop Dolan elevates the Blessed Sacrament, consecrated at the Mass of Holy Thursday, during Good Friday's Mass of the Presanctified. Assisting Bishop Dolan are Father McGuire, Father Larrabee, and seminarian Rev. Mr. Vili Lehtoranta.

the "liturgy lite" legacy from even before the changes. Most people are more than ready for a break.

We always try to keep up the Vespers and at least some sung Masses for the Octave, but this year the Greater Litanies fell on Easter Monday. It just would not do for major clerics to whisper them privately after Lauds, so we got the troops together for one last, (albeit, Paschal) act of penitential prayer on a cool, sunny evening with plenty of wind. I pray St. Michael sheathed his sword.

My dear friend, you see the lesson of all of this, don't you? *Someone* has to pray and process and sing and offer solemnly the Holy Sacrifice, even on vacation days. Time grows short, charity cold, and Antichrist nearer. Surely we must pray more, not less.

A very powerful prayer, albeit of a devotional and non liturgical nature, is the Thursday Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament Exposed. It has become our custom to conduct one on Easter Thursday, even as some of our people regularly promise a private holy hour at home, so that someone is praying this easy and accessible way every day of the month.

Prayer, public and private, austere liturgical (the psalms of Tenebrae) or delightfully devotional (novenas and holy hours and Benediction), but prayer, including of course the Rosary, is our life corporately and individually at St. Gertrude the Great. Please pray for us. We pray for you. Send a little something to cover the candles, won't you, or to help support our lonely mission priests praying all by themselves out in the field. Send us your prayer intentions, too.

We are united in powerful prayer not only at Holy Week but this week and every week of the year, especially in the pure, undefiled prayer of the Mass, the *Oblatio Munda*, offered out of the clutches and without commemoration of that Antichrist who now sits in Rome, and defiles the holy city with his heresies.

Pray!

I close with a blessing in the name of the Church's patron and protector, good St. Joseph.

—The Most Reverend Daniel L. Dolan



The Maundy, or Washing of the Feet, on Holy Thursday afternoon is a ceremony that is well attended by parents with children. Following a brief explanation on why the bishop washes the feet of the men – in obedience to Our Lord's command – the younger children gather at the communion rail for a "bird's eye view!"



The Office of Tenebrae, with its mix of plain chant and polyphony, on Spy Wednesday opened the Sacred Triduum. (Above) One of our servers extinguishes a candle on the barge leading up the the climax – the great noise – that concludes the Office.



The Passion according to St. John was solemnly chanted on Good Friday. Bishop Dolan assumed his favorite role by chanting the part of Christ.



The Holy Oils blessed by Bishop Dolan during the morning Mass on Maundy Thursday, are sent around the world to priests, enabling them to anoint the sick, as well as for use in the administration of other sacraments.



Holy Saturday with its myriad of ceremonies is already an impressive spectacle at which to assist. It was gilded this year with the ordination to the subdiaconate, the first of the major orders, of Rev. Mr. Vili Lehtoranta.