

The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

THE FOURTH SUNDAY after Pentecost was called, for a long period in the west, the Sunday of *mercy*, because, formerly, there was read upon it the passage from St. Luke beginning with the words: "Be merciful, as your Father is merciful." But, this Gospel having been since assigned to the Mass of the first Sunday after Pentecost, the Gospel of the fifth Sunday was made that of the fourth; the Gospel of the sixth became that of the fifth; and so on, up to the twenty-third. The change we speak of was, however, not introduced into many Churches until a very late period; and it was not universally received until the sixteenth century.

Whilst the Gospels were thus brought forward a week, in almost the whole series of these Sundays, the Epistles, Prayers, and the other sung portions of the ancient Masses were, with a few exceptions,

left as originally drawn up. The connection which the liturgists of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries had fancied they found between the Gospel and the rest of the liturgy for these Sundays was broken. Thus the Church spared not those favorite views and explanations which were at times far-fetched; and yet she did not intend thereby to condemn those writers, nor to discourage her children from perusing their treatises, for, as the holy reflections they contained were frequently suggested by the authority of the ancient liturgies, such reading would edify and instruct. We are quite at liberty, then, to turn their labors to profit; let us only keep this continually before us: that the chief connection existing between the several portions of the proper of each Mass for the Sundays after Pentecost consists in the unity of the Sacrifice itself.

Commentary from The Liturgical Year by Dom Prosper Guéranger (1805-1875).

JUNE 24

**NATIVITY OF
ST. JOHN THE
BAPTIST**



Proper Prayers of the Mass in the Extraordinary Form

ADDENDUM:

COMMEMORATION OF THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



SECOND COLLECT

DA nobis, quæsumus, Dómine: Ut et mundi cursus pacifice nobis tuo ordine dirigátur; et Ecclésia tua tranquilla devotíone lætétur. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

GRANT us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that the world may be regulated in its course by Thy governance for our peace, and that Thy Church may with tranquil devotion rejoice. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end.

SECOND SECRET

OBLATIONIBUS nostris, quæsumus, Dómine, placáre suscēptis: et ad te nostras étiam rebélles compélle propítius voluntátes. Per Dóminum ...

ACCEPT our oblations, we beseech Thee, O Lord, and be appeased by them: and mercifully compel even our rebel wills to turn to Thee. Through our Lord ...

SECOND POSTCOMMUNION

MYSTÉRIA nos, Dómine, quæsumus, sumpta purificent: et suo múnere tueántur. Per Dóminum nostrum ...

MAY the mysteries which we have received, we beseech Thee, O Lord, purify us, and fulfill their purpose by defending us. Through our Lord ...

The Sunday Liturgy

SO IMPORTANT is the Sunday's liturgy, destined each week to honor such profound mysteries, that, for a long time, the Roman Pontiffs kept down the number of feasts which were above the rank of semi-doubles, so that the Sunday, which is itself a semi-double, might not be superseded. It was not until the second half of the seventeenth century that this discipline of reserve was relaxed. It was then that it had to give way in order thereby to meet the attacks, made by the Protestants and their allies the Jansenists, against the cult of the saints. It was needful to remind the faithful that the honor paid to the servants of God detracts not from the glory of their Master; that the cult of the saints, the members of Christ, is but the consequence and development of that which is due to Christ their Head. The Church owed it to her Spouse to make a protest against the narrow views of these innovators, who were really aiming at lessening the glory of the Incarnation by thus denying its grandest consequences. It was, therefore, by a special inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the apostolic See then permitted several feasts, both old and new, to be ranked as of a double rite. To strengthen the solemn condemnation she had pronounced against the heretics of that period, she wisely adopted the course of allowing the feasts of saints to be sometimes kept on Sundays, although these latter were

considered as being especially reserved for the celebration of the leading mysteries of our Catholic faith, and for the obligatory attendance of the people.

The Sunday, or *dominical*, liturgy was not, however, altogether displaced by the celebration of any particular feast on the Lord's Day; for, no matter how solemn the feast falling on a Sunday may be, a commemoration must always be made of the Sunday, by adding its Prayers to those of the occurring feast.... Neither let us forget that after the assisting at the solemn Mass and the canonical Hours, one of the best means for observing the precept of keeping holy the Sabbath-day is our own private meditation upon the Epistle and Gospel appointed by the Church for each Sunday.



Recently, however, in view of the great increase in the number of festivals of Saints kept by the Universal Church, which had resulted in the Sunday liturgy being very rarely used, the Holy See has thought well to ordain that greater or lesser double feasts falling on Sundays shall be merely commemorated in the Mass and Office of the day. Henceforth the Mass of the season is said on every Sunday throughout the year which is not occupied by a double feast of the first or second class, or by a Feast of Our Lord. Thus the Sunday liturgy is restored to its former high rank in the scheme of the Church's year.

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SECOND SECRET

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