

Midday Prayer - 174

16. 3. 70

29. 3. 71 (265)

23. 3. 72

9. 4. 73 (334 part)

Salvator Mundi  
(Victorine Pascal)  
R 244

"Saviour of the world, save us" .... PREFACE OF CROSS

The motif, and the

Preface of the Holy Cross which is used at the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer of the Mass <sup>this week & next</sup> (from today) until Holy Thursday, recall that Lent is nearing its climax. These last two weeks of it concentrate <sup>towards</sup> the Passion of Christ, what He has achieved for us in His great love. It's worth remarking that the use of the word 'Passion', in the older Christian writings, usually had a wider meaning than we normally think of today - it included Our Lord's resurrection & ascension, all of what we sometimes call now His Paschal mystery. Let this, then, be a reminder not to divorce Easter Day from the rest of Holy Week, or Passiontime. For they are all linked in the experience of Christ which we commemorate and celebrate with special attention and devotion at this time, and in the life of His people <sup>in</sup> whom He lives now and whom He's continuously forming in His own pattern.

There <sup>is</sup> was a phrase in <sup>St John's gospel just before the Passion narrative</sup> (yesterday's) gospel which wd. be an apt prayer for these weeks: "We wd. like to see Jesus." Remember how St John puts it - a question or request made by some Greeks to one of the disciples: and when they informed Jesus, He began to speak about His 'hour', His glorification, about what He was going to do in suffering and dying and rising to new life. "We wd. like to see Jesus" - He called Himself the way, and to see Him a need there one must follow His way, share His way with Him. This is what He calls on all men to do, opening the way for mankind to follow and share His divine life with Him in the company and glory of His Father - it's what all Christians have taken on themselves, through His grace, in their conversion, faith and baptism into the likeness of His dying and rising. And here the

twain themes of the whole of Lent come into focus - repentance and Baptism. It's not a sentimental remembrance of what Our Lord did and what happened to Him that we're concerned with in the celebration of Holy Week and Easter. But it's a grateful recalling of those events whose meaning for us and for our world we've been given a vision of in our faith; our understanding of them should continue to grow, as we grow in union with Christ, who is (in the words of Pascal) "in agony until the end of the world." In us, individually, in the community of His Church, in the world at large Christ is the way towards intimacy with God: He is making people able to enter His intimacy with Him in as much as their lives, their suffering & joy, their hopes and human experience share with Him His love, compassion, obedience and utter dedication to His Father. Faith, and the conversion towards God which it entails, and Baptism, the sacrament of faith, are what brings us into contact with Christ and His way - the renewal of our Baptism promises on Easter night is a ceremony, or should I say a ceremonial expression of the result of our observance of Lent. By itself, it's just a formula of words: the significance of them for each of us will depend on the renewal of our dedication in faith to Christ which we'll have been undergoing during Lent, on the renewal of what our Baptism means for us in making us share with Christ His redeeming Passion, eternally and advancing along His way of return to God who is Himself the Way, Truth and Life.

<sup>A hymn new, for Palm-Sunday, from the Russian Liturgy</sup> / A motet now, for this season - "Teclume factee sunt", the 3rd of 4 penitential motets by Francis Poulenc, all 4 of which by the way will be sung at a special Good Friday concert <sup>next week</sup> ~~this year~~ in the City Hall: MUSIC PRAYERS

"Teclume..."  
Poulenc  
Rete Erato 07



Easter isn't much of a commercial occasion, despite the public holidays — certainly not nearly as much as Christmas. Yet it is the greatest, most important festival of the Christian year. We all accept this fact, at least in theory. But I wonder wd. Easter have become as commercialized as Christmas is if we really did celebrate Easter and consider it as the big festival each year? "We wd. like to see Jesus" — at Xmas there is perhaps a too easy answer, in one way — He appears as a child born at Bethlehem. But what He came into the world for was to come to Calvary and His empty tomb — His "hour" of glorification and salvation for mankind by His dying and rising. The Jesus we wd. see is God crucified by the sin and malice and blindness of the world without love, divine love — Jesus risen to new life poured out for men who will accept His grace from Him. The crucifix is harder to look at than the crib — it makes us uncomfortable; still, we ought remember the earlier representations of Christ on the cross which show Him, with the wounds of His Passion, but not in suffering and agony as if His death was the end of everything, but reigning in glory. To understand this we do need to know His Passion — not merely to know ~~it~~ about it (though this too is still we shd. be learning in these weeks) but to know Him in His Passion.... if we wd. really like to see Jesus.