

The Faith of Our Fathers

God and men proceed in contrary ways. People settle first on whatever is best, and afterward they deal with what is worse. God first gives the cross and affliction, then honor and blessedness. He does this is because we seek to preserve the sinful flesh, which urges us to keep the Law by works and offer promises great and sweet. But the result has a stale taste. And although the flesh is intoxicated with great promises, it does not feel its wretchedness. Yet when the wine is digested and the false promises gone, the wretchedness appears. God, however, terrifies the conscience, sets on miserable wine, in fact nothing but water. Then He consoles us with the promises of the Gospel which endure forever. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

“There is a real conflict for faith in today’s Gospel. We should therefore pay close attention to what Christ’s mother, Mary, does, and also what she teaches us. For Our Lord’s words to her sound harsh. But she interprets everything in her heart in such a way that she does not even think of any wrath in Him, or anything that might conflict with His goodness, but remains firm in her conviction that He is good. Mary will not allow this opinion to be taken from her by the rebuff she has suffered. She might have been offended by what Jesus said to her. Instead, she continues to regard Jesus as good and gracious.” (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

The mother renders service and takes the part of housekeeper: Christ honors the occasion by his personal presence, by a miracle and a gift. And all this is for the benefit of the groom, the bride and the guests, as is the nature of love and its works. Thus Christ lures all hearts to himself, to rely on him as ever ready to help, even in temporal things, and never willing to forsake any; so must have sufficient, and no one can prevent it. But the example of faith is still more wonderful in this Gospel. Christ waits to the very last moment when the want is felt by all present, and there is no counsel or help left. This shows the way of divine grace; it is not imparted to one who still has enough, and has not yet found his need. For grace does not feed the full and satiated, but the hungry, as we have often said. Whoever still

For the *Second Sunday after the Epiphany*. These excerpts are intended as meditative pieces for the Day’s pericopes. They have been edited and abridged for style, sense and space.

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