

## The Faith of Our Fathers

“The words of God which you receive by your ear, hold fast in your heart. For the Word of God is the food of the soul.” That Word of God is His gracious and comforting Word planted into your heart and mind through the ear by the preaching and Sacraments. It is given not simply to improve your behavior, but to strengthen your faith and build up your hope so that you have true and lasting comfort. “Strive then that the Word you hear may remain in the ear of your soul.” (St. Gregory the Great) ❧❧❧

Those who hear the Word and steadfastly hold onto it also risk and suffer everything for it. Thus they also do good in love to their neighbor. So he says, “With patience,” for such people must suffer much for the sake of the Word; insults and disgrace from the fanatics and heretics; hate and insults with injury to body and goods from the persecutors, not to mention what the thorns and afflictions of their own flesh do. This is rightly called a Word that belongs to the cross. For whoever will hold it must bear and overcome cross and misfortune with patience. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

That the words of the Savior were for the most part hidden is plain to us. For a great multitude stood about Him, gathered from all Judea, to whom He spoke, and in parables. But since they were unworthy to understand the mysteries of heaven, His words were obscure to them. Neither had they the will to believe in Christ. Moreover, they blasphemously opposed His teaching. And for this reason they also began to denounce those that followed Him, impiously declaring: “He has a devil, and is mad: why do you listen to Him?” Accordingly, it was not given to them, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to us who are ready to believe. For he has given us to understand a parable, and the interpretation. (St. Cyril) ❧❧❧

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For *Sexagesima*. 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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Good ground brings forth fruit in patience. The good that we do amounts to nothing if we do not also patiently endure the evils done by our neighbors. For the higher that anyone advances, the more he finds things in this world that are hard to bear. When our love for this present age declines, the adversity caused by this age increases. This is the reason we see so many people doing good and yet laboring under a heavy burden of distress. They are fleeing earthly desires, and yet heavy afflictions are wearing them out. But according to the word of the Lord they are bringing forth fruit in patience, because when they humbly accept their afflictions they afterwards, are accepted into heavenly rest. (St. Gregory the Great) ❧❧❧

We need to be on guard against the weaknesses and infirmities in our nature, against succumbing to false security. So we need to petition God for his Holy Spirit, to remove such obstacles, to sweep out those and thistles from our hearts, so that we can continue to hear and retain God's Word, and bring forth the good fruit, by faith in Christ. Through this faith we not only live in obedience to God but also become God's children and heirs. So the main reason this seed of the Lord's Word is sown (that is, the main reason the gospel is proclaimed in all the world) is to create and work fruit in us which endures into eternity. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

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