

The Faith of Our Fathers

“The world which is ensnared in the net of sin—how is it saved? By punishment and threats, or by kindness and mercy? Surely, by mercy! For God is merciful and forbearing. He overlooks transgressions by forgiving so that those who had not been living righteously now live in His righteousness. So then why do you murmur, O Pharisee, that Christ Jesus eats with sinners or that His Body (the Church) receives and welcomes them?” (St. Cyril of Alexandria) ❧❧❧

Today’s Gospel portrays the tender, ardent heart of Our Lord Jesus. In a winsome and kindly manner, you hear the trouble, worry, toil, and concern that He has in setting right the wayward sinner. He strikes a responsive chord in our hearts when He reminds us of how we feel at the loss of something dear to us. Thus, His heart is greatly troubled and filled with compassion and concern when He sees the devil overcoming you with sin and deception. Moreover, there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine who need no repentance. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

In today’s Gospel, sinners and tax collectors draw near Our Redeemer, and He receives them, not only to converse with them but even to eat with them. When the Pharisees see this they are scornful of Him. You should conclude from this that true righteousness has compassion, but false righteousness scorn—though even the righteous are apt to be justly indignant with sinners. But what is done as a result of pride is one thing, and what is done out of zeal for discipline is another. (St. Gregory) ❧❧❧

Christ carries you on His Body. He took your sins upon Himself, the Church seeks you out, and the Father receives you. Our Savior rescues, the Church intercedes, and the Creator reconciles. In this way, the weary sheep is recalled by the shepherd, the coin which was lost is found, and the son retraces his steps to his father and returns, guilty of error, but wholly penitent. So let us rejoice that the sheep which had strayed in Adam is lifted on Christ. The shoulders of Christ are the arms of the Cross. There, I laid down my sins. There, I

For *Trinity 3*. 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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