

COMMENTARY ON THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

To-day's liturgy proclaims God's mercy to men. Like our Lord, who came "not to call the just, but sinners," the Holy Ghost who carries on Christ's work in our hearts comes to set up the kingdom of God in sinful souls. This is the Church's teaching in breviary and missal today. The breviary lessons are concerned with the history of Saul. After Heli's death the Israelites obeyed Samuel like a new Moses but when he grew old they asked for a king. There was living, at that time, in the tribe of Benjamin a man named Cis, who had a son called Saul. No boy in Israel was his equal in appearance and he was a head taller than all the others. His father's asses having gone astray, Saul went to look for them and coming to Ramatha, where Samuel lived, he said to himself: "The man of God will tell me where I shall find them." No sooner was he in Samuel's presence, than God told the latter that this was the man whom He had chosen to reign over His people. Samuel told Saul that the asses he had lost three days ago had been found. The next day Samuel took a horn of oil and having poured it on Saul's head, kissed him and said: "Behold the Lord hath anointed thee to be prince over His inheritance: and thou shalt deliver His people out of the hands of their enemies that are round about them" (*Matins, First Nocturn*).

St. Gregory says that Saul, who was sent by his father "to look for the lost asses, is a type of our Lord whom His Father sent to seek lost souls." Saul was anointed to deliver his people from the enemies who were attacking them, but Christ the Anointed in the highest sense, came to deliver us from the devils who seek our destruction. This enables us to understand the choice of the Epistle and Gospel of this Mass. The Gospel shows us the lost sheep and the Good Shepherd seeking it, placing it on His shoulders and returning with it to the fold. It is one of the oldest representations in Christian iconography found in the catacombs. The Epistle explains the dangers to which men, signified by the lost sheep, are exposed. "Watch because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist ye, strong in faith" (*Epistle*). The admonition to watch is accompanied by the assurance, several times repeated, that God has constituted Himself our protector and that if we call upon Him He will not fail us (*Introit, Collect, Epistle, Gradual, Offertory*). Remembering Saul's fate who, at first little in his own eyes, afterwards became puffed up with pride on account of his royal dignity, disobeyed God and would not acknowledge his faults, let us rely rather on our wretchedness and nothingness in asking God "without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy" to complete in us the work of His mercy that we may use temporal goods in such manner without losing those which are eternal (*Collect*).

Commentary From St. Andrew Daily Missal, 1952 ed.

Commemorative Proper Prayers of the Mass Third Sunday After Pentecost Provided Courtesy of Una Voce Orange County



He seeks until He has found it again.

COLLECT

Protector in te sperantium, Deus, sine quo nihil est validum, nihil sanctum: multiplica super nos misericordiam tuam, ut, te rectore, te duce, sic transeamus per bona temporalia, ut non amittamus aeterna. Per Dominum.

O God, the protector of all that trust in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, multiply Thy mercies upon us; that having Thee for our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not those which are eternal. Through our Lord.

SECRET

Réspice, Dómine, múnere supplicantis Ecclesiæ: et salutí credentium perpétua sanctificatióne suménda concéde. Per Dóminum.

Favourably regard, O Lord, the offerings of Thy suppliant church, and grant to Thy faithful receiving them, that they may avail unto salvation. Through our Lord.

POSTCOMMUNION

Sancta tua nos, Dómine, sumpta vivificent: et misericordiæ sempitérnæ præparent expiátos. Per Dóminum.

May the sacrament which we have received quicken us, O Lord: and atoning for our sins, prepare us to share everlastingly in Thy mercies. Through our Lord.