

Mardi Gras Prayer

Opening Music: When the Saints Go Marching In

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

All: (after brief pause)

Come, let us enjoy the good things that exist,
and make use of the creation to the full as in youth.
Let us take our fill of costly wine and perfumes,
and let no flower of spring pass us by.
Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they wither.
Let none of us fail to share in our revelry;
because this is our portion, and this our lot. (Wisdom 2:6-9)

Reader 1: Carnival celebrates the unity of our human race as mortal creatures, who come into this world and depart from it without our consent, who must eat, drink, defecate, belch, and break wind in order to live, and procreate if our species is to survive. Our feelings about this are ambiguous. To us as individuals, it is a cause for rejoicing that we are not alone, that all of us, irrespective of age or sex or rank or talent, are in the same boat.

–W. H. Auden

All: This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

Reader 2: Who is this that has said:

The house of God is a House of Sorrow,
We must walk in black and go sadly, with longdrawn faces,
We must go between empty walls, quavering lowly, whispering faintly,
Among a few flickering scattered lights?
They would put upon God their own sorrow, the grief they should feel
For their sins and faults as they go about their daily occasions.
Yet they walk in the street proudnecked,
 like thoroughbreds ready for races,
Adorning themselves, and busy in the market, the forum
And all other secular meetings,
Thinking good of themselves, ready for any festivity,
Doing themselves very well.
Let us mourn in a private chamber,
 learning the way of penitence,
And then let us learn the joyful communion of saints.

– T.S. Eliot, “Choruses from the Rock”

Brief Pause for Reflection

Individual Intentions

Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer



All: O Lord, refresh our sensibilities. Give us this day our daily taste. Restore to us soups that spoons will not sink in, and sauces which are never the same twice. Raise up among us stews with more gravy than we have bread to blot it with, and casseroles that put starch and substance in our limp modernity. Take away our fear of fat, and make us glad of the oil which ran upon Aaron's beard. Give us pasta with a hundred fillings, and rice in a thousand variations. Above all, give us grace to live as true folk—to fast till we come to a refreshed sense of what we have and then to dine gratefully on all that comes to hand. Drive far from us, O Most Bountiful, all creatures of air and darkness; cast out the demons that possess us; deliver us from the fear of calories and the bondage of nutrition; and set us free once more in our own land, where we shall serve thee as thou hast blessed us—with the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.

--Robert Farrar Capon, *The Supper of the Lamb*

St. John Baptist de La Salle,
Pray for us.
Live Jesus, in our hearts.
Forever!



Dinner Music:

"Carnival" Overture, Antonin Dvorak
Allons a Manger, Li'l Bryan and the Zydeco Travelers
Bacchanale from *Sampson and Delilah*, Camille Saint-Saens
Carnival Time, Al Johnson
Variation of Aegina and Bacchanalia, *Spartacus*, Aram Khachaturian
Mardi Gras Mambo, The Meters

(Arranged by Brother Paul Fitzgerald with much help from *A Lent Sourcebook: The Forty Days*, edited by J. Robert Baker, Evelyn Kaehler, Peter Mazar)