

# Recipes for the Soul ...

## Lemon Jelly (or Pudding)

*This is a wonderful dessert or midafternoon palate refresher in the summer months. It comes from Sicily and must be made with fresh lemons to get the right tartness. I recently made it for some friends and they loved it. It is the perfect ending for a summer dinner. There are lots of variations of this traditional pudding, many of them with eggs which makes more of a custard. This is lighter and just - lemony. Prepare this the day before you want to serve it.*

## Lemon Jelly (Budino di limone) (for 6 people)

- 230 g ultrafine sugar (1 c. and 3 Tbls.)
- 3 large yellow lemons not too ripe, with rough peel
- 70 g of corn starch (1/2 c.)
- 1 liter of filtered water (4 fl c.)

Finely grate or zest the lemon peel from the three lemons (a microplane may be too fine), but make sure not to take the white pith. (The skin is zesty and delicious but the pith is bitter and can make the flavor of the jelly quite unpleasant.) Mix with the ultrafine sugar and let the mixture rest for 30 minutes. Then pour the water over the mixture and let it rest again for 2 hours. (I stir it once or twice during this second infusion period).

In the meantime, juice the lemons. Mix the starch with a portion of the lemon juice and add it to the flavored water and stir. Then add the remaining lemon juice. Bring the mixture to a boil then lower the heat. Mix for at least 5 minutes until the pudding begins to thicken. Pour the mixture into six ramekins and let stand overnight in the fridge.

Unmold and serve fresh on a small plate. I garnish mine with a small curl of lemon zest. I don't butter my ramekins and the jelly slides out. If they stick, run a small knife around rim of each one.

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# CROSS LINKS

CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS, UNITED STATES PROVINCE OF PRIESTS AND BROTHERS  
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May 2017

Dear friends of Holy Cross,

The season of Easter is drawing to a close with our celebration of the Ascension and Pentecost. Too often, we miss the true import of these feasts. In the Ascension, Jesus brings his human nature back to the very center of God. The resurrected Christ - complete with the marks of his suffering in his hands, feet, and side - has returned to the right hand of his heavenly Father. Where the head has gone, the body will follow. The Ascension opens the way for us to commune with him as he sends forth the Holy Spirit to dwell in our Church and in our hearts at Pentecost. This indwelling keeps us ever close to our heaven Father and impels us to continue his saving activity in our world.

After this great feast of Pentecost is celebrated, we return to Ordinary Time. It is an unfortunate translation of the Latin, for in English, "ordinary" can have a negative sensibility to it and often means dull or nondescript. In this case, ordinary actually means ordered or numbered and refers to the weeks of the year that are outside of the special seasons like Christmas and Easter. These weeks are numbered sequentially as the 1<sup>st</sup> Week of Ordinary Time, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of Ordinary Time, etc. and we simply mean that these are the numbered weeks of the year. Though a looser translation, perhaps it would be best for us to use the phrase Normal Time.

### MAY APPEAL

All gifts from the May appeal will be for the education and formation needs of our seminarians and for our members residing at Holy Cross House. Your generosity and your faithful support affects our members at the beginning and toward the end of their formation.

In any case, normal time in the Church year should be anything but ordinary. Rather than focusing on Christ's birth, his suffering and death, or the Church's birth at Pentecost, normal time calls us to celebrate the fullness of the Christian mystery and our participation in it. Each Sunday, we celebrate our salvation in Christ's death and resurrection and are sent forth at the end of Mass to be that which we just celebrated: Christ's healing, Christ's mercy; Christ's justice and Christ's peace. This is anything but dull and nondescript.

On the Saturday after Easter this year (April 22), the family of Holy Cross celebrated the ordination of our two newest priests. **Fr. Michael Palmer, C.S.C.**, hails from Berkley, Michigan and plans to serve as an Army chaplain. He is currently assigned to Christ the King Parish in South Bend. **Fr. Ryan Pietrocarlo, C.S.C.**, is assigned to St. Adalbert's Parish in South Bend and has pondered priesthood since he was six-years-old. Both Mike and Ryan were college seminarians and have been with us for a long time. It was great to see them finally ordained.

As a dear old priest said to me on my ordination day, "Congratulations! Now get to work."

Sadly, we also have lost several members since my last letter. **Fr. James Kelly, C.S.C.**, (November 30), an Akron native, served the Congregation in many capacities. After teaching sociology at the University of Portland, he was named rector of Moreau Seminary in 1972. He later taught at King's College in Wilkes-Barre before heading to East Africa to start a bachelor's program for seminarians from various religious communities. **Fr. David Sherrer, C.S.C.**, (April 13) taught English at the University of Portland before assuming the presidency of King's College. Though a Marion, Ohio native, he returned to Portland where he spent many years as Academic Vice President. He was a gracious host and many of us enjoyed long leisurely meals on a Saturday night in his apartment. A Bostonian by birth, **Fr. Richard Segreve, C.S.C.**, (April 22) ministered his whole life in New England. He taught high school in Connecticut before becoming Assistant Provincial of the Eastern Province in 1970. Later, he moved to Stonehill College where he served as a counselor and campus minister. He was a longtime beloved member of the Stonehill community.

Please remember Holy Cross this summer if you can. Your gifts provide the means for us to care for our older men and to prepare our young men for mission. Hearts have been reached and will continue to be converted through your generosity. Your donations make our ministry possible.

# WHEN I FIRST MET BEN

When I first met Ben, he made it clear that he didn't want to see me. Painfully polite, he all but invited me to leave after just a few moments. This was not an uncommon response to me as a Holy Cross novice who visited patients one day a week at Penrose Hospital in Colorado Springs. Chaplains visited each patient daily but we paid particular attention to those who had indicated - as Ben had - that they were Catholic. But that fact alone didn't mean that they necessarily welcomed a visit from me. And Ben did not want to see me that first day or either of the successive Tuesday afternoons that I stopped by his room.

I don't know what Ben's specific diagnosis was, but at that time it was still typical for folks to have extended stays in the hospital. In his nineties, Ben was nearing death and was with us for about a month and a half. His children visited often since they themselves were retired and had the time. However, he was usually alone in the late afternoon and I would stop by his room near the end of the day.

After three weeks of polite dismissals, I didn't hope for much when I entered his room once again but he greeted me warmly and invited me to sit down. Perhaps it was the realization that the end was near, or maybe it was simply that he was ready to talk, but he said that he had hoped I would visit that day. He'd had a couple of nice chats with Sr. Marie de Sales (the regular visitor), but something made him want to talk to me.

Ben talked and talked that day. He told me about his marriage of over sixty years and of how much he still missed his wife who had passed away a few years earlier. He spoke proudly of his children and how he hoped he wasn't becoming a burden to them. He then chuckled to himself for a second and quietly said that he didn't know why he had claimed that he was a Catholic on the admission form. "Once a Catholic, always a Catholic, I suppose."

Ben hadn't been to church since he had gotten married. He and his future wife had fallen in love

in high school, but the prospect of their marriage made both families angry as he was a Catholic and she was Mormon. Still the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with neither side open to the match, Ben and his girl eloped, moved away, and never spoke of religion again. In the more than sixty years together, they lived as if God had no role in their lives. Their kids were raised without faith or church or Sunday school. They reared their children to be good and kind and virtuous, but completely without reference to Jesus or his heavenly Father.

What most amused Ben about his situation was that nearly seventy years later he signed into a hospital and declared that he was a Catholic. My first visit had startled him and caused him to really think about his faith and his life. He felt guilty about having ignored what had been such an important part of family life growing up. In the ensuing weeks, he came to a deep and abiding realization that he was a Catholic, had always been a Catholic and would die a Catholic. In its own way, his faith had sustained him through difficult periods and, though fallen away from the practice of the faith, he never stopped believing what he had learned as a child. In the weeks he had spent contemplating his life, he moved to a sense of sadness for his children who had never come to have a life of faith or understood what it meant to know the love of God. He was also saddened that faith, however differently they understood it, never became a part of his marriage.

I asked Ben if he wanted to see a priest for confession and communion, and he demurred. He had made his own bed so many years ago and was now going to let it all play out. He trusted that God would understand and that he would be merciful. The last time I spoke to Ben, he was surrounded by his children who treated me like a snake oil salesman when I entered the room. He thanked me for coming and wistfully bade me farewell. Ben died a few days later.

Even though we only spoke the once and it has been thirty years since he passed away, I pray for Ben often. As he lay dying, Ben did not seek to for-

mally reconcile himself to God and to the Church, but he hoped in the mercy of God. He was a good man, loving husband and responsible father. He had loved his faith but turned away from its practice because it was easier than confronting the issues that might arise in a mixed marriage. Inactivity from fear and confusion became habit. Over time, it just seemed too long and late to try to correct the mistakes of youth. I pray that God's mercy will shine on this dear man and that he will spend eternity at the banquet feast of heaven.



*"Are we envious because God is generous?"*

In my years as a priest, I have often encountered folks who struggle with the idea of God's mercy - both for themselves as well as for others. Too often, men and women doubt that God could actually forgive them, as if their particular sin was greater than God's capacity to forgive. Folks wrestle with the very notion of mercy and find it hard to believe that they have been washed clean in the sacrament of Reconciliation. They never plunge into the deep well of strength that allows them to rebuild their lives in gratitude and hope. They remain mired in guilt and shame clinging so tightly to their sin that there is no crack for the Holy Spirit to seep in and relieve them of their burden. In some sense, their sin becomes self-definitional and they become their sin rather than transforming into a radiant child of God healed by grace.

Sometimes I meet folks who are angry and resentful about someone else who might possibly receive God's mercy and forgiveness. These people get angry about the parable of the vineyard workers in which the laborers who work for an hour get the same wages as those who work all day. "It's not fair," they declare on the steps of church after Sunday Mass. Some struggle with those who have committed gross atrocities not being held accountable for their actions. How could Hitler or Stalin or Jeffrey

Dahmer or an abortion doctor ever enjoy the comforts of heaven? Others take it more personally, as if they themselves were the ones who had entered the vineyard at dawn. Having struggled all their lives to live the good life, why should some "Johnny Come Lately" get the same reward when they converted on their death bed? These folks identify mightily with the older brother in the story of the Prodigal Son. "Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends." The anger can be palpable and the righteousness thick enough to cut with a knife when faced with a shepherd God who leaves the ninety-nine to go in search of the one lamb who was lost.



God's ways are not easily our ways. He seeks us across the length of our days and is never happier than when one of us - his beloved children - turn back to him. He cares less about our sins and more about our repentance and return to his embrace. Heaven rejoices when a lost soul begins to cry out for him once again. The Prodigal Father wasn't keeping a ledger of accounts of the sins committed by his younger son. Rather, he stood on the brow of the hill each day gazing into the distance, hoping and praying that he might catch sight of the boy's return.

As Christians, we must strive to let go of the temptation to keep score against our brothers and sisters on the road to salvation. Being good is not a hardship and attending Church is not a cost for those who believe. That others come late to the feast should not be toted up against our personal sacrifices as if we have suffered in some way for living our faith by keeping the commandments and loving God. When others turn back to God at the end of their days we must celebrate their return to the Body of Christ. I pray for Ben because I desire his eternal happiness. I also ask him to pray for me, that I might join him one day at the table of plenty.