

7. Today begins that period of the year called SEPTUAGESIMA, the pre-Lenten period of time during which we, having set aside the Christmas season, begin to turn our minds toward the fulfillment of our purpose in life. Many are they who think that now is the time for additional prayers and extra devotions. Saint Benedict himself speaks of that something over and above our usual observance. The extra prayers we do not discourage, rather we recommend them, but Lent is NOT extra prayers, and Septuagesima is the period of time set aside for the study of what Lent REALLY is. We hear tell of more penance, greater acts of reparation, the use of mortification; but if the interior disposition is not in accord with what we do, it is all for nothing. Therefore, important as the external acts are, the internal condition of our souls is far more important. During Septuagesima we must take a realistic look at our spiritual commitment, and how determined we really are in that commitment.

Never before has Mankind needed to review his PURPOSE, as much as he needs to today. Our Church, our world, our culture, and all else around us have fallen into complete shambles. And now, our physical, material, and financial safety is being threatened in ways we, especially in America, have never before known. As we read this paragraph, we hear warnings of every description, and fear lest we fail to make it home. Without a firm spiritual foundation - WITHOUT FAITH - we, every one of us, are doomed to despair. Without FAITH our lives are meaningless, and our course is tossed about without direction on the stormy waters of our world, our devastated world. Without FAITH, we cannot speak of love, trust, purpose, prayer, or anything else that has any meaning.

Septuagesima is important in any event, but at this very moment it is of the utmost importance. We speak of "preparedness," but what is most important in our getting ready for whatever is in store for us? We must prepare the normal things that future days may demand for our safety and security, but the most important preparedness is SPIRITUAL PREPAREDNESS, and spiritual preparedness is best accomplished by a solid reinforcement of our COMMITMENT to following in the Footsteps of our Blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

2. Let us all continue to be reminded of the special lamp that burns perpetually in our Abbey Church - the lamp asking for protection against war and terrorism. Let us all pray and offer special sacrifice, and let us all place our trust in a God Who sees the sincerity that fills our hearts and minds and souls.
3. There will be Catechism class after the 10:00 AM Mass today.
4. Please pray for all the Sick and Shut-Ins of our Chapels, especially remembering Manny Gomez. Pray, also, for all the sick and needy, the suffering and hungry, the oppressed of the world. Pray for all the children of the world. Pray earnestly for all Priests! PRAY FOR THE PRIESTHOOD! Pray for all sinners! Pray for all who have called upon us for prayer and help. Let us pray for each other, especially during these most troubled times. Let us pray for our leaders, both church and state, that they may be guided along the road to peace and sanity.
5. Do not forget the SEPTUAGESIMA READINGS (which are listed on the opposite side of this page). Do not fail to take time out for these readings, and do not fail to make serious use of your Home Altars.
6. So much of what is going on today is beyond reasonable comprehension, and it makes one wonder where it is all coming from. Reports are coming in from every direction, and confusion reigns supreme - enough to disturb the serenity of strong people. Our patience and our faith is being sorely tried, as is our feeling of security. It does appear that the devil is on his last fling, and is out to destroy everything left in which we can place our trust. Let us not forget that we still have OUR FAITH IN ALMIGHTY GOD, and we still have PRAYER. And let us remember that we are God's people - that He IS looking out for us. We must remember also that which God asks from us in return: PRAYER, PENANCE, MORTIFICATION, SACRIFICE, AND INTERIOR DISCIPLINE!
7. Tomorrow, February 17, 2003, is the Roman Feast of the Flight into Egypt. Let us ask St. Joseph for a share of his tremendous faith and trust in the providence and protection of Almighty God, as he, strengthened by his unshakeable faith, roused from sleep the Blessed Virgin and the Divine Child and set off with Them into the vast unknown, following blindly the unfathomable Will of God as manifested to him by the Angel. Let us ask the Mother of God for a share of her tremendous faith and trust as she also unhesitatingly obeyed that same Will, as manifested to her by her husband. And let us ask the Baby Jesus for a share of His infinite humility, as He, the Creator and Lord of all creation, allowed that very creation to have its way with Him.

8. MASSES FOR THE WEEK: (Father Abbot Leonard's schedule only)

SUNDAY:	For the people of our Chapels
MONDAY:	Deceased Teresa Kucharik
TUESDAY:	Deceased Linda Birringer
WEDNESDAY:	Deceased Miriam Roy
THURSDAY:	Special intention Irene Pachthofer
FRIDAY:	Deceased Ronald Kitchen
SATURDAY:	Special intention Ann Roberts