

Fourth Sunday in Lent LAETARE SUNDAY

"In the middle of Lent comes the Sunday Laetare, also called 'Rose Sunday.'"

It is as if Holy Mother Church wants to give us a break by interrupting the solemn chant of mourning, the unaccompanied cadences and the use of the violet vestments, bursting out suddenly in the word *Laetare* (Rejoice), allowing her priests to vest in rose-colored garments, to have flowers on the altar, and an organ accompaniment for chant. It is also called 'Rose Sunday' or 'Mothering Sunday.'

The term "Mothering Sunday" seems to go back to an ancient custom. People in every city would visit the cathedral, or mother church, inspired by a reference in the Epistle read on the Fourth Sunday of Lent: 'That Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is our Mother.' And there grew up, first in England from where it spread over the continent, the idea that children who did not live at home visited their mothers that day and brought them a gift. This is, in fact, the precursor of our Mother's Day.

Expecting their visiting children, the mothers are said to have baked a special cake in which they used equal amounts of sugar or flour (two cups of each); from this came the name 'Simnel Cake,' derived from the Latin *simila*, meaning 'wheat flour.' Here are two recipes; try your floured thumb on one or both and bring them to coffee hour on Laetare Sunday.

Simnel Cake

I

3/4 cup butter	1/3 cup shredded lemon
2 cups sugar	& orange peel
6 eggs	1 cup currants
2 cups flour	Almond Paste*
1/2 tsp. Salt	

Cream the butter and sugar until smooth. Add the eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Sift the flour and salt and add to the first mixture. Dust the peel and currants with a little flour and add to the batter. Line cake tin with waxed paper and pour in half the dough. Add a layer of almond paste and remaining dough. Bake at 350°, for one hour. Ice with a thin white icing, flavored with a few drops of almond extract.

II

3/4 cup sweet, unsalted butter	1/2 tsp. Salt
2 cups sugar	1/3 cup candied lemon & orange
4 eggs	1 cup currants
2 cups flour	Almond Paste*

Combine ingredients as in Cake I. Bake at 300°, for over an hour. Insert a toothpick in the center for doneness. Do not invert until cold. Top with your favorite thin white icing, or powdered sugar, or sprinkle with rum or brandy.

*ALMOND PASTE

Place in blender container 1/2 cup orange juice, 1 cup blanched almonds, 1 cup sugar. Blend until nuts are fine. Then 1 cup more almonds. Blend again until nuts are fine. Add 1 tablespoon of rum or brandy. The almond paste can be stored indefinitely, covered in the refrigerator. Tastes good on toast or English muffins.