

The Church's Year

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Introduction

Explanation of the Epistles and Gospels for Sundays and Holy Days, to which are added instructions on Catholic Faith and Morals.

SHORT INSTRUCTIONS ON THE MANNER OF USING THIS BOOK

My dear Catholic, before you commence to read these instructions:

- I. Place yourself in the presence of God.
- II. Humble yourself before Him, sincerely imploring His forgiveness.
- III. Pray that you may be enlightened, that you may love Him.
Recommend yourself to the Blessed Virgin and to the saints.

Then, step by step, read the instructions carefully. After each point reflect upon the truth you have just read, asking yourself:

1. **What must I believe?** That which I have just read. Then make an act of faith, saying: “O Lord! I will believe this truth, help my faith, increase my faith!”
2. **What must I now do?** I must correct the faults opposed to this truth.
3. **What have I done heretofore?** Unhappily, O God, I have acted in contradiction to this truth; how differently, O Jesus, from Thee and from Thy saints!
4. **What shall I now do?** Here make a firm resolution to put these truths into immediate practice, to contend against and overcome the faults opposed to them, and to acquire new virtue.

Then finish the reading with acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition; repeat the same each time you read in this or in any book of devotion, and you will soon perceive that great benefit for your soul is derived from such exercises.

EXPLANATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE CHURCH YEAR

What is understood by the Church Year?

By the Church Year is understood the succession of those holy days and seasons, reoccurring with each succeeding year, which the Church has appointed to be celebrated, that the faithful may be reminded of the divine graces and mysteries, may praise God, and occupy themselves, at such times, with pious, devotional exercises in His honor, and for their own sanctification.

When does the Church Year begin, and when terminate?

It begins with the First Sunday of Advent and concludes with the last Sunday after Pentecost.

How is the Church Year divided?

Into Sundays, weekdays, festivals, holy days, and fast days.

What is Sunday?

Sunday is the first day of the week, sanctified in an especial manner by God Himself; therefore, it should be devoted exclusively to His service. The Apostles called it the "Lord's Day."

Why should Sunday be devoted exclusively to God?

Because it is but proper that man, who is created for the service of God only, should reserve at least one out of the seven days of the week for that service, and for the salvation of his own soul; again, in the beginning, God ordered that on the seventh day or Saturday, on which He rested after finishing the work of creation (Ex. 20:11), man should also rest (Ex. 20:8-10), abstain from all worldly employment, and attend only to the worship of God. This was the Sabbath, or day of rest, of the Jews which they were required to keep holy (Lev. 23:3).

But the Catholic Church, authorized by Christ, inspired by the Holy Ghost, and directed by the Apostles, has made Sunday, the first day of the week, the day of rest for Christians. The holy martyr Justin (+ 167 A.D.) makes mention of this fact. Sunday was designated as the day of rest for the Christians partly to distinguish them from the Jews, as well as for the following reasons: On this day

God commenced the creation of the world, so too on this day He crowned the glorious work of our Redemption by Christ's Resurrection; on this day, as Bellarmine says, Christ was born, was circumcised, and was baptized; and on this day the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles.

Why is this day called Sunday?

Because on this day, as St. Ambrose says, Christ, the sun of justice, having driven away the darkness of hell, shone forth, as the rising sun, in the glory of the Resurrection (Mal. 4:2).

How should the Catholic keep Sunday holy, and how does he profane it?

Sunday is kept holy by abstaining from all servile work performed for wages or gain, or not commanded by necessity; by passing the day in works of piety; in hearing Mass devoutly, listening to the word of God in church and spending the day at home in a quiet manner pleasing to God. If justly prevented from being present at church on Sundays and holy days of obligation, we should unite, in spirit, with the priest and the faithful assembled there, and pray fervently; during the rest of the day we should read books of devotion, and endeavour to perform some work of charity. Sunday is profaned by being spent either in idleness, or in unnecessary servile work, or in that which is still worse, debauchery, gambling, dancing, and other sinful actions. It would be better, that is, less sinful, as St. Augustine says, to till the field on such days, than to spend them in frivolous, dangerous, and sinful pleasures. But it is not forbidden, after having properly attended divine service, to participate on Sundays and holy days in honourable, decorous entertainment of the mind and heart.

What ought a Catholic to think of dances and fairs on Sundays and holy days of obligation?

The amusement of dancing on such days cannot possibly be pleasing to God. Dancing in general is an occasion of sin. The council of Baltimore protests against round dances especially, because they are highly indecent. Buying and selling without great necessity, as also holding fairs on Sundays and holy days are likewise sinful. God never ordained His days of rest for the gratification of avarice. What rewards are offered for keeping Sunday sacred, and what punishment is incurred by its desecration?

The Old Law promised blessings, spiritual and temporal to those who kept holy the Sabbath day (Lev. 26), and threatened all evils and misfortunes to those who desecrated it. Thus, to show how much He condemned its profanation, God caused a man to be stoned to death for gathering wood upon that day (Num. 15:32). The Catholic Church from her very beginning, and in several councils (Council. Elv. A.D. 313, Paris 829) has enjoined the keeping holy of Sundays and holy days, and experience proves in our days especially, that, as the consequence of the constantly increasing profanation of Sundays and holy days, immorality and poverty are growing greater; a manifest sign that God never blesses those who refuse to devote a few days of the year to His honor and service.

PRAYER FOR ALL SUNDAYS O God, who hast appointed Sunday, that we should serve Thee and participate in Thy grace, grant that always on this day our faith may be renewed, and our hearts incited to the praise and adoration of Thy Majesty; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

What are festivals?

Festivals are days set apart by the Catholic Church, to celebrate with due solemnity the mysteries of religion, or the memory of the saints. Hence they are of two kinds, the festivals of our Lord, and the festivals of the saints.

Has the Church the right to institute festivals and fast days?

To deny her such right would be to place her below the Jewish Synagogue, which in acknowledgment of benefits received, established many festivals, such as the Feast of Lots (Esther 9:26); the festival in honor of Judith's victory over Holofernes (Jud. 16:31); the feast of the Dedication of the Temple (II Mac. 4:56), which our Lord Himself celebrated with them (Jn. 10:22). Should not the Catholic Church, therefore, celebrate with equal solemnity the far greater blessings she has received from God? God Himself, through Moses, commanded the Jews to celebrate and, as it were, to immortalize by the Pasch their redemption from Egyptian captivity; the reception of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, by the festival of Pentecost; their forty years' journey through the desert, and their living in tents, by the feast of the Tabernacles. How unjustly then would the Church conduct herself, if she would not commemorate, as the Old Law did, by the institution of certain festivals in honor of God and His saints, those graces of which He has made her partaker, through Christ and His saints, since our Lord gave to the Apostles and to the bishops, their successors, the power to bind and to loose, that is, to make ordinances and, as circumstances may require, changes for

the salvation of the people (Mt. 18:18)! These festivals are instituted to assist the faithful in working out their salvation. And from this very right of the Church to institute festivals, follows her right to change or abolish them at her discretion, whenever her object of directing them to the honor of God is no longer reached, and the faithful in this case would be as much bound to obey her, as when she established them, for: Who hears not the Church, says Christ, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican (Mt. 18:17).

How are holy days and festivals to be observed?

They are to be observed like Sunday. Besides we should endeavour to understand well the mysteries and blessings of God and the lives and labours of the saints on whose account the festivals have been instituted. This we can do by hearing Mass and attending catechetical instruction, or by reading devotional books at home, in order to induce ourselves to love and praise God and to imitate the saints, which is the object the Church has in view in instituting festivals. But, unfortunately, as this object of the Church is responded to by few, and as, on the contrary, the holy days are spent very differently from what the Church intended, she has done well in abolishing certain festivals, or transferring them to Sunday, that they may be at least better regarded, and no offence offered to God by their profanation.

What are fast days?

Fast days are those days on which the Church commands us to mortify the body by abstaining from flesh-meat, or by taking but one full meal in the day. Those days on which besides abstinence from meat, but one full meal is allowed, are called Fast Days of Obligation; those days on which it is only required to abstain from flesh-meat, are called Days of Abstinence.

Can the Church institute fast days?

She can, because the Church of Christ, as mother of the faithful, has the power to make all useful and necessary regulations for the salvation of their souls. In doing so she only follows the example of our Lord, her Head, for He fasted, and of the Apostles, who, even in their day, ordered the Christians to abstain from blood and things strangled (Acts. 15:29), in order not to prevent the conversion of the Jews, who, on account of the Old Law, abhorred the blood and meat of strangled animals. This prohibition was removed when this danger no longer existed. "Fasting is no new invention, as many imagine," writes the Father of the Church,

Basil the Great, “it is a precious treasure, which our forefathers preserved long before our days, and have handed down to us.”

Why has the Church instituted fast days, and for what purpose?

The Catholic Church, from the very beginning, has looked upon external fasting only as a means of penance. Her object in instituting fast days, therefore, was and is that by fasting the faithful should mortify their flesh and their evil desires, seek to pacify God, render satisfaction for their sins, practice obedience to the Church, their mother, and by practicing these virtues become more zealous and fervent in the service of God. Innumerable texts of Scripture, as well as experience prove that fasting aids to this end. The Fathers of the Church praise very highly the usefulness of fasting, and our Lord predicted that the Church, His spouse, would fast, when He, her Bridegroom, should be taken from her (Mt. 9:15).

What are we to think of those heretics and Catholics who contemn the command of the Church?

Those Catholics who contemn this command, contemn their mother, the Church, and Christ her founder, her head, who fasted; they give scandal to the faithful children of the Church, and do themselves great harm, because they become slaves of the flesh, subjecting their souls to the evil desires of the body and thus fall into many sins. They prove moreover, that they have departed from the spirit of the early Christians who fasted with great strictness; that they are too cowardly to overcome themselves, and offer God the sacrifice of obedience to His Church. The heretics have the Bible against them, if they assert that the command of the Church to fast is useless and unnecessary (Acts 13:2-3): that Bible which they so often quote, as well as all Christian antiquity, experience and reason. One of the Fathers of the Church, St. Basil, writes: “Honor ever the ancient practice of fasting, for it is as old as the creation of man. We must fast if we would return to paradise from which gluttony expelled us.” Every rational, reflecting person must acknowledge, as experience teaches, that bodily health, and unimpaired mind are best preserved and improved by temperance and abstinence, especially from flesh-meat. It was by continual fasting that many of the fathers of the desert preserved vigorous health, often living beyond the usual limit of man’s age, sometimes for more than a century, even in tropical countries, where a lifetime is generally shorter than in colder climates. St. Paul, the first hermit, lived one hundred and thirteen years; St. Anthony one hundred and five; St. Arsenius one hundred and twenty; St. John, the silent, one hundred and four; St. Theodesius,

abbot, one hundred and five. The Catholic Church here proves herself a good mother to us, for in this command she regards not only the spiritual, but also the corporal welfare of her children. The words of our Lord: “Not that which goeth into the mouth, defileth a man: but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man” (Mr. 15:11), was meant for the Pharisees who judged certain kinds of food prohibited by law, or that had been touched by unclean hands, to be unclean. Had He intended it to be understood in the sense the contemners of fasting assert, He would have declared intoxication by drinking, or even the taking of poison, to be permitted; certainly, food being the gift of God and therefore good, does not make man a sinner, but disobedience to the command and gluttony make him such.

Which are the most important fast days, and days of abstinence?

All the weekdays of Lent; the Fridays in Advent; the Ember days for the four seasons of the year; and the Vigils of All-Saints, Christmas, Whitsunday, and the Assumption. If the Feast, however, occurs on Monday, the vigil is kept on the Saturday before; as Sunday is never a fast day.’

The days of abstinence are, all Fridays in the year, excepting Christmas day when it falls on Friday; and all fast days of obligation, excepting those on which the use of flesh-meat is expressly allowed by the proper authorities. Soldiers and sailors in the service of the United States of America, however, are exempted from the rule of abstinence throughout the year; Ash Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday in Holy Week, the Vigils of the Assumption and Christmas excepted.

A day of abstinence is that on which it is not allowed to eat flesh-meat.

What are the Ember days and why are they instituted?

The Ember days are the first Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of each of the four seasons of the year, set apart as fast days by the Catholic Church. According to the testimony of Pope Leo, they originated in the time of the Apostles, who were inspired by the Holy Ghost to dedicate each season of the year to God by a few days of penance, or, as it were, to pay three days interest, every three months, on the graces received from God. The Church has also commanded us to fast at the beginning of each of the four seasons of the year, because it is at this time that she ordains the priests and other servants of the Church, which even the Apostles did with much prayer and fasting. Thus she desires that during the Ember days Christians should fervently ask of God by prayer, by fasting and other good works,

worthy pastors and servants, on whom depends the welfare of the whole Christian flock; she desires that in the spring Ember days we should ask God's blessing for the fertility of the earth; in summer for the preservation of the fruits of the field, in autumn when the harvest is ripe, and in winter when it is sheltered, that we should offer to God by fasting and prayer a sacrifice of thanks, petitioning Him to assist us, that we may not use His gifts for our soul's detriment, but that we refer all praise to Him, the fountain of all good, and assist our neighbour according to our means.

What are vigils?

They are the eves of certain festivals, which the Church has ordered to be observed as fast days. The early Christians prepared themselves by fasting, praying and watching, as signified by the Latin word "*Vigili*," for the coming festival. Thus to this day in the Vigil Mass the priest does not say: "*Ite Missa est*" - Go ye, Mass is over," but, "*Benedicamus Domino*"; "Let us praise the Lord," because in olden times when Mass was celebrated at night, the Christians were exhorted to continue praising God in Church until the dawn of the festival. This nightwatch the Church has now abolished, partly on account of the declining zeal of the Christians, and partly on account of the fear of its being abused; the fast, however, has been retained to honor God and His saints, to obtain their intercession, and to mortify the flesh according to their example. "By fasting on the eves of festivals," says St. Bernard, "*We learn that we can enter heaven only through many sufferings.*"

Why does the Church forbid the use of flesh-meat on Fridays and Saturdays?

"The Church," says Pope Innocent, "forbids the use of flesh-meat on Fridays because our Lord died on that day, and on Saturdays because on that day He rested in the sepulchre, and also that we may be better prepared by this abstinence for Sunday." In many dioceses the use of flesh-meat is allowed on Saturdays, and the permission is so marked in the calendar, and every year announced to the people; for this dispensation the faithful should perform another good work and fast the more conscientiously on Fridays.

Who is bound to fast, and who not?

All Christians over seven years of age, unless for some reason excused, are required under pain of mortal sin, to abstain from flesh-meat on all days of fasting and abstinence; all those who are over twenty-one years of age are allowed to take but one full meal a day. A severe illness or a dispensation obtained for valid

reasons, excuses from abstinence on Fridays: those are dispensed from fasting on one meal, who cannot fulfill the command without great inconvenience, such as: those recovering from sickness, pregnant and nursing women, old and infirm people, those who are engaged in hard labour, undertaking severe journeys, and the poor who have no full meals; also, those who are prevented by the fast from some better work, incumbent upon their office, or dictated by Christian charity. These persons mentioned are excused from fasting, in so far that they are permitted to eat, whenever they need food, but must still abstain from the use of flesh-meat unless dispensed from the command of abstinence. They should, however, be sincerely grieved to be unable to unite with the whole Church in such meritorious work, and should endeavour to make amends by prayer, alms and other good deeds.

Who are those who sin against fasting?

First, those who deliberately and without sufficient cause do not abstain from the use of flesh-meat; secondly, those who without any of the excuses mentioned, take more than one full meal a day; thirdly, those who eat between the time of meals; fourthly, those who indulge in long, extravagant and sumptuous dinners, and excessive drinking, all of which are opposed to the spirit of penance and mortification. Lastly, when on a fast day meat and fish are used at the same meal.

Is it not allowed to eat anything in the evening, on fast days?

The early Christians were so rigorous in their penance that they contented themselves with one temperate meal on fast days, and that was generally of bread and water, taken only in the evening; but as, in the course of time, the penitential zeal declined, the Church like an indulgent mother permitted, besides the full meal at noon, a small quantity of food to be taken in the evening, about as much as would make the fourth part of a regular meal, or not to appear scrupulous, as much as would not cause too great an aggravation, or exhaust the strength necessary for the next day's labour; but *“to wish to feel no aggravation in fasting, is to wish not to fast at all.”*

With what intention should we fast?

First, with the intention of doing penance and punishing the body for the sins which we have committed by yielding to its evil desires; secondly, to satisfy God and to unite ourselves with our Lord in his forty days fast; thirdly, to obtain

strength to lead a chaste, pure life; fourthly, to give to the poor that which is saved by fasting.

NOTE. Whatever is necessary to be understood further in regard to this subject, will be found in the instructions on the forty days fast.

INSTRUCTIONS ON ADVENT

What is the meaning of Advent, and what do we understand by the term?

The word Advent signifies coming, and by it is understood the visible coming of the Son of God into this world, at two different times.

It was when the Son of God, conceived of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the immaculate Virgin Mary, was born, according to the flesh, in the fullness of time, and sanctified the world by His coming, for which the patriarchs and prophets had so longed (Gen. 49:10; Is. 64:1; Lk. 10:24).

Since Christ had not yet come, how could the Just of the Old Law be saved?

Immediately after their sin, God revealed to our first parents that His only-begotten Son would become man and redeem the world (Gen. 3:15). In the hope of this Redeemer and through His merits, all in the old covenant who participated in His merits by innocence or by penance, and who died in the grace of God, were saved, although they were excluded from heaven until the Ascension of Christ.

When will the second coming of Christ take place?

At the end of the world when Christ will come, with great power and majesty, to judge both the living and the dead.

What is Advent, and why has the Church instituted it?

Advent is that solemn time, immediately preceding Christmas, instituted by the Church in order that we should, in the first place, meditate on the Incarnation of Christ, the love, patience and humility which He has shown us, and prove our gratitude to Him, because He came from the bosom of His heavenly Father into this valley of tears, to redeem us; secondly, that we may prepare ourselves by sincere repentance, fasting, prayer, alms-deeds, and other works pleasing to God,

for the coming of Christ and His birth in our hearts, and thus participate in the graces which He has obtained for us; finally, that He may be merciful to us, when He shall come again as judge of the world. *“Watch ye, for ye know not at what hour your Lord will come”* (Mt. 5:42). *“Wherefore be ye also ready; because at what hour you know not, the Son of man will come”* (Mt. 24:44).

How was Advent formerly observed?

Very differently from now. It then commenced with the Feast of St. Martin, and was observed by the faithful like the Forty Days' Fast, with strict penance and devotional exercises, as even now most of the religious communities do to the present day. The Church has forbidden all turbulent amusements, weddings, dancing and concerts, during Advent. Pope Sylverius ordered that those who seldom receive Holy Communion should, at least, do so on every Sunday in Advent.

How should this solemn time be spent by Christians?

They should recall, during these four weeks, the four thousand years in which the just under the Old Law expected and desired the promised Redeemer, think of those days of darkness in which nearly all nations were blinded by Satan and drawn into the most horrible crimes, then consider their own sins and evil deeds and purify their souls from them by a worthy reception of the Sacraments, so that our Lord may come with His grace to dwell in their hearts and be merciful to them in life and in death. Further, to awaken in the faithful the feelings of repentance so necessary for the reception of the Saviour in their hearts, the Church orders that besides the observance of certain fast days, the altar shall be draped in violet, that Mass shall be celebrated in violet vestments, that the organ shall be silent and no Gloria sung. Unjust to themselves, disobedient to the Church and ungrateful, indeed, to God are those Christians who spend this solemn time of grace in sinful amusements without performing any good works, with no longing for Christ's Advent into their hearts.

What are Rorate High Masses, and why are they celebrated?

They are the solemn high Masses celebrated in some countries in commemoration of the tidings brought to the Blessed Virgin by the Archangel Gabriel, announcing to her that she was to become the Mother of God; they derive their name from the words of the Introit in the Votive Mass, *Rorate coeli desuper*. They are celebrated

very early in the morning because the Blessed Virgin preceded our Lord, as the aurora precedes the rising sun.

PRAYER IN ADVENT O God, who by Thy gracious Advent hast brought joy into this world, grant us, we beseech Thee, Thy grace to prepare ourselves by sincere penance for its celebration and for the Last Judgment. Amen.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The first Sunday in Advent is the first day of the Church Year, and the beginning of the holy season of Advent. The Church commences on this day to contemplate the coming of the Redeemer, and with the

prophets to long for Him; during the entire season of Advent she unites her prayers with their sighs, in order to awaken in her children also the desire for the grace of the Redeemer; above all to move them to true penance for their sins, because these are the greatest obstacles in the path of that gracious Advent; therefore, she prays at the Introit of the day's Mass:

INTROIT To Thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul: in Thee, O my God, I put my trust; let me not be ashamed: neither let my enemies laugh at me: for none of them that wait on Thee shall be confounded. Show me, O Lord, Thy ways, and teach me Thy paths (Ps. 24). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT Raise up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy power, and come; that by Thy protection we may deserve to be rescued from the threatening dangers of our sins, and to be saved by Thy deliverance. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (Rom. 13:11-14). Brethren, knowing the time, that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep: for now, our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is past, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and strife; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

What does St. Paul teach us in this epistle?

After fully explaining the duties of a Christian life to the Romans who were converted mainly by St. Peter, he exhorts them to hesitate no longer to fulfill these

duties, and he seeks to move their hearts by this time of grace, presented them by the Christian dispensation, and by the shortness of the time of grace.

What is here meant by sleep?

The stupidity and blindness of the soul that, forgetting her God, is sunk in a lukewarm, effeminate, slothful and lustful life, which, when it is gone, leaves nothing more than a dream.

Why does St. Paul say, “salvation is nearer”?

He wishes to impress upon the Romans that they now have far greater hope of salvation than when they first became Christians, and that they should secure it by a pious life, because death, and the moment on which depended their salvation, or eternal reward, was drawing near. “What is our life,” says St. Chrysostom, “other than a course, a dangerous course to death, through death to immortality?”

What is the signification of day and night?

The night signifies the time before Christ, a night of darkness, of infidelity and of injustice; the day represents the present time, in which by the gospel Christ enlightens the whole world with the teachings of the true faith.

What are “the works of darkness”?

All sins, and especially those which are committed in the dark, to shun the eye of God and man.

What is the “armour of light”?

That faith, virtue and grace, the spiritual armour, with which we battle against our three enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, and in which armour we should walk honestly before all men. A Christian who in baptism has renounced the devil and all his pomps, must not live in vice, but must put on Christ Jesus, that is, must by the imitation of Christ’s virtues adorn his soul, as it were, with a beautiful garment. This text (verse 13) moved St. Augustine to fly from all works of uncleanness in which he had been involved, and to lead a pure life which he had before thought difficult.

ASPIRATION Grant, O Lord, that we may rise by penance from the sleep of our sins, may walk in the light of Thy grace by the performance of good works, may put on Thee and adorn our souls with the imitation of Thy virtues. Amen.

GOSPEL (Lk. 21:25-33). At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves, men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved; and then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand. And he spoke to them a similitude: See the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Why does the Church cause the gospel of the Last Judgment to be read on this day?

To move us to penance, and to induce us to prepare our souls for the coming of Christ, by placing the Last Judgment before our minds. Should not the thought of this terrible judgment, when all good and all evil will be revealed, and accordingly be rewarded or punished in the presence of the whole world-should not this thought strengthen us in virtue!

What signs will precede the Last Judgment?

The sun will be obscured, the stars will lose their light and disappear in the firmament (Is. 13:10), lightning and flames will surround the earth, and wither up everything; the powers of heaven will be moved, the elements brought to confusion; the roaring of the sea with the howling of the winds and the beating of the storms will fill man with terror and dread. Such evil and distress will come upon the world, that man will wither away for fear, not knowing whither to turn. Then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, the holy cross, the terror of the sinners who have scorned it, the consolation of the just who have loved it (Mt. 24:30).

Why will all this come to pass?

Because as the people love the creatures of God so inordinately, more than the Creator, and use them only to His dishonour, He will destroy them in this terrible manner, arming all creatures for vengeance against His enemies (Wis. 5:8-24, and showing by the manner of their destruction the evils which will fall upon all sinners. The darkness of the sun will indicate the darkness of hell; the blood-red moon, the anger and wrath of God; the disappearance and falling of the stars, will represent the fall of sinners into the abyss of hell and their disappearance from earth; and the madness of the elements, will exhibit the rage of the beasts of hell. Sinners will then vainly, and too late, repent that they have attached their hearts to things which will end so horribly, and that only increase their torments.

Why does Christ nevertheless command: “Lift up your heads, for your redemption is at hand”?

These words are spoken to the just who as long as they live on earth are like prisoners and exiles, but who at the Last Judgment will be taken body and soul into their long desired fatherland, the kingdom of heaven: into the freedom of the children of God. These will have reason to raise their heads, now bowed in mourning, and to rejoice.

How will the Last Judgment commence?

By the command of God, the angels will sound the trumpets, summoning all men from the four parts of the earth to come to judgment (I Thess. 4:15). Then the bodies of the dead will unite with their souls, and be brought to the valley of Josaphat, and there placed, the just on the right, the wicked on the left (Mt. 25:33). Then the devils as well as the angels will appear; Christ Himself will be seen coming in a cloud, in such power and majesty that the sinners will be filled with terror. They will not dare to look at Him, and will cry to the mountains to fall upon them, and to the hills to cover them (Lk. 23:30).

How will the judgment be held?

The book of conscience, upon which all men are to be judged, and which closed with this life, will be opened. All good and evil thoughts, words, deeds and motives, even the most secret, known only to God, will then be as plainly revealed

to the whole world as if they were written on each one's forehead; by these each one will be judged, and be eternally rewarded, or eternally punished.

O God! If we must then give an account of every idle word (Mt. 12:36), how can we stand in the face of so many sinful words and actions!

Why will God hold a universal public Judgment?

Although immediately after death, a special private judgment of each soul takes place, God has ordained a public and universal judgment for the following reasons: First, that it may be clearly shown to all how just has been His private judgment, and also that the body which has been the instrument of sin or of virtue may share in the soul's punishment or reward; secondly, that the justice which they could by no means obtain in this life, may be rendered before the whole world to the oppressed poor, and to persecuted innocence, and that the wicked who have abused the righteous, and yet have been considered honest and good, may be put to shame before all; thirdly, that the graces and means of salvation bestowed upon each, may be made known; fourthly, that the blessed providence of God which often permitted the righteous to suffer evil while the wicked prospered, may be vindicated, and it be shown on that day that His acts are acts of the greatest wisdom; fifthly, that the wicked may learn the goodness of God, not for their comfort or benefit, but for their greater sorrow, that they may see how He rewards even the slightest work performed for His love and honor; finally, that Christ may be exalted before the wicked on earth as before the good in heaven, and that the truth of His words may solemnly be made manifest.

ASPIRATION Just art Thou O God, and just are Thy judgments. Ah, penetrate my soul with holy fear of them, that I may be kept always in awe, and avoid sin. Would that I could say with the penitent St. Jerome: "*Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, I seem to hear the awful sound of the trumpet in my ears: 'Arise ye dead, and come to judgment.'*"

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

On this day the Church not only makes mention in the office of the priest, but also in the Mass, of the two different Advents of Christ, that by His first gracious advent may be gladdened, and by His last terrible coming at the day of judgment we may be impressed with salutary fear. With this intention she cries out at the Introit:

INTROIT People of Sion, behold the Lord shall come to save the nations; and the Lord shall make the glory of his voice to be heard in the joy of your heart (Is. 30:30). Give ear, O thou that rulest Israel: thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep (Ps. 79). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the ways of Thine only-begotten Son: that through His advent we may be worthy to serve Thee with purified minds; who livest and reignest with God the Father, in union with the Holy Ghost, God for ever and ever. Amen.

EPISTLE (Rom. 15:4-13). Brethren, what things soever were written, were written for our learning, that through patience and the comfort of the scriptures, we might have hope. Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of one mind one towards another, according to Jesus Christ: that with one mind, and with one mouth, you may glorify God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive one another, as Christ also hath received you unto the honor of God. For I say that Christ Jesus was minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. But that the Gentiles are to glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: Therefore will I confess to thee, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and will sing to thy name. And again he saith: Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again: Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and magnify him, all ye people. And again, Isaias saith: There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise up to rule the Gentiles, in him the Gentiles shall hope. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost.

What does St. Paul teach in this epistle?

The Jews and Gentiles who had been converted to the Christian faith were disputing among themselves at Rome, in regard to abstinence and the use of certain kinds of food, reproaching each other severely; the Jews boasted that the Saviour, according to promise, was born of their nation, thus claiming Him from the Gentiles, who, in their turn, reproached the Jews for their ingratitude in having crucified Him. To restore harmony St. Paul shows that each had reason, the Jews and Gentiles alike, to

praise God, to whose grace and goodness they owed all; that each had in Him a Redeemer in whom they could hope for salvation; and he warns them not to deprive themselves of that hope by contentions. By these words the Apostle also teaches that we too, have great reason to praise God, and to thank Him for calling us, whose forefathers were heathens, to the Christian faith, and to guard against losing our salvation by pride, envy, impurity, etc.

Why should we read the Scriptures?

That we may know what we are to believe, and do in order to be saved, as all Scripture inspired by God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice (1 Tim. 3:16); that we may learn from what Christ has done for us, and the saints for Christ, to be patient in our sufferings, and to be consoled and encouraged by their example. To derive this benefit from the Scriptures, the Catholic must read them by the light of that Spirit through whose assistance they came into existence, who lives and remains forever with the Church: that is, the light of the Holy Ghost must be sought, that their meaning may be read according to the sense of the Church and not be explained according to the reader's judgment. For he who reads the holy Scriptures by the light of his own private judgment, must, as experience shows, of necessity diverge from the right path, become entangled in manifold doubts, and at last, lose the faith entirely. For this reason the Catholic Church has very properly limited the reading of the Bible, not as has been falsely asserted, unconditionally forbidden it, but she allows the reading of those editions only, which are accompanied by notes and explanations that the unity of faith may not be disturbed, and that among Catholics there may not be the terrible bewilderment of the human intellect which has taken place among the different heretical sects who have even declared murder, bigamy and impurity to be permissible on the authority of the Bible. We are to consider also, that Christ never commanded the Bible to be written or read, and that not the readers but the hearers and the followers of the word of God by which is meant those who hear the word of God in sermons, and keep it, will be saved!

Further instruction in regard to the doctrine of faith on this subject will be found in the "Instruction for Easter Tuesday."

Why is God called a God of patience, of consolation, and of hope?

He is called a God of patience because He awaits our repentance, of consolation, because He gives us grace to be patient in crosses and afflictions, and so consoles us inwardly, that we become not faint-hearted; of hope, because He gives us the virtue

of hope, and because He desires to be Himself the reward we are to expect after this life.

ASPIRATION O God of patience, of consolation and of hope, fill Our hearts with peace and joy, and grant that we may become perfect in all good, and by faith, hope and charity, attain the promised salvation.

GOSPEL (Mt. 11:2-10). At that time, when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, he said to him: Art thou he that art to come, or do we look for another? And Jesus making answer, said to them: Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them: and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me. And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John, What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? a prophet? yea I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my Angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

Why was John in prison?

He was in prison, and lost his life, because he had rebuked king Herod for his adulterous marriage with his brother's wife (Mt. 14:310). Truth, as the proverb says, is certainly a very beautiful mother, but she usually bears a very ugly daughter: Hatred. St. John experienced that speaking the truth very often arouses hatred and enmity against the speaker. Let us learn from him to speak the truth always, when duty requires it, even if it brings upon us the greatest misfortunes, for, if with St. John we patiently bear persecution, with St. John we shall become martyrs for truth.

Why did St. John send his disciples to Christ?

That they should learn from Christ, who had become illustrious by His teachings and miracles, that He was really the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world, whom they should follow.

Why did Christ say to the disciples of St. John: "Go and say to John, the blind see, the lame walk, etc.?"

That they should, by His miracles, judge Him to be the Messiah because the prophets had predicted that He would work such miracles (Is. 35:5-6). "Christ," says St. Cyril,

“proved that He was the Messiah by the grandeur as well as by the number of His miracles.”

Why does Christ add: “And blessed is he who shall not be scandalized in me”?

Christ used these words in reference to those who would be scandalized by His poverty, humility and ignominious death on the cross, and who for these reasons would doubt and despise Him, and cast Him away; though “man,” as St. Gregory says, “owes all the more love to the Lord, his God, the more humiliations He has borne for him.”

What was our Lord’s object in the questions He asked concerning St. John?

His object was to remove from St. John all suspicion of failing in faith in Him; and to praise the perseverance with which, although imprisoned and threatened with death, he continued to fill his office of preacher, thus constituting him an example to all preachers, confessors and superiors, that they may never be deterred by human respect, or fear of man, or other temporal considerations, from courageously fulfilling their duties. Our Lord commended also rigorous penance, exhibited by St. John’s coarse garments and simple food, that we may learn, from his example, penance and mortification.

Why does Christ say that John was “more than a prophet”?

Because St. John was foretold by the prophet Malachias as was no other prophet; because of all the prophets he was the only one who with his own eyes saw Christ and could point Him out, and was the one to baptize Him: and because like an angel, a messenger of God, he announced the coming of the Saviour, and prepared the way for the Lord.

How did St. John prepare the way for the Saviour?

By his sermons on penance, and by his own penitential life He endeavoured to move the hearts of the Jews, that by amending their lives, they might prepare to receive the grace of the Messiah, for God will not come with His grace into our hearts if we do not prepare His way by true repentance.

ASPIRATION O Lord Jesus, by the praise Thou didst accord to Thy forerunner St. John, for his firmness and austerities, inflame our hearts with love to imitate his steadfastness and penance, that we may never do anything to please man which may

be displeasing to Thee; grant us also Thy grace that we too, like St. John, may have those who are confided to our care, instructed in the Christian doctrine.

CONSOLATION IN SUFFERING

“The God of patience and of comfort, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing” (Rom. 15:5,13).

What gives us the greatest consolation in adversities?

The strong and fervent belief that each and every thing that happens to us, comes to us for our own good from God, and that whatever evil befalls us, is by the will or permission of God. Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God (Ecclus. 11:14). If we have received good things at the hand of God (Job 2:10), saith the pious job in his affliction, “why should we not receive evil?”

We should be fully convinced that without the permission of God not a single hair of our head shall perish (Lk. 21:18), much less can any other evil be done to us by man or devil (Job 1); we should have a steadfast confidence that if we ask Him, God can and will assist us in our sufferings, if it be for our salvation. Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in my hands (Is. 49:15-16); we should hope for abundant reward in the future life, which we will merit by patience in our sufferings, for that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory (II Cor. 4:17); we should remember that all complaints and murmurs against the dispensation of God are useless, and lead only to harm and shame; Who hath resisted Him, and hath had peace? (Job 9:4) we should have a vivid remembrance of our sins, for which we have long since deserved the eternal punishments of hell - hence the well-known saying of St. Augustine: O Lord, here cut, here burn, but spare me in eternity. No other way leads to the kingdom of heaven than the way of the cross, which Christ Himself, His sorrowing mother, and all the saints had to tread. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory? (Lk. 24:26) Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:21). And we should not forget that sorrows and adversities are signs of God’s love, and manifest proofs of being His chosen ones. Whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth, and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth (Heb. 12:6. compare 7-11).

PRAYER IN SORROW O almighty, kind and merciful God! who hast said: “Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Ps. 49:15), behold relying upon Thy word, I take refuge in Thee in my trouble. Give honor to Thy name, therefore, and deliver me, if it be pleasing to Thee and beneficial for me, that all may know, Thou art our only help. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

On this Sunday again, the Church calls on us to rejoice in the Advent of the Redeemer, and at the Introit sings:

INTROIT Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men: for the Lord is nigh. Be nothing solicitous; but in everything by prayer let your requests be made known to God (Phil. 4). Lord, thou hast blessed thy land; thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob (Ps. 84). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT Incline Thine ear, O Lord, we beseech Thee, unto our prayers: and enlighten the darkness of our mind by the grace of thy visitation. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (Phil. 4:4-7). Brethren, rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh. Be nothing solicitous; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What is meant by “rejoicing in the Lord”?

By “rejoicing in the Lord” is meant rejoicing in the grace of the true faith we have received, in the hope of obtaining eternal happiness; rejoicing in the protection of the most High under which we stand; and in the persecution for justice’s sake in which Christ Himself exhorts us to rejoice, and in which the Apostle Paul gloried (II Cor. 7:4).

What else does St. Paul teach in this epistle?

He exhorts us to give all a good example by a modest and edifying life, to which we should be directed by the remembrance of God’s presence and His coming to judgment (Chrysostom. 33, in Joann.); he warns us against solicitude about temporal

affairs, advising us to cast our care on God, who will never abandon us in our needs, if we entreat Him with confidence and humility.

In what does “the Peace of God” consist?

It consists in a good conscience (Ambrose), in which St. Paul gloried and rejoiced beyond measure (II Cor. 1:12). This peace of the soul sustained all the martyrs, and consoled many others who suffered for justice’s sake. Thus St. Tibertius said to the tyrant: “We count all pain as naught, for our conscience is at peace.” There cannot be imagined a greater joy than that which proceeds from the peace of a good conscience. It must be experienced to be understood.

ASPIRATION The peace of God, that surpasseth all understanding, preserve our hearts in Christ Jesus. Amen.

COMFORT AND RELIEF IN SORROW

“Is any one troubled, let him pray” (Jas. 5:13).

There is no greater or more powerful comfort in sorrow than in humble and confiding prayer, to complain to God of our wants and cares, as did the sorrowful Anna, mother of the prophet Samuel, (I Kings 10) and the chaste Susanna when she was falsely accused of adultery and sentenced to death (Dan. 13:35). So the pious King Ezechias complained in prayer of the severe oppression with which he was threatened by Senacherib (IV Kings 19:14). So also King Josaphat made his trouble known to God only, saying: But as we know not what to do, we can only turn our eyes on Thee (11 Para. 20:12). They all received aid and comfort from God. Are you sad and in trouble? Lift up your soul with David and say: To Thee I have lifted up my eyes, who dwellest in heaven. Behold as the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters, as the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress: so are our eyes unto the Lord our God, until He shall have mercy on us (Ps. 122:1-3). Give joy to the soul of Thy servant, for to Thee, O Lord, I have lifted up my soul (Ps. 85:4).

GOSPEL (Jn. 1:19-28). At that time the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to John, to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and did not deny; and he confessed: I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he said: I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. They said therefore unto him, Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? what sayst thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias. And they that were sent were of the

Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying: I baptize with water: but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not: the same is he that shall come after me, who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Why did the Jews send messengers to St. John to ask him who he was?

Partly because of their curiosity, when they saw St. John leading such a pure, angelic and penitential life; partly, as St. Chrysostom says, out of envy, because St. John preached with such spiritual force, baptized and exhorted the people to penance, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem came to him in great numbers; partly, and principally, they were impelled by the providence of God to demand publicly of St. John, if he were the Messiah, and thus be directed to Christ that they might be compelled to acknowledge Him as the Messiah, or have no excuse for rejecting Him.

Why did the Jews ask St. John, if he were not Elias or the prophet?

The Jews falsely believed that the Redeemer was to come into this world but once, then with great glory, and that Elias or one of the old prophets would come before Him, to prepare His way, as Malachias (4:5) had prophesied of St. John; so when St. John said of himself that he was not the Messiah, they asked him, if he were not then Elias or one of the prophets. But Elias, who was taken alive from this world in a fiery chariot, will not reappear until just before the second coming of Christ.

Why did St. John say, he was not Elias or the Prophet?

Because he was not Elias, and, in reality, not a prophet in the Jewish sense of the word, but more than a prophet, because he announced that Christ had come, and pointed Him out.

Why does St. John call himself “the voice of one crying in the wilderness”?

Because in his humility, he desired to acknowledge that he was only an instrument through which the Redeemer announced to the abandoned and hopeless Jews the consolation of the Messiah, exhorting them to bear worthy fruits of penance.

How do we bear worthy fruits of penance?

We bear fruits of penance, when after our conversion, we serve God and justice with the same zeal with which we previously served the devil and iniquity; when we love God as fervently as we once loved the flesh-that is, the desires of the flesh-and the pleasures of the world; when we give our members to justice as we once gave them to malice and impurity (Rom. 6:19), when the mouth that formerly uttered improprieties, when the ears that listened to detraction or evil speech, when the eyes that looked curiously upon improper objects, now rejoice in the utterance of words pleasing to God, to hear and to see things dear to Him; when the appetite that was given to the luxury of eating and drinking, now abstains; when the hands give back what they have stolen; in a word, when we put off the old man, who was corrupted, and put on the new man, who is created in justice and holiness of truth (Eph. 4:22-24).

What was the baptism administered by St. John, and what were its effects?

The baptism administered by John was only a baptism of penance for forgiveness of sins (Lk. 3:3). The ignorant Jews not considering the greatness of their transgressions, St. John came exhorting them to acknowledge their sins, and do penance for them; that being converted, and truly contrite, they might seek their Redeemer, and thus obtain remission of their offences. We must then conclude, that St. John's baptism was only a ceremony or initiation, by which the Jews enrolled themselves as his disciples to do penance, as a preparation for the remission of sin by means of the second baptism, viz., of Jesus Christ.

What else can be learned from this gospel?

We learn from it to be always sincere, especially at the tribunal of penance, and to practice the necessary virtue of humility, by which, in reply to the questions of the Jews, St. John confessed the truth openly and without reserve, as shown by the words: The latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose, as the lowest of Christ's servants, giving us an example of humility and sincerity, which should induce us always to speak the truth, and not only not to seek honor, but to give to God all the honor shown us by man. Have you not far more reason than John, who was such a great saint, to esteem yourself but little, and to humble yourself before God and man? "My son," says Tobias (4:14), "never suffer pride to reign in thy mind, or in thy words: for from it all perdition took its beginning."

ASPIRATION O Lord, banish from my heart all envy, jealousy and pride. Grant me instead, to know myself and Thee, that by the knowledge of my nothingness, misery and vices, I may always remain unworthy in my own eyes, and that by the contemplation of Thy infinite perfections, I may seek to prize Thee above all, to love and to glorify Thee, and practice charity towards my neighbour. Amen.

EMBER WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT

EPISTLE (Is. 7:10-15). And the Lord spoke again to Achaz, saying: Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, either unto the depth of hell or unto the height above. And Achaz said: I will not ask, and I will not tempt the Lord. And he said: Hear ye, therefore, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to be grievous to men, that you are grievous to my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel. He shall eat butter and honey, that he may know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good.'

EXPLANATION In this Epistle is contained the important prophecy of the Saviour's birth from a virgin. War was declared by the kings of Israel and Syria against Achaz, king of Juda, who at their approach was overpowered with fear, and thought of seeking aid from the Assyrians instead of looking to Almighty God for help; and for this lack of confidence in God, the prophet Isaiah was sent to announce to him the destruction of both kings, and his own preservation. The prophet, wishing Achaz to prove his assertion, requested the king to demand a sign from God; but he being given to idolatry, did not wish to ask a sign from heaven, for he had more faith in the assistance of the demons and of the Assyrians. He offended God by his refusal and the prophet rebuked him, saying: The Lord himself will give you (that is, your posterity) a sign, for the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and he shall be called Emmanuel, that is-God with us. By these words Isaias desired to impress upon the king, that as surely as he should be preserved from his enemies, so surely this Emmanuel, the Son of the Virgin, would appear to redeem the world from Satan's power. Let us learn from this lesson always to trust in God, who can deliver us from all danger, and let us also be grateful to Him, who seven hundred and forty-three years before the time, permitted, for our consolation, the announcement of the coming of His Son, our Saviour.

The **gospel** (Lk. 1:26-28) of this day will be found in the second part of this book on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin.

ASPIRATION O Emmanuel, powerful, holy God! Our Saviour and our Redeemer! be with us always in life and death: for, if Thou art with us who can be against us?

COLLECT Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the approaching celebration of our redemption may bring us the necessary graces for the present life, and bestow upon us the rewards of eternal happiness. Through our Lord.

EMBER FRIDAY IN ADVENT

EPISTLE (Is. 11:1-5). And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness, and he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge according to the sight of the eyes, nor reprove according to the hearing of the ears. But he shall judge the poor with justice, and shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. And justice shall be the girdle of his loins: and faith the girdle of his reins.

EXPLANATION In this epistle the Lord announced to the Jews, through the prophet, the consoling promise that when they were sufficiently punished, and had come to the consciousness of their own misery, the Saviour would come and bring all things to order. The rod spoken of by the prophet, is the Blessed Virgin who would proceed from the root of Jesse, that is, from the stem of David, and give birth to the flower, viz., to the Saviour upon whom the Holy Ghost, with His sevenfold gifts, would descend, that is, dwell in Him. As a reader of the heart He would judge man, not according to his outward appearance, but according to his intentions. He would not flatter the sinner, but with severe words punish his sinful life, and because just and faithful, He would reward every man without respect to person. Let us be always mindful in all our omissions and commissions, that our Lord sees into our hearts, and judges not only according to our works, but principally according to our intentions, and let us strive ever to have pure motives in all our actions.

ASPIRATION O Fragrant Flower of the Virgin, Jesus our Saviour, come and draw us to Thee, that we may walk in the perfume of Thy ointments, and obtain a merciful judgment from Thee.

COLLECT Show forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy power, and come, that we who confidently trust in Thy love, may be the sooner delivered from all adversities. Through our Lord.

EMBER SATURDAY IN ADVENT

EPISTLE (II Thess 2:1-8). Brethren, we beseech you, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of our gathering together unto him: that you be not easily moved from your mind, nor be frightened, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by epistle, as sent from us, as if the day of the Lord were at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for unless there come a revolt first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God. Remember you not, that when I was yet with you I told you these things? And now you know what withholdeth, that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity already worketh: only that he who now holdeth, do hold, until he be taken out of the way, and then that wicked one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall kill with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

EXPLANATION At the time when St. Paul wrote this epistle, the false report was circulated that the Last Day was at hand, and Christ was coming to judge all men. The Apostle warns the faithful against trusting this, telling them they should not permit themselves to be misled; for first, the greater part of mankind would fall away from God, and Antichrist, the son of perdition appear, but not until the gospel was everywhere preached. The great falling off would be gradual, caused by the heresies which would arise from time to time, and would be completed by Antichrist, whom our Lord, at last, on the Day of Judgment would kill with the breath of his mouth. Let us learn from this epistle not to be curious concerning the Last Day, and the Advent of Christ, but to prepare, rather for the coming of Jesus into our hearts, that He may be merciful to us in death, and at judgment.

ASPIRATION The gospel of this day will be found in the instruction on the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

COLLECT O God, who seest us afflicted on account of our own wickedness; mercifully grant, that by Thy coming we may be comforted. Through our Lord.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

On this Sunday the Church redoubles her ardent sighs for the coming of the Redeemer, and, in the Introit, places the longing of the just of the Old Law upon the lips of the faithful, again exhorting them through the gospel of the day, to true penance as the best preparation for the worthy reception of the Saviour. Therefore at the Introit she prays:

INTROIT Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just (Is. 45). Let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour. The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands (Ps. 18:2). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT Raise up, O Lord, we pray Thee, Thy power, and come, and with great might succor us: that, by the help of Thy grace, that which our sins impede may be hastened by Thy merciful forgiveness. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (I Cor. 4:1-5). Brethren, Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Here now it is required among the dispensers, that a man be found faithful. But to me, it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man's day: but neither do I judge my own self. For I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge not before the time, until the Lord come: who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise from God.

Why is this epistle read on this day?

The Church desires by this epistle to impress those who received Holy Orders on Ember Saturday with the dignity of their office, and exhorts them to fill it with becoming fidelity and sanctity, excelling the laity in piety and virtue, as well as in official dignity. She wishes again to remind the faithful of the terrible coming of Christ to judgment, urging them, by purifying their conscience through a contrite confession, to receive Christ at this holy Christmas time, as their Saviour, that they may not behold Him, at the Last Day, as their severe judge.

How should the faithful regard the priests and spiritual superiors?

They should esteem and obey them as servants, stewards, and vicars of Christ; as dispensers of the holy mysteries (I Cor. 4:1); as ambassadors of the most High (II Con 5:20). For this reason God earnestly commands honor to priests (Ecclus. 7:31),

and Christ says of the Apostles and their successors (Lk. 10:16): Who despiseth you, despiseth me; and St. Paul writes (I Tim. 5:17): Let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honor: especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Can the priest dispense the sacraments according to his own will?

No, he must have power from the Church, and must exercise his office faithfully, in accordance with the orders of the Church, and act according to the will of Christ whose steward he is. The priest dare not give that which is holy to dogs (Mt. 7:6), that is, he is not permitted to give absolution, and administer the sacraments to impenitent persons, under penalty of incurring eternal damnation.

Why does St. Paul consider the judgment of men a small matter?

Because it is usually false, deceptive, foolish, and is consequently not worth seeking or caring for. Man often counts as evil that which is in itself good and, on the contrary, esteems as good that which is evil. St. Paul says: If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ (Gal. 1:10). Oh, how foolish, and what poor Christians, therefore, are they, who not to displease man, willingly adopt all silly customs, and fashions in dress, manners and appearance, making themselves contemptible to God, the angels, and saints. Recall the beautiful words of the Seraphic St. Francis: “We are, what we are in the sight of God, nothing more”; learn from them to fulfill your duties faithfully, and be indifferent to the judgment of the world and its praise.

Why does not St. Paul wish to judge himself?

Because no one, without a special revelation from heaven, can know if he be just in the sight of God or not, even though his conscience may accuse him of nothing, for “man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred” (Eccles. 9:1). Thus St. Paul goes on to say, that though he was not conscious of any wrong, he did not judge himself to be justified, God only could decide that. Man should certainly examine himself as much as is in his power, to find if he has anything within him displeasing to God; should he find nothing he must not judge himself more just than others, but consider that the eyes of his mind may be dimmed, and fail to see that which God sees and will reveal to others at the judgment Day. The Pharisees saw no fault in themselves, and were saintly and perfect in their own estimation, yet our Lord cursed them.

ASPIRATION “O Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight no man living can be justified” (Ps. 142:2).

GOSPEL (Lk. 3:1-6). In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina, under the high priests Annas and Caiphas: the word of the Lord came to John the son of Zachary in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain: and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Why is the time in which St. John commenced to preach so minutely described?

The Evangelist, contrary to his usual custom, describes the time minutely, and enumerates exactly, in their precise order, the religious and civil princes in office, that, in the first place, it could not be denied that this was truly the time and the year in which the promised Messiah appeared in this world, whom John baptized, and the Heavenly Father declared to be His beloved Son. Furthermore, it shows the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Patriarch Jacob (Gen. 49:10), that when the scepter would be taken away from Juda, that is, when the Jews would have no longer a king from their own tribes, the Saviour would come.

What is meant by: “The word of the Lord came to John”?

It means that John was commissioned by divine inspiration, or by an angel sent from God, to preach penance and announce to the world the coming of the Lord. He had prepared himself for this work by a penitential, secluded life, and intercourse with God. We learn from his example not to intrude ourselves into office, least of all into a spiritual office, but to await the call from God, preparing ourselves in solitude and quiet, by fervent prayer and by a holy life, for the necessary light.

What is meant by: “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths”?

It means that we should prepare our hearts for the worthy reception of Christ, by penance, amendment, and the resolution to lead a pious life in future. To do this, every valley should be filled, that is, all faintheartedness, sloth and cowardice, all worldly carnal sentiments should be elevated and directed to God, the highest Good,

by firm confidence and ardent desire for heavenly virtues; the mountains and hills should be brought low, that is, pride, stubbornness, and ambition should be humbled, and the obstinate will be broken. The crooked shall be made straight, that is, ill-gotten goods should be restored, hypocrisy, malice, and double dealing be renounced, and our intentions turned to God and the performance of His holy will. And the rough ways shall be made plain, that is, anger, revenge, and impatience must leave the heart, if the Lamb of God is to dwell therein. It may also signify that the Saviour put to shame the pride of the world, and its false wisdom by building His Church upon the Apostles, who, by reason of their poverty and simplicity, may be considered the low valleys, while the way to heaven, formerly so rough and hard to tread, because of the want of grace, is now by His grace made smooth and easy.

ASPIRATION O my Jesus! would that my heart were well prepared and smooth for Thee! Assist me! O my Saviour to do that which I cannot do by myself. Make me an humble valley, fill me with Thy grace; turn my crooked and perverted will to Thy pleasure; change my rough and angry disposition, throw away in me whatever impedes Thy way, that Thou mayst come to me without hindrance. Thou alone possess and rule me forever. Amen.

INSTRUCTION ON THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

“Preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins”(Lk. 3:3).

What is penance, and how many kinds are there?

Penance, says the Roman Catechism (Cat. Rom. de Pcenit. 54), consists in the turning of our whole soul to God, hating and detesting the crimes we have committed, firmly resolving to amend our lives, its evil habits and corrupt ways, hoping through the mercy of God to obtain pardon. This is interior penance, or the virtue of penance. The sincere acknowledgment of our sins to a priest and the absolution he accords, is exterior penance, or the holy Sacrament of Penance, which Christ instituted (Jn. 20:22-23), through which the sins committed after baptism, are remitted.

Which of these penances is necessary for the forgiveness of sins?

Both are necessary, for unless the conversion of the heart to God, a true consciousness of, and sorrow for sin, the firm purpose of amendment and confidence in God's mercy, precede the confession, declaring all our sins to a priest cannot obtain forgiveness of mortal sin committed after baptism. At the same time a really contrite turning to God, will not, without confession to a priest, obtain forgiveness, except

when by circumstances, a person is prevented from approaching the tribunal of penance. Such a person must, however, have the ardent desire to confess as soon as possible.

Can anyone who has committed mortal sin be saved without penance?

No, for penance is as necessary to such a one as baptism, if he wishes not to perish: Unless you do penance, says Christ, you shall all likewise perish (Lk. 13:3, 5).

Is this penance performed at once?

This penance is necessary every day of our lives: that is, we must from day to day endeavour to be heartily sorry for our sins, to despise them, to eradicate the roots of sin, that is, our passions and evil inclinations, and become more pleasing to God by penance and good works.

Why do so many die impenitent?

Because they do not accept and use the many graces God offers them, but put off their repentance. If such sinners, like the godless King Antiochus (II Mac. 9) intend to repent on their deathbed for fear of punishment, they usually find that God in His justice will no longer give them the grace of repentance, for he who when he can repent, will not, cannot when he will. "Who will not listen at the time of grace," says St. Gregory, "will not be listened to' in the time of anxiety." And it is to be feared that he who postpones penance until old age, will not find justice where he looked for mercy.

Can all sinners do penance?

With the grace of God all can, even the greatest sinners; as a real father God calls them when He says: As I live ...I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: and why will ye die, O house of Israel? And the wickedness of the wicked shall not hurt him, in what day soever he shall turn from his wickedness (Ezech. 33:11-12).

Do all who go to confession perform true penance?

Unfortunately they do not; for all is not accomplished with confession. If there is no sincere detestation of sin, no true sorrow for having offended God; if the evil inclinations and bad habits are not overcome, ill-gotten goods restored, and calumny repaired, the occasions of sin avoided; if a sincere amendment of life, or, at least, its

earnest purpose does not follow, then indeed, there cannot be the least shadow of true repentance, not even though such persons confess weekly. But alas! we see many such. And why? Because many think repentance consists simply in confession, and not in the amendment of their lives. Only those obtain pardon who are truly penitent, and perform all that is enjoined upon them in confession. It is well, therefore, to read and carefully act according to the following instructions.

I. ON THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

The foundation of true repentance, interior and exterior (see the preceding pages), is the vivid knowledge of our sins. There are many who are unconscious of the most grievous sins in which they are buried; blinded by self-love they do not even regard them as sins, do not confess them, perform no penance for them and are consequently eternally lost. To prevent this great evil, the Council of Trent (Sess. XIV c.5) ordered a careful examination of conscience before confession, and afterwards to confess the sins which are discovered by that examination.

Why should we examine our conscience?

Because, as St. Ignatius says, no one can become fully aware of his own faults, unless God reveals them by a special light; we should, therefore, first of all, daily ask the Holy Ghost to enlighten us, and should then examine our thoughts, desires, words, actions, and omissions since our last valid confession and how often we have sinned in these respects. To know this, we should let our conscience, that is, the inner voice which tells us what is good and what is evil, speak freely, without flattering ourselves, or passing it by negligently. St. Charles Borromeo says, we should place before our eyes the Ten Commandments of God and carefully compare our life and our morals with them; it is well also to examine ourselves on the seven deadly sins, and remember the places and persons with whom we have been in contact, the duties of our state of life, the vices to which we are most inclined, the consequences that were, or might have been produced upon ourselves or others. At the same time, we should imagine ourselves standing before the judgment seat of God, and whatever would cause us fear there, whatever we could not answer for there, we should look upon as sins, be sorry for, and confess.

Is it a sin not to examine ourselves long and carefully?

Certainly it is a sin for those to examine their consciences carelessly, who live unfaithfully and in mortal sin, and who seldom confess, because they expose

themselves frivolously to the danger of leaving out great sins, and consequently they make a sacrilegious confession, committing thereby a new and grievous sin.

Those who daily ask God for enlightenment and examine their conscience at least every evening before going to bed, will prepare themselves properly before approaching the tribunal of penance. “Behold, you have a book in which you write your daily expenses,” says St. Chrysostom, “make a book of your conscience, also, and write there your daily sins. Before you go to bed, before sleep comes, take your book, that is, your conscience, and recall your sins, whether of thought, word, or deed. Say then to your soul: Again, O my soul, a day is spent, what have we done of evil or of good? If you have accomplished some good, be grateful to God; if evil, resolve to avoid it for the future. Shed tears in remembrance of your sins; ask forgiveness of God, and then let your body sleep.”

II. ON CONTRITION

“O man,” cries St. Augustine, “why dost thou weep over the body whence the soul has departed, and not over the soul from which God has withdrawn?” The idolatrous Michas (Judg. 18:23-24) complained bitterly, because his idols were taken from him; Esau grieved greatly over the loss of his birthright and his father’s blessing (Gen. 27:34). Should we not therefore, be filled with sorrow, when by our sins we have lost God and Heaven?

What is contrition, and how many kinds are there?

“Contrition is a hearty sorrow and detestation of our sins, with a firm purpose of sinning no more” (Conc. Trid., Sess. XIV, can. 4). If this grief and detestation comes from a temporal injury, shame or punishment, it is a natural sorrow; but if we are sorry for our sins, because by them we have offended God, and transgressed His holy law, it is a supernatural sorrow; this, again, is imperfect when fear of God’s punishment is the motive; it is perfect, if we are sorry for our sins, because we have offended God, the supreme Lord and best of Fathers.

Is natural sorrow sufficient for a good confession?

It is not, because it proceeds not from a supernatural motive, but from the love or fear of the world. A mere natural sorrow for our sins worketh death (II Cor. 7:10). If one confess his sins having only a natural sorrow for them, he commits a sacrilege, because the most necessary part of the Sacrament of Penance is wanting.

What other qualities are necessary for a true contrition?

Contrition should be interior, proceeding from the heart and not merely from the lips; it must be universal, that is, it must extend to all the mortal sins which the sinner has committed; it must be sovereign, that is, he must be sorrier for having offended God, than for any temporal evil; it must be supernatural, that is, produced in the heart by supernatural motives; namely, because we have offended God, lost His grace, deserved hell, etc.

What kind of sorrow must we have in order to obtain forgiveness of our sins?

That sorrow which proceeds from a perfect love of God, and not from fear of temporal or eternal punishment. This perfect contrition would suffice for the forgiveness of sins, if in case of danger of death, there should be a great desire, but no opportunity to confess to a priest. But the Holy Catholic Church has declared (Conc. Trid., Sess. XIV, can. 4) the imperfect contrition which proceeds from the fear of eternal punishment to be sufficient for the valid reception of the holy Sacrament of Penance.

Who are those who have reason to fear they have aroused only a natural sorrow for their sins?

Those who care little about knowing what true sorrow is; those who often commit grievous sins, and do not amend their lives; for if true sorrow for sin had been excited in their hearts, with the firm purpose of amendment, the grace of God in this Sacrament would have strengthened the resolution, and enabled them to avoid sin, at least for a time. On account of their immediate relapse we justly doubt whether they have validly received the sacrament of penance and its sanctifying grace.

How can the sinner attain true sorrow?

The sinner can attain true sorrow by the grace of God and his own co-operation. That both are necessary is shown by the prophet Jeremias (jet. 31:18-19), who prays: Convert me, O Lord, and I shall be converted: for Thou art the Lord, my God. For after Thou didst convert me, I did penance: and after Thou didst skew unto me, I struck my thigh (with sorrow). To which God replies: If thou wilt be converted, I will convert thee (Qer. 15:19). We see, therefore, that the first and most essential means for producing this sorrow is the grace of God. It must begin and complete the work of conversion, but it will do this only when the sinner earnestly and faithfully co-operates. When God in whatever way has admonished the sinner that he should be converted, let him ardently implore God for the grace of a true conversion, invoke the intercession of the Mother of the Saviour, his guardian angel, and like the holy penitents, David, Peter, and Magdalen, let him meditate upon the truth that God is a

just judge, who hates sin, and will punish it in the eternal torments of hell. Having placed these truths vividly before his eyes, the sinner will reflect further whether by his sins he has not himself deserved this punishment, and if by the enlightenment of God he finds he has, he will also see the danger in which he stands, that if God should permit him to die impenitent, he would have to suffer forever in hell. This fear of eternal punishment urges the sinner to hope in God's mercy; for He wishes not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; again, our Redeemer says: I came to call the sinner to repentance, and, there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who does penance, than over ninety-nine just. He considers the patience of God towards him, the graces bestowed upon him during his sinful life; namely his creation, redemption, sanctification in baptism, and many others. He will now contemplate the beauty and perfection of God: "Who art Thou, O my God," he cries, "who art Thou who hast loved me with such an unspeakable love, and lowest me still, ungrateful, abominable sinner, that I am! What is all the beauty of this world of the angels and of the blessed spirits compared to Thine! Thou fountain of all beauty, of all goodness, of all that is amiable, Thou supreme majesty, Thou infinite abyss of love and merry! I for one vain thought, a short, momentary pleasure, a small, mean gain, could forget, offend and despise Thee! Could I sell, could I forfeit heaven, and eternal joy with Thee! O, could I repair those crimes! Could I but wash them out with my tears, even with my blood?" Through such meditations the sinner, by the grace of God, will be easily moved to sorrow. Without such or similar reflections the formulas of sorrow as read from prayer books or recited by heart, are by no means acts of contrition.

Should we make an act of contrition before confession only?

We should make an act of contrition before confession, and not only then, but every evening after the examination of conscience; we should make one immediately after any fault committed, above all when in danger of death; for we know not when God will call us to judgment, or whether we shall then have the grace to receive the sacrament of Penance with proper preparation.

III. ON THE PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT

The purpose of amending our life is as necessary for the remission of sin, as contrition; for how could he obtain forgiveness from God, who has not the determination to sin no more? The will to sin cannot exist with the hatred of sin.

What is necessary for a firm purpose?

A firm purpose of amendment requires: the determination to avoid sin; to flee from all occasions that might bring the danger of sinning, all persons, places, societies in which we usually sin; bravely to fight against our evil inclinations and bad habits; to make use of all means prescribed by our confessor, or made known to us by God Himself; to repair the injustice we have done; to restore the good name of our neighbour, and to remove the scandal and enmity we have caused.

Who, then, have no true purpose of amendment?

Those who do not truly intend to leave the frivolous persons with whom they have associated, and committed sin; to remove the occasions of cursing, swearing, drunkenness, and secret sins, etc.; who have the intention to borrow or to contract debts which they know they cannot pay, or do not even care to pay; to squander the property of their wives and children, letting them suffer want; to frequent barrooms, or saloons, fight, gamble, indulge in vile, filthy conversations and detraction, murmur against spiritual and temporal superiors, throw away precious time, and bring, even compel others to do the same. The saloon-keepers, who for the sake of money allure such wretched people, keep them there, and what is still worse, help to intoxicate them, participate in their sins.

IV. ON CONFESSION

Confession is a contrite acknowledgment of our sins to a priest who is duly authorized, in order to obtain forgiveness. This acknowledgment of our sins is an important and necessary part of the holy Sacrament of Penance.

Even in the Old Law, a certain kind of confession was prescribed and connected with a sacrifice, called the sacrifice of Atonement; but the forgiveness of sins was effected only through faith in the coming Redeemer, towards whom this sacrifice pointed (Lev. 5:5-6; Num. 5:7; compare Mt. 3:6). In the new Law, Christ gave to the apostles and their successors, power to forgive, and to retain sins (Jn. 20:21-23), and in doing so made them judges. Without confession on the part of the sinner, they cannot act as judges, and do justice in regard to giving punishment and remedies (Conc. Trid., Sess. XIV can. 6), and as the sinner is but seldom able to make an act of perfect contrition, which obtains the forgiveness of sin without confession, it was necessary that the most merciful Lord, as the Roman Catechism says (de poen. 5. 36), through the means of confession to the priest, should provide in an easier manner for the common salvation of man. Confession, at the same time, is the best means of bringing man to a knowledge of his sins and of their malice. Therefore, even Adam was obliged to acknowledge his sins, and in the same way Cain was asked by God

concerning his brother's murder, although God, the Omniscient, knew the sins of both. The desire to ease the troubled conscience, seems born in man. Thus David says of his crime: Because I was silent, my bones grew old, whilst I cried out all the day long (Ps. 31:3); and in the book of Proverbs it is said; He that hideth his sins, shall not prosper: but he that shall confess and forsake them, shall obtain mercy (Prov. 28:13). Constant experience in life verifies these words, and heretics could not entirely abolish private confession, though they rejected the Sacrament of Penance.

Is confession a human law, or a human invention?

No, confession was instituted by Christ Himself; for after His Resurrection He appeared to His apostles and disciples, and said to them: Peace be with you! As the Father hath sent me, I also send you; that is, the same power to remit sin which the Father has given me, I give to you. When he had said this, he breathed on them, and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained (Jn.20:21-23; compare Mt. 18:18). In these words Christ evidently gave to the apostles and their successors the power to forgive and retain sins. This they can do only when the sins are confessed to them; and, therefore, Christ, when instituting the forgiveness of sins, instituted and connected with it the acknowledgment, that is, the confession of sins. This regulation of Christ was complied with by the first Christians in humility of heart, as is proved in the Acts of the Apostles, where we read: And many (referring to the Christians at Ephesus) of them that believed, came confessing and declaring their deeds (Acts 19:18). And the apostle James exhorts his own: Confess therefore your sins one to another: and pray one for another, that you may be saved (Jas. 5:16). The work founded by Christ must stand, as long as the world, and as the apostles and disciples of our Lord died, their successors necessarily continued the work, and received the same power from Christ. This is verified by the whole history of His Church. In the very beginning of Christianity, the faithful with great sorrow confessed to the priest all their transgressions, even the smallest and most secret, after which, they received absolution. "Let us be sincerely sorry as long as we live," says St. Clement of Rome, a disciple of St. Paul (Ep. 1. ad Cor.), "for all evil which we have committed in the flesh, for having once left the world, there will no longer be any confession and penance for us." Tertullian (217 A.D.) writes of those who hid their sins, being ashamed to confess them: "Can we also hide from the knowledge of God that which we conceal from a fellow creature" (Lib. de qcen. 5. 36). Origen ('1254), after speaking of baptism, says: "There is still a severer and more tedious way of obtaining remission of sin: when the sinner moistens his pillow with tears, and is not ashamed to confess his sins to the priest of the Lord" (Hom. 3 in Lev.). St. Cyprian

(‘1258) writes of those Christians who during the persecutions of his time, had not sinned by openly denying the faith: “Yet because they had but thought of doing so, they make a sorrowful and simple confession to God’s priests” (Sib. de laps.). Basil (f 379) writes: “Necessarily the sins must be made plain to those to whom the power of the mysteries is confided, that is, to the priests” (In reg. brew 288). Many more testimonies could be brought from the earliest centuries of Christianity, which make it clear, that Christ Himself instituted confession, and that the faithful always availed themselves of it as a means of remission of sin. It would not have been possible for a human being, though he were the mightiest prince, to have imposed upon Catholic Christianity so hard an obligation as confession, without the special command of Christ the Son of God; nor could anyone have invented it without the faithful at once revolting. It is also well known that, in the Oriental Churches which separated from the true Church in the earliest ages, private confession to a priest is yet valued as a divine institution. The Catholic institution of confession, with which, in the earliest centuries, there was even connected a public confession, before the whole congregation, for notorious sinners, is as old as the Church itself, as Pope Leo the Great (f 461) proves (Ep. 136); “The secret, auricular confession was introduced into the Church as early as the times of the apostles, or their immediate successors.” It was instituted by Christ, the God-Man, and instituted for the purpose of enabling the apostles and the priests, their successors, to remit in the confessional the sins committed after baptism, if the sinner heartily regrets them, sincerely confesses, and renders satisfaction for them, or to retain them if he be unworthy of absolution. From this it is seen that the enemies of the Catholic Church oppose, in rejecting confession, the plain expression of the holy Scriptures, and of entire Christian antiquity, and that it is a detestable calumny to assert that confession is simply a human invention. The divine institution of confession always was and is a fountain of sweetest consolation for sinful man, and thousands have experienced that which is said by the Council of Trent (Sess. XIV can. 3, depart.): “The effect of this Sacrament is reconciliation with God, followed by peace, cheerfulness and consolation of the heart in those who worthily receive this Sacrament.”

What will aid us to make confession easy?

The consideration of the manifold benefits arising from it; first, forgiveness of all, even the most grievous sins, remission of the guilt and eternal punishment; secondly, the certainty of having again been made a child of God; thirdly, the sweet consolation and desired peace of conscience; fourthly, the necessary remedies which a pious and prudent confessor will prescribe for the cure of the diseases of the soul; finally, the

prayer and exhortation of the priest which will also add to the complete conversion of the sinner.

What should be done to participate in these benefits?

Besides that which has already been said of the examination of conscience, and especially of sorrow for sin, the confession must be sincere and open-hearted; that is, a correct and exact confession not only of all mortal sins, their kind, circumstances and number, without excuses, or veiling or lessening them, but also a faithful revelation of all other spiritual affairs, fears, doubts, and other wounds of the soul; for a wound which is not shown to the physician, cannot be healed. We should not seek those confessors who are only “mute dogs” (Is. 56:10), and give absolution without hesitation, but we should trust the direction of our souls to learned, pious, and zealous priests, and remain under their guidance, as in physical sickness we remain under the care of an experienced physician, and accept their words as if Christ Himself had spoken.

How should the false shame which prevents confession be overcome?

It should be remembered that the priest in the confessional is the representative of Christ, and that whoever lies to the confessor, seeks to deceive God Himself, who abominates a lie, and at the Last Day will publicly put such a liar to shame. The confessor takes the place of Christ, and after His example must be merciful to the sinner, if, a sinful man himself, he hopes to receive mercy and grace from God. At the same time, no confessor is allowed to reveal the slightest thing heard in confession, even should it cost him his life. It may be considered further that he who conceals a sin in confession, and thus obtains absolution by false pretences, receives no remission, but, on the contrary, commits a new sin, “When man uncovers his sins, God covers them; when man conceals his sins, God reveals them,” says St. Augustine. Man can be deceived, but not God, the Omniscient; and who is ashamed to show his wounds to the physician? Why should it be a cause of shame to throw out the poison of sin by a sincere confession? To sin only is shameful, to confess sin is not shameful. But if by all these reflections we are still unable to overcome ourselves so as to confess our sins to a certain confessor we may seek another in whom we have confidence.

V. ON SATISFACTION AFTER CONFESSION

Satisfaction is the diligent performance of all the works of penance imposed upon us by the confessor. With this, however, a true penitent will not be satisfied; for in our times, on account of the weakness and little zeal of Christians, a light penance is imposed that they may not be deterred from the reception of the holy Sacraments. To avoid relapsing into sin, one must do penance, and bring forth worthy fruits (Lk. 13:3), for God will only then give the grace to persevere. We satisfy God by fasting, prayer, alms deeds, avoidance of the snares of the world, diffidence in ourselves, and especially by patient endurance of the afflictions and sufferings which He imposes upon us. Those who have committed sin must do penance in this life or submit to everlasting penance in the next.

Is the heretic right in asserting that man does not need to render satisfaction since Christ has rendered it complete on the cross?

He is entirely wrong. Christ on the cross did indeed render satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, and man is not capable to atone for one single sin but it does not follow from this that man is not required to do something. To render satisfaction means to perform a duty which has been neglected. Instead of obeying God, the sinner by his sins disobeys Him. Satisfaction for disobedience requires perfect obedience from the sinner: but this, because of his weakness and corruption, no man is able to render therefore Christ rendered it for us by His perfect obedience even unto the death of the cross. But because Christ has been thus obedient for us, must we not be somewhat obedient also? or which is the same, because Christ for love of us has atoned for our sins by perfect obedience to His Heavenly Father, are we to do no penance for ourselves? It is precisely by this atonement made by Christ that we receive the power of rendering satisfaction. But for this we must, first of all, ask the grace, i.e., pray, to restrain our earthly desires, i.e., fast, and by means of active love (charity) make ourselves susceptible to this grace. St. Paul the Apostle, who calls himself the greatest of sinners, writes of himself: I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for his body, which is the Church (Col. 1:24); and to the Corinthians he writes: But I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps: when I have preached to others (meaning penance and conversion), I myself should become cast away (I Cor. 9:27). Christ Himself did not censure the Ninivites for their fasting and their penance in sackcloth and ashes, but gave them as an example (Mt. 12:41). In the Old Testament we find that even after remitting the sin, God imposed a punishment for it. Thus He let the child of king David die, as punishment for his adultery, even though

He had forgiven the sin (II Kings 12:13, 14); thus Moses and Aaron, because they once distrusted God, were not permitted to enter the Promised Land (Num. 20:24; Deut. 34:4). According to this doctrine of the Bible, the Catholic Church teaches that there remains a temporal punishment which the sinner must expiate either in this world, or in the next, though on account of the infinite merits of Christ the guilt and eternal punishment of sin are taken away by absolution. In the earliest times of the Church certain works of penance were imposed, which were then very severe, and in the course of time, owing to the indolence of the faithful, were much moderated.

CHRISTMAS EVE

“Let us therefore make him a little chamber, and put a little bed in it for him and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick, that when he cometh to us, he may abide there” (IV Kings 4:13). Such was the Sunamite woman’s regard for the prophet Eliseus, that she would make such preparations for his entertainment! Will we do as much for Christ who is ready to come to us? Take pains, O Christian, to occupy this night in pious thoughts, and aspirations, for the love of God and for the good of your own soul, making yourself worthy to receive the graces which He is ready when He comes, to give you. Think how Mary, who was near her time, and Joseph her spouse obedient to the Imperial command, and perfectly submissive to the will of God, journeyed with the greatest inconvenience to Bethlehem, and when, because of the multitude of people, they found no place to receive them they took refuge, as God willed it, in a most miserable stable, at the extreme end of the town. What love does not the Saviour deserve, who for love of us so humbled Himself!

COLLECT O God, who makest us rejoice in the yearly expectation of the feast of our redemption: grant, that we who cheerfully receive Thy only-begotten Son as a Redeemer, may behold without fear the same Lord Jesus Christ, coming as our judge. Through our Lord.

CHRISTMAS DAY

What is Christmas Day?

It is the day on which Christ Jesus, our Redeemer, was born of the Blessed Virgin in a stable at Bethlehem.

Why is this festival called “the Holy Night”?

Because this night has been especially blessed and sanctified by the holy, mysterious birth of the Redeemer of the world.

Why do priests say three Masses on this day?

In commemoration of the threefold birth of the Redeemer: of His birth from all eternity in the bosom of His Heavenly Father; of His birth in the fullness of time; and of His spiritual birth in the hearts of the faithful who, by lively faith in Him, receive the power to become children of God (Jn. 1:12).

Why is the first Mass said at midnight?

Because Christ, the true light which came into the world to enlighten those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death, that is, of unbelief and of sin (Lk. 1:79), was born at night, and because the divine birth is incomprehensible to us.

Why is the next Mass said at daybreak, and the third after sunrise?

To signify that the birth of Christ, expelling the darkness of ignorance and infidelity, brought us the clear daylight of the knowledge of God, and that the spiritual birth of Christ can take place at any time in the pure soul.

When does this spiritual birth take place?

It takes place when the soul, having been cleansed from all sin, makes the firm, unalterable resolution to die to the world and all carnal desires, and arouses in itself the ardent desire henceforth to live only for Christ, and, by His grace, to practice all virtues.

INSTRUCTION ON THE FIRST MASS

The Introit of this Mass reminds us of the eternal birth of Christ, the Lord.

INTROIT The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my Son, this day (that is, from all eternity) have I begotten thee (Ps. 2:7). Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things (Ps. 2:1)? Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT O God, who hast made this most sacred night to shine forth with the brightness of the true light: grant, we beseech Thee, that we may enjoy His happiness in heaven, the mystery of whose light we have known upon earth. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (Tit. 2:11-15). Dearly beloved, the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us, that denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works. These things speak, and exhort, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In what special manner has the grace and goodness of God been manifested to us?

In the incarnation and birth of Christ, His Son, whom, in His infinite love, He has made like unto us, our brother and our teacher, by whom we have become children of God, and co-heirs of His kingdom.

What does Christ by His incarnation desire to teach us especially?

That we should put aside all unrighteousness, all infidelity and injustice, and endeavour to become like unto Him, who, except in sin, has become altogether like unto us. But especially that we repress the desires of lust, wealth, and honor, and not rest until we have rooted them from our hearts.

How do we live soberly, justly, and godly?

We live soberly, when we fulfill all duties towards ourselves; justly, when we fulfill all duties towards our neighbour; and godly, when we fulfill all duties to God.

ASPIRATION Blessed art Thou, Oh! newborn Saviour, who hast descended from on high to teach me the ways of justice, hast become man and equal to me. In return for this goodness of Thine, I renounce all evil, all sinful desires, words, and deeds. In return for Thy love, I will ever uproot from my heart all carnal desires, and always live soberly, justly, and godly; do Thou by Thy grace, strengthen me in this resolve.

GOSPEL (Lk. 2:1-14). At that time there went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. This enrolling was first made by Cyrinus, the governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of

David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold, an Angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round them; and they feared with a great fear. And the Angel said to them: Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will.

Why, at the time of Augustus, were all the Roman subjects enrolled?

This happened by a special ordinance of God, that by this enrollment Mary and Joseph should be obliged to go to Bethlehem, that it might be made known to the world that Christ was really born at Bethlehem, of the tribe of Juda, and the house of David, and that He was the Messiah who had been foretold by the prophets (Mich. 5:2).

Let us learn from this how the providence of God directs all things according to His will, and consider the obedience which Mary rendered to the command of a heathen emperor, or rather to God who caused the command.

Why is Christ called the “first-born” of Mary?

Because she gave birth to no child before Him; she bore none after Him, He was the only son of Mary, as He was the only-begotten Son of the Heavenly Father.

Why was Christ born in such poverty?

To teach us not by words but by example that which He afterwards so often preached and forcibly taught, namely: the love of poverty, the practice of humility and patience with contempt of the world, and also to confound by His humble birth the foolish wisdom of the world which seeks only honours, pleasures and riches.

Why was the birth of Christ announced to poor shepherds, and not to King Herod and the chief priests?

That it might be known that God loves to dwell with poor, simple, pious, faithful people, such as the shepherds were, and reveals Himself to those who are little in their own eyes (Mt. 11:25), while He despises the proud and leaves them over to their own spiritual blindness.

Let us learn from this to acquire simplicity and humility, and despise pride and cunning, that God may reveal Himself to us by His interior inspirations.

What is meant by the angelic song of praise: “Glory be to God on high”?

By this song of praise which the priests usually say in the Mass is meant that the greatest praise and the most heartfelt thanks are due to God for having sent His Son into the world; and that those who have the good will to glorify God by all their actions, will receive peace, that is, all happiness, blessings, and salvation.

Rejoice with the angels over the birth of the Saviour, return thanks to God, and honor Him alone in all things, that you may have that peace: peace with God, peace with yourself and peace with all men.

Learn also from the angels, who rejoiced in the graces which man would receive from the birth of Christ, to rejoice, and thank God for the favours which He gives your neighbour, and by rejoicing participate in them.

INSTRUCTION ON THE SECOND MASS

In the Introit of this Mass the Church makes use of the words of Isaias:

INTROIT A light shall shine upon us this day: for our Lord is born to us: and he shall be called Wonderful, God, the Prince of peace, the Father of the world to come; of whose reign there shall be no end (Is. 9). The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty: the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself. Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who are filled with the new light of Thy incarnate Word, may show forth in our works what by faith shineth in our minds. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (Tit. 3:4-7). Dearly beloved, the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour hath appeared: not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our

Saviour: that, being justified by his grace, we may be heirs according to hope. of life everlasting, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To whom do we owe our salvation?

Not to ourselves, nor any good works we may have performed, but entirely to the mercy of God who from all eternity decreed our redemption, and sent His only-begotten Son into this world to accomplish it; which redemption is bestowed upon us in baptism, where we are washed from the stain of sin, and by the rich infusion of the Holy Ghost born again, heirs of eternal life.

Why, then, had God no mercy on the fallen angels?

To this question St. John of Damascus replies: “We must know here that the fall was to the angels what death is to man; for the angels there was no repentance after the fall, as for man there is no repentance after death” (De fid. orthod. lib.2. c.4). In eternity there is no available contrition and penance, so God showed no mercy to the fallen angels. Let us learn from this, to make ourselves participators in the mercy of God, by contrition and penance while there is yet time.

GOSPEL (Lk. 2:15-20). At that time the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us. And they came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger. And seeing they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. And all that heard wondered, and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

INSTRUCTION

I. The shepherds follow at once the voice of God which calls them to the manger; they exhort one another to do so; they seek the Redeemer and happily find Him; they make Him known to others, and heartily thank God for the grace given them.

Let us follow the inspirations of God with ready obedience; let us exhort one another to virtue by our good example and edifying conversation; let us make good use of the knowledge given us by God, give it to others, and praise God for the same.

II. Mary kept all these words, spoken about her Son, and pondered them in her heart. Let us learn from her to prepare food for our souls by careful meditation on the divine

truths that are made known to us: so that we may be preserved and strengthened in spiritual life.

INSTRUCTION ON THE THIRD MASS

The Introit of this Mass reminds us of the spiritual birth of Christ, by which He is spiritually born in us:

INTROIT A child is born to us, and a Son is given to us; whose government is upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called the Angel of great counsel (Is. 9). Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: for he hath done wonderful things (Ps. 97). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the new birth of Thine only-begotten Son in the flesh may deliver us who are held by the old bondage under the yoke of sin. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (Heb. 1:1-12). God, who diversely and many ways, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high: being made so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels bath he said at any time: Thou art my son, today have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son? And again when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith: And let all the angels of God adore him. And to the angels indeed he saith: He that maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But to the Son: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of justice is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved justice, and hated iniquity: therefore, God, thy God, bath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And: Thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth; and the works of thy hands are the heavens. They shall perish, but thou shalt continue; and they shall all grow old as a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the self-same, and thy years shall not fail.

INSTRUCTION The greatness of Christ Jesus, the dignity of His divinity and humanity, the love and goodness of His Heavenly Father, who has given Him to us as our teacher, could not be more gloriously described than in this epistle. Learn from

it how much you are obliged, because of this, to serve God, to be grateful to Him, and to follow Christ who governs heaven and earth; and whom the angels serve.

ASPIRATION I thank Thee, a thousand times, O Heavenly Father, that Thou hast spoken to us through Thy only-begotten Son, in whom Thou art well pleased. With my whole heart, O Father of Mercy, will I listen to Him, and be obedient to all His instructions.

GOSPEL (Jn. 1:1-14). In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but was to bear witness of the light. That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them he gave power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

What does St. John mean by the Word?

That the Son of God, who was begotten and brought forth like a word of the mouth from the Father, but in a manner incomprehensible and inscrutable to us, is one with the Father in the divine nature, but different from Him in person; He is also called the Word of the Father, because through Him the Father has spoken and made known the divine will (Heb. 1:2; Mt. 17:5).

What is meant by- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God?

When all things had their beginning the Son of God already was, not made or created, but born of the Father from eternity, with whom and in whom He therefore existed from all eternity. St. John here teaches the divinity, the eternity, and the equality of Christ with the Father.

What is meant by: All things were made by Him?

That the Son of God, Himself true God, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, has made all things, visible and invisible.

What is meant by: In Him was the life?

It means: The Son of God is the origin and fountain of the spiritual life of our souls upon earth, and of the glorious life in eternity. To give this true life to us, He became man, whereby we are born again, newly created, as it were, from the death of sin to the life of grace and righteousness.

Why is this life the light of men?

Because this true life of the soul which Christ has obtained for us, consists in the ever increasing knowledge of God and his salvation, which knowledge also comes from Christ, either externally through holy words and examples, or inwardly by divine inspiration.

How did the light shine in darkness?

The Son of God has given the necessary grace to find the true faith to mankind. He still imparts to all men the necessary light, especially by His holy Word which is preached to them, but the hardened sinners reject it, because they wish not to hear of faith and repentance.

How did St. John the Baptist bear witness of the light?

By announcing the Saviour to the world, and even pointing Him out when He appeared.

Who receive Christ?

Those who walk in the light of His grace, co-operate with it, and so become the children of God.

How are we to understand: The Word was made flesh?

We are to understand by it that the Word was not changed into human nature, but that He became incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, thus uniting in Himself two natures, the divine and the human. So Christ is true God, and at the same time true man, therefore God-Man; consequently, there are in Christ two wills, the divine and the human. In His humanity He is less than the Father (Jn. 14:28), in His divinity He is equal to the Father On. 10:30); His humanity filled Him with a

natural terror of His suffer-ings, but His divinity was perfectly united with the will of His Heav-enly Father, and could pray: Not my will, but thine be done.

ASPIRATION O God, our Heavenly Father, Who this night has given to us sinners, in the form of a child from the immaculate womb of Mary, Thine only-begotten Son as our Mediator and Redeemer, we give Thee thanks with heart and lips, and humbly beseech Thee that Thou wilt never permit us to forget such a grace, and that we may sustain ourselves by it in all temptations; that we may be ever grateful to Thee for it, and until death praise, honor and serve Thee in sanctity. Amen.

Whence comes the custom of representing in our churches and houses the crib of Bethlehem?

This custom was introduced by St. Francis of Assisi who, having a particular devotion to the Infant Jesus, was accustomed to represent to himself in this way the stable and manger at Bethlehem the further to excite his love; and as this pious practice is calculated to assist exceedingly in the instruction of the unlearned, especially of children, it was introduced into many congregations.

THE SOCIETY OF THE HOLY CHILDHOOD FOR THE SALVATION OF HEATHEN CHILDREN

Many thousands of heathen children die every year without baptism, and what is most terrible, a great number of these unfortunate children die the most miserable death, and thus perish, soul and body. In the heathen countries, especially in China, a country that contains more than three hundred million inhabitants, it is the horrible custom of parents, when they have too many children, or when they are sickly, weak, or deformed to expose them on the streets, or to throw them with a weight around their neck into the water. On the streets the poor little children die of hunger, or are devoured by beasts, in the water their flesh becomes the food of fishes. Many, especially girls, are picked up by the wicked heathens, carried home, and so trained that when they grow up, they may enrich their masters by prostitution. A multitude of others are strangled immediately after birth, their bodies thrown into the water, or into the gutter. No law forbids or punishes this horrible custom. No less than twenty or thirty thousand of these unfortunate children are killed in one year.

The missionaries who preach the gospel to these heathens wit-nessed these cruelties with terror without being able to do anything to abolish this awful custom. To see these children, die without baptism grieved them. Some sought to gather, baptize and raise them. Good women were engaged for this purpose. But how could the

missionaries provide for so many, how support those women who collected these unfortunate children? They had no means. Necessary compelled them to turn to Christian Europe. By touching letters they solicited alms for these little unfortunates. Owing to the sad condition of these children the pious bishop of Nancy, Forbin Janson, became the founder of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, inviting all children of his diocese to form a Society of the Holy Childhood, under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the benefit of the miserable heathen children, giving alms out of love for the Infant Savoiur. All under twenty-one years of age, were to belong to it forming clubs of twelve, in honor of the twelve years of Christ's childhood; each member to contribute one cent monthly; and to say one Hail Mary every day with the invocation: "Holy Mary, pray for us and for the poor children of the heathens." By means of the money thus collected, the missionaries were enabled to save the heathen children from spiritual and corporal death. The society has been in existence since 1841, and has already embraced all Catholic countries; thousands of pious Christian children deprive themselves of a portion of their food in order to save alms, thereby performing a good work for the love of the child Jesus and the salvation of the children of the heathens. Adults are admitted as honorary members, and would it not be well, beloved reader, for you to join it, and by prayers and alms aid in saving those little ones? This would be indeed a good work, for which rich reward will be given in heaven.

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

INTROIT For while all things were in quiet silence, and the night came was in the midst of her course, Thy almighty Word, O Lord, down from heaven, from Thy royal throne (Wis. 18:14-15). The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty: the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself (Ps. 92:1). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT Almighty and everlasting God, direct our actions according to Thy good pleasure; that in the name of Thy beloved Son we may deserve to abound in good works. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (Gal. 4:1-7). Brethren, as long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all: but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father: so we also, when we were children, were serving under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law: that he might redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons,

God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Therefore now he is not a servant, but a son; and if a son, an heir also through God.

EXPLANATION St. Paul desired to instruct the Galatians, many of whom still clung to the Mosaic law, that this was no longer necessary, because Christ had freed them from its hard bondage, which contained merely the rudiments, so to speak, of the one only saving faith, and had made them children and heirs of God, for which they should rejoice.

Ours is a far greater happiness than that which the Jews received, because we, through our ancestors, were converted by apostolic messengers of the faith from heathenism to the true, saving Catholic faith, and by this holy religion were changed from vassals of Satan, into children and heirs of God. What a great advantage is this! Must it not be dearer to us than all the kingdoms of the world? Let us thank the Lord for it, and be careful not to lose this prerogative of being a child of God, an heir to heaven, let us not by sin give ourselves anew, as voluntary slaves to Satan.

GOSPEL (Lk. 2:33-40). At that time, Joseph and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother: Behold, this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted: and thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years; who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day. Now she at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord; and spoke of him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel. And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew and waxed strong, full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in him.

Why did Mary and Joseph wonder at the things which were spoken of the child Jesus?

They wondered, not because that which was said of the child Jesus by Simeon was new to them, for they already knew why He was sent from God, but because of the marvellous ways in which God revealed the mysteries of the new-born Saviour to Simeon, the shepherds, and to other pious people.

How is Christ set for the fall of many?

Christ is set for the fall, that is, for the eternal damnation, of all those who either reject His doctrine, or live not according to its teachings. They themselves, not Christ, are the cause of their damnation on account of their perversity and hard-heartedness. “If I had not come and spoken to them,” says Christ, “they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin” (Jn. 15:22).

For whom is Christ the resurrection?

For those who believe in Him, and live in accordance with the teachings of His doctrine. These, if they persevere will at the Last Day rise to eternal life.

Why is Christ a sign that shall be contradicted?

Because, by His birth from a virgin, by His life and death, and especially by His heavenly doctrine, which is entirely opposed to the carnal spirit of this world, Christ became an object of mockery and blasphemy. Even now, according to the saying of St. Bernard, Christ is a sign of contradiction for many Christians who contradict His humility by their pride, His poverty by their avarice, His fasting by their gluttony, His purity by their impurity, His zeal by their indolence, etc., thus denying by their actions that which they confess with their lips, proving thereby that they are Christians but in name, of whom it is written: “Thou hast the name of being alive, but thou art dead” (Apoc. 3:1).

What is meant by these words: Thy own soul a sword shall pierce?

It means that the greatest grief should cut like a sword through the inmost parts of the soul, which came to pass, when Mary heard the calumnies and blasphemies of the Jews against her Son, and when she saw Him die on the cross between two thieves. Meditating on this grief of the most loving mother Mary, St. Bonaventure exclaims: “Never was there grief so great, for never was there a Son so loved!”

What else do we learn from this gospel?

The widows should learn from Anna, who spent nearly all her life in the temple, to serve God by prayer and fasting; for a widow who prays not, but lives in pleasures, is dead, while she is living (I Tim. 5:6). Parents should learn from it, to be careful that their children not only increase in knowledge, but that they by a pious life advance in grace before God and man.

ASPIRATION O Jesus, Thou newborn Saviour, do Thou move our hearts to the fulfillment of Thy precepts that Thou mayst be set for our fall; for it would be much

better for us, not to have known the ways of righteousness, than having known them, to have departed from them.

INSTRUCTION ON BLESSING

And Simeon blessed them “(Lk. 2: 34).

What is meant by a blessing?

A blessing on the part of God, means the giving to man some spiritual or temporal grace; a blessing on the part of an angel or a man, means the expression in prayer of a wish or desire that God would give to some particular person a corporal or spiritual grace. In the proper sense of the word, only God can give a blessing, because all spiritual and temporal good comes from Him; angels and men can only wish and ask of God that He would bestow His gifts.

Have we examples of blessing in the Bible?

Yes, for the angels blessed Jacob (Gen. 32:26), and Jacob blessed his sons and grandsons (Gen. 48:15), Melchisedech blessed Abraham (Gen. 14:19), and Rebecca was blessed by her brothers (Gen. 24:60).

Is it well for parents to bless their children?

Yes, for God frequently ratifies the blessings wished by the parents, as in the case of Isaac who blessed Jacob, and Jacob who blessed his own sons (Gen. 49). And, on the contrary, God permits the curses of parents to be fulfilled on their children as history shows. “The father’s blessing establisheth the houses of the children; but the mother’s curse rooteth up the foundation” (Ecclus. 3:11).

What power has the priest’s blessing?

A very great one, because it is given by the priest, the vicar of Christ on earth, in the name of Jesus, and of the Church founded by Him, in which He has deposited the

plenitude of His blessings. The Church expresses this, when the bishop, anointing the hands of the newly ordained, makes the sign of the cross over them. “All that they bless, is blessed; that they consecrate, is consecrated and sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The blessing of the priest is to be prized therefore, and an obstacle not set to it by a sinful life. Parents should ask his blessing for their children when he happens to visit them. Children were brought to Christ that He might lay His hands on them and bless them (Mt. 19:13).

See INSTRUCTION ON BLESSING, Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

What is the effect of God’s blessing?

In spiritual life it gives great joy and strength to practice virtue; and in physical life it gives fruitful prosperity in our occupations and undertakings. Therefore, all is contained in the blessing of God, and he who receives it, is richer than if he possessed the whole world. We should endeavour by a pious life to secure this blessing, for it rests only on the head of the just (Prov. 10:6).

NEW YEAR’S DAY

Why is this day so called?

Because the secular year begins with this day, as the Church year begins with the First Sunday in Advent.

What should we do on this day?

An offering of the new year should be made to God, asking His grace that we may spend the year in a holy manner, for the welfare of the soul.

Why do we wish each other a “happy new year”?

Because to do so is an act of Christian love; but this wish should come from the heart, and not merely from worldly politeness, otherwise we would be like the heathens (Mt. 5:47), and receive no other reward than they.

What feast of the Church is celebrated today?

The Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, Who, for love of us, voluntarily subjected Himself to the painful law of the Old Covenant, that we might be freed from the same.

What was the Circumcision?

It was an external sign of the Old Law, by which the people of that day were numbered among the chosen people of God, as now they become, by baptism, members of the Church of Christ.

What is the signification of Circumcision in the moral or spiritual sense?

It signifies the mortification of the senses, of evil desires, and inclinations. This must be practiced by Christians now, since they have promised it in baptism which would be useless to them without the practice of mortification; just as little as the Jew by exterior Circumcision is a true Jew, just so little is the baptized a true Christian without a virtuous life. Beg of Christ, therefore, today, to give you the grace of the true Circumcision of heart.

PRAYER I thank Thee, O Lord Jesus, because Thou hast shed Thy blood for me in Circumcision, and beg Thee that by Thy precious blood I may receive the grace to circumcise my heart and all my senses, so that I may lead a life of mortification in this world, and attain eternal joys in the next. Amen.

[The **INTROIT** of the Mass is the same as is said in the Third Mass on Christmas.]

COLLECT O God, Who, by the fruitful virginity of blessed Mary, hast bestowed upon mankind the rewards of eternal salvation; grant, we beseech Thee, that we may feel the benefit of her intercession for us, through whom we have deserved to receive the author of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who livest and reignest, etc.

[The **EPSTLE** is the same as is said in the First Mass on Christmas.]

GOSPEL (Lk. 2:21). At that time, after eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Why did Jesus submit to Circumcision?

That He might show His great love for us, which caused Him even at the very beginning of His life, to shed His blood to cleanse us thereby from all our sins.

Furthermore to teach us obedience to the commandments of God and His Church, since He voluntarily subjected Himself to the Jewish law, although He was not in the least bound by it, which ordered that every male child should be circumcised on the eighth day after its birth (Lev. 12:3).

Why was He named Jesus?

Because Jesus means Redeemer and Saviour, and He had come to redeem and save the world (Mt. 1:21). This is the holiest, most venerable, and most powerful name by which we can be saved.

What power has this name?

The greatest power, for it repels all attacks of the evil Spirit, as Jesus Himself says (Mk. 16:17). And so great is the efficacy of this most holy name that even those who are not righteous, can by it expel devils (Mt. 7:22). It has power to cure physical pains and evils, as when used by the apostles (Acts. 3:3-7), and Christ promised that the faithful by using it could do the same (Mk. 16:17). St. Bernard calls the name of Jesus a "Medicine"; and St. Chrysostom says, "This name cures all ills; it gives succor in all the ailments of the soul, in temptations, in faintheartedness, in sorrow, and in all evil desires, etc." "Let him who cannot excite contrition in his heart for the sins he has committed, think of the loving, meek, and suffering Jesus, invoke His holy name with fervour and confidence, and he will feel his heart touched and made better," says St. Lawrence Justinian. It overcomes and dispels the temptations of the enemy: "When we fight against Satan in the name of Jesus," says the martyr St. Justin, "Jesus fights for us, in us, and with us, and the enemies must flee as soon as they hear the name of Jesus." It secures us help and blessings in all corporal and spiritual necessities, because nothing is impossible to him who asks in the name of Jesus, whatever tends to his salvation will be given him (Jn. 14:13). Therefore it is useful above all things, to invoke this holy name in all dangers of body and soul, in doubts, in temptations, especially in temptations against holy chastity, and still more so when one has fallen into sin, from which he desires to be delivered; for this name is like oil (Cant. 1:2) which cures, nourishes, and illumines.

How must this name be pronounced to experience its power?

With lively faith, with steadfast, unshaken confidence, with deep-est reverence and devotion, for in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth (Phil. 2:10). What wickedness, then, is theirs who habitually pronounce this name carelessly and irreverently, upon every occasion!

Such a habit is certainly diabolical; for the damned and the devils constantly abuse God and His holy name.

Why does this name so seldom manifest its power in our days?

Because Christian faith is daily becoming weaker, and confidence less, while perfect submission to the will of God is wanting. When faith grows stronger among people, and confidence greater, then will the power of this most sacred name manifest itself in more wonderful and consoling aspects.

PRAYER TO JESUS IN DIFFICULTIES

O Jesus! Consolation of the afflicted! Thy name is indeed poured out like oil; for Thou dost illumine those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; Thou dost disperse the blindness of the soul and dost cure its ills; Thou givest food and drink to those who hunger and thirst after justice. Be also, O Jesus! my Saviour, the physician of my soul, the healer of its wounds. O Jesus! Succor of those who are in need, be my protector in temptations! O Jesus! Father of the poor, do Thou nourish me! O Jesus! joy of the angels, do Thou comfort me! O Jesus! my only hope and refuge, be my helper in the hour of death, for there is given us no other name beneath the sun by which we may be saved, but Thy most blessed name Jesus!

EXHORTATION St. Paul says: All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17). We should, therefore, follow the example of the saints, and continually say, at least in our hearts: “For love of Thee, O Jesus, I rise; for love of Thee I lie down; for love of Thee I eat, drink, and enjoy myself; for love of Thee I work, speak, or am silent.” Thus we will accustom ourselves to do all in the name of Jesus, by which everything is easily or at least meritoriously accomplished.

PRAYER TO BE SAID ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

O God, Heavenly Father of Mercy, God of all Consolation! we thank Thee that from our birth to this day, Thou hast so well preserved us, and hast protected us in so many dangers; we beseech Thee, through the merits of Thy beloved Son, and by His sacred blood which He shed for us on this day in His circumcision, to forgive all the sins which, during the past year, we have committed against Thy commandments, by which we have aroused Thy indignation and wrath against ourselves. Preserve us in the coming year from all sins, and misfortunes of body and soul. Grant that from this

day to the end of our lives, all our senses, thoughts, words, and works, which we here dedicate to Thee for all time, may be directed in accordance with Thy will, and that we may finally die in the true Catholic faith, and enjoy with Thee in Thy kingdom a joyful new year, that shall know no end. Amen.

VIGIL OF EPIPHANY

[The INTROIT, the COLLECT, and the EPISTLE, are the same as on the Sunday after Christmas.]

GOSPEL (Mt. 2:19-23). At that time: when Herod was dead, behold an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the life of the child. Who arose, and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither: and being warned in sleep, retired into the quarters of Galilee. And coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets: that he shall be called a Nazarite.

INSTRUCTION In this we see how wonderfully God deals with His own. He indeed permits them to be persecuted and oppressed, but never to be suppressed, and from time to time He gives them many consolations. Jesus was forced to flee into Egypt to escape the persecution of Herod, because God did not wish to save Him by an evident miracle, but in an ordinary manner. He lived in poverty in Egypt, but for no longer time than God willed, Who having confounded His enemies, and taken them out of His way, called Him back, and He passed His youth in peace and quietness. The dispensations of God the Father in regard to His Son, and the care He had for Him, should be a consolation for the just; they must be happy if God deals with them as He did with His Son; they will certainly, like Christ, be made to suffer no more than God permits, and their sufferings will be ever accompanied by consolations. St. Joseph avoided the land of Judea, because he feared since Archelaus succeeded Herod in the government, he might also imitate him in his cruelty. A Nazarite means, a low person, a despised person. Jesus was so called, because He grew up at Nazareth,

and spent the greater part of His life in that city, which was held in such contempt by the Jews that they could not believe, anything good could come out of Nazareth (Jn. 1:46).

FEAST OF EPIPHANY

What festival is this?

This festival is set apart to solemnly commemorate the coming of the three wise men from the East, guided by a miraculous star which appeared to them, and directed them to Bethlehem, where they found Christ in the stable; here they honored and adored Him and offered gifts to Him.

Why is this day called Epiphany, or Apparition of the Lord?

Because the Church wishes to bring before our mind the three great events in the life of Christ, when He made known to man His divinity: the coming of the wise men from the East, through whom He revealed Himself to the Gentiles as the Son of God; His baptism, on which occasion His Divinity was made known to the Jews, and His first miracle at the marriage of Cana, by which He revealed Himself to His disciples.

INTROIT Behold the Lord the Ruler is come; and the kingdom is in his hand, and power and dominion (Mal. 3). Give to the king thy judgment, O God; and to the king's son thy justice (Ps. 71:1). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT God, Who on this day by the leading of a star didst reveal Thine only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; mercifully grant, that we who know Thee now by faith may be brought to contemplate the beauty of Thy majesty. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (Is. 60:1-6). Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the peoples; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thy eyes round about, and see; all these are gathered together, they are come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side. Then shalt thou see, and abound, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged, when the multitude of the sea shall be converted to thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Madian and Epha; all they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense, and showing forth praise to the Lord.

EXPLANATION The Prophet Isaias, in this epistle, predicts that the light of the Lord, which is Christ, will rise over Jerusalem, the prototype of the Church, and that the Gentiles who knew nothing of the true God, would come to walk in that light which Christ, by His doctrine and holy life, would cause to shine, and that numberless nations, from all parts of the world, would assemble as her children to adore the one true God. The fulfillment of this prophecy commenced with the adoration of the Magi, who are to be regarded as the first Christian converts of the Gentiles; the Church, therefore, very properly celebrates this day with great solemnity. We ought also to share in the joy of the Church, because our ancestors were Gentiles, and like the three wise men were called to the true faith. Let us exclaim with Isaias: Give praise, O ye heavens, and rejoice, O earth, ye mountains give praise with jubilation: because the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his poor ones (Is. 49:13).

GOSPEL (Mt. 2:1-12). When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of king Herod, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to adore him. And king Herod hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda; for so it is written by the prophet: And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come forth the ruler that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him. Who having heard the king, went their way; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother and falling down they adored him. And opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their own country.

What caused the three kings to undertake so tedious a journey?

A star which God permitted to appear in their land, at the sight of which they were inwardly enlightened, so that they at once recognized its signification. Let us learn from these kings who so readily responded to the inspiration of God, by immediately

undertaking so difficult a journey, to follow without delay the promptings of divine grace, and from their zeal, and the fearlessness with which they asked Herod where the Messiah would be found, we should learn to seek and practice, without fear of men, whatever is necessary for our salvation.

Why did Herod fear, and all Jerusalem with him?

Because Herod, a proud, imperious, cruel, and therefore jealous king, was afraid, when he heard of a newborn king, that he would be deprived of his throne, and punished for his vices. A bad conscience is always ill at ease, and has no peace. There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord God (Is. 57:21). Jerusalem, that is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, feared because many of them were attached to Herod, and others, especially the chief priests and the scribes, feared they would be punished for their secret crimes, when the Messiah would come, of whom they knew that He shall judge the poor with justice, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked (Is. 11:4).

Why did Herod assemble the chief priests and the scribes?

Partly to find from them where the Messiah was to be born, partly and principally because God so directed it, that Herod and the chief priests, knowing the time and place of the Messiah's birth, would have no excuse for their infidelity. In the same way God often makes known to us, in the clearest manner the most wholesome truths, yet we heed them as little as did the Jews who had sufficient knowledge of the Messiah, indeed, even showed the way to the three kings, but made no use of it for themselves, and were therefore cast away.

Why did Herod say he wished to adore the child?

This he did out of wicked hypocrisy and dissimulation. He had no other intention than to put Jesus to death, and therefore affected piety to find out exactly the time and place of His birth. Thus do those murderers of souls who desire the fall of the innocent; they do not let their evil intentions be made known at once, and so they put on sheep's clothing, feign piety and devotion, until they creep into the heart from which, by flattery and irony about religion and virtue, and by presents, they expel shame, the fear of God, and thus murder the soul.

Why did the kings fall down and adore Christ?

Because by the light of faith they saw in the Infant at Bethlehem God Himself, and, notwithstanding the poverty of His surroundings, recognized in Him the expected

Messiah, the new-born king of the Jews, and by prostrating themselves before Him paid Him the homage of their country.

Why did the kings offer gold, frankincense and myrrh?

Because it was the ancient Eastern custom, never to appear without presents before a prince or king, and the three kings, as the holy Fathers universally teach, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, desired by their presents to honor Christ as God, as king, and as man. Of this the venerable Bede writes: “The first of the kings, named Melchior, offered gold to Christ the Lord and king; the second, named Caspar, frankincense to the divinity of Christ; and the third, Balthassar, myrrh, by which was expressed that Christ, the Son of man, must die.”

How can we bring similar offerings to Christ?

We offer gold to Him, when we love Him with our whole heart, and out of love to Him, present Him our will by perfect obedience and continual self-denial, as our will is our most precious treasure. We also offer Him gold when we assist the poor by alms given in His name. We offer Him frankincense when we devoutly and ardently pray to Him, especially when we meditate upon His omnipotence, love, goodness, justice and mercy. We offer Him myrrh when we avoid carnal desires, mortify our evil inclinations and passions, and strive for purity of body and soul.

Why did the kings return by another way to their own country?

This they did by command of God. From the example of the three wise men we should learn to obey God rather than man, that we must be obedient to His directions, even if we do not understand them; so the three kings obeyed, although they may not have understood why God commanded them to flee from Herod. After we have found God we should walk in the path of virtue, and not return to our old sinful ways. “Our fatherland is paradise, heaven,” writes St. Gregory. “We have departed from it by pride, disobedience, abuse of the senses, therefore it is needed that we return to it by obedience, contempt of the world, and by taming the desires of the flesh; thus we return to our own country by another road. By forbidden pleasures we have forfeited the joys of paradise, by penance we must regain them.”

ASPIRATION Give me, O divine Saviour, the faith of those East-ern kings. Enlighten my understanding with the light which en-lightened them, and move my heart, that I may in future follow this light, and sincerely seek Thee who hast first sought me. Grant also, that I may really find Thee, with the wise men may adore Thee

in spirit and in truth, and bring to Thee the gold of love, the frankincense of prayer, and the myrrh of penance and mortification, that, having here offered Thee the sacrifice of my faith, I may adore Thee in Thy eternal glory. Amen.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

In the Introit of the Mass of this day the Church exhorts us to a joyous adoration of Christ by the following words:

INTROIT Upon a high throne I saw a man sitting, whom a multitude of angels adore singing together: behold Him the name of whose empire is to eternity (Is. 6). Sing joyfully to God, all the earth: serve the Lord with gladness (Ps. 99:2). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT Attend, O Lord, we beseech Thee, of Thy heavenly mercy, to the desires of Thy suppliant people; and grant that they may both perceive what they ought to do, and may have strength to fulfill the same. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (Rom. 12:1-5). Brethren, I beseech you by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be reformed in the newness of your mind: that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God. For I say, by the grace that is given me, to all that are among you, not to be wiser than it behooveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety: and according as God hath divided to everyone the measure of faith. For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another in Christ Jesus our Lord.

EXPLANATION The apostle entreats, even conjures us by all the mercies we have received to bring to God a living sacrifice; namely, the mortification of our carnal desires, and the practice of every virtue, a holy, pure and immaculate sacrifice

agreeable to God, intended for His glory alone; not a dead sacrifice as the Jews offered by killing animals, nor an unholy one as the Gentiles offered by polluting their bodies. This living, holy, God-pleasing sacrifice should be the offering of our body; but this does not exclude the sacrifice of our spirit, because all our actions, the corporal as well as spiritual, should be directed to God, the end for which we were created. The sacrifice of the spirit is made when we overcome pride, anger, impatience, etc., and by avoiding willful distractions during prayer and divine worship. Like David we should have a contrite and humble heart to present to the Lord; this is a most pleasing sacrifice in His eyes, one which He will never despise. Thus we render a reasonable service, and are, as St. Peter says (I Pet 2:9), a kingly priesthood, because we govern, like kings, our evil inclinations, and offer with body and soul a continual sacrifice to God. The apostle further exhorts us not to become like the world, that is, not to follow the corrupt manners and principles of the children of the world; not to desire those things at which the world aims; not to love that which the world loves; not to act as the world acts; but rather seek constantly to change our evil disposition, by combating our corrupt and evil inclinations and by practicing virtue instead. We must cease to be the old worldly man, and become a new heavenly man; to be such, we must carefully seek to know in all things what is pleasing to God, and therefore perfect and good. This is the necessary science to which St. Paul alludes, when he says that we should not wish to know more than is proper. All worldly arts and sciences will not help us to gain heaven, if we do not endeavour to learn thoroughly that which faith teaches, and what God demands. Even if we have made great progress in this holy science we should not presume to think more of ourselves than what we really are, nor violate charity by contempt of others less instructed, for God gives to everyone, in some measure, the gift of faith. This gift of faith we should use in order to continually glorify the body of Christ, His Church, Whose members we are, and enable us to lead such a life that others, being edified, may be brought into the true fold.

ASPIRATION Grant, O Jesus, that by mortification, humility, and contrition, I may offer my body and my soul as a living, holy, and pleasing sacrifice to Thee, and that I may never defile them by impurities.

GOSPEL (Lk. 2:42-52). And when Jesus was twelve years old, they going up into Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in

the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? did ye not know that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men.

Why did our Saviour go with His parents to Jerusalem to the temple?

Because God commanded (Deut. 16:16) that all the male Israelites should appear, three times a year on certain festivals, and offer sacrifice to Him in the temple; Jesus fulfilled this commandment to set us an example that we, according to the will of the holy Catholic Church, should willingly and devoutly be present at the services of the Church on Sundays and holydays of obligation. Neither the distance from the church nor the difficulties of the way should prevent our attendance, since Jesus did not shun a three days' journey to the temple.

Why does the gospel say according to the custom of the feast?

That we may understand, that like Mary and Joseph, we should be punctual in observing the ecclesiastical festivals and holy usages, and like true Catholics, should observe them. Parents should require their children at an early age to take part in prayer, attend church and school, and see that they conduct themselves quietly and reverently while there. Mary and Joseph took the holy Child Jesus with them to the temple.

Why did the child Jesus remain in Jerusalem?

Because of His love of prayer and communion with His Heavenly Father, and to show, even then, some rays of His divinity, by which to make known that He had come for the glory of His Father, and to procure our salvation. The glory of God and the salvation of our souls should be our chief object in life.

Why did Mary and Joseph search so diligently for Jesus?

Because they were fearful lest they should lose Him Whom they loved so exceedingly. We should learn from this, how careful we should be not to lose Jesus by sin, or having lost Him, how anxiously we should seek by penance to find Him. The parents of Jesus, by their diligent search and inquiries for the divine Infant, teach

and rebuke those parents who care less for the Christian education of their children than for their temporal advantages, who pay no attention to the persons with whom their children associate, nor to the places which they frequent, whether they learn things that are useful to them, and who for the sake of some temporal advantage permit their children sinful intimacy with evil-minded persons. From these parents God will one day demand the souls of their children with severest justice.

Why was our Saviour found in the temple in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions?

To teach us that we ought to seek the knowledge necessary for our salvation, and attend carefully to the sermons and instructions on Christian doctrine; we should by no means be ashamed to ask questions of our pastors when we are in doubt, and should listen to their answers. Was Christ, the Eternal Wisdom, ashamed to ask questions and to answer? Why should we ignorant people hesitate? It is much to be regretted that persons who have many important things concerning their spiritual welfare on their minds, through pride and false shame, would rather go to perdition than ask advice, solely for fear of showing their ignorance.

Why did Mary say: Son, why hast thou done so to us?

These words were forced from her by pain at the absence of her Son, Whom she loved above all things, and not by indignation, for He was blameless. Mary's conduct should teach parents to remember their duty of caring for their children, and punish them when they do wrong.

INSTRUCTION ON THE VIRTUE OF OBEDIENCE

He was subject to them (Lk. 2:51).

From this all Christians should learn to be obedient to the commandments of God and of the Church. God has united life or death, blessing or malediction with obedience or disobedience to His commandments, and the Bible (I Kings 15:22) shows that obedience pleases God more than sacrifices or the fat of rams, and that He despises disobedience as He does witchcraft and idolatry. We must be obedient to the Church, because Christ Himself with His Holy Spirit lives in her, and governs her, and has said: Who hears not the Church, let him be to thee a heathen and a publican, therefore, shut out from eternal life. We must be obedient to our parents, because they are placed over us by God, and we are indebted to them, under Him, for life and many benefits. Those children who do not assist their parents when they are old, poor, and helpless,

or are ashamed of them, have reason to be afraid, since even Christ Jesus, the God-Man, was obedient and subject in all things to His poor mother, and to a humble mechanic who was only His foster-father. Cursed be he that honoreth not his father and mother (Deut. 27:16); how much more cursed those who despise, deride and abandon their parents? Their eyes will one day be picked out by ravens (Prov. 30:17). If God commanded obstinate and disobedient children to be stoned (Dent. 21:20), what do those not deserve who even strike or abuse their parents?

How did Jesus advance in age, wisdom and grace?

He showed new effects of the wisdom and grace with which He was filled, as He advanced in years, and thus teaches us to progress the more in virtue, and fulfill the duties of our state in life that we may attain perfection hereafter.

ASPIRATION Most amiable Jesus! Who in the twelfth year of Thy age, didst permit Thyself to be found in the temple by Thy parents, and, as an example for us, wast humbly obedient to them, grant that we may diligently attend to the important affair of our salvation, willingly carry the yoke of Thy law from our youth, and be always obedient to the laws of Thy Church, to our parents, and superiors. Prevent uneducated youth from growing reckless, and preserve them from a scandalous life. Give parents wisdom and grace to educate their children according to Thy will in all virtue. Grant to us all, that we may never lose Thee by sin, or if we have lost Thee, anxiously to seek Thee, happily find Thee, and with Thy grace more and more increase in wisdom and in virtue. Amen.

TRUE PIETY

They found Him in the temple (Lk. 2:46).

Many people deceive themselves in regard to true piety, because their imagination represents it to them according to the effect produced by their passions or disposition of mind. He who fasts often and willingly believes that he is pious, though in his heart he nourishes a secret hatred, and while he fears to wet the tip of his tongue with wine, even with water, lest he should not live temperately enough, finds pleasure in detraction and slander, that unquenchable thirst for the blood of his neighbour. Another, because he is accustomed daily to recite a long string of prayers, esteems himself pious, though he gives vent afterwards to haughty, bitter, offensive language, hurting people at home and abroad. Another keeps his purse open for the poor, but keeps his heart ever closed to the love of his enemy, whom he will not forgive; another forgives his enemy with all his heart, but will not pay his creditors, until

forced by law. All these think themselves pious, and are perhaps so regarded by the world, but in truth they are far from being pious. In what then does true piety consist? In the perfect love of God. This love is called the beautiful love, because it is the ornament of the soul, and attracts to itself with complacency the eyes of the Divine Majesty. When it strengthens us to do good, it is called the strong love; when it causes us to do that good quickly, carefully, and repeatedly, it is called piety. The ostrich has wings, it is true, but never uses them to fly; the chickens fly heavily and not high; but the eagles, the doves, and the swallows, fly high and swiftly, and do not easily tire. The sinners are but earthly people, they creep upon the ground; the just, who are still imperfect, rise, it is true, towards heaven but seldom, and then but slowly and heavily. But there are some, true, pious souls, who like the doves and the eagles soar high on strong, swift wings to God. In a word, piety is nothing else than a certain active, swift energy of the spirit, with which the strong love in us, or we with it, performs, as far as it is possible to us, all good. As the strong love urges us to keep God's commandments, the perfect love, that is, piety, urges us to keep them carefully and with all possible zeal.

No one is just or pious who does not keep all God's commandments without exception; for, to be just we must possess the strong love, and to be pious we must possess besides, a certain eagerness to profit by all the occasions of doing good, that present themselves. Thus St. Francis de Sales writes in his *Philothea*, from which it is seen that true piety consists not in special devotions, or the practice of special good works, but in the zealous, earnest, continuous obedience to the commandments and performance of duty for the love of God.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

In the Introit of this day's Mass the Church calls upon all creatures to thank God for the Incarnation of His only-begotten Son.

INTROIT Let all the earth adore Thee, O God and sing to Thee: let it sing a psalm to Thy name (Ps. 65:4). Shout with joy to God all the earth, sing ye a psalm to His name: give glory to His praise (Ps. 65:1-2). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT Almighty and eternal God, Who disposest all things in heaven and on earth: mercifully hear the supplications of Thy people, and give Thy peace to our times. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (Rom.12:6-16). Brethren: We have different gifts, according to the grace that is given us: either prophecy, to be used according to the rule of faith, or ministry in ministering, or he that teacheth in doctrine, he that exhorteth in exhorting, he that giveth with simplicity, he that ruleth with carefulness, he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Hating that which is evil, cleaving to that which is good: loving one another with the charity of brotherhood: with honor preventing one another: in carefulness not slothful: in spirit fervent: serving the Lord: rejoicing in hope: patient in tribulation: instant in prayer: communicating to the necessities of the saints: pursuing hospitality: bless them that persecute you: bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep: being of one mind, one towards another: not minding high things, but consenting to the humble. Be not wise in your own conceits.

EXPLANATION. St. Paul in this epistle exhorts every Christian to make good use of the gifts of God; if one receives an office, he must see well to it, so that he can give an account to God of the faithful performance of his duties. He exhorts especially to brotherly love which we should practice by charitable works; such as, receiving strangers hospitably, giving alms to those who are in need, and to those who by misfortune or injustice have lost their property; he commands us, at the same time, to rejoice in the welfare of our neighbour, as we rejoice at our own good fortune, and to grieve at his misfortunes as we would over those which befall us.

How is brotherly love best preserved?

By the virtue of humility which makes us esteem our neighbour above ourselves, consider his good qualities only, bear patiently his defects, and always meet him in a friendly, respectful, and indulgent manner. Humility causes us to live always in peace with our fellowmen, while among the proud, where each wishes to be the first, there is continual strife and dissatisfaction (Prov. 13:10).

INSTRUCTION FOR SUPERIORS

Those have to expect a severe sentence from God, who merely for temporal gain, seek profitable offices, and thrust themselves therein whether capable or not, and if capable care very little whether they fulfill the duties required, or perhaps make the fulfillment of them depend upon bribes. Of such God makes terrible complaint: Thy princes (judges) are faithless, companions of thieves: they all love bribes, they run after rewards. They judge not for the fatherless; and the widow's cause comes not

into them (Is. 1:23). A most severe judgment shall be for them that bear rule (Wisd. 6:6).

ASPIRATION Grant us, O Lord, Thy grace, that according to Thy will, we may follow the instructions of St. Paul in regard to humility and love, have compassion upon all suffering and needy, think little of ourselves, and descend to the lowest, that we may, one day, be elevated with them in heaven.

GOSPEL (Jn. 2:1-11). At that time there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine. And Jesus with to her: Woman, what is it to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come. His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee: and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

Why was Christ and His mother present at this marriage?

In order to honour this humble and God-fearing couple who, with faithful hearts, had invited Him and His mother to their wedding; to give us an example of humility; to assist them in their poverty, and save their good name by changing water into wine; to reveal His dignity as the Messiah to His disciples by this miracle; and to sanctify by His presence the marriages that are contracted in the spirit of the Church.

Alas! how few marriages of our time could Jesus honor with His presence, because He is invited neither by fervent prayer, nor by the chaste life of the couple: He is excluded rather, by the frequent immorality of the married couple and their guests.

Why was Mary interested in this married couple?

Because she is merciful, and the Mother of Mercy, and willingly assists all the poor and afflicted who fear God. From this incident, St. Bonaventure judges of the many

graces which we can hope for through Mary, now that she reigns in heaven; “For,” says he, “if Mary while yet on earth was so compassionate, how much more so is she now, reigning in heaven!” He gives the reason by adding: “Mary now that she sees the face of God, knows our necessities far better than when she was on earth, and in proportion to the increase of her compassion, her power to aid us has been augmented.” Ah! why do we not take refuge in all our necessities to this merciful mother, who although unasked assists the needy?

Why did Christ say to Mary: Woman, what is it to me and to thee?

This seemingly harsh reply of Christ was no reproach, for Mary had made her request only through love and mercy, and Christ calls those blessed who are merciful, but he wished to show that in the performance of divine work, the will of His heavenly Father alone should be consulted. He meant to remind her that He had not received the gift of miracles from her as the son of woman, but from His eternal Father, in accordance with whose will He would do that which she asked when the hour designed by God would come. Though the hour had not come, yet He granted the wish of His mother, who knew that her divine Son refused none of her requests, and so she said to the servants: “Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye.” Behold the great power of Mary’s intercession! Neglect not, therefore, to take refuge in this most powerful mother!

What are we taught by the words: My hour is not yet come?

These words teach us that we should in all things await God’s appointed time, and in things belonging to God and His honour, act only by divine direction, without any human motives.

What does the scarcity of wine signify?

In a spiritual sense the want of wine may be understood to signify the lack of love between married people, which is principally the case with those who enter this state through worldly motives, for the sake of riches, beauty of person, or who have before marriage kept up sinful intercourse. These should ask God for the forgiveness of their sins, bear the hardships of married life in the spirit of penance, and change the wrong motives they had before marriage; by doing so God will supply the scarcity of wine, that is the lack of true love, and change the waters of misery into the wine of patient affection.

Why did Christ command them to take the wine to the steward?

That the steward, whose office required him to be attentive to the conduct of the guests, and to know the quality of the wine, should give his judgment in regard to the excellence of this, and be able to testify to the miracle before all the guests.

ASPIRATION O my most merciful Jesus! I would rather drink in this world the sour wine of misery than the sweet wine of pleasure, that in heaven I may taste the perfect wine of eternal joy.

INSTRUCTION ON THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

What is Matrimony?

Matrimony is the perfect, indissoluble union of two free persons of different sex, for the purpose of propagating the human race, mutually to bear the burdens of life and to prevent sin (I Cor. 7:2).

Who instituted Matrimony?

God Himself, the Creator of all things (Gen. 1:27-28). He brought to man the helpmate, whom He formed from one of the ribs of Adam, that she who came from his heart, might never depart therefrom, but cling to him in the indissoluble bond of love (Gen. 2:18, 24). To this original, divine institution Christ refers (Mt. 19:4-6), and the Church declares the bond of marriage perpetual and indissoluble.

Is Matrimony a Sacrament?

Yes; according to the testimony of the Fathers, the Church has held it such from the times of the apostles, which she could not do, had Christ not raised it to the dignity of a Sacrament. St. Paul even calls it a great Sacrament, because it is symbolical of the perpetual union of Christ with His Church; and the Council of Trent declares: "If any one says that Matrimony is not really and truly one of the seven Sacraments of the Church instituted by Christ, but an invention of men that imparts no grace, let him be anathema" (Conc. Trid., Sess. XXIV, can. 1).

What graces does this Sacrament impart?

The grace of preserving matrimonial fidelity inviolate: the grace of educating children as Christians; of patiently enduring the unavoidable difficulties of married life, and of living peaceably with each other. Married people are indeed greatly in need of these graces, in order to fulfill their mutual obligations.

What is the external sign in the Sacrament of Matrimony?

The union of two single persons in Matrimony, which according to the regulations of the Council of Trent (Conc. Trid., Sess. XXIV, can. 1), must be formed publicly in the presence of the pastor, or with his permission before another priest, and two witnesses.

What preparations are to be made to receive the grace of this Sacrament?

- 1.** The first and best preparation is a pure and pious life.
- 2.** The light of the Holy Ghost should be invoked to know whether one is called to this state of life.
- 3.** The parents and the father-confessor should be asked for advice.
- 4.** The choice should be made in regard to a Christian heart, and a gentle disposition rather than to beauty and wealth.
- 5.** The immediate preparation is, to purify the conscience, if it has not already been done, by a good general confession, and by the reception of the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. Before their marriage the young couple should ask their parents' blessing, should hear the nuptial Mass with devotion, with the intention of obtaining God's grace to begin their new state of life well, and finally they should commend themselves with confidence to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her spouse St. Joseph.

Why are there so many unhappy marriages?

Because so many people prepare the way by sins and vices, and continue to sin without interruption, and without true amendment until marriage, therefore always make sacrilegious confessions, even perhaps immediately before marriage. Besides this many enter the married life on account of carnal intentions, or other earthly motives; in many cases they do not even ask God for His grace; without any proper

preparation for such an important, sacred act, on their marriage day they go to church with levity and afterwards celebrate their wedding with but little modesty. Is it any wonder that such married people receive no blessing, no grace, when they render themselves so unworthy?

Why did God institute married life?

That children might be brought up honestly and as Christians, and that they should be instructed especially in matters of faith; that married people should sustain each other in the difficulties of life, and mutually exhort one another to a pious life; and lastly, that the sin of impurity might be avoided. For they who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power (Too. 6:17).

With what intentions should the married state be entered?

With such intentions as the young Tobias and his bride had, who before the marriage ceremony, ardently prayed God for His grace, and took their wedding breakfast in the fear of the Lord (Too. 14:15). Hence God's blessing was with them until death. If all young people would enter the married state thus, it would certainly be holy, God-pleasing and blessed, and the words of St. Paul, spoken to wives, would come true unto them: Yet she shall be saved by bearing children, if she continue in faith, and love, and sanctification with sobriety (I Tim. 2:15).

Why are the bans of marriage published three times in Church?

That all impediments which would render the marriage unlawful may be made known. Such impediments are: consanguinity, clandestine marriages, etc. Therefore, anyone who is aware of such impediments, is bound to make them known to the pastor.

Why is the marriage performed in the presence of the parish priest?

Because the Catholic Church expressly declares that those marriages which are not performed in presence of the pastor, or with his permission before another priest, and two witnesses, are null and void (Conc. Trid., Sess. XXIV can. 1); and because the blessing of the priest, which he imparts in the name of the Church, gives the couple, if they are in a state of grace, strength, fortitude and grace to be faithful to each other, to endure all trials patiently, and to be safe from all the influences of the evil enemy.”

Why do they join hands before the priest, and two witnesses?

By this they bind themselves before God and His Church to remain true to each other, and to be ready to assist each other in all adversities. The bridegroom puts a ring on the bride's finger which should remind her of her duty of inviolable fidelity; to this end the priest signs and seals this holy union with the unbloody Sacrifice of the New Law.

Can the bond of marriage be dissolved in the Catholic Church?

A valid marriage, contracted with the free consent of each of the parties, can according to the plain doctrine of the Scriptures, the constant teaching and practice of the Church, be dissolved only by the death of one of the parties. If the pope or a bishop, for important reasons, gives a divorce, this is only partial, and neither can marry again while the other lives. Such a marriage would not be valid. How pure and holy are the doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church in this the most important and sacred of all human relations, preserving its inviolability and sanctity; while, on the contrary, by means of the wanton doctrine of the heretics, which for trivial reasons entirely dissolves the marriage contract, this sacred union is made the deepest ignominy of mankind, and the play-ball of human passions and caprice!

What is thought of mixed marriages, or marriages between Catholics and Protestants?

The Catholic Church has always condemned such marriages, because of the great dangers to which the Catholic party is unavoidably exposed as well as the offspring. Such marriages promote indifference in matters of religion, by which the spiritual life of the soul is destroyed; they are a hindrance to domestic peace, cause mutual aversion, quarrels, and confusion; they give scandal to servants; they interfere with the Christian education of the children, even render it impossible, and they frequently lead to apostasy and despair. But the Catholic Church condemns especially those mixed marriages, in which either all or a number of the children are brought up in heresy, and she can never bless and look upon those as her children who do not fear to withdraw themselves and their own children from the only saving faith, and expose them to the danger of eternal ruin. Therefore, those Catholics who enter the matrimonial union with Protestants, although the marriage if lawfully contracted is valid, commit a mortal sin if they permit their children to be brought up in heresy,

and should it not be their full intention to bring up their children in the Catholic faith at the time of their marriage, they would commit a sacrilege.

What should the newly married couple do immediately after the ceremony is performed?

They should kneel and thank God for the graces received in this holy Sacrament, in such or similar words: “Ratify, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that which by Thy grace Thou hast wrought in us, that we may keep that which in Thy presence we have promised unto the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That they may keep their promise made at the altar, they should always remember the duties laid down to them by the priest at the time of their marriage, and the exhortations which are taken from the epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:29, 31), wherein he instructs married people how they should comport themselves towards each other, and recalls to them as an example the union of Christ with His Church, and His love for her. To the husbands he says, they should love their wives as Christ loved His Church, for which He even gave Himself up to death; from this is seen, that men should assist their wives even unto death, in all need, and not treat them as servants. To the wives St. Paul says, that they as the weaker should be in all reasonable things obedient to their husbands, as the Church is obedient to Christ; for as Christ is the head of the Church, so is the husband the head of the wife. Experience proves there is no better way for women to win the hearts of their husbands than by amiable obedience and ready love, while, on the contrary, a querulous, imperative deportment robs them of their husbands’ affections, and even causes them to be regarded with aversion. St. Paul says further; that husbands should love their wives (and consequently wives their husbands) as their own bodies, because married people are, as it were, one. They shall be two in one flesh; no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church (Eph. 5:29, 31). How unjustly and barbarously do those act, who, instead of loving one another, rather hate and outrage each other, and cause the loss of their property, and by detraction steal their honor! These do not consider that he who hates and disgraces his partner in life, hates and disgraces himself; while according to the words of St. Paul he who loves her, loves himself. If married people would remain in constant love and unity, it is most necessary that they should patiently bear with each other’s infirmities, wrongs, and defects, exhort one another with mildness and affection, keep their adversities, trials, and sufferings as much as possible to themselves, and complain in prayer only to God, who alone can aid them. By impatience, quarrels, and complaints the cross becomes only heavier and the evil worse. Finally, not only on their wedding day, but often through life, they should earnestly consider that they have not entered the married state that they may

inordinately serve the pleasures of the body, but to have children who will one day inhabit heaven according to the will of God; as the angel said to Tobias: “For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power” (Tob. 6:17).

PRAYER Most merciful Jesus! who didst work Thy first miracle at the wedding in Cana by changing water into wine, thereby revealing Thy divine power and majesty, and honoring matrimony: grant we beseech Thee, that Thy faithful may ever keep sacred and inviolate the holy sacrament of Matrimony, and that they may so live in it truthfully, in the fear of the Lord, that they may not put an obstacle in the way of obtaining heaven for themselves, and their children.

1. In all such dioceses of the United States, where the Council of Trent has not been published, civil marriages are considered valid. The Catholic, however, who becomes married by civil authority commits a mortal sin, except in case of extreme necessity. To be married by a sectarian preacher is looked upon as a denial of faith, and incurs excommunication.

FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

(Sunday after the Octave of the Nativity or January 2)

Who instituted this festival?

Pope Innocent XIII in the year 1721 commanded that the most Holy Name of Jesus should be solemnly honored throughout the Catholic world. St. Bernard, with the sanction of the Apostolic See, had established the solemn veneration of this most Holy Name in his order a few centuries before.

In the Introit of this day's Mass, the Church proclaims the glory of this name:

INTROIT In the name of Jesus let every knee bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and let every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:10-11). O Lord our Lord, how wonderful is thy name in the whole earth! (Ps. 8:2). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT O God, Who didst ordain Thine only-begotten Son to be the Saviour of mankind, and didst command that he should be called Jesus: mercifully grant that we

may enjoy in heaven the blessed vision of him whose holy name we venerate upon earth. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (Acts 4:8-12). In those days, Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said: Ye princes of the people and ancients, hear: If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him this man standeth here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders; which is become the head of the corner: neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.

EXPLANATION This Epistle speaks of the omnipotent power of the name of Jesus, through which miracles are not only performed, but also on which our salvation depends. Jesus alone can give us redemption and happiness; He alone under heaven has been given to man by God, that through Him happiness could be reached; He alone can break the fetters of error and sin in which all mankind lies captured. He alone is the truth, He alone, as the Son of God, has power to render perfect satisfaction for sin, and to make us truly good; and the good alone can be saved. Cling, therefore, ever faithfully and firmly to Jesus, and depart not from Him; without Him you can accomplish nothing; with Him, through Him, you can accomplish all things.

[For the **GOSPEL** of this day, see the gospel of New Year's day.]

REMARKS OF ST. BERNARD ON THE SWEET NAME OF JESUS

The sweet name of Jesus produces in us holy thoughts, fills the soul with noble sentiments, strengthens virtue, begets good works, and nourishes pure affections. All spiritual food leaves the soul dry, if it contain not that penetrating oil, the name Jesus. When you take your pen, write the name Jesus: if you write books, let the name of Jesus be contained in them, else they will possess no charm or attraction for me; you may speak, or you may reply, but if the name of Jesus sounds not from your lips, you are without unction and without charm. Jesus is honey in our mouth, light in our eyes, a flame in our heart. This name is the cure for all diseases of the soul. Are you troubled? think but of Jesus, speak but the name of Jesus, the clouds disperse, and peace descends anew from heaven. Have you fallen into sin? so that you fear death? invoke the name of Jesus, and you will soon feel life returning. No obduracy of the soul, no weakness, no coldness of heart can resist this holy name; there is no heart which will not soften and open in tears at this holy name. Are you surrounded by

sorrow and danger? invoke the name of Jesus, and your fears will vanish. Never yet was human being in urgent need, and on the point of perishing, who invoked this help-giving name, and was not powerfully sustained. It was given us for the cure of all our ills; to soften the impetuosity of anger, to quench the fire of concupiscence, to conquer pride, to mitigate the pain of our wounds, to overcome the thirst of avarice, to quiet sensual passions, and the desires of low pleasures. If we call to our minds the name of Jesus, it brings before us His most meek and humble heart, and gives us a new knowledge of His most loving and tender compassion. The name of Jesus is the purest, and holiest, the noblest and most indulgent of names, the name of all blessings and of all virtues; it is the name of the God-Man, of sanctity itself. To think of Jesus is to think of the great, infinite God Who, having given us His life as an example, has also bestowed the necessary understanding, energy and assistance to enable us to follow and imitate Him, in our thoughts, inclinations, words and actions. If the name of Jesus reaches the depths of our heart, it leaves heavenly virtue there. We say, therefore, with our great master, St. Paul the Apostle: If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema (I Cor. 16:22).

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

INTROIT Adore God, all ye His angels: Sion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Juda rejoiced. The Lord hath reigned; let the earth rejoice; let the many islands be glad. (Ps. XCVI. 1.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT Almighty everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmity, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy majesty for our protection. Through our protection. Through our etc.

EPISTLE (Rom. XII. 16-21.) Brethren, be not wise in your own conceits. To no man rendering evil for evil: providing good things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as is in you, having peace with all men; not revenging yourselves, my dearly beloved but give place unto wrath; for it is written: Revenge is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. But if thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him to drink; for doing this, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.

When are we overcome by evil?

When we wish to take revenge. “Revenge is no sign of courage,” says St. Ambrose, “but rather of weakness and cowardice. As it is the sign of a very weak stomach to be unable to digest food, so it is the mark of a very weak mind to be unable to bear a harsh word.” “Are you impatient,” says the same saint, “you are overcome; are you patient, you have overcome.”

What should we do if our reputation is injured?

We should leave its revenge, or its defence and protection to God, who has retained that for Himself. “But as a good name,” says St. Francis de Sales, “is the main support of human society, and as without it we could not be useful to that society, but even hurtful to it on account of scandal, we should feel bound, for love of our neighbour, to aim after a good reputation, and to preserve it.” We should not be too sensitive about this, however, for too great a sensitiveness makes one obstinate, eccentric, and intolerable, and only tends to excite and increase the malice of the detractors. The silence and contempt with which we meet a slander or an injustice, is generally a more efficacious antidote than sensitiveness, anger, or revenge. The contempt of a slander at once disperses it, but anger shows a weakness, and gives the accusation an appearance of probability. If this does not suffice, and the slander continues, let us persevere in humility’ and lay our honour and our soul into the hands of God, according to the admonitions of the Apostle.

How do we “heap coals of fire on the head of our enemy?”

When we return him good for evil, for seeing our well-meaning towards him, the flush of shame reddens his face for the wrongs he has done us. St. Augustine explains these words thus: “By giving food and drink or doing other kindnesses to your enemy, you will heap coals, not of anger, but of love, upon his head, which will inflame him to return love for love.” Learn therefore, from the example of Christ and His saints, not to allow yourself to be overcome by evil, but do good to those that hate and persecute you.

ASPIRATION Ah, that I might, according to the words of St. Paul, so live that I may be a child of the Heavenly Father, who lets His sun shine on the just and the unjust!

GOSPEL (Matt. VIII. 1-13.) At that time, when Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him; and behold, a leper came and adored him, saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will, be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith to him, See thou tell no man: but go, show thyself to the

priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them. And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying: Lord, my servant Beth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus saith to him: I will come and heal him. And the centurion making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to this man: Go, and he goeth; and to another: Come, and he cometh; and to my servant: Do this, and he doeth it. And Jesus hearing this, marvelled; and said to them that followed him: Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I sad to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion: Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee; and the servant was healed at the same hour.

Why did the leper say: “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean”?

He believed Christ to be the promised Messiah, who as true God had the power to heal him. From this we learn to have confidence in the omnipotence of God, who is a helper in all need, (Ps. CVI. 6. 73. 19.) and to leave all to the will of God, saying: Lord, if it be pleasing to Thee, and well for me, grant my petition.

Why did Jesus stretch forth His hand and touch the leper?

To show that He was not subject to the law which forbade the touching of a leper through fear of infection, which could not affect Jesus; to reveal the health-giving, curative power of His flesh, which dispelled leprosy by the simple touch of His hand; to give us an example of humility and of love for the poor sick, that we may learn from Him to have no aversion to the infirm, but lovingly to assist the unfortunate sick for the sake of Jesus who took upon Himself the leprosy of our sins. The saints have faithfully imitated Him in their tender care for those suffering from the most disgusting diseases. Oh, how hard it will be for those to stand before the Tribunal of God at the Last Day, who cannot even bear to look at the poor and sick!

Why did Christ command the leper to tell no man?

To instruct us that we should not make known our good works in order to obtain frivolous praise, (Matt. VI 1.) which deprives us of our heavenly reward.

Why did Christ send the healed leper to the Priest?

That he might observe the law which required all the healed lepers to show themselves to the priests, to offer a sacrifice, to be examined and pronounced clean: that the priest if he beheld the miracle of the sudden cure of the leper, might know Him who had wrought the cure, to be the Messiah; and finally, to teach us that we must honor the priests because of their high position, even when they do not live in a manner worthy of their dignity, as was the case with the Jewish priests.

What it taught by the centurion's solicitude for his servant?

That masters should take care of their sick servants, see that they are attended to in their illness, and above all that they are provided with the Sacraments. It is unchristian, even cruel and barbarous, to drive from the house a poor, sick servant, or to leave him lying in his distress without assistance or care.

Why did Christ say: I will come and heal him?

Because of His humility, by which He, although God and Lord of lords, did not hesitate to visit a sick servant. Here Christ's humility puts to shame many persons of position who think themselves too exalted to attend the wants of a poor servant.

Why did the centurion say: Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof?

Because he recognised Christ's divinity and his own nothingness, and therefore regarded himself as unworthy to receive Christ into his house.

From this we learn to humble ourselves, especially when we receive Christ into our hearts, hence the priest in giving holy Communion uses the centurion's words, exhorting those to humility who are about to receive.

Why did he add: But only say the word, and my servant shall be healed?

By this he publicly manifested his faith in Christ's divinity and omnipotence, because he believed that Christ, though absent, could heal the servant by a word.

If a Gentile centurion had such faith in Christ, and such confidence in His power, should not we Christians be ashamed that we have so little faith, and confidence in God?

What is meant by: Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into the exterior darkness?

This was said by Christ in reference to the obdurate Jews who would not believe in Him. Many pagans who receive the gospel, and live in accordance with it, will enjoy heavenly bliss with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were the most faithful friends of God, while the Jews, God's chosen people, who as such, possessed the first claim to heaven, will, because of their unbelief and other sins, be cast into outer darkness, that is, into the deepest abyss of hell, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Thus it will be with those Christians who do not live in accordance with their faith. Therefore, fear lest you, for want of cooperation with God's grace, be eternally rejected, while others who have faithfully corresponded to the divine inspirations will enter into your place in the kingdom of heaven.

ASPIRATION O Jesus, rich in consolations! grant me the leper's faith and confidence, that in all things I may rely upon Thy omnipotence, and may resign myself to Thy divine will, and may ever honor Thy priests. Grant me, also, O most humble Jesus! the centurion's humility, that for Thy sake, I may compassionately assist my neighbour, and by doing so render myself worthy of Thy grace and mercy.

ON RESIGNATION TO THE WILL OF GOD

Lord, if thou wilt. (Matt. VIII. 2.)

Those who in adversity as well as in prosperity, perfectly resign themselves to the will of God, and accept whatever He sends them with joy and thanks, possess heaven, as St. Chrysostom says, while yet upon earth. Those who have attained this resignation, are saddened by no adversity, because they are satisfied with all that God, their best Father, sends them, be it honor or disgrace, wealth or poverty, life or death. All happens as they wish, because they know no will but God's, they desire nothing but that which He does and wills. God does the will of them that fear Him. (Ps. CXLIV. 10.) In the lives of the ancient Fathers we find the following: The fields and

vineyards belonging to one farmer were much more fertile and yielding than were his neighbours'. They asked how it happened and he said: they should not wonder at it, because he always had the weather he wished. At this they wondered more than ever: How could that be? "I never desire other weather," he replied, "than God wills; and because my desires are conformable to His, He gives me the fruits I wish." This submission to the divine will is also the cause of that constant peace and undimmed joy of the saints of God, with which their hearts have overflowed here below, even in the midst of the greatest sufferings and afflictions. Who would not aspire to so happy a state? We will attain it if we believe that nothing in this world can happen to us except by the will and through the direction of God, sin and guilt excepted, for God can never be the cause of them. This the Holy Ghost inculcates by the mouth of the wise man: Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God, (Eccles. XI. 14.) that is, are permitted or sent by God; all that which comes from God, is for the best, for God doeth all things well. (Mark VII. 37.) Whoever keeps these two truths always in mind, will certainly be ever contented with the will of God, and always consoled; he will taste while yet on earth the undisturbed peace of mind and foretaste of happiness which the saints had while here, and which they now eternally enjoy in heaven, because of the union of their will with the divine will.

INSTRUCTION FOR MASTERS AND SERVANTS

The master of a house should be careful to have not only obedient, faithful, willing, and industrious servants in his home, as had the centurion in the gospel, but still more, pious and God-fearing ones, for God richly blesses the master because of pious servants. Thus God blessed Laban on account of the pious Jacob, (Gen. XXX. 30.) and the house of Putiphar because of the just Joseph. (Gen. XXXIX. 5.) The master should look to the morals and Christian conduct of his servants, and not suffer irreligious subjects in his house, for he must, after this life, give an account before the tribunal of God, and he makes himself unworthy of the blessing of God, often liable to the most terrible punishment by retaining such. Will not God punish those masters and mistresses who suffer those under them to seek the dangerous occasions of sin, keep sinful company, go about at night, and lead scandalous lives? Will not God, one day, demand the souls of servants from their masters? The same punishment which will befall those who deny their faith, will rest upon careless masters and mistresses, for St. Paul the Apostle writes:

But if any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. (I. Tim. V. 8.)

Subjects should learn from the centurion's servants who obeyed his only word, that they also should willingly, faithfully, and quickly do everything ordered by their masters, unless it be something contrary to the law of God. They should recollect that whatever they do in obedience to their superiors, is done for God Himself. Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not serving to the eye, as pleasing men, but in simplicity of heart, fearing God. Whatsoever you do, do it from the heart as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance. Serve ye the Lord Christ. (Col. III. 22-24.)

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

[The ***Introit*** of the Mass as on the preceding Sunday.]

COLLECT O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so great perils, that because of the frailty of our nature we cannot stand; grant to us health of mind and body, that those things which we suffer for our sins, we may by Thy aid overcome. Through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord &c.

EPISTLE (Romans XIII. 8-10.) Brethren, owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law. For thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is comprised in this word: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The love of our neighbour worketh no evil. Love, therefore, is the fulfilling of the law.

What is meant by St Paul's words: He that loveth his neighbour, hath fulfilled the law?

St. Augustine in reference to these words says: that he who loves his neighbour, fulfills as well the precepts of the first as of the second tablet of the law. The reason is, that the love of our neighbour contains and presupposes the love of God as its fountain and foundation. The neighbour must be loved on account of God; for the neighbour cannot be loved with true love, if we do not first love God. On this account,

the holy Evangelist St. John in his old age, always gave the exhortation: Little children, love one another. And when asked why, he answered: Because it is the command of the Lord, and it is enough to fulfill it. Therefore in this love of the neighbour which comes from the love of God and is contained in it, consists the fulfillment of the whole law. (Matt. XXII. 40.)

GOSPEL (Matt. VIII 23-27) At that time, when Jesus entered into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves; but he was asleep. And they came to him and awaked him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up, he commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey him?

Why did Christ sleep in the boat?

To test the faith and confidence of His disciples; to exercise them in enduring the persecutions which they were afterwards to endure; to teach us that we should not waver in the storms of temptations. St. Augustine writes: “Christ slept, and because of the danger the disciples were confused. Why? Because Christ slept. In like manner thy heart becomes confused, thy ship unquiet, when the waves of temptation break over it. Why? Because thy faith sleeps. Then thou shouldst awaken Christ in thy heart; then thy faith should be awakened, thy conscience quieted, thy ship calmed.”

Why did Christ reproach His disciples when they awaked Him and asked for help?

Because of their little faith and trust; for if they firmly believed Him to be true God, they would necessarily believe He could aid them sleeping as well as waking.

Nothing so displeases God as to doubt His powerful assistance. Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh (mortal man) his arm (aid), and whose heart departeth from the Lord. Blessed be the man that trusteth in the Lord, and the Lord shall be his confidence. (Jerem. XVII. 5. 7.) God sometimes permits storms to assail us, such as poverty, persecution, sickness, so that we may have occasion to put our confidence in Him alone. Of this St. Bernard very beautifully says: “When the world rages, when the wicked become furious, when the flesh turns against the spirit, I will hope in Him. Who ever trusted in Him, and was put to shame?” We should therefore

trust in God only, and take refuge to Him, invoking Him as did the disciples: Lord, save us, we perish; or cry out with David: Arise, why sleepest thou, O Lord? Arise, and cast us not off to the end. (Ps. XLIII. 23.)

Why did Jesus stand up and command the sea to be still?

To show His readiness to aid us, and His omnipotence to which all things are subject. His disciples who saw this miracle, wondered and said: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him?

We see daily in all creatures the wonders of the Omnipotence, the wisdom, and the goodness of God, and yet we are not touched; we continue cold and indifferent. The reason is, that we look upon all with the eyes of the body and not with the eyes of the soul; that is, we do not seek to ascend by meditation to the Creator, and to judge from the manifold beauty and usefulness of created things the goodness and the wisdom of God. The saints rejoiced in all the works of the Lord; a flower, a little worm of the earth would move the heart of St. Francis of Sales, and St. Francis the Seraph, to wonderment and to the love of God; they ascended, as on a ladder, from the contemplation of creatures to Him who gives to everything life, motion, and existence. If we were to follow their example, we would certainly love God more, and more ardently desire Him; if we do not, we live like irrational men, we who were created only to know and to love God.

ASPIRATION Grant us, O good Jesus! in all our needs, a great confidence in Thy divine assistance, and do not allow us to become faint-hearted; let Thy assistance come to us in the many dangers to which we are exposed; command the turbulent winds and waves of persecution to be still, and give peace and calmness to Thy Church, which Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood, that we may serve Thee in sanctity and justice, and arrive safely at the desired haven of eternal happiness. Amen.

ON THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

But he was asleep. (Matt VIII. 24.)

It is an article of faith in the holy Catholic Church that God has not only created the world, but that He sustains and governs it; this preservation and ruling of the whole world and of each individual creature is called Providence. There are people who think that God is too great a Lord to busy Himself about the care of this world, that

to do so is beneath His majesty; it was enough for Him to create the world, for the rest, He leaves it to itself or to fate, enjoys His own happiness, and, as it were, sleeps in regard to us. Thus think some, but only the ignorant and impious. Were He as these imagine Him, He would not or could not have aught to do with creation. If He could not, then He is neither all-wise nor almighty, if He would not, then He is not good; and if He knows nothing of the world, then He is not omniscient.

If we once believe that God created the world, (and what rational man can doubt it?) then we must also believe He rules and sustains it. Can any work of art, however well-constructed and arranged, subsist without someone to take charge of and watch over the same? Would not the greatest of all master-pieces, the world, therefore come to the greatest confusion and fall back into its original nothingness, if God, who created it from nothing, did not take care of its further order and existence? It is indeed true that the method of Divine Providence with which God controls all things is so mysterious that, when considering some events, one is persuaded to admit a necessary fate, an accident, the course of nature, the ill will of the devil or man, as the fundamental cause. Yet in all this the providence of God is not denied, for nothing does or can happen accidentally, not the smallest thing occurs without the knowledge, permission, or direction of God. Not one sparrow shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (Matt. X. 29. 30.) Chance, fate, and luck are but the ideas of insane or wicked men, which even the more rational heathens have rejected, and the course of nature is but the constant, uninterrupted, all-wise and bountiful preservation and government of creation through God. The perverted will of men or of the devil is but the instrument which God in His all-wise intention, uses to effect the good, for He knows how to produce good from evil, and, therefore, as St. Augustine says, “permits the evil that the good may not be left undone.” If we peruse the history of our first parents, of Abraham, of Joseph in Egypt, of Moses, of the people of Israel, of Job, Ruth, David, Tobias, Esther, Judith and others, we will easily see everywhere the plainest signs of the wisest Providence, the best and most careful, absolute power, by virtue of which God knows how to direct all things according to His desire, and for the good of His chosen ones. The gospel of this day furnishes us an instance of this? Why did Christ go into the boat? Why did a storm arise? Why was He asleep? Did all this occur by accident? No, it came about designedly by the ordinance of Christ that His omnipotence might be seen, and the faith and confidence of His disciples be strengthened.

Thus it is certain that God foresees, directs, and governs all; as Scripture, reason, and daily experience prove. Would we but pay more attention to many events of our lives, we would certainly notice the providence of God, and give ourselves up to His

guidance and dispensations. The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing, says David. (Ps. XXII. 1.) And we also, we shall want nothing if we resign ourselves to God's will, and are contented with His dispensations in our regard; while, on the contrary, if we oppose His will, we shall fall into misfortune and error. God must rule over us with goodness, or with sternness, He is no slumbering God. Behold! He shall neither slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel. (Ps. CXX. 4.)

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

[For the **Introit** of this day see the [Introit in the Mass of the third Sunday after Epiphany](#)]

On this Sunday mention is made of the practice of Christian virtues, and of God's sufferance of the wicked upon earth, that by them the just may be exercised in patience.

COLLECT Keep, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy household by Thy continual mercy; that as it leans only upon the hope of Thy heavenly grace, so it may ever be defended by Thy protection. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.

EPISTLE (Col. III. 12-17.) Brethren, put ye on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another; even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so you also. But above all these things, have charity, which is the bond of perfection: and let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly, in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God. All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things, do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Why does St. Paul call charity the bond of perfection?

Because charity comprises in itself and links all the virtues in which perfection consists. For whoever truly loves God and his neighbour, is also good, merciful, humble, modest, patiently bears the weakness of his neighbour, willingly forgives offences, in a word, practices all virtues for the sake of charity.

When does the peace of God rejoice in our hearts?

When we have learned to conquer our evil inclinations, passions, and desires, and have placed order and quiet in our hearts instead. This peace then, like a queen, keeps all the wishes of the soul in harmony, and causes us to enjoy constant peace with our neighbour, and thus serve Christ in concord, as the members of one body serve the head. The best means of preserving this peace are earnest attention to the word of God, mutual imparting of pious exhortations and admonitions, and by singing hymns, psalms, and spiritual canticles.

Why should we do all in the name of Jesus?

Because only then can our works have real worth in the sight of God, and be pleasing to Him, when they are performed for love of Jesus, in His honor, in accordance with His spirit and will. Therefore the apostle admonishes us to do all things, eat, drink, sleep, work etc. in the name of Jesus, and so honour God, the Heavenly Father, and show our gratitude to Him. Oh, how grieved will they be on their death-bed who have neglected to offer God their daily work by a good intention, then they will see, when too late, how deficient they are in meritorious deeds. On the contrary they will rejoice whose consciences testify, that in all their actions they had in view only the will and the honor of God! Would that this might be taken to heart especially by those who have to earn their bread with difficulty and in distress, that they might always unite their hardships and trials with the sufferings and merits of Jesus, offering them to the Heavenly Father, and thus imitating Christ who had no other motive than the will and the glory of His Heavenly Father.

ASPIRATION O God of love, of patience, and of mercy, turn our hearts to the sincere love of our neighbour, and grant, that whatever we do in thoughts, words and actions, we may do in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through Him render thanks to Thee.

“Admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grade in your hearts to God.” (Col. III. 16.)

The custom of singing in the Church-choir* has its foundation as far back as the Old Testament, when by the arrangement of David, Solomon, and Ezechias, the psalms and other sacred canticles were sung by the priests and Levites. This custom the Catholic Church has retained, according to the precepts of the apostles, (I. Cor. XIV. 26; Eph. V. 19.) and the example of Jesus who, after they had eaten the Pasch, intoned a hymn of praise with His apostles, (Matt XXVI. 30) that Christians on earth, like the angels and saints in heaven, (Apoc. V. 8. 9., XIV. 3.) who unceasingly sing His praises, might at certain hours of the day, at least, give praise and thanks to God. In the earliest ages of the Church, the Christians sang hymns of praise and thanksgiving during the holy Sacrifice and other devotional services, often continuing them throughout the whole night; in which case the choir-singers probably were bound to keep the singing in proper order and agreement. In the course of time this custom of all the faithful present singing together ceased in many churches, and became confined to the choir, which was accompanied later by instruments in accordance with the words of David who calls to the praise of the Lord with trumpets, with timbrels, with pleasant psaltery and harps. (Ps, CL. 3, 4., LXXX. 3. 4.) In many churches, where the faithful still sing in concert, if done with pure hearts and true devotion, it is as St. Basil says, “a heavenly occupation, a spiritual burnt offering; it enlightens the spirit, raises it towards heaven, leads man to communion with God, makes the soul rejoice, ends idle talk, puts away laughter, reminds us of the judgment, reconciles enemies. Where the singing of songs resounds’ from the contrite heart there God with the angels is present.”

*The choir is usually a gallery in the Church in which the singers are stationed; the place where the clergy sing or recite their office, is also called the choir.

GOSPEL (Matt. XIII. 24-30,) At that time, Jesus spoke this parable to the multitudes: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came, and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the good man of the house coming, said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence, then, hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest perhaps, gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the

harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn.

What is understood by the kingdom of heaven?

The Church of God, or the collection of all orthodox Christians on earth, destined for heaven.

What is meant by the good seed, and by the cockle?

The good seed, as Christ Himself says, (Matt. XIII. 38.) signifies the children of the kingdom, that is, the true Christians, the living members of the Church, who being converted by the word of God sown into their hearts become children of God, and bring forth the fruit of good works. The cockle means the children of iniquity, of the devil, that is, those who do evil; also every wrong, false doctrine which leads men to evil.

Who sows the good seed, and by the cockle?

The good seed is sown by Jesus, the Son of Man not only directly, but through His apostles, and the priests, their successors; the evil seed is sown by the devil, or by wicked men whom he uses as his tools.

Who are the men who were asleep?

Those superiors in the Church; those bishops and pastors who take no care of their flock, and do not warn them against seduction, when the devil comes and by wicked men sows the cockle of erroneous doctrine and of crime; and those men who are careless and neglect to hear the word of God and the sacrifice of the Mass, who neglect to pray, and do not receive the Sacraments. In the souls of such the devil sows the seeds of bad thoughts, evil imaginations and desires, from which spring, later, the cockle of pride, impurity, anger, envy, avarice, etc.

Why does not God allow the cockle, that is, the wicked people, to be rooted out and destroyed?

Because of His patience and long suffering towards the sinner to whom He gives time for repentance, and because of His love for the just from whom He would not, by weeding out the unjust, take away the occasion of practicing virtue and gathering up merits for themselves; for because of the unjust, the just have numerous opportunities to exercise patience, humility, etc.

When is the time of the harvest?

The day of the last judgment when the reapers, that is, the angels, will go out and separate the wicked from the just, and throw the wicked into the fiery furnace; while the just will be taken into everlasting joy. (Matt. XIII. 29.)

PRAYER O faithful Jesus, Thou great lover of our souls, who hast sown the good seed of Thy Divine Word in our hearts, grant that it may be productive, and bear in us fruit for eternal life; protect us from our evil enemy, that he may not sow his erroneous and false doctrine in our hearts, and corrupt the good; preserve us from the sleep of sin, and sloth that we may remain always vigilant and armed against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, overcome them manfully, and die a happy death. Amen.

ON INCLINATION TO EVIL

Whence then hath it cockle? (Matt. XIII. 27.)

Whence comes the inclination to evil in man?

It is the sad consequence of original sin, that is, of that sin which our first parents, by their disobedience, committed in paradise, and which we as their descendants have inherited. This inclination to evil remains even in those who have been baptized, although original sin with its guilt and eternal punishment is taken away in baptism, but it is no sin so long as man does not voluntarily yield. (Cat. Rom. Part. II. 2. .43.)

Why, the sin being removed, does the inclination remain?

To humble us that we may know our frailty and misery, and have recourse to God, our best and most powerful Father, as did St. Paul, when he was much annoyed by the devil of the flesh; (II. Cor. XII. 7. 8.) that the glory of God and the power of Christ should be manifested in us, which except for our weakness could not be; that we might have occasion to fight and to conquer. A soldier cannot battle without opposition, nor win victory and the crown without a contest. Nor can we win the heavenly crown, if no occasion is given us, by temptations, for fight and for victory. “That which tries the combatant,” says St. Bernard, “crowns the conqueror.” Finally, the inclination remains, that we may learn to endure, in all meekness, the faults and infirmities of others and to watch ourselves, lest we fall into the same temptations.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

[For the **Introit** of this day's Mass see the [Introit of the third Sunday after Epiphany.](#)]

COLLECT Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that ever fixing our thoughts on such things as are reasonable, we may both in our words and works do what is pleasing in Thy sight. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.

EPISTLE (I. Thess. I. 2-10.) Brethren, we give thanks to God for you all, making a remembrance of you in our prayers without ceasing; being mindful of the work of your faith, and labour, and charity, and of the enduring of the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ before God and our Father: knowing, brethren, beloved of God, your election: for our gospel hath not been unto you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fullness, as you know what manner of men we have been among you for your sakes. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in much tribulation, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that you were made a pattern to all that believe, in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you was spread abroad the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but also in every place, your faith, which is towards God, is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves relate of us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned, to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven (whom he raised from the dead), Jesus, who both delivered us from the wrath to come.

EXPLANATION The apostle gives thanks to God in prayer for those inhabitants of Thessalonica, who have been converted to Christianity by his words, and declares to them his joy at their Christian life which they prove by their good works and their perseverance, even through all trials, in expectation of eternal reward through Christ. He assures them also of their salvation, (election) because God had caused the preaching of His gospel, which they so willingly received, to produce in them such extraordinary fruit. He praises them not only for having listened to the gospel and abandoned idolatry, but for having regulated their lives in accordance with the faith, and having become a model to distant nations, for the report of their faith had spread far, and everywhere their zealous reception of the gospel was spoken of. Would that the same could be said of all Christians!

GOSPEL (Matt. XIII. 31-35.) At that time, Jesus spoke this parable to the multitudes: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and

sowed in his field: which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come, and dwell in the branches thereof. Another parable he spoke to them: The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitude, and without parables he did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.

What is here understood by the kingdom of heaven?

The Church and the doctrine of Christ.

Why is the Church compared to a grain of mustard-seed?

Because there is a great similarity between them. The mustard-seed, though so small, grows in Palestine so high and so rapidly, that it becomes a broad tree, in which birds can build their nests. In like manner the Church of Christ was in the beginning very small like the mustard-seed, but it soon spread so wide that numberless people, even great philosophers and princes, came to find peace and protection under its branches.

Why is Christ's doctrine compared to leaven?

Because like the leaven, which quickly penetrates the flour, and makes it palatable bread, the doctrine of Christ, spreading with surprising swiftness over the then known parts of the globe, gave the Gentiles a taste for divine things and for heavenly wisdom. Thus Christ's doctrine penetrates him who receives it, sanctifies all his thoughts, words, and deeds, and makes him pleasing to God.

By what means, in particular, was the Church of Christ propagated?

By the omnipotence of God and the miracles which He so frequently wrought to prove the truth and divinity of the Christian religion; the courageous faith, and the pure moral life of the early Christians, which led many pagan minds to accept the doctrine of Christ; and the persecution of Christianity, for, as Tertullian says: "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church." The false doctrine of Mahomet, the erroneous teachings of Luther, Calvin, and earlier and later heretics have, it is true,

also spread quickly far and wide; but this is not to be wondered at, for it is easy to lead people to a doctrine that encourages sensuality, and to which they are carried by their evil inclinations, as was the case with the doctrine of the impostor Mahomet, and three hundred years ago with the heresy of Luther; but to spread a doctrine which demands the subduing of the carnal, earthly inclinations, and to bend the will to the yoke of obedience to faith, something more than human eloquence is required. Thus, the Chancellor of England, Thomas More, who gave his blood for the true doctrine of Christ, wrote to Luther, who was boasting of the rapid increase of his sect: “It is easy to descend; seducing the people to a bad life is nothing more marvellous than that a heavy stone should fall of its own accord to the ground;” and Melancton, a friend of Luther, in answer to his mother’s question, whether she should remain a Catholic or receive Luther’s doctrine, wrote : “In this religion it is easy to live, in the Catholic it is easy to die.”

Why did Christ always speak in parables?

That His teaching by being simple might be more easily understood, and better remembered. He who is called upon to teach others, should, as did Christ, always speak to them according to their ability to understand, and by no means seek his own honour, but the honor of God, and the benefit of those who hear him.

PRAYER O most benign Jesus. How much do we give Thee thanks that Thou hast permitted us to be born in Thy Holy Church, and instructed in Thy holy doctrine, which, like the mustard-seed, has grown to be a large tree, spreading over the whole earth. Grant that under the shadow of this tree, in Thy Holy Church, we may ever rest securely, cling to her faithfully, and penetrated, as by leaven, with her doctrine may bring Thee pleasing fruits of faith and virtue. Amen.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

Why is this Sunday called “Septuagesima”?

Because in accordance with the words of the First Council of Orleans, some pious Christian congregations in the earliest ages of the Church, especially the clergy, began to fast seventy days before Easter, on this Sunday, which was therefore called Septuagesima” - the seventieth day. The same is the case with the Sundays following, which are called Sexagesima, Quinquagesima, Quadragesima, because some

Christians commenced to fast sixty days, others fifty, others forty days before Easter, until finally, to make it properly uniform, Popes Gregory and Gelasius arranged that all Christians should fast forty days before Easter, commencing with Ash-Wednesday.

Why, from this day until Easter, does the Church omit in her service all joyful canticles, alleluia's, and the Gloria in excelsis etc?

Gradually to prepare the minds of the faithful for the serious time of penance and sorrow; to remind the sinner of the grievousness of his errors, and to exhort him to penance. So the priest appears at the altar in violet, the colour of penance, and the front of the altar is covered with a violet curtain. To arouse our sorrow for our sins, and show the need of repentance, the Church in the name of all mankind at the Introit cries with David: The groans of death surrounded me, the sorrows of hell encompassed me: and in my affliction I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice from his holy temple. (Ps. XVII, 5-7.) I will love thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my firmament, and my refuge, and my deliverer. (Fs. XVII. 2-3.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT O Lord, we beseech Thee graciously hear the prayers of Thy people; that we who are justly afflicted for our sins may, for the glory of Thy name, mercifully be delivered. Through our Lord, Jesus Christ etc.

EPISTLE (I. Cor. IX. 24-27., to X. 1-5.) Brethren, know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that you may obtain. And every one that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things: and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one. I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty; I so fight, not as one beating the air; but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection; lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway. For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea: and all in Moses were baptized, in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink (and they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ); but with the most of them God was not well pleased.

EXPLANATION Having exhorted us to penance in the Introit of the Mass, the Church desires to indicate to us, by reading this epistle, the effort we should make to reach the kingdom of heaven by the narrow path (Matt. VII. 13.) of penance and mortification. This St. Paul illustrates by three different examples. By the example of

those who in a race run to one point, or in a prize-fight practice and prepare themselves for the victor's reward by the strongest exercise, and by the strictest abstinence from everything that might weaken the physical powers. If to win a laurel-crown that passes away, these will subject themselves to the severest trials and deprivations, how much more should we, for the sake of the heavenly crown of eternal happiness, abstain from those improper desires, by which the soul is weakened, and practice those holy virtues, such as prayer, love of God and our neighbour, patience, to which the crown is promised! Next, by his own example, bringing himself before them as one running a race, and fighting for an eternal crown, but not as one running blindly not knowing whither, or fighting as one who strikes not his antagonist, but the air; on the contrary, with his eyes firmly fixed on the eternal crown, certain to be his who lives by the precepts of the gospel, who chastises his spirit and his body as a valiant champion, with a strong hand, that is, by severest mortification, by fasting and prayer. If St. Paul, notwithstanding the extraordinary graces which he received, thought it necessary to chastise his body that he might not be cast away, how does the sinner expect to be saved, living an effeminate and luxurious life without penance and mortification? St. Paul's third example is that of the Jews who all perished on their journey to the Promised Land, even though God had granted them so many graces; He shielded them from their enemies by a cloud which served as a light to them at night, and a cooling shade by day; He divided the waters of the sea, thus preparing for them a dry passage; He caused manna to fall from heaven to be their food, and water to gush from the rock for their drink. These temporal benefits which God bestowed upon the Jews in the wilderness had a spiritual meaning; the cloud and the sea was a figure of baptism which enlightens the soul, tames the concupiscence of the flesh, and purifies from sin; the manna was a type of the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, the soul's true bread from heaven; the water from the rock, the blood flowing from Christ's wound in the side; and yet with all these temporal benefits which God bestowed upon them, and with all the spiritual graces they were to receive by faith from the coming Redeemer, of the six hundred thousand men who left Egypt only two, Joshua and Caleb, entered the Promised Land. Why? Because they were fickle, murmured so, often against God, and desired the pleasures of the flesh. How much, then, have we need to fear lest we be excluded from the true, happy land, Heaven, if we do not continuously struggle for it, by penance and mortification!

ASPIRATION Assist me, O Jesus, with Thy grace that, following St. Paul's example, I may be anxious, by the constant pious practice of virtue and prayer, to arrive at perfection and to enter heaven.

GOSPEL (Matt. XX. 1-6.) At that time, Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market place idle, and he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour, he went out, and found others standing; and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go you also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the labourers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When therefore they were come that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny, But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more; and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering said to one of them: Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way; I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? Is thy eye evil, because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen.

In this parable, what is to be understood by the householder, the vineyard, labourers, and the penny?

The householder represents God, who in different ages of the world, in the days of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and finally, in the days of Christ and the apostles, has sought to call men as workmen into His vineyard, the true Church, that they might labour there industriously, and receive the penny of eternal glory.

How and when does God call people?

By inward inspiration, by preachers, confessors, spiritual books, and conversations, etc., in flourishing youth and in advanced age, which periods of life may be understood by the different hours of the day.

What is meant by working in the vineyard?

It means labouring, fighting, suffering for God and His honor, for our own and the salvation of others. As in a vineyard we spade, dig, root out weeds, cut off all that is

useless and noxious, manure, plant, and bind up, so in the spiritual vineyard of our soul we must, by frequent meditation on death and hell, by examination of conscience dig up the evil inclinations by their roots, and by true repentance eradicate the weeds of vice, and by mortification, especially by prayer and fasting cut away concupiscence; by the recollection of our sins we must humble ourselves, and amend our life; in place of the bad habits we must plant the opposite virtues and bind our unsteady will to the trellis of the fear of God and of His judgment, that we may continue firm.

How is a vice or bad habit to be rooted up?

A great hatred of sin must be aroused; a fervent desire of destroying sin must be produced in our hearts; the grace of God must be implored without which nothing can be accomplished. It is useful also to read some spiritual book which speaks against the vice. The Sacraments of Penance and of holy Communion should often be received, and some saint who in life had committed the same sin, and afterwards by the grace of God conquered it, should be honored, as Mary Magdalen and St. Augustine who each had the habit of impurity, but with the help of God resisted and destroyed it in themselves; there should be fasting, alms-deeds, or other good works, performed for the same object, and it is of great importance, even necessary, that the conscience should be carefully examined in this regard.

Who are standing idle in the market place?

In the market-place, that is the world, they are standing idle who, however much business they attend to, do not work for God and for their own salvation; for the only necessary employment is the service of God and the working out of our salvation. There are three ways of being idle: doing nothing whatever; doing evil; doing other things than the duties of our position in life and its office require, or if this work is done without a good intention, or not from the love of God. This threefold idleness deprives us of our salvation, as the servant loses his wages if he works not at all, or not according to the will of his master. We are all servants of God, and none of us can say with the labourers in the Vineyard that no man has employed us; for God, when He created us, hired us at great wages, and we must serve Him always as He cares for us at all times; and if, in the gospel, the householder reproaches the workmen, whom no man had hired, for their idleness, what will God one day say to those Christians whom He has placed to work in His Vineyard, the Church, if they have remained idle?

Why do the last comers receive as much as those who worked all day?

Because God rewards not the time or length of the work, but the industry and diligence with which it has been performed. It may indeed happen, that many a one who has served God but for a short time, excels in merits another who has lived long but has not laboured as diligently. (Wisd. IV. 8-13.)

What is signified by the murmers of the first workmen when the wages were paid?

As the Jews were the first who were called by God, Christ intended to show that the Gentiles, who were called last, should one day receive the heavenly reward, and that the Jews have no reason to murmur because God acted not unjustly in fulfilling His promises “to them, and at the same time calling others to the eternal reward. In heaven envy, malevolence and murmuring will find no place. On the contrary, the saints who have long served God wonder at His goodness in converting sinners and those who have served Him but a short time, for these also there will be the same penny, that is, the vision, the enjoyment, and possession of God and His kingdom. Only in the heavenly glory there will be a difference because the divine lips have assured us that each one shall be rewarded according to his works. The murmurs of the workmen and the answer of the householder serve to teach us, that we should not murmur against the merciful proceedings of God towards our neighbour, nor envy him; for envy and jealousy are abominable, devilish vices, hated by God. By the envy of the devil, death came into the world. (Wisd. II. 24.) The envious therefore, imitate Lucifer, but they hurt only themselves, because they are consumed by their envy. “Envy,” says St. Basil “is an institution of the serpent, an invention of the devils, an obstacle to piety, a road to hell, the depriver of the heavenly kingdom.”

What is meant by: The first. shall be last, and the last shall be first?

This again is properly to be understood of the Jews; for they were the first called, but will be the last in order, as in time, because they responded not to Christ’s invitation, received not His doctrine, and will enter the Church only at the end of the world; while, on the contrary, the Gentiles who were not called until after the Jews, will be the first in number as in merit, because the greater part responded and are still responding to the call. Christ, indeed, called all the Jews, but few of them answered, therefore few were chosen. Would that this might not. also come true with regard to Christians whom God has also called, and whom He wishes to save. (I. Tim. II. 4.) Alas! very few live in accordance with their vocation of working in the vineyard of the Lord, and, consequently, do not receive the penny of eternal bliss.

PRAYER O most benign God, who, out of pure grace, without any merit of ours, hast called us, Thy unworthy servants, to the true faith, into the vineyard of the holy

Catholic Church, and dost require us to work in it for the sanctification of our souls, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may never be idle but be found always faithful workmen, and that that which in past years we have failed to do, we may make up for in future by greater zeal and persevering industry, and, the work being done, may receive the promised reward in heaven, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son our, Lord. Amen.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

In the Introit of this day's Mass, the Church brings before us one who seeks to be loosed from his sins, and calls on God for help and assistance. Arise, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, and cast us not off to the end: why turnest thou thy face away, and forgettest our trouble? Our belly hath cleaved to the earth: arise, O Lord, help us and deliver us. O God, we have heard with our ears; our Fathers have declared to us. (Ps. XLIII. 23. 25.) Glory be to the Father, &c.

COLLECT O God, who seest that we trust not in aught we do; mercifully grant that by the protection of the Doctor of the Gentiles we may be defended against all adversities. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

EPISTLE (II. Cor. XI. 19-33; to XII. 1-9,) Brethren, you gladly suffer the foolish; whereas yourselves are wise. For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take from you, if a man be lifted up, if a man strike you on the face. I speak according to dishonour, as if we had been weak in this part. Wherein if any man dare (I speak foolishly), I dare also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they the ministers of Christ (I speak as one less wise,) I am more: in many more labours, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils

from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness; besides those things which are without, my daily instance, the solicitude for all the Churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my infirmity. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knoweth that I lie not. At Damascus the governor of the nation under Aretas the king, guarded the city of the Damascenes to apprehend me; and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands. If I must glory (it is not expedient indeed); but I will come to the visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in, the body I know not, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth): such an one rapt even to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth) : that he was caught up into paradise; and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter. For such an one I will glory; but for myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities. For though I should have a mind to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I will say the truth. But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth from me. And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For, which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Why is St. Paul mentioned in the Mass of this day, and why is this epistle read?

Because in Rome the Station or Church service is held on this day in the Church of St. Paul and because the Church continues to encourage us to work according to the example given by St. Paul who, with the grace of God, accomplished and suffered so much; also because we should labour for the honor of God and the salvation of our souls and faithfully cooperate with the grace of God.

Why, at the beginning of this epistle, does St. Paul say so much of his own praise?

Not out of ambition for honour and glory, but to honor God, and for the love and advantage of the Corinthians, who allowed themselves to be deceived by mercenary impostors and false prophets; that he might make public the craftiness of those deceivers who assumed the appearance of the true apostles, as Satan took the form of a good angel. To shame these, and to remove the obstacles they had placed in the way of the gospel, St. Paul was obliged to reveal to the Corinthians the things he had

performed and endured in propagating the holy gospel. -By trials and sufferings is the true apostle known; the false apostles, the hirelings, as Christ calls them, only care for their own bodies, for temporal advantages, not for the salvation of souls. We see this exemplified in our days by the heretical missionaries who, when there is suffering, when there is martyrdom, take to flight, for their eyes are directed only to the present life and a large income, while the Catholic missionaries rejoice if, for Christ's sake, and for the salvation of souls, they are permitted to suffer, and made worthy to endure the cruel death of the martyr.

Of whom does St. Paul relate such marvels?

Of himself, but from humility and modesty he does not say so; fourteen years before, forty-four years after the birth of Christ, St. Paul was rapt to the third heaven, that is, to the abode of happy spirits; but to preserve him in humility God permitted Satan to use the concupiscence of the flesh, which is like a sting in the body of man, as a temptation to the apostle, and by which he was continually tormented.

ASPIRATION Grant me, O God, thy grace that in these evil days of false doctrines I may remain steadfast to Thy holy gospel which in the holy Catholic Church remains pure and unchanged; never let me be deterred from obeying its precepts, neither by the charms of the world nor by the mockery and reproaches of the wicked.

GOSPEL (Luke VIII. 4-15.) At that time, when very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities unto him, he spoke by a similitude: The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns; and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things, he cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. To whom he said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables; that seeing, they may not see, and hearing, they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside are they that hear: then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. Now they upon the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no roots, for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares arid riche, and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that

on the good ground are they who, in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.

Why is the Word of God compared to a seed?

Because from the word of God germinates the fruit of good works, as from good seed grows good fruit; as it is impossible, therefore, for an unsowed field to produce good fruit, so is it impossible for man without the seed of God's word to produce good fruits of the spirit.

Why does Christ cry out in the parable: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear?

Because of the importance and necessity of the doctrine which was contained in the parable. For to hear the word of God is absolutely necessary for salvation, as the Apostle indicates: How shall they believe him (Jesus) of whom they have not heard? (Rom. X. 14.) Jesus calls those happy who hear the word of God and keep it. (Luke XI. 28.) And on this subject St. Augustine says: "Be assured, my brethren, that as the body becomes weakened by want and hunger, and wastes to a mere shadow, so the soul that is not nourished by the word of God, becomes shrunken, worthless and unfit for any good work."

Whence comes so much cockle of evil, when the seed of God's word is so abundantly sowed?

Because, as Christ says, the seed falls now by the wayside, now upon a rock, now among thorns, seldom upon good soil, that is to say, those who hear the word of God are as a highway, over which many distracting thoughts are traveling which tread down the scattered seed, or, like fowls of the air devour it; they are like rocks, hardened by their prejudices or repeated crimes, so that the divine word cannot take root; again, they are so overgrown by the thorns of worldly cares, the constant desire for wealth and riches, and sensual delights, that even if they receive the seed, it is unable to grow and bear fruit.

ON THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

The word of God is compared, by the Prophet Jeremias, to a hammer which crushes hearts as hard as rocks, and to a fire that dries up the swamps of vice, and consumes inveterate evil habits. (Jer. XXIII. 29.) The Psalmist compares it to thunder that makes all tremble, a storm-wind that bends and breaks the cedars of Lebanon, that is, proud and obstinate spirits; a light that dispels the darkness of ignorance; and a remedy that cures sin. (Ps. XXVIII. 3. 5., CXVIII. 105.) St. Paul compares it to a

sword that divides the body from the soul, that is, the carnal desires from the spirit; (Hebr. IV. 12.) the Apostle James to a mirror in which man sees his stains and his wrongs. (Jam. I, 23.) the Prophet Isaias to a precious rain that moistens the soil of the soul and fertilizes it; (Isai: LV. 10. 11.) and Jesus Himself compares it to a seed that when it falls on good ground, brings forth fruit a hundredfold. (Luke VIII. 8.) One single grain of this divine seed produced the most marvellous fruits of sanctity in St. Augustine, St. Anthony the Great, in St. Nicholas of Tolentino, and others; for St. Augustine was converted by the words: “Let us walk honestly as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy.” (Rom. XIII. 13.) St. Anthony by the words. If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” (Matt XIX. 21.) Nicholas of Tolentino was brought to Christian perfection by the words: “Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. (I. John II. 15.)

How should we prepare ourselves to be benefited by the word of God?

We must be good, well-tilled soil, that is, we must have a heart that loves truth, desires to learn, and humbly and sincerely seeks salvation; we must listen to the word of God with due preparation and attention, keep the divine truths we have heard, in our heart, frequently consider and strive to fulfill them.

What should be done before the sermon?

We should endeavour to purify our conscience, for, as St. Chrysostom demands; “Who would pour precious juice into a vessel that is not clean, without first washing it?” We should, therefore, at least cleanse our hearts by an ardent sorrow for our sins, because the spirit of truth enters not into the sinful soul; (Wisd. I. 4.) we should ask the Holy Ghost for the necessary enlightenment, for little or no fruit can be obtained from a sermon if it is not united with prayer; we should listen to the sermon with a good motive; that is, with a view of hearing something edifying and instructive; if we attend only through curiosity, the desire to hear something new, to criticize the preacher, or to see and to be seen, we are like the Pharisees who for such and similar motives went to hear Christ and derived no benefit therefrom. “As a straight sword goes not into a crooked sheath, so the word of God enters not into a heart that is filled with improper motives.” We should strive to direct, our minds rightly, that is, to dispel all temporal thoughts, all needless distraction, otherwise the wholesome words would fall but upon the ears, would not penetrate the heart, and the words of Christ be fulfilled: They have ears, and hear not.

How should we comfort ourselves during the sermon?

We should listen to the sermon with earnest, reverent attention, for God speaks to us through His priests, and Christ says to them: Who hears you, hears me. (Luke X. 16.) We must listen to the priests, therefore, not as to men, but as to God's ambassadors, for every priest can say with St. Paul: We are ambassadors for Christ, God, as it were, exhorting by us. (II. Cor. V. 20.) "If," says St. Chrysostom, "when the letter of a king is read, the greatest quiet and attention prevails, that nothing may be lost, how much more should we listen with reverence and perfect silence to the word of God?" The word of God is, and ever will be, a divine seed, which, when properly received, produces precious fruit, by what priest soever sowed; for in the sowing it matters not what priest sows, but what soil is sowed. Be careful, also, that you do not apply that which is said to others, but take it to yourself, or the sermon will be of no benefit to you. Are you free from those vices which the preacher decries and against which he battles? then, thank God, but do not despise others who are perhaps labouring under them, rather pray that they may be released and you preserved from falling into them. Keep also from sleeping, talking, and other distractions, and remember, that whoever is of God, also willingly hears his word. (John VIII. 47.)

What should be done after the sermon?

We should then strive to put into practice the good we have heard, for God justifies not those who hear the law, but those who keep it, (Rom. II. 13.) and those who hear the word of God and do not conform their lives to it, are like the man who looks into the mirror, and having looked into it goes away, and presently forgets what manner of man he is. (Fam. I. 23. 24.) To practice that which has been heard, it is above all necessary that it should be kept constantly in mind, and thoughtfully considered. St. Bernard says: "Preserve the word of God as you would meat for your body, for it is a life-giving bread, and the food of your soul. Happy those, says Christ, who keep it. Receive it, therefore, into your soul's interior, and let it reach your morals and your actions."

That food which cannot be digested, or is at once thrown out, is useless; the food should be well masticated, retained, and by the digestive powers worked up into good blood. So not only on the day, but often during the week, that which was heard in the sermon should be thought of and put into practice. Speak of it to others, thus will much idle talk be saved, many souls with the grace of God roused to good, and enlightened in regard to the evil they had not before seen in themselves and in future will avoid. Let us listen to others when they repeat what was said in the sermon. Heads of families should require their children and domestics to relate what they have

heard preached. Let us also entreat God to give us grace that we may be enabled to practice the precepts given us.

PRAYER How much am I shamed, O my God, that the seed of Thy Divine word, which Thou hast sowed so often and so abundantly in my heart, has brought forth so little fruit! Ah! have mercy on me, and so change my heart, that it may become good soil, in which Thy word may take root, grow without hindrance, and finally bring forth fruits of salvation. Amen.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

The Introit of this day's Mass is the sigh of an afflicted soul confiding in God:

INTROIT Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a place of refuge, to save me: for thou art my strength and my refuge: and for thy name's sake thou wilt be my leader, and wilt nourish me. (Fs. XXX. 3. 4.) In thee, O Lord, I have hoped, let me never be confounded: deliver me in thy justice, and set me free. (Ps. XXX. 2.)

COLLECT O Lord, we beseech Thee, graciously hear our prayers, and unloosing the bonds of our sins, guard us from all adversity. Through our Lord, etc.

EPISTLE (I. Cor. XIII. 1-13.) Brethren, if I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not; dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, that which

is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away the things of a child. We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known. And now there remain faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.

EXPLANATION In this epistle St. Paul speaks of the necessity, the excellence and the nature of true charity. He says that all natural and supernatural gifts, all good works, even martyrdom, cannot save us if we have not charity; because love alone can render our works pleasing to God. Without charity, therefore, though ever so many prayers be recited, fasts observed, and good deeds performed, nothing will be acceptable to God, or merit eternal life. Strive then, O Christian soul, to lead a pious life in love, and to remain always in the state of grace.

Can faith alone, as the so-called Reformers assert, render man just and save him?

Faith alone, however strong, though it could move mountains, without love, that is, without good works performed for love of God and our neighbour, can never justify or save us. For, when St. Paul says, that man is justified by faith without works, (Rom. III. 28.; XI: 6.; Eph. II. 8. 9.) he means to refer to those works which were performed by command of the law of Moses, and which, as they were external and without true charity, were of no avail; he did not refer to those works which are performed in a state of grace with a lively, love-inspired faith. Therefore the same Apostle writes to the Galatians: (Gal. V. 6.) Faith only availeth which worketh by charity; to Titus: (Tit. III. 8.) It is a faithful saying: and these things I will have thee affirm constantly: that they who believe in God, may be careful to excel in good works. These things are good and profitable unto men; and he exhorts the Colossians (Colos. I. 10.) to be fruitful in every good work. St. James confirms the same by saying: (James II. 17-24.) So faith if it have not works, is dead in itself; by works man is justified and not by faith only. That this is the true doctrine of Christ is evident from His own words, when He says: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and shall be cast into the fire." (Matt. VII. 19.) At the day of judgment Christ will demand good works from all men, (Matt. XXV. 35.) and will not judge them only according to their faith, but by their good works, which true faith must always produce. (Apoc. XX. 12.) Would Christ and His apostles demand good works, if faith alone be sufficient? "The devil's also believe and tremble," (James II. 19.) they believe, but they are not saved, and their faith but increases their torments. Therefore, the assertion that faith without good works is sufficient for justification and salvation, is

plainly against the doctrine of Christ and His Church, and must of necessity lead man to vice and misery, as shown by the history of the unhappy separation of the sixteenth century

Are good works available which are performed in the state of mortal sin?

Good works performed while in a state of mortal sin avail nothing in regard to eternal life, writes St. Lawrence Justinian, but aid in moderating the punishment imposed for disobedience and the transgression of God's commandments. They bring temporal goods, such as honour, long life, health, earthly happiness, etc.; they prevent us from falling deeper into sin, and prepare the heart for the reception of grace; so the pious Person writes: "Do as much good as you can, even though in the state of mortal sin, that God may give light to your heart."

ASPIRATION O God of love, pour the spirit of true charity into my heart that, according to the spirit of St. Paul, I may endeavour to be always in a state of grace; that all my works may be pleasing to Thee, and meritorious for me.

GOSPEL (Luke XVIII. 31-43.) At that time, Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon; and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass, when he drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the way-side, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. But he cried out much more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus standing, commanded him to be brought unto him. And when he was come near, he asked him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Why did Christ so often foretell His passion to His disciples?

Because He wanted to show how great was His desire to suffer for us, for we speak often of that which we crave; and because He wished His disciples when they should

see Him treated as a criminal and martyred, not to think evil of Him, or imagine themselves deceived, but remember that He had foretold all minutely that all happened of His own will.

Did not the disciples understand anything of what He predicted in regard to His future sufferings?

They may, certainly, have well understood He was to suffer, for which reason Peter tried to dissuade Him from it; (Matt. XVI. 22.) but they did not comprehend why or for what He would suffer, or how He would rise again. All this the Holy Ghost gave them to understand, after it had come to pass. (John XIV. 26.) The light of the Holy Ghost is of so much value, that without it even the clearest doctrines of faith are not understood.

Why does Christ so often call Himself the Son of Man?

He wished to show, in the Jewish way of speaking, He was also man, a descendant of Adam, and that we should be humble, and not seek or desire high titles.

Why did the blind man call Christ the Son of David?

Because, like all the Jews, he believed that the Messiah, according to humanity, would be of the house of David, as was promised. (Ps. CXXXI. 11.)

Why did Christ ask the blind man: What wilt thou that I do to thee?

This He asked, not because He was unaware of the blind man's wish, but to enable him the better to prove his faith and hope that through Christ he would receive his sight; and to teach us how willing He is to help us, and how it pleases Him if we confidently place our wants before Him. We should learn from this blind man, who would not be restrained by the passing crowd in his ardent and reiterated request, not to pay attention, in the work we have commenced, to human respect, or human judgment, but to persevere, and not allow ourselves to be led astray by the world's mockery or contempt. We should also learn to be grateful to God, and faithfully cling to Him, if He has once opened the eyes of our mind, and healed our spiritual blindness, which is far more deplorable than physical blindness, for nothing can be more miserable than not to see and understand God, not to know what is necessary for our salvation, and what is pernicious.

Why is this gospel read on this Sunday?

The Church wishes to remind us of the painful passion and death of Jesus, and to move us by the contemplation of those mysteries to avoid and despise the wicked, heathenish amusements of carnival, sinful pleasures which she has always condemned, because they come from dark paganism, and, to avert the people from them, commands that during the three days of carnival the Blessed Sacrament shall be exposed for public adoration, sermons given, and the faithful exhorted to have recourse at this time to the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, with the reception of which Pope Clement XIII. (Breve, 23. June 1765) connected a plenary indulgence. A true Catholic will conform to the desire of his holy Church, considering the words which St. Augustine spoke, at this time, to the faithful, “The heathens (as also the worldly people of our days) shout songs of love and merriment, but you should delight in the preaching of the word of God; they rush to the dramatic plays, but you should hasten to Church; they are intoxicated, but you should fast and be sober.”

PRAYER O most benign Jesus! who didst so desire to suffer for us, grant, that we may willingly suffer for love of Thee; that we may hate and flee from the detestable pleasures of the world and the flesh, and practice penance and mortification, that by so doing we may merit to be released from our spiritual blindness to love Thee more and more ardently, and finally possess Thee forever.

INSTRUCTION ON LENT

Who instituted Lent?

According to the fathers of the Church, Justin and Irenaeus, the fast before Easter was instituted and sanctified by Christ Himself; according to the saints Leo and Jerome, the holy apostles ordained it given by Jesus.

Why has the Church instituted this fast forty days before Easter?

To imitate Christ who fasted forty days; to participate in His merits and sufferings; to subject our flesh by voluntary mortification to the spirit, and to mortify our evil desires as did St. Paul; (Col. I. 24.) to enable us to lead a pure life, and thus prepare for the holy festival of Easter, and the reception of the divine Lamb, Jesus: and, finally, to render God satisfaction for our sins, and do penance, as Pope Gregory says, for the sins of one whole year by one short fast, lasting only the tenth part of a year.

Was the fast of Lent observed in early times as in the present?

Yes, but more strictly; for the people of the early ages not only abstained from meat, but also from all that which is connected with it, such as eggs, butter, cheese, etc., even from wine and fish, although this was not the general command of the Church; they fasted all day, and only ate in the evening after vespers, in remembrance of which, vespers are now said before dinner-time, because the Church, as a kind mother, now permits the supper to be changed into a dinner, and also allows something to be taken in the evening, that the body may not be too much weakened, and become unfit for labour.

How much does this ancient custom put to shame the Christians of to-day who think the fast in our times too severe! “But,” asks St. Ambrose, “what sort of Christians are they? Christ, who never sinned fasted for our sins, and we will not fast for our own great and numerous offences?”

How should the holy season of Lent be spent?

As according to the teaching of St. Leo, the main thing in fasting is not that the body be deprived of food, but that the mind at the same time be withdrawn from wickedness, we should endeavour during Lent, not only to be temperate in eating and drinking, but especially to lead a modest life, sanctifying the days by persevering prayer and devoutly attending church.

PRAYER AT THE BEGINNING OF LENT

Almighty God! I unite myself at the beginning of this holy season of penance with the Church militant, endeavouring to make these days of real sorrow for my sins and crucifixion of the sensual man. O Lord Jesus! in union with Thy fasting and passion, I offer Thee my fasting in obedience to the Church, for Thy honor, and in thanksgiving for the many favours I have received, in satisfaction for my sins and the sins of others, and that I may receive the grace to avoid such and such a sin, N. N. and to practice such and such a virtue, N. N.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Why is this day thus named?

Because on this day the Church blesses ashes, and places them on the heads of her faithful children, saying: “Remember man, thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return.”

Why is this done?

St. Charles Borromeo gives us the following reasons for this practice: that the faithful may be moved to sincere humility of heart; that the heavenly blessing may descend upon them, by which they, being really penitent, will weep with their whole soul for their sins, remembering how earth was cursed because of sin, and that we have all to return to dust; that strength to do true penance may be given the body, and that our soul may be endowed with divine grace to persevere in penance.

With such thoughts let the ashes be put upon your head, while you ask in all humility and with a contrite heart, for God’s mercy and grace.

Is the practice of putting ashes upon our heads pleasing to God?

It is, for God Himself commanded the Israelites to put ashes on their heads for a sign of repentance. (Jer. XXV. 34.) Thus did David (Ps, CI. 10.) who even strewed ashes on his bread; the Ninivites, (Jonas III. 5.) Judith, (Jud, IX. 1.) Mardochai, (Esth. IV 1.) Job, (JobXLII. 6.) etc. The Christians of the earliest times followed this practice as often as they did public penance for their sins.

Why from this day until the end of Lent are the altars draped in violet?

Because, as has been already said, the holy season of Lent is a time of sorrow and penance for sin, and the Church desires externally to demonstrate by the violet with which she drapes the altar, by the violet vestments worn by the priests, and by the cessation of the organ and festive singing, that we in quiet mourning are bewailing our sins; and to still further impress the spirit of penance upon us, there is usually only a simple crucifix or a picture of Christ’s passion, left visible upon the altar, and devoutly meditating upon it, the heart is mostly prepared for contrition.

In the Introit of this day’s Mass the Church uses the following words to make known her zeal for penance.

INTROIT God to mercy: Thou hast mercy upon all, O Lord, and hatest none of the things which Thou hast made, winking at the sins of men for the sake of repentance,

and sparing them; for thou art the Lord our God. (Wisd. XI. 24. 25.) Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me; for my soul trusteth in thee. (Ps. LVI. 2.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT Grant to thy faithful, O Lord, that they may begin the venerable solemnities of fasting with suitable piety, and perform them with tranquil devotion. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, etc.

LESSON (Joel II. 12-19) Thus with the Lord: Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil. Who knoweth but he will return, and forgive, and leave a blessing behind him, sacrifice and libation to the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Sion: sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather together the people; sanctify the Church; assemble the ancients; gather together the little ones, and them that suck at the breasts; let the bridegroom go forth from his bed, and the bride out of her bride-chamber. Between the porch and the altar, the priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep; and shall say: Spare, O Lord, spare thy people; and give not thine inheritance to reproach, that the heathens should rule over them. Why should they say among the nations: Where is their God? The Lord hath been zealous for his land, and hath spared his people. And the Lord answered, and said to his people: Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and you shall be filled with them; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations, with the Lord Almighty.

EXPLANATION The Prophet Joel exhorts the Jews to sorrow and penance for their sins, that they evade the expected judgment to be sent by God upon the city of Jerusalem. He required of them to show their repentance not merely by rending their garments, a sign of mourning with the Jews, but by a truly contrite heart. The Church wishes us to see plainly from this lesson of the prophet what qualities our penance should possess, if we desire reconciliation with God, forgiveness of our sins, and deliverance at the Last Day, which qualities are not merely abstinence from food and amusements, but the practice of real mortification of our evil inclinations, thus becoming with our whole heart converted to God.

GOSPEL (Matt. VI. 16-21) At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: When you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen I say to you; they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee. Lay

not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.

EXPLANATION Jesus forbids us to seek the praises of men when performing good works, (fasting is a good work,) and still worse it would be to do good as the Pharisees, through hypocrisy. He also warns us against avarice and the desire for temporal riches, urging us to employ our temporal goods, in giving alms, and doing works of charity, thus laying up treasures in heaven, which are there rewarded and will last there forever. “What folly”, says St. Chrysostom, “to leave our goods where we cannot stay, instead of sending them before us where we are going — to heaven!”“

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

INVOCABIT

This Sunday is called Invocabit, because the Introit of the Mass begins with this word, which is taken from the ninetieth psalm, wherein we are urged to confidence in God, who willingly hears the prayer of the penitent:

INTROIT He shall call upon me, and I will hear him; I will deliver him, and glorify him; I will fill him with length of days. (Ps. XC. 15-16.) He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most high shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven. (Ps. XC. 1.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT O God who dost purify Thy Church by the yearly fast of Lent; grant to Thy household that what we strive to obtain from Thee by abstinence, by good works we may secure. Through our Lord, etc.

EPISTLE (II. Cor. VI. 1-10) Brethren, we exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith: In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee. Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now, is the day of salvation. Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed: but in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God; in much patience, in tribulations, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God, by the armour of justice on the right hand, and on the left, by honor and dishonour, by

evil report, and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastised, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as needy, yet enriching many; as having nothing, and possessing all things.

EXPLANATION The Church very appropriately reads on this day this epistle of St. Paul, in which he exhorts the Christians to make use of the time of grace. A special time of grace is Lent, in which everything invites to conversion and penance, a time, therefore, in which God is ready to make rich bestowal of His graces. St. Anselm says, those do not use the grace who do not cooperate. Let us, therefore, follow St. Paul's exhortation, and earnestly practise those virtues he places before us, and especially those of temperance, patience, chastity, liberality, love of God and of our neighbour. Let us arm ourselves with the arms of justice at the right and the left, that is, let us strive to be humble in prosperity and in adversity, confident of God's help. Let us never be led from the path of virtue, by mockery, contempt, nor by persecution, torments, or death.

ASPIRATION Grant, O Jesus, that we may always faithfully cooperate with Thy graces, and employ well the time Thou hast again given for our salvation.

GOSPEL (Matt. IV. 1-11.) At that time, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. And the tempter coming, said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written: Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written: He hath given his angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said to him: It is written again: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy 'God. Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and said to him: All these will I give thee, if, falling down, thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus said to him: Begone, Satan, for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left him; and behold, angels came, and ministered to him.

INSTRUCTION

I. Christ went into the desert by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost to prepare by fasting and prayer, for His mission, and to endure the temptations of Satan, that, as St. Paul says, He might be one tempted in all things such as we are, without sin, and so become

for us a High-priest who knew how to have compassion on our infirmities, (Heb. IV. 15.) and to show us by His own example, how we should, armed with the word of God, as with a sword, overcome the tempter. (Eph. VI. 17.) – Let us, therefore, courageously follow Christ to the combat against all temptations, with His assistance it will not be hard to conquer them. He has certainly taught us to overcome the hardest ones: the lust of the eyes, of the flesh, and the pride of life, and if we overcome these, it will be easy to conquer the rest.

II. If Christ, the only Son of God, permitted Himself to be tempted by Satan, even to be taken up on a high mountain, and to the pinnacle of the temple, it should not appear strange to us, that we are assailed by many temptations, or that we should find in the lives of so many saints that the evil spirit tormented them by various images of terror and vexation. This we find in the history of the pious Job, where we also find at the same time, that the evil spirit cannot harm a hair of our head without God's permission.

III. From the coming of the angels to minister to Christ, after He had conquered Satan, we see that all who bravely resist temptations, will enjoy the assistance and consolations of the heavenly spirits.

INSTRUCTION ON TEMPTATION

To be tempted by the devil. (Matt. IV. I.)

What is a temptation?

A temptation is either a trial for instruction and exercise in virtue, or a deception and incitement to sin. In the first sense, God tempts man; in the second, he is tempted by the devil, the world or bad people, and the flesh, by evil thoughts, feelings, words, or work.

By what are we principally tempted?

By our own evil concupiscence and inclination to sin which adhere to us through original sin, (Fam. I. 14.) on account of which it is said, that the flesh lusteth against the spirit. (Gal. V. 17.)

Does the devil also tempt us?

He does, and is therefore called, in this day's gospel, the tempter. St. Peter teaches us this, having himself experienced it: Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring-lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour. (I Peter V. 8.) Not all temptations are to be ascribed to the devil, however, they often come from our own corrupt nature, our own incautiousness, or looseness of our senses, by which we expose ourselves to the danger of falling into sin.

How does the devil tempt us to sin?

In a twofold manner: He incites the concupiscence of man to those sins to which he sees him inclined, and then seeks to blind and confuse his imagination, so that he neither reflects, nor properly sees the temporal injury, disgrace, and derision, nor the shamefulness of sin and its eternal punishment. Thus the devil seduced Eve, our first mother, and thus he tempted Christ, with whom he could not, of course, succeed, for He was incapable of sin. He tempts bad people to persecute us, or to try us by their wicked vanities, as he did by the friends of Job.

Can the devil force us to evil?

He cannot; "for as a chained dog," says St. Augustine, "can bite none but those who go near him, so the devil cannot harm with his temptations those who do not consent to them. Like the dog he can bark at you, but cannot bite you against your will." Not by force but by persuasion Satan strives to injure, he does not force our consent, but entreats it. Seek, therefore, to subdue your passions and your senses, especially your eyes, and you will either remain free from all temptations, or easily overcome them.

Does God also tempt us?

God does indeed tempt us, but not to sin, as St. James expressly teaches. (Fam. I. 13.) God either Himself proves us by sufferings and adversities, or He permits the temptations of the devil or evil-minded people to give us opportunity to practise the virtues of love, patience, obedience, etc. Thus He said to the Jews through Moses: The Lord your God trieth you, that it may appear whether you love him with all your heart, and with all your soul, or no. (Deut. XIII. 3.)

Does God permit us to be tempted by man also?

He does, and for the same reasons. Thus He permitted the chaste Joseph to be tempted by Putiphar's wife; (Gen. XXXIX. 7.) Job by his wife and his friends. (Job II. 9.) But He never permits us to be tempted beyond our strength, but gives us always sufficient grace to overcome and even to derive benefit from the temptation. (I Cor. X. 13.)

Are temptations pernicious and bad?

No; they are useful and necessary, rather. “Hard is the fight,” St. Bernard writes, “but meritorious, for although it is accompanied by suffering, it is followed by the crown;”

(Apoc. III. 12.) and Origen says. (Libr. Num.) “As meat becomes corrupt without salt, so does the soul without temptations.” Temptations, then, are only injurious when consent is given, and we suffer ourselves to be overcome by them.

When do we consent to temptations?

When we knowingly and willingly decide to do the evil to which we are tempted; as long as we resist we commit no sin.

What are the best means of overcoming temptations?

Humility; for thus answered St. Anthony, when he saw the whole earth covered with snares, and was asked “Who will escape?” “The humble;” he who knows his own frailty, distrusts himself, and relies only on God who resists the proud and gives His grace to the humble; (Dam. IV. 6.) the fervent invocation of the Mother of God, of our holy guardian angels and patron saints; the pronouncing of the holy name of Jesus, making the sign of the cross, sprinkling holy water; the remembrance of the presence of God who knows our most secret thoughts, and before whom we are indeed ashamed to think or do that which would cause us shame in the presence of an honourable person; frequent meditation on death, hell, and eternal joys; fleeing from all those persons by whom, and places in which we are generally tempted; fervent prayers, especially ejaculations, as:

“Lord, save me, lest I perish! Lord, hasten to help me!” finally, the sincere acknowledgment of our temptations at the tribunal of penance, which is a remedy especially recommended by pious spiritual teachers.

PRAYER O Lord Jesus! who spent forty days in the desert without food or drink, and didst permit Thy self to be tempted by the evil spirit, give me, I beseech Thee by that holy fast, the grace to combat, during this holy season of Lent, under Thy protection, against intemperance, and to resist the suggestions of Satan that I may win the crown of eternal life. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

(REMINISCERE)

The Introit of this day's Mass, which begins with the word Reminiscere, from which this Sunday derives its name, is the prayer of a soul begging God's assistance, that she may sin no more:

INTROIT Remember, O Lord, Thy compassions and Thy mercies, which are from the beginning, lest at any time our enemies rule over us: deliver us O God of Israel, from all our tribulations. To Thee O Lord, have I lifted up my soul: in Thee, O my God, I put my trust; let me not be ashamed. (Ps. XXIV.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT O God, who seest us to be destitute of strength, keep us both inwardly and outwardly; that we may be defended in the body from all adversities, and cleansed in our mind from all evil thoughts. Through our Lord, etc.

EPISTLE (I Thess. IV. 1-7.) Brethren, we pray and beseech you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us, how you ought to walk, and to please God, so also you would walk, that you may abound the more. For you know what precepts I have given to you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you should abstain from fornication; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles that know not God: and that no man over-reach nor circumvent his brother in business; because the Lord is the avenger of all these things, as we have told you before, and have testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification; in Christ Jesus our Lord.

EXPLANATION From these words we see, that the great Teacher of Nations as carefully showed the Christian congregations the sanctity of their calling, as he laboured to lead them from the blindness and abominations of heathenism.

ASPIRATION Grant, O God, that I may live an honest, chaste and holy life in accordance with my vocation, and go not after earthly and carnal pleasures, as the heathens who know Thee not.

GOSPEL (Matt. XVII. 1-9.) At that time, Jesus took Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as snow. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And

as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said to them: Arise, and fear not. And they lifting up their eyes, saw no one, but only Jesus. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man: till the Son of Man be risen from the dead.

Why was Christ transfigured in the presence of His apostles on Mount Thabor?

To permit them to see the glorious majesty of His divinity; to guard them from doubts when they should afterwards see Him die on Mount Calvary; to encourage the disciples and all the faithful to be patient in all crosses and afflictions, for the bodies of the just at the resurrection will be made like the glorified body of Christ. (Phil. III. 21.)

Why did Moses and Elias appear there?

That they might testify, that Jesus was really the Saviour announced by the law and the prophets, and that the law and the prophets received fulfillment in Him. The former was represented by Moses, the latter by Elias.

Why, did Peter wish to build three tabernacles there?

The delightful sweetness of the apparition in which Jesus made him participator so enraptured him, that he knew not what he said, not considering that glory can be attained only through sufferings, the crown through fight, joy through crosses and afflictions.

ASPIRATION Draw us, O Jesus, to Thee, that by the contemplation of the sacred joys awaiting us, we, by Thy grace, may not be defeated in the spiritual contest, but conquer through Thy grace and carry off the unfading crown of victory.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

(OCULI)

The Introit of this day's Mass, which begins with the word *Oculi*, is the prayer of a soul imploring deliverance from the snares of the devil:

INTROIT My eyes are ever towards the Lord: for he shall pluck my feet out of the snare: look thou upon me, and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor. To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul: in thee, O my God, I put my trust: let me not be ashamed. (Fs. XXIV.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT We beseech Thee, Almighty God, regard the desires of the humble, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy majesty to be our defence. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, etc.

EPISTLE (Ephes. V. 1-9.) Brethren, be ye followers of God, as most dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God, for an odour of sweetness. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints; nor obscenity, nor foolish talking, nor scurrility, which is to no purpose; but rather giving of thanks: for know ye this, and understand, that no fornicator, nor unclean, nor covetous person, which is a serving of idols, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief. Be ye not therefore partakers with them. For you were heretofore darkness; but now light in the Lord. Walk, then, as children of the light: for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and justice, and truth.

EXPLANATION The apostle requires us to imitate God, as good children imitate their father in well-doing and in well-wishing; besides he declares that all covetousness, fornication, all disgraceful talk and equivocal jokes should be banished from Christian meetings, even that such things should not be so much as mentioned among us; because these vices unfailingly deprive us of heaven. He admonishes us not to let ourselves be deceived by the seducing words of those who seek to make these vices appear small, nothing more than pardonable human weaknesses; those who speak thus are the children of darkness and of the devil, they bring down the wrath of God upon themselves, and all who assent to their words. A Christian, a child of light, that is, of faith, should regard as a sin that which faith and conscience tell him is such, and must live according to their precepts and not by false judgment of the wicked. Should any one seek to lead you away, ask yourself, my Christian soul, whether you would dare appear with such a deed before the judgment-seat of God. Listen to the voice of your conscience, and let it decide, whether that which you are expected to do is good or bad, lawful or unlawful.

ASPIRATION Place Thy fear, O God, before my mouth, that I may utter no vain, careless, much less improper and scandalous words, which may be the occasion of sin to my neighbour. Strengthen me, that I may not be deceived by flattering words, and become faithless to Thee.

GOSPEL (Luke XI. 14.-28.) At that time, Jesus was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb. And when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke, and the multitudes were in admiration at it. But some of them said: He casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils. And others tempting, asked of him a sign from heaven. But he seeing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall. And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say, that through Beelzebub I cast out devils. Now if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out devils, doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things which he possesseth are in peace; but if a stronger than he come upon him, and overcome him, he will take away all his armour wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils. He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding, he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out: and when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to him: Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck. But he said: Yea rather blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it.

Can a man be really possessed of a devil?

It is the doctrine of the Catholic Church that the evil spirit most perniciously influences man in a twofold manner: by enticing his soul to sin, and then influencing his body which he often entirely or partially possesses, manifesting himself by madness, convulsions, insanity, etc. Many texts of Scripture, and the writings of the Fathers speak of this possession. St. Cyprian writes: "We can expel the swarms of impure spirits, who for the ruin of the soul, enter into the bodies of men, and we can compel them to acknowledge their presence, by the force of powerful words." Possession takes place by the permission of God either for trial or as a punishment for sin committed, (I. Cor. V. 5.) and the Church from her Head, Jesus, who expelled

so many devils, has received the power of casting them out as He did. (Mark XVI. 17.; Acts V. 16., VIII. 6. 7., XVI. 18. &c.) She however warns her ministers, the priests, who by their ordination have received the power to expel the evil spirits, to distinguish carefully between possession and natural sickness, that they may not be deceived, (Rit. ROM. §. 3. §. 5-10.) and the faithful should guard against looking upon every unusual, unhealthy appearance as an influence of Satan, and should give no ear to impostors, but in order not to be deceived, should turn to an experienced physician or to their pastor.

What is understood by a dumb devil?

The literal meaning of this is the evil enemy, who sometimes so torments those whom he possesses that they lose the power of speech; in a spiritual sense, we may understand it to mean the shame which the devil takes away from the sinner, when he commits the sin, but gives back again, as false shame, before confession, so that the sinner conceals the sin, and thereby falls deeper.

How does Christ still cast out dumb devils?

By His grace with which He inwardly enlightens the sinner, so that he becomes keenly aware that the sins which he has concealed in confession, will one day be known to the whole world, and thus encourages him to overcome his false shame. - "Be not ashamed to confess to one man," says St. Augustine, "that which you were not ashamed to do with one, perhaps, with many." Consider these words of the same saint: "Sincere confession subdues vice, conquers the evil one, shuts the door of hell, and opens the gates of paradise."

How did Christ prove, that He did not cast out devils by Beelzebub?

By showing that the kingdom of Satan could not stand, if one evil spirit were cast out by another; that they thus reproached their own sons who also cast out devils, and had not been accused of doing so by power from Beelzebub; by His own life and works which were in direct opposition to the devil, and by which the devil's works were destroyed. - There is no better defence against calumny than an innocent life, and those who are slandered, find no better consolation than the thought of Christ who, notwithstanding His sanctity and His miracles, was not secure against calumnation.

What is meant by the finger of God?

The power of God, by which Christ expelled the evil spirits, proved himself God, and the promised Redeemer.

Who is the strong man armed?

The evil one is so called, because he still retains the power and intellect of the angels, and, practiced by long experience, seeks in different ways to injure man if God permits.

How is the devil armed?

With the evil desires of men, with the perishable riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, with which he entices us to evil, deceives us, and casts us into eternal fire.

Who is the stronger one who took away the devil's armour?

Christ the Lord who came into this world that He might destroy the works and the kingdom of the devil, to expel the prince of darkness, (John XII. 31.) and to redeem us from his power. "The devil," says St. Anthony, "is like a dragon caught by the Lord with the fishing-hook of the cross, tied with a halter like a beast of burden, chained like a fugitive slave, and his lips pierced through with a ring, so that he may not devour any of the faithful. Now he sighs, like a miserable sparrow, caught by Christ and turned to derision, and thrown under the feet of the Christians. He who flattered himself that he would possess the whole orbit of the earth, behold, he has to yield!"

Why does Christ say: He who is not with me, is against me?

These words were intended in the first place for the Pharisees who did not acknowledge Christ as the Messiah, would not fight with Him against Satan's power, but rather held the people back from reaching unity of faith and love of Christ. Like the Pharisees, all heretical teachers who, by their false doctrines, draw the faithful from communion with Christ and His Church, are similar to the devil, the father of heresy and lies. May all those, therefore, who think they can serve Christ and the world at the same time, consider that between truth and falsehood, between Christ and the world, there is no middle path; that Christ requires decision, either with Him, or against Him, either eternal happiness with Him, or without Him, everlasting misery.

Who are understood by the dry places through which the evil spirit wanders and finds no rest?

“The dry places without water,” says St. Gregory, “are the hearts of the just, who by the force of penance have drained the dampness of carnal desires.” In such places the evil-one indeed finds no rest, because there his malice finds no sympathy, and his wicked will no satisfaction.

Why does the evil spirit say: I will return into my house?

Because he is only contented there where he is welcomed and received: those who have purified their heart by confession, and driven Satan from it, but labour not to amend, again lose the grace of the Sacraments by sin, and thus void of virtue and grace, offer a beautiful and pleasant dwelling to the devil.

Why is it said: The last state becomes worse than the first?

Because a relapse generally draws more sins with it, and so it is said: the devil will return with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, by which may be understood the seven deadly sins, because after a relapse into sin conversion to God becomes more difficult, as a repeated return of the same sickness makes it harder to regain health; because by repetition sin easily becomes a habit and renders conversion almost impossible; because repeated relapses are followed by blindness of intellect, hardness of heart, and in the end eternal damnation.

Why did the woman lift up her voice?

This was by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost to shame the Pharisees who, blinded by pride, neither professed nor acknowledged the divinity of Christ, whilst this humble woman not only confessed Jesus as God, but praised her who carried Him, whom heaven and earth cannot contain. Consider the great dignity of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of the Son of God, and hear her praises from the holy Fathers. St. Cyril thus salutes her: “Praise to thee, Blessed Mother of God: for thou art virginity itself, the sceptre of the true faith!” and St. Chrysostom: “Hail, O Mother, the throne, the glory, the heaven of the Church!” St. Ephrem: “Hail, only hope of the Fathers, herald of the apostles, glory of the martyrs, joy of the saints, and crown of the virgins, because of thy vast glory, and inaccessible light!”

Why did Christ call those happy who hear the word of God and keep it?

Because, as has been already said, it is not enough for salvation to hear the word of God, but it must also be practiced. Because Mary, the tender Mother of Jesus, did this most perfectly, Christ terms her happier in it, than in having conceived, borne, and nursed Him.

SUPPLICATION O Lord Jesus! true Light of the world, enlighten the eyes of my soul, that I may never be induced by the evil one to conceal a sin, through false shame, in the confessional, that on the day of general judgment my sins may not be published to the whole world. Strengthen me, O Jesus, that I may resist the arms of the devil by a penitent life, and especially by scorning the fear of man and worldly considerations, and guard against lapsing into sin, that I may not be lost, but through Thy merits maybe delivered from, all dangers and obtain heaven

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT (LAETARE)

The Introit of this day's Mass, which begins with the word Laetare, is as follows:

INTROIT Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and come together all you that love her; rejoice with joy you that have been in sorrow: that you may exult, and be filled from the breasts of your consolation. (Isai: LXVI. 10. 11.) I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: We shall go into the house of the Lord. (Ps. CXXI. 1.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT Grant, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that we who justly suffer for our deeds may be relieved by the consolation of Thy grace. Through etc.

EPISTLE (Gat. IV. 22-31.) Brethren, it is written that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bond-woman and the other by a free-woman. But he who was of the bond-woman was born according to the flesh; but he of the free-woman was by promise: which things are said by an allegory. For these are the two testaments. The one from Mount Sina, engendering unto bondage, which is Agar: for Sina is a mountain in Arabia, which hath affinity to that Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But that Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother. For it is written: Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not: break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that hath a husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born according to the flesh persecuted him that was after the spirit, so also it is now. But what saith the scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the

bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman. So, then, brethren, we are not the children of the bond-woman, but of the free: by the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free.

EXPLANATION It was the common custom, in the days of the patriarchs, for a man to have more than one wife. This was permitted by God, partly because they and their descendants would hardly have been satisfied with one marriage, (Matt. XIX. 8.) partly because bigamy was a means of promoting the increase of the people of Israel, typical of the future increase of the children of God. Thus Abraham had two wives, who had each a son; of these Ismael was born to Abraham from his bond-woman Agar, in the natural way; the other, Isaac, the son of the free wife Sara, was born in a supernatural manner according to the promise, (Gen. XVIII. 11. 14.) that she by the grace of God, although aged, would give birth to a son. These two women with their sons were types, as St. Paul says, of the two Testaments: Agar the bond-woman typified the Old, Sara, the free-woman, the New Testament; the son of Agar, the Jews, the son of Sara, the Christians; for the Jews, like Ismael, are descendants of Abraham by natural descent, but the Christians, like Isaac, by grace. The Old Testament gave birth only to servants; for the Jews obeyed the commandments of God through fear of punishment, and in hope of temporal reward; the New Testament, the Jerusalem from above. that is, the Christian Church, gives birth to children who willingly and through love obey the commandments of God. Although the Christian Church, the New Jerusalem, chosen from heathenism, was in the beginning barren, as was Sara, she gives birth, by the grace of God and through His apostles, to more children than the Jewish Church, which was so long the Church of God, that is, more were converted to Christianity from the Gentiles than from the Jews. The latter even hated and persecuted the Christians, as did Ismael his brother Isaac. For their hardness of heart they were cast out by God, like Agar and her son; that is, after the destruction of Jerusalem the Jews were dispersed to all parts of the world. Let us, therefore, give thanks to God, that through Jesus we have become the free children of our heavenly Father, who through love fulfill His holy will by which we shall be saved.

ASPIRATION Give me the grace, O Jesus, that by prayer and fasting, and patience in all adversities and persecutions, I may be made less unworthy of Thy passion; that I may not, one day, be cast out by Thee, but become worthy of Thy divine promise and Thy eternal consolation in the heavenly Jerusalem.

GOSPEL (John VI. 1-15.) At that time, Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias; and a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased. Jesus therefore went up into a mountain,

and there he sat with his disciples. Now the pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand. When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to try him; for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered: Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him: There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes: but what are these among so many? Then Jesus said: Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down: in like manner also of the fishes, as much as they would. And when they were filled, he said to his disciples: Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost. They gathered up, therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had eaten. Now those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world. Jesus therefore when he knew that they would come to take him by force, and make him king, fled again into the mountain himself alone.

Why did Christ try St. Philip?

To test his faith and confidence; to instruct us that before seeking supernatural means, we should first look for natural ways of providing; that the miracle of the multiplying of the loaves should be more marvellous to the people from having seen there was no provision; and that we may learn to trust in God, who is a helper in due time in tribulation. (Ps. IX. 10.)

What signs did Christ make use of in this miracle, and why?

According to St. Matthew (XIV. 19.) He lifted up His eyes to heaven, by which He showed that all good gifts come from above; He gave thanks, thus teaching us to give thanks to God for all His blessings. "The table," says St. Chrysostom, "that is approached and is left with prayer will never know want, but the more richly yield its gifts." He blessed the bread showing us that the divine blessing increases all things.

Why did Christ require them to gather up the fragments that were left?

That they should not be wasted or destroyed; that the greatness of the miracle should be made evident by the quantity of the fragments; and that we might learn to honor

the gifts of God, even the most insignificant, and if we do not ourselves need them, give them to the poor.

Why did Christ, after this miracle, flee from the people?

Because after this miracle the people recognized in him the Messiah, and would have made Him king. He wished to teach us to flee from praise and honor, and in all our actions seek not our own, but God's glory.

CONSOLATION IN POVERTY

This gospel gives the account of Christ providing for those who followed and listened to Him, which is indeed consoling for the poor. God from the beginning of the world has always cared for His own. For the aid and comfort of His chosen people in time of famine God sent Joseph, the son of the Patriarch Jacob, in advance into Egypt: (Gen. XLV. 5.) for forty years He fed the children of Israel in the desert with bread from heaven; (Deut. VIII. 2. 3.) He fed the Prophet Elias by a raven; (III Kings VII. 6.) and thought of Daniel in the lions' den. (Dan. XIV. 37.) In the New Testament God shows His merciful care for His own, because in great need He fed them marvelously through angels, men, and even animals, as we frequently see in the lives of the saints. Truly has David said: God forsakes not the just, I have been young, and am now old: and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread, (PS. XXXVI. 25.) that is, one who sincerely serves Him, and seeks before all the kingdom of God and His justice, as Christ commands. (Luke XII. 31.) Strive to be a faithful child, and you will have God for your father, and with King David you can cast your care upon the Lord, and He will sustain you. You must not think it is enough to pray and trust in God, He demands that you should use your strength to receive help, for if any man will not work, neither let him eat. (II Thess. III. 10.)

ASPIRATION In Thy omnipotence and goodness, O my God, I put my trust, firmly believing that if I fear Thee, serve Thee faithfully, and avoid evil, I shall not be abandoned in poverty, but receive many good things. Amen.

INSTRUCTION ON PREPARATION FOR EASTER

Now the Pasch the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand. (John VI. 4.)

If we would sing a joyful Alleluia with the Church on the festival of Easter, we must fulfill her desire, and prepare ourselves to celebrate it worthily. Therefore, we should shun improper, clamorous meetings, and retire often to pray in solitude, especially to meditate on the bitter sufferings of our Saviour, for when man is alone, God speaks to his heart. (Osee. II. 14.) We should carefully examine our conscience, and consider how we stand before God, for upon this day shall be the expiation for you, and the cleansing from all your sins: you shall be cleansed before the Lord; for it is a Sabbath of rest, and you shall afflict your souls, that is, by fasting, watching, and praying. (Lev. XVI. 30-31.) From this Sunday until Easter we should fast more strictly, give more alms to the poor if we are able, or if poor ourselves, bear our poverty more patiently, offering it to Christ in union with His poverty, His hunger, thirst, etc.; we should make a sincere and contrite confession, and purify our heart from the old leaven of iniquity, that we may keep the Easter meal with Christ in the unleavened bread of purity and truth. (I Cor. V. 7. 8.) For this end we should incite ourselves to holy desires, rise from sin, which is the death of the soul

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

(JUDICA)

This Sunday, called Judica from the first word of the Introit, is also called Passion Sunday, because from this day the Church occupies herself exclusively with the contemplation of the passion and death of Christ. The pictures of Christ crucified are covered today in memory of his having hidden Himself from the Jews until His entrance into Jerusalem, no longer showing Himself in public. (John XI. 54.) In the Mass the Glory be to the Father, etc. is omitted, because in the person of Christ the Holy Trinity was dishonoured. The psalm Judica is not said today, because on this day the high priests held council about our Lord, for which reason the Church in the name of the suffering Saviour uses these words at the Introit:

INTROIT Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy: deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man, for Thou art my God and my strength. Send forth thy light and thy truth: they have conducted me, and brought me unto thy holy hill, and into thy tabernacles. (Ps. XLII. 1. 3.)

COLLECT We beseech Thee, Almighty God, graciously to look upon Thy family; that by Thy bounty it may be governed in body, and by Thy protection be guarded in mind. Through, &c.

EPISTLE (Heb. IX. 11-15.) Brethren, Christ being come, a high-priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, by the Holy Ghost, offered himself without spot to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? And therefore he is the Mediator of the new testament; that by means of his death, for the redemption of those transgressions which were under the former testament; they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

EXPLANATION St. Paul here teaches, that Christ as the true high-priest of the New Testament, through His precious blood on the altar of the cross, has indeed rendered perfect satisfaction for sins, but that the sinner must also do his own part, by cooperating with Christ to make himself less unworthy of participating in His passion and merits, and to appropriate to himself its fruits. This is done when he diligently and devoutly assists at the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass, by which the fruits of the death on the cross are attributed to us; when, according to the will of the Church, he purifies his conscience by true contrition and confession; and when he seeks by trust in Christ's merits to render some satisfaction for his sins through voluntary penance and faithful following of Christ.

ASPIRATION Grant us, O meek Jesus, Thy grace, that through perfect sorrow for our sins and the exercise of good works we may become participators in the merits of Thy bitter passion.

GOSPEL (John VIII. 46-59.) At that time, Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me? He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God. The Jews therefore answered, and said to him: Do not we say well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered: I have not a devil; but I honor my Father, and you have dishonoured me. But I seek not my own glory; there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Amen, amen, I say to you, if any man keep my word, he shall not see death for ever. The Jews therefore said: Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art thou greater than our Father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered: If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that

glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. And you have not known him; but I know him. And if I shall say that I know him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know him, and do keep his word. Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

Why did Christ ask the Jews, which of them should convince Him of sin?

To show us that he who would teach and punish others, should strive to be irreproachable himself; and to prove that He, being free from sin, was more than mere man, and therefore, the Messiah, the Son of God, as He repeatedly told the Jews, especially in this day's gospel, and substantiated by His great and numerous miracles.

Why did He say: He that is of God, heareth the words of God?

To prove that the Jews on account of their stubbornness and unbelief were not the children of God, but of the devil. "Therefore," St. Gregory says, "let everyone when he hears the word of God, ask himself, of whom he is. Eternal truth demands that we be desirous of the heavenly fatherland, that we tame the desires of the flesh, be indifferent to the praises of the world, covet not our neighbour's goods, and give alms according to our means. Therefore examine yourself, and if you find in your heart this voice of God, then you will know that you are of God."

CONSOLATION UNDER CALUMNY

When Christ told the Jews the truth, He received insults and calumny; they called Him a Samaritan, that is, an unbeliever, a heretic, one possessed of a devil. This was a terrible slander, and it must have pained Him exceedingly, but at the same time it is a great consolation to those who are innocently calumniated, when they consider that Christ Himself received nothing better. St. Augustine consoles such by saying: "O friend, what is there that can happen to you that your Saviour did not suffer before you? Is it slander? He heard it, when He was called a glutton, a drunkard, a heretic, and a rebel, a companion of sinners, one possessed of a devil; He even heard, when casting out devils, that He did so by Beelzebub, prince of devils." (Matt. IX. 34.) He therefore comforts His apostles, saying, if they have called the good man of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household? (Matt, X. 25.) Are the pains

bitter? There is no pain so bitter that He has not endured it; for what is more painful, and at the same time more ignominious, than the death of the cross? For think, says St. Paul, diligently upon him who endured such opposition from sinners against himself: that you be not wearied (by all contempt and calumny), fainting in your minds. (Heb. XII. 3.)

How and why did Christ defend Himself against those who slandered Him?

Only by denying with the greatest modesty the things with which they reproached Him, saying that He had not a devil, that He was not a Samaritan, because He honored His Father not in their manner, but in His own. In repelling this calumny while He left the rest unanswered, Christ removed all doubt in regard to His divine mission, thus vindicating the honor of God, and securing the salvation of man. Christ thus teaches us by His own conduct to defend ourselves only against those detractions and insults which endanger the honor of God and the salvation of man, and then to defend ourselves with all modesty; by no means however to do it, if they injure only our own good name, for we should leave the restoration of that to God, as exemplified by Christ, who knows better than we how to preserve and restore it.

[See the [Instruction](#) on the Epistle of the third Sunday after Epiphany.]

How had Abraham seen Christ's day?

In spirit, that is, by divine revelation he foresaw the coming of Christ and rejoiced; also, he heard, by revelation from God, with the other just in Limbo, that Christ's coming had taken place, and derived the greatest comfort from it.

Why did Christ conceal Himself from the Jews, instead of taking vengeance?

Because the time of His death had not come; because He would show His meekness and patience and teach us that we should avoid our enemies rather than resist them or take vengeance on them; Christ wished to instruct us to avoid passionate and quarrelsome people, for it is an honor for a man, to separate from quarrels: but all fools are meddling with reproaches. (Prov. XX. 3.)

PETITION When Thine enemies calumniated Thee, most meek Jesus, Thou didst answer them with tender words, and when they were about to stone Thee, Thou didst depart from them, whilst we can scarcely bear a hard word, and far from yielding to our neighbour, defend and avenge ourselves most passionately. Ah! pardon us our

impatience, and grant us the grace to bear patiently the wrongs done us, and when necessary, answer with gentleness for Thy glory and the salvation of our neighbour.

PALM SUNDAY

Why is this day called Palm Sunday?

In memory of our Saviour's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, when the multitude strewed palm branches before Him, for which reason the Church, on this day, blesses palms, and carries them in procession.

Why are palms blessed?

That those who carry them with devotion, or keep them in their houses, may receive protection of soul and body, as prayed for in the blessing; that those who carry the palms may, by means of the prayers of the Church, adorn their souls with good works and thus, in spirit, meet the Saviour; that, through Christ whose members we are, we may conquer the kingdom of death and darkness, and be made worthy to share in His glorious resurrection and triumphant entrance into heaven. St. Augustine writes of the palms: "They are the emblem of praise, and sign of victory, because the Lord by death conquered death, and with the sign of victory, the cross, overcame the devil, the prince of death." Therefore, preceded by the cross, we go in procession around the church singing hymns of praise; when we come to the church door, we find it locked; the priest knocks at it with the cross. Heaven was closed to us by the sin of Adam, and it is opened to us by reconciliation through Jesus on the cross.

To move us to compassion for the suffering Redeemer, the Church, in the person of Christ, cries in lamenting tones at the Introit:

INTROIT O Lord, remove not Thy help to a distance from me, look towards my defence: save me from the lion's mouth, and my lowness from the horns of the

unicorns. O God, my God! look on me, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins. O Lord! Remove not, etc. (Ps. XXI.)

COLLECT Almighty and everlasting God! who didst vouchsafe to send Thy Son, our Saviour, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, to give mankind an example of humility; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of His patience, and be made partakers of His Resurrection. Through the same etc.

EPISTLE (Philip. II. 5-11.) Brethren, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery himself to be equal to God; but debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of men, and in shape found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name, which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that the Lord, Jesus Christ, is in the glory of God, the Father.

INSTRUCTION In this epistle, the apostle urges us in a special manner to humility by which we are made like to Christ, our Lord, who putting off the majesty of His divinity, became man, and humbled Himself in obedience to the ignominious death of the cross. “Would that all might hear,” exclaims St. Gregory, “that God resists the proud, and gives His grace to the humble! Would that all might hear: Thou dust and ashes, why dost thou exalt thyself? Would that all might hear the words of the Lord: Learn of me, because I am humble of heart. The only-begotten Son of God assumed the form of our weakness, suffered mockery, insult and torments for the purpose that the humble God might teach man not to be proud.”

ASPIRATION Ah, that my sentiments were as Throe, O my Lord, Jesus! who so humbled Thyself and was obedient to the most ignominious death of the cross. Grant me, I beseech Thee, O my Redeemer, the grace diligently to follow Thee in humility.

Instead of the gospel of the Passion, that is, the history of the sufferings of our Lord according to St. Matthew, (Chaps. XXVI. XXVII.) is read in this day’s Mass, and neither incense, nor lights are used, nor is the Dominus vobiscum said, thus signifying that Jesus, the Light of the world, was taken away by death, and that the faith and devotion of the apostles was shaken, and became almost extinct. When reading the History of the Passion at the words: and bowing his head, he gave up the ghost, the priest with all the congregation kneel and meditate for a short time on the great mystery of the death of Jesus, by which our redemption was effected.

At the blessing of the palms, the priest reads the following

GOSPEL (Matt. XXI. 1-9.) At that time, when Jesus drew nigh to Jerusalem, and was come to Bethphage, unto Mount Olivet; then he sent two disciples, saying to them: Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately ye will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them, and bring them to me; and if any man shall say anything to you, say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done, that the word might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, saying: Tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke. And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them. And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way; and the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Why did Jesus enter Jerusalem so solemnly and yet so humbly?

To show that He was the promised Messiah and King of the Jews, as foretold by the Prophet Zacharias, (IX 9.) and that He had come to conquer the world, the flesh and the devil, for which He used the weapons of meekness, humility, and poverty and therefore came seated not on a proud steed but like a poor person on the weak colt of an ass, entering Jerusalem in all humility, thus teaching us that meekness and indifference to earthly goods are our best weapons to gain victory over our enemies. Jesus entered Jerusalem so humbly to perfect the type of the Paschal lamb, for on this day the lambs which were to be sacrificed in the temple on the following Friday, were solemnly led into the city. Thus Jesus like a meek lamb, entered the city of Jerusalem to be sacrificed for us.

Why did the people meet Christ with palm branches?

This happened by the inspiration of God, to indicate that Christ, the conqueror of death, hell and the devil, would reconcile man with God, and open the heavenly Jerusalem to him, for the palm is the emblem of victory and peace. By this we learn also the inconsistency and mutability of the world; for the very people who on this day met Christ with palm branches exclaiming: “Hosanna to the Son of David,” a few days later shouted: “Crucify him! Crucify him!” - Learn from this to despise the praise of the world, and be careful not to imitate the inconsistency of this people by

crucifying Him again by sin (Heb. VI. 6.) after having received Him with joy in holy Communion.

How should we take part in the procession on this day?

With the pious intention of meeting Christ in spirit, with the devout people of Jerusalem, adoring Him, saying: “Hosanna to the Son of David, Hosanna to Him who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna to the Highest!” and with the heart-felt prayer to Jesus for His grace, that with Him we may conquer the world, the flesh and the devil, and thus merit to be received into the heavenly Jerusalem.

PETITION O Jesus, Tree of Life! ever fresh and fruitful, grant that we may by love be like palms ever green, and by the practice of, good works blossom and bring forth fruit.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI., XXVII.

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: You know that after two days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified. Then were gathered together the chief priests and the ancients of the people into the palace of the high-priest, who was called Caiphas. And they consulted together, that, by subtlety, they might apprehend Jesus and put him to death. But they said: Not on the festival day, lest there should be a tumult among the people. And when Jesus was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, there came to him a woman having an alahaster box of precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he was at table. And the disciples seeing it, had indignation, saying: To what purpose is this waste? For this might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. And Jesus knowing it, said to them: Why do you trouble this woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For the poor you have always with you: but me you have not always. For she, in pouring this ointment upon my body, hath done it for my burial. Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memory of her.

Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests, and said to them: What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? But they appointed for him thirty pieces of silver. And from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray him.

And on the first day of the Azymes, the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Pasch? But Jesus said: Go ye into the city to a certain man, and say to him: The master saith: my time is near at hand, I will keep the Pasch at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them, and they prepared the Pasch. Now when it was evening, he sat down with his twelve disciples. And whilst they were eating, he said: Amen, I say to you, that one of you is about to betray me. And they being very much troubled, began everyone to say: Is it I, Lord? But he answering, said: He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of Man indeed goeth as it is written of him; but woe to that man, by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed: it were better for that man, if he had not been born. And Judas that betrayed him, answering, said: Is it I, Rabbi? He said to him: Thou hast said it. And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye and eat: This is my body. And taking the chalice he gave thanks: and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins. And I say to you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day, when I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to Mount Olivet.

Then Jesus saith to them: All you shall be scandalized in me this night. For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed. But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. And Peter answering, said to him: Though all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized. Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee, that in this night, before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice. Peter saith to him: Though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner said all the disciples. Then Jesus came with them to a country place which is called Gethsemani, and he said to his disciples: Sit you here, till I go yonder, and pray. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to grow sorrowful and to be sad.

Then he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay you here, and watch with me. And going a little further he fell upon his face, praying, and saying: O my Father! if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh to his disciples, and findeth them asleep; and he saith to Peter: What! could you not watch one hour with me? Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again he went the second time, and prayed, saying: O my Father! if this chalice cannot pass away except I drink it, thy will be done. And he cometh again, and findeth them asleep; for

their eyes were heavy. And leaving them, he went away again, and he prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then he cometh to his disciples, and with to them: Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go; behold, he is at hand that will betray me.

As he yet spoke, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the ancients of the people. And he that betrayed him, gave them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: hold him fast. And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said: Hail, rabbi! And he kissed him. And Jesus said to him: Friend! whereto art thou come? Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus, and held him. And behold one of them that were with Jesus, stretching forth his hand, drew out his sword; and striking the servant of the high-priest, cut off his ear. Then Jesus saith to him: Put up again thy sword into its place for all that take the sword shall perish by the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of Angels? How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done? In that same hour Jesus said to the multitude: You are come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to apprehend me. I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and you laid not hands on me. Now all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then the disciples all leaving him, fled away.

But they holding Jesus, led him to Caiphas, the high-priest, where the scribes and the ancients were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off to the high-priest's palace. And going in, he sat with the servants, to see the end. Now the chief priests and whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death: and they found not, though many false witnesses had come in. And last of all, there came two false witnesses. And they said: This man said: I am able to destroy the temple of God, and in three days to rebuild it. And the high-priest rising up, said to him: Answerest thou nothing to the things which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high-priest said to him: I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man, sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed, what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy. What think you? But they answering, said: He is guilty of death.

Then they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others struck his face with the palms of their hands, saying: Prophecy unto us, O Christ! who is he that struck thee? But Peter sat without in the palace, and there came to him a servant maid, saying: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest. And as he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath: I do not know the man. And after a little while, they that stood by came and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them: for even thy speech doth discover thee. Then he began to curse and to swear that he knew not the man.

And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus which he had said: Before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice. And going forth, he wept bitterly.

And when the morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people held a council against Jesus, to put him to death. And they brought him bound, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the governor.

Then Judas, who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the ancients, saying: I have sinned, in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? look thou to it.

And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed: and went and hanged himself with a halter. But the chief priests having taken the pieces of silver, said: It is not lawful to put them into the corbona, because it is the price of blood. And having consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying-place for strangers. Wherefore that field was called Haceldama, that is the field of blood, even to this day.

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they prized of the children of Israel. And they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed to me.

And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus saith to him: Thou sayest it. And when he was accused by the chief priests and ancients, he answered nothing. Then Pilate saith to him: Dost thou not hear how great testimonies they allege against thee?

And he answered him not to any word: so that the governor wondered exceedingly.

Now upon the solemn day the governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner, whom they would. And he had then a notorious prisoner, that was called Barabbas. They, therefore, being gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus, who is called Christ? For he knew that through envy they had delivered him up. And as he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying. Have thou nothing to do with that just man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream on account of him. But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people, that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away. And the governor answering, said to them: Which will you have of the two to be released unto you? But they said: Barabbas. Pilate saith to them: What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? They all say: Let him be crucified. The governor said to them: Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying: Let him be crucified. And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made; having taken water, washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it. And all the people answering, said: His blood be upon us, and upon our children. Then he released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to them to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band. And stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him. And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews!

And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head. And after they had mocked him, they took off the cloak from him, and put on him his own garments, and led him away to crucify him.

And going out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon; him they forced to take up his cross. And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is, the place of Calvary. And they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when he had tasted, he would not drink. And after they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots; that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: They divided my garments among them; and upon my vesture they cast lots. And they sat down, and watched him. And they put over his head his cause written: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Then were there crucified with him two thieves; the one on the right hand, and the other on the left. And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, thou who destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again, save thy own self: if thou be

the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also, the chief priests with the scribes and ancients, mocking, said: He saved others; himself he cannot save: if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will save him: for he said: I am the Son of God.

And the self-same thing the thieves also, that were crucified with him, reproached him with. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the earth, until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is: My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood there and heard, said: This man calleth for Elias. And immediately one of them, running; took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar; and put it on a reed and gave him to drink. And the others said: Stay, let us see whether Elias will come to deliver him. And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two, from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent; and the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose: and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. Now the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were greatly afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God. And there were there many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him; among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. And when it was evening, there came a certain rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded that the body should be delivered. And Joseph taking the body, wrapped it up in a clean linen cloth. And laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewed out in a rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way. And there was Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre.

And the next day, which followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. "Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day; lest his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead. So the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard, go guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, with guards, sealing the stone.

INSTRUCTION ON HOLY WEEK

Why is this week called Holy Week?

This week is called Holy Week because during it we celebrate the most holy mysteries of our religion, and in all her offices and ceremonies the Church refers in quiet mournfulness to the passion and death of our Redeemer.

What remarkable things did Christ do during the first four days of this week?

After He had entered the temple at Jerusalem on Palm Sunday amidst the greatest rejoicings of the people, and was saluted by the children with that cry of joy: “Hosanna to the Son of David,” He drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and when He had spent the entire day in preaching and healing the sick, He went in the evening to Bethania, where He remained overnight in Lazarus’ house, because in Jerusalem no one wished to receive Him for fear of His enemies. The three following days He spent in Jerusalem, teaching in the temple, and passing the night in prayer on Mount Olivet. In His sermons during these days He strove especially to convince the Jewish priests, the Doctors of the Law and the Pharisees, that He was really the Messiah, and that they would commit a terrible sin by putting Him to death; that they would bring themselves and the whole Jewish nation to destruction. This ruin of the people He illustrated most plainly causing the fig tree to wither under His curse, and by foretelling the destruction of the city and the temple of Jerusalem. He disputed with them, and confounded them, and brought them publicly to shame by parables, so that out of anger and hatred they with one mind determined to kill Him. The impious Judas aided the most in the execution of their design; through avarice he sold Him for thirty pieces of silver (about eighteen dollars in our money) to the chief priests, and the next day, Thursday, became His betrayer and delivered Him over into their hands.

MONDAY AFTER PALM SUNDAY

LESSON (Isai. L. 5-10.) In those days, Isaias said: The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I do not resist: I have not gone back. I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me. The Lord God is my helper, therefore am I not confounded: therefore, have I set my face as a most hard rock, and I know that I shall not be confounded. He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me? Let us stand together, who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold the, Lord God is my helper: who is he that shall condemn me? Lo they shall all be destroyed as a garment, the moth shall eat them up. Who is there among you that feareth the Lord, that heareth the voice of his servant? Let him that hath walked in darkness, and bath no light, hope in the name of the Lord, and lean upon his God.

EXPLANATION All the holy Fathers agree that Isaias here prophesies of Christ, who in accordance with His Father's will, gave Himself up without uttering one word of complaint to the most, ignominious sufferings for us, and strengthened by divine assistance, patiently submitted to all the blows, torments, and insults of His enemies. But they did not escape just punishment, for their guilty consciences devoured them interiorly, as a moth consumes a garment, and the memory of them disappeared from the earth. Let us put our trust in God, if, with Christ, we are surrounded by sufferings and distress, finding no help, for He will be our Redeemer and our Helper.

GOSPEL (John XII. 1-9.) Now Jesus, six days before the Pasch, came to Bethania, where Lazarus had been dead, whom Jesus raised to life. And they made him a supper there: and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that were at table with him. Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of right spikenard, of great price, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, he that was about to betray him said: Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein. Jesus therefore said: Let her alone, that she may keep it against the day of my burial, for the poor you have always with you: but me you have not always. A great multitude therefore of the Jews knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus's sake only, but that they might see Lazarus, whom he, had raised from the dead.

INSTRUCTION We should also, like Mary Magdalen, anoint the Saviour by diligently performing good works, and thus become, as the holy Apostle says, a good odour unto Christ. (II Cor. II. 15.) The conduct of the traitor Judas should serve us as a warning not to be carried away by attachment to temporal riches, to avarice, and by it to greater crimes. Judas did not become a great sinner at once, he loved money and so grew cold to the love of God; seduced by avarice, he became a miser, a traitor to his Master and a suicide. Strive, therefore, to suppress your evil inclinations at the moment of their commencement, that they may not bring you into sin, and render you miserable like Judas.

TUESDAY AFTER PALM SUNDAY

LESSON (Jer. XI. 18-20.) In those days, Jeremias said: Thou, O Lord, hast shewed me, and I have known: then thou shewedst me their doings. And I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to be a victim: and I knew not that they had devised counsels against me, saying: Let us put wood on his bread, and cut him off from the land of the living, and let his name be remembered no more. But thou, O Lord of Sabaoth, who judgest justly, and triest the reins and the hearts, let me see thy revenge on them: for to thee have I revealed my cause.

EXPLANATION Jeremias was unjustly persecuted, but showed only meekness to his persecutors: so Christ silently permitted Himself like a meek lamb to be nailed by His enemies to the hard wood of the cross. Learn from this, Christian soul, to follow the example of the meek Lamb of God, and silently bear all evils. In reference to the prophet's prayer for vengeance on his enemies, St. Augustine remarks: "It is well wishing, not vengeance, when the just rejoices that punishment comes to the impious, for he has no pleasure in the sinner's destruction, whose conversion he wishes, but he desires justice by which many are converted."

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. MARK, CHAP. XIV. AND XV.

At that time, the feast of the Pasch and of the Azymes was after two days; and the chief priest and the scribes sought how they might, by some wile lay hold on him, and kill him. But they said: Not on a festival day, lest there should be a tumult among the people. And when he was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, and was

at meat, there came a woman having an alahaster box of ointment of precious spikenard; and breaking the alahaster box, she poured it out upon his head. Now there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said: Why was this waste of the ointment made? For this ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her. But Jesus said: Let her alone, why do you molest her? She hath wrought a good work upon me. For the poor you have always with you, and whensoever you will, you may do them good; but me you have not always. What she had, she hath done; she is come beforehand to anoint my body for the burial. Amen, I, say to you: wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests, to betray him to them. Who hearing it were glad; and they promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him. Now on the first day of the unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Pasch, the disciples say to him: Whither wilt thou that we go and prepare for thee to eat the Pasch. And he sendeth two of his disciples, and saith to them: Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water; follow him, and whithersoever he shall go in, say to the master of the house: The Master saith: Where is my refectory, that I may eat the Pasch with my disciples? And he will show you a large dining-room furnished; and there prepare ye for us. And his disciples went their way, and came into the city; and they found as he had told them, and they prepared the Pasch. And when evening was come, he cometh with the twelve. And when they were at table and eating, Jesus saith: Amen, I say to you, one of you that eateth with me shall betray me. But they began to be sorrowful, and to say to him one by one: Is it I? Who saith to them: One of the twelve, who dippeth his hand in the dish with me. And the Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of God shall be betrayed. It were better for him, if that man had not been born. And whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread; and blessing, broke, and gave to them, and said: Take ye, This is my body. And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank of it; and he said to them: This is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, that I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung a hymn, they went forth to the mount of Olives. And Jesus saith to them: You will all be scandalized in my regard this night; for it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be dispersed. But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter saith to him: Although all shall be scandalized in thee, yet not I. And Jesus saith to him: Amen, I say to thee, to-day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. But he spoke the more vehemently: Although I should die together with thee, I will not deny thee.

And in like manner also said they all. And they came to a farm called Gethsemani. And he saith to his disciples: Sit you here, while I pray. And he taketh Peter, and James, and John with him; and he began to fear, and to be heavy. And he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay you here, and watch. And when he had gone forward a little, he fell flat on the ground: and he prayed that, if it might be, the hour might pass from him: and he saith: Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee, remove this chalice from me, but not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping. And he saith to Peter: Simon, deepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And going away again, he prayed, saying the same words. And when he returned, he found them again asleep, (for their eyes were heavy) and they knew not what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith to them: Sleep ye now, and take your rest. It is enough, the hour is come; behold the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go. Behold he that will betray me is at hand. And while he was yet speaking, cometh Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests, and the scribes, and the ancients. But he that betrayed him had given them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he, lay hold on him, and lead him away carefully. And when he was come, immediately going up to him, he saith: Hail, Rabbi; and he kissed him. But they laid hands on him, and held him. And one of them that stood by, drawing a sword, struck a servant of the chief priest, and cut off his ear. And Jesus answering, said to them: Are you come out as to a robber with swords and staves to apprehend me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not lay hands on me. But that the Scriptures may be fulfilled. Then his disciples leaving him, all fled away. And a certain young man followed him, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and they laid hold on him. But he, casting off the linen cloth, fled from them naked. And they brought Jesus to the high priest; and all the priests and the scribes and the ancients were assembled together. And Peter followed him afar off even into the court of the high priest; and he sat with the servants at the fire, and warmed himself. And the chief priests and all the council sought for evidence against Jesus that they might put him to death, and they found none. For many bore false witness against him, and their evidence were not agreeing. And some rising up, bore false witness against him, saying: We heard him say: I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another not made with hands. And their witness did not agree. And, the high-priest rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, saying: Answerest thou nothing to the things that are laid to thy charge by these men? But, he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high-priest asked him, and said to him: Art thou the Christ the Son of the blessed God? And Jesus said to him: I am. And you shall see the Son of Man sitting

on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rending his garments, saith: What need we any further witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What think you? Who all condemned him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say to him: Prophecy; and the servants struck him with the palms of their hands. Now when Peter was in the court below, there cometh to him one of the maid-servants of the high-priest; and when she had seen Peter warming himself, looking on him, she saith: Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying: I neither know nor understand what thou sayest. And he went forth before the court, and the cock crew. And again a maid-servant seeing him, began to say to the standers-by: This is one of them. But he denied again. And after a while, they that stood by said again to Peter: Surely thou art one of them, for thou also art a Galilean. But he began to curse and swear, saying: I know not this man of whom you speak. And immediately the cock crew again. And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him: Before the cock crew twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he began to weep. (Chap. XV.) And straightway in the morning the chief priests holding a consultation with the ancients and the scribes, and the whole council, binding Jesus, led him away, and delivered him to Pilate. And Pilate asked him: Art thou the king of the Jews? But he answering, saith to him: Thou sayest it. And the chief priests accused him in many things. And Pilate again asked him, saying, Answerest thou nothing? Behold in how many, things they accuse thee. But Jesus still answered nothing; so that Pilate wondered. Now on the festival day he was wont to release unto them one of the prisoners, whomsoever they demanded. And there was one called Barabbas, who was put in prison with some seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder. And when the multitude was come up, they began to desire that he would do as he had ever done unto them. And Pilate answered them, and said: Will you that I release to you the king of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him up out of envy. But the chief priests moved the people that he should rather release Barabbas to them. And Pilate again answering, with to them: What will you then that I do with the king of the Jews? But they again cried out: Crucify him. And Pilate saith to them: Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more: Crucify him. And so Pilate being willing to satisfy the people, released to them Barabbas, and delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led him away into the court of the palace, and they called together the whole band; and they clothed him with purple, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon him. And they began to salute him: Hail, king of the Jews. And they struck his head with a reed: and they did spit on him, and bowing their knees, they adored him. And after they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own garments on him; and they led him out to crucify him. And they forced one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by,

coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and of Rufus, to take up his cross. And they bring him into the place called Golgotha, which being interpreted is, the place of Calvary. And they, gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh; but he took it not. And crucifying him, they divided his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. And the inscription of his cause was written over: The King of the Jews. And with him they crucify two thieves, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith: And with the wicked he was reputed. And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, 'and in three days buildest it up again, save thyself, coming down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking said with the Scribes one to another: He saved others, himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him, reviled him. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour; and at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying: Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabathani? Which is, being interpreted: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of the standers-by hearing, said: Behold, he calleth Elias. And one running and filling a sponge with vinegar, and putting it upon a reed, gave him to drink, saying: Stay, let us see if Elias will come to take him down. And Jesus having cried out with a loud voice, gave up the ghost. (Here all kneel and pause.) And the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the centurion who stood over against him, seeing that crying out in this manner he had given up the ghost, said: Indeed this man was the Son of God. And there were also women looking on afar off, among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the Mother of James the Less and of Joseph, and Salome; who also when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered to him, and many other women that came up with him to Jerusalem. And when evening, was now come, (because it was the Parasceve, that is, the day before the Sabbath,) Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. But Pilate wondered that he should be already dead; and sending for the centurion, he asked him if he were already dead. And when he had understood it by the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And Joseph buying fine linen, and taking him down, wrapped him up in the fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and he rolled a stone to the door of the sepulchre.

WEDNESDAY AFTER PALM SUNDAY

LESSON (Isai. LXII, II., to LXIII. 1-7.) Thus said the Lord God: Tell the daughter of Sion: Behold thy Saviour cometh: behold his reward is with him. Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength. I, that speak justice, and am a defender to save. Why then is thy apparel red, and thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine-press? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me: I have trampled on them in my indignation, and have trodden them down in my wrath, and their blood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, the year of my redemption is come. I looked about and there was none to help: I sought, and there was none to give aid: and my own arm hath saved from me, and my indignation itself hath helped me. And I have trodden down the people in my wrath, and have made them drunk in my indignation, and have brought down their strength to the earth. I will remember the tender mercies of the Lord, the praise of the Lord for all the things that the Lord hath bestowed on us.

EXPLANATION Once more the prophet's words point to the Saviour, and describe His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, where He went to accomplish the work of redemption, which He had always in His heart and before His eyes; he refers to His victories over all His enemies, the world, and the devil, whom He had trampled on and destroyed as the wine-presser does the grapes. The day of Christ's death was also the day of vengeance on His enemies, whom He overcame on the cross. The prophet who foresaw all this, thanks God in the last words of this lesson, and we also are called upon to thank Christ for our Redemption.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE, CHAP. XXII. AND XXIII.

At that time, The feast of unleavened bread, which is called the Pasch, was at hand. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might put Jesus to death; but they feared the people. And Satan entered into Judas, who was surnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve; and he went, and discoursed with the chief priests and the magistrates, how he might betray him to them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised; and he sought opportunity to betray him in the absence of the multitude.

And the day of the unleavened bread came, on which it was necessary that the Pasch should be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying: Go and prepare for us the Pasch, that we may eat. But they said: Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said to them:

Behold, as you go into the city, there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in, and you shall say to the good man of the house: The master saith to thee: Where is the guest-chamber, where I may eat the Pasch with my disciples? And he will show you a large dining-room furnished; and there prepare.

And they going, found as he had said to them, and made ready the Pasch. And when the hour was come, he pat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And having taken the chalice he gave thanks, and said: Take and divide it among you. For I say to you that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God come. And taking bread, he gave thanks, and brake, and gave to them, saying: This is my body, which is given for you: do this for a commemoration of me. In like manner the chalice also, after he had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament of my blood, which shall be shed for you. But yet behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And the Son of man, indeed goeth, according to that which is determined; but yet woe to that man by whom he shall be betrayed.

And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife amongst them, which of them should seem to be greater. And he said to them: The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and they that have power over them, are called beneficent. But you not so; but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is the leader, as he that serveth. For which is greater, he that sitteth at table, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at table? but I am in the midst of you, as he that serveth; and you are they who have continued with me in my temptations. And I dispose to you, as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom: that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren. Who said to him: Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death. And he said: I say to thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest me. And he said to them: When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, did you want anything? But they said: Nothing.

Then said he unto them: But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip; and he that hath not, let him sell his coat and buy a sword. For I say to you, that this that is written must yet be fulfilled in me: And he was reckoned among the

wicked: for the things concerning me have an end. But they said: Lord, behold here are two swords And he said to them: It is enough.

And going out he went according to his custom to the Mount of Olives. And his disciples also followed him. And when he was come to the place, he said to them: Pray, lest ye enter into temptation. And he was withdrawn away from them a stone's cast; and kneeling down he prayed, saying: Father, if thou wilt, remove this chalice from me; but yet not my will, but thine be done. And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed the longer. And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow. And he said to them: Why sleep you? Arise, pray, lest you enter into temptation. As he was yet speaking, behold a multitude; and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near to Jesus to kiss him. And Jesus said to him: Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?

And they that were about him, seeing what would follow, said to him: Lord, shall we strike with the sword? And one of them struck the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answering, said: Suffer ye thus far. And when he had touched his ear, he healed him. And Jesus said to the chief priests and the magistrates of the temple, and the ancients that were come unto him: Are you come out, as it were against a thief, with swords and clubs? When I was daily with you in the temple, you did not stretch forth your hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. And apprehending him, they led him to the high-priest's house; but Peter followed afar off.

And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sitting about it, Peter was in the midst of them. Whom when a certain servant maid had seen him sitting at the light, and had earnestly beheld him, she said: This man also was with him. But he denied, saying: Woman, I know him not. And after a little while, another seeing him, said: Thou also art one of them. But Peter said: O man, I am not. And after the space as it were of one hour, another certain man affirmed, saying: Of a truth this man was also with him; for he is also a Galilean. And Peter said: Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, as he was yet speaking, the cock crew. And the Lord turning looked on Peter.

And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, as he had said: Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter going out wept bitterly. And the men that held him, mocked him, and struck him. And they blind-folded him, and smote him on the face. And they asked him, saying: Prophecy, who is it that struck thee? And many other things blaspheming, they said against him.

And as soon as it was day, the ancients of the people, and the chief priests, and scribes, came together, and they brought him into their council, saying: If thou be the Christ,

tell us. And he said to them: If I shall tell you, you will not believe me and if I shall also ask you, you will not answer, me, nor let me go. But hereafter the Son of man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all: Art thou then the Son of God? Who said: You say that I am. And they said: What need we any further testimony? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth. (Chap. XXIII.) And the whole multitude of them rising up, led him to Pilate.

And they began to accuse him, saying: We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he is Christ the king. And Pilate asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? But he answering, said: Thou sayest it. And Pilate said to the chief priests and to the multitudes: I find no cause in this man. But they were more earnest, saying: He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place. But Pilate hearing Galilee, asked if the man were of Galilee? And when he understood that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him away to Herod, who himself was also at Jerusalem in those days. And Herod seeing Jesus was very glad, for he was desirous of a long time to see him, because he had heard many things of him: and he hoped to see some sign wrought by him.

And he questioned him with many words. But he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood by, earnestly accusing him. And Herod with his army set him at nought, and mocked him, putting on him a white garment, and sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day: for before they were enemies one to another. Then Pilate calling together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people, said to them: You have brought this man to me as one that perverteth the people, and behold I, having examined him before you, find no cause in this man touching those things wherein you accuse him. No, nor Herod neither. For I sent you to him, and behold nothing worthy of death is done to him. I will chastise him, therefore, and release him.

Now of necessity he was to release unto them one upon the feast day. But the whole multitude together cried out at once, saying: Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas, who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for a murder, was cast into prison. And Pilate again spoke to them, desiring to release Jesus. But they cried out again, saying: Crucify him, crucify him. And he said to them the third time: Why, what evil hath this man done? I find no cause of death in him. I will chastise him therefore, and let him go. But they were instant with loud voices requiring that he might be crucified; and their voices prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him who for murder and sedition had been cast into prison, whom they had desired: but Jesus he delivered up to their will. And as they led him away, they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country; and they laid the cross on him to carry after Jesus.

And there followed him a great multitude of people and of women, who bewailed, and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold the days shall come, wherein they will say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if in the green wood, they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?

And there were also two other malefactors led with him, to be put to death. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified him there; and the robbers, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. And Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. But they dividing his garments cast lots. And the people stood beholding, and the rulers with them derided him, saying: He saved others, let him save himself, if he be Christ, the elect of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying: If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. And there was also a superscription written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin and Hebrew: This is the King of the Jews.

And one of those robbers who were hanged, blasphemed him, saying: If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying: neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise. And it was almost the sixth hour; and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened; and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And Jesus crying out with a loud voice, said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And saying this, he gave up the ghost. (Here all kneel and pause.)

Now the centurion seeing what was done, glorified God, saying: Indeed this was a just man. And all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned striking their breast. And all his acquaintance, and the women that had followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things. And behold there was a man named Joseph, who was a counsellor, a good and a just man, (the same had not consented to their counsel and doings,) of Arimathea, a city of Judea, who also himself looked for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. And taking him down he wrapped him in fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre that was hewed in stone, wherein never yet any man had been laid.

INSTRUCTION ON HOLY THURSDAY

What festival does the Church celebrate today?

The Catholic Church commemorates today the institution, by our Saviour, of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. This commemoration she has celebrated from the first ages of Christianity.

What remarkable things did Christ perform on this day?

He ate with His apostles the Paschal lamb which was a type of Himself; it was eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread; they ate it standing with clothes girded, and staff in hand, in remembrance of the hurried escape of the Jews from Egypt. (Exod. XII.) After having eaten the Paschal lamb our Lord with profound humility washed the feet of His apostles, exhorting them to practise the same humility and charity; afterwards, He gave them His Flesh and Blood under the appearance of bread and wine, for spiritual food and drink, thus instituting the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the priesthood; for when He said to the apostles: Do this in commemoration of me, he ordained them priests. After this He held His last discourse in which He particularly recommended brotherly love; said that beautiful, high-priestly prayer, in which He implored His Heavenly Father particularly for the unity of His Church. He then went as usual to Mount Olivet, where He commenced His passion with prayer and resignation to the will of His Father, suffering intense, deathlike agony, which was so great that He sweat blood. Here Judas betrayed Him into the hands of the Jews, by a treacherous kiss. They bound Him and led Him to the high-priests, Annas and Caiphas, where He was sentenced to death by the council, and denied by Peter.

The ***Introit*** of the Mass reads thus: We ought to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection: by whom we have been saved and delivered. (Gal. VI. I4.) May God have mercy on us, and bless us: may He cause the light of His countenance to shine upon us, and may He have mercy on us. (PS. LXVI. 2.)

COLLECT O God! from whom Judas received the punishment of his sin, and the thief the reward of his confession: grant us the effects of Thy mercy; that as our Lord Jesus Christ at the time of His passion bestowed on each a different recompense of

his merits, so having destroyed the old man in us, He may give us the grace of His Resurrection. Who liveth, etc.

What ceremonies are observed in this day's Mass?

The crucifix is covered with a white veil in memory of the sacred institution of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. The priest comes to the altar robed in white vestments; the Gloria in excelsis is solemnly sung, accompanied by the ringing of bells, and all Christians are exhorted to render praise and gratitude to the Lord for having instituted the Blessed Feast of Love; after the Gloria the bells are silent until Holy Saturday to indicate the Church's mourning for the passion and death of Jesus; to urge us also to spend these days in silent sorrow, meditating on the sufferings of Christ, and in memory of the shameful flight of the apostles at the capture of their master, and their silence during these days. At the Mass the priest consecrates two hosts one of which He consumes at the Communion, and the other he preserves in the chalice for the following day, because no consecration takes place on Good Friday. The officiating priest does not give the usual kiss of peace before Communion, because on this day Judas betrayed his master with a kiss. After Mass, the consecrated host in the chalice, and the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, are taken in procession to the sacristy or repository, in memory of the earliest times of Christianity, when the consecrated hosts for the communicants and the sick, were kept in a place especially prepared, because there was no tabernacle on the altar. Moreover it also signifies Christ's going to Mount Olivet, where His Godhead was concealed. After the procession the priests with the choir say vespers in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

EPISTLE (I Cor. XI. 20-32.) Brethren, When you come together into one place, it is not now to eat the Lord's supper. For every one taketh before his supper to eat. And one indeed is hungry, and another is drunk. What! have you not houses to eat and drink in? Or despise ye the Church of God? and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? Do I praise you? In this I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also. I delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke it, and said: Take ye, and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner also, the Chalice, after, he had supped, saying: This Chalice is the New Testament in my blood. This do ye, as often as you shall drink it, for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come. Wherefore, whoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be

guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord. Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep. But if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But whilst we are judged, we are chastised by the Lord, that we be not condemned with this world.

EXPLANATION The early Christians were accustomed after the celebration of the Lord's Supper, to unite in a common repast; those who were able furnished the food, and rich and poor partook of it in common, in token of brotherly love. This repast they called "Agape," "meal of love." At Corinth this custom was abused, some ate before Communion that which had been brought, became intoxicated, and deprived the poor of their share. The Apostle condemns this abuse, declaring it an unworthy preparation for Communion, and reminds the Corinthians of the institution of the Blessed Sacrament telling them what a terrible sin it is to partake of the body and blood of the Lord unworthily, for whoever does this makes himself guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and eats and drinks his own judgment, that is, eternal damnation. Therefore prove yourself, O Christian soul, as often as you communicate, see whether you have committed any grievous sin which you have not confessed, or for which you were not heartily sorry.

GOSPEL (John XIII. 1-15.) Before the festival day of the Pasch, Jesus knowing that his hour was come, that he should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved, his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. And when supper was done, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray him: knowing that the Father had given him all things into his hands, and that he came from God, and goeth to God: he riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments: and having taken a towel, he girded himself. After that, he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel, wherewith he was girt. He cometh therefore to Simon Peter, and Peter saith to him: Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered, and said to him: What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith to him: Thou, shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him: If I wash thee, not, thou shalt have no part with me. Simon Peter with to him: Lord! not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him: He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you are clean, but not all. For he knew who he was that would betray him: therefore he said: You are not all clean. Then after he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, being set down again, he said to them: Know you what I have done to you? You call me Master, and Lord: and you say well, for so I am. If then I,

being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that as I have done to you so do you also.

Why did Jesus wash the feet of His disciples?

To give them a proof of His sincere love and great humility which they should imitate; to teach them that although free from sin, and not unworthy to receive His most holy body and blood, their feet needed cleansing, that is, that they should be purified from all evil inclinations which defile the heart, and prevent holy Communion from producing fruitful effects in the soul.

Why is it that on this day in each church only one priest says Mass at which the others receive Communion?

Because on this day Christ alone offered the unbloody Sacrifice, and having instituted the Blessed Sacrament, fed with His own hands His disciples with His flesh and blood, it is therefore proper that in commemoration of this, the priests in one church should receive the Blessed Sacrament from the hands of one, according to the example of the apostles, but as a sign of the priestly dignity which on this day Christ gave to the apostles and their successors, each priest wears a stole.

Why are the altars stripped on this day?

To show that Jesus took off, as it were, at the time of His passion, His divine glory, and yielded Himself up in utter humiliation into the hands of His enemies to be crucified, (Phil. II. 6. 7.) and that at the crucifixion He was forcibly stripped of His garments, which the soldiers divided among them, as foretold in the twenty-first psalm, which is therefore said during this ceremony. The faithful are urged to put off the old sinful man with his actions, and by humbling themselves become conformable to Christ.

Why is it that spiritual superiors wash the feet of their subjects, as do also the Catholic princes the feet of twelve poor men?

To commemorate the washing of the apostles' feet by Christ, and to teach all, even the highest to exercise the necessary virtues of humility and charity towards all, even the lowest, according to the example given by Jesus. Princes and spiritual superiors therefore kiss the feet after washing them, and the pope presses them to his breast, giving to each person a silver and a gold medal, on which is pictured the washing of the feet by Christ.

What is Tenebrae, and what its meaning?

It is the office which the clergy say on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of this week, accompanied by the lamentations of the Prophet Jeremias, and other ceremonies. The word Tenebrae means darkness, and represents the prayers formerly said in the dark hours of the morning. In the Tenebrae the Church mourns the passion and death of, Jesus, and urges her children to return to God; she therefore makes use of those mournful words of Jeremias: “Jerusalem! Jerusalem, be converted to the Lord, thy God!”

Why is the Tenebrae said in the evening?

In memory of that time when the early Christians spent the whole night preceding great festivals in prayer, but later, when zeal diminished, it was observed only by the clergy on the eves of such festivals; also in order that we may consider the darkness, lasting for three hours, at the crucifixion of Christ, whence the name Tenebrae; and lastly, to represent by it that mourning, of which darkness is the type.

Why, during the Prayers of the clergy, are the lights in the triangular candlestick extinguished one after another?

Because the Tenebrae, as has been already remarked, in the earliest times of the Church, were held in the night, the candles were extinguished one after another, as the daylight gradually approached they were no longer, necessary; again, at the time of the passion and death of Jesus, His apostles whom He calls the light of the world, one, after another gradually left Him; at the death of Christ the earth was covered with darkness. The Jews, blinded by pride, would not recognize Christ as the Saviour of the world, and therefore fell by His death into the deepest darkness of hardened infidelity.

What is meant by the last candle which is carried lighted behind the altar, and after prayers are finished, is brought back again?

This candle signifies Christ; who on the third day came forth from the grave, by His own power, as the true light of the world, though according to His human nature He died and lay in the grave until the third day.

Why is a noise made with clappers at the end of the Tenebrae?

This was formerly a sign that service was over; it, also signifies the earthquake which took place at Christ's death.

How should we attend the Church service on this day?

The Church commemorates on this day the institution of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; we should therefore consider with a lively faith that Jesus, our divine Teacher and Saviour, is really and truly here present; we should adore Him as the Son of God, who became man to redeem us; should admire the love which determined Him to institute the Blessed Sacrament, that He might always be with us; and should thank Him for all the inestimable graces which we derive from this Sacrament.

REMARK In the Cathedrals the holy oils which are used in Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Extreme Unction, as also in consecrating baptismal fonts and altar stones, are blessed on this day. Let us thank our Lord for the institution of these Sacraments at which blessed oils are used.

INSTRUCTION ON GOOD FRIDAY

This day was formerly for the Jewish people a day of preparation for Easter, and was called by them the Parasceve; for us Christians it is the anniversary of the death and burial of our Lord who on this day, being Himself both High-Priest and Victim, offered Himself upon the cross for the salvation of the world.

Why do Catholics hold this day in such veneration?

Because it is one of the greatest days from the beginning of the world to its end. On this day the designs which God had from all eternity were perfected, as Jesus Himself expressed when He said, All is consummated; for on this day He was given up to the Gentiles by the Jews, was scourged, crowned with thorns, loaded with the cross, dragged to Calvary amid taunts and sneers, there nailed to the cross between two thieves, and by His painful death finished the great work of redemption.

Why did Christ suffer so much to, redeem, us?

To show us what an immense evil sin is, on account of which He underwent such cruel sufferings that He might satisfy divine justice. His love for us was so great that He gave the last drop of His blood to save us. He rendered satisfaction for all men without exception, that none might be lost, that every one might possess eternal life. Look up today, and every day of thy life, to Christ on the cross, and see how God punishes sin, since He did not even spare His only-begotten Son, who took upon Himself our sins, and for them died this cruel death. What death is due to thee, if thou dost not despise and flee from sin?

Why does the Church celebrate the commemoration of the passion of Christ in such solemn quietness?

That we may be induced to thank the Saviour for our redemption, and to move us to sincere love for Him by serious meditation on His passion. For this reason St. Paul ordered the observance of this day, and the Christians even in his time sanctified it by deep mourning, and rigorous fasting.

Why do we not observe Good Friday with such festivities as do the Protestants? [in Europe.]

Because our grief for our Saviour's death is too great to permit us to celebrate it joyously, even nature mourned His death; the sun was darkened, the earth trembled and the rocks were rent. Although the Christian rejoices on this day in the grace of redemption through Christ, he is aware that his joy cannot be pleasing to God unless he endeavours to participate in the merits of the passion and death of Christ by sorrow for his sins, by amendment and penance; and this is the very reason why the Church solemnizes this day in a sad and touching manner.

Why are there no candles lighted at the beginning of the service?

To signify that on this day Christ, the Light of the world, became, as it were, extinguished.

Why does the priest prostrate himself before the altar at the beginning of the service?

That with him we should consider in deepest sorrow and humility how the Saviour died on the cross for our sins, and how unworthy we are on account of them to lift up our faces.

Why does the service commence with the reading of two lessons?

Because Christ died for Jews and Gentiles. The first lesson is from the Prophet Osee, (Osee VI, 1-6.) and the other from Exodus, (Exod. XII. 1-11.) from them we infer that by the bloody death of the immaculate Lamb Jesus we are healed of our sins, and redeemed from death.

After the first lesson the Priest says the following:

COLLECT O God! from whom Judas received the punishment of his sin, and the thief the reward of his confession: grant us the effects of Thy mercy; that as our Lord Jesus Christ at the time of His passion bestowed on each a different recompense of his merits, so having destroyed the old man in us, He may give us the grace of His Resurrection. Who liveth, etc.

REMARK After the Passion the priest prays in behalf of the one, only true Church, that she may increase, and that peace and unity may always remain with her; for the pope, that his government may be blessed; for the bishops, priests, the clergy, and the people, that they may serve God in justice; for those converted to the faith, that they may continue to grow an knowledge and an zeal for the holy religion; for rulers as defenders of the Church, that they may govern with wisdom and justice, and that those under them may be loyal to them with fidelity and obedience; for the unfortunate, that God may have mercy on them; for heretics and apostates, that they may be brought back from error to the truth of the Catholic faith; for the Jews, that they may be enlightened; for the heathens, that they may be converted. Before each gayer the priest says Oremus, (Let us pray Flectamus genua, (Let us kneel; when kneeling, we say Amen, and at the call Levate (Rise up) we rise: except at the prayer for the Jews, when the genuflection is omitted, because the Jews bent the knee in mockery before our Lord. As Christ on this day prayed for all men, the Church desires, that we do the same; say, therefore, the following:

PRAYER O Lord Jesus! who on the cross, while enduring the most excruciating pain, didst pray with a loud voice for all men, we humbly pray Thee for Thy vicar, Pope N., for our bishop N., for all the priests and clergy, for our civil government, for the neophytes, for the unfortunate and oppressed, for all Catholics, that Thou mayst preserve them in the true faith, and strengthen them, that they may serve Thee according to their different vocations. We pray Thee also for all unbelievers, and those separated from the true fold, for the Jews, and for the heathens, that Thou mayst unite all in Thy Holy Church, and bring them to eternal salvation. Amen.

What is done by the priest after these prayers?

The priest then goes down from the epistle side of the altar, takes the veiled crucifix, and extending it towards the people, uncovers it so much that the head is seen, and sings in a low voice: Ecce lignum. Crucis &c., Behold the wood of the cross on which the Salvation of the world was hanged! The choir answers: Venite, adoremus: Come, let us adore! at which all kneel, adoring Christ who died on the cross for us. The priest then advances to the corner of the altar, uncovers the right arm of the Crucifix, and sings in a higher tone: Ecce lignum crucis, &c.; to which the choir responds as before.

Then at the middle of the altar he uncovers the entire Crucifix, and elevating it, sings in a still higher tone than before: *Ecce lignum, &c.* The choir responds again: *Venite adoremus.* The image of the crucified Redeemer, which has been hidden from our view since Passion Sunday should make a deep impression upon us; it teaches us at the same time how the Saviour became gradually known to the world. Jesus is adored three times, because He was mocked three times: in the court-yard of the high-priest, in Pilate's house, and on mount Calvary. When the crucifix is unveiled the priest carries it to the place prepared for it, and kneeling he places it on the cushion covered with a white veil to represent the laying of Christ in the sepulchre; he then retires to the gospel side of the Altar where he puts off to a his shoes, like Moses, when he was about to approach Almighty God; he then kneels and meditates on the passion of Christ; goes a few steps forward, again kneels, and still a third time, this time directly in front of the crucifix. He adores Jesus with humility, considers His infinite love, which brought Him to the cross and laid Him in the sepulchre for our Redemption; and then kisses with reverence the image of the crucified Saviour. During this veneration of the cross the choir chants alternately the versicles called the Reproaches, and between each part of the canticle the following words in Greek and Latin: "Holy God! Holy and strong God! Holy and immortal God! have mercy on us!" In these versicles Christ tenderly and lovingly reproaches the people who crucified Him, which we may also take to ourselves, who have so often crucified Jesus anew by sin. They are therefore called reproaches, words of complaint, and continue during the veneration of the cross by the priest. Afterwards a hymn of praise composed by St. Fortunatus is sung in honor of the victory gained on the cross by our Saviour, which calls upon us also to render praise and thanks to Jesus crucified.

Adore also in deepest humility the Saviour who died on the cross, and is now victoriously enthroned; ask with sincere contrition the forgiveness of your sins, and by a threefold advance, kiss with sincere love His sacred wounds, promising to love all men, even your enemies, and to have pity on all in distress, according to His example.

What follows the veneration of the cross?

The sacred Host consecrated on Holy Thursday, and kept in the chalice, is brought by the priest in procession, from the repository to the high altar, incensed in sign of adoration, and after a few short prayers the priest elevates It with the right hand, breaks It, puts one part in the chalice and communicates, and soon after leaves the altar.

Is there, then, no Mass said on this day?

No; for on this day there is no bread and wine consecrated, which is the essential part of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Why is no Mass said on this day?

Because Jesus Christ having this day sacrificed Himself on the altar of the cross in a bloody offering, it is not meet that His death sacrifice should be today repeated even in an unbloody manner. Besides this, Mass is a joyous and comforting sacrifice, and is therefore omitted because of our mourning.

What devotions may be practised to-day?

Besides adoring Jesus in the holy sepulchre, the stations may be said, meditations made on the sufferings of our Lord. Let the words of St. Augustine touch your heart, when he places the crucified Redeemer before our mind in the following words: “Behold the wounds of Jesus who is hanging on the cross, the blood of the dying, the price of our redemption! His head is bowed to give the kiss of peace; His side is open to love; His arms are extended to embrace us; His whole body sacrificed for our redemption. Let these words be the subject of your meditation that He may be wholly in your heart who is nailed to the cross for you.”

MANNER OF CONTEMPLATING CHRIST’S BITTER PASSION

Christ also suffered for us: leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. (I Peter II. 21.)

“Whence does it come,” writes St. Alphonsus Ligouri, “that so many of the faithful look with so much indifference at Christ on the cross? They generally assist during Holy Week at the commemoration of His death without any feeling of gratitude or compassion, as if it were a fable or an event in which they had no interest. Know they not, or believe they not what the gospel relates of Christ’s passion? Indeed they know it, and believe it, but do not think of it. It is impossible that he who believes and meditates, should fail, to become burning with love for God who suffers and dies for love of him.” But why, we may ask here, are there so many who draw so little benefit even from the contemplation of the passion and death of Jesus? Because they fail to consider and imitate the example which Christ gives in His sufferings.

“The cross of Christ,” says St. Augustine, “is not only a bed of death, but a pulpit of instruction.” It is not only a bed upon which Christ dies, but the pulpit from which

He teaches us what we must do. It should now be our special aim to meditate upon the passion of Christ, and to imitate those virtues which shone forth so preeminently in His passion and death. But many neglect to do this: They usually content themselves with compassion when they see Christ enduring such great pains, but they see not with what love, humility, and meekness He bears them; and so do not endeavour to imitate His example. That you, O Christian soul, may avoid this mistake, and that you may draw the greatest possible benefit for your soul, from the contemplation of the passion, and death of Christ, attend to that which is said of it by that pious servant of Gods Alphonse Rodriguez:

We must endeavour to derive from the meditation on the mysteries of the passion and death of Christ this effect, that we may imitate His virtues, and this by slowly and attentively considering each virtue by itself, exercising ourselves in forming a very great desire for it in our hearts, making a firm resolution to practice it in words and works, and also to conceive a holy aversion and horror of the opposite vice; for instance, when contemplating Christ's condemnation to the death of the cross by Pilate, consider the humility of Jesus Christ, who being God, as humble as He was innocent, voluntarily submitted and silently accepted the unjust sentence and the ignominious death. Here you see from the example given by Jesus, how you should despise yourself, patiently bear all evil, unjust judgment; and detraction, and even seek them with joy as giving you occasion to resemble Him. To produce these necessary effects and resolutions, you should at each mystery contemplate the following particulars:

First, Who is it that suffers? The most innocent, the holiest, the most loving; the only-begotten Son of the Almighty Father, the Lord of heaven and earth. Secondly; What pains and torments, exterior and interior, does He suffer? Thirdly, In what manner does He suffer, with what patience, humility, meekness and love, does He bear all ignominy and outrage? Fourthly, For whom does He suffer? For all men, for His enemies and His executioners. Fifthly, By whom does He suffer? By Jews and heathens, by soldiers and tyrants, by the devil and all impious children of the world to the end of time, and all who were then united in spirit with His enemies. Sixthly, Why does He suffer? To make reparation for all the sins of the whole world, to satisfy the justice of God, to reconcile the Heavenly Father, to open heaven, to give us His infinite 'merits that we may from them have strength to follow the way to heaven. At the consideration of each of these points, and indeed at each mystery of the passion of Christ, the imitation of the example of His virtues is the main object, because the true life of the Christian consists in the imitation of Jesus. In considering each stage of the passion of Christ place vividly before your mind the virtue which is practiced

therein; contemplate it and ask yourself whether you possess this virtue, or whether you still cherish the opposite vice. If you find the latter to be the case make an act of contrition, with the firm resolution to extirpate this vice, and excite in yourself a sincere desire for the opposite virtue. In this way you will draw the greatest advantage from the contemplation of Christ's passion, and will resemble Christ, and, as the pious Louis of Granada says, there can be no greater honor and adornment for a Christian than to resemble his divine Master, not in the way that Lucifer desired, but in that which He pointed out, when He said: "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so do you also."

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN. (CHAPS. XVIII., XIX.)

At that time, Jesus went forth with his disciples, over the brook of Cedron, where there was a garden into which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place: because Jesus had often resorted thither together with his disciples. Judas therefore having received a band of men and servants from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and said to them: Whom seek ye? They answered him: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them: I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said to them: I am he; they, went backward, and fell to the ground.

Again therefore he asked them: Whom seek ye? And they said: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered: I have told you, that I am he. If therefore you seek me, let these go away. That the word might be fulfilled which he had said: Of them whom thou hast given me, I have not lost any one. Then Simon Peter having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus. Then Jesus said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall not I drink it?

Then the band, and the tribune, and the servants of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him: and they led him away to Annas first: for he was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the high-priest of that year. Now Caiphas was he who had given the council to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. And that disciple was known to the high-priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high-priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then the other disciple who was known to the high-priest, went out, and spoke to her that kept the door: and brought in Peter. And the maid that waited at the door, saith to Peter: Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith: I am not.

Now the servants and officers stood at a fire of coals, because it was cold, and warmed themselves: and with them was Peter also standing, and warming himself.

The high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him: I have spoken openly to the world: I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort: and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them who have heard what I have spoken to them: behold they know what things I have said. And when he had said these things, one of the officers standing by, gave Jesus a blow, saying: Answerest thou the high-priest so? Jesus answered him: If I have spoken, evil, give testimony of the evil: but if well, why strikest thou me?

And Annas sent him bound to Caiphas the high-priest.

And Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore to him: Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it and said: I am not. One of the servants of the high-priest, a kinsman to him whose ear Peter, cut off, saith to him: Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Then Peter: again denied, and immediately the cock crowed. Then they led Jesus from Caiphas to the governor hall. And it was morning: and they went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the passover.

Pilate therefore went out to there, and said: What accusation bring you against this man? They answered and said to him: If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee. Pilate then said to them: Take him you, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said to him: It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which he said, signifying what death he should die. Pilate therefore went into the hall again, and called Jesus, and said to him: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of me. Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? Thy own nation, and the chief priests, have delivered thee up to me. What hast thou done? Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be, delivered to the Jews: but now

my kingdom is not from hence. Pilate therefore said to him: Art thou a king then? Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth: every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.

Pilate saith to him: What is truth?

And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and saith to them: I find no cause in him. But you have a custom that I should release one unto you at the passover: will you therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying: Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers plating a crown of thorns, put it upon his head: and they put on him a purple garment, and they came to him, and said: Hail, King of the Jews! And they gave him blows. Pilate, therefore, went forth again, and saith to them: Behold I bring him forth to you that you may know that I find no cause in him. So Jesus came forth bearing the down of thorns, and the purple garment. And he saith to them: Behold the man. When the chief priests, therefore, and the officers had seen him, they cried out, saying: Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith to them: Take him you, and crucify him; for I find no cause in him. The Jews answered him: We have a law; and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore had heard this saying, he feared the more. And he entered into the hall again, and he said to Jesus: Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him: Speakest thou not to me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee? Jesus answered: Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above. Therefore he that hath delivered me to thee, hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him. But the Jews cried out, saying: If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend. For whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Caesar.

Now when Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth: and sat down in the judgment-seat, in the place that is called the Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the parasceve of the passover, about the sixth hour, and he saith to the Jews: Behold your king. But they cried out: Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith to them: Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered: We have no king but Ceasar. Then therefore, he delivered him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him forth. And bearing his own cross he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate

wrote a title also, and he put it upon the cross. And the writing was: Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.

The title, therefore, many of the Jews did read, because the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin. Then the chief-priest of the Jews said to Pilate: Write not, the king of the Jews: but that he said: I am the king of the Jews. Pilate answered: What I have written, I have written. Then it u the soldiers, when they had crucified him, took his garments (and they made four parts, to, every soldier a part) and also his coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

They said then one to another: Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled which saith: They have parted my garments among, them, and upon my vesture they have cast lots. And the soldiers did indeed these things. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman! behold thy son. After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own. Afterwards, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. Now there was a vessel set there full of vinegar. And they put a sponge full of vinegar, about hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus, therefore, had taken the vinegar, he said: It is consummated. And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost.

Then the Jews (because it was the parasceve) that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day (for that was a great Sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers, therefore, came: and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him.

But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers opened his side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it gave testimony, and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true, that you also may believe.

For these things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled: You shall not break a bone of him. And again another Scripture saith: They shall look on him whom they pierced.

And after these things, Joseph of Arimathea (because he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews), besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore and took away the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus also came, he who at the first came to Jesus by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes; about a hundred-pound weight.

They took therefore the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is, to bury. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man yet had been laid. Therefore, because of the parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus there; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

THE PEOPLE AT THE CROSS, AND THE PEOPLE OF TODAY

At Golgotha, in sight of the temple and city of Jerusalem, in the presence of two or three millions of Jews, who had come to the city from all lands, Jesus, the Son of God, hung upon the cross, an , expiatory sacrifice for mankind burdened with all manner of sin. Near cross of her dying Son stood Mary, His mother, filled with grief; by her side John, the beloved disciple, and kneeling at the foot of the cross almost insensible from sorrow and anguish, convulsively winding her arms around the wood of the cross, was Mary Magdalen, the penitent. On a cross at the right hand hung a penitent thief turned towards the Saviour; at the left hand on another cross groaned another criminal of impenitent heart, blaspheming the Holy One of Israel. Around the agonizing Saviour stood the Scribes and Pharisees, that hypocritical class of practiced miscreants, who hated and persecuted the innocent Lamb Jesus, even in death, who blink to all the predictions of the prophets whose books they had read, blind to the actual miracles which Jesus had wrought before their eyes to prove His divinity and His mission, filled with envy and hatred, reviled the dying Redeemer. At a distance stood a crowd of curious, indifferent people, who had come to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Passover, and having heard of Jesus were present at His crucifixion. Not far from them the rough soldiers and executioners lay around, dividing among themselves the Saviour's clothes and casting lots for His seamless garment.

This was the society that surrounded the Son of God and Redeemer of the world bleeding on the cross, and in their different phases they are types of the men of today.

Only few were there who clung to the Saviour in unwavering faith and true love, ready to die with Him, and for Him. There were few who suffered all taunts and sneers all revilings and blasphemies, and departed not from the cross. Of these three were especially faithful, viz. Mary, John, and Magdalen. Those who like Mary and John are pure and innocent, or like Magdalen are weeping for their sins, who confess Jesus with their heart and lips, cling faithfully to Him, and permit neither persecution nor death to separate them from Him, are like the faithful three at the cross. As then by the cross, so today, the number of the faithful is small, and great is the number of those who, like the careless spectators of the crucifixion, are not decided enemies of Jesus crucified, nor yet His firm friends. They have indeed been baptized in the name of Jesus, they remain externally with the Catholic Church, which Christ founded, but they are sunk in lukewarmness, have no living faith, and are wavering to and fro like a reed between the world and Jesus. They fear the sneers of the so-called learned and enlightened, many of whom are well represented by the Scribes and Pharisees, who, having no faith in Christ themselves, bear in their hearts only hatred and contempt for His Church; they shun the cross, because it is too heavy for their sensuality; they do not, it is true, commit public crimes, they prize highly a good name, occasionally observe the law of the Church, but are accessible to every error; their ears incline to every blasphemy against the religion of Jesus and His ministers, the priests. Instead of standing fearlessly and boldly for Christ, for the holy faith He has taught, and which the Church teaches, they turn away, are silent, even go with the Church's enemies that they may not be sneered at. They are neither hot, nor cold, so that the words of the Scriptures are verified in them: Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold, nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth. (Apoc. III. 16.) The Lord casts away from Him these lukewarm, indifferent Christians, as nauseous saliva, and leaves them to their destruction. The true Pharisees of our day are those who purposely close their eyes to the light of truth, who have put aside faith in Jesus, and are no longer disposed to receive instruction. Their pride, their egotism has blinded them, with their poor reason they wish to understand the mysteries of the Almighty, with their weak intellect to fathom His ways, even seek to be equal to God; they deny every revealed truth, they deny the existence of heaven and hell, they propose to live like the animals, without God, — but their end is, ruin! Few of them, having seen their error, as the thief on the cross at the right hand of Jesus, turn repentingly to the Redeemer; obdurate as the robber and murderer at His left, the Pharisees of our day cease not to blaspheme the Crucified, and to revile His Holy Church. These are assisted by the apostates and unbelievers, who, like the soldiers and executioners,

divide among themselves His clothes, and cast lots for His seamless garment. Those clothes which the soldiers divided among themselves, are the truths which the apostates and heretics yet retain after their apostasy from the Church. They have divided these truths, for they have separated themselves into thousands of sects, and possess only portions of the one truth, which Jesus has laid down in His Church, whole and complete. “Upon my vesture they have cast lots.”

This seamless vesture of Christ is His Holy Church that cannot be separated or divided, she is one, and must remain one to the end of time. Concerning this one true Church, the sects all quarrel, all want to be the true Church without considering that, as but one soldier, by the lots, received Christ’s seamless garment, so only one association of men can be the true Church, and that is the association which Christ has chosen.

Thus we find at the cross on Golgotha the different classes of people of our day represented, namely, the pure and innocent; the repenting sinners, firm adherents of Jesus and His teachings; as also the lukewarm, wavering, nominal Christians; obdurate heretics, professed infidels and apostates. So today mankind is divided into like parties.

To which party do you belong, O Christian soul? To which do you wish to belong? Choose! The time of the division is near. The Lord already holds in His hand the winnowing shovel to clear His floor. If you are not a firm adherent of Jesus and His Church, in the storm that is gathering you will be blown like chaff. If you remain with the small group at the cross, in persevering courage, you will stand firm, and on the day when the cross shall appear in the clouds of heaven, you, with Mary, the mother of the (faithful, with John and with Magdalen, will triumph forever, as a victorious knight of the cross. Decide!

INSTRUCTION ON HOLY SATURDAY

Why is this day called Holy Saturday?

Because on this day Jesus, the Holy of holies, rested in the sepulchre, and because the Church today blesses the new fire, the Easter candle, and the baptismal water.

Why is fire struck anew, blessed, and the lamps and candles in the Church lighted from it?

In ancient times it was customary to strike a new fire every day, bless it, and light the candles from it, and later this was done every Saturday; in the eleventh century this ceremony was restricted to Holy Saturday. The fire is struck from a stone to indicate, that Christ is the light of the world, and the Stone which the Jews rejected has now become the Corner stone of His Church; (Ps. CXVII. 22.) that the divine Son, the light of the world, was apparently extinguished at His death, but at His resurrection shone anew; that all those who witness this ceremony today be spiritually enlightened hereafter. This fire is blessed, because the Church blesses everything that is used for divine service, and because the light and fire represent Christ, who brought the fire of love upon earth with which to enkindle our hearts. Luke XII. 49.)

What is represented by the triple candle?

The triple candle represents the most Holy Trinity of which the second Divine Person came down upon the earth as the true light. For this reason, the priest (or deacon) sings at the lighting of each candle: Lumen Christi, Light of Christ, and kneeling, three times humbly adores the Triune Deity, and especially Christ the true, divine Light. The chanter responds Deo gratias, Thanks be to God.

What does the Easter candle signify?

It is an emblem of Christ who has risen from death. Christ the true Light leads us from the bondage of Satan into the freedom of the children of God as the pillar of fire led the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. The five holes in the candle represent the five wounds of Jesus by which mankind was healed, (I Pet. II. 24,) and the five grains of frankincense signify the spices with which the body of our Lord was embalmed.

Why are all the candles and lamps lighted from the triple candle?

To show that Christ was begotten by the Father of Light from all eternity, and is therefore true God from true God, true Light from true Light, from whom enlightenment is diffused over all men. (II Cor. IV, 6.)

To what do the twelve prophecies refer which are read before the blessing of the baptismal font?

They have reference to Christ in whom the predictions contained therein were verified. The number corresponds to the twelve apostles, who announced their fulfillment to the world.

Why is the baptismal water blessed with so many ceremonies, and what is its signification?

The baptismal water is blessed with so many ceremonies that a different effects of baptism may be shown, and that the holy Sacrament may be administered and received with more reverence and devotion; it signifies the blood of Christ by which our souls are purified.

What is the meaning of these ceremonies?

The priest with his hand parts the water in the form of the cross, to illustrate that God gives to it the virtue of regenerating all those born in original sin, making them children of God through Christ who died on the cross. He touches the surface of the water with the palm of his hand, to show that the Holy Ghost is over this water as at the creation, and bestows many graces on those who are baptized. He blesses it, signing it three times with the sign of the cross, because the water receives its sin-cleansing power only through the sufferings and the merits of Christ, from the Father, by the cooperation of the Holy Ghost. The baptismal water is thrown by the priest towards the four parts of the earth, because the grace of baptism should reach all nations. The priest breathes on the water three times in the form of a cross, as the Creator breathed into man the breath of life; Christ breathed upon the apostles the divine Spirit who by His grace and power revives and sanctifies those who are baptized. The Easter candle, (emblem of Christ, risen from the dead) is dipped three times into the water each time deeper, to show that the baptized should become more and more enlightened through the light of Christ's doctrine, more and more penetrated by, its divinity, more and more purified from sin. The people are sprinkled with this water to remind all those present who have received sanctification in baptism, and have lost it by sin, that they should strive to regain it by true repentance. Finally, oil and chrism are mixed with the water as a sign that the grace of the Holy Ghost of which these are figures, is given through the water to those who receive this Sacrament; and also, that the baptized should, after baptism, devote themselves to the service of Christ, the Anointed One, and unite themselves in love to Him.

Why is the baptismal water blessed only on this day and on the Saturday before Pentecost?

Because in early times converts were baptized only on these days; and because the risen Saviour is the example of a soul sanctified by the Holy Ghost in baptism.

How should we assist at the blessing of the baptismal water?

With sentiments of sincere gratitude for the grace of baptism; with the firm resolution of preserving our baptismal innocence, or if we have lost it, of gaining it by penance. We should renew our baptismal vows especially on this day by saying the apostle's creed, making acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition; and renounce anew the devil, all his pride, and all his suggestions.

Why does the priest prostrate himself after blessing the baptismal water, and rise again after the litany of the saints has been chanted?

To most humbly ask God, by the intercession of the saints, that He would give to all men the grace of baptism, that as all men have been dead and buried in sin, so they may rise with Christ as new creatures to grace and eternal life.

Why are the altars decorated on this day?

Because the Church, the beloved bride of Christ, desires to announce in advance to her children the glad tidings, that the Lord has risen from the dead; she decorates herself therefore, and causes the bells to peal and joyous hymns, to resound. It also has reference to the glorious, incorruptible body with which Christ adorned Himself at His Resurrection.

Why is there no Introit in this day's Mass?

The Introit of the Mass was formerly an entire psalm which was sung while the people were assembling in church; but as in early times the people on Easter were already assembled to assist at the ceremonies, no Introit was sung at the Mass. The Church observes the same practice, although she abolished the night vigils on account of the abuses to which they gave rise.

COLLECT O God, who makest this most sacred night illustrious by the glory of the Resurrection of our Lord, preserve in the new offspring of Thy family the spirit of adoption, which Thou hast given them; that being renewed in body and soul, they may serve Thee with purity of heart. Thro' the same &c.

EPISTLE (Coloss. III. 1-4.) Brethren: If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God: mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then shall you appear with him in glory.

After the epistle the priest sings three times: Alleluia as a joyful exclamation over the Redeemer's triumphant victory.

EXPLANATION St. Paul places Christ's, resurrection before us as the example and, motive of the spiritual resurrection from sin, which should be effected in us by the holy Sacraments at Easter. With Christ we should die to the world, and live hidden in Him, if we desire to rise at the Last Day with Him in glory, and be acknowledged before all men by Him as His own.

GOSPEL (Matt. XXVIII, 1-7,) , In the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary, to view the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven: and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men. And the angel answering, said to the women: Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid. And going quickly, tell ye his disciples that he is risen: and behold, he will go before you into Galilee; there you shall see him. Lo, I have foretold it to you.

What are we to learn from this gospel?

That we, too, will receive the plenitude of divine grace and heavenly blessings, if like these pious women we seek Christ early, that is, by making a good intention before we begin our work.

Why is there no Credo or Agnus Dei said, nor the kiss of peace given, and why are short vespers said after communion?

Formerly, the Credo or confession of faith was said by the newly baptized, the Agnus Dei was sung in the litany of the saints, and these are therefore omitted in the Mass. The kiss of peace is, not given, because Christ had not yet said to His disciples, Peace be with you. Short vespers are said after the priest's communion, because this day, is a type of the eternal Sabbath in heaven which has no vespers, that is, evening.

Do not omit on this day to thank our Lord for the many graces He has given us through His passion and death. If in the evening the solemn ceremonies of the resurrection are held, assist at them and there make the repeated resolution to rise from the sleep of sin and begin a new life with Christ.

INSTRUCTION ON EASTER

What is the festival of Easter?

Easter, in Latin Pascha, signifies passing over, and has the following historical origin: Under Pharaoh, King of Egypt, the Jews in that country groaned under intolerable bondage. God had mercy on His people, and the hour of deliverance came. By His command the first-born of all the Egyptians was killed by an angel. The Jews had been ordered by God to be ready for emigration, but first to kill a lamb, eat it in their houses in common, and sprinkle the door-posts with its blood. And the angel of death, by order of God, passed the doors sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, and did no harm to any child of the Israelites, whilst he slew all the first-born sons of the Egyptians. In grateful memory of this passing their doors, the Jews observed the festival of Easter, the Pasch, or Passover. After the death of Jesus, the apostles introduced the same festival into the Church in grateful remembrance of the day on which Jesus, the true Easter Lamb, took away our sins by His blood, freed us from the angel of eternal death, and passed us over to the freedom of the children of God.

Where, during this time, was Christ's holy soul?

In Limbo, that is, the place where the souls of the just who died before Christ, and were yet in original sin, were awaiting their redemption.

What have we to expect from the resurrection of Christ?

That our bodies will rise again from death. (Rom. VIII. II) For if Christ our head is alive, then we His members must also become reanimated, because a living head cannot exist without living members.

What is meant by the Alleluia sung at Easter time?

In English Alleluia means Praise the Lord, and expresses the joy of the Church at the Resurrection of Christ, and the hope of eternal happiness which He has obtained for us.

Why does the Church on this day bless eggs, bread, and meat?

To remind the faithful that although the time of fasting is now ended, they should not indulge in gluttony, but thank God, and use their food simply for the necessary preservation of physical strength.

At the Introit the Church introduces Christ, her Head, as addressing His Heavenly Father in these words:

INTROIT I arose, and am still with thee, alleluia; thou hast laid thy hand upon me, alleluia: thy knowledge is become wonderful, alleluia, alleluia Lord, thou hast proved me and known me: Thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up. (Ps. CXXXVIII.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT O God, who on this day, through Thine only-begotten Son, didst overcome death and open unto us the gate of everlasting life; as by Thy prompting grace Thou dost breathe on the desires of our hearts, so do Thou ever accompany them with Thy help. Through &c.

EPISTLE (I Cor. V. 7-8.) Brethren, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened: for Christ our pasch is sacrificed. Therefore, let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

EXPLANATION St. Paul here exhorts us that we should at this time remove by a good confession and true penance the leaven, that is, the sins we have committed, and partake of the Paschal lamb in holy Communion with a pure, sincere heart; as the Jews were on this day commanded to eat the Paschal lamb with unleavened bread, abstaining on this day from the old leaven.

During the octave of this festival repeat often with the Church: “Alleluia! Praise to the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endureth forever. Alleluia! This is the day the Lord has made, Alleluia! Let us rejoice therein, Alleluia! Our Paschal Lamb is Christ who sacrificed Himself for us, Alleluia!”

GOSPEL (Mark XVI. 1-7.) At that time, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, bought sweet spices, that, coming, they, might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first, day, of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back, for it was very great. And, entering into the sepulchre they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe, and they were astonished. Who saith to them: Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth; who was crucified: he is risen, he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee: there you shall see him, as he told you.

Why did the holy women desire to embalm the body of Jesus with spices?

Because it was the custom of the Jews to embalm the dead, and as the Sabbath was so near and the time so short that they could not do it before the burial, these pious women procured the spices, and immediately after the Sabbath, hurried in the early morning to the sepulchre, to perform this act of love. We are taught by their conduct, that true love is never indifferent or slow, and what is agreeable to God it does without hesitation.

Why did the angel send the women to the disciples, and especially to Peter?

Because the disciples were to announce the Resurrection of Christ to the whole world, and they were now much saddened, and disturbed because of His death. Peter was the head of the apostles, and on account of having three times denied our Lord, he was greatly dejected and faint of heart, and was, therefore, above all to be comforted.

What encouragement does the Resurrection of Christ give us?

It encourages us to rise spiritually with Him, and live henceforth a new life, (Rom. VI. 4.) which we do if we not only renounce sin, but also flee from all its occasions, lay aside our bad habits, subdue our corrupt inclinations, and aim after virtue and heavenly things.

ASPIRATION I rejoice, O my Jesus, that Thou hast victoriously risen from death. By Thy triumph over death, hell and the devil, grant us the grace to subdue our evil inclinations, walk in a new life, and die to all earthly things. Amen.

INSTRUCTION It is certainly true that Christ, by His death on the cross and by His resurrection, has rendered perfect satisfaction; and effected man's redemption; (Heb. IX. 12.) but we must not imagine that there is no further need of doing penance, or of

working out our salvation. For, as the children of Israel, though freed from Pharaoh's bondage, had to fight long and against many enemies in order to gain the Promised Land, so also must we, though freed by Christ from the servitude of the devil, battle against our enemies to the end of our lives to obtain the promised, heavenly land, for no one is crowned unless he has properly fought. (II Tim. II. 5.) We must apply the merits of the redemption and satisfaction of Christ to our soul by the frequent reception of the holy sacraments; by imitating His virtues; by patiently bearing our trials and sufferings, and by a penitential life. The pious Angelus Silesius very appropriately writes:

“God is a Lamb that avails you not, my Christian,

If you become not also a lamb of God.

The cross on Golgotha redeems not from evil,

If it is not also erected in thee;

The dear Christ's death aids you not, my Christian,

Until in Him and for Him you also have died.”

INSTRUCTION ON EASTER MONDAY

In the Introit of this day's Mass, the Church compares the opening of the entrance into heaven which has been effected by the death and Resurrection of Christ, with the entrance of the chosen people of Israel into the Promised Land, which was effected by Josue:

INTROIT The Lord hath brought you into a land flowing with milk and honey, alleluia: let then the law of the Lord be ever in your mouth, alleluia, alleluia. (Exod: XIII.) Give glory to the Lord, and call upon his name: publish his works among the Gentiles. (Ps. CIV.) Glory be to the Father, &c.

COLLECT O God, who by the Paschal solemnity, hast bestowed remedies on the world, continue, we beseech Thee, Thy heavenly blessings on Thy people, that they may deserve to obtain perfect liberty, and advance towards eternal life. Through....

LESSON (Acts, X. 37-43) In those days, Peter standing, up in the midst of the people said: You know the word which hath been published through all Judea: for it began

from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, Jesus of Nazareth: how God anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things that he did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed, hanging him upon a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses pre-ordained by God: even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose again from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he who was appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead. To him all the Prophets give testimony, that by his name all receive remission of sins, who believe in him.

INSTRUCTION St. Peter concludes his sermon on the Resurrection with the declaration, that all who believe in Christ will through Him receive forgiveness of their sins. To obtain this remission a faith actuated by love is necessary, which will manifest itself in the exercise of good works. Endeavour to have this faith, if you wish to obtain the forgiveness of sin and eternal happiness, for without good works faith is dead, and forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation are promised only to those who possess an active faith.

GOSPEL (Luke XXIV. 13-35.) At that time, Two of the disciples of Jesus went the same day to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus; and they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus himself also drawing near went with them: but their eyes were held that they should not know him. And he said to them: what are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad. And the one of them, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to him: Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? To whom he said: What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people: and how our chief priests and princes delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he that should have redeemed Israel: and now besides all this today is the third day since these things were done. Yea and certain women also of our company, affrighted us, who before it was light, were at the sepulchre, and not finding his body, came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say, that he is alive.

And some of our people went to the, sepulchre: and found it so as the women had said, but him they found not. Then he said to them: O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have

suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things that were concerning him. And they drew nigh to the town, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go farther. But they constrained him, saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in with them. And it came to pass, whilst he was at table with them, he took bread, and blessed and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him: and he vanished out of their sight. And, they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within, us; whilst he spoke in the way, and opened to us the scriptures? And rising up the same hour they, went back, to Jerusalem: and, they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, saying: The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way: and how they knew Him in the breaking of bread.

Why did Christ appear as a stranger to these two disciples?

Christ conformed himself to their state of mind; for these disciples, as it appears, did not yet believe that He was, God, although He had often declared that He was; and proved it beyond contradiction; they regarded Him as a prophet and doubted His Resurrection. They looked at Him up to this time only with their outward eyes, that is, without faith in His divinity, and therefore the Saviour did not reveal Himself to their soul. It is thus that God generally proceeds towards us. He makes Himself known to us and gives us His graces in proportion to our faith, hope, love, and fidelity.

Then Christ did not suffer voluntarily, but by compulsion, since He says: Ought not Christ to have suffered?

Christ gave Himself voluntarily up to death, as said by Isaias; (LIII. 7.) but at the same time He was obliged to suffer, that the decree of His Father, and the prophecies might be fulfilled; that our redemption, which required the price of His death upon the cross, might be effected; and that we might learn from His example to enter heaven by suffering.

How did Christ expound the Scriptures to these disciples?

It is probable that He showed them how His passion and death were foretold and prefigured in various ways; that He was sold like Joseph, and that His scourging was prefigured by the blood-stained coat of Joseph. He probably drew their attention to the ram which was ensnared in the thorn bush, and His crowning with thorns; He carried His cross to Mount Calvary as Isaac, loaded with the wood on which He was

to be sacrificed; was deprived of His clothes and derided in His nakedness, as Noah by his son. His crucifixion was prefigured by the serpent Moses set up in the desert. The animals prepared for sacrifice in the Old Testament, and especially the Paschal lamb, were types of Him, who, like them, was killed and sacrificed on the cross, without having His bones broken; finally, Jonas who was three days in the whales and then came forth again, imaged Christ's death, burial; and resurrection. He showed them, also, how clearly David and Isaias fore-told and described His passion.

Why did Jesus appear to be going farther?

To give them an occasion of showing their love for Him a stranger, whom they did not recognize as God; and also to give them an opportunity of practicing a work of charity, for it is pleasing to God that we hospitably invite and entertain strangers. Thus did Abraham and Lot entertain angels in the form of strangers, and saints in the New Testament have done likewise to Christ Himself.

How did the disciples recognize Him in the breaking of bread?

Because, as the holy Fathers believe, He gave them then His sacred body as He did to the apostles at the Last Supper, the description of which they had undoubtedly heard.

What else have we to learn from this gospel?

That when we have received Christ at Easter in the Blessed Sacrament, we should beg Him to stay with us, for the evening of our life draws near.

PETITION O Jesus, the evening of our life: is drawing nearer and nearer: remain with us by virtue and through the effects of Thy Blessed Sacrament that we, who like the disciples going to Emmaus, are in need of constancy and understanding, may have our faith strengthened by Thy most holy body, become fixed in hope, and so united with Thee in love that nothing can ever again separate us from Thee. Amen:

INSTRUCTION ON THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER, CALLED DOMINICA IN ALBIS

Why is this Sunday called Dominica in Albis or White Sunday?

Because on this day the neophytes laid aside the white dress which, as emblem of their innocence, they received on Holy Saturday, and put on their necks an Agnus Dei, made of white wax, and blessed by the pope, to remind them always of the

innocence for which they were given, and of the meekness of the Lamb Jesus. For which reason the Church sings at the Introit:

INTROIT As newborn babes, alleluia: desire the rational milk without guile. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. (I Pet II. 2.) Rejoice to God our helper: sing aloud to the God of Jacob. (Ps. LXXX.) Glory, &c.

COLLECT Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who have completed the paschal solemnities may, through Thy merciful bounty, ever retain them in our life and conversation. Through.

EPISTLE (I John V. 4-100.) Dearly Beloved, Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the spirit which testifieth that Christ is the truth. And there are three who give testimony in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater: for this is the testimony of God, which is greater, because he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself.

INSTRUCTION As in his gospel, so in his epistles, and especially in this, St. John proves the divinity of Christ which had been denied by some heretics. He says that Christ had come to purify all men from sin by water and blood, that is, by His blood shed on the cross for our reconciliation, and by the water of baptism to which He has given the power, the divine effect of His blood, and has thus proved Himself the divine Redeemer. This His divine dignity is attested by the Holy Ghost who lived in Christ and worked through Him with His fullness, and when sent by Him after our Lord's Ascension, produced most wonderful effect in the apostles and the faithful. As now on earth three, the Spirit, water, and blood, give testimony of Christ's divinity and agree in it, so also in heaven three, the Father, who calls Him His beloved Son, (Matt, III. 17.) the Word, or the Son Himself, who wrought so many miracles, the Holy Ghost, when He descended upon Him at the baptism in the Jordan, (Luke III. 22.) give testimony of His divinity, and these also agree with one another in their testimony. If Christ is truly God, then we must believe in Him, and this faith must be a living one, that is, it must prove fertile in good works, and this faith conquers the world by teaching us to love God above all, to despise the world with its pleasures,

and to overcome it by indifference. Let us strive to have such faith, and we shall overcome all temptations and gain the eternal crown.

ASPIRATION O Lord Jesus! strengthen me by a lively faith in Thy divinity, so that I may not succumb in the spiritual combat against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and be eternally lost.

GOSPEL (John XX. 1-9.) At that time, when it was late that same day, the first of the week and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came, and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when, they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then he said to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said to him: My Lord and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.* Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, you may have life in his name.

* What follows is omitted on the Feast of St. Thomas, 21st of December.

Why does Christ so often wish peace to the apostles?

To show that He only, by His death and resurrection, has made peace between God and man, and that His followers should be known by their harmony. (John XIII. 35.) There is a threefold peace: peace with God, by avoiding sin; peace with ourselves, that is, a good conscience; peace with our neighbour, by the exercise of charity. This threefold peace is necessary for our salvation.

Why did Jesus breathe upon the apostles when giving them the power to forgive sin?

To show that as bodily life was once given to Adam by the breath of God, so should the spiritual life be given henceforth by the apostles and their successors, through the Holy Ghost in the Sacrament of Penance, to the children of Adam who were spiritually dead.

Why did God permit Thomas to doubt the Resurrection of Christ?

That Thomas, as well as we, says St. Gregory, should be strengthened in humble belief in the Resurrection of Christ, and that all doubts should be removed.

Had Thomas true faith when with his own eyes he saw Christ?

Yes, for he saw Christ only in His humanity, and yet testified to His divinity by exclaiming: My Lord and my God!

Is it true, meritorious faith not to be ready to believe before seeing that which is to be believed?

By no means; for faith consists precisely in firmly hold-ing as true that which is not seen. Therefore, Christ calls him blessed who has not seen and yet believes.

When is faith true and meritorious?

That is true faith which firmly believes all that God has revealed, whether written or unwritten, and when one lives in accordance with that faith; for faith in Jesus simply does not save us, when that which He has commanded is not performed. (Matt VII, 21.; James II. 20.) That faith is meritorious which without doubting and without hesitation willingly submits the understanding to revealed truths which it cannot comprehend, and this for the love of Gods who is eternal truth and cannot deceive.

Whence do we know for certain that God has revealed certain things?

From the Church of Christ which alone preserves the revealed word of God faithfully and uncorrupted, as it is contained in the Bible and in tradition; by the Holy Ghost all truth is given to the Church, and Christ remains with her until the end of the world. (Matt. XXVIII. 20.)

Has the Church of Christ any marks by which it may be known?

Christ's Church has these four marks: it is One, it is Holy, it is Catholic, and it is Apostolic.

How is the Church one?

The Church is one, because all its members agree in one faith, are all in one communion, and are all under one head. (Matt. XVI, 18.; Eph. IV. 37.)

How is the Church Holy?

The Church is Holy, in her Founder, Jesus Christ, and by teaching a holy doctrine, by inviting all to a holy life, and by the eminent holiness of so many thousands of her children.

How is the Church Catholic?

The Church is Catholic or Universal, because she subsists in all ages, teaches all nations, (Matt. XXVII. 19, 20.) and maintains all truth.

How is the Church Apostolic?

The Church is Apostolic, because she comes down by a perpetual succession from the apostles of Christ, and has her doctrines her orders, and her mission from them.

Which is this true Church?

The Roman Catholic Church, for she alone has these marks. She is One in her head, the Pope of Rome, in her doctrine, and in her Sacraments, which is evident since she excludes all those who do not accept all her dogmas. She is Holy, for Christ her Founder is holy; and her doctrine and Sacraments lead to holiness, as shown by the multitude of her saints whose sanctity God arms by great miracles. No sect has saints. She is Catholic or Universal, for she has been in existence always from the times of the apostles, as is clearly shown by the fact that from the times of the apostles there have always been some who separated from her and founded sects. The Catholic Church has always existed, and cannot perish or become corrupt, since Christ has promised to remain with her to the end of the world; she is also spread over the whole world, is always being announced to all nations, and is fitted for all generations and for all people. She is Apostolic, for she accepts no doctrine which does not come from the apostles, and she can prove that the ministers of the Church, the bishops, have come down in unbroken succession from the apostles.

Can those who remain outside the Catholic Church be, saved?

The Council of Trent (Sess. V. in the Introduction) assigns the Catholic faith as the one without which it is impossible to please God, and the Roman Catechism teaches: (I part. art. 9.) “The Church is also called Catholic or Universal, because all who desire eternal salvation must cling to, and embrace her, like those who entered the ark to escape perishing in the flood.” According to this doctrine of the Church, which the holy Fathers affirm, only those idolaters and obstinate heretics are excluded from salvation who knowingly deny the truth, and will not enter the Church. The Catholic Church does not condemn the unbelievers, she prays for them, leaves judgment to the Lord, who alone knows the heart, and knows whether the error is culpable or not, and she calls on all her members to pray for their enlightenment.

Are we then already saved, if we belong to the true Church?

No, we must also live up to the faith which she teaches make good use of all means of salvation, regard and honour all her regulations and commands, for otherwise the words of Christ will be verified in us: And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom (the true Church) shall be cast out into exterior darkness. (Matt. VIII. 11.)

INSTRUCTION ON THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Because of the joyous Resurrection of Christ, and the graces flowing to us on account of it, the Church sings at the Introit of the Mass:

INTROIT The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord, alleluia; by the word of the Lord the heavens were established, alleluia, alleluia. Rejoice in the Lord, ye just: praise becometh the upright. (Ps. XXII.) Glory be to the Father, &c.

COLLECT O God, who in the humility of Thy Son hast raised up a fallen world; grant to Thy faithful a perpetual joyfulness; that whereas Thou hast rescued them from the perils of eternal death, Thou mayest bring them to the fruition of everlasting joy. Through &c.

EPISTLE (I Pet II. 21-25.) Dearly beloved, Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, did not revile; when he suffered, he threatened not; but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly; who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live to justice: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray: but you are now converted to the shepherd and bishop of your souls.

EXPLANATION St. Peter teaches the Christians patience in misery and afflictions, even in unjust persecution, and for this purpose places before them the example of Christ who, though most innocent, suffered most terribly and most patiently. Are we true sheep of the good Shepherd if at the smallest cross, at every word, we become angry and impatient?

ASPIRATION O Lord Jesus! grant me the grace to follow Thee, my good Shepherd, and not to complain and make threats whenever I am reprimanded, reviled or persecuted for justice sake.

GOSPEL (John X. 11-16.) At that time, Jesus said to the Pharisees: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth; and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep: and the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling, and he bath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

How has Christ proved Himself a good Shepherd?

By sacrificing His life even for His enemies, for those who did not yet love Him, (I John IV. 10; Rom. V. 8.) and could not reward Him. He has besides given Himself to us for our food.

How are we to know if we are among the sheep of Christ, that is, His chosen ones?

If we listen willingly to the voice of the Shepherd in sermons and instructions, in spiritual books and conversations; are obedient to it, and especially give ear and follow the rules of the Church through which the Good Shepherd speaks to us, (Luke X. 16.) “for he,” says St. Augustine, “who has not the Church for his mother, will not

have God for his father;” if we gladly receive the food of the Good Shepherd, that is, His sacred Body and Blood in holy Communion; if we are patient and meek as a lamb, freely forgiving our enemies; if we love all men from our heart, do good to them, and seek to bring them to Jesus.

Who are the other sheep of Christ?

The Gentiles who were not of the fold of Israel, whom Christ sought to bring by His disciples, and now by their successors; into His fold. To these sheep we also belonged by our ancestors. O how grateful we should be to God, that He has brought us into the fold of His Church, and how diligently should we conduct ourselves as good sheep!

When will there be but one fold and one shepherd?

When, by the prayers of the Church and by her missionaries, all nations shall be converted to the only saving Church, constituting then one Church under one head. Let us pray that this may soon come to pass.

PRAYER O Lord Jesus! Thou Good Shepherd who on the cross didst give Thy life for Thy sheep, grant us, we beseech Thee, by Thy death, the grace to be faithful to Thy voice and teachings like obedient lambs that we may one day be numbered among Thy chosen ones in heaven.

INSTRUCTION ON HOPE

I lay down my life for my sheep. (John X. 15.)

What has Christ obtained for us by His death?

The remission of our sins, the grace to lead a life pleasing to God in this world, and eternal happiness in the next, for which we now firmly hope, with secure confidence may now expect, and most assuredly will obtain, if we do not fail on our part.

In what does eternal happiness consist?

In the beatific vision of God, which includes the most perfect love of Him, by which those who are saved become, as it were, one with Him, possessing in this union everything that they can possibly desire.

What are the necessary means of obtaining eternal happiness?

The grace of God, that is, His continual assistance; the practice of the three divine virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity; the keeping of God's commandments; the frequent use of the holy Sacraments, and constant prayer. These means must be diligently employed, for "God who", as St. Augustine says, "created us without us, will not save us without us," that is, without our cooperation.

What may especially enable us to hope for eternal happiness?

The infinite mercy and goodness of God, who from all eternity has loved us more than an earthly mother, and, because of this love did not even spare His only-begotten Son, but gave Him up, for our sake, to the most bitter death. Will He then deny us heaven, He who in giving us His Son, has given us more than heaven itself? The fidelity of God: He has so often promised us eternal happiness, and in so many texts of Scripture so clearly explained that He wishes us to be saved, that He must keep His promise, for He is eternal truth and cannot deceive. (Heb. VI. 18.) He says not yes today, and no tomorrow, there is no change in Him, nor shadow of alteration. (James I, 17.) The omnipotence of God, who can do all that He pleases, whom no one can oppose or prevent from doing what He will; if we have confidence in a rich and honest man who assures us he will assist us in need, how much more should we hope in the goodness, fidelity, and omnipotence of God!

When should we make an act of Hope?

As soon as we come to the use of reason and, are sufficiently instructed concerning this virtue and its motives; in time of trouble or of severe temptation against this virtue; when receiving the holy Sacraments; every morning and evening, and especially at the hour of death.

The same thing is to be observed in regard to acts of Faith and Love.

INSTRUCTION ON THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Church continues to rejoice and praise God for the Resurrection of Christ and sings accordingly at the Introit of this day's Mass:

INTROIT Shout with joy to God all the earth, alleluia: Sing ye a psalm to his name, alleluia. Give glory to his praise, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. (Ps. LXV.) Say unto God:

How terrible are thy works, O Lord! In the multitude of thy strength thy enemies shall lie to thee. Glory & c.

COLLECT O God, who showest the light of Thy truth to such as go astray, that they may return to the way of righteousness, grant that all, who profess the Christian name, may forsake whatever is contrary to that profession, and closely pursue what is agreeable to it. Through etc.

EPISTLE (I Peter II. 11-19.) Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims to refrain yourselves from carnal desires, which war against the soul, having your conversation good among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may, by the good works which they shall, behold in you, glorify God in the day of visitation. Be, ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake: whether it be to the king as excelling, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of the good: for so is the will of God, that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not as making liberty a cloak for malice, but as the servants of God. Honor all men: Love the brotherhood: Fear God: Honor the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. For this is thanks worthy, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

EXPLANATION St. Peter here urges the Christians to regard themselves as strangers and pilgrims upon this earth, looking upon temporal goods only as borrowed things, to which they should not attach their hearts, for death will soon deprive them of all. He then admonishes them as Christians to live in a Christian manner, to edify and lead to truth the Gentiles who hated and calumniated them. This should especially be taken to heart by those Catholics who live among people of a different religion; for they can edify them by the faithful and diligent practice of their holy religion, and by a pure, moral life lead them to the truth; while by lukewarmness and an immoral life, they will only strengthen them in their error, and thus inure the Church. St. Peter also requires the Christians to obey the lawful authority, and therefore, to pay all duties and taxes faithfully, because it is the will of God who has instituted lawful authority. Christ paid the customary tribute for Himself and Peter, (Matt. XVII. 26.) and St. Paul expressly commands that toll and taxes should be paid to whomsoever they are due. (Rom. XIII, 7.) St. Peter finally advises servants to obey their masters whether these are good or bad, and by so doing be agreeable to God who will one-day reward them.

ASPIRATION Grant me the grace, O Jesus! to consider myself a pilgrim as long as I live and as such to use the temporal goods. Give me patience in adversities, and so

strengthen me, that I may willingly obey the lawful authority, though its laws and regulations should come hard and its tribute press upon me.

GOSPEL (John XVI. 16-22.) At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: A little while, and now you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me: because I go to the Father. Then some of his disciples said one to another: What is this that he saith to us: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me, and, because I go to the Father? They said therefore: What is this that he saith, A little while? We know not what he speaketh. And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask him, and he said to them: Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while and you shall see me. Amen, amen I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labour, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice: and your joy no man shall take from you.

What is the meaning of Christ's words: A little while and you shall not see me; and again a little while and you shall see me?

St. Chrysostom applies these words, which Christ spoke to His apostles a few hours before His passion, to the time between the death of Jesus and His Resurrection; but St. Augustine, to the time between the Resurrection and the Ascension, and then to the Last judgment at the end of the world, and he adds: "This little while seems long to us living, but ended, we feel how short it is." In affliction we should console ourselves by reflecting, how soon it will terminate, and that it cannot be compared with the future glory, that is awaiting eternally in heaven him who patiently endures.

Why did our Saviour tell His disciples of their future joys and sufferings?

That they might the more easily bear the sufferings that were to come, because we can be prepared for sufferings which we know are pending; because He knew that their sufferings would be only slight and momentary in comparison with the everlasting joy which awaited them, like the pains of a woman in giving birth to a child which are great indeed, but short, and soon forgotten by the mother in joy at the birth of the child. "Tell me" says St. Chrysostom, "if you were elected king but were obliged to spend the night preceding your entrance into your capital city where you were to be crowned, if you were compelled to pass that night in much discomfort in a stable, would you not joyfully endure it in the expectation of your kingdom? And

why should not we, in this valley of tears, willingly live through adversities, in expectation of one day obtaining the kingdom of heaven?”

PETITION Enlighten me, O Holy Spirit! that I may realize that this present life and all its hardships are but slight and momentary, and strengthen me that I may endure patiently the adversities of life in the hope of future heavenly joys.

CONSOLATION IN TRIALS AND ADVERSITIES

You shall lament and weep. (John XVI. 20.)

That Christian is, most foolish who fancies that the happiness of this world consists in honors, wealth, and pleasures, while Christ, the eternal Truth, teaches the contrary, promising eternal happiness to the poor and oppressed, and announcing eternal affliction and lamentation to those rich ones who have their comfort in this world. How much, then, are those to be pitied who as Christians believe, and yet live as if these truths were not for them, and who think only how they can spend their days in luxury, hoping at the same time to go to heaven where all the saints, even Christ the Son of God Himself, has entered only by crosses and sufferings.

PRAYER IN TRIBULATION O good Jesus! who hast revealed, that we can enter heaven only by many tribulations, (Acts XIV. 21.) hast called them blessed who in this world are sad, oppressed, and persecuted, but patiently suffer, and who hast also taught us, that without the will of Thy Heavenly Father, not one hair of our head can perish: (Luke XXI. 18.) I therefore submit entirely to Thy divine will, and beg Thy grace to endure all adversities for Thy sake, that after this life of misery I may enjoy eternal happiness with Thee in heaven.

The Introit of this days Mass is a canticle of praise and thanks:

INTROIT Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle alleluia; because the Lord hath done wonderful things, alleluia; he hath revealed his justice in the sight of the Gentiles.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. His right hand hath wrought for him salvation; and his arm is holy. (Ps. XCII.) Glory etc.

COLLECT O God, who makest the minds of the faithful to be of one will: grant unto Thy people to love what Thou commandest, and to desire what thou dost promise; that amidst the various changes of the world our hearts may there be fixed where true joys abide. Through etc.

EPISTLE (James I. 17-21.) Dearly beloved, Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration. For of his own will hath he begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be some beginning of his creatures. You know, my dearest brethren. And let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger: for the anger of man worketh not the justice of God. Wherefore, casting away all uncleanness, and abundance of naughtiness, with meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

INSTRUCTION Of all the gifts that come from God, the most excellent is the gospel and regeneration in baptism, by which He has made us His children and heirs of heaven. How great is this honor, and how earnestly we should endeavour to preserve it! To hear the word of God, when preached to us in sermons, will aid our endeavours. The admonition of the apostle to be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, contains true wisdom, for: In the multitude of words there shall not want sin; but he that refraineth his lips is most wise. (Prov. X. 19.)

ASPIRATION Aid me, O Lord, to preserve the dignity received in baptism, grant me a great love for Thy divine word, and strengthen me to subdue my tongue and to use it only for Thy glory.

GOSPEL (John XVI. 5-14.) At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: I go to him that sent me: and none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believed not in me: and of justice, because I go to the Father, and you shall see me no longer: and of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the, Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but what things soever he shall

hear, he shall speak, and the things that are to come he shall show you. He shall glorify me, because he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you.

INSTRUCTION As the disciples, in their grief at Christ's going to His passion and death, after the accomplishment of which He was to return to His Father, never once asked Him: "Whither goest Thou?" many Christians, because of their attachment to this world and its pleasures, never ask themselves: Whither am I going, whither leads my way? By my sinful life I am perhaps going towards hell, or will my little fervour for the right, my lukewarm prayers take me to heaven? Ask yourself in all earnestness, dear Christian, whither leads the way you are going? Is it the right path? if not, retrace your steps, and follow Jesus who by suffering and death entered heaven.

Why could the Paraclete not come before the Ascension of Christ?

Because the work of Redemption had first to be completed, Christ had to die, reconcile man to God, and enter into His glory, before the Spirit of truth and filial adoption could abide in man in the fullness of grace. From this we may learn that we must purify our hearts, and be reconciled to God, if we wish to receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

How will the Holy Ghost convince the world of sin, of justice and of judgment?

He will convince the world, that is, the Jews and Gentiles, of sin, by showing them through the preaching, the sanctity and the miracles of the apostles, as well as by gradual inward enlightenment, the grievous sins which they have committed by their infidelity and their vices; of justice, by unveiling their error, and showing them that Christ whom they unjustly rejected, is the fountain of justice; of judgment, by showing them their condemnation in their prince and head, the devil, whom they served. This prince is now driven from idols and from the bodies of men, and his kingdom is destroyed in the name of Jesus by the apostles.

Why did not Christ tell His apostles all He had to tell them?

Because they could not yet comprehend, and keep it in their memory; because they were still too weak, and too much attached to Jewish customs, and also because they were depressed; He therefore promised them the Holy Ghost, who would fit them for it by His enlightenment, and would teach them all truth.

How does the Holy Ghost teach all truth?

By guiding the Church, that is, its infallible administration, by His light to the knowledge of the truth necessary for the salvation of souls, preserving it from error; and by advancing those members of the Church who seek His light and place no obstacle in its way, in the necessary knowledge of truth.

What is meant by: He shall not speak of himself, but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak?

That the Holy Ghost will teach us only that which He has heard from all eternity from the Father and Son; His teaching will, therefore, perfectly agree with Christ's teachings, for the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and Son and is equal God to them, and that which He teaches is also their doctrine, which is expressed in the words: He shall receive of mine.

ASPIRATION Ah, my Lord and my God! direct my feet in the way of Thy commandments and preserve my heart pure from sin, that the Holy Spirit may find nothing in me deserving of reproach, that He may teach me all truth, and lead me to Thee, the eternal Truth, in heaven. Amen.

INSTRUCTION ON THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Introit of this days Mass is a canticle of praise and thanks:

INTROIT Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle alleluia; because the Lord hath done wonderful things, alleluia; he hath revealed his justice in the sight of the Gentiles. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. His right hand hath wrought for him salvation; and his arm is holy. (Ps. XCII.) Glory etc.

COLLECT O God, who makest the minds of the faithful to be of one will: grant unto Thy people to love what Thou commandest, and to desire what thou dost promise; that amidst the various changes of the world our hearts may there be fixed where true joys abide. Through etc.

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And let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger: for the anger of man worketh not the justice of God. Wherefore, casting away all uncleanness, and abundance of naughtiness, with meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

INSTRUCTION Of all the gifts that come from God, the most excellent is the gospel and regeneration in baptism, by which He has made us His children and heirs of heaven. How great is this honor, and how earnestly we should endeavour to preserve it! To hear the word of God, when preached to us in sermons, will aid our endeavours. The admonition of the apostle to be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, contains true wisdom, for: In the multitude of words there shall not want sin; but he that refraineth his lips is most wise. (Prov. X. 19.)

ASPIRATION Aid me, O Lord, to preserve the dignity received in baptism, grant me a great love for Thy divine word, and strengthen me to subdue my tongue and to use it only for Thy glory.

GOSPEL (John XVI. 5-14.) At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: I go to him that sent me: and none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believed not in me: and of justice, because I go to the Father, and you shall see me no longer: and of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the, Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak, and the things that are to come he shall show you. He shall glorify me, because he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you.

INSTRUCTION As the disciples, in their grief at Christ's going to His passion and death, after the accomplishment of which He was to return to His Father, never once asked Him: "Whither goest Thou?" many Christians, because of their attachment to this world and its pleasures, never ask themselves: Whither am I going, whither leads my way? By my sinful life I am perhaps going towards hell, or will my little fervour for the right, my lukewarm prayers take me to heaven? Ask yourself in all earnestness, dear Christian, whither leads the way you are going? Is it the right path? if not, retrace your steps, and follow Jesus who by suffering and death entered heaven.

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How does the Holy Ghost teach all truth?

By guiding the Church, that is, its infallible administration, by His light to the knowledge of the truth necessary for the salvation of souls, preserving it from error; and by advancing those members of the Church who seek His light and place no obstacle in its way, in the necessary knowledge of truth.

What is meant by: He shall not speak of himself, but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak?

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ASPIRATION Ah, my Lord and my God! direct my feet in the way of Thy commandments and preserve my heart pure from sin, that the Holy Spirit may find nothing in me deserving of reproach, that He may teach me all truth, and lead me to Thee, the eternal Truth, in heaven. Amen.

INSTRUCTION ON THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

In thanks for the redemption the Church sings at the Introit:

INTROIT Declare the voice of joy, and let it be heard, alleluia: declare it even to the ends of the earth: the Lord hath delivered his people. (Isai. XLVII. 20.) Alleluia, alleluia Shout with joy to God, all the earth: sing ye a psalm to his name, give glory to his praise. (Fs. LXV.) Glory etc.

COLLECT O God, from whom all good things proceed: grant to Thy suppliants, that by Thy inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by Thy guidance may perform the same. Through etc.

EPISTLE (James I. 22-27.) Dearly Beloved, Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his own countenance in a glass: for he beheld himself and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. But he that hath looked into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless, and widows in their tribulation, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world.

EXPLANATION True piety, as St. James here says, consists not only in knowing and recognizing the word of God, but in living according to its precepts and teachings; in subduing the tongue, the most dangerous and injurious of all our members; in being charitable to the poor and destitute, and in contemning the world, its false principles, foolish customs and scandalous example, against which we should guard, that we may not become infected and polluted by them. Test thyself, whether thy life be of this kind.

ASPIRATION O Jesus! Director of the soul! Give me the grace of true piety as defined by St. James.

GOSPEL (John XVI. 23-30.) At this time, Jesus saith to his disciples: Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father, anything in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto, you have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father. In that day, you shall ask in my name: and I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples say to him: Behold, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things, and thou needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou comest forth from God.

Why does God wish us to ask of Him?

That we may know and confess that all good comes from Him; that we may acknowledge our poverty and weakness which in all things need the help of God; that we may thus glorify Him and render ourselves less unworthy of the gifts which He has promised us.

What is meant by asking in the name of Jesus?

By this is meant praying with confidence in the merits of Jesus, “who,” as St. Cyril says, “being God with the Father, gives us all good, and as mediator carries our petitions to His Father.” The Church, therefore concludes all her prayers with the words: “Through our Lord, Jesus Christ.” It means also that we should ask that which is in accordance with the will of Christ, namely, all things necessary for the salvation of our soul; to pray for temporal things merely in order to live happily in this world, is not pleasing to Christ and avails us nothing. “He who prays for what hinders salvation,” says St. Augustine, “does not pray in the name of Jesus.” Thus Jesus said to His disciples: Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name, “because,” as St. Gregory says, “they did not ask for that which conduces to eternal salvation.”

Why is it that God sometimes does not grant our petitions?

Because we often pray for things that are injurious, and like a good father, God denies them to us, in order to give us something better; because He wishes to prove our patience and perseverance in prayer; because we generally do not pray as we ought;

to be pleasing to God, prayer should be made when in a state of grace and with confidence in Christ's merits, for the prayer of a just man availeth much; (James V. 16.) we must pray with humility and submission to the will of God, with attention, fervour, sincerity, and with perseverance.

At what special times should we pray?

We should pray every morning and evening, before and after meals, in time of temptation, when commencing any important undertaking, and particularly in the hour of death. God is mindful of us every moment, and gives us His grace. It is, therefore, but just that we think often of Him during the day, and thank Him for His blessings.

How can we, in accordance with Christ's teachings, (Luke XVIII. 1.) pray at all times?

By making the good intention when commencing our work, to do all for the love of God, and according to His most holy will; by raising our hearts to God at different times during the day; frequently making acts of faith, hope, love, and humility, and by repeating short ejaculations, such as: O Jesus! grant me grace to love Thee! Thee only do I desire to love! O be merciful to me! Lord hasten to help me.

What is the signification of the different ceremonies that Catholics use at their prayers?

The general signification is that God must be served, honored and adored, not only with the soul but with the body; when we pray aloud we praise God, not only with the mind, but also with our lips; when we pray with bowed and uncovered head, with folded, uplifted, or outstretched hands, on bended knees, with bowed and prostrated body, we show our reverence and subjection to the majesty of God, before whom we, who are but dust and ashes, cannot humble ourselves enough. These different ceremonies during prayer are frequently mentioned in both the Old and the New Testaments, and Christ and His apostles have made use of them, as for instance, the bending of the knees, falling on the face, &c.

Which is the best of all prayers?

The Lord's Prayer which Christ Himself taught us, and commands us to repeat. When said with devotion, it is the most powerful of all prayers. (Matt. VI, 9-13; Luke XI. 2-4.)

SHORT EXPLANATION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

Of what does the Lord's Prayer consist?

It consists of an address, as an introduction to the prayer, and of seven petitions which contain all that we should ask for the honour of God, and for our own salvation. The address is thus: Our Father who art in heaven:

What does the word "Our" signify?

In the communion of saints, we should pray for and with all the children of God; we should be humble and preserve brotherly love towards all men.

Who is it that is here called our "Father"?

Our Father is God who has made us His children and heirs of His kingdom through His Son.

Why do we say "Who art in heaven", since God is everywhere?

To remind us that our true home is heaven, for which we, should ardently long, because our Father is there, and there He has prepared our inheritance.

For what do we ask to the first petition: "Hallowed be Thy name?"

That we and all men may truly know, love, and serve God.

For what do we pray to the second petition: “Thy kingdom come?”

That the Church of God; the kingdom of Christ, may extend over the whole earth, and the kingdom of sin and the devil be destroyed; that Christ may reign in our hearts and in the hearts of all; and that God will deign to receive us into the kingdom of heaven when our earthly pilgrimage is ended.

For what do we ask to the third petition: “Thy will be done on earth as it is to heaven?”

We beg that God would enable us, by His grace, to do His will in all things, as the blessed do it in heaven. In these three petitions we seek, as taught by Christ, first the kingdom of God, that all the rest may be added unto us. (Luke XII. 31.)

For what do we ask in the fourth petition: “Give us this day our dally bread?”

We beg for all necessaries for body and soul

Why does it say, “this day?”

The words “this day” signify that we should not be over anxious for the future, but place all our confidence in God who will provide the necessaries of life.

What do we ask for in the fifth petition: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us?”

We beg that God will forgive us our sins, as we forgive others their offenses against us. Those who make this petition, and still bear enmity towards their neighbour, lie in the face of God, and will not receive forgiveness. (Mark XI. 25, 26.)

What is asked for in the sixth petition: “Lead us not into temptation?”

We ask God to avert all temptations or at least not to abandon us when we are tempted. We cannot, indeed be entirely free from them in this world, they are even necessary and useful for our salvation: for without temptation there is no combat, without combat no victory and without victory no crown.

What do we ask for in the seventh petition: “Deliver us from evil?”

We beg that God would free us from all evil of soul and body.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE PROCESSIONS ON ROGATION DAYS

What are processions?

Processions are solemn religious assemblages of persons marching together, and are instituted by the Catholic Church partly to encourage the piety of the faithful, partly in remembrance of graces received, and in thanksgiving for them. Processions are approved of by the Fathers of the Church from the earliest ages. Those who take part in them in a true spirit will reap wholesome fruit of Christian piety.

Are processions something new?

No, they were the custom in the very earliest centuries of the Church, as testified by the acts of the martyrs, of Saints Cyprian, Lucius, Boniface, and the Fathers of the Church, Saints Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Gregory, and others. They are also founded on Scripture. Thus King David caused the ark of the covenant to be carried in solemn procession to Jerusalem, (II Kings VI.) and Solomon, his son, had it carried in solemn procession into the new temple. (III Kings VIII. 1-6.)

What do processions signify?

Processions are a figure of our pilgrimage on earth; we are strangers and wanderers here below, our journey reaches from this valley of tears to the heavenly Sion, the procession therefore returns into the house of God; our journey leads over the thorny ways of life, the procession therefore takes place in the open air, where the pilgrim is exposed to all kinds of weather; they are a powerful incentive to fervour in prayer for the faithful; when hundreds, even thousands of faithful praise God aloud, or cry to Him for help and mercy, must not even the coldest heart be roused to vivid, fervent devotion, since Christ has promised to be present even where two or three are assembled in His name? Processions are an open acknowledgment that praise, thanks and adoration are due to God alone, while they are a public profession of our faith in Christ, the Crucified; they are a solemn thanksgiving for being permitted to profess Christ, our Lord, before the whole world, as also for all the graces obtained through

Him; they are a public testimonial of our faith in the one, holy, Catholic Church, whose members are united by the same bond of faith, and who form under their head, Christ, one family in God. Finally, they are a sign of the triumph of Christian faith over the darkness of heathenism. If processions are solemnized with such intentions, with order and dignity, with fervent devotion, in the light of faith, they are indeed a pleasing sight for angels and men

Why are banners and the cross carried in procession?

The cross signifies that we are assembled as Christians, in the name of Jesus, in whose name we begin and end our prayers, through whose merits we expect all things from the Heavenly Father, and whom we must follow: on our journey to heaven; the red and white banners indicate that we must walk in all innocence under the banner of Christ, and fight unto death against sin, against the world and the devil, and be as ready as were the martyrs to give our life for our faith; the blue banners indicate that we must walk the road of self-denial and mortification, with really humble and penitent feelings for our sins. The banners are also emblematic of Christ's victory over death and hell, and of the triumph of His religion over the pagans and Jews.

Why do we go around the fields in processions?

To beg God to bless the fields with His fatherly hand, to give and preserve the fruits of the earth, and, as He fills the animals with blessings, and gives them food at the proper time, so may He give to us also our necessary food.

What is the origin of the procession on St. Mark's day and on Rogation Days?

The procession on St. Mark's day was instituted even before the time of Pope Gregory the Great (607) who, however, brought it into fervent practice, "in order," as he says, "to obtain, in a measure forgiveness of our sins." The same pontiff introduced another, called the Sevenfold Procession, because the faithful of Rome took part in it in seven divisions, from seven different Churches, meeting in the Church of the Blessed Virgin. It was also named the Pest Procession, because it was ordered by St. Gregory to obtain the cessation of a fearful pestilence which was at that time raging in Rome, and throughout all Italy. This pestilence so poisoned the atmosphere that one opening his mouth to sneeze or gape would suddenly fall dead; (hence the custom of saying "God bless you," to one sneezing, and of making the sign of the cross on the mouth of one who gapes). The same holy pope ordered the picture of the Blessed Virgin, which is said to have been painted by St. Luke, to be carried in this procession, and that the intercession of this powerful mother and these

supplications the pestilence cease. God heard and the pestilence ceased. It is said that the processions in Rogation Week owe their origin to St. Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne in France; in the neighbourhood of which city there were, in the year 469, terrible earthquakes which caused great destruction, the fruits perished and various plagues afflicted the people. The saintly bishop assembled the faithful, recommended them to seek refuge in the merciful God, and led them in procession around the fields. Such processions spread over France, and gradually throughout the Christian world; they are held in order to obtain from God the averting of universal evils, such as war, famine, and pestilence, and are, at the same time, a preparation for the Ascension of Christ who is our most powerful mediator with His Father, and whom we should invoke especially during these days.

With what intentions should we take part in a procession?

With the intention of glorifying God, of thanking Him for all His graces, and of obtaining aid and comfort from Him in all our corporal and spiritual needs; with the view of professing our faith openly before the whole world, and with the sincere resolution of always following Christ, the Crucified, in the path of penance and mortification. He who entertains other intentions and takes part, perhaps, for temporal advantages, or for sinful pleasures, or to avoid labour, &c., sins against God and the Church who weeps over and condemns such abuses.

INSTRUCTION ON THE FESTIVAL OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

At the Introit the Church sings the words which were spoken by the angels to the apostles and disciples, after the Ascension of our Lord:

INTROIT Ye men of Galilee, why wonder you, looking up to heaven? allel.: He shall so come as you have seen him going up into heaven. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. (Acts I. 11.), Oh, clap your hands, all ye nations; shout unto God with the voice of joy. (Ps. XLVI. 2.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT Grant, we beseech Thee, O Almighty God, that we who believe Thy only-begotten Son, our Redeemer, to have this day ascended into the heavens, may ourselves also in mind dwell amid heavenly things. Through the same etc.

LESSON (Acts I. 1-11.) The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, of all things which Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day on which, giving commandments by the Holy Ghost to the apostles, whom he had chosen, he was taken up: to whom also he

showed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And eating together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard (saith he) by my mouth: for John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence. They, therefore, who were come together, asked him, saying: Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? But he said to them: It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in his own power; but you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold, two men stood by them in white garments, who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand yon looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen him going into heaven.

EXPLANATION This gospel of St. Luke addressed to Theophilus, a Christian of note in Antioch, contains an account of the life, sufferings, and death of Jesus up to the time of His ascension into heaven. The Evangelist continues his account in the Acts of the apostles, in which he describes in simple words that which Jesus did during the forty days following His Resurrection, and the manner in which He ascended into heaven in the presence of His apostles. Rejoice that Christ today has entered into the glory gained by His sufferings and death, and pray: I rejoice, O King of heaven and earth, in the glory Thou hast this day attained in heaven. Sing to God, ye kingdoms of the earth: sing ye to the Lord: sing ye to God, who mounteth above the heaven of heavens to the east. Give ye glory to God for Israel, his magnificence and his power is in the clouds. God is wonderful in his saints, the God of Israel is he who will give power and strength to his people, blessed be God. (Ps.LXVII. 33-36.)

GOSPEL (Mark. XVI. 14-20.) At that time, Jesus appeared to the eleven as they were at table: and he upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen him after he was risen again. (And he said to them: Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned: And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents: and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands upon the sick; and they shall recover.) And the Lord Jesus after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God. But they going forth preached

everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.

Why did Christ say to His apostles: Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to all creatures?

To show that no one is to assume the office of preaching, but must look for his mission from the lawful pastors of the Church. And when Christ sends His apostles into the whole world to all nations without exception, He shows His willingness to save all men. If the designs of God are not fulfilled, the blame is not to be attributed to God, but to man, who either does not accept the doctrine of the gospel, or accepting, does not live in accordance with it, or else renders himself by his obduracy in vice, unworthy of the gospel.

Is faith without good works sufficient for salvation?

No, faith that is not active in love, not fruitful in good works, and therefore not meritorious, (Gal. V. 6.) is not sufficient for salvation. "Such faith," says St. Anselm, "is not the faith of a Christian, but the faith of the devil." Only he who truly believes in Christ and His doctrine, and lives in accordance with it, will be saved.

Is ours then the true faith since all the faithful do not work miracles; as Christ has predicted?

St. Gregory very beautifully replies to this question: "Because the Redeemer said that true faith would be accompanied by miracles, you must not think that you have not the faith, because these signs do not follow; these miracles had to be wrought in the beginning of the Church, because faith in her had to be increased by these visible signs of divine power." And even now when such signs are necessary for the propagation of the faith, and victory over unbelief, God gives His faithful power to work them.

Are miracles wrought now in the Catholic Church?

Yes, for there have been at all times saints in the Church, who, as seen from their lives, have wrought miracles, on account of their faith, which even the heretics cannot deny; for instance St. Francis Xavier, who in the sight of the heathens, raised several

dead persons to life. In a spiritual manner all pious Catholics still work such miracles; for, as St. Chrysostom says, “they expel devils when they banish sin, which is worse than the devil; they speak new tongues when they converse no longer on vain and sinful things, but on those which are spiritual and heavenly.” “They take up serpents,” says St. Gregory, “when by zealous exhortations they lift others from the shame of vice, without being themselves poisoned; they drink deadly things without being hurt by them, when they hear improper conversation without being corrupted or led to evil; they lay their hands upon the sick and heal them, when they teach the ignorant, strengthen by their good example those who are wavering in virtue, keep the sinner from evil, and similar things.” Strive to do this upon all occasions, O Christian, for God willingly gives you His grace and you will thus be of more use to yourself and others, and honour God more than by working the greatest miracles.

Where and how did Christ ascend into heaven?

From Mount Olivet where His sufferings began, by which we learn, that where our crosses and afflictions begin which we endure with patience and resignation, there begins our reward. Christ ascended into heaven by His own power, because He is God, and now in His glorified humanity He sits at the right hand of His Father, as our continual Mediator.

In whose presence did Christ ascend into heaven?

In the presence of His apostles, and many of His disciples, whom He had previously blessed, (Luke XXIV. 51.) and who, as St. Leo says, derived consoling joy from His ascension. Rejoice, also, O Christian soul, for Christ has today opened heaven for you, and you may enter it, if you believe in Christ, and live in accordance with that faith. St. Augustine says: “Let us ascend in spirit with Christ, that when His day comes, we may follow with our body”.

Yet you must know, beloved brethren, that not pride, nor avarice, nor impurity, nor any other vice ascends with Christ; for with the teacher of humility pride ascends not, nor with the author of goodness, malice, nor with the Son of the Virgin, impurity. Let us then ascend with Him by trampling upon our vices and evil inclinations, thus building a ladder by which we can ascend; for we make a ladder of our sins to heaven when we tread them down in combating them.”

ASPIRATION O King of glory! O powerful Lord! who hast this day ascended victoriously, above all heaven, leave us not as poor orphans; but send us, from the Father, the Spirit of truth whom Thou hast promised. Alleluia.

Why is the paschal candle extinguished after the gospel on this day?

To signify that Christ, of whom the candle is a figure, has gone from His disciples.

INSTRUCTION ON MIRACLES

And these signs shall follow them that believe.(Mark XVI. 17.)

What is a miracle?

A miracle, as defined by St. Thomas of Aquin, is anything beyond the ordinary, fixed state of things that is done through God. Thus when the sun stands still in his course, when thousands are fed with five loaves and two small fishes, when by a word or simple touch the dead are raised to life, the blind see, and the deaf hear, these are things contrary to nature, and are miracles which can only be performed by God or those persons to whom God has given the power.

That God can work miracles, cannot be denied. God has made the laws of nature, and at any time it pleases Him, He can suddenly suspend them, and that God has at times done so, we have more solid and undeniable proofs, than we have for the most renowned and best authenticated facts of history, far more witnesses testify to miracles, the whole world has believed them, and been converted by them; more than eleven millions of martyrs have died to confirm and maintain their truth; no one gives up his life for lies and deceptions; the Jews and pagans have admitted them, but ascribed them to witchcraft and the power of demons rather than to God; by this they proved and acknowledged the truth of miracles, because in order to deny them, they were driven to false and absurd explanation of them.

Can men work miracles?

No; only God works miracles through man to whom He gives the power. The history of the Christian Church in all ages bears testimony, that men have wrought miracles in the name of Jesus, as, for example, the apostles and the saints.

Can miracles be worked by the relics of saints, pictures, &c.?

The Church, in the Council of Trent, solemnly declares, that we are never to believe that there is in any picture or relic any hidden power by which a miracle can, be worked, and that we are not to honour or ask any such thing of them. Therefore no

miracle can ever be worked by them, but God can perform miracles through them, and He has done so, as the holy Scriptures and the history of the Church of Christ both prove. But when through certain pictures (usually called miraculous pictures) miracles do take place, that no deception may occur, the Church commands that such a picture shall not be exposed for the veneration of the faithful, until the truth of the miracles performed is by a rigorous examination established beyond doubt; she then causes such pictures to be respectfully preserved as monuments of the goodness and omnipotence of God.

Why are there not so many miracles in our times as there were in the first days of the Church?

Because the Church is no longer in need of such extra-ordinary testimony to the truth of her teachings. Thus St. Augustine writes: “He who in the face of the conversion of the world to Christianity demands miracles, and strives to doubt those which have been wrought in favour of this most wonderful change, is himself an astonishing miracle of irrationality and stupidity;” and St. Chrysostom says: “The question is sometimes asked: How happens it there are not so many miracles now-a-days? The answer is, because the knowledge of Christ is propagated all over the earth, and the Church is like a tree which, having once taken deep root and grown to a certain height, no longer needs to be carefully watered and supported.”

INSTRUCTION ON THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

This Sunday and the whole week should serve as a preparation for the festival of Pentecost, that we may be enabled by good works and pious devotional exercises, to receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost. At the Introit the Church sings:

INTROIT Hear, O Lord, my voice, with which I have cried to thee, alleluia. My heart hath said to thee: I have sought thy face, thy face, O Lord, I will seek: turn not away thy face from me, alleluia, alleluia. The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? (Ps. XXVI. 7-9.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT Almighty, everlasting God, grant us ever to have a will devoted to Thee, and to serve Thy majesty with a sincere heart. Through .etc.

EPISTLE (1 Peter IV. 7-11.) Dearly beloved, be prudent, and watch in prayers. But before all things, have a constant mutual charity among yourselves; for charity covereth a multitude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without

murmuring: as every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God: if any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth; that in all things God may be honoured through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

EXPLANATION The practice of the virtues which St. Peter here prescribes for the faithful, is an excellent preparation for the reception of the Holy Ghost, for nothing renders us more worthy of His visit than true love for our neighbour, the good use of God's gifts; and the faithful discharge of the duties of our state of life. Strive, therefore, to practise these virtues and thus make yourself less unworthy of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Say daily during the week the following prayer: Come, Holy Spirit, who hast assembled the people of all tongues in unity of faith, fill the hearts of Thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of Thy divine love.

GOSPEL (John XV. 26-27., to XVI. 1-4.) At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me: and you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whomsoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you, that, when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you.

Why is the Holy Ghost called the Paraclete?

Through the apostles and disciples whom He made so eloquent and so courageous that they intrepidly professed and preached Christ to be the Son of God, and the true Messiah. This doctrine He confirmed by astounding miracles, and sealed it by their blood which they shed in its defence. The Holy Ghost still gives testimony of Christ through the Church, that is, the clergy, through whom He speaks, and who must, therefore, be listened to reverently. We must also give testimony of Christ and profess by our lives, by patience in crosses and afflictions that He is our Teacher, our Lord, and our God; for if we do not thus acknowledge Him in this world He will deny us before His Father in heaven. (Matt X. 33.)

Did the Jews sin in persecuting and putting to death the apostles?

Undoubtedly; for although they erroneously believed they were doing God a service, their ignorance and error were very sinful and deserving of punishment, because they could easily have known and been instructed in the truth.

Those Christians who neglect all religious instruction hardly know what is necessary for salvation, and make light of many things which are grievous sins; as also those who are in doubt whether they justly or unjustly possess certain goods, and yet through fear of being compelled to make restitution, neglect to settle the doubts such are in culpable ignorance.

What must every Christian know and believe in order to be saved?

That there is but one God, who has created and governs all things; that God is a just judge, who rewards the good and punishes the wicked; that there are in the Deity three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that the Son of God became man for love of us, taught us, and by His death on the cross redeemed us; that the Holy Ghost sanctifies us by His grace, without which we cannot become virtuous or be saved; that man's soul is immortal.

PETITION Send us, O Lord Jesus! the Paraclete, that He may console and strengthen us in all our afflictions. Enlighten us by Thy Holy Spirit that we may learn and live in accordance with the truths of faith. Amen.

INSTRUCTION ON SCANDAL

These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. (John XVI. 1.)

How is scandal given?

By speaking, doing or omitting that which will be, to others an occasion, of sin: Scandal is given in different ways, for instance: if you dress improperly, speak improper words, or sing bad songs; by which you can see, that your neighbour will be tempted to think, desire or act wrongly; or what is worse, if you act sinfully, in the presence of, others, or bring bad books., books against good morals, or against the holy faith, among people; if you incite others to anger, cursing, and vengeance, or if you prevent them from attending church, the sermon, or catechetical instruction, etc. In all these things you become guilty of scandal, as well as of all the sins to which it gives rise.

If at the Last judgment we will be unable to, give an account of our own sins, how, then can we answer for the innumerable sins caused by, the scandal we have given? Therefore Christ pronounces a terrible, woe upon those who give scandal. Woe to that man, He says, by whom the scandal cometh! It were better for him, that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matt. XVIII.)

How do parents give scandal?

By giving their children bad example; by excessive anger, cursing and swearing; by avarice, injustice and cheating; by discord and quarrels; by gluttony in eating and drinking; by extravagance and vanity in dress; by sneering at religion, good morals, etc.; by not keeping their children from evil company, but sometimes even bringing them into it; by not punishing and endeavouring to eradicate their children's vices. How much parents sin, through such scandals, cannot be expressed; at the Day of judgment their children will be their accusers!

How do masters give scandal to their servants and those under their care?

In the same way as parents do to their children; by keeping them away from, or not urging them by their own example or command to attend church on Sundays and holy-days; by giving them meat on fast-days; by commanding them to do sinful things, such as stealing, injuring others, etc.

INSTRUCTION ON PREPARATION FOR PENTECOST

- 1).** We should withdraw, after the example of the Blessed Virgin and the apostles, to some solitary place, or at least avoid, intercourse with others, as much as possible; speak but little, and apply ourselves to earnest and persevering prayer; for in solitude God speaks to man.
- 2).** We should purify our conscience by a contrite confession, become reconciled to our neighbour, if we have lived in enmity; for the Holy Ghost, as a spirit of peace and purity, lives only in pure and peaceful souls. (Ps. IXXV. 3.)
- 3).** We should give alms according to our means, for it is said in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts X.) of the Gentile centurion Cornelius, that by prayer and alms-deeds he made himself worthy of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

4). We should fervently desire to receive the Holy Ghost, and should give expression to this longing by frequent aspirations to God, making use of the prayer: “Come, O Holy Ghost, etc.”

INSTRUCTION ON THE FESTIVAL OF PENTECOST

What festival is this?

It is the day on which the Holy Ghost descended in the form of fiery tongues, upon the apostles and disciples, who with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, were assembled in prayer in a house at Jerusalem. (Acts II.)

Why is this day called Pentecost?

The word “Pentecost” is taken from the Greek, and signifies fifty. As St. Jerome explains it, this was the last of the fifty days, commencing with Easter, which the early Christians celebrated as days of rejoicing at the resurrection of the Lord.

Why is this day observed so solemnly?

Because on this day the Holy Ghost, having descended upon the apostles, the law of grace, of purification from sin, and the sanctification of mankind, was for the first time announced to the world; because on this day the apostles, being filled with the Holy Ghost, commenced the work of purifying and sanctifying mankind, by baptizing three thousand persons who were converted by the sermon of St. Peter; and because on this day the Church of Jesus became visible as a community to the world, and publicly professed her faith in her crucified Saviour.

Why did the Holy Ghost descend on the Jewish Pentecost?

Because on their Pentecost the Jews celebrated the anniversary of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, and God would show by sending the Holy Ghost on this days that the Old Law had ceased and the New Law commenced. God also chose this time, that the Jews who on this day came together from all countries to Jerusalem to celebrate the Pentecost, might be witnesses of the miracle, and hear the New Law announced by the apostles.

Why is the baptismal font blessed on the vigil of Pentecost, as on Holy Saturday?

Because the Holy Ghost is the Author of all sanctity and the Fountain of baptismal grace, and because in the Acts (i. 5.) the descent of the Holy Ghost itself is called a baptism.

In the Introit of the Mass the Church rejoices at the descent of the Holy Ghost and sings:

INTROIT The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole earth, alleluia; and that which containeth all things hath knowledge of the voice, Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. (Wisd. I.7.) Let God arise, and his enemies be scattered: and let them that hate him, fly before his face. (Ps. 67.) Glory etc.

COLLECT God, who on this day didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit: grant us in the same spirit to relish what is right, and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Thro'. — in the unity of the same, etc.

LESSON (Acts II. I-II.) When the days of Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue: and they were all amazed, and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? And how have we heard every man our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphilia, Egypt, and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

Why did the Holy Ghost come upon the apostles in the form of fiery tongues?

The appearance of fiery tongues indicated the gift of language imparted to the apostles by the Holy Ghost, and inflamed their hearts and the hearts of the faithful with the love of God and their neighbour.

Why did a mighty wind accompany the descent?

To direct the attention of the people to the descent of the Holy Ghost, and to assemble them to hear the sermon of the Apostle Peter.

What special effects did the Holy Ghost produce in the apostles?

He freed them from all doubt and fear; gave them His light for the perfect knowledge of truth; inflamed their hearts with the most ardent love, and incited in them the fiery zeal for the propagation of the kingdom of God, strengthened them to bear all sufferings and persecutions, (Acts V. 41.) and gave them the gift of speaking in various languages, and of discerning spirits.

GOSPEL (John XIV. 23-31,) At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make our abode with him. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words: and the word which you have heard is not Mine, but the Father's, who sent Me. These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you: but the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you, I go away, and I come unto you. If you loved Me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it came to pass, that when it shall come to pass you may believe. I will not now speak many things with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandments, so do I.

Why is the Holy Ghost expressly called "Holy," since this attribute is due to each of the divine persons?

Because He is the Author of inward sanctity and of all supernatural gifts and graces, and therefore to Him is especially ascribed the work of man's sanctification.

What does the Holy Ghost effect in man?

He enlightens him that he may know the truths of religion and salvation, and the beauty of virtue; He moves him to desire, to aim after and to love these things; He renews his heart by cleansing it from sin, and imparts to him the supernatural gifts and graces by which he can become sanctified, and He brings forth in him wonderful fruits of holiness.

What are the gifts of the Holy Ghost?

According to the Prophet Isaias they are seven:

- 1.** The gift of wisdom, which enables us to know God, to esteem spiritual more than temporal advantages, and to delight only in divine things.
- 2.** The gift of understanding, by which we know and understand that which our faith proposes to our belief; children and adults should pray fervently for this gift, especially before sermons and instructions in the catechism.
- 3.** The gift of counsel, which gives us the knowledge necessary to direct ourselves and others when in doubt, a gift particularly necessary for superiors, for those about choosing their state of life, and for married people who live unhappily, and do not know how to help themselves.
- 4.** The gift of fortitude, which strengthens us to endure and courageously overcome all adversities and persecutions for virtue's sake.
- 5.** The gift of knowledge, by which we know ourselves, our duties, and how to discharge them in a manner pleasing to God.
- 6.** The gift of piety, which induces us to have God in view in all our actions, and infuses love in our hearts for His service.
- 7.** The gift of the fear of the Lord, by which we not only fear the just punishment, but even His displeasure at every sin, more than all other things in the world.

Which are the fruits of the Holy Ghost?

As St. Paul (Gal. V.. 22-23.) enumerates them, they are twelve:

- 1.** Charity.
- 2.** Joy.
- 3.** Peace.
- 4.** Patience.

5. Benignity.
6. Goodness.
7. Longanimity.
8. Mildness.
9. Faith.
10. Modesty.
11. Continency.
12. Chastity.

To obtain these fruits as well as the gifts of the Holy Ghost, we should daily say the prayer: “Come, O Holy Ghost, etc.”

Why does Christ say: The Father is greater than I?

Christ as God is in all things equal to His Father, but as Christ was at the same time Man, the Father was certainly greater than the Man-Christ.

Why does Christ say: I will not now speak many things with you?

Christ spoke these words a short time before His passion, and by them He wished to say that the time was near at hand when Satan, by his instruments, the wicked Jews, would put Him to death, not because Satan had this power over Him, but because He Himself wished to die in obedience to the will of His Father.

INSTRUCTION ON THE MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The ***Introit*** of the Mass is the same as on the Feast of Corpus Christi.

COLLECT O God, who didst give the Holy Ghost to Thine apostles: grant to Thy people the fruit of their pious petition; that to whom Thou hast given faith, Thou mayst also impart peace. Thro’.

LESSON (Acts X. 34., 42-48.) In those days, Peter opening his mouth, said: Men brethren, the Lord commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead: to Him all the prophets give testimony, that through His name all receive remission of sins, who believe in Him. While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. And the faithful of the circumcision, who came with Peter, were astonished, for that the grace of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they heard them speaking with tongues, and magnifying God. Then Peter answered: Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

EXPLANATION This lesson relates the manner in which the Holy Ghost descended upon the converted Gentiles who were assembled with the centurion Cornelius, and who heard the sermon of St. Peter with hearts burning for knowledge. — Endeavour, to assist at sermons with a heart desirous of learning, and the Holy Ghost will enlighten you; and do not fail to invoke the Holy Ghost, before the sermon.

GOSPEL (John III. 16-21.) At that time, Jesus said to Nicodemus: God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.

For God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him. He that believeth in him is not judged: but he that doth not believe is already judged; because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment: because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil, for every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reprov’d. But he that both truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God.

How has God shown His love for us?

He has given us His only Son for our Teacher and redeemer, delivering Him up for our sake to the most ignominious and painful death of the cross. For God so loved

the world as to give His only-begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting. (John III. 16.)

Why, then, are so many lost?

Because they despise this love of God and reject Christ, the Light of the world, that is, do not follow His teachings, even hate Him, loving more the darkness, that is, the suggestions of Satan, and the pleasures of this world.

Has the Holy Ghost come into this world as a light?

Yes; for. He inwardly, enlightens the hearts of men by His grace, that they may properly understand the truths, of salvation; and as the natural light leads us out of darkness, so the Holy Ghost by His supernatural light leads us, out of the darkness of ignorance, and from the snares and dangers of the world and the devil, into eternal happiness.

MOTIVES FOR THE LOVE OF GOD

God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son. (John III. 16.)

What will we render to God for the love He has shown us heretofore and still manifests towards us every moment? He has loved us from all eternity when we were not, and although He knew that we would be sinners and enemies to Him, He loved us with infinite love, showing His love by creating all things for us. But even this was not enough; to release us from the misery of sin, He gave us His only-beloved Son, who, clothing Himself with our mortal flesh, and having become our equal in all things, except in sin, shed the last drop of His blood on the cross as a ransom for our sin's; gives Himself to us for our nourishment in the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; offers Himself daily, in the Mass, to His Heavenly Father for us, and is, day and night, present with us in the most adorable Sacrament. What more could the infinite love of God give us? One thing more — the Holy Ghost, and Him He has sent with all His gifts and fruits.

“If,” says St. Bernard, “we love him who does us good, assists us in our needs, undergoes danger in our behalf, how then, must we love Him who has given us all that we have; who has given us the angels to be our guardians, the sun, moon, and stars to shine for us, the earth for our dwelling, the elements, the plants, the animals to supply our necessities, our food, our pleasure; who continually preserves us, that we fall not back into original nothingness; who constantly guards us from innumerable dangers and evils; who has not only endangered His life, but has really

suffered the most bitter death for us; who so mercifully forgives us all our sins, heals all our weaknesses, keeps us from perdition, and crowns us with mercy and compassion!” (Ps. CII. 4.)

Let us therefore with our whole heart love this good and gracious God, who has loved us without any merit of ours, let us be ashamed that we have until now loved Him so little, and performed so little for love of Him. God seems to live only for us, to occupy Himself only with us, and we — alas! instead of living for Him alone, have until now lived only for the world, lived only to offend Him! Let us cast ourselves down in sorrow before the face of God, and exclaim with St. Francis of Assisi: “My God and my all! What art Thou? and what am I, but a worm of the earth? Most Holy Lord! Would that I loved Thee! Sweetest Lord! Would that I loved Thee!” Say with St. Ignatius:

Only Thy grace, For it makes me so rich,
Only Thy love, I ask no more;
Only that, O Lord, If I am Thine and Thou mine,
Only that give me. Then shall I be eternally happy.

INSTRUCTION ON THE TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Introit of the Mass is:

INTROIT Receive the joy of your glory, alleluia; giving thanks to God, alleluia; who hath called you to a heavenly kingdom, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia (IV. Esd. 2.) Attend, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. (Ps. LXXVII.)

COLLECT Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that the power of the Holy Ghost may be ever present with us to purify our hearts from sin, and to defend us from all adversity. Thro’.

LESSON (Acts VIII. 14-17) In those days, when the apostles that were in Jerusalem had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John. Who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for he was not as yet come upon any of them, but they were only baptized in

the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost.

ON CONFIRMATION

Is Confirmation a Sacrament?

YES, for it has the three marks of a Sacrament: the visible sign, the invisible sanctifying grace, and institution by Christ.

Did Christ institute this Sacrament?

Christ is the Author of this Sacrament as He is of all the others, with this difference only, as St. Thomas of Aquin says, that He instituted this only by promise, for it was necessary that He should die, should rise from the dead, and ascend into heaven (John XVI. 7.) before giving the fullness of the Holy Ghost, in which consists the proper effect of this Sacrament. This according to the tradition of the Fathers, is the doctrine of the infallible Church. Thus St. Clement, a disciple of the apostles, writes that St. Peter taught him, and that the other apostles had also announced it, in accordance with the command of the Lord. That the apostles administered this Sacrament by Christ's command, is clear from the Acts of the Apostles (viii. 14-17.) which state, that Peter and John laid their hands upon the newly baptized at Samaria, and prayed over them, thus imparting to them the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which St. Paul also did to the baptized at Ephesus. (Acts XIX. 5, 6.)

What, is the visible sign in confirmation?

The imposition of the bishop's hands, the anointing with holy chrism, and the words: N. N., I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, &c."

What graces are received in this Sacrament?

This Sacrament gives to those who have been baptized, the Holy Ghost with the plenitude of His gifts, and thus completes the grace of baptism; for which reason confirmation is also called by the holy Fathers: "Completion," "Sealing." It especially gives strength to profess the faith firmly, and to live in accordance with it, and is therefore called Confirmation from the Latin confirmare, to strengthen, to confirm; it elevates man, who has by baptism become a child of God, to the dignity of a soldier

of Christ, enrolls him as a warrior under the banner of the cross, imprints upon him an indelible mark, and thus distinguishes him from those who have been baptized, but not confirmed, and can therefore be received but once.

Who has power to administer confirmation?

The ordinary ministers of this Sacrament are the bishops only; for according to the Acts of the Apostles (VIII. 16.) only the apostles and their successors who are bishops, can impart the Holy Ghost by imposition of hands.

What is the holy chrism which the bishop uses in confirmation?

The holy chrism which Christ commanded to be used in confirmation, consists of balsam and olive oil mixed, and signifies the plenitude of grace which comes down from Christ through the Holy Ghost upon those to be confirmed; the balsam represents the good odour of the edifying life which those confirmed should lead, as said by the apostle: We are a good odour of Christ; (II Cor. II. 15.) the balsam also indicates, that as the bodies of the dead are preserved from corruption when embalmed with it, so the soul by the heavenly grace obtained in confirmation, is preserved from the infection of sin.

Why is the forehead anointed with chrism in the form of a cross?

To remind the Christian that he is never to be deterred by either shame or fear from the public acknowledgment of the name of Jesus, but must fight valiantly as a true soldier of Christ, under the banner of the cross, against all the enemies of his salvation.

Why does the bishop impose his hands upon those to be confirmed?

This indicates that the actual imparting of the Holy Ghost is taking place, (Heb. VI. 2.) and that the person confirmed is placed under God's special protection.

What prayers are said by the bishop while he imposes his hands upon those to be confirmed?

The bishop repeats the following prayers: Almighty, eternal God, who hast deigned to regenerate these Thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, who hast also granted

them the remission of all their sins, pour out from heaven the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit, Thy Paraclete. Amen.

The spirit of wisdom and understanding. Amen.

The spirit of counsel and of fortitude. Amen.

The spirit of knowledge and of piety. Amen.

Fill them with the spirit of fear towards Thee, and sign them with the sign, of the cross of Christ, granting them eternal life, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with Thee in the unity of, the same God, the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth for all, eternity. Amen.

Why does the bishop ask especially for the spirit of the fear of the Lord?

Because the filial fear of the Lord is the foundation of all good, the beginning of all wisdom, the fountain of life, and gains for him who possesses it eternal happiness. (Ps. CXI. 1.)

Why does the bishop give those confirmed a slight blow on the cheek?

To remind them that like Christ and the apostles, they must courageously bear all adversities and persecutions for the holy faith, and thus obtain that true peace which the bishop wishes them.

Why do the sponsors lay their right hand on the shoulder of the one to be confirmed?

To show that they are witnesses of the renewal of his faith; that they will exhort him, when necessary, to preserve the faith; that they will walk before him in the true path of virtue by good example. (In regard to the spiritual affinity arising from confirmation, see the instruction concerning baptism on the feast of the Holy Trinity.)

Is confirmation necessary for salvation?

It is not absolutely necessary for salvation, but he who having the opportunity would neglect to receive it, would commit a grievous sin, even a mortal sin, because he openly shows by this, that he has no regard for the assistance of the Holy Ghost: Baptism lays the foundation for the Christian religion, but confirmation crowns the work baptism has commenced, because in confirmation, as the Roman Catechism teaches, the form of a true Christian is perfected.

What is required of those who are to be confirmed?

They must be in the state of grace, or purified by a good confession from the sins committed after baptism, for, to receive this Sacrament while in mortal sin, would be a sacrilege; they should be well instructed in the truths of faith, especially in those relating to confirmation; they should have a sponsor or witness who has been confirmed; they should arouse in themselves a great desire for the gifts of the Holy Ghost; they should receive the Sacrament with great reverence and devotion, and while being confirmed should make the resolution to become and remain henceforth true, zealous Catholics; finally, those who are to be confirmed, should never forget that they must be present from the first imposition of hands by the bishop, because this is the especial signs to which the granting of the gifts of the Holy Ghost is annexed. It is seen from all this, that it is not advisable to allow infants to be confirmed, because they do not know what they receive, nor can they be properly prepared, and they can be saved even if they die without confirmation.

What should be done after receiving confirmation?

Those confirmed should remain in church some time, and thank the Holy Ghost for the graces received; renew the promise to serve God faithfully henceforth, and to preserve the faith. They should daily show themselves, by an edifying life, to be true Catholic Christians, and thus add to the truth that unbelievers may also see the fruits of confirmation, and learn to love and respect a Church, that gives such glorious gifts to her children.

PRAYER AFTER CONFIRMATION

[To be said often during the year.]

I thank Thee, O Holy Ghost, that Thou hast given me Thy grace in the Sacrament of Confirmation to strengthen me against all temptations and persecutions, and I most humbly beseech Thee that by Thy inward inspirations Thou mayst continually so urge me on, that in all the dangers to my salvation, I may faithfully cooperate with the graces I have received, and never from fear or false shame transgress the commandments of God and the Church. Let me die rather than ever offend Thee, O Holy Ghost, or refuse to heed Thy inspirations, or drive Thee from me by mortal sin. Amen.

WEDNESDAY AFTER PENTECOST

[Ember-day]

LESSON (Acts V. 12-16.) In those days, Were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. But of the rest no man durst join himself unto them: but the people magnified them. And the multitude of men and women that believed in the Lord was more increased, insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities. And there came also together to Jerusalem a multitude out of the neighbouring cities, bringing sick persons and such as were troubled with unclean spirits, who were all healed.

EXPLANATION In this porch of the temple the apostles met frequently because there they found occasion to prepare and bring the heathens to receive the faith of Christ. From this porch the Gentiles were permitted to enter the temple, and in order to open their eyes, God wrought, through the apostles; great miracles, St. Peter was especially distinguished; for even his shadow healed diseases, and he was the first to receive the Gentiles into the Church. Thus: in the apostles were verified Christ's words: He that believeth in Me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do: (John XIV. 12.)

GOSPEL (John VI. 44-52.) At that time, Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: No, man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets: And. they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, but He who is of God, He hath seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from, heaven: that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any, man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread than I will give, is My flesh for the life of the world.

INSTRUCTION From these words of Jesus that no man comes to Him unless drawn by the Father, that is, as St. Cyril says, unless the Father move him through exhortations; instructions, or revelations, it is seen that the grace of God is necessary for conversion, faith, and eternal happiness. "But that you may be drawn," says St. Augustine, "pray." Ask God incessantly for help and grace, that He may draw you wholly to Him, nourish and strengthen you with the true bread, the flesh of His Son, and you will thus gain eternal life.

FRIDAY AFTER PENTECOST

[Ember-day]

LESSON (Joel II. 23-27.) Thus saith the Lord God: And you, O children of Sion, rejoice, and be joyful in the Lord your God: because He hath given you a teacher of justice, and He will make the early and the latter rain to come down for you as in the beginning, and the floors shall be filled with wheat, and the presses shall overflow with wine, and oil. And I will restore to you the years, which the locust and the bruchus, and the mildew, and the palmerworm hath eaten: My great host which I sent upon you. And you shall eat in plenty, and shall be filled: and you shall praise the name of the Lord your God, who hath done wonders with you: and My people shall not be confounded forever. And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: and I am the Lord your God, and there is none besides: and My people shall not be confounded forever, saith the Lord Almighty.

EXPLANATION In the verses of the first and second chapters preceding this the prophet announces to the Jews punishments on account of their sins, and urges them to repentance; in this lesson he promises them a happy day in which the Teacher of justice, the Messiah will visit them with all graces. O happy penance which prepares for him who performs it, such great blessings both in this world and in the world to come!

GOSPEL (Luke V. 17-26.) At that time, It came to pass on a certain day, that Jesus sat teaching. And there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, that were come out of every town of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was to heal them. And behold men brought in a bed a man who had the palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before Him. And when they, could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went up upon the roof, and let him down through the tiles with his bed into the midst, before Jesus. Whose faith when He saw, He said: Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the Scribes and Pharisees began to think, saying: Who is this who speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? And. when Jesus knew their thoughts, answering He said to them: What is it you think in your hearts? Which is easier to say: Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say; Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the, palsy) I say to thee: Arise, take up thy bed, and go - into thy house. And immediately rising up before them, he took up the bed on which he lay: and he went

away to his own house, glorifying God. And all were astonished: and they glorified God. And they were filled with fear, saying: We have seen wonderful things today.

[For explanation of this gospel see eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost.]

SATURDAY AFTER PENTECOST

[Ember-day]

EPISTLE (Rom. V. 1-5.) Brethren, Being justified by faith let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access through faith into this grace wherein we stand, and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God. And not only so, but we glory also in tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience: and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not: because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.

EXPLANATION The Catholic Church has always maintained that not faith alone, which the devils have also, but faith manifesting itself by good works, justifies man. The Catholic Church teaches this in opposition to those heretics who assert that by faith in Christ man is already justified, bringing as proof of their assertion the words of this chapter which St. Paul speaks concerning faith. The Church's doctrine in this respect is confirmed by St. Paul himself in many texts from his epistles, (I Cor. XIII. 2; I Tim. VI. 18.; Tit, III. 8.) and by the traditions of all the Fathers of the Church. Believe in Jesus and His word, but also practise this faith in works of love, and you will be saved.

(For gospel and explanation see Thursday in the third week of Lent)

FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY

This festival is celebrated on the Sunday after Pentecost, because as soon as the apostles were instructed and consoled by the Holy Ghost, they began to preach openly that which Christ had taught them.

Why do we celebrate this festival?

That we may openly profess our faith in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which is the first of Christian truths, the foundation of the Christian religion, and the most sublime

of all mysteries; and that we may render thanks, to the Father for having created us, to the Son for having redeemed us, and to the Holy Ghost for having sanctified us.

In praise and honour of the most Holy Trinity, the Church sings at the Introit of this day's Mass:

INTROIT Blessed be the holy Trinity and undivided Unity: we will give glory to him, because he hath shown his mercy to us: (Tob. XII.) O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is thy name in all the earth! (Ps. VIII. 1.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT Almighty, everlasting God, who hast granted to Thy servants, in the confession of the true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of Thy, majesty, to adore the Unity: grant that, by steadfastness in the same faith, we may ever be defended from all adversities. Thro'.

EPISTLE (ROM XI. 33-36.) O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made Him? For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things: to Him be glory forever. Amen.

EXPLANATION St. Paul's exclamations, in this epistle, are caused by the inscrutable judgment of God in rejecting the Jews and calling the Gentiles. The Church makes use of these words to express her admiration for the incomprehensible mystery of the most Holy Trinity, which surpasses our understanding, and yet is the worthy object of our faith, hope and love. Although neither angels nor men can fathom this mystery, it cannot be difficult for the sound human intellect to believe it, since it is indubitably and evidently revealed by God, and we, in many natural and human things, accept for true and certain much that we cannot comprehend. Let us submit our intellect, therefore, and yield ourselves up to faith; as there was indeed a time when men were martyred, when even persons of all ages and conditions preferred to die rather than to abandon this faith, so let us rather wait until our faith is changed to contemplation, until we see the Triune God, face to face, as He is, and in the sight of that countenance become eternally happy. Thither should all our hopes, wishes, and desires be directed, and we should cease all fruitless investigations, endeavouring by humble faith and active love, to prove worthy of the beatific vision; for if we do not love Him who is our all, our last end and aim, and lovingly desire Him, we will have to hope of one day possessing Him.

ASPIRATION O incomprehensible, Triune God! O Abyss of wisdom, power, and goodness! To Thee all glory and adoration! In Thee I lose myself; I cannot contain Thee, do Thou, contain me. I believe in Thee, though I cannot comprehend Thee; do Thou increase my faith; I hope in Thee, for Thou art the source of all good; do Thou enliven my hope; I love Thee, because Thou art worthy, of all love; do Thou inflame ever more my love, that in Thy love I may live and die. Amen.

Feast of the Holy Trinity

GOSPEL (Matt. XXVIII. 18-20.) At that time Jesus said to His disciples: All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore; teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.

EXPLANATION Christ being God had from all eternity the same power that His Father had; being man, He had this same power by the union of His divinity with His humanity, and on account of the infinite merits of His passion. In virtue of this power, He said to His apostles, before the ascension, that, as His Heavenly Father had sent Him, even so He sent them to all nations, without exception, to teach all that He had commanded, and to receive them, by means of baptism, into the Church; at the same time He promised to be with them to the end of the world, that is, that He would console them in suffering, strengthen them in persecution, preserve them from error, and always protect them and their successors, the bishops and priests, even unto the consummation of the world.

(See Instruction on the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church for the first Sunday after Easter.)

ASPIRATION Be with us, O Lord, for without Thee our pastors cannot produce fruit, nor their hearers profit anything from their words. Be with us always, for we always need Thy help. All power is given to Thee, Thou hast then the right to command, and we are bound to obey Thy commands which by Thy Church Thou hast made known to us. This we have promised in baptism, and now before Thee we renew those vows. Grant now that those promises which without Thee we could not have made, and without Thee cannot keep, may be fulfilled in our actions. Leave us not to ourselves, but be Thou with us, and make us obedient to Thee, that by cheerful submission to Thee true may receive happiness.

INSTRUCTION ON THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. XXVIII. 19.)

Is baptism a Sacrament?

Yes because in it the baptized person receives the grace of God by means of an external sign, instituted by Christ.

What is this external sign?

The immersion, or the pouring of water, accompanied by the words: “I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy ghost:”

What does the baptismal grace effect?

It removes original and actual sin; causing man to be spiritually born again, made a new creature, a child of God, and joint heir with Christ.

How many kinds of baptism are there?

There are three kinds: The baptism of desire, which consists in a heartfelt desire for the baptism of water, joined with a perfect love of God, or a perfect sorrow for sins committed, and with the purpose to obey all God’s commands; the baptism of blood, which is received by those who suffer martyrdom for the true faith, without having received the baptism of water; the baptism of water, which is the Sacrament of Baptism.

What do the deferent ceremonies of this Sacrament signify?

They are the external signs of the effects which baptism produces inwardly upon the soul, and should impress us with deep reverence for this Sacrament.

Why is it customary to have a godfather or godmother?

That there may be a witness that the child has received baptism; that in case of the death of the parents, the sponsors may assume their place, and have the child

instructed in the truths of religion. St. Augustine speaking of the duties of sponsors, very beautifully says: “They should use all care, often to admonish in true love their godchildren that they may strive to lead a pure life; they should warn them against all detraction, all improper songs, and keep them from pride, envy, anger, and revenge; they should watch over them that they may preserve the Catholic faith, attend the church services, listen to the word of God, and obey their parents and their pastors.” Sponsors must therefore be true believers, and of unquestionable morality. No one, unless a Catholic can be chosen for a sponsor, because one who is not a Catholic would not instruct the child in the Catholic faith, or see that others do it; but would be more likely, as experience shows, to draw the child over to error.

What results from this sponsorship?

In baptism, as in confirmation, a spiritual affinity originates between, the sponsors, the one who baptizes or confirms, with the one baptized or confirmed, and with the parents, so that, by a decision of the Church a godfather or godmother cannot contract marriage with any of these parties, unless the impediment is removed by dispensation, that is, by a special permission received from a spiritual superior. But the sponsors have no spiritual relationship to each other.

Why has the Church instituted this spiritual relation?

From reverence for these holy Sacraments, and that by this spiritual bond the sponsors may be more closely connected with their godchildren, and be incited earnestly to discharge their obligation.

Why must the person to be baptized wait at the entrance of the church?

To indicate that until he has thrown off the yoke of sin, and submitted to Christ, and His authority, he is unworthy to enter, because baptism is the door of God’s grace, to the kingdom of heaven, and the communion of saints.

Why does the person receive a saint’s name?

That by this name he may be enrolled, through baptism, into the number of Christians whom St. Paul calls saints; that he may have a patron and intercessor, and that the

saint, whose name he bears, may be his model and example, by which he may regulate his own life.

Why does the priest breathe in the face of the one to be baptized?

In imitation of Christ who breathed on His apostles when He gave them the Holy Ghost. (John XX. 22.) St. Chrysostom says that in baptism supernatural life is given to the soul as God imparted natural life to Adam by breathing on him.

Why does the priest impose his hand so many times upon the head of the person to be baptized?

To show that he is now the property of God and is under His protection.

What do the many exorcisms signify?

That the evil spirit who previous to baptism holds the person in bondage is now commanded in the name of God to depart, that a dwelling place may be prepared for the Holy Ghost.

Why is the person so often signed with the sign of the cross?

To signify that through the power of Christ's merits and of His death on the cross, baptism washes away original sin; that the person is to be henceforth a follower of Christ the Crucified, and as such must fight valiantly under the banner of the cross, against the enemies of his salvation, and must follow Christ on the way of the cross even unto death.

What does the salt signify which is put into the person's mouth?

It is an emblem of Christian wisdom and of preservation from the corruption of sin.

Why are his ears and nose touched with spittle?

That as Christ put spittle on the eyes of the man born blind, thus restoring his sight, so by baptism, the spiritual blindness of the soul is removed, and his mind receives light to behold heavenly wisdom. Also, as St. Ambrose says, the candidate is thus instructed to open his ears to priestly admonitions, and become a sweet odour of Christ.

Why does the priest ask: "Dost thou renounce the devil; and all his works, and all his pomps?"

That the Christian may know that his vocation requires him to renounce and combat the devil, his works, suggestions and pomps. Thus St. Ambrose very beautifully addresses a person just baptized: “When the priest asked: ‘Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works,’ what didst thou reply? ‘I renounce them.’ ‘Dost thou renounce the world, its lusts and its pomps?’ ‘I renounce them.’ Think of these promises, and let them never depart from thy mind. Thou hast given thy hand writing to the priest,, who stands for Christ; when thou hast given thy note to a man, a thou art bound to him. Now thy word is not on earth but preserved in heaven; say not thou knowest nothing of this promise; this exculpates thee no better than the excuse of a soldier who in time of battle should say he knew not that by becoming a soldier he would have to fight.

Why is the person anointed on the shoulder and breast with holy oil?

As SS. Ambrose and Chrysostom explain this is done to strengthen him to fight bravely for Christ; as the combatants of old anointed themselves with oil before they entered the arena, so is he anointed, on the breast, that he may gain courage and force, bravely to combat the world, the flesh, and the devil, and on the shoulder, that he may be strong to bear constantly and untiringly, the yoke of Christ’s commands, and pursue the toilsome course of life in unwavering. fidelity to God and His holy law.

Why are, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Apostles’ Creed said at baptism?

That, when the child is a grown person an acknowledgment of faith may by this means be made in the face of the Church; when children are baptized, these prayers are said by the sponsors who are thus reminded to see that their godchildren are well instructed in these as in all other Christian truths.

Why does the priest expressly ask the person if he will be baptized?

Because as man, through Adam, of his own free will obeyed the devil, so now when he would be received among the number of Christ’s children, he must, to obtain salvation, of his own free will obey the precepts of God.

Why is water poured three times upon the person’s head?

This is done, as St. Gregory the Great writes, in token that man after this thrice-repeated ablution rises from the death of sin, as Christ, after His three days’ burial,

rose from the dead. (Rom. VI. 4.5.) In early times the candidate for baptism was immersed three times in the water. For many 'reasons this custom has been abolished.

Why is the person anointed on the top of the head with chrism?

This anointing is, so to speak, the crown of the young Christian. As in the Old Law the kings were anointed, (I Kings X. 1.) as Jesus is the Anointed One, and as the Apostle St. Peter calls the Christians a chosen race, a kingly priesthood, a holy people, (I Peter II. 9.) so the baptized by means of this unction is embodied in Christ, the Anointed One, and participates in His priesthood and kingly dignity. What an exalted position is the Christian's! He is the anointed one of the Lord, and in a spiritual sense a priest, because he constantly brings himself to the Lord God as a pleasing sacrifice in prayer, mortification, &c. He is king when he rules over his inclinations, submits them to reason, and reason to the Lord. Besides this he is king by the claims which, through baptism, he possesses to the kingdom of heaven. Through the chrism he becomes the blessed temple of the Holy Ghost, the sacred vessel which in time, through communion, will contain the precious body and blood of Christ. How does he desecrate this temple when, by grievous sin, he tramples this exalted dignity under his feet and stains the temple of the Holy Ghost, his soul!

What does the white robe signify?

The holy Fathers teach that this represents the glory to which by baptism we are born again; the purity and beauty with which the soul, having been washed from sin in the Sacrament of baptism, is adorned, and the innocence which the baptized should preserve through his whole life.

Why is a lighted candle placed in his hand?

It is an emblem of the Christian doctrine which preserves the baptized from the darkness of error, ignorance, and sin, illumines his understanding, and leads him safely in the way of virtue; it represents the flame of love for God and our neighbour which the baptized should henceforth continually carry, like the five prudent virgins, (Matt. XXV. 13.) on the path to meet the Lord, that when his life is ended he may be admitted to the eternal wedding feast; it signifies also the light of good example which he should keep ever burning.

Who is the minister of this sacrament?

The ordinary minister is the priest of the Church; but in case of necessity any layman or woman, even the father or mother can baptize. Parents, however, should not

baptize their own child unless no other Catholic can be procured. The reason why lay persons are permitted to baptize is that no one may be deprived of salvation.

What must be observed particularly in private baptism?

The person who baptizes must be careful to use only natural water, which must be poured on the child's head saying at the same time the words: I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; having at the same time the intention of baptizing as the Church does, in the manner required by Christ.

INSTRUCTION ON THE RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS

All the graces and dignities which we receive in baptism, God secures to us for the future, only on condition that we keep our baptismal vows. Every Christian in baptism makes a bond with God through the meditation of Christ who has sealed it with His blood. This bond consists, on man's part, in the promise to renounce forever the devil, all his works and all his pomps, that is, constantly to suppress the threefold lust of the eyes, the flesh and the pride of life, by which the devil leads us to sin, and to believe all that God has revealed, and all that His holy Church proposes to our belief, and diligently and properly to make use of all the means of salvation. On the part of God this bond consists in cleansing us from all sin, in bestowing the gifts of the Holy Ghost, in adopting us as His children, and. in the assurance to the inheritance of heaven. This bond will never be broken by God who is infinitely true and faithful, but it is often violated by weak and fickle man. In compliance with the desire of the Church we should often reflect upon it, and from time to time renew it in the sight of God. This should be done particularly before receiving the holy Sacrament of Confirmation, before first Communion, on the vigils of Easter and Pentecost, at the blessing of baptismal water, on the anniversaries of our baptism and confirmation, before making any solemn vow, before entering into matrimony and when in danger of death. This renewal of baptismal vows can be made in the following manner: Placing ourselves in the presence of God, we kneel down, fold our hands, and say with fervent devotion:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was born and suffered for us.

I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

I renounce the devil; all his works and all his pomps.

Christ Jesus! With Thee I am united, to Thee alone I cling, Thee only will I follow, for Thee I desire to live and die. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

DOCTRINE ON THE HOLY TRINITY

What is God?

GOD is the most perfect being, the highest, best Good, who exists, from all eternity, by whom heaven and earth are create, and from whom all things derive and hold life and existence, for of Him, and by Him, and in Him are all things. (Rom. XI. 36.)

What is the Blessed Trinity?

The Blessed Trinity is this one God who is one in nature and threefold in person, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Is each of these three persons God?

Yes, because each of them has the divine nature and substance.

Are they not three Gods?

No, because all three of these persons have one and the same divine nature and substance.

Is any one of these three persons older, mightier, or greater than the other?

By, no means, they are all three from eternity entirely equal to each other in divine omnipotence greatness and majesty, and must, therefore, be equally adored and venerated.

Ought one to give himself up to the investigation of the most Blessed Trinity?

No; “For,” says the saintly Bishop Martin, “the mystery of the Trinity cannot be comprehended by the human intellect, no one however eloquent can exhaust it; if entire books were written about it, so that the whole world were filled with them, yet the unspeakable wisdom of God would not be expressed. God who is indescribable,

can in no way be described. When the human mind ceases to speak of Him, then it but begins to speak.” Therefore the true Christian throws his intellect under the feet of faith, not seeking to understand that which the human mind can as little comprehend, as a tiny hole in the sand can contain the immeasurable sea. A humble and active faith will make us worthy some day in the other world, to see with the greatest bliss this mystery as it is, for in this consists eternal life, that by a pious life we may glorify and know the only true God, Christ Jesus His Son, and the Holy Ghost.

FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

Why is this day called Corpus Christi?

Because on this Thursday the Catholic Church celebrates the institution of the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. The Latin term Corpus Christi signifies in English, Body of Christ.

Who instituted this festival?

Pope Urban IV, who, in the decree concerning it, gives the following explanation of the institution and grandeur of this festival: “Although we daily, in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass; renew the memory of this holy Sacrament, we believe that we must, besides, solemnly commemorate it every year, to put the unbelievers to shame; and because we have been informed that God has revealed to some pious persons that this festival should be celebrated in the whole Church, we direct that on the first Thursday after the octave of Pentecost the faithful shall assemble in church, join with the priests in singing the word of God,” &c. Hence this festival was instituted on account of the greatness of the divine mystery; the unbelief of those who denied the truth of this mystery; and the revelation made to some pious persons. This revelation was made to a nun at Liege, named Juliana, and to her devout friends Eve and Isabella. Juliana, when praying, had frequently a vision in which she saw the bright moon, with one part of it somewhat dark; at her request she received instructions from God that one of the grandest festivals was yet to be instituted the festival of the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. In 1246, she related this vision to Robert, Bishop of Liege, who after having investigated the matter with the aid of several men of learning and devotion, among whom was Jacob Pantaleon, Archdeacon of Liege, afterwards Pope Urban IV. He made arrangements to introduce this festival in his diocese, but death prevented his intention being put into effect. After the bishop’s death the Cardinal

Legate Hugh undertook to carry out his directions, and celebrated the festival for the first time in the year 1247, in the Church of St. Martin at Liege. Several bishops followed this example, and the festival was observed in many dioceses, before Pope Urban IV. in 1264 finally ordered its celebration by the whole Church. This order was confirmed by Clement V, at the Council of Vienna in 1311, and the Thursday after the octave of Pentecost appointed for its celebration. In 1317, Pope John XXII. instituted the solemn procession.

Why are there such grand processions on this day?

For a public profession of our holy faith that Christ is really, truly and substantially present in this Blessed Sacrament; for a public reparation of all the injuries, irreverence, and offences, which have been and are committed by impious men against Christ in this Blessed Sacrament; for the solemn veneration and adoration due to the Son of God in this Sacrament; in thanksgiving for its institution; and for all the graces and advantages received therefrom; and finally, to draw down the divine blessing upon the people and the country.

Had this procession a prototype in the Old Law?

The procession in which was carried the Ark of the Covenant containing the manna, was a figure of this procession.

The Church sings at the Introit the words of David:

INTROIT He fed them with the fat of wheat, alleluia: and filled them with honey out of the rock. Allel. allel. allel. Rejoice to God our helper; sing aloud to the God of Jacob. (Ps. LXXX.) Glory etc.

COLLECT O God, who under a wonderful sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion; grant us, we beseech Thee, so to venerate the sacred mysteries of Thy body and blood, that we may ever feel within us the fruit of thy redemption. Who livest etc.

EPISTLE (I Cor. XI. 23-29.) Brethren, I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye, and eat; this is My body which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of Me. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This Chalice is the New Testament in My blood: this do ye; as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of

the Lord until He come. Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink of the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.

Feast of Corpus Christi **GOSPEL** (John VI. 56?59.) At that time, Jesus laid to the multitude of the Jews: My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live forever.

[The explanation of the epistle and gospel is contained in the following instruction.]

The Jews, liberated by the powerful hand of God from Egyptian captivity, went on dry ground through the midst of the Red Sea, whose waters became the grave of their pursuer, King Pharaoh, and, his whole army. Having arrived in the desert called Sin they began to murmur against Moses and Aaron, their leaders; on account of the want of bread, and demanded to be led back to Egypt where there was plenty. The Lord God took pity on His people. In the evening He sent into their, camp great flocks of quails, which the Jews caught and ate, and on the morning of the next day the ground was covered with white dew, and in the desert something fine, as if pounded in a mortar, looking like frost on the earth, which as soon as the Jews beheld, they exclaimed in surprise: “Man hu?” “What is that?” But Moses said to them: “This is bread which the Lord has given you.” And they at once began to collect the food which was white, small as Coriander seed, and tasted like wheat bread and honey, and was henceforth called man or manna. God gave them this manna every morning, for forty years, Sabbaths excepted, and the Jews lived upon it in the desert, until they came to the Promised Land. This manna is a figure of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar which contains all sweetness, and nourishes the soul of him who receives it with proper preparation, so that whoever eats it worthily, dies not, though his body sleeps in the grave, for Christ will raise him to eternal life.

INSTRUCTION ON THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is that Sacrament in which under the appearance of bread and wine the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are really, truly and substantially present.

When and to what manner did Christ promise this Sacrament?

Instruction on the most Holy Sacrament. About one year before its institution He promised it in the synagogue at Capharnaum, according to St. John the Evangelist: (VI, 24-65.) When Jesus, near the Tiberian Sea, had fed five thousand men in a miraculous manner with a few small loaves, these men would not leave Him, because they marvelled at the miracle, were anxious for this bread, and desired to make Him their king. But Jesus fled to a high mountain, and in the night went with His disciples to Capharnaum which was a town on the opposite side of the sea; but a multitude of Jews followed Him, and He made use of the occasion to speak of the mysterious, bread which He would one day give them and all men. He first exhorted them not to go so eagerly after the perishable. bread of the body, but to seek the bread of the soul which lasts forever, and which the Heavenly Father would give them, through Him, in abundance. This imperishable bread is the divine word, His holy doctrine, especially the doctrine that He had come from heaven to guide us to eternal life. (Vers. 25-38.) The Jews murmured because He said that He had come from heaven, but the Saviour quieted them by showing that no one could believe without a special grace from His Heavenly Father (V. 43, 44.) that He was the Messiah, and had come from heaven. After this introduction setting forth that the duty of faith in Him and in His divine doctrine was a spiritual nourishment, Christ very clearly unfolded the mystery of another bread for the soul which was to be given only at some future time, and this the Saviour did not ascribe to the Heavenly Father, as He did the bread of the divine word, but to Himself by plainly telling what this bread was: I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give, is My flesh for the life of the world. (V. 51, 52.)

But the Jews would not believe these words, so clearly expressed, for they thought their fulfillment impossible, and said: How can this man give us his flesh to eat? (V. 53.) But Jesus recalled not His words, answered not the Jews' objections, but confirmed that which He had said, declaring with marked emphasis: Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you., (V. 54.) He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed: and My blood is drink indeed; he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me; and I live by the

Father; so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread; shall live forever: (V. 55-59.) Jesus, therefore, said distinctly and plainly, that at a future time He would give His own Body and Blood as the true nourishment of the soul; besides, the Jews and the disciples alike received these words in their true, literal sense, and knew that Jesus did not here mention His Body and Blood in figurative sense, but meant to give them His own real Flesh and Blood for food; and it was because they believed it impossible for Jesus to do this, and because they supposed He would give them His dead flesh in a coarse, sensual manner, that the Jews murmured, and even several of His disciples said: This saying is hard, and who can hear it? But Jesus persisted in His words: My flesh is meat indeed, &c., and calls the attention of His disciples to another miracle: to His future ascension, which would be still more incredible, but would come to pass; and by the words: It is the spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I have spoken to you, are spirit and life, (V. 64) He showed them that this mystery could be believed only by the light and grace of the Holy Spirit, and the partaking of His Bodes and Blood would not be in a coarse, sensual manner, but in a mysterious way. Notwithstanding this, many of His disciples still found the saying hard, and left Him, and went no longer with Him. (V. 67.) They found the saying hard, because, as our Saviour expressly said, they were lacking in faith. He let them go, and said to His apostles: Will you also go away? thereby showing that those who left Him, understood Him clearly enough, and that His words did contain something hard for the mind to believe. The apostles did not leave Him, they were too well assured of His divinity, and that to Him all was possible, as St. Peter clearly expresses: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that thou art Christ, the Son of God.

From the account given by St. John, it is plainly seen that Christ really promised to give us for our food His most precious Body and Blood, really and substantially, in a Wonderful, mysterious manner, and that He did not speak figuratively of faith in Him, as those assert who contemn this most holy Sacrament. If Jesus had so meant it, He would have explained it thus to the Jews and to His disciples who took His words literally, and therefore could not comprehend, how Jesus could give His Flesh and Blood to them for their food. But Jesus persisted in His words, that His Flesh was truly food, and His Blood really drink. He even made it the strictest duty for man to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood; (V. 54) He shows the benefits arising from this nourishment of the soul, (V. 55) and the reason why this food is so necessary and useful. (V. 56.) When His disciples left Him, because it was a hard saying, He allowed them to go, for they would not believe His words, and could not believe them on

account of their carnal manner of thinking. This holy mystery must be believed, and cannot be comprehended. Jesus has then promised, as the Catholic Church has always maintained and taught, that His Body and Blood would be present under the appearance of bread and wine in the Blessed Sacrament, a true nourishment for the soul, and that which He promised, He has really given.

When and in what manner did Christ institute the most holy Sacrament of the Altar?

At the Last Supper, on the day before His passion, after He had eaten with His apostles the paschal lamb, which was a prototype of this mystery. Three Evangelists, Matthew, (XXVI: 26-29.) Mark, (XIV. 22-25.) and Luke (XXII. 19-20.) relate in few, but plain words, that on this evening Jesus took into His hand bread and the chalice, blessed and gave both to His disciples, saying: This is My body, that will be given for you; this is My blood, which will be shed for you and for many. Here took place in a miraculous manner, by the all-powerful word of Christ, the mysterious transformation; here Jesus gave Himself to His apostles for food, and instituted that most holy meal of love which the Church says contains all sweetness. That which three Evangelists plainly relate, St. Paul confirms in his first epistle to the Corinthians, (XI. 23-29. See this day's epistle) in which to his account of the institution of the Blessed Sacrament he adds: Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, (that is, in a state of sin) shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord . . . eateth and drinketh judgment to himself. (V. 27-29.)

From these words and those of the three holy Evangelists already mentioned, it is clear that Jesus really fulfilled His promise, really instituted the most holy Sacrament, and gave His most sacred Body and Blood to the apostles for their food. None of the Evangelists, nor St. Paul, informs us that Christ said: this will become My body, or, this signifies My body. All agree that our Saviour said this is My body, this is My blood, and they therefore decidedly mean us to understand that Christ's body and blood are really, truly, and substantially present under the appearance of bread and wine, as soon as the mysterious change has taken place. And this is confirmed by the words: that is given for you; which shall be shed for you and for many; because Christ gave neither bread nor wine, nor a figure of His Body and Blood, for our redemption, but His real Body, and His real Blood, and St. Paul could not assert that we could eat the Body and Blood of the Lord unworthily, if under the appearance of bread and wine were present not the real Body and Blood of Christ, but only a figure of them, or if they were only bread and wine. This is also proved by

the universal faith of the Catholic Church, which in accordance with Scripture and the oldest, uninterrupted Apostolic traditions have always believed and taught, that under the appearance of bread and wine the real Body and Blood of Christ are present, as the Ecumenical Council of Trent expressly declares: (Sess. XIII. C. I. Can. I. de sacros. Euchdr.) “All our ancestors who were of the Church of Christ, and have spoken of this most Blessed Sacrament, have in the plainest manner professed that our Redeemer instituted this wonderful Sacrament at the Last Supper, when, having blessed the bread and wine, He assured the apostles in the plainest and most exact words, that He was giving them His Body and Blood itself; and if any one denies that the holy Eucharist truly, really, and substantially contains the Body and Blood, the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore the whole Christ, and asserts that it is only a sign or figure without virtue, let him be anathema.”

Did Christ institute this Sacrament for all time?

Yes; for when He had promised that the bread which He would give, was His flesh for the life of the world, (John. vi. 34.) and had said expressly that whosoever did not eat His Flesh and drink His Blood would not have life in Him, He, at the Last Supper, by the words: Do this for a commemoration of Me, (Luke XXII. 19.) gave to the apostles and their successors, the priests, the power in His name to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood, also to receive It and administer It as a food of the soul, which power the apostles and their successors, the priests, have always exercised, (I Cor. X. 16.) and will exercise to the end of the world.

How long after the change does Christ remain present under the appearance of bread and wine?

As long as the appearances remain; this was always the faith of the Church; therefore, in the primitive ages when the persecutions were raging, after the sacrifice the sacred body of our Lord was taken home by the Christians to save the mystery from the pagans; at home they preserved It, and received It from their own hands, as affirmed by the holy Fathers of the Church Justin, Cyprian, Basil, and others. But when persecution had ceased, and the Church was permitted to profess the faith openly, and without hindrance, the Blessed Sacrament was preserved in the churches, enclosed in precious vessels, (ciborium, monstrance, or ostensorium) made for the purpose. In later times it was also exposed, on solemn occasions, for public adoration.

Do we Catholics adore bread when we pay adoration to the Blessed Sacrament?

No; we do not adore bread, for no bread is there, but the most sacred Body and Blood of Christ, and wherever Christ is adoration is due Him by man and angels. St. Augustine says: “No one partakes of this Body until he has first adored, and we not only do not sin when we adore It, but would sin if we did not adore It.” The Council of Trent excommunicates those who assert that it is not allowable to adore Christ, the only begotten Son of God, in the Blessed Sacrament. How unjust are those unbelievers who sneer at this adoration, when it has never entered into the mind of any Catholic to adore the external appearances of this Sacrament, but the Saviour hidden under the appearances; and how grievously do those indifferent Catholics sin who show Christ so little veneration in this Sacrament, and seldom adore Him if at all!

Which are the external signs of this Sacrament?

The form and appearance, or that which appears to our senses, as the figure, the colour, and the taste, but the substance of the bread and wine is by consecration changed into the real Body and Blood of Christ, and only the appearance of bread and wine remains, and is observable to the senses.

Where and by whom is this consecration effected?

This consecration is effected on the altar during the holy Sacrifice of the Mass (therefore the name Sacrament of the Altar), when the priest in the name and by the power of Christ pronounces over the bread and wine the words which Christ Himself pronounced when He instituted this holy Sacrament. St. Ambrose writes: “At the moment that the Sacrament is to be accomplished, the priest no longer uses his own words, but Christ’s words therefore. Christ’s words complete the Sacrament.”

Is Christ present under each form?

Christ is really and truly present under both forms, in Divinity and Humanity, Body and Soul, Flesh and Blood. That Jesus is thus present is clear from the words of St. Paul: Knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more. (Rom. VI. 9.) Because Christ dies no more, it naturally follows that He is wholly and entirely present under each form. Hence the council of Trent says: “Whoever denies that in the venerable Sacrament, of the Eucharist the whole Christ is present in each of the forms and in each part of each form, where a separation has taken place, let him be anathema.”

Then no matter how many receive this Sacrament, does each receive Christ?

Yes, for each of the apostles received Christ entirely, and if God by His omnipotence can cause each individual to rejoice at the same instant in the sun's light, and enjoy its entirety, and if He can make one and the same voice resound in the ears of all the listeners, is He not able to give the body of Christ, whole and entire, to as many as wish to receive It?

Is it necessary that this Sacrament should be received in both forms?

No, for as it has already been said, Christ is wholly present, Flesh and Blood, Humanity and Divinity, Body and Soul, in each of the forms. Christ promises eternal life to the recipient also of one form when He says, "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world". (John. VI. 52.) The first Christians, in times of persecution, received this Sacrament only in the form of bread in their houses. Though in earlier times the faithful, like the priests, partook of the chalice, it was not strictly required, and the Church for important reasons has since ordered the reception of Communion under but one form, because there was danger that the blood of our Lord might be spilled, and thus dishonoured; because as the Blessed Sacrament must always be ready for the sick, it was feared that the form of wine might be injured by long preservation; because many cannot endure the taste of wine; because in some countries there is scarcity of wine, and it can be obtained only at great cost and with much difficulty, and finally, in order to refute the error of those who denied that Christ is entirely present under each form.

Which are the effects of holy Communion?

The graces of this most holy Sacrament are, as the Roman Catechism says, innumerable; it is the fountain of all grace, for it, contains the Author of all the Sacraments, Christ our Lord, all goodness and perfection. According to the doctrine of the Church, there are six special effects of grace produced by this Sacrament in those who worthily receive it. It unites the recipient with Christ, which Christ plainly shows when He says: He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him; (John VI. 57.) hence the name Communion, of which St. Leo writes: "The participation of the Body and Blood of Christ transforms us into that which we receive," and from this union with Christ, our Head, arises also a closer union with our brethren in Christ, into one body. (I Cor. X. 17.) It preserves and increases sanctifying grace, which is the spiritual life of the soul, for our Saviour says: He that eateth Me, the, same also shall live by Me. (John VI, 58.) It diminishes in us concupiscence and strengthens us against the temptations of the devil. St. Bernard says: "This holy Sacrament produces two effects in us, it diminishes gratification in venial sins, it removes the full consent in grievous sins; if any of you do not feel so

often now the harsh emotion of anger, of envy, or impurity, you owe it to the Body and Blood of the Lord:” and St. Chrystostom: “When we communicate worthily we return from the table like fiery lions, terrible to the devils.” It causes us to perform good works with strength and courage; for he who abides in Christ, and Christ in him, bears much fruit. (John XV.) It effaces venial sin, and preserves from mortal sin, as St. Ambrose says: “This daily bread is used as a help against daily weakness: and as by the enjoyment of this holy Sacrament, we are made in a special manner the property, the lambs of Christ, which He Himself nourishes with His own heart’s blood, He does not permit us to be taken out of His hands, so long as we cooperate with His grace, by prayer, vigilance and contest. It brings us to a glorious resurrection and to eternal happiness; for he who communicates worthily, possesses Him who is the resurrection and the life, (John XI. 25.) who said: He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. (John VI, 55.) He has, therefore, in Christ a pledge, that he will rise in glory and live forever. If the receiving of this Sacrament produces such great results, how frequently and with what sincere desire should we hasten to enjoy this heavenly banquet, this fountain of all grace! The first Christians received it daily, and St. Augustine says: “Daily receive what daily benefits!” and St. Cyril: The baptized may know that they remove themselves far from eternal life, when they remain a long time from Communion.” Ah, whence comes in our days, the indifference, the weakness, the impiety of so many Christians but from the neglect and unworthy reception of Communion! Christian soul, close not your ears to the voice of Jesus who invites you so tenderly to His banquet: Come to Me all you who are heavily laden and I will refresh you. Go often, very often to Him; but when you go to Him, do not neglect to prepare for His worthy reception, and you will soon feel its effects in your soul.

In what does the worthy preparation for this holy Sacrament consist?

The worthy preparation of the soul consists in purifying ourselves by a sincere confession from all grievous sins, and in approaching the holy table with profound humility, sincere love, and with fervent desire. He who receives holy Communion in the state of mortal sin draws down upon himself, as the, apostle says, judgment and condemnation. The worthy preparation of the body consists in fasting from midnight before receiving Communion, and in coming properly dressed to the Lord’s banquet.

The holy Sacrament of the Altar is preserved in the tabernacle, in front of which a light is burning day and night, to show that Christ, the light of the world, is here present, that we may bear in mind that every Christian congregation should contain in itself the light of faith, the flame of hope, the warmth of divine love, and the fire

of true devotion, by a pious life manifesting and consuming itself, like a light, in the service of God. As a Christian you must believe that under the appearance of bread Christ is really present in the tabernacle, and that He is your Redeemer, your Saviour, your Lord and King, the best Friend and Lover of your soul, whose pleasure it is to dwell among the children of men; then it is your duty often to visit Him in this most holy Sacrament, and offer Him your homage and adoration, “It is certain,” says: St. Alphonsus Ligouri, that next to the enjoyment of this holy Sacrament in Communion, the adoration of Jesus in this Sacrament is the best and most pleasing of all devotional exercises, and of the greatest advantage to us. Hesitate not, therefore, to practise this devotion. From this day renounce at least a quarter of an hour’s intercourse with others, and go to church to entertain yourself there with Christ. Know that the time which you spend in this way will be of the greatest consolation to, you in the hour of death and through all eternity. Visit Jesus not only in the church, but also accompany and adore Him when carried in processions, or to sick persons. You will thus show your Lord the homage due to Him, gather great merits for yourself, and have the sure hope that Christ will one day repay you a hundredfold.

1. Thus St. Ignatius, the Martyr, who was instructed by the apostles themselves, rebukes in these words those who even at that time would not believe in the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord: “They do not believe that the real body of Jesus Christ our Redeemer who suffered for us and has risen from death is contained in the Sacrament of the Altar.” (Ep. ad Smyr.) Thus St. Irenaeus who was a disciple of St. Polycarp, a pupil of St. John the Evangelist, writes: “Of the bread is made the body of Christ” (Lib. IV adv. haer.) In the same manner St. Cyril: “Since Christ our Lord said of this bread, This is My body, who dares doubt it? Since He said, This is My blood, who dares to say, it is not His blood?” (Lib. IV. regul. Cat.) and in another place: “Bread and wine which before the invocation of the most Holy Trinity were only bread and wine, become after this invocation the body and blood of Christ.” (Cat. myrt. I.)

INSTRUCTION ON THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

INTROIT The Lord became my protector, and He brought me forth into a large place: He saved me, because He was well pleased with me. (Ps. XVII.) I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength: the Lord is my firmament, and my refuge, and my deliverer. Glory &c.

COLLECT Make us, O Lord, to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name; for Thou never failest to help and govern those whom Thou dost establish in Thy steadfast love. Thro’.

EPISTLE (I John III. 13-18.) Dearly beloved, Wonder not if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death; whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself. In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shut up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue, but indeed and in truth.

EXPLANATION People who are really pious have always something to suffer from the wicked world, as, Jesus foretold, but they do not cease to love their persecutors as their best friends, and are ready, if necessary, to give their life for, their enemies, as Christ did. Thus should all Christians act; for the love of our neighbour and even of our enemies is a universal command, a law that binds all; it is the life of the soul. Hatred deprives the soul of this life and makes man a murderer, because hatred is the beginning of murder, and often ends in homicide. By love we know the true Christians. (John. XIII. 35.) St. John even considers love the certain sign of being chosen for eternal life, when he says: We know, we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. Alas! how few will be chosen from among the Christians of today, because there is so little love among them! Empty compliments, assurances of friendships &c. love appears only in words, only on the tongue; and such idle, ephemeral, worthless love is found everywhere in this world; but that which is love in truth and reality, which shows charity to the suffering, how rare it is! and yet only to this love is promised eternal life, because it alone rests on the love of God.

Second Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Luke XIV. 16-24.) At that time, Jesus spoke to the Pharisees this parable: A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant, at the hour of supper, to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out, and see it; I pray thee hold me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee hold me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning, told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his, servant: Go

out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you, that none of these men that were invited shall taste of my supper.

What as to be understood by this great supper?

The Church of Christ on earth, in which His doctrine and His most precious Flesh and Blood are given as food to those who belong to her; also the Church triumphant in heaven, in which God Himself, in the beatific vision, is the nourishment. This supper is called great, because God Himself has founded the Church; because the Church embraces heaven and earth, hence many belong and will belong to her; and because having ended the contest on earth, she will last forever in heaven. There the saints of God will enjoy the Highest Good for all eternity, and will have nothing to wish for, since all their desires will there be realized. O, what happiness it is that we are invited to His supper, and as guests are nourished by the teachings of Christ, and by His most sacred Flesh and Blood.

Who is it that prepares the supper?

It is Christ, the God Man, who for our benefit has not only instituted His Church to which He has entrusted doctrine and the Sacrament of His Flesh and Blood, but has gained eternal salvation for us by His passion and death, and who has invited us first by the prophets, who foretold Him and His divine kingdom, and afterwards by His apostles, and their successors to His great supper.

Who are they who excuse themselves?

They are principally the Jews who bound by pride and avarice to earthly possessions, and blinded by the pleasures of the world, did not recognize Jesus, and remained outside of His church. By him who said he had bought a farm are understood those who by constant anxieties about the possession of earthly goods, and the riches of this world, become indifferent to eternal salvation. By him who had bought five yoke of oxen, is to be understood that sort of busy men who are so burdened with worldly affairs that they find no time to work for heaven, for they even appropriate Sundays and festivals to their worldly affairs. By him who had taken a wife, and could not come, are represented the carnal, impure men who have rendered themselves by their lusts incapable of spiritual and heavenly joys. Since these different classes of people

do not wish to have part in the heavenly banquet, God has excluded them and called others.

Who are meant by the poor, the feeble, the blind and the lame?

The humble and submissive Jews, the publicans, also the Samaritans and the Gentiles, who did not reject Jesus and His doctrine as did the proud, high-minded, carnal Scribes and Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke this parable. The former faithfully received Him, entered His Church, and became participators in eternal happiness. This is daily repeated, because God excludes from the kingdom of heaven those proud, avaricious, and carnal Christians who are ever invited by His servants, the priests, to the enjoyment of holy Communion, but who reject the invitation. On the contrary God welcomes the poor, despised people, the penitent sinners, by separating them from the love of the world by the inspiration of His grace, and by the adversities which He sends them. Thus, in a measure, He forces them to take part in the spiritual joys of a sincerely pious life in His Church on earth, and in the heavenly bliss of His Church in heaven.

SUPPLICATON I thank Thee, O most merciful Jesus that Thou hast called me into Thy Church, permitting me so often to share in the banquet of Thy love, and that by Thy sufferings and death Thou hast obtained the joys of heaven for me. Urge me as seems pleasing to Thee, compel me by temporal trials that by the use of these graces I may obtain the place which Thou hast prepared for me in heaven.

MORAL LESSON CONCERNING THE VICE OF IMPURITY

I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. (Luke XIV. 29.)

From this foolish excuse it would seem as if married life were an obstacle to arriving at the heavenly banquet, whereas lawful, chaste, Christian marriage is, on the contrary, a means of eternal salvation for those to whom the gift of continency is not given. The excuse of this married man was not grounded on his station in life, but on his inordinate inclination for carnal pleasures which render the one who gives way to it, unfit for spiritual or heavenly things, for the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God. (I Cor. II. 14.)

Unfortunate indeed are they who suffer themselves to be carried away by their sensual lusts, who give away the priceless jewel of chastity and purity of heart which makes man equal to the angels, (Matt. XXII. 30.) who for a momentary enjoyment of

sinful pleasure lose that white and precious garment in which chaste souls will shine forever in heaven before the face of God! What benefit does the impure man derive from the gratification of vile lust? He gains the anger and contempt of God; intolerable disgust when the sin is consummated; the torment of a remorseful conscience, and unless he repents, the eternal torments of hell, for the apostle says: Do not err: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate shall possess the kingdom of God, (I Cor. VI. 9, 10.) It is seen from the examples of the Old Law, how much God hates and abominates the sins of impurity. Why did God regret having created man? (Gen. VI. 6.), Why did He destroy all except a very few, by a universal deluge? (Gen. VI. 17.) Why did He lay the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in ashes by pouring upon them fire and brimstone? (Gen. XIX.) Why did He punish the two brothers Her and Onan, by a sudden death? (Gen. XXXVII. 7. 10.) Why did He permit the whole tribe of Benjamin to be extirpated? (Judges XX.) Because of their detestable sins of impurity. And is not this vice an object of the just wrath of God? By these sins an impure man disgraces his body which should be a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost; he disgraces his soul the image of God, purified and purchased by the precious blood of Christ, and lowers himself beneath the animal, which, void of intellect, follows its instinct; he weakens the power of his body and soul, and ruins his health; he loses the respect of the good, scandalizes his fellowmen, voluntarily separates himself from the communion of saints, deprives himself of the sanctifying grace of God and participation in the merits of Jesus and His saints, and, if he continues like an animal to wallow in this vice, he finally falls into such blindness and hardness of heart that eternal truths, death, judgment, hell, and eternity no longer make any impression upon him; the most abominable crimes of impurity he considers as trifles, as human weaknesses, no sin at all. He is therefore but seldom, if ever, converted, because the evil habit has become his second nature, which he can no longer overcome without an extraordinary grace from God. This God seldom gives, because the impure man generally despises ordinary means and graces, and therefore despairs and casts himself into the pool of eternal fire, where the worm dies not, and where with Satan and his angels the impure shall be forever tormented.

Do not suffer yourself to be deceived, Christian soul, by the words “love and friendship”, which is sought to cover this vice and make it appear a weakness clinging to man. This impure love is a fire which has its origin in hell, and there it will eternally torment the bodies in which it has prevailed. That which God so much detests and so severely punishes, certainly cannot be a trifle, a human weakness! Impress deeply on your heart that all impure thoughts, desires and looks, to which you consent, all impure words, songs, exposures, touches, jokes, and such things, are great sins which exclude you from the kingdom of heaven, into which nothing defiled can enter.

Remember that he who looks at a woman with a lustful desire, has already, as Christ says, committed adultery in his heart. (Matt. V. 28.) We must, then, carefully guard against “such trifles”, as the wicked world calls them, if we do not wish to expose ourselves to the greatest danger of losing our souls. Although it is difficult for an impure person to be converted, yet he should not despair. God does not cast away even the greatest sinner; Jesus forgave the adulteress in the temple, and forgave and received Mary Magdalen. But he who wishes to repent must make use of the proper means to regain the grace of God, and prevent a relapse. Those who have not defiled themselves by the sin of impurity can make use of the following means:

Constant prayer. Hence the admonition of the wise King; As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, I went to the Lord and besought him. (Wisd. VIII. 21.)

Mortification of the flesh by fasting and abstinence. Jesus says these impure spirits can in no other way be cast out but by prayer and fasting. (Matt. XVII. 20.)

The frequent meditation on the four last things, and on the bitter sufferings of our Lord; for there is, says St. Augustine, no means more powerful and effective against the heat of lust than reflection on the ignominious death of the Redeemer.

The quiet consideration of the temporal and eternal evils which follow from this vice, as already described.

The love and veneration of the Blessed Virgin who is the mother of beautiful love, the refuge of all sinners, of whom St. Bernard says: “No one has ever invoked her in his necessity without being heard.”

The careful mortification of the eyes. The pious Job made a covenant with his eyes, that he would not so much as look upon a virgin. (Job XXXI. 1.)

The avoidance of evil occasions, especially intercourse with persons of the other sex. “Remember,” says St. Jerome, “that a woman drove out the inhabitants of paradise, and that you are not holier than David, stronger than Samson, wiser than Solomon, who all fell by evil intercourse.”

The avoidance of idleness: for idleness, says the proverb, is the beginning of all evil.

The immediate banishing of all bad thoughts by often pronouncing the names of Jesus and Mary, which, as St. Alphonsus Ligouri says, have the special power of driving away impure thoughts.

The frequent use of the holy Sacraments of Penance and of the Altar. This last remedy in particular is a certain cure if we make known to our confessor our weaknesses, and use the remedies he prescribes. The Scripture says that frequent Communion is the seed from which virgins spring, and the table which God has prepared against all temptations that annoy us.

COLLECT In flame, O Lord, our loins and hearts with the fire of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may serve Thee with pure bodies, and please Thee with clean hearts. Amen.

What can the unbelievers say to this testimony? Do they know the truth better than those apostles who themselves saw and heard Jesus at the Last Supper, and who taught their disciples that which they had seen and heard? All Christian antiquity proves the error of these heretics:

NOTE. The Blessed Sacrament as a Sacrifice and the Holy Mass and its ceremonies, are treated upon towards the end of this book.

INSTRUCTION ON THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

ORIGIN OF THIS FESTIVAL

After many devout souls had venerated the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with sincere devotion, in the solitude of quiet life, as is seen in the lives of SS. Augustine, Bernard, Bonaventura, Thomas of Aquin, Francis de Sales, Ignatius, Clara, Gertrude, Mechtild, Catharine of Sienna, Theresa, and others, our divine Saviour willed that His heart's infinite love should be recognized by all men, and be kindled in cold hearts by a new fire of love. For this end He made use of a feeble, obscure instrument, that all the world might know that the devotion to His loving heart; previously almost entirely unknown, was His own work. This instrument, disregarded by the world, was one who shone before God in all the radiance of the most sublime virtues; the nun Margaret Alacoque of the order of the Visitation of Mary, at Paray, in Burgundy. In

the year 1675, whilst she was one day in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament; our Lord appeared to her, and pointing to His heart which He showed to her, surrounded with flames, surmounted by the cross, encircled with a crown of thorns, and pierced with a gaping wound, He said to her: “Behold this heart, which has loved mankind so much, and which receives only ingratitude and coldness in return for its love. My desire is that you should make reparation to My heart for this ingratitude, and induce others also to make reparation.” Our Lord then designated the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi as the special day for this duty. In several subsequent apparitions our divine Lord repeated this injunction, and made the most unbounded promises in favour of all who would apply themselves to this office of reparation to His Sacred Heart. The following are some of His promises:

I will give them all the graces necessary for their state of life.

I will establish peace in their families.

I will console them in all their pains and trials.

I will be their assured refuge in life, and especially in death.

I will shed abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.

Sinners shall find in my Heart an infinite ocean of mercy.

Lukewarm souls will be rendered fervent.

Fervent souls shall rise rapidly to greater perfection.

I will bless those houses where the image of my heart shall be exposed and honoured.

I will give to priests the gift of moving the hardest hearts.

Persons who propagate this devotion, shall have their names inscribed on my heart, never to be effaced from it.

Margaret obeyed, but found everywhere the greatest opposition, actual sneers and persecution, even from her Sisters in religion, until finally, with the aid of her divine spouse, she succeeded as mistress of novices, in bringing her young charges to the veneration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But this did not content her zeal; although opposition continued, she strove to fulfill the command of Jesus, who assisted her by at last changing the hardened hearts of the nuns and inflaming them with the same

love of His Sacred Heart. This devotion soon spread from the convent throughout the adjoining dioceses, where confraternities in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus arose, and Pope Clement, XIII., after causing the strictest investigation to be made, commanded the Festival of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to be observed throughout the Catholic Church on the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi.

ON DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

I. OBJECT OF THIS DEVOTION

By the Sacred Heart of Jesus must be understood not the lifeless heart, separated from the body of Christ, but the tender, loving heart of the God-Man, the home of all His emotions, the fountain of all His virtues, and the most touching embodiment of His infinite love for man. The Catholic Church, in like manner, sets apart certain festivals with appropriate Mass and office, in honour of the cross, of our Lord's sacred blood and wounds that our devotion to the Redeemer may be rendered more fervent by the contemplation of these objects, for Jesus has shed His blood for us, has received wounds for us which He retained even after His resurrection, as eternal signs of His immense love for man, has taken them with Him to heaven, and will show them to us on the judgment Day. How much more should our Saviour's Sacred Heart be the object of our devotion, since all the thoughts, sentiments, and emotions of this most loving heart aim only at our salvation, and since it is always ready to receive truly penitent sinners to forgive them, again to turn His love to them, and make them sharers in eternal bliss.

Therefore, the saints have from the first encouraged a tender devotion to this most Sacred Heart, as already mentioned. "Longinus," says St. Augustine, "opened the side of Jesus with his spear; in it I enter, and securely rest." "O how good," exclaims St. Bernard, "how lovely to take up my abode in this Heart! In this temple, in this sanctuary, before this ark of the covenant, I will adore and praise the name of the Lord, and say with the prophet: I have found in the heart of Jesus, my king, my brother, my friend." "Believe me, O blinded men," says St. Bonaventura, "if you knew how to enter by His sacred wounds into the interior of Jesus, you would there find not, only a wonderful sweetness for your soul, but even sweet repose for your body. And if even the body there finds rest, how great, think you, must be the sweetness which the spirit there enjoys, if through these wounds we become united to the Sacred Heart of Jesus!" And St. Peter Damian says: "In this adorable heart we find the weapons with which to defend ourselves against our enemies, a cure for our

ills, powerful help against temptations, the sweetest consolation is suffering, and the purest joy in this valley of tears.”

St. Mechtild and St. Gertrude found themselves transported in an especial manner by the tenderness of this adorable heart, to adore it fervently, and Gertrude, enlightened by the Spirit of God, spoke these prophetic words: “The Lord retained until these late centuries the devotion to His Sacred Heart, as a last effort of His divine love.” We have already seen how these words have been verified in the pious Margaret. O would that Jesus’ great desire that all men, might know and love His Sacred Heart be accomplished!

II. EXCELLENCE OF THIS DEVOTION

It is, says the venerable P. Simon Gourdan:

The most sacred devotion, for by it man venerates the holiest sentiments and emotions of the Heart of Jesus, by which He has sanctified the Church, glorified His Heavenly Father, and presented Himself to us as the perfect model of the most exalted sanctity.

The oldest devotion of the holy Church, which, instructed by the great St. Paul, has at all times recognized the munificence of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The most approved devotion, for the holy Scriptures everywhere exhort us to renew our heart by changing our lives, rendering them contrite by true penance, inflaming them with the fire of divine love, and adorning them by the exercise of all virtue. Therefore, a new heart is promised on which to remodel our Heart. That Heart can be no other than the Heart of Jesus, which is given us as an example of all virtue, and which we must imitate if we wish to be saved.

The most perfect devotion, for it is the: source of all other devotions; the Heart of Jesus is that inexhaustible treasury from which the Mother of God and all the saints have drawn their graces, their life, their virtues, and all spiritual blessings. Filled from this treasury, other servants of God have instituted different devotions.

The most useful devotion, for in it we have the Fountain of Life itself before our eyes, from which we can draw directly, and increase in all virtue by adoring this divine Heart, meditating on its holy desires, and seeking to imitate it.

The devotion most pleasing to Christ, for by it we honour God, as Christ requires, in spirit and in truth, because we adore the interior power of God, seeking to please His heart.

Finally; the most necessary devotion, for its object is that we become intimately connected as members with Jesus, our Head, that we live by and according to His spirit, and have only one heart and soul with Christ.

Because this devotion is of such importance, we cannot sufficiently recommend it to all who are anxious for their soul's salvation. Every person may cherish this devotion, and venerate the Heart of Jesus by himself, but there is a greater blessing when pious souls make the devotion in a confraternity. In the year 1726 there existed more than three hundred such confraternities, and they are now spread throughout all Catholic countries. Do not delay then, O Christian soul, to practise this devotion, uniting with others to honour the divine Heart of Jesus, because in this most Blessed Heart all men find their reconciliation, the pious their assurance, sinners their hope, the oppressed their comfort, the sick their relief, those who are fighting their strength, the dying their refuge and the elect their joy and bliss.

GOSPEL (John XIX. 31-35.) At that time, The Jews (because it was the parasceve), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day (for that was a great sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers, therefore, came, and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony: and his testimony is true.

EXPLANATION According to the Jewish law a criminal could not be put to death, nor could the body of one who had been executed, remain in the place of execution, on the Sabbath day; it was for this reason that the Jews asked Pilate, the governor, to have the Body of Christ and those of the two thieves buried. Before this could be done, the bones of the crucified, according to the Roman law, had to be broken with iron clubs. The soldiers did so to the two thieves, who were yet alive; when they came to Jesus and found Him dead, they did not break His bones, but one of them, Longinus, opened the Saviour's side with a spear, as was foretold by the prophet.

Jesus permitted His most Sacred Heart to be opened to atone for and efface those sins of men which originate in the heart, as Christ Himself says: (Matt. XV. 19.) From the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts; false

testimonies, blasphemies; also to show us the infinite love with which He has loved us from the beginning, so that He even shed the last drop of His heart's blood for our salvation; to make, as it were, a place of refuge in His heart for us, as St. Augustine says: "The Evangelist is very careful in his expression; he does not say, the soldiers pierced or wounded His side, but he o p e n e d it, as if to open for us the door of life, from which flow the Sacraments of the Church, without which there can be no access to the true life." As often, then, as a temptation arises, or trouble depresses us, let us take refuge in that abode, and dwell there, until the tempest is over; as says the prophet; (Is. II. 10.) Enter thou into the rock, and hide thee in the pit. Who is the rock but Christ, and what is the pit but His wound?

AN ACT OF RESIGNATION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

[An indulgence of one hundred Days is gained by saying this prayer with true contrition, before a picture of the sacred heart of Jesus, and a plenary indulgence by saying it every day for a month, and receiving the Sacraments of Penance and Communion, and Praying for the Church.]

O Jesus, most worthy of love! I gratefully offer

Thee my heart in compensation for my great unfaithfulness,

and consecrate myself wholly and forever to

Thy service, purposing, with Thy grace, no more to

offend Thee. Amen

INSTRUCTION ON THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

At the Introit of the Mass the Church calls upon all to invoke our Lord:

INTROIT Look Thou upon me, and have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am alone and poor. See my abjection and my labour, and forgive me all my sins, O my God. (Ps. XXIV.) To Thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul. In Thee, O my God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed. Glory etc.

COLLECT O God, the protector of them that hope in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: multiply Thy mercy upon us, that, guided and directed by Thee, we may so pass amid temporal goods as not to lose the eternal. Through etc.

EPISTLE (I Pet: V. 6-11.) Dearly beloved, Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation: casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you. Be sober and watch: because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will himself perfect you and confirm you and establish you. To him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen.

EXPLANATION In this lesson St. Peter teaches that if we would be exalted we must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. This necessary humility shows itself in us by giving ourselves and all our cares up to the providence of God who, as St. Augustine says, provides for one as for all. We should not fail, however, to be sober and circumspect, and not think ourselves secure from the lusts of the world. The devil like a lion seeking prey, desires the ruin of our souls, tormenting us by temptations and afflictions. By confidence in God's help we can and should resist him, especially when we consider that after the trials of this life the crown of glory will be our portion for all eternity.

ON DRUNKENNESS

Be sober and watch. (I Peter, V. 8.)

Sobriety is the mother of vigilance; intemperance is the mother of sloth and of numberless other vices which cast many souls into the jaws of the devil who, like a hungry lion, goes about day and night seeking for prey. Woe, therefore, to those who because of their drunkenness live, as it were, in constant night and in the perpetual sleep of sin! How will they feel when, suddenly awakened by death, they find themselves before the judgment seat of God burdened with innumerable sins of which they were unconscious, or of which they wished not to know they were guilty! Who can number the sins committed in a state of intoxication, sins for which the drunkard cares nothing, for which he has no contrition, and has not confessed, because the light of reason is extinguished, his life is a senseless stupor, and he is therefore unconscious of his thoughts, words and actions.

But will the divine Judge find no sin in such persons? Will He permit the shameful deeds committed while intoxicated, the curses, blasphemies, sneers, detractions, outrages, and scandals to remain unpunished? He who demands an account of every idle word, will He demand no account of the time so badly spent, of the money so uselessly squandered, families neglected, church service unattended, education of

children omitted, and the other great sins committed? They will indeed excuse themselves, pleading that these sins were committed involuntarily, or as a joke, when they were intoxicated; that their intoxication was excusable, as they were not able to stand muck; but will God be content with such excuses? Will they not add to their damnation? That they took more than they could bear of the intoxicating drink, deprived themselves of the use of reason, and thus voluntarily caused all the sins they committed while in that state, is what will be punished.

What then can they expect? Nothing less than the fate of the rich man spoken of in the gospel, who on account of his debaucheries was buried in hell; where during all eternity his parched tongue was not cooled by one drop of water. (Luke XVI. 22.) Yes, this will be the place of those unconverted drunkards of whom St. Paul says that they will not possess the kingdom of God. (I Cor. VI. 10.) How rare and how difficult is the conversion of a drunkard, because with him as with the unchaste this habit becomes a second nature, and because he generally abuses the remedies: the holy Sacraments of Penance and the. Altar.

This should certainly deter any one from the vice of drunkenness; but those who are not thus withheld, may consider the indecency, the disgrace, and the injury of this vice, for it ruins the body as well as the soul.

Is it not disgraceful that man endowed with reason, and created for heaven, should drown that reason in excessive drink, degrading his mind, his intellectual spirit, the image of God, rendering it like the brute animals, and even lower than the beasts. "Are not the drunkards far worse than the animals?" says St. Chrysostom. Yes, not only on account of their drunkenness, but far more so because of the shameful position of their body, their manners, their speech, their behaviour. How disgracefully naked lay Noah, although he was intoxicated not through his own fault, exposed in his tent to the ridicule of the impudent Cain! (Gen. IX. 21.) Even the heathen Spartans considered the vice of drunkenness so disgraceful that they were in the habit of intoxicating a slave, and bringing him before their children that they might be disgusted with such a state.

Finally, that which should deter everybody from this vice is its injuriousness. It ruins the body as well as the soul. By surfeiting many have perished, (Ecclus. XXXVII. 34.) and it has ruined the health of many more. Who hath woe? whose father hath woe? who hath contentions? who fall into pits, who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? Surely they that pass their time in wine, and study to drink off their cups? (Prov. XXIII. 29. 30.) Daily observation confirms this truth of Scripture,

and the miserable old age, accompanied by innumerable weaknesses and frailties of one addicted to drink is a sufficient testimony of the injuriousness of this vice.

GOSPEL (Luke XV. 1-10.) At that time, the publicans and sinners drew nigh unto Jesus to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them And He spoke to them this parable, saying: What man of you that hath an hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing: and coming home, call, together his friends and neighbours, saying to them:

Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety nine just who need not penance. Or what woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat, which I had lost? So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

What moved the sinners to approach Jesus?

The goodness and benevolence with which He met the penitent sinners. Do you also humbly and trustingly approach Him, and you may rest assured that, even if you are the greatest of sinners, you will receive grace and forgiveness.

What is Christ's meaning in the parable of the lost sheep and groat?

He expresses by this His desire for the salvation of the sinner, His joy and that of all heaven when a sinner is converted. Moreover, He shows the Pharisees, who in vain self-righteousness avoided all intercourse with acknowledged sinners, and who murmured at the goodness of Jesus, that the sinner, being truly unhappy, deserves our compassion rather than our anger.

Why do the angels rejoice more over one sinner who does penance than over ninety-nine just?

Because the places of the fallen angels are thus refilled; because the angels see how the good God rejoices; because they find their prayers for the conversion of sinners granted, as St. Bernard says: "The tears of the penitents are wine for the angels;" because, as St. Gregory says, "the true penitents are usually more zealous than the innocent."

ASPIRATION I have erred like a sheep that has lost its way; but I thank Thee, O Jesus, my good Shepherd, that Thou hast so carefully sought me by Thy inspirations, admonitions and warnings, and dost now bring me back to true penance, that I may be a joy to the angels. Amen.

INSTRUCTION ON THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

INTROIT The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid? My enemies that trouble me have themselves been weakened and have fallen. If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. (Ps. XXVI. 1-3.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that both the course of the world may be peaceably ordered for us by Thy governance, and that Thy Church may rejoice in tranquil devotion. Through etc.

EPISTLE (Rom. VIII. 18-23). Brethren, The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared to the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly; but by reason of him that made it subject, in hope: because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth, and travaileth in pain, even till now. Arid not only it, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body: in Jesus Christ our Lord.

INSTRUCTION There is no greater consolation under crosses and afflictions, no more powerful support in the adversities of a pious and virtuous life, than the thought that all sufferings are as nothing when compared with the coming glory of heaven, and that by a slight and momentary suffering in this life is obtained a superabundant happiness in the next. (II Cor, IV. 17.) Thus St. Augustine says: “Were we daily to suffer all torments, even for a short time the pains of hell, in order to see Christ and be numbered among His saints, would it not be worth all this misery to obtain so great a good, so great a glory?”

ASPIRATION Ah Lord, when shall we be delivered from the miserable bondage of this life, and participate in that indescribable glory which Thou hast prepared for Thy children, where free from the misery and many temptations of this life, they enjoy

eternal bliss. Enable us to see more and more into the misery of this life that we may thus be urged to strive for freedom and glory in Thy kingdom. Amen.

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Luke V. 1-11.) At that time, When the multitude pressed upon Jesus, to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Genesareth. And He saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets; and going up into one of the ships that was Simon's, He desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting, He taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now when He had ceased to speak, He said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon, answering, said to Him: Master, we have laboured all the night, and have taken nothing, but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes: and their net broke. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of fishes which they had taken; and so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's Partners. And Jesus with to Simon: Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed Him.

What are we to learn from the people who came to Christ to hear the word of God?

We should listen with great zeal to the word of God, because from it man receives the life of the soul, (Matt. IV. 4.) and eternal happiness. (Luke XI. 28.)

Why did Christ teach from Peter's ship?

By this He showed that the true doctrine is preached only from that Church of which Peter is the head, (John. XXI. 15.) which is here represented by his ship. Amid storms of persecution Jesus has preserved and will preserve this ship, His Church, until the end of time. (Matt. XVI. 18). Peter still guides the bark in the unbroken line of his successors, and Jesus still teaches from this ship the same doctrine through the bishops and priests, as His cooperators, with whom He has promised to remain to the end of the world. Matt. XXVII. 20.)

Why was it that Peter and his assistants took in such a draught of fishes after they had laboured all night in vain?

Because at first they trusted in themselves, and did not throw out their nets in the name of the Lord, relying on His blessing and assistance. “This example,” says St. Ambrose, “proves how vain and fruitless is presumptuous confidence, and how powerful, on the contrary, is humility, since those who had previously laboured without success, filled their nets at the word of the Redeemer.” Let us learn from this our inability, that we begin our work only with God, that is, with confidence in His help, and with the intention of working only for love of Him, and for His honour. If we do this, the blessing of the Lord will not be wanting.

What is represented by the nets and the draught of fishes?

“The word of truth which, so to speak forms the network of gospel preaching,” says St. Ambrose, “with which the successors of the apostles, the bishops and priests, draw souls from the darkness of error to the light of truth, and from the depths of the abyss to raise them to heaven.”

What is meant by the apostles' calling, to their partners for help?

We are instructed by this that we should assist the preachers of the gospel, the priests, in the conversion of sinners, by prayer, fasting, alms-deeds, and other good works, especially by good example, for this is a most meritorious work. (James V. 20.)

Why did Jesus choose poor and illiterate fishermen to be His apostles?

To show that the founding and propagating of the holy Catholic Church is not the work of man, but of God; for how could it be possible, without the evident assistance of God, that poor, illiterate fishermen could overthrow proud paganism, and bring nations to receive the doctrine of the crucified God-Man Jesus, who to the Jews was an abomination, to the Gentiles a folly!

INSTRUCTION ON A GOOD INTENTION

Master, we have laboured all the night, and have taken nothing, but at Thy word I will let down the net. (Luke V. 5.)

There are many people who by a special, but loving decree of God, seem to be born only for a miserable life, and who, with all this, can have no hope of a reward in the next world, because they, do not avail themselves (by a good intention) of the miseries which God gives them as a ladder to heaven.

In what does a good intention consist?

In performing all our works, even the smallest, and in offering all our thoughts and words in the name of God, that is, for His honour and in accordance with His most holy will; that we receive all sufferings and afflictions cheerfully from His hand, and offer them in union with the passion of Jesus.

How should we make a good intention?

In the morning we should offer to the Lord all our thoughts, words, and deeds, all our crosses and afflictions, and all our steps during the day:

- as a sacrifice of homage, to pay to Him the service, honor and adoration due Him;
- a sacrifice of thanksgiving for graces received;
- a sacrifice of propitiation to render some satisfaction to divine justice for our own sins and the sins of others;
- a sacrifice of impetration to obtain, through the merits of Christ, new graces and gifts for ourselves and others.

We must not forget, however, in making a good intention, to unite all our works with the merits of Jesus, by which alone they acquire worth and merit before God, and we must guard against impatience or sinful deeds by which we lose the merit of the good intention made in the morning, for a good intention cannot exist with sin. It is also very useful to place all our actions into the wounds of Jesus, offering them to Him by the hands of His Blessed Mother, and it is advisable frequently to renew our good intention during the day, by making use of these or similar words: “For the love of Thee, O Lord! For Thy sake! All in honour of God! With the intention I made this morning!” Endeavour to instruct the ignorant, how to make a good intention, and thus share in their good works.

What benefit is derived from a good intention?

St. Anselm says: “It renders all works, even the smallest golden and divine;” and St. Gregory: “It makes all thoughts, words and deeds meritorious, and causes us to expect

in the hour of death, like the wise virgins, the heavenly bridegroom, Jesus, and be richly rewarded by Him.”

ASPIRATION Incline my heart, O God, to Thy holy commandments. Guard me, that I work not in the night of sin, and thus gain nothing by my works. Assist all pastors that by Thy divine will, they may win souls for Thy kingdom, and bring them to Thee.

INSTRUCTION ON THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

At the Introit implore God’s assistance and say, with the priest:

INTROIT Hear, O Lord, my voice with which I have cried to Thee: be Thou my helper, forsake me not, nor do Thou despise me, O god, my Saviour. (Ps. XXVI.) The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT O God, who hast prepared invisible good things for those that love Thee: pour into our hearts such a sense of Thy love, that we, loving Thee in all, and above all, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all our desire: Through etc.

EPISTLE (I Peter III. 8-15.) Dearly beloved, Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble: not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing: for unto this you are called; that you may inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him decline from evil, and do good: let him seek after peace, and, pursue it: because the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His ears unto their prayers: but the countenance of the Lord upon them that do evil, things. And, who is he that can, hurt you, if you: be zealous of good? But if also you suffer anything for, justice’ sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their fear, and be not troubled: but sanctify the Lord Christ, in your hearts.

How can and how should we sanctify the Lord in our hearts?

By practising those virtues which Peter here recommends, and which he so exactly describes; for thereby we become true disciples of Christ, honour Him and edify others, who by our good example are led to admire Christianity, and to become His followers. Moreover, we thus render ourselves more worthy of God’s grace and protection, so that if for justice’ sake we are persecuted by, wicked men, we need not fear, because God is for us and will reward us with eternal happiness.

ASPIRATION O good Saviour, Jesus Christ, grant that I may make Thy virtues my own; especially Thy humility, patience, mercy, and love; grant that I may practise them diligently, that I may glorify Thee, sanctify myself, and thus become worthy of Thy protection.

Fifth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Matt. V. 20-24.) At that time, Jesus said to His disciples: Except your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. If therefore, thou bring thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother: and then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift.

In what did the justice of the Pharisees consist?

In external works of piety, in the avoidance of such gross vices as could not be concealed, and would have brought them to shame and disgrace. But in their hearts these Pharisees cherished evil, corrupt inclinations and desires, pride, envy, avarice, and studied malice and vengeance. Jesus, therefore, called them hypocrites, whitened sepulchres, and St. John calls them a brood of vipers. True Justice consists not only in external works of piety, that is, devotional works, but especially in a pure, sincere, self sacrificing feeling towards God and man; without this all works, however good, are only a shell without a kernel.

How are we to understand that which Christ here says of anger and abusive words?

The meaning of Christ's words are: You have heard that murder was forbidden to your fathers in the desert, and that the murderer had to be given up to justice: but I say to you, whoever becomes angry with his neighbour, shall be in danger of divine judgment, and he who with abusive words, such as Raca, villain, gives vent to his anger, using expressions of contempt and insult, as fool, scoundrel, profligate, wretch, is more liable to punishment. These degrees of anger are punished in different ways by God.

Is anger always sinful?

No, anger is sinful only when we wish or actually inflict some evil to the body, property, or honour of our neighbour; when we make use of such insulting and abusive words as injure his character, provoke and irritate him. If we become angry at the vices and crimes of others, when our office or the duties of our station demand that we watch over the conduct of those under our care, to punish and correct them, (as in the case of parents, teachers, and superiors) then anger is no sin. When one through pure love of God, becomes irritated at the sins and vices of his fellowmen, like King David, or if one urged to wrong, repels the tempter with indignation, this is even a holy anger. Thus St. Gregory Says; "It is to be understood that anger created by impatience is a very different thing from anger produced by a zeal for justice. The one is caused by vice, the other by virtue." He, then, who becomes angry for justice' sake, commits no sin, but his conduct is holy and praiseworthy, for even our Lord was angry at those who bought and sold in the temple, (John II. 15.) Paul at the magician Elymas, (Acts XIII. 8.) and Peter at the deceit of Ananias and Saphira. (Acts V. 3.) Anger, then, to be without sin, must proceed from true zeal for God's honour and the salvation of souls, by which we seek to prevent others from sin, and to make them better. Even in this respect, we must be careful to allow our anger no control over our reason, but to use it merely as a means of doing good, for we are often apt to take the sting of anger for holy zeal, when it is really nothing but egotism and ambition.

Why must we first be reconciled with our neighbour before bringing an offering to God, or undertaking any good work?

Because no offering or other good work can be pleasing to God, while we live in enmity, hatred, and strife with our neighbour; for by living thus we act altogether contrary to God's will. This should be remembered by all Christians, who go to confession and holy Communion, without forgiving those who have offended them, and asking pardon of those whom they have injured. These must know that instead of receiving absolution for their sins, they by an invalid confession are guilty of another sin, and eat their own judgment in holy Communion.

How should reconciliation be made with our neighbour?

With promptness, because the apostle says: Let not the sun go down upon your anger. (Eph. IV. 26.) But if the person you have offended is absent, says St. Augustine, and you cannot easily meet him, you are bound to be reconciled to him interiorly, that is, to humble yourself before God, and ask His forgiveness, making the firm resolution to be reconciled to your enemy as soon as possible. If he is accessible, go to him, and ask his forgiveness; if he has offended you, forgive him from your heart. The

reconciliation should be sincere, for God sees into the heart; it should also be permanent, for if it is not lasting, it may be questioned if it was ever sincere. On account of this command of Christ to be reconciled to our enemies before bringing sacrifice, it was the custom in ancient times that the faithful gave the kiss of peace to one another at the sacrifice of Mass, before Communion, as even to this day do the priests and deacons, by which those who are present, are admonished to love one another with holy love, and to be perfectly reconciled with their enemies, before Communion.

ASPIRATION O God, strike me not with the blindness of the Pharisees that, like them, I may seek to please man by my works, and thus be deprived of eternal reward. Banish from my heart all sinful anger, and give me a holy zeal in charity that I may be anxious only for Thy honour and for the salvation of my neighbour. Grant me also that I may offend no one, and willingly forgive those who have offended me, thus practicing true Christian justice, and become agreeable to Thee.

MEANS OF PREVENTING ANGER

The first and most effectual preventive is humility; for as among the proud there are always quarrels and contentions, (Prov. XIII. 10.) so among the humble reign peace, meekness and patience. To be humble, meek, and patient, we must frequently bring before our minds the example of Christ who did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, (I Peter II. 22.) yet suffered great contradictions, many persecutions, scoffs and sneers from sinners, without threatening vengeance to anyone for all He suffered; He say's to us in truth: Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart. (Matt. XI. Z9.) A very good preventive of anger is to think over in the morning what causes will be likely to draw us into anger at any time during the day, and to arm ourselves against it by a firm resolution to bear all with patience and silence; and when afterwards anything unpleasant occurs, let us think, "What will I effect by my anger? Can I thereby make things better? Will I not even make myself ridiculous and injure my health?" (for experience as well as holy Scripture teaches, that anger shortens life.) (Eccles. XXX. 26.) Finally, the most necessary preventive of anger is fervent prayer to God for the grace of meekness and patience, for although it seems difficult and almost impossible to our nature to be patient, by the grace of God it becomes not only possible, but even easy.

INSTRUCTION ON SACRIFICE

Offer thy gift. (Matt. V. 24.)

In its wider and more universal sense sacrifice comprehends all religious actions by which a rational being; presents himself to God, to be united with Him; and in this sense prayer, praising God, a contrite heart, charity to others, every good work, and observance of God's commandments is a sacrifice. Thus the Holy Scriptures say: Offer up the sacrifice of justice and trust in the Lord. (Fs. IV. 6.) Offer to God the sacrifice of praise. (Ps. XLIX. iq.) Sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. (Ps. 1. 19.) It is a wholesome sacrifice to take heed to the commandments, and to depart from, all iniquity. (Ecclus. XXXV. 2.) "Therefore," says St. Augustine, "every good work which is united in sanctity with God, is a true sacrifice, because it refers to the end of all good, to God, by whom we can be truly happy." As often, then, as you humble yourself in prayer before the majesty of God, when you give yourself up to God, and when you make your will subject to His divine will, you bring a sacrifice to God; as often as you punish your body by continency, and your senses by mortification, you bring a sacrifice to God, because you offer them as instruments of justice; (Rom. VI. 13.) as often as you subdue the evil concupiscence of the flesh, the perverted inclinations of your soul, deny yourself any worldly pleasure for the love of God, you bring a sacrifice to God. Such sacrifices you should daily offer to God; without which all others have no value and do not please God, such as these you can make every moment, when you think, speak, and act all for the love, of God.

Strive then, Christian soul, to offer these pleasing sacrifices to God, the supreme Lord, and as you thus glorify Him, so will He one day reward you with unutterable glory.

[Concerning Sacrifice in a stricter sense, especially the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross and its renewal in holy Mass, see the latter part of this book.]

INSTRUCTION ON THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Introit of this day's Mass is the prayer of a soul that trusts in God's powerful and merciful protection:

INTROIT The Lord is the strength of His people, the protector of the salvation of His Anointed: save, O Lord, Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance, and rule them forever. Unto Thee will I cry, O Lord: O my God, be not Thou silent to me; lest if

Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. (Ps. XXVII.)
Glory etc.

COLLECT O God of hosts, to whom belongeth all that is perfect: implant in our hearts the love of Thy name, and grant within us an increase of religion, that Thou mayest nourish in us what is good, and by the fervour of our devotion may preserve in us what Thou hast nourished. Through etc.

EPISTLE (Rom. VI. 3-11.) Brethren, All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death. For we are buried together with Him by baptism unto death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer. For he that is dead is justified from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ. Knowing that Christ, rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him. For in that he died to sin, he died once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. So do you also reckon that you are dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

EXPLANATION The apostle here teaches that in consequence of our baptism we are made members of Christ's body, and must, therefore, die to sin; as Christ by His death died to physical life, but has risen again, so must we bury sin, by constant renewal of baptismal vows, and by self-mortification rise to a Christian life. As members of Christ's body we should in a spiritual manner imitate Him. As He permitted His body to be nailed to the cross to atone for our sins, so should we crucify our corrupt nature by self-denial, and as He after His Resurrection lives always, because having risen He dieth no more, so we, risen from the death of sin, should lead a pious life conformable to that of Christ.

ASPIRATION I trust, O Lord Jesus, that by the merits of Thy passion I have risen from the death of sin: grant me Thy grace, that as Thou diest no more, so may I die no more by sin, but live for God, according to Thy law.

Sixth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Mark. VIII. 1-9.) At that time, when there was a great multitude with Jesus, and had nothing to eat, calling His disciples together, He saith to them: I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I shall send them away, fasting, to their home, they will faint in the way: for some of them came from afar

off. And his disciples answered Him: From whence can anyone fill them here with bread in the wilderness? And He asked them: How many loaves have ye? Who said: Seven. And He commanded the people to sit down on the ground. And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, He broke, and gave to His disciples to set before them: and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes, and He blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them. And they did eat, and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets: and, they that had eaten were about four thousand: and He sent them away.

Why did Christ say: I have compassion on the multitude?

Because of His mercy and goodness to man, as well as to prove that which He taught on another occasion, (Matt. VI. 33.) that to those who seek first the kingdom of God and His justice all other things will be added, without asking; for none of the multitude asked Christ for food, and yet He provided for all.

REMARK The instruction after the gospel for the fourth Sunday in Lent, where a similar miracle is mentioned, may be read to-day.

INSTRUCTION ON BLESSING

And He blessed them. (Mark VIII. 7.)

Seduced by Satan, the first man violated the holy is command of God, and by his sin brought upon himself and his habitation the curse of divine wrath. (Gen. III. 17.) Man was made by God, and therefore subject to Him, but was himself master of all created things. After the sin of disobedience, however, all creation revolted against him: the animals fled from him, the fields yielded only thorns and thistles, the herbs became poisonous to him, or refused him their former wholesome power. Innumerable evils followed, all men and even the whole earth suffered from them; the devil drew both into his sphere and made them his servants, and this evil spirit now made use of created things to divert man altogether from God and to cause his eternal ruin. But God decreed that man and earth should not remain in this condition: Christ, the Son of God, came upon earth, redeemed it from the bonds of Satan, and gave all men the power to become once more God's children. The devil was conquered by the cross, but not slain; man and the earth were indeed taken from his dominion, but not from his influence; for he even now, as the apostle writes, goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, (I Peter V. 8.); and as he used the forbidden fruit in

paradise to seduce man, he now uses the created things of the earth to tempt man, and, make him his servant. Man and all creation had to be drawn from this pernicious influence, to be liberated from the bondage of corruption and be brought to the freedom of the children of God. (Rom. VIII. 19.) This is done in the Church, to which Christ entrusted the power of binding and loosing, and gave the work of sanctifying through the Holy Ghost, by means of blessing and consecrating. By virtue of the merits of Christ, and with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, the Church, or the priest in her name, therefore blesses and consecrates persons as well as other created things which they are to use, or which she is to apply to the service of God. In this the Church follows the example of Christ and the Apostles. Jesus embraced children and laid His hands upon them, blessing them; (Mark X. 16.) He blessed bread and fishes, the food of thousands; blessed bread and wine at the last supper; (Matt. XXVI. 26.) was recognized by the disciples in the blessing of bread; (Luke XXIV. 30.) blessing the disciples He ascended into heaven; (Luke XXIV. 51.) by His command the apostles wished peace to every house into which they stepped; (Matt. X. 12, 13.) and St. Paul expressly says, that every living thing is sanctified by prayer and the word of God. (I Tim. IV. 5.) Following the example and command of Christ the Church also introduced blessings and benedictions which were prefigured in the Old Law. God commanded the priests to sanctify and to consecrate whatever was to belong to His service, (Levit. VIII.) and the Old Law is full of blessings and consecrations which had to be used by the priests; (Exod. XXIX. 36.; XXX. 25.; XI. 9.) and if persons and things used for God's service were to be blessed, how much more so in the. New Law which in place of the type, contains the reality and truth The testimony of Scripture is confirmed by all the holy Fathers, and by the constant practice of the Church which has received from Christ, the power to bless and to consecrate.

The blessing or benediction of the Church is nothing more than a, prayer of intercession which the priest makes in the name of the Church, that for the sake of Christ (therefore the sign of the cross) and the prayers of the saints, God may give His blessings to a person or thing, and sanctify it. Through consecration, in which besides prayer and the sign of the cross, the anointing with holy oil is used, things required for divine service are separated from all other things and especially sanctified. Thus persons, fruits, bread, wine, houses, ships and fields, are blessed; churches, altars, bells, &c., are consecrated.

What virtue have these blessings?

The chief effects of the blessing of persons are: Preservation or liberation from the influence of Satan; preservation of the soul from his temptations and evil suggestions;

reservation of the body and of the property from his pernicious malice; forgiveness of venial sins, and strength to suppress concupiscence; curing of sickness and physical evils, whether natural or supernatural; a blessing upon the person and his surroundings; the imparting of the grace of conversion; the advantage of the prayer of the Church and further grace for the remission of temporal and eternal punishment. The blessing of things withdraws them from the influence of the devil, so that he can no longer use them as a means of bringing us into sin, but that they rather serve us as a protection against the evil spirits and as a means for our salvation.

Whence do the blessings derive their force?

From the merits of Christ who by His death on the cross vanquished Satan. The Church asks God that He will through these merits and through the intercession of the saints bless a person or thing, and make that which is blessed profitable to us for both body and soul. Whether or not the effects manifest themselves in the person who receives the blessing, or makes use of the object blessed, depends on his faith and moral condition, as also on the usefulness or profit of the blessing to him. We should not, then, place obstacles in its way by diffidence in God and the prayers of the Church or by a sinful life, but should always be convinced. that these benedictions will serve for our benefit, if according to God's will they are used as the Church intends, as a means to overcome evil, to sanctify ourselves, and to honour God.

Why are salt and water blessed?

This is plainly shown in the prayer the priest says in blessing them; for he asks, in the name of the Church, that God may pour the virtue of His blessing over the water that it may conquer devils, prevent sickness, and that everything which is sprinkled with it, may be preserved from every injury, and that He may bless the salt, so that it may be salutary for the body and soul of all who use it. The salt which Eliseus sprinkled into the unwholesome waters of Jericho healed them, (IV King. II. 20. 21.) and is a type of blessed salt.

Why are the people sprinkled with holy water on Sundays?

To remind the people of the interior purity with which they should come to divine service, and fulfill the duties of their calling; and to exhort them to purify themselves from the stains of sin by tears of sorrow, and repentance. Hence the priest in sprinkling the faithful recites the words of the fiftieth psalm: *Asperges me hyssopo*, etc. Sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed; to remind them to preserve the purity and innocence procured by the blood of the Lamb of God, and communicated

to them in baptism. Finally, the people are sprinkled that the temptations of the devil may depart from them, enabling them to attend with great fervour and with more recollection to the holy service.

What else is to be remembered concerning the use of blessed things?

That they are to be used with faithful confidence for the purpose for which the Church blessed them, and are to be treated with great reverence, because they are blessed by the Church in the name of Jesus, a custom almost as old as Christianity itself. The Christian must not believe that blessed things which he possesses, carries, or uses, will make him holy, for he should always remember that things blessed are only a means of sanctification, and are only effectual when the faithful have the earnest will to die rather than sin, to fight with all fervour against the enemies of their salvation, to follow Christ, and be thereby received into the freedom of the children of God, and into heaven.

INSTRUCTION ON THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Introit the Church invites us to give praise to God in the following words:

INTROIT Oh, clap your hands, all ye nations: shout unto God with the voice of joy. For the Lord is most high, He is terrible; He is a great King over all the earth. (Ps. XLVI.) Glory etc.

COLLECT O God, whose providence is unerring in what it ordains, we humbly beseech Thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us all things which will profit us. Thro’.

EPISTLE (ROM. VI., 19-23.) Brethren, I speak a human thing, because of the infirmity of your, flesh: for as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification. For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from justice. What fruit therefore had you then in those things, of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them, is death. But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting. For the wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

EXPLANATION St. Paul here admonishes the Romans who had been converted to Christianity, but were still sensual and weak, that they ought to be much more zealous in serving God and mastering their passions. He demands of them that they should at least strive, now as hard to save their souls as they once did to destroy them. This certainly is but right, for many a man would become just and holy if he would do as much for heaven, as he does for sin and hell. But to know how wholesome it is to consecrate themselves to justice and sanctity, he wishes them to consider what advantage they derived from sin. Nothing is gained from it but shame, confusion, sorrow, and death, but by a pious life, God's grace and eternal life. Often consider this, Christian soul, and do not defile yourself by sins, which profit nothing, but bring shame, grief, and the retributive wrath of God.

Seventh Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Matt. VII. 15-21.) At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves: by their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not everyone that saith to me: Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Who are the false Prophets?

Those seducers who under an appearance of virtue and honesty lure innocent, simple souls from the right path, and lead them to vice and shame; who by sweet words, such as: "God, is full of love, and will not be severe on sin, He does not require so very much of us, He knows we are weak, and if a person sins, he can be converted," seek to steal from souls all modesty and fear, of God. Guard against such hypocrites, for they have the poison of vipers on their tongues. By the false prophets are also understood those who propagate error, who by superficial words fade the true faith, who speak always of love and liberty, and who under the pretence of making people free and happy bring many a soul to doubt and error, depriving it of true faith and peace of heart.

How can we know the false prophets?

By their works; for evil, corrupted men can produce only bad fruit. If we look into their life, we will find that at heart they are immoral hypocrites who observe external

propriety only that they may the more easily spread their poison. The false teachers and messengers of error may be known by their lives, but especially by their intentions, which are to subvert all divine order, and to put the unrestrained lust of the flesh and tyranny in its place.

Who else are understood by the false prophets?

Those who under pretence of making men happy and rich, induce the credulous to make use of superstition, of wicked arts, deceit, and injustice; especially those who under the deceiving appearance of liberty and equality, independence and public good, incite them to open or secret revolt against civil and ecclesiastical authority.

Be not deceived by these so-called public benefactors who look always to their own advantage, but trust in God, support yourself honestly, live like a Christian, and you will find true liberty and happiness here and hereafter.

Why does Christ say: “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire?”

He warns us that faith without good works is not sufficient for salvation; and He therefore adds; Not everyone that saith: Lord, Lord (who outwardly professes himself My servant, but is not really such) shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who, (by the fulfillment of the duties of his state of life and by the practice of good works), does the will of My Father, merits heaven. Strive then, Christian soul, to fulfill God’s will in all things, perform your daily duties with a good intention, and you will certainly obtain the kingdom of heaven.

INSTRUCTION ON GOOD WORKS

What are good works?

All the actions of man which are performed according to the will of God, while in the state of grace, for the love of God.

Which are the principal good works?

Prayer, fasting, and alms deeds. These are especially inculcated in holy Scripture. (Tob. XIII. 8.) By prayer is here understood all religious services; by fasting all mortification of soul and body; by alms deeds all works of charity.

How many kinds of charitable works are there?

Two kinds: spiritual and corporal.

Which are the spiritual works of mercy?

Those that are performed for the good of the soul: to admonish sinners; to teach the ignorant; to counsel the doubtful; to console the afflicted; to suffer injustice patiently; to forgive all injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead.

Which are the corporal works?

Those which are performed for the good of the body: to feed the hungry; to give drink to the thirsty; to clothe the naked; to visit and ransom the captives; to harbour the harbourless; to visit the sick; and to bury the dead.

Can we be saved without good works?

No, for Christ expressly, says: Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. The servant in the gospel who did not even waste the talent received, but only hid it in the ground, was therefore cast into outer darkness. How greatly do those err who hope to reach heaven, simply because they do no evil! Of this great mistake St. Chrysostom plainly says: "If you had a servant who was in truth no robber, no glutton or drunkard, but who sat at home idle, neglecting everything for which you had employed him, would you not pay him with the whip and send him off? Is it not bad enough to neglect that which duty demands?" Such a servant is the Christian who, doing neither good nor evil, makes himself thereby unfit for heaven which is the reward of work performed, and if no work has been done, no reward is to be expected.

SUPPLICATION O Lord, guard me from false prophets, heretics, and seducers, and grant me the grace, that according to St. Paul's instructions I may become fruitful in all good works. Inflame my heart, that I may adorn my faith with them, thus do the will of the Heavenly Father, and render myself worthy of heaven.

INSTRUCTION ON THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Introit of the Mass reads:

INTROIT We have received Thy mercy, O God, in the midst of Thy temple: According to Thy name, O God, so also is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth: Thy right hand is full of justice. Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised in the city of our God, in His mountain. (Ps. XLVII.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT Lord, we beseech Thee, mercifully grant us the spirit to think and do always the things that are right: that we, who cannot subsist without Thee, may by Thee be enabled to live according to Thy will. Through etc.

EPISTLE (ROM. VIII. 12-17.) Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if by the spirit you mortify the deed of the flesh, you shall live. For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

Who live according to the flesh?

Those who follow the evil pleasures and the desires of corrupt nature, rather than the voice of faith and conscience. Such men are not guided by the Spirit of God, for He dwells not in the sensual man, (Gen. VI. 3.) they are no children of God, and will not inherit heaven, but eternal death. But he who is directed by the Spirit of God, and with Him and through Him crucifies his flesh and its concupiscence, is inspired with filial confidence in God. by the Holy Ghost, who dwells in him, and by whom he cries: Abba (Father.) Prove yourself well, Christian soul, that you may know whether you live according to the flesh, and strive by prayer and fasting to mortify all carnal and sensual desires that you may by such means become a child of God and heir of heaven.

ASPIRATION Strengthen me, O Lord, that I may not live according to the desires of the, flesh; but resist them firmly by the power of Thy Spirit, that I may not die the eternal death.

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Luke XVI. 1-9.) At that time, Jesus spoke to His disciples this parable: There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him: How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for now, thou canst be steward no longer. And the steward said within himself: What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me my stewardship? To dig, I am not able: to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore, calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: A hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty, then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? Who said: A hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: Take thy bill, and write eighty. And the Lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wiser in their generations than the children of light. And I say to you: Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.

Who are represented by the rich man and his steward?

The rich man represents God, the steward is man - to whom God has confided the various goods of soul and body, of grace and nature: faith, intellect, memory, free will; and five senses, health, strength of body, beauty, skill power over others, time and opportunity for good, temporal riches, and other gifts. These various goods of soul and body God gives us not as our own, but as things to be used for His honour and the salvation of man. He will therefore demand the strictest account of us if we use them for sin, luxury, seduction, or oppression of others.

Why did Christ make use of this parable?

To teach us that God requires of every man a strict account of whatever has been given to him, and to urge us to works of charity, particularly alms-deeds.

What friends do we make by alms giving?

According to St. Ambrose they are the poor, the saints and angels, even Christ Himself: for that which we give to the poor, we give to Christ. (Matt. XXV. 40.) And: He that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay him. (Prov. XIX. 17.) "The hands of the poor," says Peter Chrysologus, "are the hands of Christ," through whom we send our riches to heaven before us, and through whose intercession we obtain the grace of salvation.

Why did his lord commend the steward?

Because of his prudence and foresight, but not for his injustice; for he adds: The children of this world are wiser than the children of light: that is, the worldly-minded understand better how to obtain temporal goods than do Christians to lay up treasures for themselves in heaven.

Why is wealth called unjust?

Because riches are often massed and retained unjustly, often lead man to injustice, and because they are often squandered, or badly used.

SUPPLICATION Grant me the grace, O my just God and Judge, that I may so use the goods of this earth confided to me by Thee, that I may make friends, who at my death will receive me into eternal joys.

ON THE SIN OF DETRACTION

And the same was accused unto him. (Luke XVI. 1.)

The steward in the gospel was justly accused on account of the goods he had wasted; but there are many who lose their good name and honour by false accusations, and malicious talk! Alas, what great wrongs do detracting tongues cause in this world! How mean a vice is detraction, how seldom attention is paid to its evil, how rarely the injury is repaired!

When is our neighbour slandered?

When he is accused of a vice of which he is not guilty; when a secret crime is made known with the intention of hurting him, or when our duty does not require us to mention it; when we attribute an evil intention to him or entirely misconstrue his actions and omissions; when his good qualities or commendable actions are denied or lessened, or his merits underrated; when we remain silent, or speak ambiguously in cases where praise is due him; when we lend a willing ear to detractions, and make no effort to stop them; and lastly, when joy is felt in the detraction.

Is detraction a great sin?

Yes, for it is directly opposed to the love of our neighbour, therefore to the love of God, hence it is, as St. Ambrose says, hateful to God and man. By it we rob our

neighbour of a possession greater than riches, (Prov. XXII. 1.) and often he is plunged by it into want and misery, even into the greatest vices; St. Ambrose says: “Let us fly from the vice of detraction, for it is altogether a satanic abyss, full of deceit.” Finally, detraction is a great sin, because it can seldom be recalled, and the injury done by it is very great, and often irreparable.

What should we do when we have committed this sin?

We should retract the calumny as soon as possible and repair the injury done to our neighbour in regard to his name or temporal goods; we should detest this sin, regret it, and be cleansed from it by penance, we should daily pray for him whom we have injured, and in future guard against the like fault.

Are we ever allowed to reveal the wrongs of our neighbour?

To make public the faults of our neighbour only for the entertainment of idle people, or for the sake of news, and to satisfy the curiosity of others, is always sinful. But if after having reproached or advised our neighbour fraternally, without obtaining our end, we make known his faults to his parents or superiors for the sake of punishment and reformation, far from being a sin it is rather a duty, against which those err who are silent about the sins of their neighbour, when by speaking they could prevent the sin and save him much unhappiness.

Is it a sin to listen willingly to detraction?

Yes, for we thus give the detractors occasion and encouragement. Therefore St. Bernard says: “Whether to detract is a greater sin than to listen to detraction, I will not decide. The devil sits on the tongue of the detractor as he does on the ear of the listener.” In such cases we must strive to interrupt, to prevent the detracting words, or else withdraw; or if we can do none of these, we must show in our countenance our displeasure, for the Holy Ghost says: The north wind driveth away rain, so doth a sad countenance a backbiting tongue. (Prov. XXV. 23.) The same demeanour is to be observed in regard to improper language.

What varieties of detraction are there?

There is a certain detestable kind of detraction which degrades and ridicules others by witty and sneering words. Still worse is that detraction which carries the faults of others from one place to another, thus exciting those who are on good terms to hard feeling, or making those who are living in enmity more opposed to each other. The

whisperer and the double tongued, says the Holy Ghost, is accursed, for he hath troubled many that were at peace.

What should deter us from detraction?

The thought of the enormity of this sin; of the difficulty, even impossibility of repairing the injury caused; of the punishment it incurs, for St. Paul expressly says: Calumniators shall not possess the kingdom of God, (I Cor. VI. 10.) and Solomon writes: My son, fear the Lord, and the king: and have nothing to do with detractors; for their destruction shall rise suddenly. (Prov. XXIV 22.)

SUPPLICATION Guard me, O most loving Jesus, that I may not be so blinded, either by hatred or, envy, as to rob my neighbour of his good name, or make myself guilty of such a grievous sin.

CONSOLATION FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED FROM DETRACTION

If your good name has been taken away by evil tongues, you may be consoled by knowing that God permitted this to humble you, to exercise you in patience and free you from pride and vain self-complacency. Turn your eyes to the saints of the Old and the New Law, to the chaste Joseph who was cast into prison on a false charge of adultery, (Gen. XXXIX.) to the meek David publicly accused by Semei as a man of blood, (II Kings XVI. 7.) to the chaste Susanna who was also accused of adultery, tried and condemned to death. (Dan, XIII.) Jesus, the king of saints, was called a drunkard, accused and condemned as a blasphemer, a friend of the devil, an inciter of sedition among the people, and like the greatest criminal was nailed to the cross between two thieves. Remember besides that it does not injure you in the sight of God, if all possible evil is said of you, and that He, at all times, cares for those who trust in Him; for He who touches the honour of those who fear God, touches, as it were, the pupil of His eye, (Zach. II. 8.) and shall not go unpunished. St. Chrysostom says: “If you are guilty, be converted; if you are innocent, think of Christ.”

PRAYER O most innocent Jesus, who wert thus calumniated, I submit myself wholly to Thy divine will, and am, ready like Thee, to bear all slanders and detractions, as with perfect confidence I yield to Thy care my good name, convinced that Thou at Thy pleasure wilt defend and protect it, and save me from the hands of my enemies.

INSTRUCTION ON THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Implore God for help and protection against all temptations both visible and invisible, and say with the priest at the Introit:

INTROIT Behold, God is my helper, and the Lord is the protector of my soul: turn back the evils upon my enemies, and cut them off in Thy truth, O Lord, my protector. (Ps. LIII.) Save me, O God, by Thy name, and deliver me in Thy strength. Glory etc.

COLLECT Let the ears of Thy mercy, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Thy supplicants: and that Thou mayest grant them their desires, make them to ask such things as please Thee. Through etc.

EPISTLE (I Cor. X. 6-13.) Brethren, let us not covet evil things, as they also coveted. Neither become ye idolaters, as some of them: as it is written: The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication, and there fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted, and perished by the serpents. Neither do you murmur, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them in figure, and they are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall. Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human: and God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able but will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it.

Can we sin by thought and desire?

Yes, if we desire evil and forbidden things, or voluntarily think of them with pleasure, for God prohibits not only evil deeds, but evil thoughts and desires in regard to our neighbour's wife or goods. (Exod. XX. 17.) Christ says, (Matt. V. 28.) that he who looks upon a woman with evil desire, has already committed adultery. But wicked thoughts and imagination are sinful only when a person consents to, or entertains them deliberately. They become, however, an occasion of gaining merit, if we earnestly strive against them. For this reason, God sometimes permits even the just to be tempted by them.

What is meant by tempting God?

Demanding presumptuously a mark or sign of divine omnipotence, goodness or justice. This sin is committed when without cause we desire that articles of faith

should be demonstrated and confirmed by a new miracle; when we throw ourselves needlessly into danger of body or soul expecting God to deliver us; when in dangerous illness the ordinary and, natural remedies are rejected, and God's immediate assistance expected.

Is it a great sin to murmur against God?

That it is such may be learned from the punishment which God inflicted on the murmuring Israelites; for besides Kore, Dathan, and Abiron whom the earth devoured, many thousands of them were consumed by fire; and yet these had not murmured against God directly, but only against Moses and Aaron whom God had placed over them as their leaders. From this it is seen that God looks upon murmuring against spiritual and civil authority, instituted by Him, as murmuring against Himself. Hence Moses said to the Israelites: Your murmuring is not against us, but against the Lord. (Exod. XVI. 8.)

ASPIRATION Purify my heart, I beseech. Thee; O Lord, from all evil thoughts and desires. Let it never enter my mind to tempt Thee, or to be dissatisfied with Thy fatherly dispensations. Suffer me not to be tempted beyond my strength, but grant me so much fortitude, that I may overcome all temptations, and even derive benefit from them for my soul's salvation.

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Luke XIX. 41-47.) At that time, when Jesus drew near Jerusalem, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And entering into the temple, He began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying to them: It is written, My house is the house of, prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. And He was teaching daily in the temple.

Why did our Saviour weep over the city of Jerusalem?

Because of the ingratitude and obduracy of its inhabitants who would not receive Him as their Redeemer, and who through impenitence were hastening to destruction.

When was the time of visitation?

The period in which God sent them one prophet after another who urged them to penance, and whom they persecuted, stoned, and killed. (Matt. XXIII. 34.) It was especially the time of Christ's ministry, when He so often announced His salutary doctrine in the temple of Jerusalem, confirmed it by miracles, proving Himself to be the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, but was despised and rejected by this hardened and impenitent city.

Who are prefigured by this hardened and impenitent city?

The hard-hearted, unrepenting sinners who will not recognize the time of God's visitation, in which He urges them by the mouth of His preachers, confessors, and superiors, and by inward inspiration to reform their lives and seek the salvation of their soul, but who give no ear to these admonitions, and defer conversion to the end of their lives. Their end will be like to that of this impious city; then the enemy, that is, the evil spirit, will surround their soul, tempt, terrify, and drag it into the abyss of ruin. Oh, how foolish it is to squander so lightly, the time of grace, the days of salvation! Oh, how would the damned do penance, could they but return to earth! Oh, how industriously would they employ the time to save their soul! Use, then, my dear Christian, the time of grace which God designs for you, and which, when it is run out or carelessly thrown away, will not be lengthened for a moment.

Will God conceal from the wicked that which serves for their salvation?

No; but while they are running after the pleasures of this life, as St. Gregory says, they see not the misfortunes treading in their footsteps, and as consideration of the future makes them uncomfortable in the midst of their worldly pleasures, they remove the terrible thought far from them, and thus run with eyes blindfolded in the midst of their pleasure into eternal flames. Not God, but they themselves hide the knowledge of all that is for their peace, and thus they perish.

ASPIRATION. I beseech Thee, O Lord, who didst weep over the city of Jerusalem, because it knew not the time of its visitation, to enlighten my heart, that I may know and profit by the season of grace.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY AND TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM

Has our divine Saviour's prophecy concerning, the city of Jerusalem been fulfilled?

Yes, and in the most terrible manner. The Jews, oppressed by the Romans their cruel masters, revolted, killed many of their enemies, and drove them out of Jerusalem.

Knowing well that this would not be permitted to pass unavenged, the Jews armed themselves for a desperate resistance. The Emperor Nero sent a powerful army under the command of Vespasian against the city of Jerusalem, which first captured the smaller fortresses of Judea, and then laid siege to the city. The want and misery of the inhabitants had already reached the highest pitch; for within the city ambitious men had caused conflicts; factions had been formed, daily fighting each other, and reddening the streets with blood, while the angry Romans stormed outside. Then a short time of respite was granted to the unfortunate Jews. The Emperor Nero was murdered at Rome in the year of our Lord 68; his successor Galba soon died, and the soldiers placed their beloved commander Vespasian upon the imperial throne. He then left Jerusalem with his army, but in the year he sent his son Titus with a new army to Judea, with orders to capture the city at any price, and to punish its inhabitants.

It was the time of Easter, and a multitude of Jews had assembled from all provinces of the land, when Titus appeared with his army before the gates of Jerusalem, and surrounded the city. The supply of food was soon exhausted, famine and pestilence came upon the city and raged terribly. The leader of the savage revolutionists, John of Gischala, caused the houses to be searched, and the remaining food to be torn from the starving, or to be forced from them by terrible tortures: To save themselves from this outrageous tyrant, the Jews took the leader of a band of robbers, named Simon, with his whole gang into the city. John and Simon with their followers now sought to annihilate each other. John took possession of the temple. Simon besieged him; blood was streaming in the temple and in the streets. Only when the battle-din of the Romans was heard from without, did the hostile factions unite, go to meet the enemy, and resist his attack. As the famine increased, many Jews secretly left the city to seek for herbs. But Titus captured them with his cavalry, and crucified those who were armed. Nearly five hundred men, and sometimes more, were every day crucified in sight of the city, so that there could not be found enough of crosses and places of execution; but even this terrible sight did not move the Jews to submission. Incited by their leaders to frenzy, they obstinately resisted, and Titus finding it impossible to take the city by storm, concluded to surround it by walls in order to starve the inhabitants. In three days his soldiers built a wall of about ten miles in circumference, and thus the Saviour's prediction was fulfilled: Thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side.

The famine in this unfortunate city now reached its most terrific height; the wretched inhabitants searched the very gutters for food, and ate the most disgusting things. A woman, ravenous from hunger, strangled her own child, roasted it, and ate half of it;

the leaders smelling the horrible meal, forced a way into the house, and by terrible threats compelled the woman to show them what she had eaten; she handed them the remaining part of the roasted child, saying: "Eat it, it is my child; I presume you are not more dainty than a woman, or more tender than a mother." Stricken with horror they rushed from the house. Death now carried away thousands daily, the streets and the houses were full of corpses: From the fourteenth of April when the siege commenced. to the first of July, there were counted one hundred and fifty-eight thousand dead bodies; six hundred thousand others were thrown over the walls into the trenches to save the city from infection. All who could flee, fled; some reached the camp of the Romans in safety; Titus spared the helpless, but all who fell into his hands armed, were crucified. Flight offered no better security. The Roman soldiers had learned that many Jews had swallowed, gold to secure it from the avarice of the robbers, and therefore the stomachs of many were cut open. Two thousand such corpses were found one morning in the camp of the Romans. The attempts of Titus to prevent this cruelty were unavailing. Finally, when misery had reached its height, Titus succeeded in carrying the fort, Antonia, and with his army forced a passage as far as the temple which had been held by John of Gischala with his famous band. Desirous of saving the temple, Titus offered the revolutionists free passage from it, but his proposition was rejected, and the most violent contest then raged; the Romans trying to enter the temple, and being continually repulsed, at last, one of the soldiers seized a firebrand, and threw it into one of the rooms attached to the temple. The flames in an instant caught the whole of the inner temple, and totally consumed it, so that this prediction of our Lord was also fulfilled. The Romans butchered all the inhabitants whom they met, and Titus having razed the ruins of the temple and city, ploughed it over, to indicate that this city was never to be rebuilt. During the siege one million one hundred thousand Jews lost their lives; ninety-seven thousand were sold as slaves, and the rest of the people dispersed over the whole earth.

Thus God punished the impenitent city and nation, over whose wretchedness the Saviour wept so bitterly, and thus was fulfilled the prediction made by Him long before.

What do we learn from this?

That as this prediction so also all other threats and promises of the Saviour will be fulfilled. The destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews, are historical facts which cannot be denied, and testify through all centuries to the truth of our Lord's word: Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (Matt. XXIV. 35.)

USEFUL LESSONS CONCERNING DEATH-BED REPENTANCE

Can a sinner rely upon his being converted at the end of his life?

By no means, for this would be a sin against the mercy of God which is much the same as the sin against the Holy Ghost. “God,” says St. Augustine, “generally so punishes such negligent sinners, that in the end they forget themselves, as in health they forgot Him.” He says: They have turned their back to Me, and not their face: and in the time of their affliction they will say: Arise, and deliver us! Where are the gods whom thou hast made thee? Let them arise and deliver thee in the time of thy affliction. (Jer. II. 27-28.) And although we have a consoling example in the case of the penitent thief, yet this, as St. Augustine says, is only one, that the sinner may not despair: and it is only one, so that the sinner may have no excuse for his temerity in putting off his repentance unto the end.

What may we hope of those who are converted at the close of life?

Everything that is good if they be truly converted, but this is a very rare thing, as St. Augustine says: “It cannot be asserted with any security, that he who repents at the end has forgiveness;” and St. Jerome writes: “Scarcely one out of thousands whose life was impious, will truly repent at death and obtain forgiveness of sin;” and St. Vincent Ferrer says, “For a man who has lived an impious life to die a good death is a greater miracle than the raising of the dead to life.” We need not be surprised at this, for repentance at the end of life is extorted by the fear of death and the coming judgment. St. Augustine says, that it is not he who abandons sin, but sin abandons him, for he would not cease to offend God, if life were granted him. What can we expect from such a conversion?

When should we repent?

While we are in health, in possession of our senses and strength, for according to the words of St. Augustine, the repentance of the sick is a sickly repentance. As experience proves, man while ill is so tormented and bewildered by the pains of sickness and the fear of death, by remorse of conscience, and the temptations of the devil as well as by anxiety for those whom he leaves, that he can scarcely collect his

thoughts, much less fit himself for true repentance. Since it is so hard for many to do penance while they are in health, and have nothing to prevent them from elevating their mind to God, how much more difficult will it be for them, when the body is weakened and tortured by the pains of sickness. It has been made known by many persons when convalescent, that they retained not the slightest recollection of anything which occurred during their illness, and although they confessed and received the last Sacraments, they did not remember it. If then you have committed a grievous sin, do not delay to be reconciled as soon as possible by contrition and a sacramental confession. Do not put off repentance from day to day, for thereby conversion becomes more difficult, so much so that without extraordinary grace from God, you cannot repent God does not give His grace to the presumptuous scoffer.

INSTRUCTION ON THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

At the Introit of the Mass pray with the Church for God's help to guard us against our enemies:

INTROIT When I cried to the Lord, He heard my voice, from them that draw near to Me, and He humbled them, who is before all ages, and remains forever. Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee. (Ps. LIV.) Hear, O God, my prayer, and despise not my supplication; be attentive to me, and hear me. Glory etc.

COLLECT O God, who dost manifest Thine almighty power above all in showing pardon and pity: multiply upon us Thy mercy, that we running forward to the attainment of Thy promises, may be made partakers of Thy heavenly treasures. Through etc.

EPISTLE (I Cor. XII. 2-11.) Brethren, You know that when you were heathens; you went to dumb idols according as, you were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, saith Anathema to Jesus. And no man can say: the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. To one, indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom: and to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another, faith in one Spirit: to another, the working of miracles: to another, prophecy: to another, the discerning, of spirits: to another, divers kinds of

tongues: to another, of speeches. But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He will.

EXPLANATION The apostle here reminds the Corinthians of the great grace they received from God in their conversion, and urges them to be grateful for it; for while heathens, they cursed Jesus, but being now brought to the knowledge of the Spirit of God, they possess Christ as their Lord and Redeemer who can be known and professed only by the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost. The holy Spirit works in different ways, conferring His graces on whom He wills; to one He gives wisdom to understand the great truths of Christianity; to another the gift of healing the sick; to another the gift of miracles and of prophecy; to another the gift of discerning spirits, to know if one is governed by the Spirit of God, or of the world, Satan and the flesh; to another the gift of tongues. The extraordinary gifts, namely, those of working miracles, and of prophesying &c. became rarer as the faith spread, whereas the gifts which sanctify man will always remain the same.,

[See ***Instruction on the gifts of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.***]

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Luke XDII. 9-14.) At that time, Jesus spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others. Two men went up into the Temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. The Pharisee standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this Publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the Publican standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven, but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say to you: this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: because everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Why did Christ make use of' this parable of the Pharisee and the Publican?

To teach us never proudly to condemn or despise a man, even though he should appear impious, for we may be deceived like the Pharisee who despised the Publican, whom he considered a great sinner, while, in reality, the man was justified before God on account of his repentant spirit.

What should we do before entering a Church?

We should reflect that we are going into the house of God, should therefore think what we are about to say to Him, and what we wish to ask of Him. That we may make

ourselves less unworthy to be heard, we should humble ourselves as did Abraham, (Gen. XVIII. 27.) remembering that we are dust and ashes, and on account of our sins unworthy to appear before the eyes of God, much less to address Him, for He listens to the prayers of the humble only, (Ps. CI, 18.) and gives them His grace, while He resists the proud. (James IV. 6.)

Was the Pharisee's prayer acceptable to God?

No, for it was no prayer, but boasting and ostentation; he praised himself, and enumerated his apparent good works. But in despising others and judging them rashly he sinned grievously instead of meriting God's grace.

Was the Publican's prayer acceptable to God?

Yes, for though short, it was humble and contrite. He stood afar off, as if to acknowledge himself unworthy of the presence of God and intercourse with men. He stood with downcast eyes, thus showing that he considered himself because of his sins unworthy to look towards heaven, even confessed himself a sinner, and struck his breast to punish, as St. Augustine says, the sins which he had committed in his heart: This is why we strike our breast at certain times during Mass, for by this we acknowledge ourselves miserable sinners, and that we are sorry for our sins.

ON PRIDE AND VAIN GLORY

We should learn from this gospel that God looks upon the humble and exalts them, but is far from the proud. (Ps. CXXXVII. 6.) The Pharisee went to the temple entirely wrapt up in himself, and the good works which he thought he had performed, but returned empty and hated by God; the Publican, on the contrary, appearing before God as a public but penitent sinner, returned justified. Truly, an humble sinner is better in the sight of God than a proud just man!

He who glories in his own good works, or performs them to please men, or to win their praise, loses his merit in the eyes of the most High, for Christ says: Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven. (Matt. VI. 1.)

In order that we may learn to despise vain glory, these doctrines should be well borne in mind. We should consider that it will happen to those who seek after vain glory, as to the man who, made many toilsome journeys on land and sea in order to

accumulate wealth, and had no sooner acquired it than he was shipwrecked, and lost all. Thus the ambitious man avariciously seeking glory and honour will find, when dying, that the merit which he might have had for his good works, is now lost to him, because he did not labour for the honour of God. To prevent such an evil, strive at the commencement of every good work which you undertake, to turn your heart to God by a good intention.

But that you may plainly recognize this vice, which generally keeps itself concealed, and that you may avoid it, know that pride is an inordinate love of ostentation, and an immoderate desire to surpass others in honour and praise. The proud man goes beyond himself, so to speak, makes far more of himself than he really is, and, like the Pharisee, despises others; the humble man, on the contrary, has a low estimate of himself, looks upon himself as nothing and, like the Publican, despises no one but himself, and thus is pleasing in the sight of God.

ASPIRATION O God, who hearest the prayers of the humble, but dost resist the proud, I earnestly beseech Thee to give me an humble heart, that I may imitate, the humility of Thy only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby merit to be exalted with Him in heaven.

INSTRUCTION ON GRACE

In the epistle of this day the Apostle St. Paul speaks of the different gifts of the Holy Ghost which He distributes as He pleases. These extraordinary graces which the apostle mentions, are not necessary for salvation. But the Church teaches, that the grace of the Holy Ghost is necessary for salvation, because without it we could neither properly believe, nor faithfully observe the commandments of God. For the holy religion of Jesus teaches, and experience confirms, that since the fall of our first parents we are weak and miserable, and of ourselves, and by our own strength, we cannot know or perform the good necessary for our salvation. We need a higher aid, a higher assistance, and this assistance is called grace.

What, then, is grace?

Grace is an inward, supernatural gift which God through finite goodness, and in consideration of Christ's merits, grants us to enable us to work out our salvation.

Grace is a gift, that is, a present, a favour, a benefit. It is an inward and supernatural gift; an inward gift, because it is bestowed upon man's soul to distinguish it from

external gifts and benefits of God, such as: food, clothing, health; grace is a supernatural gift, because it is above nature. In creating our souls God gives us a certain degree of light which enables us to think, reflect, judge, to acquire more or less knowledge: this is called natural light. In the same way He gives our souls the power in some measure to overcome sensual, vicious inclinations; this power is called natural power (virtue). To this natural light and power must be added a higher light and a higher power, if man would be sanctified and saved. This higher light and higher power is grace. It is, therefore, called a supernatural gift, because it surpasses the natural power of man, and produces in his understanding and in his will wholesome effects, which he could not produce without it. For example, divine faith, divine love is a supernatural gift or grace of God, because man of his own power could never receive as certain God's revelations and His incomprehensible mysteries with so great a joy and so firm a conviction, and could never love God above all things and for His own sake, unless God assisted him by His grace.

God grants us grace also through pure benevolence without our assistance, without our having any right to it; He grants it without cost, and to whom He pleases; but He gives it in consideration of the infinite merits of Christ Jesus, in consideration of Christ's death on the cross, and of the infinite price of our redemption. Finally, grace is a gift of God, by which to work out our salvation, that is, it is only by the grace of God that we can perform meritorious works which aid us in reaching heaven. Without grace it is impossible for us to perform any good action, even to have a good thought by which to gain heaven.

From this it follows that with the grace of God we can accomplish all things necessary for our salvation, fulfill all the commandments of God, but without it we can do nothing meritorious. God gives His grace to all, and if the wicked perish, it is because they do not cooperate with its divine promptings.

How is grace divided?

Into two kinds, actual and sanctifying grace.

Actual grace is God's assistance which we always need to accomplish a good work, to avoid sin which we are in danger of committing, or that grace which urges us on to good, and assists us in accomplishing it; for it is God, says the Apostle Paul, (Phil. II. 13.) who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish. If a good work is to be performed by us, God must enlighten our mind that we may properly know the good

and distinguish it from evil; He must rouse our will and urge it on to do the known good and to avoid the evil; He must also uphold our will and increase our strength that what we wish to do, we may really accomplish.

This actual grace is, therefore, necessary for the just, that they may always remain in sanctifying grace, and accomplish good works; it is necessary for the sinner that he may reach the state of sanctifying grace.

What is sanctifying grace?

It is the great benefit which God bestows upon us, when He sanctifies and justifies us; in other words: sanctifying grace is the love of God, given to us by the Holy Ghost, which love dwells in us and whose temple we become, or it is the advent and abiding of God in our hearts, as promised in the words of Jesus: If any one love Me he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him. (John XVI. 23.)

He who possesses sanctifying grace, possesses the greatest treasure that a man can have on earth. For what can be more precious than to be beautiful in the sight of God, acceptable to Him, and united with Him! He who possesses this grace, carries within himself the supernatural image of God, he is a child of God, and has a right to the inheritance of heaven.

How is this sanctifying grace lost?

It is lost by every mortal sin, and can only be regained by a complete return to God, by true repentance and amendment. The loss of sanctifying grace is a far greater injury than the loss of all earthly possessions. How, terrible, then, is mortal sin which deprives us of this treasure!

INSTRUCTION ON THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

At the Introit pray with the priest for brotherly love and for protection against our enemies within and without:

INTROIT God in His holy place; God, who maketh men of one mind to dwell in a house: He shall give power and strength to His people. Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Him flee from before His face. (Ps. LXVII.) Glory etc.

COLLECT Almighty, everlasting God, who, in the abundance of Thy loving kindness, dost exceed both the merits and desires of Thy suppliants; pour down upon us Thy mercy, that Thou mayest forgive those things of which our conscience is afraid, and grant us those things which our prayer ventures not to ask. Through...

EPISTLE (I Cor. XV. 1-10.) Brethren, I make known unto you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand: by which also you are saved: if you hold fast after what manner I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all, which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures: and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that He was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all, He was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God; but by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace in me hath not been void.

INSTRUCTION I. St. Paul warns the Corinthians against those who denied the Resurrection of Christ and exhorts them to persevere in the faith which they have received, and to live in accordance with the same. Learn from this to persevere firmly in the one, only saving Catholic faith, which is the same that Paul preached.

II. In this epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul gives us a beautiful example of humility. Because of the sins he had committed before his conversion, he calls himself one born out of due time, the least of the apostles, and not worthy of being called an apostle, although he had laboured much in the service of Christ. He ascribes it to God's grace that he was what he was. Thus speaks the truly humble man: he sees in himself nothing but weakness, sin, and evil, and therefore despises himself and is therefore willing to be despised by others. The good which he professes or practices, he ascribes to God, to whom he refers all the honour. Endeavour, too, O Christian soul, to attain such humility. You have far more reason to do so than had St. Paul, because of the sins which you have committed since your baptism, the graces which you have abused, and the inactive, useless life you have led.

ASPIRATION Banish from me, O most loving Saviour, the spirit of pride, and grant me the necessary grace of humility. Let me realize that of myself I can do nothing, and that all my power to effect any good, comes from Thee alone who alone workest in us to will and to accomplish.

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Mark vii. 31-37.) At that time, Jesus going out of the coast of Tyre, came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coast of Decapolis. And they bring to Him one deaf and dumb, and they besought him that He would lay His hand upon him. And taking him from the multitude apart, He put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue: and looking up to heaven, He groaned, and said to him, Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened: and immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And He charged them that they should tell no man; but the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it, and so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well: He hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

Whom may we understand by the deaf and dumb man?

Those who desire neither to hear nor to speak of things concerning salvation.

Why did Christ take the deaf and dumb man aside?

To teach us that he who wishes to live piously and be comforted, must avoid the noisy world and dangerous society, and love solitude, for there God speaks to the heart. (Osee ii. i4.)

Why did Christ forbid them to mention this miracle?

That we might learn to fly from the praise of vain and fickle men.

What do we learn from those who brought the deaf and dumb man to Jesus, and notwithstanding the prohibition, made known the miracle?

That in want and sickness we should kindly assist our neighbour, and not neglect to announce and praise the works of God, for God works His miracles that His goodness and omnipotence may be known and honoured.

SUPPLICATION O Lord Jesus, who during Thy life on earth, didst cure the sick and the infirm, open my ears that they may listen to Thy will, and loosen my tongue that I may honour and announce Thy works. Take away from me, O most bountiful Jesus,

the desire for human praise, that I may not be led to reveal my good works, and thus lose the reward of my Heavenly Father. (Matt. vi. 1.)

ON RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

What are ceremonies?

Religious ceremonies are certain forms and usages, prescribed for divine service, for the increase of devotion, and the edification of our fellow-men; they represent externally and visibly the interior feelings of man.

Why do we make use of ceremonies in our service?

That we may serve God not only inwardly with the soul, but outwardly with the body by external devotion; that we may keep our attention fixed, increase our devotion, and edify others; that by these external things we may be raised to the contemplation of divine, inward things. (Trid. Sess. 22.)

Are ceremonies founded on Scripture?

They are; for besides those which Christ used, as related in this day's gospel, in regard to the deaf and dumb man, He has also made use of other and different ceremonies: as, when He blessed bread and fishes; (Matt. xv. 36.) when He spread clay upon the eyes of a blind man; (John ix. 6.) when He prayed on bended knees; (Luke xxii. q.i.) when He fell upon His face to pray; (Matt. xxvi, 39.) when He breathed upon His disciples, imparting to them the Holy Ghost; (John xx. 22.) and finally, when He blessed them with uplifted hands before ascending into heaven. (Luke xxiv. 30.) Likewise in the Old Law various ceremonies were prescribed for the Jews, of which indeed in the New Law the greater number have been abolished; others, however, have been retained, and new ones added. If, therefore, the enemies of the Church contend that ceremonies are superfluous, since Christ Himself reproached the Jews for their ceremonial observances, and said: God must be adored in spirit and in truth, we may, without mentioning that Christ Himself made use of certain ceremonies, answer, that He did not find fault with their use, but only with the intention of the Jews. They observed every ceremony most scrupulously, without at the same time entertaining pious sentiments in the heart, and whilst they dared not under any circumstances omit even the least ceremony, they scrupled not to oppress and defraud their neighbour. Therefore, Christ says: God must be adored in spirit and in truth, that is, in the innermost heart, and not in external appearances only. Do not, therefore, let

the objections, nor the scoffs and sneers of the enemies of our Church confound you, but seek to know the spirit and meaning of each ceremony, and impress them on your heart, and then make use of them to inflame your piety, to glorify God, and to edify your neighbour.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE ABUSE OF THE TONGUE

There is no member of the body more dangerous and pernicious than the tongue. The tongue, says the Apostle St. James, is indeed a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how small a fire kindleth a great wood. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is placed among our members, which defileth the whole body, and inflameth the wheel of our nativity, being set on fire by hell. (James iii. 5. 6.) The tongue no man can tame: an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison. By it we bless God and the Father; and by it we curse men, who are made after the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. (ibid. iii. 8-10.) There is no country, no city, scarcely a house, in which evil tongues do not cause quarrel and strife, discord and enmity, jealousy and slander, seduction and debauchery. An impious tongue reviles God and His saints, corrupts the divine word, causes heresy and schism, makes one intemperate, unchaste, envious, and malevolent; in a word, it is according to the apostle a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue of the serpent seduced our first parents, and brought misery and death into the world. (Gen. iii.) The tongue of Judas betrayed Jesus. (Matt. xxvi. 49.) And what is the chief cause of war among princes, revolts among nations, if it is not the tongue of ambitious, restless men, who seek their fortune in war and revolution? How many, in fine, have plunged themselves into the greatest misery by means of their unguarded tongue? How can we secure ourselves against this dangerous, domestic enemy? Only by being slow to speak according to the advice of St. James, (i. 19.) to speak very few, sensible, and well-considered words. In this way we will not offend, but will become perfect. (James iii. 2:.) As this cannot happen without a special grace of God, we must according to the advice of St. Augustine beg divine assistance, in the following or similar words:

ASPIRATION O Lord, set a watch before my mouth, and a door round about my lips, that I may not fall and my tongue destroy me. (Ps. cxl. 3.)

INSTRUCTION ON THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Introit of the Mass is the prayer of a troubled soul, entreating God for assistance against its enemies:

INTROIT Incline unto my aid, O God: O Lord, make haste to help me: let my enemies be confounded and ashamed, who seek my soul. Let them be turned backward and blush for shame, who desire evils to me. (Ps. LXIX) Glory etc.

COLLECT Almighty and merciful God, of whose gift it cometh that the faithful do Thee homage with due and laudable service: grant, we beseech Thee, that we may run without stumbling to the attainment of Thy promises. Through etc.

EPISTLE (II Cor. III. 4-9.) Brethren, such confidence we have through Christ towards God: not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God, who also hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit: for the letter killeth: but the spirit quickeneth. Now if the ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which is made void: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather in glory? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory.

EXPLANATION St. Paul speaks in the epistle, from which this extract is taken, of the conversion of the Corinthians, which he accomplished not by his own ability, but with the help of God, who made him a minister of the New Testament, a teacher of the true religion of Christ. The New Testament by the grace of the Holy Ghost recalls the sinner from the death of sin, reconciles him to God, and thus enlivens and makes him pleasing to God; whereas the letter of the Old Law, which contains more eternal ceremonies and fewer commandments, changes not the man, but rather destroys him, that is, threatens with death the transgressor of the law instead of freeing him from sin and reconciling him to God, thus permitting him to die the eternal death. St. Paul preached the true religion of Christ, which vivifies, justifies, and sanctifies man. If the ministry of Moses was so glorified by God, that his countenance shone, when he returned from Mount Sinai, where God gave him the law, how much more dignified and glorious must be the ministry of the New Law. Learn from this to esteem the office of preaching, and be humble like St. Paul, who trusted not in himself but in God, to whom he ascribed all honour.

Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Luke X. 23-37.) At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and

have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting Him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But He said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And He said to him: Thou hast answered rightly: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away; leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him: and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him: and the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him, and whatsoever, thou shalt spend over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee. Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbour to him that fell among robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go, and do thou in like manner.

Why does Christ call His disciples blessed?

Because they had the happiness which so many patriarchs and prophets had desired in vain, namely: of seeing Him and hearing His teaching. Though we have not the happiness to see Jesus and hear Him, nevertheless we are not less blessed than the apostles, since Christ pronounces those blessed who do not see and yet believe. (John XX. 29.)

What, besides faith, is necessary for salvation?

That we love God and our neighbour, for in these two commandments consists the whole law. (Matt. XXII. 40.)

Who is our neighbour?

Every man, be he an acquaintance or a stranger, poor or rich, of our faith or of another; for the Samaritan did not ask the one who had fallen among robbers: Who

and whence are you? but considered him his neighbour, and proved himself as such by his prompt assistance.

How should we love our neighbour?

As we love ourselves, that is, we should wish him everything good, and when in necessity do to him as we would wish others to do to us, and, on the contrary, not wish nor do to him anything that we do not wish to be done to ourselves. In this way the Samaritan loved his neighbour, and in this he was far superior to the priest and the Levite.

How can we especially practice love for our neighbour?

By the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. [See [instruction for the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost](#).] Besides which we must rejoice at the spiritual and corporal graces of our neighbour, which God communicates to him; we must grieve for his misfortunes, and, according to the example of St. Paul, (I Cor. I. 4.) have compassion for him; we must bear with the faults of our neighbour, as St. Paul again admonishes us: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal. VI. 2.)

Why should we love our neighbour?

We should love him because God commands it; but there are also other reasons which should induce us to do so. We are not only according to nature brothers and sisters in Adam, but also according to grace, in Christ, and we would have to be ashamed before animals, if we would allow ourselves to be surpassed in the love which they bear one to another; (Ecclus, XIII. 19.) all our neighbours are the image and likeness of God, bought by the blood of Jesus, and are adopted children, called to heaven, as we are; the example of Christ, who loved us, when we were yet His enemies, (Rom. V. 10.) and gave Himself for us unto death, ought to incite us to love them. But can we be His disciples, if we do not follow Him, and if we do not bear in us the mark of His disciples, i. e. the love of our neighbour? (John XIII. 35.). Finally, the necessity of the love for our neighbour ought to compel us, as it were, to it; for without it, we cannot be saved. He that loveth not, says St. John, abideth in death, (I John III. 14.) and he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not? (I John IV. 20.) because he transgresses one of the greatest commandments of God, and does not fulfill the law. (Rom. XIII, 10.)

What is necessary to make the love of our neighbour meritorious?

It must tend to God, that is, we must love our neighbour only in and for God, because God commands it, and it is pleasing to Him. For to love our neighbour on account of a natural inclination, or self-interest, or some other still less honourable reason, is only a natural, animal love, in no wise different from the love of the heathens; for the heathens also love and salute those who love and salute them in turn. (Matt. V. 46.)

PETITION. O my God, Father of mercy! give me a loving and compassionate heart, which will continually impel me to do good to my neighbour for Thy sake, so that I may merit the same from Thy mercy.

What is understood from this day's gospel in a higher and more spiritual sense?

According to the interpretation of the Fathers, our father Adam, and hence the whole human race is to be understood by the one who had fallen among robbers. The human race, which through the disobedience of Adam fell into the power of Satan and his angels, was robbed of original justice and the grace of God, and moreover, was wounded and weakened in all the powers of the soul by evil concupiscence. The priest and The Levite who represent the Old Law, would not and could not repair this misfortune; but Christ, the true Samaritan, embraced the interests of the wounded man, inasmuch as He poured the oil of His grace, and the wine of His blood into the wounds of man's soul, and thus healed him, and inasmuch as He led him by baptism into the inn of His Church, and there entrusted him to His priests for further care and nursing. Thank Christ, the good Samaritan, for this great love and care for you, and endeavour to make good use of His blessings by your cooperation.

INSTRUCTION ON THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION

He bound up his wounds pouring in oil and wine. (Luke X. 34.)

The conduct of the Samaritan in regard to the wounded man may be viewed as a figure of the holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction, in which Christ, the true Samaritan, by means of the holy oil and the prayer of the priest, His representative, dispenses His grace to the sick for the welfare of the soul and often of the body, provided the sick place no obstacle in His way.

Is Extreme Unction a Sacrament?

Yes; because it was instituted by Christ, and by it grace is conveyed to the sick through an outward sign.

Did Christ institute this Sacrament?

He did, for He sent His disciples to anoint the sick with oil and heal them, as the Evangelist writes: Going forth they preached that men should do penance: and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. (Mark VI. 12,13.) We must believe that this unction was not invented by the apostles, but ordained by the Lord. This is confirmed by the Council of Trent, which says: (Sess. XIV. C. I.) “This sacred Unction of the sick was instituted by Christ our Lord, as indicated by St. Mark, but recommended to the faithful and promulgated by the Apostle St. James, a relative of our Lord.” “Is any man,” he says, “sick among you? let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven. (James V. 14,15.) St. James could not have said this, if he had not known the institution and command of Christ: to it apostolic and uninterrupted tradition also gives testimony.

What is the external sign of this Sacrament?

The anointing with holy oil, which is blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday, and the prayer of the priest.

What graces does this Sacrament produce in the sick man?

The Catechism of the Council of Trent enumerates the following: first, it remits sins, especially venial sins. Its primary object is not to remit mortal sin. For this the Sacrament of penance was instituted, as was that of baptism for the remission of original sin; secondly, it removes the languor and infirmity entailed by sin, with all other inconveniences. The time most seasonable for the application of this cure is, when we are visited by some severe malady, which threatens to prove fatal; for nature dreads no earthly visitation so much as death; and this dread is considerably augmented by the recollection of our past sins, particularly if the mind is harrowed by the poignant reproaches of conscience; for it is written: “They shall come with fear at the thought of their sins, and their iniquities shall stand against them to convict them.” A source of alarm still more distressing is the awful reflection, that, in a few moments, we shall stand before the judgment-seat of God, whose justice will award

that sentence, which our lives have deserved. The terror inspired by these considerations frequently agitates the soul with the most awful apprehensions; and to calm this terror nothing can be so efficacious as the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. It quiets our fear, illumines the gloom in which the soul is enveloped, fills it with pious and holy joy, and enables us to await with cheerfulness the coming of the Lord; thirdly, it fortifies us against the violent assaults of Satan. The enemy of mankind never ceases to seek our ruin: and if it be possible to deprive us of all hope of mercy, he more than ever increases his efforts, when he sees us approach our last end. This Sacrament, therefore, enables the recipient to fight resolutely and successfully against him; fourthly, it effects the recovery of health, if advantageous to the sick person.

What intentions must the sick man have, in order to gain these graces?

Since the Sacraments work the more powerfully the better the preparation made by those who receive them, and since by this Sacrament those sins are remitted which we have forgotten, or have not sufficiently known, the sick man should, therefore, receive beforehand, if it be possible, the holy Sacrament of Penance and the blessed Eucharist; or if this cannot be done, he should make an act of perfect contrition, and have the wish to confess if possible. He should, therefore, not defer the reception of this Sacrament to the last moment, when the violence of sickness has already taken away the use of his reason and senses, but he should ask for this Sacrament whilst yet enjoying the use of reason, so that he may receive it with devotion and salutary result.

Is this Sacrament necessary for salvation?

No; yet we should not neglect in case of sickness to partake of the excellent fruits of this Sacrament since the Council of Trent teaches: "To despise so great a Sacrament would indeed be a great sin, an insult to the Holy Ghost." (Sess. XIV. C. 3.)

Can we receive this Sacrament more than once?

We can receive it as often as we are in danger of death by sickness; but we must bear in mind that we can be anointed only once in the same sickness.

Why is this Sacrament called Extreme Unction?

Because among all the Sacraments which our Lord and Saviour ordained in His Church, this one is the last we are to receive. But from this it does not follow, as so many believe that one who receives this Sacrament must die soon, but it will rather

become a means of salvation for their souls, and if it be for their eternal welfare, will also restore their bodily health.

What does the priest do when he enters the house of the sick person?

He wishes peace to the house, and prays that God may send His angels to protect its inmates, that He may drive away the enemy, console the sick, strengthen and give him health.

Why does the priest sprinkle the sick person with holy water?

To remind him that he should implore of God the forgiveness of his sins, with tears of contrition, in order to dispel the influence of the evil spirit.

Why does the priest exhort those present to pray while he administers the Sacrament?

That God may grant through their prayers whatever may contribute to the welfare of the sick man's body and soul.

For what does the priest pray when he imposes his hands on the head of the sick person?

He begs that God, through the imposition of hands and by the intercession of all the saints, may take the sick person under His protection, and destroy the power of the devil, who attacks one particularly in the hour of death.

What does the priest say at the anointing with oil?

He begs that God, through this unction and through His gracious mercy, may forgive the sick person all the sins which he has committed with his five senses. At the same time the sick person should, in a spirit of humility and with a repentant and contrite heart, implore of God the forgiveness of all his sins.

Why does the priest present the sick person a crucifix to kiss?

To remind him that, like Jesus, he should suffer with patience, and place his whole confidence in the infinite merits of the Crucified, and be willing to suffer and die for love of Him. For this reason, the crucifix ought to be presented often to the dying person.

What should the sick person do after he has received the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?

He should use all his remaining strength to thank God sincerely for the benefit he has received, commend himself to the wounds and the blood of Jesus, and meditate with quiet recollection on death and eternity.

How consoling does our holy Catholic Church appear in the continual use of this Sacrament! Having, like a tender mother, received man by holy Baptism under her maternal care; by holy Confirmation given him the necessary weapons against sin, heresy, and infidelity; by the holy Sacrament of Penance purified him from stains and sins; and by the blessed Eucharist nourished him with the bread of life, enriched him with virtues, and secured him against falling, she does not desert him even in the last, all-important moment of death. In that dangerous hour when the dying person, forsaken by all, often by his most intimate friends, or looked upon with fear, lies on his bed of pain, when behind him time ceases and before him a certain, though unknown eternity opens itself, when Satan brings all his resources into play, in order to ruin his soul, and the thought of the coming judgment makes the heart tremble, - in this terrible hour the faithful mother, the Catholic Church, does not abandon him; she sends the priest, her servant, like a consoling angel to his couch, to encourage the sufferer and strengthen the fearful with the divine word, to cleanse the sinner and reconcile him with God by the Sacrament of Penance, to fortify the weak and nourish him with the bread of life, to strengthen the combatant with the holy oil, thus providing him with all the means of grace which Jesus obtained for His Church, to conduct his soul before the face of the eternal Judge, there to find grace and mercy.

Considering this, dear Christian, should you not feel happy to be a member of this Church, should you not thank God continually, and adhere faithfully to a Church, in which it is indeed not so pleasant to live, as in the bosom of irreligion, but in which it is good to die!

1. A detailed Instruction on the Love of God may be found under the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost. Here we treat only of the love of our neighbour.

INSTRUCTION ON THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Pray today at the Introit of the Mass with the, Church against her enemies: Have regard, O Lord, to Thy conversant, and forsake not to the end the souls of Thy poor:

arise, O Lord, and judge Thy cause, and forget not the voices of them that seek Thee. O God, why hast Thou cast us off unto the end: why is Thy wrath enkindled against the sheep of Thy pasture? (Ps. LXXIII.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT Almighty and ever-lasting God, give unto us an increase of faith, hope and charity; and that we may obtain that which Thou doth promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command. Thro’.

EPISTLE (Gal. III. 16-22.) Brethren, To Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed. He saith not, and to his seeds, as of many, but as of one: And to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say, that the testament which was confirmed by God, the law which was made after four hundred and thirty years doth not disannul, or make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. But God gave it to Abraham by promise. Why, then, was the law? It was set because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom He made the promise, being ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not of one: but God is one. Was the law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could give life, verily justice should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

EXPLANATION St. Paul in this epistle proves to the Galatians who were misled by false doctrines, and adhered too much to the Jewish Law, that they could be saved only through a lively faith in Christ, enriched by good works. Therefore, he says that the great promises, made by God to Abraham, referred to Christ, through whom all nations of the earth, who would believe in Him, would be blessed and saved. (Gen. XII. 3., and XXII. 18.) The law, indeed, does not annul these promises, since it rather leads to their attainment, yet it must be placed after them because of their advantages, nay, even cease to exist, because the promises are now fulfilled, Christ, the promised Messiah, has really, appeared and liberated man, who could not be freed from their sins by the Jewish law.

ASPIRATION O, let us be grateful for this promise, yet more, however, for the Incarnation of Christ, whereby this promise has been fulfilled.

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Luke XVII. 11-19.) At that time, As Jesus was going to Jerusalem, He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee: and as He entered into a certain town, there met Him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off, and lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us. Whom, when, He saw, He said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to

pass, that as they went, they were made clean. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God, and he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said: Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is no one found to return, and give glory to God, but this stranger. And He said to him: Arise go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole.

What may be understood by leprosy in a spiritual sense?

Sin, particularly impurity, by which the soul of man is stained much more than is the body by the most horrid leprosy: In the Jewish law (Lev. XIII.) three kinds of leprosy are enumerated, viz: the leprosy of the flesh, of garments, and of houses. Spiritually, the impure are afflicted with the, leprosy of the flesh, who easily infect others, and are therefore to be most carefully avoided. The leprosy of garments consists in extravagance of dress and scandalous fashions, whereby not only individuals, but also whole communities are brought to poverty, and many lose their innocence. The leprosy of houses, finally, is to be found in those places, where scandalous servants are retained, where nocturnal gatherings of both sexes are encouraged, where, obscenities are indulged in, where unbecoming dances and plays are held, and filthy actions performed; where married people allow themselves liberties in presence of others, and give scandal to their household, where they take their small children and even such as already have the use of reason, with themselves to bed, where they permit children of different sexes to sleep together, &c. Such houses are to be avoided, since they are infected with the pestilential leprosy of sin, and woe to them who voluntarily remain in them.

Why did the lepers remain standing afar off?

Because it was thus commanded in the law of Moses, (Lev. XIII. 46.) so that no one would be infected by them. From this we learn that we must carefully avoid scandalous persons and houses; for he who converses with lewd, vain and unchaste persons, will soon become like them. (Ecclus. XIII. 1.)

Why did Christ send the lepers to the priests?

This He did to show the honour due to the sacerdotal dignity and to the law of God: for it was commanded, (Lev. XIV.) that the lepers should show themselves to the priests, in order to be declared by them clean or unclean; He did it to try the faith, the confidence, and the obedience of these lepers: for Christ did not wish to heal them upon their mere prayer, but their cure was to cost them something, and they were to

merit it by their cooperation. Their purification, therefore, was the reward of their obedience and faith. Further, Christ sent these lepers to the priests to show figuratively, as it were, that he who wishes to be freed from the leprosy of sin, must contritely approach the priest, sincerely confess his sins, and be cleansed by him by means of absolution.

Why did Christ ask for the others, who were also made clean?

To show how much ingratitude displeases Him. Although He silently bore all other injuries, yet He could not permit this ingratitude to pass unresented. So great, therefore, is the sin of ingratitude, hateful alike to God and man! “Ingratitude,” says St. Bernard, “is an enemy of the soul, which destroys merits, corrupts virtues, and impedes graces: it is a heavy wind, which dries up the fountain of goodness, the dew of mercy, and the stream of the grace of God.” “The best means,” says St. Chrysostom, “of preserving benefits, is the remembrance of them and gratitude for them, and nothing is more acceptable to God than a grateful soul; for, while He daily overloads us with innumerable benefits, He asks nothing for them, but that we thank Him.” Therefore, my dear Christian, by no means forget to thank God in the morning and evening, before and after meals. As often as you experience the blessing of God in your house, in your children, and your whole property, thank God, but particularly when you take in the fruits of the earth; (Lev. XXIII. 10.) by this you will always bring upon yourself new blessings and new graces. “We cannot think, say, or write anything better or more pleasing to God,” says St. Augustine, “than: Thanks be to God.”

ASPIRATION O most gracious Jesus! who, as an example for us, wast always grateful to Thy Heavenly, Father, as long as Thou didst live upon earth, grant, that I may always thank God for all His benefits, according to Thy example and the teaching of Thy servant St. Paul. (Col. III. 17.)

INSTRUCTION ON THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDER

Go, show yourselves to the priests. (Luke XVII. 14.)

Such honour did God show to the priests of the Old Law that He sent the lepers to them, although they could in no wise contribute to the removal of leprosy. What honour, therefore, do the priests of the New Law deserve, who through the sacerdotal

ordination, have not only received from God the power to free mankind from the leprosy of the soul, but also far higher privileges.

Is the priesthood a special and holy state, selected by God?

Yes; this is evident from the writings of the Old as well as of the New Testament, and is confirmed by holy, apostolic tradition. In the Mosaic Law God Himself selected a particular race - Aaron and his descendants - from among the tribes of Juda, to perform solemnly the public service, to pray for the people, and instruct them in matters of religion, (Exod. XXVIII. I.; Lev. IX. 7; King's II. Z8.) but particularly to offer the daily sacrifices, (Lev. I. II; Num. XVIII.) for which offices they were consecrated by different ceremonies, ordained by God, which ceremonies lasted seven days. (Exod. XXVIII. 4. &c. ib. XXIX.) Besides these, God instituted a sort of minor priesthood, Levites, for the service of the temple and of God; (Num. III. 12; VIII. 6-18.) they were of the tribe of Levi, and received no land like the other tribes, but lived on the offerings and tithes, and were consecrated like the priests. (Num. XVIII. 21.; VIII. 66-26.) This priesthood, an emblem of the real priesthood of the New Testament, was not abolished by Christ, but He brought it to its fulfillment and completed it, since He did not come to take away, but fulfill the law. For this reason, Christ selected twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples from among the faithful, at the commencement of His public life, and He said to them: I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit. (John XV. 16.) He gave them power to free man from sin, to sanctify, and reconcile him with God. (Matt. XVIII. Z8.) He commanded them - to preach His gospel to all nations, (Matt. XXVII. 18-20.) and to offer up His holy Sacrifice. (Luke XXII, 19.) Just as the apostles were chosen by Christ, so afterwards by the Holy Ghost. St. Paul was chosen to be an apostle, and he calls himself a minister of Christ and a dispenser of the mysteries of God, (I Cor. IV. I) and who together with Barnabas was ordained. (Acts XIII. 2, 3.) In the same manner the apostles chose their successors, and ordained them, (I Tim. IV, 14.; II Tim. I. 6.) and even appointed seven deacons, as assistants in the priestly office. (Acts VI. 1-3.) From these clear testimonies of holy Writ, it is evident that, as God in the Old, so Christ in the New Testament chose a particular class of men, and established certain grades among them, for the government of His Church, for the service of God, and the salvation of the faithful, as holy, apostolic tradition also confirms. Already the earliest Fathers, Ignatius and Clement, disciples of the apostles, write of bishops, priests, and deacons, who are destined for the service of God and the faithful. Subdeacons, ostiariates, lectors, exorcists, and acolytes, are mentioned by St. Gregory of Nazianzen, St. Justin, St. Cyprian, and many others, but

particularly by the Council of Carthage in the year 398, which also gives the manner of ordaining priests.

The heretics, indeed, contend that the Roman Catholic Church robs the true believers of their dignity, since she grants the priesthood only to a certain class, and give as proofs of their assertion two texts, where St. Peter (I Pet. II. 9.) calls the faithful a kingly priesthood, and where St. John (Apoc. I. 6.) says that Christ made us kings and priests. But these texts speak only of an internal priesthood, according to which every Christian, sanctified by baptism, who is in the state of grace, and consequently justified, and a living member of Christ, the great High-Priest, should offer spiritual sacrifices, that is, good works, such as prayer, mortification, charity, penance &c., on the altar of the heart, as also St. Peter, (I Pet II. 5.) St. Paul, (Rom. XII. I.) and David (Ps. 1. 19.) teach. If the assertion of the heretics were true that all believers are priests, why did God in the Old Law institute an especial priesthood, why did Christ and the apostles choose suitable men for the service of God? If all believers must be priests, why are not all kings, since St. John says, that Christ has made us kings? God, on the contrary, severely punished those who presumed to arrogate to themselves a priestly office, as He did to King Ozias, who was afflicted with leprosy because he burnt incense in the temple, which the priests alone were permitted to do. (II Paralip. XXVI. 18. 19.)

Of course heretics must make this assertion; for since they say that Scripture is the only rule of faith, and that everyone can explain it, for what purpose are preachers necessary? And since they have no sacrifice, and with the exception of baptism, no Sacraments, for what purpose should they want priests? But since the sacrifice of Jesus is to continue in the Catholic Church until the end of time, since all the Sacraments instituted by Christ are still dispensed by her, and the command of Christ to teach all nations, must be carried out by her, therefore, there must be priests chosen and destined, who will perform the ministry of the Lord, and these must not only be chosen, but also be consecrated for this by a special Sacrament.

What is Holy Order?

Holy Order is a Sacrament by which Bishops, Priests, &c. are ordained, and receive grace and power to perform the duties belonging to their charge.

What is the external sign, by which grace is communicated to the priests?

The imposition of the bishop's hands, the presentation of the chalice with bread and wine, and the words by which power is given to offer the Sacrifice of the New Law,

changing, bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, and to forgive or retain sins. (Conc. Flor. in Decr. Eug. et Trid Sess. 14. C. 3. de poen. et Sess. 22. C. 1.)

When did Christ institute this Sacrament?

At the Last Supper, when, having changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood, He said: Do this, for a commemoration of Me, and when after His Resurrection He said to them: As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you (to free man from sin and to sanctify him). When He had said this, He breathed on them: and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. (John XX. 21. 22.) The power to forgive and retain sins He gave them when He said: Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. (John XX. 23.)

Has Holy Order always been regarded as a Sacrament in the Church?

Yes, for St. Paul admonishes his disciple Timothy (I Tim, IV. 14.) not to neglect the grace conferred upon him by the imposition of hands, and in another place he admonishes him, (II Tim. I. 6.) to stir up the grace which was in him by the imposition of his (St. Paul's) hands. From this it follows, that St. Paul believed that the external sign of the imposition of hands of the bishops conferred a particular grace, wherein, indeed, the essence of a Sacrament consists. Therefore, the Council of Trent (Sess. 23. de ord. can. 3.) declares those anathema, who contend, that Holy Order is not a real and true Sacrament, instituted by Christ, but only a human invention, or a certain form of electing the ministers of the Word of God and the Sacraments.

Are those called to the priesthood ordained at once?

No, they are not admitted to Holy Order until they have undergone a rigid examination regarding their vocation, moral conduct, and their knowledge of the sacred science.

How many degrees are there in Holy Order?

In Holy Order there are seven degrees: four lesser, and three greater. Of the lesser, the **first** is that of Porter, whose office is to keep the keys of the Church, sacristy, treasury, and to see that due respect is observed in the house of God: to him the bishop says, in his ordination: So behave yourself as to give an account to God of what is kept under your charge.

2. That of Lector; his office is to read aloud the lessons of the Old and New Testament, which belong to the divine office, and to instruct the ignorant in the

rudiments of the Christian religion: the bishop gives him a book containing those things, and charges him faithfully and profitably to fulfill his office.

3. That of Exorcist; to him is given power to exorcise possessed persons: the bishop gives a book of exorcisms, and bids him receive the power to lay his hands on such as are possessed, whether baptized or catechumens.

4. That of Acolyte; his office is to assist the deacon and subdeacon at the altar; to carry the lights, to prepare the wine and water for consecration, and attend to the divine mysteries: the bishop gives him a wax candle, with two little cruets, bidding him light the candle, and serve wine and water in the cruets.

The **first** of the greater is the order of subdeacon; he serves the deacon; prepares the altar, the chalice, the bread, and the wine; he reads the epistle aloud at high Mass; the bishop before he ordains him declares that none are to receive this order, but those who will observe perpetual continency; he then gives him a chalice, paten, basin and towel, two little cruets, and the book of epistles; bids him consider his ministry, and behave so as to please God.

The **second** of the greater orders is that of Deacon; his office is immediately to assist the bishop or priest at high Mass; and the administration of the sacraments. He reads the Gospel aloud at high Mass; he gives the cup when the sacrament of the Eucharist is given in both kinds; he may administer baptism, and preach the Gospel, by commission. To him the bishop gives a book of Gospels, with power to read it in the Church of God.

The **third** is that of Priesthood, which has two degrees of power and dignity: that of bishops, and that of priests. The office of a priest is to consecrate and offer the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ, under the forms of bread and wine; to administer all the sacraments, except Confirmation and Holy Order; to preach the Gospel, to bless the people, and to conduct them in the way to life eternal; as also to bless such things as are not reserved to the benediction of the bishop. The bishop, when he ordains a priest, anoints his hands with oil; he gives him the paten with bread upon it, and a chalice with wine, with power to offer sacrifice for the living and the dead; then he lays his hands upon him and says: Receive the Holy Ghost, whose sins &c., and performs several other ceremonies.

Learn from this instruction to honour and respect the priests, whose dignity as representatives of God, and dispensers of His mysteries, surpasses all human dignity; upon whom a load, too heavy even for angels, as St. Chrysostom says, has been

imposed, namely, the care of your immortal soul; who daily enter the sanctuary before the face of the Lord, to offer the immaculate Lamb of God for the forgiveness of our sins; to whom Jesus confided the merits of His most precious blood, in order to cleanse your soul therewith in the tribunal of penance, if you confess your sins contritely; of whom God will one day ask the strictest account. Honour, therefore, these ministers of God, pray daily for the assistance of heaven in their difficult calling; particularly on the Ember-days implore God, that He may send pious and zealous priests; and if, perhaps, you know a bad priest, do not despise his high dignity which is indelibly imprinted on him, have compassion on him, pray for him, and consider that Jesus has said of such: “All things whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not.” (Matt. XXIII. 3.)

1. See the [Instruction on Sacrifice on the fifth Sunday after Pentecost](#), and on Rational Worship on the first Sunday after Epiphany.

INSTRUCTION ON THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

At the Introit of the Mass excite in your heart an ardent desire for heaven, with these words:

INTROIT Behold, O God, our protector, and look on the face of Thy Christ, for better is one day, in Thy courts above thousands. How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. (Ps. LXXXIII.) Glory etc.

COLLECT Keep, We beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy Church with Thy perpetual favour; and because without Thee the weakness of man is ready to fall, may it be withheld by Thy aid from all things hurtful, and devoted to all things profitable to salvation. Thro’.

EPISTLE (Gal. V. 16-24.) Brethren, Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh: for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: for these are contrary one to another: so that you do not the things that you would. But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I foretell to you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the

kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.

What is it to walk in the spirit?

It is to obey the inspirations of the Holy Ghost always, and in all things. He who does this, says St. Paul, will not do the evil works of the flesh, which are here enumerated, but he will rather suppress and mortify all sensual desires, in this manner crucify his flesh together with its vices and lusts, and make himself worthy of the fruits of the Holy Ghost, which are also mentioned; he will belong to Christ, and secure for himself eternal happiness. On the contrary, he who lives according to the flesh, that is, gives way to the desires of the flesh, has no hope of salvation.

Is it not strange, that all Christians wish to belong to Christ and become heirs of His kingdom, but are unwilling to crucify the flesh and its lusts, though Christ says to all; If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. (Matt XVI. 24.)

ASPIRATION Intercede for me, O St. Paul, that God may give me grace to crucify my flesh with its lusts, that I may have part with thee in Christ:

Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Matt. VI. 24-33.) At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will sustain the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon. Therefore, I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air; for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment, why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin; but I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. Now, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which is today, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice; and all these things shall be added unto you.

What is meant by serving God?

Doing the will of God, or performing faithfully and zealously all that God asks of us according to our age and condition, and for love of Him.

Who are the two masters whom we cannot serve alike?

God and Mammon or riches, whereby also, the other goods and pleasures of the world are understood. These we cannot serve at the same time, because they command things diametrically opposed to each other; for instance, God prohibits usury, theft, deceit, &c.; to which the desire for wealth impels us. God commands that we keep holy Sundays and holy days, and devote them to His service; the desire for riches tempts man to omit religious worship and to seek temporal gain; it disturbs him even in church, so that he is only present with his body, but absent in mind with his temporal goods and business.

To whom can riches be useful?

To those who, like the saints, perform works of mercy with them, and thus lay up treasures for themselves in heaven.

Why does Christ call our attention to the birds of the air and the lilies of the field?

To, excite in us confidence in the providence of God, which preserves even the birds and the flowers. Surely, if God feeds the young ravens which cry to Him; (Ps. CXLVI. 9.) if He nourishes the birds which neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns; if He vests the flowers of the field so beautifully, how much more will He care for man whom He has made to His own image and likeness, and adopted as His child, if he only acts as such, keeps His commandments, and always entertains a filial confidence in Him.

Should we, therefore, lay aside all care and never work?

This does not follow from what has been said. Christ condemns only the superfluous cares, which cause man to forget God and to neglect the salvation of his soul. Besides, God has Himself ordered (Gen. III. 17-19.) that man should obtain the fruits of the earth with much labour, that he should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. St. Paul says: If any man will not work, neither let him eat. (II Thess. III. 10.)

What should preserve us from superfluous cares?

A firm and lively faith, that God can and will help us. That He can is evident, because He is almighty; that His will is certain, because He promises it in so many passages of Holy Writ, and because He is infinitely faithful to all His promises. Christ encourages us to this lively confidence with these, words: All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive and they shall come unto you. (Mark XI. 24.) Therefore, the apostle also commands us to throw all cares upon the Lord, who provides for us. (I Pet. V. 7.) And why should God not care for us, since He sent us His Son and with Him all; for which reason St. Augustine says: “How can you doubt that God will give you good things, since He vouchsafed to assume evil for you!”

PRAYER O Lord Jesus! give me a firm confidence in Thy Divine Providence, and daily increase it in me, that when in necessity I may confidently believe if I seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, the rest shall be added unto me.

CONSOLATION IN POVERTY

Be not solicitous for your life. (Matt. VI. 25.)

If you were born in poverty, or accidentally, or through your own fault have become poor, be consoled, because God has sent you this poverty for your own good; for good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches are, from God. (Ecclus. XI-14.). Therefore, receive it from the hand of God without impatience or murmuring, as a means by which He wishes to keep you from forgetting Him, which would, perhaps, happen if He were to bless you with temporal prosperity. Riches are a source of destruction for many. If you have brought poverty upon yourself by a licentious and sinful life, receive it in a spirit of penance as a just and salutary chastisement, and thank God that He gives you an opportunity to do penance for your sins. But if you have become poor through no fault of your own, be consoled by the example of the saints, of whom St. Paul says: they bear the unjust taking away of their goods with joy, because they know that a better and an unchangeable treasure is in store for them in heaven. (Hebr. X. 34.) But you should particularly take courage from the example of Christ who, being rich, became poor for us, (II Cor. VIII. 9.) and had not a place whereon to lay His head. (Matt. VIII. 20.)

In your distress say with job: The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: as it pleased the Lord, so it is done: blessed be the name of the Lord. Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. (Job. I. 21.) Fear not my son,

says Tobias, we lead indeed a poor life, but we shall have many good things if we fear God, and depart from all sins, and do that which is good. (Tob. IV. 23.) To serve God and to be content with few things always brings rich reward, if not in this, at least in the next life. Therefore, Christ promised the kingdom of heaven to the poor in spirit, that is, not only to the humble, but also to the poor who imitate Christ in all patience and resignation. Follow, therefore, the poor Jesus, follow His poor mother, by imitating their example, and you will possess the kingdom of heaven.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING USURY

You cannot serve God and Mammon. (Matt. VI. 24.)

Usury is to demand more than legal interest from our neighbour, to whom we have lent something, or who is otherwise indebted to us. Those are also commonly called usurers, who, in times of want, hoard up necessary food, such as grain, flour, &c., and only sell it at an exorbitant price; or who buy up all such articles to sell them to the needy for enormous prices. This is a grievous sin, and usurers are threatened with eternal death, for Christ expressly prohibits lending with usury. (Luke VI. 34, 35.)

Usurers are the real leeches of the poor, whom they rob of their sweat and blood, and since they transgress the natural law, but still more the divine, which commands us to love our neighbour, and be merciful to the needy, they will surely not possess the kingdom of heaven. Would to God, the hard-hearted sinner might consider this, and take to heart the words of Christ: What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul (Matt. XVI. 26.)

INSTRUCTION ON THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Introit of the Mass is a fervent prayer; which may be said in every necessity and adversity:

INTROIT Bow down thine ear, O Lord; to me, and hear me: save Thy servant, O my God, that hopeth in Thee: have mercy on me, O Lord, for I have cried to Thee all the day. Give joy to the soul of Thy servant: for to Thee, O Lord, I have lifted up my soul. (Ps. IXXXV.) Glory etc.

COLLECT Let Thy continued pity, O Lord, cleanse and defend Thy Church: and because without Thee it cannot abide in safety, govern it ever by Thy gift. Thro'.

EPISTLE (Gal. V. 25, 26.; vi. I-10.) Brethren, If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be made desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ. For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let everyone prove his own work, and so he shall have glory in himself only, and not in another. For every one shall bear his own burden. And let him that is instructed in the word, communicate to him that instructeth him, in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption: but he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting. And in doing good, let us not fail: for in due time we shall reap, not failing. Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

EXPLANATION This epistle is taken, like that of the Sunday before last, from the epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians, in which St. Paul shows them the insufficiency of the Jewish law, and that they can only be saved by a lively faith in Christ, but now he admonishes them to the performance of good works. You now live, he tells them, in the Spirit, that is, the Holy Ghost animates your heart by His grace, enlightens, confirms, and inflames you, admonishes and teaches you, impels your heart to do good; you must, therefore, also regulate your external conduct accordingly, and in particular devote yourself to the practice of humility and charity, as the foundations of a truly spiritual life. Humility must teach and move you to think little of yourself, to avoid vain glory, and not to confide in your own strength. But charity should impel you to be meek and compassionate to all, even sinners, to correct them charitably, and lead them back to the path of virtue; since he who is harsh to the erring, despises and treats them roughly, is often permitted by God to fall into the same, nay, even into greater sins.

Particularly you must show your charity one for another, that one bears the burdens of the other: that you bear the faults and imperfections of others just as patiently as you wish others to bear with your own imperfections; thus you will fulfill the law of Christ, which commands us to love our neighbour; you will prevent many sins which are occasioned by considering yourself perfect, raising yourself above others, criticising their failings, and causing disturbance. True glory consists in knowing ourselves, our faults and evil inclinations, and in eradicating them. Be grateful to those who instruct you in the word of God, and give to them willingly of your earthly possessions. What you sow, you shall reap; if you only follow the dictates of the flesh, do not mortify yourself, do not correct your failings, and indulge your sinful appetites, you will one day reap death, destruction and damnation, whereas, on the contrary, if you follow the dictates of the Holy Ghost, you will reap of the Spirit of life.

Let us obey this doctrine, for it is of interest to us, and impress deeply on our heart that without mortification of body and soul we cannot be saved.

ASPIRATION. O. St. Paul! beg of God the grace for me, that I may always walk in humility, and the love of my neighbour, particularly in bearing with his imperfections and failings, and thus fulfill the law of Christ in this as in all things.

Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Luke VII. 11-16.) At that time, Jesus went into a city called Naim: and there went with Him His disciples, and a great multitude. And when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a great multitude of the city was with her. Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, said to her: Weep not. And He came near, and touched the bier. And they that carried it stood still. And He said: Young man, I say to thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on them all; and they glorified God, saying: A great prophet is risen up amongst us, and God hath visited His people.

Why did Christ show compassion to this widow?

To convince us that God takes sorrowful and destitute widows under His protection; and is to them a consoler and helper; and to teach us to do the same. Woe, therefore, to those who oppress them and cause them to weep. The tears and cries of widows will ascend to God, who will terribly punish the injuries inflicted upon them. (Exod xxii. 22. 23.)

Christ had still other reasons for compassion, for He saw in this deceased youth the death of sinners, and in the afflicted mother the pain which the Church experiences at the spiritual loss of so many of her children. Should this not also awaken our sympathy since it was the principal cause which moved our Saviour to compassion. If we are faithful children of our mother, the Church, it is impossible for us not to share her sorrow, and we would surely not be her children, if we could contemplate without sorrow the multitude who daily die the death of sin, and thus separated from the living body of Christ, hasten to eternal destruction. O let us with the Church unceasingly, ask Jesus, that He raise sinners from their spiritual death, enlighten those in error so that all recognize the truth, find, and walk the path Which leads to life!

Why did Christ say to the widow: Weep not?

He wished to moderate her excessive sorrow, and to teach us that we should not mourn for the loss of our relatives, like the heathens who have no hope of resurrection to eternal life. (Thess. iv. 1 a.) Resignation to the will of God, with prayer and good works, will be of more use to the dead than many tears.

What else do we learn from this gospel?

That no one, however young and healthy, will escape death, wherefore we should always be prepared to die.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING DEATH

IF there were locked up in prison several hundred persons, on whom sentence of death had irrevocably been pronounced, yet who knew not the day or hour of their execution; if one after the other, and often he who least expected it, were taken out to be executed; would not each one's heart tremble, whenever the prison door opened? Now the irrevocable sentence of death is pronounced on us all; we are all locked up in our bodies, as in a prison; (Ps. cxiv. 8.) one after the other is called hence, yet we do not regard it. We live as though we could live forever; we think only of the body, but for the soul nothing is done, except that we load it with sins and vices.

Is this rational? The body will be food for worms, but the soul (without knowing when) will travel into the house of eternity, to which place she must bring treasures of good works, in order to live happy forever. Who would, therefore, be so foolish as to care only for the body during life, and neglect the salvation of the soul?

O man, says St. Francis of Sales, (Phil. part. i. chap. 13.) represent to yourself in lively colours, that at your death the world will cease to exist with respect to you. In that last hour the pleasures, the vanities, the riches, the honours, the friendships, and all that was dear to you, will disappear before your eyes as so many shadows. O fool that I am! you will then say, for what trifles and fooleries have I lost all! On the contrary, piety, good works, penance, etc., will appear pleasant to you, and you will exclaim: O, why did I not travel on this blessed road. Then the sins which you now consider as mere trifles, will seem to you like mountains, and all that you thought you had accomplished as, great things, with regard to piety, will seem to you very little.

What terrible fear will then seize your soul, when she must travel alone into the bottomless abyss of eternity which, as St. Bernard says, devours all possible, imaginable ages, and of which St. Gregory says, that we can easier say what it is not than what it is. What terrors will befall her, when she must appear before the tribunal of that God whom she never really loved and honoured in her life-time and before whom she must now give the strictest account, and hear an irrevocable and just sentence!

Should not these thoughts make an impression upon you? How can you escape this terrible future? By living now, as you would wish to have lived at the hour of death. Die daily with St. Paul by crucifying the flesh and its lusts and by voluntarily withdrawing your heart from the world, its pomps and vanities, before death will do this by violence.

RESOLUTION O world! because I cannot know the hour, in which I must leave you, I will not be attached to you. O you dear friends and relatives, you, too, I will in future love only with a holy inclination, directed to God, which will not cease with death, but remain forever. O Lord! help me, that I may die totally to myself and the world, and live only for Thee, and partake of eternal happiness.

INSTRUCTION ON THE CEREMONIES USED AT FUNERALS

Behold, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and a great multitude of the city was with her. (Luke vii. 12.)

OF these people who accompanied the funeral of the youth, we should learn to pay the last honours to the dead, and follow their bodies to the grave. This is a meritorious work, one pleasing to God, if it be not performed from vanity and self-interest, but for love of God and the deceased, with the charitable intention of assisting him by prayers. Therefore, those do very wrong, who from worldly motives either omit this good work entirely, or during the funeral procession indulge in idle talk and deny the deceased even a short prayer.

Why is a cross carried before the corpse?

By this is indicated that the deceased during life professed Christ, died believing in Him, and hoping for resurrection through Him.

Why are lighted candles carried before the bier?

To represent the desire of the Church that the deceased through the grace of God may be received into eternal light. This custom is very ancient; wax-candles and torches, together with prayer and great solemnity were made use of at the burial of St. Cyprian who was beheaded for Christ's sake, in the year 258 after Christ. (Ruinart.)

Why are the coffin and the grave sprinkled with holy water?

In order, as St. Thomas of Aquin (Lib. iii. art. 21.) remarks, to implore God, on account of the prayers which the Church says when she blesses the water, that the souls of the faithful may be cleansed from all stains, and may receive consolation and refreshment in the tortures which they may still have to suffer.

Why are the body and the grave incensed?

By this the Church indicates that the deceased by his Christian vocation was a good odour of Christ, (ii Cor. ii. 14, 15.) and admonishes the faithful that their prayers should ascend like incense to heaven for the deceased.

Why are Psalms and other sacred canticles sung?

This is done to remind us of the teaching of St. Paul, (I Thess. iv. 12.) not to be excessively sorrowful for the loss of the deceased, like the heathens who have no hope of eternal life. We also signify, thereby, that we congratulate the dead for the peace which they now enjoy. (Apoc. xiv. 13.) This custom, as St. Jerome shows, (Ep. 53.) is derived from the apostles, who interred St. Stephen, singing Psalms and hymns of praise.

Why are the bells rung?

To invite the faithful to the funeral and to pray for the dead who, during lifetime, was called very often by the same bells, prayed with and for us during religious worship, and who is not separated from us by death.

Why are the bodies of the faithful buried with the head towards the East, and those of the priests towards the West?

The faithful are buried towards the East, whence the sun rises, to indicate, that they are waiting for Christ who is called the Orient from on High, (Luke i. 78.) and whose voice they will hear at the end of the world, when He calls them to the resurrection; the priests towards the West, as a sign that on the day of judgment they will be placed opposite to the souls confided to them, to give an account of their charge and to bear judgment for or against them.

Why is a cross or monument erected over the grave?

To show that the deceased was a follower of Christ, the Crucified, to admonish the passers-by to pray for him, and to remind us of the solemn moment of death.

Why is the body laid in consecrated ground?

This is done through reverence for the bodies of the dead which are, by baptism, temples of the Holy Ghost; to show that, even in death, they still belong to the communion of that holy Church, in which they were embodied during life by baptism, and to which they clung in faith even until death; to inspire the surviving with a holy fear lest they profane graves.

Why is the solemn funeral service of the Church denied to heretics?

Because they would not belong to the Church during life, and despised the holy customs and prayers of the Church for the dead. How should the blessing and prayer of the Church be useful in death to one who despised them during life.

Why does not the Church permit criminals and suicides to be buried on consecrated ground?

In order to express her horror for the crimes perpetrated by them, and to deter the faithful from committing similar actions.

INSTRUCTION ON THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

At the Introit of the Mass implore with great confidence the mercy of God in the words of Ps. LXXXV.:

INTROIT Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I have cried to Thee all the day; for Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee.

Bow down Thy ear to me, O Lord, and hear me, for I am needy and poor. Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT Let Thy grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord, ever precede and follow us, and make us continually intent upon good works. Through etc.

EPISTLE (Ephes. III. 13-21) Brethren, I pray you not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are your glory. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened by His Spirit with might unto the inward man, that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts: that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth:, to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand, according to the power that worketh in us: to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations, world without end. Amen.

EXPLANATION In the epistle of the following Sunday St. Paul tells us, that he was at the time of writing this letter in prison at Rome, whither he was brought upon the false accusations of the Jews. From prison he wrote to the Ephesians, whom he had converted to Christianity, and who zealously obeyed his counsels, in order to confirm them in their zeal and to console them in their grief on account of his sufferings which he bore for Christ's sake. These sufferings which I bear, he writes, redound to your honour, since I, your spiritual father, am considered by God worthy to suffer like His Son; yes, I thank the Father of our Lord Jesus for it, and beg Him on my knees, that He vouchsafe to strengthen you with His Holy Spirit, so that you overcome, your evil inclinations and passions, cleanse your hearts more and more, and sanctify your souls, that if you live thus according to your faith, you may be made the habitations of Christ. He begs God also to give them a well-grounded charity, which not only loves God on account of the reward, but also on account of our sufferings, thus to become like to Christ, the Crucified. By this constant love for Jesus, even in adversities, we

only comprehend with the saints the greatness of the love of Jesus, the Crucified; its breadth, since all the members of His body, all the powers of His soul were tormented with all sorts of tortures, on account of the sins of all men; the length, since He had all these sufferings for thirty-three years before His eyes, and bore them in His soul; the depth, since these tortures surpassed in intensity all which men ever suffered or will suffer; the height, since Christ on the cross saw, with the most perfect knowledge, the malice of each single sin, and the terrible insult offered to the sublime Majesty of God, and He bore the punishment for them in Himself and did penance for them. Other holy Fathers say that by these words the whole mystery of our redemption is to be understood, and, indeed, the breadth thereof is, that it is for all men; the length, that it lasts for all centuries and reaches into eternity; the height, that its contemplation takes us away from earth and raises us to heaven; the depth, that it even penetrates the kingdom of the dead. By contemplating these mysteries, we learn to know the infinite love of God, to love Him more and more, and thus make ourselves partakers of His graces. Obey the teaching of this holy apostle, contemplate the suffering Saviour and His love, endeavour to become like to Him by suffering, and when you see how the Church, her ministers, the bishops and priests, are persecuted and in tribulation, be not disheartened, but consider that the discipleship of Jesus consists particularly in suffering, that therefore, the Church and her ministers must suffer, since their Head, Jesus, has suffered. The holy Church has borne the crown of thorns of Jesus for eighteen hundred years and drank from His chalice; but like Jesus, her Head, she will triumph over all her enemies, and whilst these are hastening to destruction, she will continually live victorious until the end of time and will triumph eternally in heaven.

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Luke XIV. 1-11.) At that time, When Jesus went into the house of one of the chiefs of the Pharisees on the Sabbath-day to eat bread, they watched Him. And behold there was a certain man before Him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? But they held their peace: but He taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, He said: Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into, a pit, and, will not immediately draw him out on, the Sabbath-day? And they could not answer Him to these things. And He spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them when thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited by him; and he that invited thee and him come and say to thee: Give this man thy place: and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place: But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh he may say to thee: Friend,

go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at the table with thee; because everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Why did Jesus eat with the Pharisees?

To take occasion, as St. Cyril says, to instruct them that it is allowed to heal the sick on the Sabbath, and to show how those who give invitations to a supper, and those who are invited, should conduct themselves. The Pharisees' invitation to Jesus was not actuated by kindness, but by the desire to find something in His actions which they might criticise; Jesus; however, approaches them with meekness and endeavors to inspire them with a better intention. Beware of the spirit of criticisms and like Jesus make use of every occasion to do good, even to your enemies.

Who may be understood by the dropsical man?

The debauchees and misers; for the more a dropsical person drinks the more his thirst increases, so the debauchee never succeeds in satisfying his shameful lusts; the same is the case with the miser. And just as the dropsical are hard to cure, so the debauchee and miser are difficult to convert.

Why is covetousness classed among the seven deadly sins?

Because it is the root of many evils, (I Tim. VI. 10.) for it leads to usury, theft, to the employment of false weights and measures, to the suppression of justice in courts, to perjury, to the oppression of widows and orphans, nay, even to the denial of faith, as was the case with Judas. Therefore, the apostle says: They that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition; and admonishes us: to fly these things: and pursue justice, godliness, faith, charity, patience, mildness. (I Tim. VI. 9, 11.)

A powerful remedy against avarice is to consider that we are not owners of what we possess, and can take nothing with us in death, but must render a strict account of the use we made of our riches. (I Tim. VI. 7.)

INSTRUCTION ON KEEPING SUNDAY HOLY

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? (Luke XIV. 3.)

Why did Christ put this question?

Because the Jews, particularly the Pharisees, were so very superstitious in keeping the Sabbath, they would not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, while He healed on the Sabbath, which was really a good work. But, if the Jews were so conscientious, through superstition and hypocrisy, and considered the performing of an external good work on this day as a sin, some Christians, on the contrary, blinded by avarice and worldly pleasure, place themselves heedlessly, nay, insolently above the commandment to observe the Sabbath, and do not consider those things as wrong which are sometimes very grievous sins.

Consider, my dear Christian, you serve your body the whole week, you use all your powers for temporal business, to support yourself and your family, and God blesses you, if you work with a good intention. Now God chose one day in the week, Sunday, and in the year several other holidays, which you should devote to His service and the salvation of your soul; is it not, therefore, the greatest ingratitude to steal these days from God and your soul, and employ them to gain a transient good, or to indulge in vain, sinful pleasures? At certain times man gives rest to irrational animals, and you give the powers of your body and soul none of the rest they would and should find in quiet devotion, in prayer and meditation, in attending divine service, in receiving the holy Sacraments, &c. If you inquire whence come these shameful violations of Sundays and holidays, you will find that there is no other reason than love of gain and avarice, sinful love of pleasure, and often complete want of faith and confidence in God's providence. We wish to become rich by all means, and we do not reflect that this will not happen without the blessing of God, and that wealth is a net, in which thousands entangle themselves to their eternal, perdition. We wish to live merrily and enjoy ourselves, but we do not consider that our life is only a time of penance, to attain that eternally blissful rest, of which Sunday is an emblem. We spend Sundays and holydays in idleness, vain conversations, buying and selling, servile work, or in still worse things, without experiencing the slightest scruple. But God will cover the violators of His sacred days with confusion and shame, (Malach. II. 3.) and permit many temporal evils to come upon them, as proved by daily experience. The blessing of God can never rest upon those who never care for it, but rather make themselves unworthy to receive it, by violating days consecrated to God. Let this be a warning to you.

PRAYER O good Saviour! how manifest are meekness, and wisdom in all Thy words and actions! O, grant, that we may regulate all our actions in such a manner, that they may be acceptable to Thee and tend to the edification of our neighbour. Give us the

grace to employ all the days, consecrated to Thee, for Thy honor and our salvation, that we may never raise ourselves above others, but follow Thee in all humility.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

At the Introit of the Mass the justice and mercy of God are praised:

INTROIT Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right; deal with Thy servant according to Thy mercy. Blessed are the undefiled in the way; who walk in the law of the Lord. (Ps. CXVIII.) Glory etc.

COLLECT Grant to Thy people, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to avoid the defilements of the devil, and with a pure mind to follow Thee, the only God. Thro’.

EPISTLE (Ephes. IV. 1- 6.) Brethren, I, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called. With all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all. Who is blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

ADMONITION Implore God continually for grace to accomplish and make certain your vocation by practicing these virtues, recommended by St. Paul.

INSTRUCTION ON THE ONE ONLY SAVING FAITH

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. (Ephes. IV. 5. 6.)

These words of the great Apostle of the Gentiles show clearly, that it is not a matter of indifference, what faith or religion we profess. Yet in our times so poor in faith, we often hear the assertion from so-called enlightened men: “It is all the same to what religion we belong, we can be saved in any, if we only believe in God and live

uprightly.” This assertion is impious! Consider, my dear Christian, there is but one God, and this one God has sent only one Redeemer; and this one Redeemer has preached but one doctrine, and has established but one Church. Had God wished that there should be more than one Church, then Christ would have founded them, nay, He would not have preached a new doctrine, established a new, Christian Church; for the Jews also believed in one God. But Jesus cast aside Paganism and Judaism, promulgated a new religion, and founded a new Church. Nowhere does He speak of Churches, but always of one Church. He says that we must hear this Church, and does not add, that if we will not hear this Church, we may hear some other. He speaks of only one shepherd, one flock, and one fold, into which all men are to be brought. In the same manner He speaks always of one kingdom upon earth, just as there is only one kingdom in heaven; of only one master of the house and one family, of one field and one vineyard, whereby He referred to His Church; of one rock, upon which He would build His Church. On the day before His death, He prayed fervently to His Heavenly Father, that all who believe in Him, might be and remain one, as He and the Father are one, and He gave His disciples the express command to preach His gospel to all nations, and to teach them all things, whatsoever He had commanded them. This command the apostles carried out exactly. Everywhere they preached one and the same doctrine, establishing in all places Christian communities, which were all united by the bond of the same faith. Their principal care was to prevent schisms in faith, they warned the faithful against heresy, commanded all originators of such to be avoided, and anathematized those who preached a gospel different from theirs. As the apostles, so did their successors. All the holy Fathers speak with burning love of the necessary unity of faith, and deny those all claim to salvation who remain knowingly in schism and separation from the true Church of Christ.

Learn hence, dear Christian, that there can be but one true Church; if there is but one true Church, it naturally follows that in her alone salvation can be obtained, and the assertion that we can be saved by professing any creed, is false and impious. Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, speaks of but one Church, which we must hear, if we wish to be saved. He who does not hear the Church, He says, should be considered as a heathen and publican. He speaks furthermore of one fold, and He promises eternal life only to those sheep who belong to this fold, obey the voice of the shepherd and feed in His pasture. The apostles were also convinced that only the one, true Church could guide us to salvation. Without faith it is impossible to please God, writes St. Paul to the Hebrews, (XI. 6.) and this faith is only one, he teaches the Ephesians. (IV. 5.) If the apostles had believed that we could be saved in any religion, they would certainly not have contended so strenuously for unity, they would not have declared so solemnly, that we should not belong to any other than to Christ

alone, and that we must receive and obey His doctrine. As the apostles taught so did their successors and all the Fathers agree that there is no salvation outside of the true Church. St. Cyprian writes: “If anyone outside Noah’s ark could find safety, then also will one outside the Church find salvation.” (De unit. eccl. c. 7.) From all this it follows, that there is only one true Church which insures salvation, out of which no one can be saved.

But which is this Church? The Roman Catholic, Apostolic Church, for she alone was founded, by Christ, she alone was watered with the blood of the apostles and of thousands of holy martyrs, she alone has the marks of the true Church of Christ, [see the *Instruction for the first Sunday after Easter*] against which He has promised that the powers of hell shall not prevail. Those who fell away from the Church three hundred years ago do, indeed contend that the Church fell into error and no longer possessed the true, pure gospel of Jesus. Were they right, Jesus might be blamed, for He established this Church, promising to remain with her and guide her through the Holy Ghost until the end of the world. He would, therefore, have broken His word, or He was not powerful enough to keep it. But who dare say this? On the contrary, she has existed for eighteen hundred years, whilst the greatest and most powerful kingdoms have been overthrown, and the firmest thrones crumbled away. If she were not the only true and saving Church, founded by Christ, how could she have existed so long, since Jesus Himself said: Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. (Matt. XV. 13.) If she were not the Church of Christ, she would have been destroyed long ago, but she still stands today, whilst her enemies who battled against her have disappeared, and will continue to disappear; for the gates of hell shall not prevail against her, says our Lord. He has kept His promise and will keep it, notwithstanding all the oppositions and calumnies of her implacable enemies.

You see, therefore, my dear Christian, that the Catholic Church is the only true, the only saving Church; be not deceived by those who are neither cold nor warm, and who say: “We can be saved in any religion, if we only believe in God and live uprightly,” and who wish to rob you of your holy faith, and precipitate you into the sea of doubt, error, and falsehood. Outside of the Catholic Church there is no salvation; hold this firmly, for it is the teaching of Jesus, His apostles, and all the Fathers; for this doctrine the apostles and a countless host of the faithful have shed their blood. Obey the teaching of this Church, follow her laws, make use of her help and assistance, and often raise your hands and heart to heaven to thank God for the priceless grace of belonging to this one, true Church; forget not to pray for your erring brethren, who are still outside of the Church that the Lord may lead them into her, that His promise may be fulfilled: There will be one fold, and one shepherd.

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Matt XXII. 35-46.) At that time, The Pharisees came to Jesus, and one of them, a doctor of the law, asked Him, tempting Him: Master, which is the great commandment of the law? Jesus said to him: thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.

This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets. And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying: What think you of Christ; whose son is He? They say to Him: David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord; saying: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son? And no man was able to answer Him a word: neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions.

What is meant by loving god?

It means to find one's pleasure, happiness and joy in God, because He is the highest and most perfect Good; to rejoice in His infinite majesty and glory; to direct one's thoughts, words, and actions towards Him as our only end: to do His will in all things, and be prepared always rather to lose everything, even life itself, than His friendship.

What is meant by loving God with our whole heart, our whole soul, etc.?

These different expressions all properly mean the same thing, namely, that we should cling to God with a true, sincere and heartfelt love, but by our heart our will may be understood, that power by which we wish God all glory, and desire nothing more than that He be known, loved, and honoured by all men. The soul signifies the intellect by means of which we should endeavour to arrive at the knowledge and love of God, praise and glorify Him above all things. The mind may signify our memory, with which we continually remember God and the innumerable benefits bestowed on us by Him, praise Him for them, thank Him, and always walk irreproachably before Him. Finally, we love God with all our strength, if we employ all the powers and faculties of our body in His service, and direct all our actions to Him as to our last end.

Is it true love, if we love God only because He is good to us?

This is grateful love, which is good and praiseworthy, but it is not perfect love, because the motive is self-love and self-interest.

What, therefore, is perfect love?

When we love God only because He is in Himself the highest Good, and most worthy of all love. In this manner we should endeavour to love Him; not through self-interest not through hope of reward, not through fear of punishment, but only because He, as the greatest Good, contains all goodness and, therefore, deserves to be loved only on account of Himself. Such love had St. Francis Xavier, which he very beautifully expressed in the following canticle, composed by himself:

**O God, I give my love to Thee,
Not for the heaven Thou'st made for me,
Nor yet because who love not Thee
Will burn in hell eternally.
In dying throes on Calvary,
My Jesus, Thou didst think of me,
Didst bear the lance, the nails, the tree,
Rude scoffs, contempt and infamy,
And pangs untold, all lovingly,
The scourge, the sweat the agony,
And death itself, all, all for me,
A sinner and Thy enemy.
Why therefore, should not I love Thee,
O Jesus, dead for love of me?
Not that I may in heaven be,
Not that from hell I may be free;
Not urged by dread of endless pain,
Not lured by prize of endless gain,
But as Thou, Lord, didst first love me,
So do I love and will love Thee.
To Thee, my King, I give my heart,
For this alone that God Thou art.**

Can fear exist with love?

Servile fear cannot, but filial fear may. Servile fear is rather a fear of punishment than a fear of offending God. Where such fear exists, love cannot dwell; for in love, writes St. Augustine, (in Joann. Tr. 9.) there is no fear, for perfect love casteth out fear. (I John IV. 18.) Filial fear, on the contrary, is the fear of offending God. This fear leads to love and is also an effect of love; it is the beginning of wisdom. (Eccles. I. 16.) Let us cherish this fear, for it will drive away sin, as sentinels expel thieves; (Ecclus. I

16.) it will replenish us with joy, and gladness, and obtain for us in our last moments divine blessings and a holy death. (Ecclus. I. 27.)

How may we obtain a perfect love of God?

By meditating on His infinite, divine perfections, such as His almighty power, His wisdom, His splendour, His beauty, etc.; by contemplating His boundless love for us, in the incarnation, sufferings, and death of His only-begotten Son; by frequently practicing this virtue; by fervent prayer; and by making acts of love, such as are found in good prayer-books.

When should we practice the virtue of love of God?

As soon as we have arrived at the age of reason; when the world, the devil and the flesh, endeavour to withdraw us from God, by their apparent goods and pleasures; when we have separated ourselves from God by mortal sin; when we receive the holy Sacraments, particularly holy Communion; when we receive a particular grace from God; when we use food and drink and other lawful enjoyments; when we contemplate God's creatures; often during the day; and especially in the hour of death.

[Concerning the love of our neighbour, see the [twelfth Sunday after Pentecost](#)].

Why is the commandment to love God and our neighbour called the greatest commandment?

Because in it are contained all the other commandments, for Christ says, in it consists the whole law. He who loves God with his whole heart, does not separate himself from God by infidelity, does not practice public or private superstition and idolatry; he does not murmur against God, does not desecrate the name of God by cursing and swearing; he does not profane the Sabbath, because he knows that all this is displeasing to God. On the contrary, he hopes in God, keeps Sundays and days of obligation holy, and observes all the commandments of the Church, because God wishes that we hear the Church; he honours his parents, inflicts no evil upon his neighbour; does not commit adultery, does not steal, calumniates no one, does not bear false witness, does not judge rashly, is not envious, malicious or cruel, but rather practices the corporal and spiritual works of mercy; and all this, because he loves God and his neighbour.

What is the meaning of the question What think you of Christ?

Christ asked the Pharisees this question in order to convince them, from their own answer, that He was not only the Son of David, but that He as the only-begotten Son of God was the Lord of David and of all men from eternity. (Fs. II. 7.). Unhappily, even today there are men who like the Pharisees deny the divinity of Christ, the Son of the living God, consider Him merely a very wise and virtuous man, and do not receive His doctrine, confirmed by so many miracles. Beware, my dear Christian, of these men who rob you of the peace of the soul, and the consoling hope of a future resurrection and eternal life, together with faith in Christ, the divine Redeemer. But if you believe Christ to be the Son of God and our Lord, Law-giver, Instructor, and Redeemer, follow His teaching, and do not contradict indeed what you profess with your lips.

PRAYER O most amiable Jesus! who hast admonished us so affectionately to love God and our neighbour, pour the fire of Thy love into our hearts, that all our deeds and actions, all our thoughts and words may begin and end with Thy love. Grant, that we may love Thee with all the powers of our body and. soul, and thereby be so united to Thee, that, like St. Paul, no temptation, no tribulation, no danger, not even death, may be able to separate us from Thee. Grant us also, that we may love our neighbours, friends, and enemies as ourselves for Thy sake, and thus be made worthy to possess Thee as our Redeemer and merciful judge.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

At the Introit of the Mass the Church prays for the peace which God has promised by His prophets:

INTROIT Give peace, O Lord, to them that patiently wait for Thee, that Thy prophets may be found faithful: hear the prayers of Thy servant, and of Thy people Israel. (Ecclus. XXXVI. 18.) I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord. (Ps. CXXI. 1.) Glory etc.

COLLECT O Lord, inasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, let Thy merciful pity rule and direct our hearts, we beseech Thee. Thro’.

EPISTLE (I Cor. I. 4-8.) Brethren, I give thanks to my God always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus, that in all things you are made rich in Him, in all utterance and in all knowledge: as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace, waiting for the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ who also will confirm you into the end without crime, in the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

EXPLANATION St. Paul shows in this epistle that he possesses true love for his neighbour, because he rejoices and thanks God that he enriched the Corinthians with different graces and gifts, thus confirming the testimony of Christ in them, so that they could without fear expect His arrival for judgment. Do thou also rejoice, with St. Paul, for the graces given to thy neighbour, for this is a mark of true charity.

Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Matt. IX. 1-8.) At that time, Jesus entering into a boat, passed over the water, and came into His own city. And behold, they brought to Him one sick of the palsy lying in a bed. And Jesus seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold, some of the Scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? whether it is easier to say, thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then said He to the man sick of the palsy): Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it feared, and glorified God who had given such power to men.

EXPLANATIONS

I. Those who brought this sick man to Christ, give us a touching example of how we should take care of the sick and help them according to our ability. Christ was so well pleased with their faith and charity, that He cured the man sick of the palsy, and forgave him his sins. Hence we learn how we might assist many who are diseased in their soul, if we would lead them to God by confiding prayer, by urgent admonitions, or by good example.

II. Christ did not heal the man sick of the palsy until He had forgiven him his sins, by this He wished to teach us, that sins are often the cause of sicknesses and other evils, by which we are visited, and which God would remove from us if we were truly repentant. This doctrine Jesus confirmed, when He said to the man, who had been sick for thirty-eight years: Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee. (John V. 14.) Would that this were considered by those who so often impetuously demand of God to be freed from their evils, but do not intend to free themselves from their sins, which are the cause of these evils, by a sincere repentance.

III. “He blasphemeth.” Thus thought the Jews, in their perverted hearts, of Christ, because they believed that He in remitting the sins of the sick man, usurped the rights of God and thus did Him a great injury; for it is blasphemy to think, say, or do anything insulting to God or His saints. But these Jews did not consider that they by their rash judgment calumniated God, since they blasphemed Christ who by healing the sick man, and by numerous other works had clearly proved His God-head. If Christ so severely reprimanded the Jews, who would not recognize Him as God, for a blasphemous thought against Him, what will He do with those Christians who, though they wish to be adorers of God and His Son, nevertheless, utter blasphemies, curses, and profanations of the holy Sacraments?

IV. When Jesus saw their thoughts, He said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? This may be taken to heart by those who think that thoughts are free from scrutiny, and who never think to confess their evil and shameful thoughts. God; the most Holy and most just, will, nevertheless, not leave a voluntary unchaste, proud, angry, revengeful, envious thought unpunished, any more than an idle word. (Matt, XII. 36.) The best remedy against evil thoughts would be the recollection that God who searches the heart sees them, and will punish them.

PRAYER How great, O Jesus! is Thy love and mercy towards poor sinners, since Thou not only forgavest the sins of the man sick of palsy, but calling him son, didst console and heal him! This Thy love encourages me to beg of Thee the grace, that we may rise from our bed of sins by true penance, amend our life, and through the ways of Thy commandments enter the house of eternal happiness.

INSTRUCTION ON INDULGENCES

Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. (Matt. IX. 2.)

The same that Christ says to the man sick of the palsy, the priest says to every contrite sinner in the confessional, and thus remits the crime or the guilt of his sins, and the eternal punishment, by virtue of the authority given him by God. But since sins not only bring with them guilt and eternal punishment, but also temporal and indeed spiritual or supernatural punishment, such as, painful conditions of the soul, as well in this world as in purgatory, and natural ones, as: poverty, disease, all sorts of adversities and accidents, we should endeavour to liberate ourselves from them by means of indulgences.

What is an indulgence?

It is a total or partial remission of the temporal punishment which man would have to suffer either in this or the next life, after the sins have been remitted.

How do we know that after the remission of the sins there still remains temporal punishment?

From holy Scripture; for our first parents after the forgiveness of their sin, were still afflicted with temporal punishment. (Gen. III.) God likewise forgave the sins of the children of Israel, who murmured so often against Him in the desert, but not their punishment, for He excluded them from the Promised Land, and caused them to die in the desert. (Num. XIV.) Moses and Aaron experienced the same, on account of a slight want of confidence in God. (Num. XX. 12., Deut. XXXII. 51. 52.) David, indeed, received pardon from God through the Prophet Nathan for adultery and murder, (II Kings XII.) still he had to endure heavy temporal punishment. Finally, faith teaches us, that we are tortured in purgatory for our sins, until we have paid the last farthing. (Matt. V. 26.)

Did the Church always agree with this doctrine of Scripture?

Yes; for she always taught, that by the Sacrament of Penance the guilt and eternal punishment, due to sin, are indeed forgiven for the sake of the infinite merits of Jesus, but that temporal punishment still remains, for which the sinner must do penance. Even in the earliest ages she imposed great penances upon sinners for their sins which were already forgiven. For instance, murder or adultery was punished by a penance of twenty years; perjury, eleven; fornication, denial of faith or fortune-telling, by seven years of severe penance with fasting, etc. During this time, it was not allowed to travel, except on foot, to be present at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, or to receive the holy Eucharist. If the penitents showed a great zeal for penance and sincere amendment, or if distinguished members of the Church, particularly martyrs,

interceded for them, the bishops granted them an indulgence, that is, they remitted the remaining punishment either totally or partially. In our days, on account of the weakness of the faithful, the Church is lenient. Besides the ecclesiastical, the spiritual punishments which would have to be suffered either here or in purgatory for the taking away of sins, are shortened and mitigated by indulgences through the treasure of the communion of saints.

Has the Church the power to remit temporal punishments, or to grant indulgences?

The Council of Trent expressly states, that the Church has power to grant indulgences, (Sess. 25.) and this statement it supports by the words of Christ. For as Christ protests: Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; so He also promised, that whatever the Church looses upon earth, is ratified and loosed in heaven. Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven. (Matt. XVIII. 18.) Even an apostle granted an indulgence. In the person and by the power of Christ, that his spirit might be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, (II Cor. II. 10.; I Cor. V. 4. 5.) St. Paul forgave the incestuous Corinthian, upon whom he had imposed a heavy punishment.

What is meant by saying, indulgences are granted out of the treasury of the saints or of the Church?

By this is meant that God, by the Church, remits the temporal punishment due to sin for the sake of the merits of Christ and the saints, and supplies, as it were, by these merits what is still wanting in our satisfaction.

What kinds of indulgences are there?

Two; plenary and partial indulgences. A plenary indulgence, if rightly gained, remits all ecclesiastical and temporal punishment, which we would otherwise have to expiate by penance. A partial indulgence, however, remits only so many days or years of the temporal punishment, as, according to the penitential code of the primitive ages of the Church; the sinner would have been obliged to spend in severe penance. Hence the name forty day's indulgence, etc.

What is a Jubilee?

It is a plenary indulgence, which the pope grants to the faithful of the entire world, whereby all the temporal punishments of sin, even in cases reserved to the pope or the bishops, are remitted, and forgiven in the name of God, if the sinner confesses contritely and receives the holy Eucharist and has a firm purpose of doing penance.

What is required to gain an indulgence?

First, that we should be in the state of grace, and have already obtained, by true repentance, forgiveness of those sins, the temporal punishment of which is to be remitted by the indulgence; and secondly, that we should exactly perform the good works prescribed for the gaining of the indulgence.

Do indulgences free us from performing works of penance?

By no means: for there are few in the proper state to receive a plenary indulgence in its fullness, since not only purity of soul is necessary but also the inclination to sin must be rooted out, it therefore cannot be the intention of the Church too free us from all works of penance by granting us indulgences. She cannot act contrary to the word of Jesus: Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish. Luke XIII. 3.) She rather wishes to assist our weakness, to supply our inability to do the required penance, and to contribute what is wanting in our penance, by applying the satisfaction of Christ and the saints to us by indulgences. If we, therefore, do not wish to do penance for our own sins, we shall have no part in the merits of others by indulgences.

Can indulgences be gained for the souls of the faithful departed?

Yes, by way of suffrage, so far as we comply with the required conditions, and thus beg of God, for the merits of His Son and the saints, to release the souls in purgatory. Whether God receive this petition or not, remains with Him, He will act only according to the condition of the deceased. We must, therefore, not depend upon the indulgences and good works which may be performed for us after death, but rather endeavour, during our life-time, to secure our salvation by leading a pious life; by our own good works and by the gaining of indulgences.

What follows from the doctrine of the Church concerning indulgences?

That an indulgence is no grant or license to commit sin, as the enemies of the Church falsely assert; that an indulgence grants no forgiveness of sins past or future, much less is permission given to commit sin; that no Catholic can believe that by gaining indulgences he is released from penance, or other good works, free from the fight with his evil inclinations, passions and habits, from compensating for injuries, repairing scandals, from retrieving neglected good, and glorifying God by works and sufferings; but that indulgences give nothing else than partial or total remission of

temporal punishment; that they remind us of our weakness and lukewarmness which is great when compared with the zeal and fervour of the early Christians; that they impel us to satisfy the justice of God according to our ability. Finally, they remind us to thank God continually that He gave the Church a means in the inexhaustible treasure of the merits of Christ and His saints, to help our weakness and to supply what is wanting in our penance.

1. See Instruction on *Satisfaction on the fourth Sunday in Advent.*

2. The word jubilee signifies deliverance, remittance. With the Jews every fiftieth year was so called, and all the prisoners and slaves were to be set free in this year, according to the command of God, the inheritances which had been sold, restored to their masters, the debts cancelled, and the earth left untilled. This was a year of grace and rest for the Jews. This Jubilee of the Jews is a figure of the Catholic jubilee, in which the captives of sin and Satan are liberated, the debt of sin remitted, and the inheritance of heaven, which the sinner had sold to Satan, is restored to him.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

INTROIT I am the salvation of the people, saith the Lord: in whatever tribulation they shall cry to Me, I will hear them: and I will be their Lord forever. Attend, O My people, to My law: incline your ears to the words of My mouth. (Ps. LXXVII.) Glory etc.

COLLECT Almighty and merciful God, graciously keep us from all things that are hurtful; that we, being set free both in mind and body, may with ready minds accomplish whatever is Thine. Thro'.

EPISTLE (Ephes. IV. 23-28.) Brethren, be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbour, for we are members one of another. Be angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger. Give not place to the devil. He that stole, let him now steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffereth need.

EXPLANATION St. Paul admonishes the Ephesians to lay aside the old man, like a worn out garment, and put on the new man, that is, to renew their internal and external life. This renewal according to his teaching takes place, when we by a true repentance

put away our vices, shun all lies, anger, injustice, &c., and adorn our soul with virtues, and zealously seek after Christian justice and perfection. We have, perhaps, already sought to change our manner of living, for which a jubilee or some other particular solemnity of the Church gave us occasion, and at that time, perhaps, purified our soul by a general confession, making the firm resolution to live for God, and work out our salvation, we appeared converted, and to have become other men: but how long did this conversion last? Ah, how soon did we fall back into the old, sinful ways. And why? Because we lived in too great, deceitful security. We thought everything accomplished by the general confession; we were satisfied, and omitted to employ the means of remaining in the state of grace. We did not thank God for the grace of conversion; we did not ask Him for the grace of perseverance; we frequented evil company, and did not avoid dangerous occasions; we indulged in idleness and pleasures as before. How can it appear strange, if such a conversion is fruitless? Ah, we should remain in wholesome fear even after the remission of our sins. (Ecclus. V. 5.) Even if we could say that we have done everything, nevertheless we cannot be certain, whether we be worthy of hatred or love. (Ecclus. IX. 1.) We should, therefore, work out our salvation according to the advice of St. Paul (Philipp. II. 12.) in fear and trembling, and thus not fall into the old life of sin, losing the hope of a new conversion.

Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Matt. XXII. 1-14.) At that time, Jesus spoke to the chief priests and the Pharisees in parables, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants, to call them that were invited to the marriage, and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited, Behold I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the marriage. But they neglected: and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise: and the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard, of it; he was angry: and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city. Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready; but they, that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together, all that they found, both bad and good; and the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to feed the guests; and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment: and he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

REMARK This parable agrees in many respects with that for the second Sunday after Pentecost, and has the same meaning. See, therefore, the explanation of that gospel, as also of the feast of SR Catherine, to which may be added the following:

EXPLANATION In this parable the king is our Heavenly Father who has espoused His only-begotten Son to the Church, and on this occasion prepares the most sumptuous marriage-feast by giving the evangelical doctrine, the holy Sacraments, and the heavenly joys. The servants sent to invite the guests are the prophets, apostles and disciples of Christ. Those invited are the Jews who despised the honour and grace of the divine King, destined for them, abused and killed His servants, and were, therefore, cast aside and with their city Jerusalem, destroyed by the armies of their enemies, as a just punishment; in their stead the heathens and all those nations were called, who were on the broad road to destruction, and who now occupy the places of the unfortunate Jews at the marriage feast of the Church, and shall also occupy them in heaven. In the Jews to whom Christ addressed this parable, is verified that many of them, nay, all are called, but few chosen, because they would not heed the invitation.

APPLICATION We have the honour not only to be invited to this marriage-feast, but are in reality guests at it, because we are members of the Church of Christ by faith. “But the Christian,” says St. Gregory, “who is a member of the Church by faith, but has not charity, is like to a man who comes to the marriage-feast without the wedding garment.” With this garment which is charity, Christ was vested, when He came to celebrate the nuptials with His spouse, the Church, and by the bond of charity the Son of God also unites Himself with His elect. He clearly lets us know that charity is the wedding garment which should vest us. Those, therefore, who believe and are in the communion of the Church, but who do not preserve the grace of charity, are indeed in the wedding-chamber, but they are not adorned with the wedding garment. They are dead members of the Church, and shall not be admitted without this garment into the celestial marriage-feast in the triumphant Church, but rather be cast like that unfortunate guest into exterior darkness. This guest was silent, when asked by the king, why he had not the wedding garment. By this we see, that no one can excuse himself to God for not having charity, because everyone can have it, if he asks it from God, and, as St. Augustine says, our heart is the workshop of charity, and everyone who has a heart can practice it.

PRAYER I thank Thee, O Jesus, that Thou didst call me to the marriage-feast in Thy Church; give me the wedding garment of charity that I may be present at the celestial marriage-feat, and not be cast into exterior darkness.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING HELL

Cast him into the exterior darkness. (Matt, XXII. 13.)

What is hell?

Hell is that place where the damned must suffer eternal punishment.

Is there a hell?

Yes; reason, holy Scripture and the Church teach us that there is a hell. Reason tells us that there is a just God who will punish sin. It is evident that all sins are not punished in this world; there must, therefore, be a place, where every mortal sin, not atoned for by sorrow and penance, will be punished, and this place is - hell. All nations from the beginning of the world, even those who had not the light of revelation, believed this.

But clearer still is the existence of hell shown by holy Scripture: The pious Job, (X. 22.) speaks of a region of misery and darkness, where the shadows of death and no order, but where eternal terror dwells. The Prophet Isaias (XXX. 33.) says that hell is deep and wide, and that the fire burning in it, is like a stream of sulphur, ignited by the breath of the Lord. Our Saviour expressly says that those who have done evil, shall go to everlasting torment, (Matt. XXV. 46.) that they shall be tortured by everlasting fire. (Matt. XXV. 41.) He makes mention of hell, and says that an inextinguishable fire burns there, and a worm which never dies, plagues the wicked. (Mark IX. 42. 43; Matt. X. 28.) All the Fathers of the Church teach and testify to the same doctrine. St. Augustine, among many others, says: "The infinite wisdom of God tells us that there is a hell, and the illimitable power of God it is that punishes the damned in a wonderful, but real manner."

Wherein do the pains of hell consist?

Sacred Scripture and the Church teach concerning the pains, of the reprobate in hell, that the damned burn there in an inextinguishable fire. (Mark IX. 45.) The holy doctors of the Church say, that this fire is never extinguished, and its smoke ascends or rises from century to century, "I see this fire," says St. Gregory, "as if it were gifted with reason; it makes a distinction between the guilty, and tortures the damned according to the nature of their sins." This fire burns, but never consumes its victims; it communicates, as Cassiodorus says, immortality to the reprobate and lets them

suffer pain, which preserves them, like salt which penetrates the flesh and keeps it from corruption, as Jesus says: Every one shall be salted with fire. (Mark IX. q.8.) This fire does not shine, it leaves the reprobate in darkness, (Matt. VIII. 12.) and with this fire a never dying worm continually torments the damned. This worm is not only a bad conscience, say the holy Fathers, but particularly the privation of the Beatific Vision. Eternally will the thought torment the damned: I have lost God, the only true and highest Good, I have lost Him through my fault, I have lost Him for a brief pleasure, I have lost Him forever. In hell eternity devours all time; and if after millions and millions of years a damned soul wailingly asks his companion in misery: What time is it? he receives the answer: Eternity.

Who would not fear hell, and avoid sin which incurs eternal punishment, when he reflects upon this! Arid yet there are many, upon whom the truth of the existence of a hell makes no impression, who even deny that there is such a place, and who say: God is love, He can have no pleasure in the torments of His creatures, He cannot eternally punish a sin which was committed in so short a time as is the life of man.” But those who speak thus, forget that God is just, that His love and mercy are indeed always ready to forgive the contrite and penitent, but that His justice must also be satisfied, when the sinner continually rejects the merciful love of God; they forget, that every grievous sin which man commits voluntarily and knowingly is an infinite, eternal insult, offered to God, which can only be atoned for by an eternal punishment. For the perverted and malicious will of a man, who dies in mortal sin, remains perverted and malicious forever, therefore he must also be punished eternally.

O my dear Christian, do not listen to such deceivers; for just on account of their sinful life, they fear hell and therefore they endeavour too free themselves from this fear by denying the existence of hell; but they cannot succeed; for Jesus, the Truth, has told us that there is a hell, and His word remains for all eternity. Endeavour rather by a pious life to escape hell, descend there in spirit frequently according to the advice of a saint, contemplate the torments of the damned, and let this reflection urge you to imitate Christ, who has promised the joys of heaven to all His faithful followers.

CONSOLING DOCTRINE ON THE JOYS OF HEAVEN

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son. (Matt. XXII. 2.)

Heaven is compared by Christ to a marriage-feast because we will there enjoy all imaginable pleasures in the most perfect union with God. In what these joys consist, Paul could not describe, although he was wrapt into the third heaven and tasted these pleasures; he only said: Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him. (I Cor. II. 9.) Holy Writ, indeed, gives us many descriptions of the celestial joys, by comparing heaven to a paradise of bliss, sometimes to a precious pearl, or a treasure which neither rust nor moth consumes, nor thieves steal; again it represents heaven under the picture of a kingdom, a throne, a crown, whereby we are raised to the highest honour; at another time to the picture of a city which is built of gold, precious stones and pearls, lighted by the splendour of God, filled with magnificence and glory, and where the inhabitants enjoy undisturbed peace and security. These are only images or similitudes, which are taken from the most beautiful, most precious, and magnificent things of the earth, to teach us that heaven is as beautiful and pleasant a place, as we can wish and represent to ourselves, and that all possible beauty, agreeableness and joy may be found there in the highest and most perfect manner, free from evil, anxiety, disgust and fear of losing them. In heaven we will possess God Himself, the source of all joy and bliss, and will enjoy His own happiness for all eternity. More is not needed to give us the highest conception of heaven.

Who would not willingly despise the vain, short and imperfect pleasures of this earth, whilst contemplating this indescribable bliss? Who would not willingly bear all the misfortunes and misery of this world, when considering that the more miserable we have been in this life the happier will we be hereafter. What would it avail us to have enjoyed all the pleasures of this world, if deprived of the pleasures of heaven, in, eternity!

ASPIRATION How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord, of hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. (Ps. LXXXIII. 2-3.) How do I loathe the world, when I contemplate heaven.

(St. Ignatius Loyola.)

TWENTYTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTCOST

The Introit of the Mass is an humble prayer, by which we acknowledge that we are punished for our disobedience:

INTROIT All that Thou hast done to us, O. Lord, Thou hast done in true, judgment: because we have sinned against Thee, and have not obeyed Thy commandments: but give glory to Thy name, and deal with us according to the multitude of Thy mercy. (Dan. III. 28.) Blessed are the undefiled in the way: who walk in the law of the Lord. (Fs. CXVIII.). Glory etc.

COLLECT Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, in Thy mercy to Thy faithful pardon and peace; that they may both be cleansed from all their offences, and serve Thee with a quiet mind. Thro’.

EPISTLE (Ephes. V. 15-21.) Brethren, See how you walk circumspectly, not as unwise, but as wise redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore, become not unwise, but understanding what is the will of God. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury: but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord: giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father; being subject one to another in the fear of Christ.

How may we redeem time?

By employing every moment to gain eternal goods, even should we lose temporal advantages thereby; by letting no opportunity pass without endeavouring to do good, to labour and, suffer for love of God, to improve our lives, and increase in, virtue.

Do you wish to know, says the pious Cornelius á Lapide, how precious time is: Ask the damned, for these know it from experience. Come, rich man, from the abyss of hell, tell us what you would give for one year, one day, one hour of time! I would, he says, give a whole world, all pleasures, all treasures, and bear all torments. O, if only one moment were granted me to have contrition for my sins, to obtain forgiveness of my crimes, I would purchase this moment with every labour, with any penance, with all punishments, torments and tortures which men ever suffered in purgatory or in hell, even if they lasted hundreds, yes, thousands of millions of years! O precious moment upon which all eternity depends! O, how many moments did you, my dear Christian, neglect, in which you could have served God, could have done good for love of Him, and gained eternal happiness by them, and you have lost these precious moments. Remember, with one moment of time, if you employ it well, you can

purchase eternal happiness, but with all eternity you cannot purchase one moment of time!

ASPIRATION Most bountiful God and Lord! I am heartily sorry, that I have so carelessly employed the time which Thou hast given me for my salvation. In order to supply what I have neglected, as far as I am able, I offer to Thee all that I have done or suffered from the first use of my reason, as if I had really to do and suffer it still; and I offer it in union with all the works and sufferings of our Saviour, and beg fervently, that Thou wilt supply, through His infinite merits, my defects, and be pleased with all my actions and sufferings.

Be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury!

[On the vice of drunkenness *see the third Sunday after Pentecost* Here we will speak only of those who make others drunk by encouragement.] The Persian King Assuerus expressly forbade that anyone should be urged to drink at his great banquet. (Esth. I. 8.) This heathen who knew from the light of reason, that it is immoral to lead others to intemperance, will one-day rise in judgment against those Christians who, enlightened by the light of faith, would not recognize and avoid this vice. Therefore, the Prophet Isaias (V. 22.) pronounces woe to those who are mighty in drinking and know how to intoxicate others; and St. Augustine admonishes us, by no means to consider those as friends, who by their fellowship in drinking would make us enemies of God.

Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (John IV. 46-53.) At that time, there was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to Him, and prayed Him to come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. The ruler with to Him: Lord, come down before my son die. Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way. And as he was going down, his servants met him, and they brought word, saying that his son lived. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him: Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father therefore, knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him: Thy son liveth: and himself believed. and his whole house.

INSTRUCTIONS

I. God permitted the son of the ruler to become sick that he might ask Christ for the health of his son, and thus obtain true faith and eternal happiness. In like manner, God generally seeks to lead sinners to Himself, inasmuch as He brings manifold evils and misfortunes either upon the sinner himself or on his children, property, etc. Hence David said: It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy justifications, (Ps. CXVIII. 71.) and therefore he also asked God to fill the faces of sinners with shame, that they should seek His name. (Ps. LXXXII. 17.) This happened to those of whom David says: Their infirmities were multiplied: afterwards they hastened in returning to God. (Ps. XV. 4.) O would we only do the same! When God sends us failure of crops, inundations, hail-storms, dearth, war, etc., He wishes nothing else than that we abandon sin and return to Him. But what do we? Instead of hastening to God, we take refuge in superstition, or we murmur against Him, find fault with or even blaspheme His sacred regulations; instead of removing our sins by sincere penance, we continually commit new ones, by murmuring and impatience, by hatred and enmity, by rash judgments, as if the injustice and malice of others were the cause of our misfortune. What will become of us if neither the benefits nor the punishments of God make us better?

II. Christ said to this ruler: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. This was a reprimand for his imperfect faith; for if he had truly believed Christ to be the Son of God, he would not have asked Him to come to his house, but, like the centurion, would have believed Him able, though absent, to heal His son. (Matt. VIII.) Many Christians deserve the same rebuke from Christ, because they lose nearly all faith and confidence in God, when He does not immediately help them in their troubles, as they wish. He proves to us how displeasing such a want of confidence is to Him by withdrawing His assistance and protection from the fickle and distrustful. (Ecclus. II. 15.)

III. How much may not the example of the father of a family accomplish! This ruler had no sooner received the faith, than his whole household was converted and believed in Christ. Fathers and mothers by their good example, by their piety, frequent reception of the Sacraments, by their meekness, temperance, modesty and other virtues, may accomplish incalculable good among their children and domestics.

CONSOLATION IN SICKNESS

There was a certain ruler whose son was sick. (John IV. 16.)

As a consolation in sickness, you should consider that God sends you this affliction for the welfare of your soul, that you may know your sins; or if you be innocent, to practice patience, humility, charity, etc., and increase your merits. Therefore, a holy father said to one of his companions, who complained, because he was sick: “My son! if you are gold, then you will be proved by sickness, but if you are mixed with dross, then you will be purified.” “Many are vicious in health,” says St. Augustine, “who would be virtuous in sickness;” and St. Bernard says: “It is better to arrive at salvation through sickness, than to have health and be damned.”

It is also a powerful means of consolation in sickness, to represent to ourselves the suffering Redeemer, who had no soundness from the top of His head to the sole of His foot, and contemplating whom St. Bonaventure used to cry out: “O Lord, I do not wish to live without sickness, since I see Thee wounded so much.”

When sick, we should carefully examine, whether we possess any ill-gotten goods, or have any other secret sin on our conscience; and if we are conscious of any, we should quickly free ourselves from it by a contrite, sincere confession, and by restoring the things belonging to others. Sins are very often the cause of disease, and God does not bless the medicine unless the sickness effects its object, that is, the sinner’s amendment. Still less can we expect help, but rather temporal and eternal misfortune, if we have recourse to superstition, and spells, as the King Ochozias experienced, who was punished with death, because in sickness he had recourse to the idol Beelzebub. (IV Kings I.)

PRAYER O Jesus, Thou true physician of souls, who dost wound and heal us, yea, dost even permit sorrows and adversities to visit us that our souls may have health, grant us the grace to use every bodily pain according to Thy merciful designs for the promotion of our salvation.

INSTRUCTION ON CARE OF THE SICK

Come down before my son die. (John IV. 49.)

All who have the charge of sick persons, should be like this father, that is, they should first of all endeavour to call upon Jesus to come in the most holy Sacrament, before the sick person is unable to receive Him. The devil seeks to hinder nothing more than this. He excites the imagination of the sick person, making him believe that he can

live longer, that he will certainly get well again, in order to ruin him easier afterwards, because he defers his conversion. Those contribute to this end who through fear of frightening the sick person or of annoying him, fail to call the priest at the right time. This is cruel love, which deprives the sick person of the salvation of his soul and eternal happiness, and brings with it a terrible responsibility. Where there is question of eternity, no carefulness can be too great. We should, therefore, choose the safest side, because the suffering may easily increase and finally make the sick person unable to attend to the affairs of his soul. We should, therefore, not conceal from him the danger in which he is, and if he has still the use of his reason, should call in the priest that he may receive the Last Sacraments. He will not die sooner on that account, but rather derive the greatest benefit therefrom, since his conscience will be cleansed from sin, which may be the cause of his sickness, and perhaps, he may regain his health, or at least be strengthened by the newly received grace of God, to bear his pains with greater patience and to die far easier, securer, and more consoled. We should also endeavour to encourage the sick person to resignation, and a childlike confidence in God, should pray with him to strengthen him against desponding thoughts, and the temptations of the devil; we should present him a crucifix to kiss; repeat the holy names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and other consolatory ejaculations, such as are found in prayer-books; should sign him with the sign of the cross; sprinkle him with holy water, and above all pray for a happy death. We should not weep and lament, by which death is only made harder for him, nor should we hold useless, idle and worldly conversations with him which will prevent him from thinking of God and the salvation of his soul, and from preparing himself for the last dangerous struggle. Finally, we should by no means suffer in his presence persons who have given him occasions of committing sin, because they would be obstacles to his sincere conversion.

There is truly no greater work of charity than to assist our neighbour to a happy death.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

At the Introit of the Mass is said a prayer of Mardochai, which may be used in all necessities:

INTROIT All things are in Thy will, O Lord: and there is none that can resist Thy will: for Thou hast made all things, heaven and earth, and all things that are under the

cope of heaven: Thou art Lord of all. (Esth. xiii. 9, 10.) Blessed are the undefiled in the way: who walk in the law of the Lord. (Ps. cxviii.) Glory etc.

COLLECT Keep, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy family by Thy continued goodness: that, through Thy protection, it may be free from all adversities, and devoted in good works to the glory of Thy name. Thro’.

EPISTLE (Ephes. vi. 10-17.) Brethern, be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of His power. Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil: for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high places. Therefore, take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of, the most wicked one: and take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

EXPLANATION The apostle teaches the Ephesians how hard and dangerous a struggle every Christian has to make, not against human enemies of flesh and blood, but against spiritual, invisible enemies, who were at one time powerful princes in heaven, but through sin became princes of the darkness of this world, who govern the adherents of the world, and exercise their evil influence in the air as well as on the earth, as far as God permits them, for our chastisement or trial.

He shows us also the manner in which we can gain the victory in the evil day, that is, the time of temptation, and particularly at the hour of death, when he admonishes us to have confidence in God and gives us the weapons for the contest. We should, therefore, gird ourselves with the girdle of truth, which shows us that honour, concupiscence and riches are vain and useless; we should put on the breast-plate of justice which is made of good works: the shoes, by regulating our lives according to the precepts of the gospel, which alone can give us true peace; the shield of faith, which teaches us how richly God rewards virtue and how terribly He punishes those who succumb to temptation and sin; the helmet of salvation, namely, confidence in God and the hope of heaven; the sword of the word of God, by making use, when violently tempted, of consoling and strengthening expressions of Holy Scripture, by which we can put the devil to flight, according to the example of Christ (Matt. iv.) and the saints. Let us diligently use these weapons, and we shall be victorious in this spiritual combat, and be crowned with eternal glory in heaven.

Twenty-first Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Hall. XVill. 23-35.) At that time, Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence: and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant falling down besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt. Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved: and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellowservant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not everyone his brother from your hearts.

Who are understood by the king, and the servants?

The King is God, and the servants are all mankind.

What is meant by the ten thousand talents?

The ten thousand talents, according to our money more than ten million dollars, signify mortal sin, the guilt of which is so great that no creature can pay it; even all the works of the saints cannot make atonement, because by every mortal sin the infinitely great, good, and holy God is offended, which offence it is as impossible for any creature to cancel as it is for a poor servant to pay a debt of ten million dollars. Nevertheless, God is so merciful that He remits the whole immeasurable debt of sin, on account of the infinite merits of Christ, if the sinner contritely begs forgiveness and amends his life.

Why did the master order, not only the debtor, but also his wife and children to be sold?

Probably because they assisted in contracting the debt, or gave occasion for its increase. This is a warning to those who in any way make themselves partakers of

others' sins, either by counsel, command, consent, provocation, praise or flattery, concealment, partaking, silence and by defending ill-done things.

What is understood by the hundred pence?

By the hundred pence are understood the offences committed against us, and which, in comparison with our debt against God, are very insignificant.

What does Jesus intend to show by this parable?

That if God is so merciful and forgives us our immense debts, we should be merciful and willingly forgive our fellow-men the slight faults and offences, which they commit against us; he who does not this, will not receive pardon from God, in him will be verified the words of the apostle St. James: Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy. (James ii. 13.)

Who are those who throttle their debtors?

These are, in general, the unmerciful, but particularly those who have no compassion for their debtors; those who immediately go to law and rest not until the debtor is left without house or home; those who oppress widows and orphans, if they owe them anything, thus committing one of the sins which cry to heaven for vengeance; (Ecclus. xxxv. 18. 19.) those who even in just lawsuits act harshly and severely with their opponent, without the slightest inclination to come to an agreement with him; finally, rulers and landlords who overburden their subjects with excessive tithes and taxes, and exact their share with the greatest rigour.

Who are those who accuse these hardened men before God?

They are the guardian angels and their own conscience; the merciless act itself cries to God for vengeance.

What is it to forgive from the heart?

It is to banish from the heart all hatred, ill-will and revengeful desires, to treasure a true and sincere love towards our offenders and enemies not only in our hearts, but also manifest it externally by deeds of charity. Therefore, those have not forgiven from their hearts, who, indeed, say and believe, that they have no ill-will against their enemy, but everywhere avoid him, refuse to salute him, to thank him, to pray for him,

to speak to him, and to help him in necessity, even when they might do so, but who rather rejoice at his need.

INSTRUCTION ON THE VIRTUE OF PATIENCE

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost Have patience with me. (Matt. xviii. z6.)

Since God has such great patience with us, ought not this to move us to have patience likewise with the faults and weaknesses of our fellow-men, and to resign ourselves patiently in all the sufferings and tribulations sent us from God? What will your impatience avail you? Will you thereby change or ease your sufferings? Do you thereby correct the faults of your neighbour? No; on the contrary, it makes suffering more oppressive, misfortune greater, and the erring neighbour more obstinate, so that he will ultimately refuse even mild and patient corrections. Besides impatience leads to many sins, to cursing, raillery, quarrelling, contention, and murder. The pious Job gives us a good example of true patience and resignation to the will of God. He was a wealthy, respected, God-fearing man in the land of Hus, the father of seven sons and three daughters, and lived peacefully and happy. God wished to try him and permitted the devil to vent his entire rage upon him. Job was deprived of his children and all his property, and, finally, he was himself afflicted with the most painful disease of leprosy. But in the midst of all these dreadful misfortunes he remained calm. Naked, covered only with a few patches, he sits on a dunghill, a picture of misery, and yet no sound of murmuring comes from his lips, he does not curse, does not blaspheme God, but says resignedly: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord. To all this misery was added the baseness of his own wife, who came and mocked him, and of three intimate friends, who instead of consoling him, judged him falsely and said, that his misery was a just punishment from heaven. Still Job did not murmur against God's wise dispensations; with unshaken patience he faithfully confided in God, and he was not forsaken. God rewarded him well for his fidelity and patience; for He restored him to health, and gave him greater wealth than he had previously. See what patience can do, what reward is in store for it! And thou a Christian, a follower of Christ, the patient, crucified Lamb, art immediately irritated, become angry and morose at every little cross which you meet! Be ashamed of your weakness, and learn from the pious Job, to practice the virtue of patience, for patience proves hope, and hope permits us not to be put to shame. Patience always gains the victory, and will be rewarded in heaven.

If you find yourself inclined to impatience, make every morning a firm resolution to battle bravely against this vice and often ask God for the virtue of patience in the following prayer:

O God who by the patience of Thy only-begotten Son hast humbled the pride of the old enemy, vouchsafe that devoutly considering what He has suffered for us we may cheerfully bear our adversities, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, etc.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

At the Introit of the Mass pray with the priest for the forgiveness of your sins: If thou shalt observe iniquities O Lord: Lord, who shall endure? for with Thee is propitiation, O God of Israel. From the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. (Ps. CXXIX.) Glory etc.

COLLECT O God, our refuge and strength, who art the author of all goodness, hear, we beseech Thee, the devout prayers of Thy Church, and grant that what we faithfully ask we may effectually obtain. Thro’.

EPISTLE (Philipp. I. 6-II.) Brethren, We are confident in the Lord Jesus, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus. As it is meet for me to think this for you all, for that I have you in my heart, and that in my hands, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, you are all partakers of my joy. For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge and in all understanding: that you may approve the better things; that you may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of justice, through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

EXPLANATION This epistle was written by St. Paul at Rome, where he was imprisoned for the faith, to the inhabitants of Philippi in Macedonia whom he had converted to the true faith. He congratulates them that they so willingly received and conscientiously obeyed the gospel which he had preached to them, and he says, he trusts in God to complete the good work which He has commenced, and to give them perseverance until the day of Christ, that is, until death.

Twenty-second Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Matt. XXII. 15-21.) At that time, the Pharisees went and consulted among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in his speech. And they send to Him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man, for Thou dost not regard the person of men: tell us, therefore, what dost Thou think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? But Jesus knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Show me the coin of the tribute. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose image and inscription is this? They say to him: Caesar's. Then he saith to them: Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

Why did the Pharisees try to ensnare Jesus in His speech?

In order to find some reason to accuse Him before the emperor, or to make Him hated by the Jews; for had He denied tribute to Caesar, they would have accused Him before the emperor as guilty of high treason; had He, on the contrary made it obligatory to pay tribute, then they would have denounced Him as a destroyer of the liberty of the people, who considered themselves a free nation owing allegiance only to God. Like the Pharisees are all those who, under the appearance of friendship, only cause vexation and misfortune to their neighbour.

Who are really hypocrites?

Those who in order to cheat their neighbour, appear outwardly pious and holy, whilst inward they are full of malice; those who have honey on the tongue, but gall in the heart, and sting like scorpions, when we least expect it. Because there are so many vices connected with hypocrisy, (Matt. XXIII.) therefore Christ has denounced no sin more emphatically than this one. Hypocrites are brethren of Cain, Joab, and Judas, of whom the first killed his brother, the second his cousin and the third betrayed his divine Master with a kiss. Such false men are cursed by God. (Mal, I. 14.) I hate a mouth with a double tongue. (Prov. VIII. 13.) "The devil silently possesses the hearts of hypocrites and quietly sleeps in them, whilst he gives them no peace," says St. Gregory; and St. Jerome writes: "Pretended holiness is double malice." Better is an open enemy, before whom we can be on our guard, than a hypocritical friend of whom we have no suspicion, because we look upon him as a friend. Beware, therefore, my dear Christian, of the vice of hypocrisy, which is so hateful to God; endeavour always to be sincere with God, thyself and thy neighbour, and to walk in-true humility before God, then mayst thou carry His image within thee.

PRAYER Help me, O Lord, for the number of the saints is decreasing and truth is becoming rare among men. They speak vain things each with his neighbour: their lips are deceitful, and they speak with double hearts. Let the Lord destroy all those who say: We will magnify our tongue; our lips are our own; who is Lord over us? O Lord, deliver my soul from wicked lips and deceitful tongues give me grace to preserve Thy image in my soul, by piety and virtue. Direct my heart to justice and keep it from avarice, that I may give to each his own.

INSTRUCTION ON THE FOLLY OF HUMAN RESPECT

Thou art a true speaker neither carest Thou or any man, for Thou dost not regard the person of men. (Matt. XXII. 16.)

In this Christians ought especially to follow the Saviour, and not permit themselves to be deterred from piety, and the practice of virtue by fear or human respect. What matters it, what people think and say of us, if we only please God? He alone can truly benefit or injure us; therefore, He alone is to be feared, as Christ says: Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matt. X. 28.)

How foolishly, therefore, do those act who through fear of displeasing certain people, are afraid to serve God and practice piety; who even go so far as to commit sin; who in order to be pleasing to others, oppress innocent, poor and forsaken people; who adopt the latest and most scandalous fashions and customs; those who eat meat on days of abstinence, or give it to others; those who sing sinful songs, or what is still worse, do not hesitate to ridicule sacred things to give others occasion to laugh, or in order to be considered strong-minded. Implore God daily and sincerely, that He may take from you this vain fear of men and give you instead the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom.

INSTRUCTION ON THE VALUE AND DIGNITY OF THE SOUL

Whose image is this? (Matt. XXII. 20.)

Thus we should often ask ourselves with respect to our soul, particularly when we are tempted to stain and ruin it by sin, Whose image is this? We should then say to ourselves, “Is it not the likeness of God, a likeness painted with the blood of Jesus, an image for which the Saviour gave His life? Should I defile and deform this by sin and voluptuousness? God forbid!” For in truth, what among all created things, except the angels, is more beautiful and more precious than a human soul, which is in the state of grace? “Could we,” says St. Catherine of Sienna, “behold with our corporal eyes a soul in the state of grace, we would see with astonishment that it surpasses in splendour all flowers, all stars, the whole world, and there is probably no one who would not wish to die for such beauty.” It is a dwelling of the Blessed Trinity! Christ did not give His life for all the goods and treasures of this earth, but for the human soul. And yet many estimate their soul at such little value that they sell it for a momentary pleasure, for a present not worth a penny! For shame! The body we estimate so highly that we take all pains to decorate it and keep it alive, and the soul the image and likeness of God, we take no pains to keep in the state of grace, and adorn with virtues! What folly!

INSTRUCTION ON THE OBLIGATION TO PAY TAXES OR TRIBUTE TO THE GOVERNMENT

Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. (Matt. XXII. 21.)

To pay tribute to the lawful government is a duty of justice which the Spirit of God Himself commands us faithfully to fulfill. (Rom. XIII. 6, 7.) Christ Himself paid the customary didrachma for Himself and St. Peter; (Matt. XVII. 23.) “and if the Son of God Himself paid duty and tax,” says St. Ambrose, “who art thou, O man, that thou wouldst free thyself from it?” The government must watch lest the life of its subjects be at hazard, that their property be not endangered or stolen, that there be security on the highways, that peace, harmony and order be preserved among the citizens, that their temporal welfare be promoted; that science and art flourish, etc. For this, teachers, judges, officers and soldiers are necessary, for whose support care must be taken, and whose trouble must be rewarded. Besides this the government must care for the security of the country, for public streets and bridges, and institutions necessary for the common good; to enable the government to perform these duties, taxes are necessary and lawfully assessed. If you oppose these laws, you oppose God, for by Him princes rule, and the mighty degree justice. (Prov. VIII. 16.) Let the payment of duties be done willingly, because you pay them for love of God, and

resigned to His holy will as the early Christians did, who even served their heathenish government with pleasure, in all that was not contrary to God's will, and cheerfully paid the duties.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

REMARK If from Pentecost until Advent there be only twenty-three Sundays, the following one is omitted, and the Mass of the twenty-fourth is said.

The **Introit** of the Mass consoles and incites us to confidence in God who is so benevolent towards us, and will not let us pine away in tribulation. The Lord saith: I think thoughts of peace, and not of affliction: you shall call upon Me, and I will hear you: and I will bring back your captivity from all places. (Fer. XXIX. 11. 12. 14.) Lord, thou hast blessed Thy land: Thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob. (Ps. LXXXIV.) Glory etc.

COLLECT Absolve, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy people from their offences: that through Thy bountiful goodness we may be freed from the bonds of those sins which through our frailty we have contracted. Thro',

EPISTLE (Philipp. III 17-21.: IV, 1-3.) Brethren, Be followers of me, and observe them who walk so as you have our model. For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping), that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of His glory, according to the operation whereby also He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. Therefore, my dearly beloved brethren, and most desired, my joy and my crown: so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beg of Evodia, and I beseech Syntyche, to be of one mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, my sincere companion, help those women who have laboured with me in the gospel with Clement and the rest of my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.

EXPLANATION There are unhappily many Christians, who, as St. Paul complains, are, declared enemies of Christ's cross, who do not wish to mortify their senses, who only think of gratifying their lusts, and, as it were, find their only pleasure, even seek their honour, in despising the followers of Jesus and His saints on the narrow path of

the cross, of mortification and humiliation. What will be the end of these people? Eternal perdition! For he who does not crucify the flesh, does not belong to Christ. (Gal. V. 24.) He who does not bear the-marks of the mortification of Jesus in his body, in him the life of Christ shall not be manifested. (II Cor. IV. 10.) He who does not walk in heaven during his, life-time, that is, who does not direct his thoughts and desires heavenward, and despise the world and its vanities, will not find admission there after his death.

ASPIRATION Would to God, I could say with St. Paul: The world is crucified to me, and I to the world. (Gal. VI. 14.)

Twenty-third Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Matt. IX. 18-26.) At that time, As Jesus was speaking to the multitudes, behold, a certain ruler came up, and adored Him, saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead: but come, lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus, rising up, followed him, with His disciples. And behold, a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter: thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a tumult, he said: Give place: for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn. And when the multitude was put forth, He went in, and took her by the hand. And the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.

INSTRUCTIONS

I. Filial was the faith, unbounded the confidence, profound the humility of this woman, and therefore, she received health also. Learn from this, how pleasing to the Lord is faith, confidence and humility; let your prayer always be penetrated by these three virtues, and you will receive whatever you ask.

II. The devout Louis de Ponte compares the conduct of this woman to our conduct at holy Communion, and says: Christ wished to remain with us in the most holy Eucharist, clothed with the garment of the sacramental species of bread, that he who receives His sacred flesh and blood, may be freed from evil concupiscence. If you wish to obtain the health of your soul, as did this woman the health of the body, imitate her. Receive the flesh and blood of Jesus with the most profound humility, with the firmest confidence in His power and goodness, and like this woman you too will be made whole.

III. Jesus called three dead persons to life, the twelve-year-old daughter of Jairus, ruler of the synagogue, of whom there is mention made in this gospel, the young man at Naim, (Luke VII. 14.) and Lazarus. (John. XI- 43.) By these three dead persons three classes of sinners may be understood: the maiden signifies those who sin in their youth through weakness and frailty, but touched by the grace of God, perceive their fall and easily rise again through penance; by the young man at Naim those are to be understood who sin repeatedly and in public, these require greater grace, more labour and severer penance; by Lazarus, the public and obdurate habitual sinners are to be understood who can be raised to spiritual life only by extraordinary graces and severe public penance.

IV. Christ did not raise the maiden, until the minstrels and noisy multitude were removed, by which He wished to teach us that the conversion of a soul cannot be accomplished in the midst of the noise and turmoil of temporal cares, idle pleasures and associations.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING RIDICULE AND DERISION

And they laughed him to scorn. (Matt IX. 24.)

When Jesus told the minstrels and the crowd that the girl was not dead, but sleeping, they laughed at Him, because they understood not the meaning of His words. Sensual-minded men generally act in the same manner towards the priests and ministers of God, who by their word and example admonish them to despise honours, riches and pleasures, and to embrace the love of poverty, humility and mortification. This is, an unintelligible and hateful language to them which they ridicule and mock just as they do when they hear that death is a sleep, from which we shall one day awake and be obliged to appear before the judgment-seat of God. Woe to such scoffers by whose ridicule so many souls are led from the path “of virtue! What the devil formerly, accomplished by tyrants in estranging men from God and a lively faith in Him and His Church, he seems to wish to accomplish in our days by the mockery, scoffs, and blasphemies of wicked men; for at no period have piety and virtue, holy simplicity and childlike faith, adherence to the holy Roman Church and her laws, reverence for her head, her ministers and priests, been more mocked, derided and blasphemed. Unhappily many permit themselves to be induced by mockery to abandon piety, to omit the public practice of their faith, to conceal their Catholic conviction, and to lead a lukewarm, careless, indeed, sinful life. Woe to the scoffers! they are an abomination to the Lord (Prov. III. 32.) who will one day require from their hands all the souls

perverted by them. Do not permit yourself to be led astray by those who ridicule your faith and zeal for virtue; remember the words of Jesus: He that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. (Matt. X. 33.) Let Jesus be your consolation, He was scoffed and blasphemed for your sake, and often say within yourself:

I know, my most amiable Jesus, that the servant cannot be more than his master. Since Thou wert so often sneered at, mocked and blasphemed, why should I wonder if I am derided for my faith in Thee and Thy Church, and for the practice of virtue!

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

REMARK The Mass of this Sunday is always the last, even if there are more than twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost; in that case the Sundays remaining after Epiphany, which are noticed in the calendar, are inserted between the twenty-third and the Mass of the twenty-fourth Sunday.

The **Introit** of the Mass is the same as that said on the **twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost**.

COLLECT Quicken, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the wills of Thy faithful: that they, more earnestly seeking after the fruit of divine grace, may more abundantly receive the healing gifts of Thy mercy. Thro'.

EPISTLE (Col. I. 9—14.) Brethren, We cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: that you may walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God: strengthened with all might according to the; power of His glory, in all patience and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins.

EXPLANATION In this epistle St. Paul teaches us to pray for our neighbour, and to thank God especially for the light of the true, only saving faith. Let us endeavour to imitate St. Paul in his love and zeal for the salvation of souls, then we shall also one day partake of his glorious reward in heaven.

Twenty-fourth Sunday After Pentecost **GOSPEL** (Matt. XXIV. 15—35.) At that time, Jesus said to His disciples: When you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth, let him understand: then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains: and he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat. And woe to them that are with child, and that give suck, in those days. But pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the Sabbath. For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be: and unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the sake of the elect, those days shall be shortened. Then, if any man shall say to you: Lo, here is Christ, or there: do not believe him: for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold, I have told it to you beforehand: if therefore they shall say to you: Behold, He is in the desert, go ye not out; Behold, He is in the closets, believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together. And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be moved: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty: and He shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them. And from the fig-tree learn a parable: when the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors. Amen I say to you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass.

EXPLANATION When you shall see the abomination of desolation. The abomination of desolation of which Daniel (IX. 27.) and Christ here speak, is the desecration of the temple and the city of Jerusalem by the rebellious Jews by perpetrating the most abominable vices, injustices and robberies, &c., but principally by the pagan Romans by putting up their idols. This destruction which was accomplished in the most fearful manner about forty years after the death of Christ, was foretold by Him according to the testimony of St. Luke. (XXI. 20.) At the same time, He speaks of the end of the world and of His coming to judgment, of which the desolation of Jerusalem was a figure.

Pray that your flight be not in the winter or on the Sabbath. Because, as St. Jerome says, the severe cold which reigns in the deserts and mountains would prevent the people from going thither to seek security, and because it was forbidden by the law for the Jews to travel on the Sabbath.

There shall rise false Christs and false prophets. According to the testimony of the Jewish historian Josephus, who was an eyewitness of the destruction of Jerusalem, Eleazar, John, Simon, &c., were such false prophets who under the pretence of helping the Jews, brought them into still greater misfortunes; before the end of the world it will be Antichrist with his followers, whom St. Paul calls the man of sin and the son of perdition, (II Thess. II. 3.) on account of his diabolical malice and cruelty. He will rise up, sit in the temple, proclaim himself God, and kill all who will not recognize him as such. His splendour, his promises and his false miracles will be such that even the holy and just will be in danger of being seduced, but for their sake God will shorten these days of persecution.

Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together. That is, where the wicked are, who have aimed at spiritual corruption, there punishment will overtake and destroy them.

This generation shall not pass till all these things be done. By these words Christ defines the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and says that many of His hearers would live to see it, which also happened. But when the end of the world will come, He says, not even the angels in heaven know. (Matt. XXIV. 36.) Let us endeavour to be always ready by leading a holy life, for the coming of the divine Judge, and meditate often on the words of our divine Lord: Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass.

(See *the account of the Destruction of Jerusalem on the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.*)

PRAYER Remove from us, O Lord, all that is calculated to rob us of Thy love. Break the bonds with which we are tied to the world, that we may not be lost with it. Give us the wings of eagles that we may soar above all worldly things by the contemplation of Thy sufferings, life and death, that we may hasten towards Thee now, and gather about Thee, that we may not become a prey to the rapacious enemy on the day of judgment. Amen.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING PERJURY

Amen, I say to you.(Matt. XXIV. 34.)

The Son of God here, and elsewhere in the gospel, confirms His word by an oath, as it were, for swearing is nothing else than to call upon God, His divine veracity, His justice, or upon His creatures in the name of God, as witness of the truth of our words. — Is swearing, then, lawful, and when? — It is lawful when justice or necessity or an important advantage requires it, and the cause is true and equitable. (Jer. IV. 2.) Those sin grievously, therefore, who swear to that which is false and unjust, because they call upon God as witness of falsehood and injustice, by which His eternal truthfulness and justice is desecrated; those sin who swear in a truthful cause without necessity and sufficient reason, because it is disrespectful to call upon God as witness for every trivial thing. In like manner, those sin grievously and constantly who are so accustomed to swearing as to break out into oaths, without knowing or considering whether the thing is true or false, whether they will keep their promise or not, or even if they will be able to keep it; such expose themselves to the danger of swearing falsely. “There is no one,” says St. Chrysostom, “who swears often, who does not sometimes swear falsely, just as he who speaks much, sometimes says unbecoming and false things.” Therefore, Christ tells those who seek perfection, not to swear at all, (Matt. V. 34.) that they might not fall into the habit of swearing and from that into perjury. He who has the habit of swearing should, therefore, take the greatest pains to eradicate it; to accomplish which it will be very useful to reflect that if we have to render an account for every idle word we speak, (Matt. XII. 36.) how much more strictly will we be judged for unnecessary false oaths! God’s curse accompanies him who commits perjury, in all his ways, as proved by daily experience. He who commits perjury in court, robs himself of the merits of Christ’s death and will be consumed in the fire of hell, which is represented by the crucifix and burning tapers, in presence of which the oath (in some places) is taken. If you have had the misfortune to be guilty of perjury, at once be truly sorry, weep for this terrible sin which you have committed, frankly confess it, repair the injury you may have caused by it, and chastise yourself for it by rigorous penance.

Part II: Instruction on the Veneration and Invocation of Saints

INSTRUCTION ON THE FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, COMMONLY CALLED CANDLEMAS-DAY. [February 2.]

What is this festival?

This is the festival on which the Church venerates the humility and obedience of Mary who, though not subject to the law of Moses, which required purification and presentation in the temple, yet subjected herself to it. From this comes the name Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or the Presentation of Jesus in the temple. It is also called Candlemas, because before Mass on this day the candles used in divine service are blessed and carried in procession.

Why are the candles blessed on this day and carried in procession?

In remembrance of the presentation of Jesus to His Heavenly Father on this day, when the aged Simeon called Him: A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of the people of Israel, (Luke II. 32.) and to remind us that, like the five wise virgins, we should go to meet Christ with the light of faith and good works.

With what intention are candles blessed?

With the intention of obtaining from God by their pious use and the prayers of those who devoutly carry them, health of body and soul; that our hearts, through the doctrine of Jesus and the grace of the Holy Ghost, may be interiorly enlightened; and that the fire of the love of God may be kindled in our hearts, purify them from all remains of sin, and make us partakers in the joyous light of heaven, which will never be extinguished.

The **Introit** of the Mass is: We have received Thy mercy, O God, in the midst of Thy temple: according to Thy name, O God, so also is Thy praise, unto the ends of the earth: Thy right hand is full of justice. Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised: in the city of our God, in His holy mountain. (Ps. XLVII.) Glory etc.

COLLECT Almighty, everliving God, we humbly beseech Thy Majesty, that as Thine only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in the substance of our flesh; so we also may, with purified hearts, be presented unto Thee. Thro'. etc.

EPISTLE (Malach. III. 1-4.) Thus Saith the Lord God: Behold, I send My Angel, and he shall prepare the way before My face. And presently the Lord, whom you seek, and the Angel of the testament, whom you desire, shall come to His temple. Behold, He cometh, saith the Lord of hosts, and who shall be able to think of the day of His coming, and who shall stand to see Him? For He is like a refining fire, and like the fuller's herb: and He shall sit refining and cleansing the silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall refine them as gold and as silver: and they shall offer

sacrifices to the Lord in justice. And the sacrifice of Juda and of Jerusalem shall please the Lord, as the days of old, and the ancient years: saith the Lord Almighty.

EXPLANATION The angel or messenger who shall prepare the way for the Lord, is John the Baptist, (Matt. XI. 10.) and the long desired Ruler and Messiah is Christ, who on this day comes into his temple. He is called the Angel of the testament, because He has arranged between God and man a new and far more excellent covenant than God had made with the Jews; inasmuch as He has given to the Christians not merely temporal but eternal good. This Angel of the testament, Christ, came the first time in all the humility of a little child into the temple, but His second coming at the end of the world will be terrible. The prophet likens Him to a fire which purifies the gold, and to that herb with which cloth is whitened in the fuller's machine; under which figures he alludes to the severity of judgment, with which Christ will judge the just and the unjust. Pure as refined gold, and as the white linen (corporal) on which the Body of Christ is laid in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, must be the heart of those who receive Christ in the blessed Sacrament, or seek worthily to offer the holy Sacrifice with the priest.

GOSPEL (Luke II. 22-32.) At that time, After the days of Mary's purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried Jesus to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. And to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons. And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was in him. And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when His parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law: he also took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said: Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace: Because my eyes have seen thy salvation: which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Why was Jesus brought into the temple of Jerusalem?

That He might be offered to God, who had commanded the Jews to offer their first-born sons to Him in grateful commemoration of the destroying angel having spared their first-born at the departure from Egypt, when all the firstborn of the Egyptians

were slain. (Exodus XII. 12.) These children had to be redeemed afterwards by certain gifts. (Exodus XIII. 13.)

How soon after birth was this offering to be made?

On the fortieth day; for according to the law the mother's impurity lasted for this length of time after the birth of a boy, after which she went to the temple, and in order to be declared purified, made her offering of purification. (Lev. XII.)

Was Mary subject to this law of purification?

No, for she had not, like other mothers, conceived in sin, and, therefore, did not need purification; but she placed herself with her divine Child among sinners and fulfilled the law by which these were bound. "Nothing", says St. Bernard, "was impure in her conception, nothing impure in her birth; there was nothing to be cleansed, for the Child itself was the origin of all purity, and came into the world to purify it from sin. Truly, O happy Virgin, thou wast not in need of purification, but thou wouldst pass as a woman among women, as thy Son also passed for a child among children."

Why did Mary comply with the law of purification?

She did this to give us an example of obedience and true humility, for she interiorly thought little of herself and wished externally to be so regarded; to teach us to thank God for the favours He has shown to our ancestors, for the law of the Jews was given to encourage them to gratitude for the preservation of the first-born of their ancestors from the hands of the destroying angel; (Exodus XII. 12.) and in order not to scandalize, by being regardless of this law, those who did not know that she was not required to observe it.

Learn, O Christian, from Mary's example to be truly humble and obedient, to be grateful to God for the benefits which your ancestors and parents have received, and to be on your guard never to give scandal, by failing to observe the commandments of God and His Church.

Why did not Mary offer a lamb as did the rich, (Lev. XII. 6). but merely, like the poor, a pair of doves?

Because she was poor, and was not ashamed to appear as such before the world. Mary loved humility and the poverty connected with it. Be not ashamed, therefore, if thou

art poor, love poverty the more; but if rich, be poor in spirit, and love the poor and distressed.

How did it come to pass that Simeon met the Saviour in the temple?

Because he was a pious and faithful servant of God, it had been promised him that he should not die, until he had seen the Saviour. When Jesus was brought into the temple, Simeon was inspired by God to go there also, and when he found Jesus there, he by divine inspiration knew Him to be the Messiah, and gave testimony of Him.

See how God rewards those who sincerely love and serve Him, giving Himself to them to be known always more and more!

Why was Simeon ready to die when he had held Jesus in his arms?

Because his wish was fulfilled; for since he had not only seen with his own eyes, but had held in his arms the Desired of all nations, for whom the patriarchs had so vainly longed, what more could he wish than to leave this miserable world, and commend his spirit into the hands of his Saviour?

Why did Simeon call Jesus a light for the revelation of the Gentiles?

Because Jesus had come into the world as the true light, (John I. 9) which was to free the Gentiles from the darkness of superstition and idolatry, and from the blindness and slavery of Satan, as well as to conduct the Jews out of the bondage of the Mosaic Law into the liberty of the children of God. (Gal. IV. 31.)

PRAYER Heavenly Father! look down from Thy throne of mercy upon the face of Thy Anointed in whom Thou art well pleased. Behold, He is this day offered to Thee in the temple for the sins of His brethren. Let this offering please Thee, and move Thee to have compassion on us sinners. In consideration of His humility and obedience, forgive us our pride and disobedience, and grant us, that purified by His blood, we may one day, having like Simeon departed this life in peace, behold Thee as the eternal Light which shall never be extinguished in the temple of Thy glory, be presented to Thee by Mary, our beloved Mother, and love and praise Thee forever. Amen.

INSTRUCTION ON CHURCHING

In the Jewish law (Lev. XII.) women for forty days after the birth of a boy, and for eighty after that of a girl, were regarded as unclean and kept out of the temple, and

required, at the end of that time, to bring a lamb as a holocaust, and a dove as a propitiatory sacrifice to the temple, and be pronounced pure by the prayer of the priest. This law does not, it is true, apply to Christian women, because the Church has abolished the Jewish ceremonies: but the Church, nevertheless, permits them to remain absent from church for six weeks, or so long as circumstances may require, after the birth of a child, in order to take care of their health. This should be remembered by husbands, who should see that their wives have the necessary quiet and attendance which nature requires for recovery after the birth of a child. The Church desires that at the end of this time the mother, following Mary's example, should resort to the church to obtain the blessing of the priest, thank God for her delivery, offer the child to God, praying with the priest for the grace to bring up her offspring in sanctity and piety. This comprises the Churching of women, which is a very old and praiseworthy custom and should not be neglected. This practice was not instituted to prevent their being harmed by the devil, by malicious persons, or by ghosts, and it would be not only a foolish fear, but a superstition to be condemned, if one were to suppose that a woman were liable to harm if she should go abroad before she were churched. The delicate health of women and of children is generally owing to their having injured themselves by want of proper care and attention.

PRAYER Almighty and beneficent God! who didst impose upon our mother Eve, in punishment for her sin, that she should give birth to her children in pain: I offer to Thee all the pains which I have thus suffered in atonement for my sins, and thank Thee, that I have safely brought a child into the world, whom I now offer to Thee, according to the example of the Mother of Thine only-begotten Son, for Thy holy service, whom I shall zealously endeavour to educate for Thy honour. Give me but this grace through the intercession and merits of this most blessed Mother. Bless me and my child, and grant, that we may here live in accordance with Thy divine will, and receive eternal salvation. Through Christ, our Lord, &c. Amen.

INSTRUCTION ON THE FEAST OF ST. BLASE, BISHOP AND MARTYR
[February 3.]

St. Blase was born at Sebaste, in Armenia. In his youth he gave himself with great zeal to the study of philosophy and medicine, but at the same time did not forget his

soul. He followed Christ in beautiful virtues, especially in meekness and humility, and kept from the sinful ways of the world. He was appointed bishop of Sebaste at the earnest solicitations of its inhabitants. At that time the Christians, especially the bishops and priests, suffered many persecutions from the pagans; persecutions from which Sebaste did not escape. That his life might be saved for his flock, St. Blase withdrew to a grotto in Mount Agaesus, where he led a most penitent life, and entirely destroyed the old man in himself. If one masters his corrupt nature, subdues his evil inclinations, and banishes everything earthly from himself, then his course of life becomes a heavenly one, and he becomes master over the earthly, material life, so that all nature is his friend and servant. So it was with St. Blase. The animals of the forests became his friends and served him; they approached him with confidence, permitted themselves to be caressed by him, had their wounds healed by him, received his blessing, brought him food, and obeyed his voice. A hunter one day met him in the midst of these animals, and forthwith reported the saintly man to the governor, who sent his officers to apprehend him. St. Blase went cordially to meet them, and when they reached the door of his cave, he said: "You are welcome, for now I see that God has not forgotten me." When they were returning with him, the animals followed, and the officers terrified would have fled, but St. Blase reassured them: "Be not afraid," he said, "they will do you no harm," and ordered the animals to go back. They obeyed, but for a long time looked sadly after him. While on his way many people came on the road to see the saint and to ask his blessing; among them a woman whose child was suffering from the effects of having swallowed a fish-bone. She was inconsolable, and cried out to the saint: "O dearest master, help my child, or it will be strangled!" The saint knelt down, prayed, blessed the child with the sign of the cross, and it was immediately cured.

When the saint had reached the city, he was taken before the governor who ordered him to worship the gods. Refusing to do this, he was struck with clubs; while thus tortured, he said to the governor: "Do you indeed fancy, that by torture you can force me to forsake my Lord and my God? You are indeed wrong; no pain shall separate me from my Jesus." The governor, then, was so enraged that he had him bound to a pillar and torn to pieces by iron claws. St. Blase calmly looking up to heaven, suffered all without uttering a single moan. He was then taken to prison, where the governor allowed him to remain for a time. Once more called to the judgment-seat, the saint again firmly refused to offer sacrifice to idols, and the governor then ordered that he should be beheaded.

The Church venerates his memory on the third of February. After the Mass on this day, the priest, holding two burning candles, touches with them the necks of the

faithful while he pronounces the following blessing: “Through the intercession of the holy bishop and martyr Blase, may the Lord preserve thee from every disease of the throat, and all other evils, in the name † of the Father, † and of the Son, † and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.” It is a very ancient custom to invoke St. Blase in all diseases of the throat, hence this blessing.

COLLECT O God, who dost gladden us with the yearly solemnity of blessed Blase, Thy martyr and bishop: mercifully grant, that as we celebrate his birthday to immortality, so we may also rejoice in his protection. Thro’. etc.

THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

On this day and the ensuing eight days, the Catholic Church celebrates with special solemnity the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

What does the Catholic Church understand by the Immaculate Conception?

By the Immaculate Conception she does not understand that great grace by which Mary preserved herself pure from every, even the least, actual sin; for, as concerns this, the Church has long since declared that Mary never sinned: nor does she understand by it her continual virginity, for it has been for a long time a doctrine of faith that both before and after the birth of her divine Son Mary remained a pure virgin; nor yet that she was sanctified before birth; as were the Prophets Jeremias and John the Baptist, who were both conceived in sin, but by a special grace of God were released from it before their birth; neither does she understand by it the conception of Christ from the Holy Ghost, that is, that Mary unstained conceived the Son of God of the Holy Ghost; and without the assistance of man, for this was always the unalterable doctrine of the Church: she does understand by it that exalted favour, that unshared privilege, by which the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first moments of her conception, by a special grace and favour on the part of God in reference to the merits of Jesus, our Saviour, was preserved from every stain of original sin.

What has until now been held by the Church in regard to this privilege?

Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden of Eden. The Catholic Church has always been of the pious opinion that Mary, the blessed Mother of the Redeemer, was

conceived immaculate, that her most pure soul had never from the first moment of her existence the least shadow of sin. This doctrine was embraced by all the saints, the most learned and most faithful children of the Church. We have testimony of this, as far back as the times of the apostles, in a document concerning the sufferings of St. Andrew, in which it is said: "As the first man was created from the spotless earth, so was it necessary that the perfect man (Christ Jesus) should be born of an immaculate virgin." St. Justin, who died a martyr in the year 167 after Christ, compares the Blessed Virgin to Eve, before she sinned and while she was still a virgin. St. Amphilochus says: "He who created the first Eve free from shame, created the second without spot or stain." Origen, one of the Fathers of the Church, writes that she was neither surprised by the personated serpent, nor infected by his poison, and calls her a pure and immaculate mother. St. Ephrem calls her the undefiled, the strong, the inviolate, the most chaste virgin, far removed from all spot and stain. The Abbot St. Sabbas says of Mary: "On thee who never took part in any guile, I place my hope. No one but thou, O Lady, is without fault, and besides thee no one is unsullied and spotless." St. Ambrose calls Mary a virgin who by the grace of God remained always free from all shadow of sin. St. Augustine says: "When there is mention made of sin, the Virgin of whom on account of our Lord no question is to be asked, must be excepted." St. Proclus says, "that the holy Mother of God was made by the purest God free from all stain." St. Fulgentius says: "The wife of the first man was led astray and her soul soiled by the malice of sin, but in the mother of the second (Christ) the grace of God preserved the soul as well as the body inviolate." St. Paschasius Radbertus testifies: "It is certain that Mary was free from original sin;" and St. Peter Barman says: "The flesh of the Virgin taken from Adam, would not submit to the stain of Adam," and before him the pious Doctor Alcuin wrote of Mary: "Thou art beautiful as the moon and free from all spot and every shadow of changeableness!" And St. Ildephonsus says: "It is certain that Mary was free from original sin." An immense number of saintly men and theologians maintained the same. Many of them argued with the greatest keenness and the most indefatigable zeal the part of the Blessed Virgin; the teachers at the universities of Paris, Salamanca, Coimbra, Naples, Cologne, Mayence, Ingolstadt, &c., made it their duty by vows to inculcate this great privilege of the most favoured Virgin, and to defend it by speech and by writings. Celebrated orders of monks, especially the orders of St. Benedict, St. Francis and St. Ignatius, made it their duty to advance this pious faith of the Immaculate Conception among the people. A great number of popes and bishops also honoured the Immaculate Conception, and forbade the contrary doctrine to be taught. Even kings, princes and emperors counted it a great honour to pay homage to the Immaculate Conception of the Queen of Heaven. Finally, the Catholic Church gave definite expression to this universal belief, by declaring in the Council

of Trent, that in the resolutions relating to original sin, the Virgin Mary was not included, and she confirmed the festival of the Immaculate Conception, introduced in the tenth century by St. Anselm, the worthy son of the great St. Benedict, and since that time observed in all the Churches.

This veneration for the Immaculate Conception, this pious view held by the whole Catholic Church was not yet a matter of faith, that is, the Catholic Church had not yet laid down this great privilege of the Mother of God as a dogma. We were not commanded to believe it, although to preach or teach against it was forbidden. But when, in the course of time, a large number of the faithful, among whom were archbishops, bishops, whole religious orders, as well as great monarchs, besought the pope as head of the Church to pronounce concerning the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, that is, to elevate the belief so widely spread throughout the Catholic Church to a dogma, the pope could no longer hesitate to raise his voice in regard to this most important affair.

What did the supreme pastor of the Church, the pope, then do in regard to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin?

Pope Pius IX. who, as he himself testified, had in many ways experienced the assistance of the great Queen of Heaven, was urged by his love and childlike veneration for the Blessed Mother of our Lord, to set the last brilliant diamond in her crown of glory by declaring the Immaculate Conception an article of faith. Not wishing to be precipitate, he first addressed a circular to all the primates, patriarchs, archbishops and bishops, of the whole Catholic world, February 2, 1849, requesting them to send him reports of the devotion of their clergy and the faithful concerning the Immaculate Conception, and the extent of their desire in the matter, that the case might be decided by the Apostolic See; at the same time he urged them to pray with him that God would give him the necessary enlightenment, and to call upon the clergy and the faithful for their prayers. When this was done, five hundred bishops in different parts of the world declared that they and their flocks firmly believed that Mary, the most favoured Virgin, was preserved from every stain of original sin, and that they earnestly desired that the pope might raise this pious opinion to a dogma of the Church. Then the holy father, filled with delight, invited the bishops of the different countries to Rome, to consult with him upon the matter. About one hundred and fifty bishops, and a large number of learned men and superiors of spiritual orders, met at Rome and the whole subject was once more maturely examined; and at last, the 8th of December, 1854, the day on which the Church celebrates the feast of the Immaculate Conception, was appointed as the day on which the pope, the supreme

head of the Church, the mouth of the apostles, should solemnly announce the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

On this day the holy father ascended the Apostolic Chair in the splendid Church of St. Peter at Rome, and surrounded by the assembled cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, the clergy and the people he once more invoked the light of the Holy Ghost, and amid the perfect silence which reigned in that immense church, the holy father in a loud voice and with the most profound reverence and emotion read the decree by which he solemnly pronounced and established, that:

“It is an article of faith that the Blessed Virgin Mary by a special grace and privilege of God, on account of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, was from the first instant of her conception protected and preserved from every stain of original sin.”

Thus has the head of Catholic Christianity drawn aside the veil, which until then obscured the full glory of the Queen of Heaven, which now shines in stainless loveliness radiant over the whole world. The truth that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived immaculate is no longer a pious opinion, but an article of faith which every Catholic who wishes to remain a child of the Church, must profess with heart and with lips.

But, perhaps the decision of the pope concerning the Immaculate Conception is a new doctrine?

By no means; it is an old belief, established upon the holy Scriptures and laid down in the bosom of the Church, but not solemnly pronounced and made public previously. The pope cannot make a new article of faith, but he can and must announce that, as a revealed truth, which is established by the holy Scriptures and has been everywhere and at all times believed as a revealed truth by all true Christians. But if there is a truth founded on the holy Scriptures and tradition, of which the pope, the representative of Christ on earth, speaks officially, then every Catholic is bound to believe and openly to acknowledge the same. As we have already seen, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception has been believed since the time of the apostles, and it is also established by the Scriptures. In the oldest of the sacred Books, in the Book of Genesis, (iii. 15.) is one of the most weighty passages on this subject which reads: I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel. After the fall of the first man, God spoke to the serpent, Satan, announcing that a woman would come and crush his head, that is, destroy his power; and all Catholic interpreters and holy Fathers agree

that this woman is the Blessed Virgin. Mary is, therefore, placed by God Himself as Satan's enemy, and must have been free from original sin from the first moment of her conception, otherwise she would have been, as St. Paul, the Apostle, says, a child of God's wrath and under the power of Satan. In the gospel of St. Luke, (I. 28.) it is further said: And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail full of grace: the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women. The angel, by the direction of God, called Mary full of grace, that is, more than any of the just endowed with God's sanctifying grace, as the holy Fathers agree. But would Mary be full of sanctifying and all other graces, had she for one moment of her life been without grace and burdened with sin? Would God have permitted the Blessed Mother of His only begotten Son, from whom He received flesh, to be touched by sin, even though for an instant, and be in the power of Satan? No; God's hand preserved her; by His grace and by the infinite merits of her divine Son she remained free from every stain of sin, and the Church most justly applies to her the words of holy Scripture: Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee. (Cant. iv. 7.)

What instructive meaning has the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin for every Catholic?

The Immaculate Conception teaches Catholics to know in some measure the infinite sanctity of the holy Trinity which makes sin so hateful and detestable to Him. The Heavenly Father could not see His beloved daughter for one moment stained by sin. The Divine Son could not wish to choose for His mother a virgin upon whose soul there was a vestige of sin. The Holy Ghost whose most pure bride Mary is, was not willing that her heart, His dwelling-place, should ever be for one instant soiled by sin. Behold how God detests sin! The Immaculate Conception also teaches us the inestimable treasure of sanctifying grace. Mary received this priceless treasure from God even in the first moment of her conception, without it she would never have become the Mother of the Saviour. Thou, my Christian, hadst not this treasure at thy conception, it is true, but thou didst receive it in holy baptism; there God's hand arrayed thee in the white garment of innocence; there He sanctified thy soul, and the Holy Ghost selected it for His dwelling-place. Mary preserved this inestimable treasure until death, she was always blooming as a pure lily, the breath of sin never soiled her loveliness. Ask thyself: Do I still possess this treasure, which was given to me in holy baptism; have I preserved my soul's beauty from the poison of sin, have I soiled it, destroyed it, lost it? Oh, if thou hast lost this precious gift, how unhappy art thou! if thou hast had this great misfortune to have stained thy garment of baptismal innocence by sin, Mary, the peerless virgin, has borne for thee the Saviour whose precious blood cleanses from every sin, whose infinite merits will restore to

thee sanctifying grace, if thou art contrite and dost confess thy sin. But for the Saviour this treasure would be forever lost to thee, and thy soul forever forfeited. But for this Saviour Mary would not have been preserved from original sin, would not have received sanctifying grace at her conception. We can here learn the necessity of salvation through Christ, gratefully thank God who has given it to us, and praise Mary who had the grace to conceive and give birth to Him. In the Immaculate Conception, O Christian, thou canst learn to know something of the priceless value of virginity. Jesus chose a pure and immaculate virgin for His mother, who should be the mirror of all virginal souls, her most pure and immaculate image should be continually presented to the corrupted world to show how virginity is esteemed in the eyes of our Lord.

INTROIT I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation: and with the robe of justice He hath covered me, as a bride adorned with her jewels. (Isai. Ixi. 10.) I will extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast upheld me: and hast not made my Enemies to rejoice over me. Glory etc.

COLLECT O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, didst prepare a worthy habitation for Thy Son: we beseech Thee, that as Thou didst through the foreseen death of Thy same Son, preserve her from all stain, so Thou wilt also grant that we may reach Thee cleansed through her intercession. Through the same Jesus etc.

LESSON (Prov. viii. 22—35.) The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made any thing, from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old, before the earth was made. The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived: neither had the fountains of waters as yet sprung out: the mountains with their huge bulk had not as yet been established: before the hills I was brought forth: He had not yet made the earth, nor the rivers, nor the poles of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was present; when, with a certain law and compass, He enclosed the depths; when He established the sky above, and poised the fountains of waters; when He compassed the sea with its bounds, and set a law to the waters, that they should not pass their limits; when He balanced the foundations of the earth. I was with Him, forming all things, and was delighted every day, playing before Him at all times, playing in the world; and my delights were to be with the children of men. Now, therefore, ye children, hear Me: Blessed are they that keep My ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth Me, and that watcheth

daily at My gates, and waiteth at the posts of My door. He that shall find Me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.

EXPLANATION AND APPLICATION This lesson is first a panegyric on the divine, uncreated Wisdom, the eternal Son of God, who at all times and before all things was with God and in God, by whom was made everything that was made, ordered and preserved; who rejoices in His works, loves them, and who admonishes man to love and imitate Him, and promises him eternal and temporal happiness. The Church causes this lesson to be read on this day, because the greater part of it can be applied to Mary; for it can truly be said of her, that she, as the most holy and excellent of all creatures, possessed the first place in the heart of God. For this reason the Church applies to her the words of the wise man: I came out of the mouth of the most High, the first-born before all creatures. (Ecclus. xxiv. 5.) For, as St. Richard says, she is the most worthy of all; no one has received so full a measure of purity, and of all supernatural gifts; in no creature are the marvels of divine goodness so visible as in her. Admire, devout soul, this master-piece of Almighty God, and make frequent use of the words of St. Chrysostom:

“Hail Mother of God and our Mother! Hail O Heaven in which God Himself dwells! O Throne of grace from which the Lord distributes His graces! Pray always to Jesus for us, that on the Day of Judgment we may receive forgiveness and eternal salvation.”

GOSPEL (Luke i. 26—28.) at that time, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women.

Why is this gospel read today?

Because it has a significant relation to the Immaculate Conception, and proclaims the great honour shown to the Blessed Virgin by these words: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women.

Why did the angel call Mary full of grace?

Because Mary was filled with grace, even before she came into this world; because she always increased in grace; because she was to bear the Author of all grace; that we may consider how Mary obtains for us the treasures of divine grace.

Mary was filled with grace even before her birth. As we are all conceived in sin, being children of a sinful ancestor, we are, therefore, burdened by sin before our birth. Mary was free by the privilege of the Immaculate Conception from all sin; her soul, pure and adorned with sanctifying grace, came forth from the hands of the Creator, and without the least prejudice to its purity and sanctity was united to her most pure body, from which the Saviour was to take His humanity. She could not from the first instant of her existence be wanting in that original sanctity and justice, which were the most beautiful adornments of our natural ancestress, Eve.

But Mary from the first moment of her conception was not only in grace but full of grace, because God appointed her for the highest dignity, of being the Mother of His only-begotten Son, and had consequently endowed her with the full measure of corresponding plenitude of graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost; according to the opinion of many learned men, the measure of grace which the Blessed Virgin received at her Immaculate Conception, was greater than that which all the angels and blessed possess now in glory. Mary ever increased in grace: But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day. (Prov. iv. 18.) These words of the Holy Ghost are verified especially in the life of the Blessed Virgin. What abundance of grace did she not receive, when the Holy Ghost overshadowed her, and the divine Son, who is Himself the infinite plenitude of grace, was conceived in her most pure body! Above all this, there yet came that rich supply of grace by which her zealous, constant, perfect and faithful cooperation made Mary increase every moment in grace. Thus St. Bonaventure says: “As all the waters meet in the sea, so all the graces were united in Mary.”

Why did the angel say to Mary: The Lord is with thee?

Because God is with the Blessed Virgin in an extraordinary manner. It is well to notice particularly, that the archangel Gabriel did not say to Mary as the angel did to Gideon: The Lord be with thee, (Judges vi. 12.) but: The Lord is with thee. These words are not, therefore, the wish that the favour, the blessing, the protection of God may be with Mary, but the positive declaration that the Lord really is with her, not simply because of His omnipotence and omnipresence by which He is with all His creatures, nor merely because of His goodness, love and intimacy by which He is with all the just. He is with her in a peculiar manner, since she by her dignity of being the Mother of God came into such close relationship with the Triune God that our

intellect can conceive nothing nearer. She became the chosen Mother of the Son of God, the dearest, the most favoured daughter of the Heavenly Father, and the pure, beloved bride of the Holy Ghost. “God the Father was with her,” says St. Bonaventure, “as with His most noble Daughter; God the Son was with her as with His most worthy Mother; God the Holy Ghost was with her as with His most pure Bride.”

Why did the angel say to Mary: Blessed art thou amongst women?

Because he desired to honour her as the most blessed of her sex, since she alone was chosen of all the others to be the Mother of God; because the first woman brought the curse, but Mary, the salvation of the world.

Mary, Mother of God! An honour, indeed, which in its exaltation is second only to divinity. Mary, the Virgin Mother of God! Mother and Virgin at the same time, what a wonderful prerogative! Though the greatest and most glorious of all mothers, she is the purest and most spotless of virgins, the queen of virgins.

But not only on account of her double glory as Mother of God and as a Virgin, Mary is the most blessed of her sex, but because it was given to her to mediate for us and for the whole world. She is that woman, promised to our first and sinful parents in Paradise, who would crush the serpent’s head; she gave to her Son the body with which He, by His death on the cross, accomplished the great work of salvation.

ACT OF PRAISE “Praised and blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary!”

(Pope Pius VI. granted an indulgence of one hundred days to those who, with contrition and devotion repeat the above act of praise.)

THE FEAST OF OF SS. PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES. [June 29.]

PETER, formerly called Simon, from Bethsaida in Galilee, was a son of Jonas and a brother of Andrew, by whom he was brought to Christ. After the great draught of fishes, when our Lord said to him and Andrew: Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men, Peter followed the Saviour constantly, from whom he received the most tender proofs of love. Peter was present when Christ appeared in His glory on Mount Tabor, when He raised the daughter of Jairus to life, and when He sweat blood in the agony on Mount Olivet. Peter was also present at the miraculous draught of

fishes, which was a figure of the multitudes which he was to bring, by means of the holy Gospel, to the kingdom of God, for Christ called him a fisher of men, and afterwards, because Peter recognized and professed Him to be the Son of the living God, Christ named him Peter, made him the head of the apostles and of the entire Church, made him His vicar and visible representative upon earth, promising to build His Church upon him as upon a rock, gave him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and commanded him to feed His lambs and His sheep. Peter loved our Lord above all things; because of his love he wished to remain with Christ upon Mount Tabor to prevent Him from suffering, and in his love desired to die with Christ. He certainly showed the greatest courage when Christ was taken, following Him even into the house of Caiphas. But alas, the instability of man! There Peter three times denied the Lord. But the look of forgiving love which Jesus cast upon him, forced from him tears of the deepest contrition. He atoned for his denial by suffering much for Christ. Under the Emperor Nero he was crucified for his faith at Rome, and by his own request with his head downwards, because he did not consider himself worthy to die like Christ.

Oh! that all sinners would seek by such penance to turn their evil into good!

PRAYER TO ST. PETER. O God, who from a poor fisherman hast made St. Peter prince of the apostles and head of Thy Church, we beseech Thee through his intercession to make us true lambs of Thy flock. Grant, that we may hear his voice, follow his doctrine, and walk in his steps, until we reach that happy pasture where the Good Shepherd, Thine only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, whom St. Peter represented on earth, reigns with Thee and the Holy Ghost forever. Amen.

St. Paul

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL

PAUL, before his conversion called Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, was born at Tarsus in Cilicia, and was a pupil of Gamaliel. As he had the most zealous attachment for the Jewish law, he was exasperated against the Christians. However, when hastening to Damascus to persecute them, he was converted by the Lord on the way and called to be an apostle. [See the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.] His unwearied labours in the vineyard of the Lord after his conversion, the sufferings which he endured upon his apostolic journeys, and the dangers and persecutions through which he passed in different countries, cannot be described. The zeal and constancy with which he confessed and preached the faith, though in chains and fetters, though scourged and beaten, in hunger and thirst, and through innumerable dangers, are almost incredible.

He was so humble that he regarded himself as the least of the apostles, and thanked God fervently that He considered him worthy to suffer for His sake. After he had fought a good fight and finished his course, having everywhere zealously preached the faith, and still more zealously practiced it, he won the crown of justice. On the same day and at the same place in Rome, in which Peter was crucified, he was beheaded, by command of the Emperor Nero. Thus God tries and rewards true virtue. Paul in his life, as after death, worked numberless miracles; even his handkerchief, like St. Peter's shadow, healed sickness and expelled devils. He had so deeply impressed the name of Jesus in his heart, that it was almost continually on his lips, for "out of the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaketh."

Would that we loved Jesus as St. Paul loved Him, then we would, like St. Paul, be ready to do and suffer much for Him.

PRAYER TO ST. PAUL. O St. Paul, chosen vessel of the Lord, who didst carry the name of Jesus to kings and heathens, who didst suffer so much for Christ, and wast never allured from the love of Him: like a brave soldier of Christ, thou hast fought a good battle, a zealous teacher, thou hast preached far and wide the true faith, and the just and merciful God has, therefore, rewarded thee with the crown of justice: pray to God for me, that I who because of my sins am an instrument of wrath, may become an instrument of honour, adorned with the Christian virtues, with which thou art already decorated. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The **Introit** of the Mass consists of Peter's words, spoken after his deliverance from the prison at Jerusalem: Now I know in very deed that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. (Acts xii. 11.) Lord, Thou hast proved me, and known me: Thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up. (Ps. cxxxviii.) Glory be to the Father, &c.

COLLECT O God, who hast sanctified this day by the martyrdom of Thy blessed Apostles Peter and Paul: grant unto Thy Church, that as from them it received the first teachings of religion, so it may in all things follow their holy precepts. Thro'. &c.

EPISTLE (Acts xii. 1 — 11.) In those days, Herod the king stretched forth his hands to afflict some of the Church: and he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take up Peter also. Now it was in the days of the azymes. And when he had apprehended him, he cast him into prison, delivering him to four files of soldiers to be kept, intending after the pasch to bring

him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison. But prayer was made without ceasing by the Church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door of the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the room: and he striking Peter on the side, raised him up, saying: Arise quickly. And the chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said to him: Gird thyself, and put on thy sandals. And he did so. And he said to him: Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And going out, he followed him, and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel: but he thought he saw a vision. And passing through the first and the second ward, they came to the iron gate that leadeth to the city: which of itself opened to them. And going out, they passed on through one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. And Peter coming to himself, said: Now I know in very deed that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

EXPLANATION

I. This Herod, a grandson of Herod the Great, under whom Christ was born, and who murdered the holy Innocents, was a zealous Jew, and to please the Jews persecuted the Christians. He caused Peter to be imprisoned with the intention of having him publicly executed after Easter, for the amusement of the people. How shameful it is to do wrong, to murder a man in order to amuse others! See how deeply the desire to please can lead into error! Take care to commit no sin for the sake of pleasing others; for he who seeks to please men cannot be a servant of Christ, says the Apostle Paul.

II. The Church, that is, the priests and the faithful, prayed to God continually for the liberation of St. Peter, and their prayers were heard. Let us pray for one another, especially for sinners, that God may free them from the chains of the evil one.

III. Peter slept quietly in prison, for his conscience was at peace, and he confided himself to God's protection. The innocent are calm in every peril and need, the bad alone have no peace.

IV. God sent an angel to Peter, who told him to rise quickly, gird himself, put on his sandals, and follow him. If thy guardian angel warns thee to rise from the sleep of sin, do so at once, return to thyself, like the prodigal son, break the bonds that bind thee to sin, gird thyself with the strong resolution to sin no more, put on thy shoes, that is, make the firm purpose to follow Christ.

(The Gospel as on the Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome.)

INSTRUCTION ON THE FEAST OF THE VISITATION OF MARY. [July 2.]

Why is this festival called the Visitation of Mary?

BECAUSE on this day Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, whom, as the angel had told her, God had blessed with a son in her old age.

[The **Introit** of the Mass is the same as on the festival of the Immaculate Conception.]

EPISTLE (Cant. ii. 8—14.) behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills: my beloved is like a roe or a young hart. Behold, he standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices. Behold, my beloved speaketh to me: Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land: the time of pruning is come: the voice of the turtle is heard in our land: the fig-tree hath put forth her green figs: the vines in flower yield their sweet smell. Arise, my love, my beautiful one: and come: my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, show me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears: for thy voice is sweet, and thy face comely.

EXPLANATION The Church here applies this lesson to Christ's love for His Mother, from whom He received His flesh. From the beautiful words of this day's lesson, thou mayest, therefore, comprehend the love which Jesus and Mary had for each other, and consider that Jesus so loves thy soul, that He calls on thee to rise up, that is, to leave earthly thoughts, and come to Him, to live for Him only, and entertain thyself in prayer with Him only, like Mary who because of this was so beautiful in His sight.

COLLECT O Jesus, sweet Bridegroom of my soul, come, hasten with Thy grace to visit my soul, that she may be purified and sanctified by Thy love, come prepare her for Thy worthy dwelling, visit me as thou once didst visit with Mary the child John and sanctify him. Do not permit my ears ever to close to Thy warning voice, but grant that I may always obey Thy holy admonitions, and thus become ever more and more pleasing to Thee.

The Visitation

GOSPEL (Luke i. 39—47). At that time, Mary rising up, went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Juda: and she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb: and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord. And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

LESSON

I. Mary rising up went into the hill-country, and as St. Luke says, with haste: “And tell us now, O Mary,” exclaims St. Alphonsus Liguori, “why dost thou hasten so?” “I have a duty to fulfill she replies, “which the love of my neighbour requires. I go to assist a pious family.” — In like manner you also should hasten to carry help and consolation to your neighbour.

II. Mary visited her cousin out of true love, not from inconsiderate curiosity or according to the custom of the world. From such motives we should make all our visits. They should aim always only at the honour of God and the spiritual advantage of our fellow-men, they should not come from false politeness or through bad intentions, which alas! are too often the motives of worldly visits.

III. Mary in this visit gives a special example of humility, when she, although the Mother of God, visits the mother of His servant, John, saluting her first, and rendering her for three months the services of a maid. — Learn from Mary, and sincerely ask her to obtain for you the virtue of humility.

IV. When Mary was praised by her cousin and called blessed, she turned the praises at once to God and gives Him all the honour. — When we do any good, we should always give the honour to God, not to ourselves, as the prophet says: Not to us, not to us, but to thy name give glory!

V. When Mary entered into Zachary’s house, wonderful grace entered with her. The infant John leaped for joy, because sanctifying grace was then given to him, before he was born; Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and Zachary, St. John’s father, was soon to be consoled by regaining the use of speech.

“It is then but true,” exclaims St. Alphonsus Ligouri, “that through thy mediation, my Queen and Mother, God’s graces are dispensed and souls sanctified! Forget me not, Oh! my beloved Mother Mary, forget not me, thy servant, who loves thee and places in thee all his hopes!”

EXPLANATION OF THE MAGNIFICAT

What does this canticle contain?

THE praise of God, Mary’s gratitude and humility. In it she praises God, and rejoices that He saw the humility of His hand-maid, and made her the Mother of His only-begotten Son, and, therefore, all generations shall call her blessed. She says that God’s mercy is great from generation to generation to those that fear Him: He humbles the proud and casts them down from their seat, which they had erected in their conceit, but gives His grace to the humble and exalts them: He richly fills those who hunger and thirst after virtue and heavenly treasures, but let’s those who think themselves rich, go away empty; He receives all true Israelites for His worshipers and leads them to salvation, which He promised to their fathers. “God is mighty;” says St. Augustine, “if thou exaltest thyself, He turns from thee; if thou humblest thyself, He descends to thee.”

SUPPLICATION O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living- God! who didst descend from the heights of heaven into the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, didst remain for nine months in it, deigning to visit and sanctify St. John through her, grant, that we may participate, through the practice of good works and especially of humility, in the fruits of Thy holy Incarnation.

THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY **(August 15.)**

Why is this feast so called?

Because on this day the Blessed Virgin was taken up into heaven.

Why are plants and fruits blessed on this day?

The Church does this to manifest her joy at the glorious victory which Mary achieved over death, the world and the devil, and at her splendid triumph when she, adorned with virtues as with so many flowers, entered heaven; and that God may so sanctify and bless the plants and fruits, that their use may serve to our welfare.

At the **Introit** of the Mass, the Church invites us to universal joy by singing: Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a festal day in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for whose Assumption the angels rejoice, and give praise to the Son of God. My heart hath uttered a good word: I speak my works to the King. (Ps. XLIV.) Glory &c.

COLLECT Pardon, Lord, we beseech Thee, the transgressions of Thy servants: that we, who by our own deeds are unable to please Thee, may be saved by the intercession of the Mother of Thy Son our Lord. Through the same &c.

EPISTLE (Ecclus. XXIV. 11 — 20.) In all things I sought rest, and I shall abide in the inheritance of the Lord. Then the creator of all things commanded, and said to me; and He that made me rested in my tabernacle, and said to me: Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thy inheritance in Israel, and take root in My elect. And so was I established in Sion, and in the holy city likewise I rested, and my power was in Jerusalem. And I took root in an honourable people, and in the portion of my God his inheritance, and my abode is in the full assembly of saints. I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus, and as a cypress-tree on Mount Sion. I was exalted like a palm-tree in Cades, and as a rose-plant in Jericho. As a fair olive-tree in the plains, and as a plane-tree by the water in the streets was I exalted. I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon and aromatic balm: I yielded a sweet odour like the best myrrh.

EXPLANATION The Holy Ghost uses these words in praise of eternal wisdom, but the Church applies them to Mary also, to describe the glory and splendour of her assumption. Mary found her rest only in God, the Creator of all things, who created her, and preserved her from, original sin, and lived in her womb as in a tabernacle. On this day God seems to say to her: “Possess the abode destined for thee from all eternity, and the inheritance designed for thee as the first of the elect.” Thus Mary is exalted as Queen of the saints and angels in the heavenly Sion; and now in this holy city, she enjoys an undisturbed peace with God, shares His happiness with Him, and is second only to Him in power and glory; there she shines in the most radiant garments, like the ever-blooming rose of Jericho, from there she lets flow upon the

wretched children of Adam the oil of her mercy as from a fair olive-tree, shades them with her protection like a palm-tree, and refreshes them with the sweet fragrance of her virtue and grace.

GOSPEL (Luke x. 38—42.) At that time, Jesus entered into a certain town: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house: and she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet heard His word. But Martha was busy about much serving: who stood and said: Lord, hast thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? Speak to her, therefore, that she help me. And the Lord answering, said to her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But, one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Why does the Church cause this gospel to be read today?

Because it can be well applied to Mary, who more worthily and tenderly even than Martha, received, nourished and served the Son of God, and more fervently and attentively than even Martha's sister, listened to His words, preserved them in her heart and sought to fulfill them. In both ways has she chosen the best of all parts, because in both she walked in perfection, and so gained the greatest of rewards which can never be taken from her.

What may we learn from these two sisters?

That like Martha, who is a type of active, stirring life, we should be energetic in performing the duties of our vocation, but not on that account forget to practice good works, to do all for the love of God, seeking in all things His pleasure, and, since we can no longer administer to Christ in a material way, we should serve the poor, of whom He says that whatever we do to the least of them, He will consider and reward as if done to Himself. We are also like Mary who represents the contemplative life, to be fervent in prayer, in listening and meditating upon the word of God, upon the divine Majesty, its perfections and our frailty, thus to sanctify ourselves and to become more worthy of eternal happiness. This contemplative life Christ calls the better part, but does not, therefore, set aside the active life. We can easily unite both, but must never lose sight of the better part.

Why does Jesus reproach Martha?

Because she was uneasy and distracted by her over-carefulness and anxiety, and forgot to hear the divine word. — Thus do many Christians who find no time to work

for the salvation of their soul, and even during divine service and the sermon are thinking of their domestic affairs, and so leave the church without having gained anything for their soul.

What is the one thing necessary?

To seek the glory of God and the salvation of our soul. He who attends to this; attends to all his duties, he is busy and active, but not uneasy and disturbed, and calmly directs his mind to God in all his labours, offers his every step to Him, and draws His grace upon himself.

PETITION. Would that I had better attended to the one thing necessary! Unhappy hours which I have squandered for the world, its vanities and pleasures! Where are you now? What shall I have from you in eternity but sorrow and desolation? Could I but call back my wasted life? But since that cannot be, give me Thy grace, I beseech Thee, O most beneficent God, to pass the remaining years of my life wholly in Thy service, and work above all and only for the affairs of my soul.

THOUGHTS OF ST. BERNARD ON THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

ON this day the glorified Virgin entered heaven and crowned by her presence the holy pleasures of its inhabitants. But what mind can conceive the glory with which the arrival of the Queen of the world was celebrated by the brilliant heavenly hosts, their advance to greet her, their chanting as they led her to the magnificent throne? Who can fancy the tender gaze, the loving countenance, the divine caresses with which she was received by her Son and placed over all created beings, honoured as became such a mother, with the glory that became such a Son? What lips can describe the assumption of Mary? As upon earth she, before all others, received special grace, so in heaven she, before all others, receives special glory. If eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to know the delights that God has prepared for those that love Him, who shall say what is prepared for her who bore Him and loved Him more than all! O blessed art thou, Mary! Most blessed wert thou, when thou didst receive the Saviour; most blessed art thou, when the Saviour receives thee!

ST. BERNARD'S PRAYER TO MARY

We accompany thee, on this day, with our most ardent wishes to thy Son, O glorious Virgin, Queen of heaven! and follow thee from afar, O happy Virgin! Give thy

mildness to the world, give of the grace thou hast found with God. Obtain by thy blessed intercession, grace for the guilty, recovery for the sick, strength for the faint-hearted, aid for those in peril! Dispense to us thy servants, who on this glorious festival-day invoke thy sweetest name, O gentlest Queen, the grace of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord and God, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

INSTRUCTION OF THE FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (September 14)

From what does this feast derive its name?

From the yearly commemoration of the erection of the holy cross, at Jerusalem, by Constantine the Great, son of St. Helena.

When was this festival celebrated with especial solemnity?

When the Cross which Cosroes, King of the Persians, had captured at the conquest of Jerusalem, and had for forty years in his power, was recaptured by the Emperor Heraclius, who carried it himself on his own shoulders to Mount Calvary into the Church of the Holy Cross.

What miracle occurred on this occasion?

When the emperor wished to carry the Cross on his own shoulders to Jerusalem, at the entrance of the city he stopped suddenly, finding it impossible to proceed. The patriarch Zachary suggested to him to lay aside his imperial garments which did not accord with the humble appearance which Christ made when He bore His cross through the streets of that city. Hereupon the emperor laid aside his purple, crown and shoes, and devoutly proceeded with the cross to its appointed place.

Let us learn from this, how the divine Saviour dislikes extravagance in dress, and how in all humility and poverty we should follow Him who was poor and humble.

[For further Instruction on the Holy Cross, as also the Epistle of this day, see the Festival of the Finding of the Holy Cross.]

COLLECT O God, who dost gladden us this day with the yearly solemnity of the exaltation of the Holy Cross: grant, we beseech Thee, that as we have learnt to know

its mystery on earth, so we may merit to taste in Heaven the reward of its redemption. Thro.' &c.

GOSPEL (John XII. 31-36) AT THAT TIME, Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. (Now this He said, signifying what death He should die.) The multitude answered Him: We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest Thou: The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man? Jesus therefore said to them: Yet a little while, the light is among you. Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light.

SHORT INSTRUCTION ON THE WAY OF THE CROSS

What is meant by the Way of the Cross?

THE Way of the Cross is a devotion, approved by the Pope, by which we meditate upon the passion and death of Christ, and especially upon His last way of sorrow to Mount Calvary.

How did this devotion originate?

The pathway which our Lord Jesus Christ had to follow from Jerusalem to Mount Calvary, was the real Way of the Cross. His holy Mother, and other pious women, as also the beloved disciple St. John, followed Him on this painful journey; (Matt, XXVII. 56. John XIX. 25, 26.) and the apostles and early Christians animated by veneration for these places, made sacred by the sufferings and death of Jesus, often traversed the same pathway. In the same spirit, in later times, many came from the most distant countries to Jerusalem to visit these sacred places to increase their devotion. In time, pictures, representing different scenes of the sufferings of our Lord, were erected along this route, and were called Stations; when the Saracens conquered the Holy Land, in consequence of which visits to it became dangerous, almost impossible, the Roman pontiffs permitted the erection of stations of the cross in other countries. The first to erect stations in their churches were members of the Franciscan Order, and by degrees this devotion, supported by the Roman pontiffs and favoured by indulgences, spread throughout the entire Church. A pathway was sought which led to elevated ground; this elevation was called the Mount of the Cross or Mount

Calvary, and along the route pictures representing our Lord's sufferings, as related by the evangelists, or made known by tradition, were erected, or else the pictures were hung in churches, and the place where they stood, or the pictures themselves, were called stations; of these there are fourteen.

Is the practice of this devotion of the Way of the Cross of great value?

Next to the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and holy Communion, there is certainly no devotion which represents better to us the sufferings and death of Christ than the Way of the Cross. St. Albertus Magnus says: "A simple remembrance of Christ's sufferings is worth more than fasting on bread and water every Friday for a year, and scourging one's self unto blood." St. Bernard gives us the reason of this, when he says: "Who can consider the sufferings of Christ and be so void of religion as to remain untouched; so proud that he will not humble himself; so vindictive that he will not forgive; so fond of pleasure that he will not abstain from it; so hard-hearted that he will not repent of his sins?" And St. Augustine says: "What pride, what avarice, what anger can be cured otherwise than by the humility, the poverty, the patience of the Son of God? All these virtues are found in carefully meditating on that way of pain which our Saviour went, and along which we should follow Him." On this account several of the Popes, among others Clement XII. and Benedict XIV., have granted many indulgences to the performance of this devotion; indulgences which may be applied to the suffering souls in purgatory.

[For the manner of meditating on the sufferings of Christ, see the Instruction on Good Friday.]

Why has the Church instituted this festival?

- 1.** To give praise to God in His saints, (Ps. cl.) and to pray to the saints themselves the honour which they merit for having made it the work of their earthly life to promote the honour of God.
- 2.** To impress vividly upon our minds that we are members of that holy Catholic Church which believes in the communion of saints, that is, in the communion of all true Christians, who belong to the Church triumphant in heaven, to the Church suffering in purgatory, or to the Church militant upon earth; but, more particularly, to cause us earnestly to consider the communion of the saints in heaven with us, who are yet battling on earth.
- 3.** To exhort us to raise our eyes and hearts, especially on this day, to heaven, where before the throne of God is gathered the innumerable multitude of saints of all countries, times, nationalities and ranks of life, who have faithfully followed Christ and left us glorious examples of virtues, which we ought to imitate. This we can do, for the saints, too, were weak men, who fought and conquered only by the grace of God, which will not be denied to us.
- 4.** To honour those saints, for whom during the year there is no special festival appointed by the Church. Finally, that in consideration of so many intercessors God may grant us perfect reconciliation, may permit us to share in their merits, and may grant us the grace to enjoy with them, one day, the bliss of heaven.

Who first instituted this festival?

Pope Boniface IV. first suggested the celebration of this festival, when in 610 he ordered that the Pantheon, a pagan temple at Rome, dedicated to all the gods, should be converted into a Christian church, and the relics of the saints, dispersed through the different Roman cemeteries, taken up and placed therein. He then dedicated the Church to the honour of the Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs, and thus for the first time celebrated the Festival of All Saints, directing that it should be observed in Rome every year. Pope Gregory IV. extended this feast to the whole Catholic Church, and appointed the 1st of November as the day of its celebration.

At the ***Introit*** the Church sings: Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a festival day in honour of all the saints; at whose solemnity the angels rejoice, and give praise to the Son of God. Rejoice in the Lord, ye just: praise becometh the upright. Glory &c.

COLLECT Almighty everlasting God, who givest us to venerate in one solemnity the merits of all Thy saints: we beseech Thee to bestow upon us, through our multiplied intercessors, the fullness of Thy propitiation. Thro'. &c.

LESSON (Apoc. vii. 2-12.) IN THOSE DAYS, behold, I, John, saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the sign of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying: Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we sign the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them that were signed, a hundred and forty-four thousand were signed, of every tribe of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Ruben twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Aser twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Nephtali twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Manasses twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Zabulon twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand signed. After this I saw a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: and they cried with a loud voice, saying: Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the ancients, and the four living creatures; and they fell down before the throne upon their faces, and adored God, saying: Amen. Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honour, and power, and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen.

EXPLANATION The words of this lesson relate immediately to the divine punishment on Jerusalem and the Jewish people, as they were revealed in spirit to John; in a higher and particular sense they refer to the general judgment. At this judgment there will be chosen ones, from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. But that it might not be thought that the elect are principally Christian converts from Judaism, St. John was shown a countless multitude of Christians from heathen lands, by which it is seen, that it is the pagans who will principally fill the Church of Christ and heaven. This multitude clothed in white and carrying palms in their hands, stand before the throne of God and before the Lamb, that is, Christ. The white robes are tokens of their innocence; the palm is the emblem of their glory and of their victory over the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. They shall adore God, and forever sing to Him, in communion with all the heavenly spirits, a canticle of praise for the power and glory which He has bestowed upon them.

Let us strive so to live, that we may one day be among these chosen ones.

GOSPEL (Matt. v. 1 -12.) At that time, Jesus seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain. And when He was sat down, His disciples came unto Him. And opening His mouth, He taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly, for My sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.

Why is the Gospel of the Eight Beatitudes read on this day?

Because they form, so to speak, the steps on which the saints courageously ascended to heaven.

If you desire to be with the saints in heaven, you must also mount patiently and perseveringly these steps, then God's hand will assuredly aid you.

EXPLANATION OF THE EIGHT BEATITUDES.

I. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

THEY are poor in spirit who, like the apostles, leave all temporal things for Christ's sake and become poor; they who have lost their property by misfortune or injustice, and bear this loss with patience and resignation to the will of God; they who are contented with their poor and lowly station in life, do not strive for greater fortune or a higher position, and would rather suffer want than make themselves rich by unlawful means; they who though rich do not love wealth, nor set their hearts upon it, but use their riches to aid the poor; and especially they who are humble, that is, who have no exalted opinion of themselves, but are convinced of their weakness and inward poverty, have a low estimate of themselves, therefore, feel always their need, and like poor mendicants, continually implore God's grace and assistance.

II. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.

He is meek who represses every rising impulse of anger, impatience and desire of revenge, and willingly puts up with everything that God, to prove him, decrees or permits to happen to him, or men inflict upon him. He who thus controls himself, is like a calm and tranquil sea, in which the image of the divine Sun is ever reflected, clear and unruffled. He who thus conquers himself is mightier than if he besieged and conquered strongly fortified cities, (Prov. xvi. 32.) and will without doubt receive this earth, as well as heaven, as an inheritance, enjoying eternally there the peace (Ps. xxxvi. n.) which is already his on earth.

III. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

The mourners here mentioned are not those who weep and lament over the death of relatives and friends, or over misfortune or loss of temporal riches, but those who mourn that God is so often offended, so little loved and honoured by men, that so many souls, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, are lost. Among these mourners are also those who lead a strict and penitential life, and patiently endure distress; for sin is the only evil, the only thing to be lamented, and those tears only, which are shed on account of sin, are useful tears, and are recompensed by everlasting joy and eternal consolation.

IV. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill.

Hunger and thirst denote the ardent longing for those virtues which constitute Christian perfection. He who seeks such perfection with ardent desire and earnest striving, will be filled, that is, will be adorned by God with the most beautiful virtues, and will be abundantly rewarded in heaven.

V. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

They are merciful who assist the poor according to their means, who practice every possible spiritual and corporal work of mercy, who as far as they can, patiently endure the faults of others, strive always to excuse them, and willingly forgive the injuries they have received. They especially are truly merciful, who are merciful to their enemies, and do good to them, as written: Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you. (Matt. v. 44.) Well is it for him who is merciful, the greatest rewards are promised him, but a judgment without mercy shall be passed on the unmerciful.

VI. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.

They are clean of heart, who carefully preserve the innocence which they received in baptism, and keep their heart and conscience free not only from all sinful words and deeds, but from all sinful thoughts and desires, and in all their omissions and commissions think and desire only good. These while yet on earth see God in all His works and creatures, because their thoughts are directed always to the Highest Good, and in the other world they will see Him face to face, enjoying in this contemplation a peculiar pleasure which is reserved for pure souls only; for as the eye that would see well, must be clear, so must those souls be immaculate who are to see God.

VII. Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Those are peace-makers who guard their improper desires, who are careful to have peace in their conscience and regulated tranquility in all their actions, who do not quarrel with their neighbours, and are submissive to the will of God. These are called children of God, because they follow God who is a God of peace, (Rom. xv. 33.) and who even gave His only Son to reconcile the world, and bring upon earth that peace which the world does not know and cannot give. (Luke ii. 14.; John xiv. 27.)

VIII. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Those suffer persecution for justice' sake who by their words, writings, or by their life defend the truth, the faith and Christian virtues; who cling firmly to God, and permit nothing to turn them from the duties of the Christian profession, from the practice of their holy religion, but on its account suffer hatred, contempt, disgrace, injury and injustice from the world. If they endure all this with patience and perseverance, even, like the saints, with joy, then they will become like the saints and like them receive the heavenly crown. If we wish to be crowned with them, we must suffer with them: And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution, (ii. Tim. iii. 12.)

SUPPLICATION. How lovely, O Lord, are Thy tabernacles! My soul longeth for Thy courts. My body and soul rejoice in Thee, most loving God, Thou crown and reward of all the saints, whose temporal pains and sufferings Thou dost reward with eternal joy, filling them with good! How blessed are they who have faithfully served Thee, for they carry Thy name on their forehead, and reign with Thee for all eternity. Grant us, we beseech Thee, O God, by their intercession, Thy grace that we, after their example, may serve Thee in sanctity and justice, in poverty and humility, in meekness and repentance, in the ardent desire for all virtues, by mercy, perfect purity

of heart, in peacefulness and patience, following them, and taking part, one day, with them in heavenly joy and happiness. Amen.

INSTRUCTION ON THE FEAST OF ALL SOULS [November 2]

What is All Souls' Day?

It is the day set apart by the Catholic Church for the special devout commemoration of all those souls who have departed this life in the grace and friendship of God, for whom we pray, that they may soon be released by God from the prison of purgatory.

What is purgatory?

Purgatory is a middle state of souls, suffering for a time on account of their sins. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: And the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built there upon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. (I. Cor. in. 13-15.) "And when St. Paul," says St. Ambrose (Serm. 20. in Ps. cxviii.) "says, yet so as by fire, he shows that such a man indeed becomes happy, having suffered the punishment of fire, but not, like the wicked, continually tormented in eternal fire." St. Paul's words, then, can only be understood to refer to the fire of purification, as the infallible Church has always explained them.

Are the heretics right in denying that there is such a place of purification as purgatory?

By no means, for by such denial they oppose the holy Scriptures, tradition and reason. The holy Scriptures teach that there is a purgatory: it is related in the Second Book of Machabees, that Judas Machabeus sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem, to be used in the temple, to obtain prayers for those who fell in battle, for he believed it a good and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins. But for what dead shall we pray? Those in heaven do not require our prayers; to those in hell they are of no avail; we must then pray for those who are in the place of purification. Christ speaks of a prison in the future life, from which no man comes out until he has paid the last farthing. (Matt. v. 25, 26.) This prison cannot be hell, because from hell there is never any release; it must be then a place of purification. Again Christ speaks of sin which shall be forgiven neither in this world nor in the next, (Matt. xii. 32.) from which it follows that there is a remittance of some sins in the next world; but this can be neither in heaven nor in

hell, consequently in purgatory. As the council of Trent says, (Sess. 6. c. 30.) the Church has always taught, according to the old tradition of the Fathers, in all her councils, that there is a purgatory, and every century gives proofs of the continual belief of all true Christians in a purgatory. Finally, man's unblinded reason must accept a purgatory; for how many depart this earth before having accomplished the great work of their own purification? They cannot enter heaven, for St. John tells us: There shall not enter into it anything defiled. (Apoc. xxi. 27.) The simple separation of the soul from the body does not make it pure, yet God cannot reject it as He does the soul of the hardened sinner in hell; there must then be a middle place, a purgatory, where those who have departed not free from stain, must be purified. See how the doctrine of the Church, reason and the holy Scriptures all agree, and do not let yourself be led away by false arguments from those who not only believe in no purgatory, but even in no hell, so that they may sin with so much more impunity.

For what, how much, and for how long must -e suffer in purgatory?

Concerning this the Church has made no decision, though much has been written by the Fathers of the Church on the subject. Concerning the severity of the punishment in purgatory, St. Augustine writes: "This fire is more painful than any that man can suffer in this life." This should urge us to continual sanctification and atonement, so that we may escape the fearful judgment of God.

How can we aid the suffering souls in purgatory?

St. Augustine writes: "It is not to be doubted that we can aid the souls of the departed by the prayers of the Church, by the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and by the alms which we offer for them." The Church has always taught that prayers for the faithful departed are useful and good, and she has always offered Masses for them.

What should urge us to aid the suffering souls in purgatory?

1. The consideration of the belief of the Church in the communion of saints, by which all the members of the Church upon earth, in heaven, and in purgatory are united by the bonds of love, like the members of one body, and as the healthy members of a body sympathize with the suffering members, seeking to aid them, so should we assist our suffering brethren in purgatory.

2. The remembrance that it is God's will that we should practice charity towards one another, and that fearful judgments are threatened those who show no charity to a

brother in need, together with the recollection, of God's love which desires that all men should be happy in heaven.

3. We should be urged to it by love for ourselves, for if we should be condemned to the pains of purification, we would assuredly desire our living brethren to pray for us and perform good works for our sake, while the souls who have found redemption, perhaps through our prayers, will not fail to reward us by interceding for us.

Can we aid the souls in purgatory by gaining indulgences?

Yes, for indulgences, (as explained in the Instruction on the eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost,) are a complete or a partial remittance of the temporal punishment due to sin, bestowed by the Church to penitent sinners from the treasury of the merits of Christ and His saints. If we gain such a remittance, we can apply it to the souls in purgatory. Such an indulgence, however, can be transferred only to one soul.

For which souls should we pray?

We should, on this day especially, offer prayers and good works for all the faithful departed, but particularly for our parents, relations, friends and benefactors; for those who are most acceptable to God; for those who have suffered the longest, or who have the longest yet to suffer; for those who are most painfully tormented; for those who are the most forsaken; for those who are nearest redemption ; for those who are suffering on our account; for those who hope in our prayers; for those who during life have injured us, or been injured by us; and for our spiritual brethren.

When and by what means was this yearly commemoration of the departed introduced into the Church?

The precise time of its introduction is not known. Tertullian (A. D. 160) writes that the early Christians held a yearly commemoration of the faithful departed. Towards the end of the 10th century St. Odilo, Abbot of the Benedictines at Cluny, directed that the yearly commemoration of the faithful departed should be observed on the 2nd of November with prayers, alms and the Sacrifice of the Mass, which time and manner of celebration spread through various dioceses, and was officially confirmed by Pope John XIX. This day was appointed that, having the day previously rejoiced at the glory of the saints in heaven, we might on this day most properly pray for those who are yet doing penance for their sins and sigh in purgatory for their redemption.

The ***Introit*** of this day's Mass as of all Masses for the dead reads: Eternal rest give to them, O Lord: and let perpetual light shine upon them. A hymn, O God, becometh Thee in Sion; and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem: hear my prayer; all flesh shall come to Thee. Eternal rest give to them, O Lord: and let perpetual light shine upon them.

COLLECT O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, grant to the souls of Thy servants departed the remission of all their sins: that through pious supplications they may obtain the pardon which they have always desired. Who, livest &c.

EPISTLE (i. Cor. xv. 51-57.) BRETHREN, behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall all indeed rise again, but we shall not all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible: and, we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Now the sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL (John v. 25-29.) At that time, Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: Amen, amen, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself: and He hath given Him power to do judgment, because He is the Son of man. Wonder not at this, for the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life: but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.

The Epistle and Gospel of this day speak of the resurrection of all men and of the judgment, when everyone according as he has lived, sinful and impenitent, or pure and innocent, will receive an eternally miserable or an eternally happy life. Purgatory will then end and there will be only heaven and hell. It remains with us to choose which of these two we shall possess.

At the ***Offertory*** of the Mass the priest prays:

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the pains of hell and from the deep pit: deliver them from the mouth of the lion, that hell may not swallow them up, and they may not fall into darkness: but may the holy standard-bearer, Michael, introduce them to the holy light: which Thou didst promise of old to Abraham and to his seed. We offer to Thee, O Lord, sacrifices and prayers: do Thou receive them in behalf of those souls whom we commemorate this day. Grant them, O Lord, to pass from death to that life which Thou didst promise of old to Abraham and to his seed.

We may profitably and devoutly repeat the following as often as we pass a graveyard.

V. From the gates of hell,

R. Deliver their souls, O Lord.

V. Eternal rest give to them, O Lord,

R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

V. May they rest in peace,

R. Amen.

V. May the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace,

R. Amen.