

THE PREACHER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA

*

Other Volumes

LENT AND EASTERTIDE

TWELFTH TO LAST SUNDAYS AFTER
PENTECOST

ADVENT TO QUINQUAGESIMA

THE PREACHER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA

Compiled and Edited under the Supervision of
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SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION TO
ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

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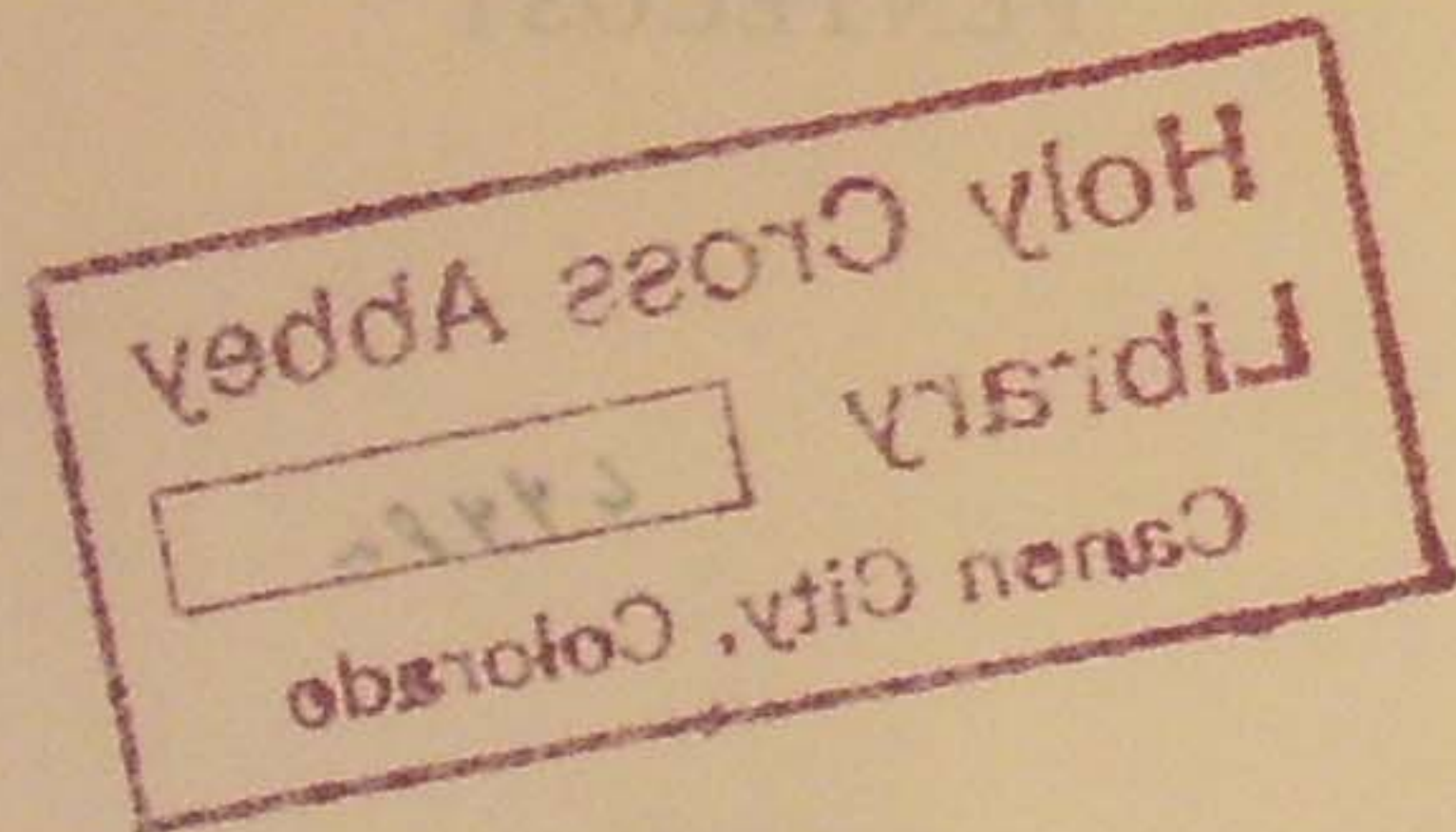


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Sunday after the Ascension

PERSECUTION AND MARTYRDOM

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

The Epistle: 1 Peter 4. 7-11 The Gospel: John 15. 26-27, 16. 1-4

Texts concerning persecution and martyrdom

I. *God permits persecutions:*

(a) *For our correction* (cf. Ex. 20. 5; Tob. 3. 1-5; Ezech. 33. 11):

It is where he loves that he bestows correction; there is no recognition for any child of his without chastisement. Be patient, then, while correction lasts; God is treating you as his children. Was there ever a son whom his father did not correct? Heb. 12. 6-7.

(b) *To prove us:*

Job. 1. 20-22; Prov. 17. 3; Ps. 65. 10; Ecclus. 33. 1.

And indeed, for fear that these surpassing revelations should make me proud, I was given a sting to distress my outward nature, an angel of Satan sent to rebuff me. Three times it made me entreat the Lord to rid me of it; but he told me, My grace is enough for thee; my strength finds its full scope in thy weakness. More than ever, then, I delight to boast of the weaknesses that humiliate me, so that the strength of Christ may enshrine itself in me. 2 Cor. 12. 7-9.

(c) *To purify and glorify us:*

Before all these, men will be laying hands on you and persecuting you; they will give you up to the synagogues and to prison, and drag you into the presence of kings and governors on my account; that will be your opportunity for making the truth known. Luke 21. 12-13.

The branch that yields no fruit in me, he cuts away; the branch that does yield fruit, he trims clean, so that it may yield more fruit. John 15. 2.

(d) *To increase our merits:*

... where they fortified the spirits of the disciples, encouraging them to be true to the faith, and telling them that we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven without many trials. Acts 14. 21.

... nay, we are confident even over our afflictions, knowing well that affliction gives rise to endurance, and endurance gives proof of our faith, and a proved faith gives ground for hope. Rom. 5. 3-4.

Not that I count these present sufferings as the measure of that glory which is to be revealed in us. Rom. 8. 18. Cf. 2 Cor. 4. 17-18; Heb. 12. 2-3.

And indeed, all those who are resolved to live a holy life in Christ Jesus will meet with persecution . . . 2 Tim. 3. 12.

2. Martyrs in the Sacred Scriptures:

- (a) Eleazar: 2 Mach. 6.
- (b) The Machabees: 2 Mach. 7.
- (c) St John the Baptist: Mark 6. 17-29.
- (d) St Stephen: Acts 7. 54 ff.
- (e) James the Greater: Acts 12. 1-2.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

A: The novena to the Holy Ghost

We are now in the week which immediately precedes the coming of the Holy Spirit. We have already had occasion to lament the lack of liturgical formation in the faithful, a lack which is very obvious in all that concerns the Holy Spirit. Before Leo XIII there were few who had recognized the transcendence of this Feast; but Leo made the novena of obligation for the whole Church. He even laid down how it was to be made. We can say that it is the only official novena in the liturgy of the Church. However, it has not yet penetrated into the hearts of the people as it should. It usually occurs in the months of May or June, and it is easy to see how people will pay more attention to the May Devotions or to those in honour of the Sacred Heart than they do to this devotion to the Holy Spirit. Yet how beautiful is the hymn the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, which calls up so many and varied emotions when it is used at the ordination of priests or at the consecration of bishops!

If we are conscious of all that we owe to the Holy Spirit and of his influence in our lives, then we should be prepared to instruct and inspire our faithful to an ever increasing devotion to him. We might well begin by celebrating this novena in a more solemn fashion.

B: The Mass

Today's Mass is a preparation for next Sunday's great feast. The Epistle, taken from St Peter, shows us the activity of the Holy Spirit in the soul, while the Gospel gives us the formal promise of his coming.

Before the fifteenth century, when the octave of the Ascension began to be celebrated, this was known as Rose Sunday. The Pope

preached a homily to the people in which he explained to them the promixate coming of the Holy Spirit, and while he did so a shower of roses came down on the congregation to symbolize the Holy Spirit's descent on the Church and the individual. By preaching the preparation for Pentecost on this Sunday we shall be doing nothing more than follow the tradition of the Church.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 1 Peter 4. 7-11

1. Argument:

There can be no doubt that many of the early Christians thought the end of the world to be very near (St Paul had to argue against this idea many times). They truly desired this end as the triumph of Christ. This was probably due to the deliberate obscurity of our Lord's remarks on the subject of the second coming. This belief gave rise to difficulties and worries (in Thessalonica for example) which must have been the same as those in other parts of the Church, and that includes those who were the objects of St Peter's letter.

Both Peter and Paul refuse to settle the question in general, but accept the doctrine as it applies to the individual—therefore they both stress the same things, charity and prayer.

2. Texts:

(a) Live wisely and keep your senses awake to greet the hours of prayer:

Wisely, so as not to be deceived by stupid predictions (2 Thess. 2. 2). We might also add that *wisely* here means avoiding sentiment in prayer, and relying on fact. It is a difficult verse to translate effectively, but the meaning may easily be 'watch your prayers'.

(b) Charity . . . in all its meanings:

Boylan gives it the meaning of constant charity (so does Knox), in opposition to the momentary enthusiasm of those who thought the end was near. We may notice the connection between material charity and spiritual (v. 10)—benevolence towards the neighbour is a necessary condition for true prayer.

The phrase: Charity draws the veil over a multitude of sins, needs special comment.

Being a biblical citation from the Book of Proverbs (10. 12), its primary meaning will be something like that of St Paul, when he says: Charity is patient, kind; charity feels no envy . . . sustains, believes, hopes, endures to the last (1 Cor. 13. 4-7). The person who is charitable does not see the faults of his neighbour. Why should Peter, on writing these words, not be reminded of the words of his Master about the pardon of one's neighbour which had to extend to seventy times seven? (Matt. 18. 22).

The second meaning—also included in the Gospel idea—assures pardon for those who are not free with their judgements of others but are ready to forgive their neighbour (Luke 7. 47; Matt. 6. 14).

(c) Hospitality . . .

St Peter insists on the two applications of charity which were of greatest importance in his day: hospitality and the good use of the gifts of the Spirit.

Hospitality is a virtue which is stressed in both Testaments (cf. Rom. 12. 13; Heb. 13. 2; 3 John 5; Matt. 25. 34ff). It was most necessary in apostolic times and also included a certain amount of danger in those days. Although it may not be so necessary in our time it can be applied to the need for almsdeeds and also to the help given to the displaced persons, etc.

(d) The gift which each has received . . .

All the gifts we have received from God must be used for our neighbour. There are many practical applications of this truth (cf. Matt. 25. 14; Luke 19. 12; Rom. 12. 13; 1 Cor. 12. 12).

B: The Gospel: John 15. 26-27, 16. 1-4

1. Argument:

It continues the same scenes as former Sundays. We have already dealt with this general theme so many times that there is no need to repeat it here.

2. Texts:

(a) Well, when the truth-giving Spirit, who proceeds from the Father . . .

This is one of the deepest passages of the Gospels from the theological point of view, especially if we remember that the adjective translated by Mgr Knox as truth-giving has also another meaning, i.e. the Spirit of Truth in so far as the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father.

(b) He whom I will send to you . . .

The Son can send us the Spirit precisely because the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father; it is not the exercise of authority but of origin.

(c) From the Father's side . . .

Again we are faced with the mysteries of the Trinity; and we may well ask how can we deal with these in sermons to our people. Perhaps the easiest way is to relate the inner life of the Trinity with the actions of the Divine Persons in our regard. Thus, we know the Father through the works of creation, especially the creation of man, an action in which we see his power. Man weeps because of what he

lost through sin, and the Father sends the Son to redeem him. Just as the Holy Spirit completes the three Persons, so he completes the work of the Son. Christ, as the Word of God, looks at the Father and sees that such is his will; therefore, in complete accord, both of them send the Holy Spirit on his mission of perfection.

(d) He will bear witness . . .

We have already spoken of this point in the section devoted to the fourth Sunday after Easter. However, today it seems that this doctrine has a special relation to the witness which the apostles will have to bear, i.e. that of preaching and martyrdom (Luke 12. 11).

(e) And you, too, are to be my witnesses . . .

This is the effect on us of the coming of the Spirit. The apostles themselves will give that double testimony which is, in itself, a moral miracle. Each individual Christian is a witness to him whose name he bears, and according to the measure granted him by the Holy Ghost, each one will increase in holiness. So there will be a range of testimony, from the ordinary life which is the salt of the earth, to the very heights of sanctity and the witness of blood in martyrdom.

From the beginning we have been with him, and we, too, should feel the zeal of the apostolate.

(f) So that your faith may not be taken unawares:

The apostles were truly scandalized when they saw Christ taken prisoner and condemned. But what would they not suffer when they felt the same persecution in their own flesh? Who would have thought that the very method chosen by divine providence to extend the faith was this one, of lifting up against his Church the power of the world? The apostles certainly needed this warning, that the Holy Spirit would open up to them the full sense of these words later.

(g) They will forbid you the synagogue:

This was equivalent to excommunication in those days. The parents of the blind man were afraid to testify because of their fear of this decree against them (John 9. 22).

Here a warning is necessary—persecutors are not always in bad faith. Was St Paul in bad faith? Nor are those always in bad faith who, confusing human motives with religious, make the Church the target for their attacks. We must not confuse the issue, but should try, by our example, to give light to the blind.

St Paul would say of them later that they did not know Christ, otherwise they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Cor. 2. 8). It is always difficult to know when ignorance is culpable, and after all, we are not the judges. Our task is to make sure that, through our prayers, works and words, the world may know Christ better and love him.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST CYPRIAN

The Church of Silence in the second century

1. *The glory of martyrdom:*

I do not marvel, most brave and blessed brethren, that these things have happened to you on account of your faith and religion; that the Lord should thus have lifted you up to the lofty heights of glory by the honour of his glorification, seeing that you have always flourished in his Church, guarding the faith, keeping his commands strictly; in simplicity, in innocence, in charity and concord; modesty with humility; diligence in administration; watchful in helping those who suffer, merciful in cherishing the poor, constant in the defence of truth, always ready to judge with severity in matters of discipline. And that nothing should be wanting to the example of good deeds in you, even now, with the confession of your mouths and the sufferings of your body, you persuade the minds of your brethren to martyrdom, by showing yourselves as leaders of the flock, which follows its pastors and imitates what it sees done by those set over it. Thus it may be crowned by the like merits of obedience by the Lord.

2. *The Christian does not fear suffering of this kind:*

A Christian body is not greatly terrified by clubs, seeing that all its hope is in the Wood of the Cross. The servant of Christ acknowledges the sacrament of his salvation; redeemed by wood to eternal life, he is led by wood to the crown. But what wonder if, as gold and silver vessels, you have been committed to the mine that is the home of gold and silver; except that now the nature of the mine is changed, and the places which previously yielded gold and silver have now received them. Moreover, they have put fetters on your hands and feet and have bound your limbs and the temples of God with shameful bonds, as if the spirit also could be chained with the body, or your gold could be stained with the contact of the iron. To men who are dedicated to God and who attest their faith with true religious courage, such things are ornaments, not chains. . . . The body is not cherished in the mines with couch and cushions, but it is cherished with the refreshment and consolations of Christ. The frame wearied with labours lies prostrate; but it is no penalty to lie there with Christ! Your limbs are foul and disfigured with filth and dirt, but within they are cleansed spiritually. There the bread is scarce; but man does not live by bread alone, but by the word of God. Cold, you need clothing; but he who puts on Christ is both abundantly clad and adorned. . . . This temporal and brief suffering, how shall it be exchanged for the reward of shining and eternal honour when,

according to the word of the blessed apostle: The Lord shall form this humble body of ours anew, moulding it into the image of his glorified body (Phil. 3. 21).

3. *What is truly pleasing to God:*

Nor should you feel any loss of religion or faith, my dearest brethren, in the fact that you are not given any opportunities there to offer or celebrate the divine sacrifice; because indeed you celebrate and offer a sacrifice to God equally precious and glorious, and one which will profit you exceedingly for a heavenly reward. . . . you offer this sacrifice to God; you celebrate it without ceasing, day and night being made victims for God and proving yourselves as holy offerings and unspotted. . . . For this is most pleasing to God; this it is which our faith, obedience and devotion can render to God for his great and saving benefits. . . . indeed precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

4. *The victory in God:*

Who would not receive with joy and gladness the chalice of the Lord? Who would not joyfully desire to render something to his Lord? Who would not receive without faltering a death which is so precious in the sight of the Lord, to please his eyes who, looking down from above upon us who are placed in the arena for his sake, approves the willing, assists the struggling, crowns the conquerors with the reward of their endurance, goodness and affection, praising in us whatever he has himself bestowed upon us and honouring what he himself has accomplished? For it is by his doing that we conquer and that we attain to the palm of glory by the overcoming of that adversary. Thus he says: When they hand you over thus, do not consider anxiously what you are to say or how you are to say it; words will be given you when the time comes; it is not you who speak, it is the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you (Matt. 10. 19-20).

5. *Praise of the Christian virtue of fortitude:*

All which things, most brave and faithful soldiers of Christ, you have taught to your brethren, fulfilling in deeds what you have previously taught in words, and thus to be the greater in the kingdom of God, as he says: But the man who keeps them and teaches others to keep them will be accounted in the kingdom of heaven as the greatest (Matt. 5. 19). Moreover, a great part of the people, following your example, have made a confession like to yours and so have been crowned, following you in the bond of the greatest charity and separated from their prelates neither by the prison nor by the mines; . . . in boys also a courage greater than their age, surpassing their years in the praise of their confession, so that every sex and every age should adorn the blessed flock of your martyrdom. (Ep. 76 to Nemesianus and others in the mines.)

II. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(Extracts from Homilies 3-6 on 1 Corinthians)

The miracle of the witnesses to Christ

1. *Ignorance conquers knowledge:*

The apostles were not learned men, not because they despised knowledge, but so that their preaching would not be harmed by it. It was not they who made the word acceptable. . . . What God sought was that the leaders and those who first began to sow the seed of the word would not be wise or eloquent; they needed great virtue to overcome error at the beginning. . . . If he who did not need wise men at the beginning later admitted them, it was not from his need of them, but so as not to differentiate. . . . What he sought was that the power of Christ should be admired, not that the converted should abandon their belief because of greater wisdom outside it.

Thus, when the Greeks accuse the disciples of being ignorant and unskilled we also make the same affirmation, only more so. . . . Because this very fact will contribute not a little to their defeat and our victory will be the more splendid. . . . If Paul had been wiser and more eloquent than Plato it might have been argued that he won, not by the power of grace, but by that of his eloquence.

2. *Nothing can resist the power of the apostolic preaching:*

Marvel, then, at a simple fisherman, a tent-maker, a publican, ignorant men and unlettered, coming from Palestine, a far country, and in a short time overcoming philosophers, orators and men of great eloquence. They put them all to flight in the midst of great dangers, in spite of the opposition of kings and peoples, in spite of contrary and immemorial customs and the efforts of the devils, who certainly took part in the struggle.

3. Wherefore, if we hope to win the victory over them, let us strive to conquer, not with words, but through our lives. This is the great struggle; this is the argument which cannot be contradicted—facts. Even though we may philosophize without ceasing, we shall achieve nothing unless we show them a life which is better than theirs; because, without paying any attention to what is said, they examine what we do, and they think to themselves: Follow your own teaching first of all, and then exhort others. If you say that there are immense riches in the other world, while we see you attached to those of this life as if the others did not exist, we are more inclined to believe your deeds than your words. When we see you rob others, weep too much for those who have died and commit many other sins, how are we to think that you believe in the resurrection?

A few unlettered men terrified the philosophers, showing them a philosophy of deeds, clamouring more loudly than any military

trumpet by the wise ordering of their lives—a stronger argument than any produced by the tongue.

4. Commenting on 1 Cor. 1. 22-24, he says: There is great prudence in these words, because the apostle wishes to indicate to us that God conquers in another way and that this preaching was no human thing. The argument is this: When we say to the Jews, Believe, they reply: Raise the dead, cast out devils, show us miracles. And instead what do we answer? That he whom we preach was nailed to a cross and died there. That would be enough, not merely to remove all attraction towards us from those who do not wish to be converted, but even to repel those who do; yet these words do not repel, they attract, overcome and triumph.

5. *A miracle that they should ever undertake such a task:*

In this also we must see the divine origin of their preaching. If not, how could it ever have entered into the heads of these twelve men, incapable as they were, to take on such a high task, especially since they were country folk, who had probably never even entered a large city or into the forum? How could they ever have thought up the idea of giving battle to the whole world?

The Gospel tells us much about the apostles; and what does it say of them? That once Christ was made prisoner after all miracles, some of them fled, and he who remained, the head of them all, denied his Master. How is it then, that these who could not resist the attacks of the Jews while he was still alive, defied the whole world when he was dead, buried and—as you insist—not risen or in communication with them? Why did they not say within themselves: He could not help himself while he was alive, and is he going to stretch out his dead hand to us? Alive, he did not subject even one nation to himself, and are we supposed to be able to convince the whole world by preaching in his name? Is it a rational thing, not merely to attempt it, but even to think of it?

6. *The resurrection—source of all their strength:*

Why did they preach that Christ was risen? You may say, because they loved him so much. The logical thing would have been to hate him for having deceived them, for having made them abandon home and father and mother and wife for his sake, and after making them enemies of the whole Jewish nation, he betrayed them. . . .

Let us realize that they never really understood the prophecies of the passion, which was repugnant to them. Christ dies, and at once they begin to preach—what has happened here? What motive had they for thinking that the whole world would have to believe them? How were they going to convince the world without miracles? Because if they did work miracles (as they did), then that which they

preached was divine. And if they did not work miracles, then what happened is even more miraculous. . . . If their preaching was not clever and artistic; if those who were called to undertake it were rough men and unlettered; if he whom they preached was the same and if there were persecutions to be faced, fear and trembling, then how and why did they succeed? By the divine power. . . . Do you see how God's folly is more wise than men, and his weakness stronger than they? These ignorant men, persecuted as they were, overcame their persecutors. Why? Because they made themselves worthy of belief by the power of his Spirit.

III. ST AUGUSTINE

(Extracts from various parts of his writings concerning the Holy Spirit and also martyrdom.)

1. *The testimony of the Holy Ghost:*

For the blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins, even for that sin from which he died. Therefore he said: They hated me without cause; but when the Paraclete comes, he shall give testimony of me. That is to say, then they hated me, and seeing me they put me to death; but such will be the testimony of the Paraclete that it will make even those who did not see me believe in me.

And you, he says, shall give testimony because you have been with me from the beginning. The Holy Ghost will give testimony, and you also shall give it. For since you have been with me from the beginning you will be able to preach that which you have seen; and the fact that you do not do this now is simply because you have not as yet the fulness of that Spirit. . . . And the charity of God that is poured forth into your hearts by the Spirit that will be given to you shall give you the courage to testify.

This had indeed been lacking in Peter until then; terrified at the questions of a servant maid, he had not the courage to give true witness, but instead he was driven by his grievous fear to deny his Lord three times. Fear such as this has no place in charity, for true charity casts out fear. . . . After the Lord's resurrection his generous love was tested by the Prince of generosity and because of fear he was then terrified, but here restored to calm; there he denied the One he loved; here he showed his love for him whom he had denied.

But even this very love was weak and shallow until it was enlarged and made strong by the Holy Spirit. After the fulness of grace was poured out into his soul, then the spirit within, formerly so lukewarm, burned with desire to bear witness to Christ and unsealed the lips which trembling had withheld the truth. Thus, while all the rest on whom the Spirit descended spoke in many tongues, and while the multitude of the Jews stood about them, he alone shone

out above all the rest in bearing witness to Christ, confounding those who had slain him by his testimony to the resurrection.

Should anyone desire to contemplate this divine event, so full of meaning, let him read the Acts of the Apostles. There let him with wonder see Peter proclaiming the Christ whom he had grieved by his denial. There he will see the tongue, changed from cowardice to confidence, from servitude to freedom, converting to the praise of Christ the tongues of so many who were his enemies. . . . In short, such splendour of grace shone forth from him, such fulness of the Holy Spirit, such weight of most precious truth came from his mouth as he preached to them, that he made Jews who were enemies of Christ, and his murderers, into members of that great multitude who were ready to suffer and die for him. . . . This the Holy Spirit accomplished, promised beforehand, and then sent down upon them. . . .

2. *The world:*

To understand how this world of perdition, a hater of the redeemed world, can dare to love itself, we must realize that it loves itself with a false love, not a true one. Its love is false and its hatred certain, because he who loves iniquity hates his own soul (Ps. 10. 6). He loves himself then who loves his own wickedness, but in reality he hates himself, because he loves that which can only do him harm. He hates his own nature and loves vice; he hates what God made good in him and loves that which his own free will made bad.

3. *Christ's example:*

Our Lord, when he exhorted his servants to suffer patiently the hatred of the world, could give them no other consolation but his own example, just as did St Peter when he said: Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps (1 Pet. 2. 21). If the world hates you, be sure that it hated me before it learned to hate you (John 15. 18). You have just heard in the Gospel that no servant can be greater than his master . . . and they will treat you thus because you bear my name; they have no knowledge of him who sent me (*ibid.* 21). These last words mean that they will hate me in you and will rise up against your preaching, because it is mine, and that they will be more unhappy in persecuting my name than you will be in suffering persecution; for blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice.

4. *The testimony of the martyrs and our testimony:*

This message about what we have seen and heard we pass on to you, so that you too may share in our fellowship (1 John 1. 3). They (the apostles) saw the Lord in the flesh, heard his words and passed them on to us. Are we then less fortunate than those who saw and heard him personally? If so why did he add: That you too may share in our fellowship? They saw but we do not see, yet we are their

companions because we share the same faith. . . . In those days he who allows the angels to see him also allowed men to touch him with their hands. The disciple touched him and exclaimed: My Lord and my God. But the Lord, to console us who cannot embrace him according to the flesh, but only in faith, said: Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed. He is describing us, talking about us. Let us make sure then of that happiness which he promises us; let us maintain that faith in something which we do not see.

5. *Men still judged the Church as ignominious:*

She was like a widow, covered with opprobrium, because she belonged to Christ and wore his cross on her forehead. As yet to be a Christian was not an honour but a crime; then the wall of testimony was built up and through it the charity of Christ was spread abroad, conquering the whole world.

6. *The world rose up and suppressed us:*

The tower of testimony of the blood of the martyrs was lifted up, while the pagans said, Where is your God? Nor did you appear to defend us, you did not show yourself or employ your power against them . . . but you were all the time working from within. When the martyrs were being dragged along in chains, when they were locked in the prisons, objects of mockery and food for wild beasts, when they were wounded by the sword, burnt with the irons and when all despised them as a people left desolate, abandoned without help—how did God act then? How did he console them interiorly; sweeten their hope with the thought of the eternal life? Did they groan, perhaps? Feel themselves abandoned because God did not manifest himself? On the contrary, because he did not manifest himself he led the Church into the Promised Land.

SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

ST THOMAS AQUINAS

The Gifts of the Holy Ghost

A: The gifts

1. *They are supernatural habits:*

Different from the virtues, for which reason Scripture calls them 'spirits', from which word we are clearly given to understand that these seven are there set down as being in us by divine inspiration (1-2. q. 68. a. 1. c).

2. *They can be compared with the virtues:*

(a) It must be noted that in man there is a twofold principle of movement, one within him, viz. the reason; the other extrinsic to

him, viz. God. Now, it is evident that whatever is moved must be in proportion to its mover: and the perfection of the mobile as such consists in a disposition whereby it is disposed to be well moved by its mover. Hence the more exalted the mover, the more perfect must be the disposition whereby the mobile is made proportionate to its mover: . . . Now it is manifest that human virtues perfect man according as it is natural for him to be moved by his reason in his interior and exterior actions. Consequently, man needs yet higher perfections, whereby to be disposed to be moved by God (*ibid.* a. 1. c).

(b) The gifts of the Holy Ghost are habits whereby man is perfected to obey readily the Holy Ghost (*ibid.* a. 3. c).

3. *Necessary for salvation:*

The gifts are perfections of man whereby he is disposed to be amenable to the promptings of God. Wherefore, in those matters where the promptings of reason are not sufficient, and there is need for the prompting of the Holy Ghost, there is, in consequence, need for a gift.

Now, man's reason is perfected by God in two ways; first, with its natural perfection, i.e. the natural light of reason; secondly with a supernatural perfection, namely, the theological virtues. And though this latter perfection is greater than the former, yet the former is possessed by man in a more perfect manner than the latter; because man has the former in his full possession, whereas he possesses the latter imperfectly, since we love and know God imperfectly.

(a) *The first action of the gifts:*

Now, it is evident that anything that has a nature or a form or a virtue perfectly, can of itself work accordingly to them; not however excluding the operation of God, who works inwardly in every nature and every will. On the other hand, that which has a nature or form or virtue imperfectly, cannot of itself work, unless it be moved by another. . . . Accordingly, in matters subject to human reason and directed to man's connatural end, man can work through the judgement of his reason. If, however, even in these things man receives help in the shape of special promptings from God, this will be out of God's superabundant goodness.

(b) *The second action:*

But in matters directed to the supernatural end, to which man's reason moves him according as it is, in a manner and imperfectly, informed by the theological virtues, the motion of reason does not suffice unless it receive in addition the promptings or motion of the Holy Ghost, according to Rom. 8. 14. Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. . . . Therefore, in order to accomplish this end, it is necessary for man to have the gift of the Holy Ghost (*ibid.* a. 2).

B: The gift of wisdom

1. *Inter-relation of the three intellectual gifts:*

The intellect exercises a twofold act, perception and judgement. The gift of understanding concerns the former, the gift of wisdom regards the latter according to the divine ideas, the gift of knowledge according to human ideas.

On the part of the things proposed to faith for belief, two things are requisite on our part; first that they be penetrated or grasped by the intellect, and this belongs to the gift of understanding. Secondly, it is necessary that man should judge these things aright, that he should esteem that he ought to adhere to these things, and to withdraw from their opposites; and this judgement with regard to divine things belongs to the gift of wisdom, but with regard to created things belongs to the gift of knowledge, and as to its application to individual actions, belongs to the gift of counsel (2-2. q. 8. a. 6. c).

2. *Its definition:*

Wisdom . . . enables us to judge aright of divine things, or of other things according to divine rules, by reason of a sort of connaturalness or union with divine things, which is the effect of charity (2-2. q. 45. a. 4. c).

3. *Explanation:*

According to the Philosopher, it belongs to wisdom to consider the highest cause. By means of that cause we are able to form a most certain judgement about other causes, and according thereto all things should be set in order. Now, the highest cause may be understood in two ways, either simply or in some particular genus. Accordingly, he that knows the highest cause in any particular genus, and by its means is able to judge and set in order all the things that belong to that genus, is said to be wise in that genus, for instance, in medicine or architecture . . . On the other hand, he who knows the cause that is simply the highest, which is God, is said to be wise simply, because he is able to judge and set in order all things according to divine rules (*ibid.* a. 1. c).

4. *It differs from faith but supposes it:*

In like manner it differs from faith, since faith assents to the divine truth in itself, whereas it belongs to the gift of wisdom to judge according to the divine truth. Hence the gift of wisdom presupposes faith, because a man judges well what he knows (*ibid. ad 2um*).

5. *It is an effect of charity:*

. . . it belongs to wisdom as a gift of the Holy Ghost to judge aright about them on account of connaturalness with them. . . Now this

sympathy or connaturalness for divine things is the result of charity, which unites us to God (*ibid.* a. 2. c), according to 1 Cor. 6. 17: He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

6. *Its grades:*(a) *That common to all:*

The wisdom of which we are speaking denotes a certain rectitude of judgement in the contemplation and consultation of divine things, and as to both of these men obtain various degrees of wisdom through union with divine things.

For the measure of right judgement attained by some, whether in the contemplation of divine things or in directing human affairs according to divine rules, is no more than suffices for their salvation. This measure is wanting to none who is without mortal sin through having sanctifying grace, since if nature does not fail in necessities, much less does grace fail.

(b) *A special gift:*

Some, however, receive a higher degree of the gift of wisdom, both as to the contemplation of divine things (by knowing more exalted mysteries and by being able to impart this knowledge to others) and as to the direction of human affairs according to divine rules (by being able to direct not only themselves, but also others according to those rules). This degree of wisdom is not common to all that have sanctifying grace, but belongs rather to the gratuitous graces, which the Holy Ghost distributes as he will.

C: The gift of understanding

This perfects and strengthens the reason to penetrate supernatural truths.

1. *Definition:*

Understanding implies an intimate knowledge, for *intelligere* (to understand) is the same as *intus legere* (to read inwardly). . . .

Now the light of our understanding, considered from the natural point of view, is finite; wherefore it can only reach to a certain fixed point. Consequently, man needs a supernatural light in order to penetrate further still so as to know what it cannot know by its natural light: and this supernatural light which is bestowed on man is called the gift of understanding.

2. *Its object:*

We need to make a twofold distinction here; one on the side of faith, the other on the part of understanding. On the side of faith the distinction to be made is that certain things, of themselves, come directly under faith because they surpass natural reason, such as the mystery of three Persons in one God and the incarnation of the Son of God; whereas other things come under faith through being

subordinated, in one way or another, to those just mentioned, for instance, all that is contained in the divine Scriptures.

On the part of understanding the distinction to be observed is that there are two ways in which we may be said to understand. In one way we understand a thing perfectly when we arrive at knowing the essence of the thing we understand, and the very truth considered in itself of the proposition understood. In this way, so long as the state of faith lasts, we cannot understand those things which are the direct object of faith; although certain other things that are subordinated to faith can be understood even in this way.

In another way we understand a thing imperfectly, when the essence of a thing or the truth of a proposition is not known as to its quiddity or mode of being, and yet we know that whatever be the outward appearances, they do not contradict the truth, in so far as we understand that we ought not to depart from matters of faith, for the sake of things that appear externally. In this way, even during the state of faith, nothing hinders us from understanding even those things which are the direct objects of faith (*ibid.* q. 8. a. 2. c).

3. *At once a speculative and a practical gift:*

The gift of understanding is not only about those things which come under faith first and principally, but also about all things subordinate to faith. Now good actions have a certain relationship to faith, since faith worketh through charity (Gal. 5. 6). Hence the gift of understanding extends also to certain actions, not as though these were its principal object, but in so far as the rule of our actions is the eternal law, to which the higher reason, which is perfected by the gift of understanding, adheres by contemplation and consulting it, as Augustine states (*ibid.* a. 3).

4. It is possessed by all who have sanctifying grace, but not by those who have lost this gift (*ibid.* a. 4 and 5).

D: The gift of knowledge

1. *Requisite things:*

Two things are requisite in order that the human intellect may assent perfectly to the truths of faith; one of these is that he should have a sound grasp of the things that are proposed to be believed, and this pertains to the gift of understanding, as stated above; while the other is that he should have a sure and right judgement on them, so as to discern what is to be believed from what is not to be believed, and for this the gift of knowledge is required.

2. *Its object:*

The knowledge of divine things is called wisdom, while the knowledge of human things is called knowledge, this being the common name denoting certitude of judgement, and appropriated

to the judgement which is formed through second causes. Accordingly, if we take knowledge in this way it is a distinct gift from the gift of wisdom, so that the gift of knowledge is only about human or created things (*ibid.* q. 9. a. 2).

3. *Approaches the knowledge of God himself:*

In God there is a sure judgement of truth, without any discursive process, by simple intuition . . . wherefore God's knowledge is not discursive, or argumentative, but absolute and simple, to which that knowledge is likened which is a gift of the Holy Ghost, since it is a participated likeness thereof (*ibid.* a. 1. *ad 1um*).

4. It is both speculative and practical insofar as it guides us in our actions as well as deepening our knowledge (*ibid.* a. 3. c).

5. *It teaches us the right path to follow:*

So we must take note with regard to the gift of knowledge, that they alone have the gift of knowledge who judge aright about matters of faith and action, through the grace bestowed on them, so as never to wander from the straight path of justice (Wis. 10. 10). (*Ibid.* a. 3. *ad 3ium*.)

E: The gift of counsel

1. *The need for this gift:*

Prudence . . . makes man take good counsel either for himself or for another. Since, however, human reason is unable to grasp the singular and contingent things which may occur, the result is that the thoughts of mortal men are fearful, and our counsels uncertain (Wis. 9. 14). Hence, in the search of counsel man requires to be directed by God who comprehends all things; and this is done through the gift of counsel, whereby man is directed as though counselled by God, just as, in human affairs, those who are unable to take counsel for themselves, seek counsel from others who are wiser (2-2. q. 52 a. 1. *ad 1um*).

2. Through it God moves us to action (*ibid.* in c).

3. *It perfects prudence:*

Prudence, which denotes rectitude of reason, is chiefly perfected and helped through being ruled and moved by the Holy Ghost, and this belongs to the gift of counsel. . . . Therefore the gift of counsel corresponds to prudence as helping and perfecting it (*ibid.* a. 2. c).

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

The Indwelling

(Any of the Sundays before Pentecost gives us an opportunity to treat of this theme in our sermons. We shall limit ourselves to

St John's ideas as they are to be found in chapters 5 and 6 of Book 2 of *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*.)

1. *Union of the soul with God:*

From what has been said it becomes clear to some extent what we mean by the union of the soul with God. . . . In order then to understand what is meant by this union whereof we are treating it must be known that God lives and dwells and is present substantially in every soul, even in that of the greatest sinner in the world. And this kind of union is ever existing between God and all creatures. . . . And so, when we speak of the union of the soul with God we do not mean this substantial union which forever exists in all creatures, but the union and the transformation of the soul in God through love, which is not being wrought continually, but only when there exists that likeness which comes from love; we shall therefore term this the union of likeness, even as that other union is called substantial or essential. The former is natural, the latter supernatural. And the latter comes to pass when the two wills—namely that of the soul and that of God—are conformed together in one, and there is nought in one which is repugnant to the other. And thus, when the soul rids itself entirely of that which is repugnant to the divine will and conforms not with it, it is transformed in God through love.

2. *Grades of this union:*

This is to be understood of that which is repugnant, not only in action, but also in habit, so that not only do the voluntary acts of imperfection cease, but the habits of those imperfections, whatever they may be, are destroyed. . . . Wherefore, although it is true that God is ever in the soul, giving it and through his presence preserving within it its natural being, yet he does not always communicate supernatural being to it. For this is communicated only by love and grace, which not all souls possess; and all those that possess it have it not in the same degree; for some have attained more degrees of love, and some fewer. Wherefore God communicates himself most to that soul which has progressed farthest in love; namely, that has its will in closest conformity with the will of God. . . . The more completely a soul is wrapped up in creatures and in its own abilities, by habits and affection, the less preparation it has for such union; for it does not give God a complete opportunity to transform it supernaturally. The soul then needs only to strip itself of these natural dissimilarities and contrarieties, so that God, who is communicating himself naturally to it, according to the course of nature, may communicate himself to it supernaturally by means of grace.

3. *Re-birth in the Spirit:*

And it is this that St John desired to explain when he said: *qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo nati sunt*. As though he had said: he gave power to be sons

of God, that is to be transformed in God, only to those who are born, not of blood—that is, not of natural constitution and temperament—neither of the will of the flesh—that is of the free will of natural capacity and ability—still less of the will of man. . . . He gave power to none of these to become sons of God, but only to those who are born of God, that is, to those who, being born again through grace and dying first of all to everything that is of the old man, are raised above themselves to the supernatural, and receive from God this re-birth and adoption which transcends all that can be imagined. For as St John himself says: *Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu Sancto, non potest videre regnum Dei*. This means: he that is not born again in the Holy Spirit will not be able to see the Kingdom of God, which is the state of perfection; and to be born again in the Holy Spirit in this life is to have a soul most like to God in purity, having in itself no admixture of imperfection, so that pure transformation can be wrought in it through participation of union, albeit not essentially.

4. *A comparison:*

In order that both these things may be better understood let us make a comparison. A ray of sunlight is striking a window. If the window is in any way stained or misty, the sun's rays will be unable to illuminate it and transform it into its own light totally, as it would were it clean of all these things and pure; but it will illumine it to a lesser degree, in proportion as it is free from these mists and stains. . . . and this will not be because of the sun's rays, but because of itself; so much so that, if it be pure and clean, the soul will be illumined and transformed by the sun's ray to such an extent that it will itself seem to be a ray and will give the same light as the ray. . . .

This makes it clearer that the preparation of the soul for this union, as we said, is not that it should understand or experience or feel or imagine anything concerning either God or ought else, but that it should have purity and love—that is, perfect resignation and detachment for God's sake alone. . . .

5. *The condition of the soul:*

After the same manner we may describe the condition of the soul with respect to God in this enlightenment or transformation. For, although it is true that a soul, according to its greater or lesser capacity, may have attained to union, yet not all do so to the same degree, for this will depend upon what the Lord wants to grant to each one. It is in this way that souls see God in heaven; some more, some less; but all see him and are content, for their capacity is satisfied.

6. *Degrees of the soul:*

Wherefore, although in this life here below we find certain souls enjoying equal peace and tranquillity in the state of perfection, and

each one of them satisfied, yet some of them may be many degrees higher than the others. All, however, will be equally satisfied, because the capacity of each one is satisfied. But the soul that attains not to such a measure of purity as is in conformity with its capacity never attains true peace and satisfaction, since it has not attained to the possession of that detachment and emptiness in its faculties which is required for simple union with God.

II. BOSSUET

The three persecutions of the Church and their causes

(A summary of this famous sermon will fit in perfectly with the Gospel of today, even though it was originally delivered on the First Sunday of Lent. Mark 6. 47.)

1. *Introduction:*

The mystery of the Church consists in a mixture of strength and weakness; a reflection of the divine and the human in Christ. At times therefore we see her represented as founded upon a rock and at others as a ship tossed hither and thither by tempests. There is nothing so strong and so weak as the Church. There have been three persecutions which have threatened the Church:

- i. infidelity, with its persecutions;
- ii. unhealthy curiosity, and the heresies which accompanied it;
- iii. the corruption of morals.

2. *Bloody persecution:*

(a) *Its causes:*

In the depths of the human heart there is a repugnance to divine truths which are not merely obscure, but annoying to it. This is called by the Scriptures infidelity (Luke 9. 41); the spirit of mistrust (Eph. 2. 2) and incredulity (Col. 3. 6). It lives in all of us, although the grace of God does not allow it to have the same dreadful effects. If we penetrate a little we shall see that this evil comes from our blindness on the one hand and from our presumption on the other.

i. *Intellectual blindness:* Presented to us in Scripture as forgetfulness of God (Ps. 9. 18; 118. 139; 49. 22). Man closes his eyes to divine truth and allows himself to be led by the senses; he ends by not being able to understand anything except what is presented to him by the senses. Those who return to God are said to be mindful of him once again.

ii. *Pride:* Joined with our pride this blindness is increased and becomes more dangerous. Blind to God's truth, we make another, based on human fashions and thoughts; when human nature knows nothing, yet thinks that it understands everything, it cannot bear

to be corrected, and when reasons fails, appeals to force. That is why the Gospel truths have always managed to awaken that latent brutality in the human heart, together with ruthless obstinacy. We can see it clearly in the case of our Lord. They sought to kill him because they did not understand his words (John 8. 37).

(b) *Persecution overcome:*

What happened in the case of Christ had to happen also to his Church. His doctrine, new and lofty as well as severe, could not be heard by the world, and you have seen what the Church had to suffer for four hundred years. If there is no rain, if the harvests fail, if the barbarian devastates the land . . . the Christians to the lions! What have you done, Mother Church, to deserve to be treated thus? She could reply by citing many reasons, but listen to the principal one: I taught the divine truth. But just as violence could not sink the bark of Christ, neither could heresy.

3. *Heresy:*

(a) *Its causes:*

The second storm is produced by unhealthy curiosity, mother of heresies and the ruin of true piety. God who put limits on the waters of the sea has also placed limits on human knowledge. The Christian, says Tertullian, does not pretend to know more than a certain number of things, because he knows that few things are within his intellectual reach; he therefore refuses to get lost in speculations on the infinite which are of no use to him. He who is content to remain within the limits laid down by God and the Church will not be in danger from the wild winds of the tempest; but he who is insatiably curious about such things will be tossed to the heavens as a small boat is in a storm; a vivid image of the curious mind, which thinks that it has reached the heights when it is on the point of being cast down into the abyss of error. Foolish man, he wishes to penetrate the secrets of divine providence, to rise up to the very highest secrets and he does not realize that the first effect of such things is to find himself swaying like a drunken man.

The remedy for avoiding these storms is to hear the Church faithfully and take heed of her decisions. He who is outside her neither hears nor lives, while those within her cannot be deaf or blind. . . . We must hear the Church because God has so established it. Certainly, he could have led each one individually to the truth, granting us the facilities for reaching it; but he has not wished to do it any other way except through that body and Christian community of which we form a part. . . . Do we wish to understand the truth? Then let us look for the bosom of unity and the centre of charity. In the Catholic unity only will we find charity and evangelical truth.

4. *Corruption:*(a) *An internal danger:*

Up to now we have been speaking about storms which come from without and which the Church has always defeated; but now we have to deal with an interior danger. Selvanus put it this way: I do not know how to say it, Mother Church, nor how to explain that your own happiness has fought against you, and that the more nations and people you have conquered, the more vices you have reunited. Prosperity brought you into grave danger, because you acquired power and discipline was relaxed. The more the number of your faithful increased so much the more was the ardour of your faith extinguished and your fecundity weakened by your very growth, so that you almost died through your own strength. Have you ever heard a more eloquent complaint? Yet it is true. The devil knows how to use these scandals and more than once he will point his finger at the iniquities which can be found in the House of God, saying to you: And is this the Church? Are these the successors of the apostles?

(b) *All is not evil in the Church:*

Not all is evil in the Church; there is abundant corn in her granaries, but it was impossible to uproot the cockle without doing harm to the wheat; nor is the evil able to corrupt the corn or root it out. There may be those who profane the sacraments, but there are also many who sanctify themselves through them.

(c) *The remedy:*

What shall I do who live in the world among evil men? Separate yourself from them at heart, reprove them freely, suffer them with charity. We do not know the designs of God who allows some to be evil so that they may be converted and live. If God can wait for them, will not you do likewise? He suffers others for the punishment and proving of the just. Take advantage of it. God knows the day appointed to each one, either for his condemnation or his conversion. Let us love all in the bonds of unity.

The triumph of the charity of Christ consists in loving Catholic unity in spite of all the scandals we can see in the Church. Let us groan before God, reproving before men if it be our vocation, let us not lift up our voice in vain, instead let us begin the reform of the Church by reforming ourselves. The Church says to us: Look, beloved sons; see how things are with me! I may be at peace exteriorly, but my interior peace is bitter, even when I am not suffering persecution or being calumniated by heresy. It is a bitter peace, because your sins wound me. Do you wish to cure me? Then begin by curing yourself.

III. RAOUL PLUS, S.J.

(Extracts from *Le Christ dans nos frères*: we shall limit ourselves to his remarks about sins of omission.)

I. *Sins of omission*(a) *Their harm:*

Work is productive—but so too is omission, even though it may be negative.

Towards the end of the 1918 war we were in the Red Cross post number 221, united with the rearguard by one solitary road. Some soldiers had the mission of filling in the holes made in the road by enemy shells, but through their negligence some of them remained open. There was a sudden attack; the ambulances arrived in droves with the wounded. An American car made all haste to take them to the rear, but it did not return, the wounded were in great pain and many died through not receiving immediate attention. What had happened? One of the wheels of an artillery wagon had struck one of the holes in the road and blocked the convoy. The wounded could not be evacuated, and many of them died. All through a sin of omission.

But it is not merely the omissions of the medical student, the soldier or the workman which cause damage, because there are other omissions which can do harm to souls, to the nation and to the Church.

Let us remind ourselves of the time when France suffered from the separation of Church and State. It was allowed to pass. The time for the expulsions came and one or two protests gave the occasion to Briand to stand up in the French parliament and say: You protest; it is not enough!

(b) *The sin of omission exists:*

We can easily have the idea that the only sins worth worrying about are those of action; but we must remember that there are abstentions which can be grave sins in the Catholic.

We are not merely responsible for what we know, but for what we ought to have known or might have known had we wished; for what we might have been able to do for the truth if we had made use of the occasions for knowing more about it. We shall be asked to give an account of the merits we have acquired and also for those we might have acquired. If St Francis Xavier had fallen down on the task committed to him what a vacuum there would have been in the Church of Asia! We complain that the kingdom of God is long in coming; but have we done all we can and all that we should have done? Have we contributed our stone to the edifice? Everyone who has been baptized should feel himself responsible for the salvation

of the world, since he has promised to be a qualified assistant to Christ in that task. There are souls whom God has determined to save if we help in that work. He knows the account we must render to him afterwards. If we think of Christ's words we shall see what he thinks of such sins of omission: You did not give me to drink. . . . You gave me not to eat, etc.

2. *The testimony of suffering:*

(a) *The fundamental doctrine:*

Souls are taught by words, but they are saved by suffering. In truth, suffering is an even more apostolic work than prayer, which is usually not fertile unless there are sown together with it some drops of blood. Rarely does the apostolate of words alone reach the heart, because a man who has been able to resist the calls of God is easily able to resist that of another man. The invincible weapon is suffering.

The Curé d'Ars once asked a priest who complained that he had used every means to convert his parish: Have you used the discipline, mortification, suffering? They are the words of a saint. Christ, who could make good choice of all means to accomplish his task, redeemed us all by his death on the cross, and since then without shedding of blood there is no remission (Heb. 9. 22). The Cross dominates the history of the world. The way to God is that of Calvary. That is why Christ gave the law to his apostles; why he said that, if anyone would follow him, it had to be the way of the cross. The same is true of Mary, Mother of sorrow and of the apostles. The history of the Church is founded on the blood of those first athletes of Christ.

(b) *Union with the mystical body:*

If we are members of Christ and he has desired to redeem the world by means of his immolation, then we are of necessity incorporated into that redemptive sacrifice. Baptism associates us with the work of Christ, which consists in redeeming through sacrifice. He is lazy and a traitor who does not understand this.

Frequently the order of values in Christian mortification is badly established. We are told: Mortify yourselves to avoid falls; do it to obtain pardon for your sins. This is not enough. We need to widen the horizons to the full splendour of their perspective. What saves the world is the cross, no matter how small it may be.

Generals cannot win wars without the private soldiers. Christ could have done so; but he wished to honour us by calling on our help, so that we may say, as did St Paul, that we make up in our bodies what is wanting to the Passion of Christ, by suffering for his mystical body which is the Church. When a Christian, conscious of his vocation, suffers, he can and should consider himself as a crucified

member of Christ. His weakness then becomes a most powerful weapon (2 Cor. 12. 10). The Christian is also a temple of God, and the Master, watching him from above, is delighted when he finds that he has the form of a cross.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

(A summary of the papal documents on the subject of the Church of Silence and persecution in general.)

1. *The persecuted Church:*

(a) Millions of our brother Christians are, at the present moment, enclosed within an iron wall, deprived of all their rights as citizens. Truly they may be said to belong to the Church of Silence, submitted as they are to the despotism of those who have brought them under subjection. The procedures by which this silent martyrdom is accomplished would fill volumes. The hostility against the Church is advancing like the lava which flows from the volcano. Especially, the designs of these persecutors are directed against the children. In the face of this great offensive the whole Christian community should be united. No one should lose heart, because the veil of silence, extended over so many in chains, will not impede the true judgement of history. (Pius XII: radio message for Christmas, 1950 and 1951; also the Easter message, 1941.)

(b) The Holy Father recalls the obligation which is on us all to pray for those who are being persecuted and also for the whole Church, in danger of persecution. Nor should we forget in our prayers and sufferings those who are in prison, far from their homes and families. (Encycl. *Ingruentium malorum*, 1951.)

2. Documents referring to some of the persecuted countries and Churches:

Poland: Pius XII on the occasion of the 7th anniversary of the canonization of St Stanislaus. 16 July 1953.

To the bishops of Poland, 1951.

Czechoslovakia: Pius XII, Apostolic Letter to the bishops and faithful, 28 October 1951.

Rumania: Pius XII, Excommunication on those who intervened in the Bucharest Process, 17 September 1951; Consistorial allocution on the condemnation of Cardinal Mindszenty, 14 February 1949.

China and Far East Missions: Pius XII, Encycl. *Evangelii Praecones*, 2 June 1951.

The Eastern Churches: Pius XII. Encycl. to the Catholic Bishops of the East, 13 December 1952.

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

Mission of the Holy Ghost

He will give testimony of me

1. The mission of the Holy Spirit in the Church was that of giving testimony to Christ.
 - (a) Pentecost is the manifestation of the mission and doctrine of Christ.
 - (b) This mission is also carried out in each soul. To it can be reduced the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. Holiness is nothing less than the increase in truth and charity.
 - ii. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, at one and the same time love and the spirit of truth, this progressive growth in Jesus Christ becomes possible.
2. The liturgy presents the Holy Ghost to us in this office of giving testimony to the truth (cf. *General Comments*, p. 2).

The Holy Ghost—Light

1. *Light and truth:*
 - (a) In the Gospel Christ is called the Truth, yet the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth.
 - (b) In a similar fashion for the liturgy Christ is the true light (John 1. 8); but the Holy Spirit is also called light.
 - i. In the Sequence of Pentecost he is invoked under the title of Light of hearts.
 - ii. In the *Veni, Creator* we ask him to illumine our minds 'accende lumen sensibus'.
 - (c) The light of hearts; light of minds—these are metaphoric ways of saying that he is the light of our cognitive faculty whose object is the truth.
2. *The Holy Spirit is light because:*
 - (a) He guards the deposit of revelation; he assists the Pope and the bishops so that the truth may be manifested, taught, conveniently explained and developed according to the needs of the times.
 - (b) He is also light in an interior way in so far as he gives us the gift of faith, the gift of the Holy Ghost and actual graces.
 - i. Through them he illumines us (Collect of Pentecost).
 - ii. In many other prayers of the liturgy the same idea is expressed. Cf. the prayers for blessing of candles, 2 February.

His office as light

1. *Keeps away error:*

(a) If light and darkness are incompatible, then the first office of the Holy Ghost will be to keep error from man and see to it that he does not fall again into it.

(b) This idea is brought out in an ancient sequence mentioned in the *Ordines Romani* of the fifteenth century. It reads:

Spiritus alme, illustrator hominum,
Horridas nostrae mentis
Purga tenebras.

Amator sancte sensorum
Semper cogitatum,
Infunde unctionem tuam
Clemens nostris sensibus.

Tu, purificator omnium
Flagitorum spiritus,
Purifica nostri oculum
Interioris hominum.

Ut videri supremus
Genitor possit a nobis,
Mundi cordis quem soli
Cernere possunt oculi.

2. *He guides us to the truth:*

(a) This is the idea expressed in the Gospel: John 16. 13. It will be for him, the truth-giving spirit, when he comes, to guide you into all truth. This idea is summed up in the prayer for the Wednesday after Pentecost: We beseech thee, O Lord, that the Paraclete who proceeds from thee may illumine our minds and bring us to the full truth, just as thy Son promised.

(b) In the concrete, he makes us know the Son, Jesus Christ—through thee we know the Son (*Veni Creator*).

i. In this respect the last prayer for the blessing of candles on the 2nd of February is very beautiful: Lord Jesus Christ, who becoming man among men, wast presented by thy parents in the temple in the flesh, whom Simeon, that venerable old man, illumined by the light of thy Spirit, knew, received and blessed, kindly grant to us also, that, enlightened and taught by the grace of that same Spirit, we may truly know thee and faithfully love thee.

ii. Under the action of the Holy Spirit the soul increases in its knowledge, ever understanding more and more the life of Christ.

iii. All know the phrase used in the Exercises of St Ignatius: To ask interior knowledge.

iv. Commentators explain that this phrase implies not merely the knowledge of the person of Christ, but also the reasons and motives which directed him.

v. This interior knowledge is principally the work of the Holy Spirit, who produces it through the gift of understanding.

Applications

1. The soul should invoke the Holy Spirit whenever it is about to make contact with Christ in prayer or spiritual reading, or when about to hear the word of God.
2. Especially those should invoke him who are dedicated to intellectual activities.
3. The same should be said of ministers of State, fathers of families, etc.
4. In fact, all Christians, on beginning the day and especially when beginning some special work, so that they may be free from errors.

II. THE EPISTLE

A: Charity covers a multitude of sins

Charity and its effects on sin

1. *Today's epistle touches on charity:*
 - (a) It mentions the glory of God;
 - (b) the good of our neighbour;
 - (c) and, in verse 8, commands three things:
 - i. that we should love one another;
 - ii. with an ardent love;
 - iii. above all, placing this precept before all others.
2. *Lovers of our brethren:*

One of the motives for this desire that we should be lovers of our brethren is mentioned in the epistle: that of covering a multitude of sins. We shall study it a little.

It has a literal and an applied sense:

 - (a) **In the literal sense:**
It means that he who loves covers up the sins of the one whom he loves.
 - (b) **In the appropriated sense:**
God knows well how to cover up the sins of the one who really is charitable.

Charity dissimulates the sins of the neighbour

1. *A reason which reaches the very essence of love:*
 - (a) Love joins the two people into one, to such an extent that they think of themselves as one person, so that the same thing is desired for oneself as for the beloved;
 - (b) with what delicate solicitude we know how to hide our own defects.
 - i. See how mothers do not even see the defects in their children.
 - ii. Love is blind, it is said. Blessed be that blindness!
 - (c) Thinking of my brethren as myself has another consequence; I also am capable of any sin.
 - i. There is no sin which man commits, of which another man is not capable, if the Creator of men is not there to help him, says St Augustine.
 - ii. *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto* (Terent. *Heauton*).

2. The other reasons and motives for the Christian love of charity are all contained in this one. Let us look at them:

The love of charity makes us see that:

- (a) We are members of one body, that of Christ. When one member suffers the rest suffer with it (1 Cor. 12. 26 ff.).
- (b) We are brothers in the choice which Christ made of us. What is more, he chose us generously, forgetting our many faults. You are God's chosen people, holy and well-beloved; the livery you wear must be tender compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; you must bear with one another's faults, be generous to each other; the Lord's generosity to you must be your model (Col. 3. 12 ff.).
- (c) We are all companions in the difficult task of building up the body of Christ, his Church and in that of our own salvation. Therefore St Paul says that we should help to carry one another's burdens (Gal. 6. 2).

3. The example of the saints might well make us feel ashamed: how long are we capable of sustaining a conversation without talking ill of our neighbour? Do we judge him with the same kindness and leniency as we do ourselves?

Our charity dissimulates our own sins*

1. We do not mean that mercy towards others gives us permission to sin.

* On this point, cf. the schemes concerning charity and judgement in the series for the 1st Sunday of Advent; also St Augustine and John Chrysostom concerning almsdeeds and pardon of sins in schemes for 4th Sunday of Advent.

2. But we have to point out that this mercy and charity is a necessary condition for our own pardon.

(a) The merciless will be judged mercilessly; mercy gives its judgement an honourable welcome (James 2. 13).

(b) Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.

3. *One further step:*

(a) Such is the interest God has that we should forgive our neighbour and so direct his manner when speaking about it that we may well conclude that his mercy will grant the grace to the charitable man to repent and attain mercy at the moment of death.

(b) Forgive and you shall be forgiven: Judge nobody and you will not be judged; condemn nobody and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven (Luke 6. 37).

B: Prudence

Be discreet

1. That is to say, be prudent: the counsel of St Peter. Imprudence spoils many virtues, apostolates and governments—a logical thing, because prudence regulates and directs all the virtues, especially those of rulers.

2. We must explain this virtue from the supernatural (and not merely from the natural) point of view, following the exposition of St Thomas (2-2. q. 47). Remember also that our Lord told us to be wise as serpents—i.e. prudent.

The natural virtue defined as a practical direction of right reason with regard to our actions

In other words, faced with any situation, the prudent man makes use of his past experience and also of the general principles which govern action to decide the best thing to do, the best way to do it, etc. This leads to the maximum effort in execution, while we are slow in deciding (St Thomas, 2-2. q. 47. a. 9. c).

1. *Its principal acts:*

(a) *A detailed study of the situation:*

The end which is proposed and the means to attain it; all this calmly and carefully when possible.

(b) *To be circumspect:*

It is not enough that the end and means should be good, because it is possible that the thousand circumstances which surround an action may make certain means evil.

(c) *Caution in foreseeing extrinsic obstacles.*

2. *The ambit of prudence extends to all our actions, but especially:*

(a) it moderates the actions of and finds the just mean for the other moral virtues: it helps all and works through all (*ibid.* q. 47. a. 5. *ad 2um*);

(b) it can even have a part to play in the use of the theological virtues, in so far as it tells us when and how to exercise them—to spend all the day in acts of faith or love and to neglect our real work would be contrary to divine prudence (*ibid.* q. 47. a. 7, cf. 1-2. q. 64).

(c) *It is necessary:*

For all those who govern—the act of prudence is to direct; that of rulers is the same—therefore for them it is essential.

(d) *For subjects too it is essential:*

Subjects should co-operate rationally, executing the orders given them, for which they also need prudence.

A supernatural virtue

1. *The object of prudence:*

To determine and take decisions on our actions so that they may be more in relation to our end. But since there is one end which is superior to all—our salvation—the real object of supernatural prudence is to lead us to that end.

2. *The supreme rule or norm of prudence:*

(a) is called by St Ignatius the principle and foundation:

i. man is created to praise, reverence and serve God and through this to reach his salvation;

ii. other things are intended to help him in that supreme task;

iii. from which it follows that man must make use of them in so far as they help him to attain his end and should deprive himself of them in so far as they are an impediment to him (*Spirit. Exerc.*).

(b) *It is the norm given by our Lord:*

What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul.

3. God, when he infuses grace into the soul also infuses the virtues, so that every man in a state of grace possesses prudence as far as is necessary for his salvation.

(a) This does not mean that they necessarily possess natural prudence which extends to all the circumstances of natural life (q. 47. a. 14),

(b) but it does mean that we have all the light necessary to select those means which are necessary for our salvation, a light which we should both follow and develop.

4. On the other hand, the sinner lacks this light of supernatural prudence.

(a) He may have the prudence of the flesh, which enables him to follow perfectly his base desires.

(b) He may have a natural prudence which covers the natural ends of human life: he may be a good seaman, pilot, etc., without being prudent about his supernatural end.

(c) He is lacking in that which is true prudence and perfect; that which counsels, judges and orders aright those things which are necessary for the true end of life, and which is the only one that merits the name of prudence (q. 47. a. 13. c).

5. This is the prudence which St Peter recommends and which our Lord commands.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: You who from the first have been in my company

Introduction

1. *Christ lays the foundation of the mission given to his disciples:*

(a) They will be witnesses to him because from the beginning they have been with him;

(b) an indispensable condition for the disciple.

2. *There are two aspects of this statement:*

(a) It has a dogmatic value, in dealing with the position of the apostles, chosen by Christ to form his Church.

(b) It has an ascetic value for all who are in any way consecrated to the apostolate.

We shall consider the dogmatic aspect as it is applied to the apostles.

What Jesus did for his apostles

It is necessary to give a complete picture of it to see the relation between Christ and his apostles.

1. *He chooses them:*

(a) personally in the case of each one, as men who have his full confidence;

(b) not like the great multitude that followed him everywhere;

(c) not like the disciples, who although they followed him, were not chosen in this solemn manner.

2. *He explains all his doctrine to them:*

(a) Therefore, at the Last Supper, Christ united these two extremes; the communication of all the truths of his doctrine and their apostolic mission:

(b) I do not speak of you any more as my servants; a servant is one who does not understand what his master is about, whereas I have made known to you all that my Father has told me; and so I have called you my friends. It was not you that chose me, it was I that chose you. The task I have appointed you is to go out and bear fruit, fruit which will endure (John 15. 15-16).

3. *The apostles have been witnesses of the whole life of Jesus:*

(a) They saw his first miracle at the marriage feast of Cana, and the Gospel tells us that it confirmed their faith in him (John 2. 11).

(b) For the hidden life, to which they were not witnesses, Jesus gave them his own Mother to teach them its details.

(c) It does not matter if the others do not see all his miracles, the apostles will see them all, and not one will be worked without at least one or two of the apostles as witnesses. Above all, they will be the witnesses to his resurrection.

4. *As apostles:*

(a) they will have the full powers of government, of teaching and of sanctification, which they will pass on to be perpetuated in his Church;

(b) apart from this:

i. they will have personal infallibility,

ii. they will be able to carry his doctrine to all parts of the earth with their own personal jurisdiction;

iii. they will be able to confirm what they say with miracles.

5. With the apostles divine revelation comes to its full perfection—and ceases; in them, with the death of the last apostle, divine inspiration of Scripture also comes to an end.

6. For them will be the extraordinary Pentecost in the Upper Room.

The force they themselves give to this having been with Christ

1. When they elect a new member of the apostolic college: There are men who have walked in our company all through the time when the Lord Jesus came and went among us, from the time when John used to baptize to the day when he, Jesus, was taken from us. One of these ought to be added to our number as a witness of his resurrection (Acts 1. 21-22).

2. *It is used by them as a great argument to convince the people:*

We are witnesses of all he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And they killed him, hanging him on a gibbet; but

on the third day God raised him up again, and granted the clear sight of him, not to the people at large, but to us, the witnesses whom God has appointed beforehand; we ate and drank in his company after his rising from the dead. And he gave us a commission to preach to the people, and to bear witness that he, and none other, has been chosen by God to judge the living and the dead (Acts 10. 39-42).

3. It makes them strong and determined in their speech, even though their enemies may try to make them keep silent. It is impossible for us (they say) to refrain from speaking of what we have seen and heard (Acts 4. 20).

4. Finally, the apostles find in the fact of their having lived a common life with Christ on earth, a special strength to represent him to the world.

(a) They see themselves as continuations of him and his mission.

(b) They unite themselves with the message and the life of Christ, and by uniting themselves with Christ they are united with the Father.

(c) Therefore all the faithful, through union with them, are also joined in this supernatural community.

Our message concerns that Word, who is life; what he was from the first, what we have heard about him, what our own eyes have seen of him; what it was that met our gaze and the touch of our hands. Yes, life dawned; and it is as eyewitnesses that we give you news of that life, that eternal life, which ever abode with the Father and has dawned, now, on us. This message about what we have seen and heard we pass on to you, so that you too may share in our fellowship. What is it this fellowship of ours? Fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1. 1-3).

Conclusion

1. At the last judgement we shall find the apostles seated with Jesus as judges.

2. To those who have lived with Jesus and have explained both his life and his doctrine to the world it belongs to see, at the last day, if men have reproduced in their lives the example given by those first envoys of Christ.

3. Please God, they find us living as they taught by their words, by their example, and by the supreme test of their blood.

B: To be with Christ—a test and condition of the apostolate

An ascetic lesson

1. Christ formed his apostolic college from those who had been with him from the beginning.

2. Here is a lesson in ascetics for us. Everyone who wishes to be an apostle, not merely in an official manner, especially by giving greater efficacy to his work, joining to the power of what he teaches special efficacy in the way in which he teaches it, must live intimately in union with Christ.

Union with Christ through faith and knowledge

1. Jesus has made known all his doctrine to the apostles (John 15. 15-16).

(a) This full knowledge is a sign that he treats them as friends and that they will bring forth much fruit.

(b) The Holy Ghost himself is promised as the Spirit of Truth, who will bring their knowledge to perfection.

2. Pius XII said: The first impulse which should motivate the priestly spirit should be that of uniting oneself most intimately with the divine Redeemer:

(a) to accept with docility and in all their integrity the divine teaching;

(b) and to apply them diligently at every moment of his existence;

(c) so that faith will be ever the light of his conduct and his conduct a reflection of his faith (*Menti Nostrae*).

Union with Christ through sanctity

1. *The sanctity which consists in fleeing from sin:*

(a) It is a lamentable inconsistency that one whose office it is to sanctify others should himself live in a state of sin.

(b) What is more, such a person's ministry is, for the most part, useless or at least ineffective while he is living in sin. It is worth while studying the reply given to Holofernes by the chief of the sons of Ammon—it has a clear application to priests and layfolk alike (cf. Judith 5. 3-29).

2. *Sanctity through union with Christ by grace:*

(a) **And Christ said to them:**

I am the vine, you are its branches; if a man lives on in me, and I in him, then he will yield abundant fruit; separated from me, you have no power to do anything (John 15. 5).

(b) **Pius X insisted that . . .**

To restore all things in Christ by means of the apostolate:

i. it is necessary to possess divine grace, and the apostle does not receive it unless he remains united to Christ;

ii. only when we have formed Christ in ourselves shall we be able to form him easily in the families and in society;

iii. all those who have a share in the apostolate should possess true piety (Encycl. to the bishops of Italy, 11 June 1905).

Union with Christ through prayer

1. The apostles themselves understood so well the necessity for this that they laid aside other activities to dedicate themselves to prayer and to preaching.

2. At this point the words of St John of the Cross are better than any commentary we could make:

(a) Let those then that are greatly interested in activity, that think to girdle the world with their outward works and preaching, take note here that they would bring far more profit to the Church and be far more pleasing to God (apart from the good example they would give) if they spent even half this time in abiding with God in prayer, even had they not reached such a height as this.

(b) Of a surety they would accomplish more with one piece of work than they now do with a thousand, and that with less labour, since their prayer would be of such great deserving and they would have won such spiritual strength by it. For to act otherwise is to hammer vigorously and to accomplish little more than nothing, at times nothing at all; at times, indeed, it may even be to do harm. May God forbid that your salt should begin to lose its savour; and yet although in such cases it may seem superficially that it has some effect, it will have no substantial effect, for it is certain that good works cannot be done save in the strength of God (*Spiritual Canticle*, stanza 28).

C: The testimony of the martyrs

Two points of view

Martyrdom can be considered as an apologetic proof of doctrine from two points of view:

1. *The historical:*

(a) Martyr, from the etymology of the word, means witness, and the early martyrs did die as a proof of what they themselves had seen of the life, miracles and resurrection of Christ, which were the foundations of their faith.

(b) The proof is a strong one—but it reduces the demonstration to the first generation of Christians.

2. *Psychological:*

Heroism of this kind is impossible in any society for a long time without divine intervention.

Martyrdom is a moral miracle

1. From this point of view martyrdom is a moral miracle in the sense that the human will overcomes obstacles and performs actions in cases where it should normally fail.

2. The moral miracle is usually only verified in the case of communities.

(a) Because we cannot say to what lengths the will of the individual will reach; but we do know what the great mass is capable of.

(b) A man may reach on foot the farthest parts of Africa; but if a hundred thousand people were to undertake the journey then we can be morally certain that the great majority will not reach the goal.

3. Our thesis is, then, that martyrdom puts Christians into such a psychological situation that it is necessary to admit a collective heroism throughout many centuries and throughout the whole Roman empire in order to remain Christian—a heroism which is morally impossible.

The facts

The Christian lived in a state of constant anxiety brought about by the thought of imminent death or persecution.

1. This must be linked with the great number of the martyrs throughout the whole of the known world.

2. *With the cruelty of the tortures to which they were subjected.*

There is no need to go through them all, but we may mention the normal ones: to be shut up in prison, deprived of friends and family, offered all kinds of bribes if they would only detest Christianity and worship the old pagan gods, flogging, tearing with the iron hooks, being broken on the wheel, thrown to the wild beasts, burned as flaming torches, beheading, crucifixion, boiling in oil or water, etc.

3. *Moral tortures to be considered:*

(a) Families divided, fathers and children beseeching their families to give up their faith. The Acts of the Martyrdom of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas give us a complete idea of what this could mean.

(b) Privation of goods, exile, deprived of public office, etc.

4. *The valour of the Christians:*

(a) As Tertullian says, criminals could not submit without groans and loud cries to half of what the Christians accepted with calmness.

(b) Many, he continues, surprised by our courage, have sought the reason for it and have come over to our side.

5. *They suffer for the faith:*

They themselves affirmed it and their judges too—it was the only thing that mattered to both sides—are you a Christian?

6. *Their situation:*

(a) It is impossible for us to get a true idea of what this meant, to live all the time in fear of betrayal by those nearest to them, the

sword of Damocles always hanging over them at every step, together with the easy way out—apostasy.

(b) It needs great courage to face a situation like this for a month or two, but when it goes on for years and even for centuries. . . .

The miracle of heroism

1. *A fanatic can exist:*

Even a whole community can have its moments of fanaticism. Any religion can have a martyr or two.

2. What cannot be explained from the human point of view is that so many thousands, of all races, states of life, women and children not excepted, of all social classes, should endure such a situation as they did for three centuries.

(a) Human motives cannot suffice to explain it:

- i. not glory, because the Christian was despised.
- ii. not fanaticism, because the Christian serenity was certainly anything but that;
- iii. such motives will never explain the deaths they had to undergo.

(b) Even certain supernatural motives, such as the desire for heaven, are deficient:

- i. This is proved by our weakness in pain and under temptation, a weakness which cannot be overcome without a special grace from God.
- ii. Wherever heresy has been energetically suppressed martyrdom has soon disappeared.

D: The testimony of Christ about the Holy Ghost

The importance of his mission

Christ spoke a great deal about the Holy Spirit, and attributes to him the most prominent place in the work of the Church.

- (a) He is to be the soul of the Church;
- (b) Christ did not wish to leave behind him a dead institution, but one full of life and capable of giving life to others.

The coming of the Holy Spirit

1. Christ's respect for the Third Person and the capital importance of his mission in the Church can be seen:

- (a) because Christ prays that the Spirit may come:
 - i. then the vacuum left by his leaving them will be filled in the hearts of the apostles;
 - ii. the vacuum left by one Person of the Trinity could only be filled by another;

iii. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another to befriend you, one who is to dwell continually with you for ever (John 14. 16).

(b) Jesus goes that the Spirit may come in his place (John 16. 7);
(c) he wanted the apostles to find their true consolation; not the human comfort of his presence, which might turn their minds to thoughts of a material kingdom;

(d) but the true consolation of the spiritual kingdom, which would only be spread in their hearts and in the hearts of others by the Holy Ghost.

(e) It is through this interior purity of all creatures that Christ wished to found his kingdom of truth and love.

2. *From heaven Christ sends the Holy Spirit:*

(a) Jesus has realized his mission of redemption; he has preached his gospel, has left his Church as a visible organization in the world, has overcome his enemies, has ascended into heaven, taking with him as captives who can no longer do us any real harm, all our sins and miseries.

(b) In exchange he gives us the Holy Spirit, who will bring us two main benefits:

- i. he will give testimony to Christ in the world;
- ii. he is the greatest gift God could make to man.

(c) Thus the work of Christ will be completed.

Jesus prophesies the action of the Holy Spirit in his Church

1. He concentrates in the discourse of the Last Supper all his ideas about the Holy Spirit.

2. But all through his life we can find references to this doctrine.

(a) *We are born into the Church through the Spirit* (John 3. 5):

- i. This is the main point of his teaching to Nicodemus.
- ii. The Holy Spirit will give the force and strength to the waters of baptism.
- iii. This rebirth is necessary for all mankind—and it is a birth to the Church through the Spirit.

iv. Although at times and in certain circumstances the water can be supplied by something else (contrition or blood) still, the action of the Spirit is always necessary. Without the Holy Ghost there is no salvation.

(b) *Together with the Holy Spirit Christ gives to his Church the power to forgive sins:*

With that he breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit; when you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven, when you hold them bound, they are held bound (John 20. 22-23).

(c) The Holy Spirit will complete the work of Jesus:

i. Jesus came to preach the truth and although the apostles' minds were as yet stubborn and closed to that truth in all its fullness, still he can leave them without worry, because the Holy Spirit will enlighten them (John 14. 26).

ii. During his mortal life Christ gathered up all the thorns which can spoil our passage to heaven and get in our way; lack of comprehension, insults, treachery, being despised, negations, even death itself. The splendid flowering of all that is beautiful and holy in the Church he reserves for the Holy Spirit.

E: The testimony of the Holy Ghost

The testimonies to which Jesus appeals:

- (a) that of his Father (John 5. 37);
- (b) that of the Scriptures (John 5. 39);
- (c) that of Moses (John 5. 45-46);
- (d) that of the Baptist (John 5. 33);
- (e) that of his own works (John 5. 36).

The Holy Spirit as witness

This is the greatest of all the testimonies, both because of the dignity of the testifying Person and also because of the special force of his testimony.

He is infinite wisdom itself, infinite truth and has authority or power to testify. These three conditions are necessary in some degree in all witnesses, but in the Person of the Holy Spirit they reach an infinite degree.

His internal witness

1. The Holy Spirit bears witness in a twofold fashion, both interior and exterior.

(a) The first is in the line of the spiritual life of each individual, the second is in the propagation of the faith throughout the world.

(b) One is done directly by the action of the Holy Spirit on the soul; the other is brought about by the action of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and through the magisterial function of the Church.

2. This testimony of the Holy Ghost so far as it is internal, may be:

(a) against us:

- i. against our sins through remorse of conscience,
- ii. in the activity of the Spirit through his actual graces, accusing the sinner of the state in which he lives.

(b) in our favour:

- i. the testimony of the peace of the just man; by this means the Spirit gives witness to the fact that we are in the state of grace (cf. Rom. 9. 16);
- ii. through a greater participation in his gifts (1 Cor. 2. 11).

The external testimony of the Spirit

The Spirit has borne witness to Jesus:

1. *Through the ministry of the apostles:*

- (a) to whom he teaches all truth (John 16. 13);
- (b) who is it but the Spirit who gives force to their words? (1 Thess. 1. 5);
- (c) he gives them their holiness of life and the grace of martyrdom;
- (d) the link between his coming and the witness of the apostles to Christ was foretold by Jesus (Acts 1. 8).

2. *Through the martyrs:*

- (a) By the power of the Spirit they find strength to speak up in defence of their faith and of Christ, dying for it with joy.
- (b) This also was promised them by Christ (Luke 12. 12).

3. Through the wonderful spread of the Church and its triumph over all kinds of enemies. This is the perpetual miracle wrought by the Spirit to bear witness to Christ and his truth.

Conclusion

1. We should open our hearts and souls to the testimony of the Spirit;
2. putting ourselves in his hands in order to be witnesses in our turn.

F: The gift of wisdom

This gift in the saints

1. Their lives bear witness to the fact of the influence of the Holy Spirit on them through this gift.

St Ignatius loved to see himself slighted; St Francis loved poverty and self-denial; St Pius X loved humility all his life, even in high positions.

2. This way of acting of the saints cannot be understood by the world or by those Christians even who govern their lives through a human criterion.

(a) These will tell you that religion should be something normal; the saints were, to them, exaggerated, eccentric, extremists, even mad.

(b) But the world's wisdom is stupidity before God (1 Cor. 1. 25-27, 3. 18). In the sight of God the saints are normal—the logical development of the grace which is in them.

3. In the world there are three types of wisdom, all of them condemned by the Scriptures:

- (a) earthly wisdom, which has no taste for anything except riches;
- (b) the animal, which only desires bodily sensations and pleasures;
- (c) the diabolic, which puts its final end in its own excellence.

4. Before God the only true wisdom is that of the power and wisdom of God.

This is the wisdom of the saints and they were moved to embrace it by the gift of wisdom.

The nature of this gift

1. To understand it we must keep in mind the doctrine of St Thomas, already quoted (cf. p. 12ff.).

2. In this life we can participate in some way, even though imperfect, in the very wisdom of God himself, rise to him and see things through his eyes.

(a) The gift of wisdom never leaves the very heart of the Trinity.

(b) Through it we judge of God and the things of God.

(c) As Bede Jarrett says:

i. *Its business is to make us see God everywhere*: in the material and spiritual creation of God, in the concrete facts of existence and in the revealed truths of faith.

ii. *It produces in the soul a sense of complete certainty and hope*: indeed, its finest side is often just that determined and resolute conviction with which the soul rises superior to every possible disaster, and is prepared to brave every contingency in its sureness of God's final power and the efficacy of his will. It comes closer therefore to God himself than understanding or knowledge.

iii. *Wisdom, therefore, implies an understanding of the world through God, whereas knowledge and understanding suppose a perception of God through the world.*

iv. *The wise man, then, estimates everything by its highest cause*: He compares and discovers, gleans the reason of God's providence, its purpose, its fitness. First principles are his guide, not the ready and practical proverbs that display the width and worldly wisdom of the lesser man. Eternity becomes of larger moment than time, since time is merely for eternity. God's law is more convincing than man's, for man's enactments are not laws at all when they come in conflict with divine commands. Faith is so deeply in him that he judges between propositions and discovers truth against heresy. He has climbed to the heights of God and sees all the world at his feet, and knows it as God knows it, the world and its Lord and the glory of it (*The Abiding Presence of the Holy Ghost*, pp. 59-61).

The gift of wisdom and charity

1. In general the gifts perfect the virtues, giving them a divine form.

2. In particular, charity is of greater excellence than the gift of wisdom. Yet the latter perfects the former:

(a) The virtue of charity unites us to God and pours out his love upon us; but the gift makes this love ever more perfect.

(b) Death to self is the perfect expression of charity, and this is very difficult until and unless the gift of wisdom intervenes.

(c) Charity towards the neighbour reaches its highest grade also through the action of the gift of wisdom.

i. The saints contemplated God in a special way in the neighbour.

ii. For this reason they love and serve the neighbour with heroic self-sacrifice, full of naturalness and simplicity.

iii. They rejoice when they can deprive themselves of useful or even necessary things to help their neighbour.

(d) Since charity is the first of all the virtues, without doubt wisdom is the first of all the gifts and the most perfect.

The Christian life under the influence of the gift of wisdom

1. *The gifts form part of our spiritual edifice*:

They are infused at baptism and are necessary for salvation.

2. *The Christian is called to be moved by them*:

This can be seen clearly in many lives, but there are others who put impediments in the way of the Holy Spirit.

3. *This gift quickly raises souls to sanctity*:

Because the souls who live in union with God by charity, with its acts of love, purification and prayer, plunge ever deeper into the very life of the Trinity:

(a) their way of judging is perfect;

(b) so is their action through the other virtues;

(c) they rejoice in work and sufferings;

(d) even though engaged in the active life, they never lose this interior contact with God;

(e) the 'I' is finished now, and the only one who lives in their hearts is God.

4. *How to attain this*:

(a) Do everything possible to increase the devotion in the spiritual life.

(b) Once this grows and increases then the gift of wisdom is sure to make itself felt more and more.

(c) Therefore interior recollection, prayer and being mindful of the presence of God are essential elements in its growth.

- (d) In particular we may make these rules for acquiring this gift in an ever increasing degree:
- i. make a special effort to consider all our desires and aspirations from God's point of view;
 - ii. oppose the criterion of the world and its norms—diametrically opposed to those of God;
 - iii. look for the supernatural everywhere and in every thing; not the divine consolations but the God of consolations.

G: The gift of understanding

The Holy Ghost, teacher of all truth (John 16. 13)

1. The words in which Christ describes this action of the Holy Spirit refer directly to the gift of understanding, whose object is to penetrate (*intus legere*) the revealed truths of faith, in order to see their full meaning and application.
2. Christ is the light of the world, who called himself our Master and teacher—now he applies this idea to the Holy Spirit. We shall see the reason if we remember what happened to the apostles. They did not understand all his teaching; it was left to the Holy Ghost to enlighten their minds concerning it.
3. *At Pentecost he comes upon them:*
Now they do understand and begin to preach that doctrine in all its purity to the people. The sermons of St Peter, the writings of Paul, etc., show this quite clearly. Through the Holy Spirit these same apostles begin to build up the edifice of Christian theology.

The gift of understanding

1. Definition:

It may be described as a supernatural habit infused together with sanctifying grace, by which man's intellect, under the enlightening action of the Holy Spirit, is given a certain intuitive penetration into both the speculative and practical revealed truths and also those natural truths connected with them; all this in order to lead us to our supernatural end.

2. For the understanding of this description we have to remember:

- (a) The field of action of this gift is principally revealed truth, and secondly, all other truths connected with it:
- i. that is, the whole content of the Scriptures and Tradition, everything taught by the Councils and the magisterium of the Church;
 - ii. any natural truths which may have a relation to the supernatural.

- (b) The object is to penetrate more profoundly into these truths, not to judge about them, but to contemplate and live them, seeing their applications and implications.

The effects of this gift

The explanation given by Fr Bede Jarrett is again used here:

1. It might seem that the light of faith is itself sufficient, and that no further gift is needed, since it is the very purpose of faith to make us accept this revealed truth, enlightening and strengthening the intellect until, under the influence of the will, it says: I believe.
2. It is true that faith suffices for this, but we require something more than faith, or at least if we do not require more absolutely, we shall progress more rapidly and further when we not only believe but understand.
3. In every article of faith there is always something which is mysterious or hidden, some obscurity due, not to the entanglement of facts, but to the weakness of the human mind. Of course, this must always exist to some extent, for man can never hope to comprehend God till, by the beatific vision, he sees him face to face; but a good deal of the obscurity can be lifted by the mere operation of the mind under the light of God, not arising purely from study, but from the depth of love enkindled by God. It is commonplace in the lives of the saints that without instruction they do manage to learn the deep mysteries of God; the same is true of many simple souls whom we meet from time to time in the world. They not only believe, but penetrate the truths of faith.
4. Here then I have ready to hand a most useful gift of God. I desire not only to believe but to absorb and penetrate the mysteries of God. I want to taste to the full the meaning of life as a whole, to develop every power that lies in me, to make the truths of revelation blossom out ever more fully, till their hidden and mystical significance becomes gradually more clear. The pages of Holy Scripture are full of instruction, but they will not yield up their secrets save to a soul attuned to God.
5. That can be effected by the gift of understanding. I shall find by its means that these treasures are inexhaustible, that from mere abstract teaching the sayings of the Master and his apostles become full of practical meaning, that all life about me takes on a new significance. History and social life open their doors to whomever has this blessed gift, and it becomes clearly seen that their maker and builder is God. The dullness of souls who will not believe or only believe and then stop short, becomes painful to note and bothersome to put up with, but this is the price one has to pay for so fine a

vision. By this, then, we peer into the depths of faith, and find them gradually and steadily growing more and more clear and penetrable (*loc. cit.*, pp. 57-58).

6. *The means to achieve this:*

We must be careful to remove all obstacles to its full development.

(a) One of these is mental dullness which is a child of lust; for which reason those who live given over to the lusts of the flesh are slow to take advantage of this gift, if indeed it can operate in them at all.

(b) Gluttony is another obstacle and so is tepidity.

7. *Positive means:*

(a) *Purity:*

Not merely from the point of view of the sixth and ninth commandments, but also purity of intention—blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God (Matt. 5. 8).

(b) *Interior recollection,*
which also implies meditation on the truths of faith.

(c) *Repeated reading of the Scriptures,*
which is done carefully and with prayer.

H: The gift of counsel

1. *Prudence and the gift of counsel:*

(a) *Prudence is a moral virtue:*

It is infused into our souls together with sanctifying grace, and has for its object our guidance in actions which are directed towards our supernatural end.

(b) *One of the parts of prudence is counsel.*

2. *Prudence is perfected by the gift of counsel:*

This may be described as a supernatural habit by which the soul in grace, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, judges rightly in particular cases what should be done with relation to our final end.

(a) The difference between the gift and prudence is simply one of the manner in which the judgement is made:

i. In the case of the virtue the guide is human reason under the influence of grace; in the case of the gift it is the Holy Spirit who is guiding us.

ii. Needless to say, the soul is not always conscious of this guidance.

iii. That which is done by prudence needs laborious study and attention; the gift can act like lightning.

(b) It is interesting to notice some of the effects of this gift in the Scriptures. We may take as typical:

i. the silence of Christ before Herod (Luke 23. 9);

ii. the replies he gave in the case of the woman taken in adultery (John 8. 7); the tribute to Caesar (Matt. 22. 21); the judgement of Solomon (3 Kings 3. 16-28); St Paul's attitude towards the Pharisees and Caesar (Acts 25. 1-12).

3. *Its effects:*

Again let Fr Bede Jarrett describe them for us:

(a) Now prudence, which counsel helps and protects, is eminently a practical gift of God, not so high as wisdom, not so wonderful in the beauty of its vision as knowledge or understanding, yet for all that a most important and homely need. The other intellectual gifts of God are more abstract. They give us just the whisper of God that enables us to see the large ways of God in the world. They give, in consequence, the great principles that are to govern us in life. Hence their importance is very great. We do so seriously need to know by what principle we are to measure life's activities, on what basis to build up the fabric of our souls, to be sure that God's laws are very clearly and definitely made manifest to us.

(b) But, after all, that is only one half of the difficulty, for even after I know the principles of action, I have still the trouble, in some ways more full of possibilities of mistake, of applying them to concrete experience. I know that sacrifice is the law of life, I know that meekness over-indulged may be cowardice, I know that I may sin by not having anger; that is all-evident, a series of platitudes. But here and now, have I come to the limit of meekness? Must I manifest my angry protests? Am I obliged to attend to my own needs and renounce the idea of sacrifice? There daily are questions that puzzle, torture, bruise me with scruples.

(c) Just here, then, I have intense need for this practical gift of God in order with nicety and precision to apply principles to concrete cases; often I am precipitate or perhaps dilatory. I am in a hurry or cannot make up my mind—shall I answer those who attack me, or shall I be silent? Our Lord was silent and made answer by turns. Counsel, then, is my need from God, the instinct whereby a practical judgement is quickly and sagely made. All the more have I a tremendous need for this if my life is full of activity, if pressure of work or social life, or the demands of good and useful projects, or the general tendencies of my family surroundings, make my day crowded and absorbed, for the very combined and concentrated essence of life will need some exceedingly moderate influence to produce any sense of balance or proportion in my judgement.

4. *The way to acquire this effect of the gift:*

(a) Avoid haste, lack of diligence, tenacity in holding my own opinion.

- (b) Have the humility to ask God for it repeatedly.
- (c) Accustom oneself to weigh up the pros and the cons of things.
- (d) Obey with docility the pastors and leaders of the Church.

I: The gift of knowledge

1. *Its definition:*

A supernatural habit infused into the soul with grace, by which man's intellect, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, makes a correct judgement concerning created things in relation with our supernatural end.

2. *Creatures are for the Creator:*

A solid theological truth which has many applications in life, although it is seldom used.

- (a) The only end God could have in view when he created—being God—was himself.
- (b) All things are a reflection of God because they are made to his image and likeness. They are therefore all good, because he is good.
- (c) There is another way in which certain creatures give glory to God:
 - i. By serving man and helping him to attain his end, thus giving glory to God in turn through the use of his liberty.
 - ii. Man, as the supreme ruler of creation on earth, has the obligation of giving glory to God through it and in it.
- (d) In summary we may say that, surrounded as he is by God's creatures, man has to have a right judgement as to the creatures which he can use to glorify God and how they have to be used to that end.
- (e) Since all can help him and at the same time all can be harmful to him, man has to know how to see them with God's eyes and also to see God in them; thus both he and the other creatures will fulfil their mission in life—the glory of God.

3. Again let Fr Bede Jarrett explain to us what this gift really means. It is a gift whereby we discover God in his creatures and in the works of man.

(a) It is here no mere task set to reason for detecting the Creator in his handiwork, but an actual vision by which the soul is supernaturalized and sees him patently everywhere. The beautiful face of nature is merely seen as a veil, hiding a beauty more sublime. Things of dread as well as things of loveliness come into the scheme, things trivial and things tremendous, things majestic and things homely, all that God has made.

(b) Even man's work, who is himself only one of the greater masterpieces of the the Great Artificer, is affected by this new light with which the world is flooded. The delicate pieces of machinery constructed by human ingenuity, that gain in wonder and power,

are themselves still God's work at one remove; they are the fruits of a mind that he has constructed, and they do not exhaust the capacity of that mind. They reveal hidden potentialities as well as express actual achievements. Weapons of destruction, with all the horror they rightly inspire, are yet witness again to that parent-intelligence whence was begotten man himself. All this, of course, as soon as considered, is admitted by every believer in God, but the gift of knowledge makes it realized and seen steadfastly.

(c) Life, then, of itself is full of illusion. That is the cry, desolating and pitiful, which arises from the followers of every religious faith. Man is bound to the wheel, his mind is compassed with infirmity, he is born into ignorance. Desire tumultuously hustles all his days. He needs, therefore, some light whereby he may find the true inner meaning of all with which he comes in contact. Here, then, in the gift of knowledge is such a true vision, understanding vouchsafed him of the visible things of creation.

(d) He will realize as much, perhaps even more than before, the attraction of beauty, only it will be no snare, but a beckoning light. He will find in it now no illusion, but the perfect image of a greater beauty. The charm of the world about him will become greater, the wonders of nature, the intricate pattern of mechanical appliances, the fury of storms, the tumult of the wind, the terrific force of pestilence, the psychological facts of man's mind, the construction of his frame, the grouping of his social instincts, all now will be alive with God, shot through with the divine splendour, elevated to his order of life, eloquent of his name—a deepening knowledge of God achieved through a knowledge of his creatures.

4. *The means to achieve it:*

- (a) Flight from a mere natural and sensual life. The world's criterion is materialistic, creatures are there to be used, as we please.
- (b) Meditation on the vanity of this is also an excellent means of preparing ourselves to know them as they are.
- (c) Use creatures always as God wants them to be used and see him in them as much as possible.

J: A double testimony

Two witnesses

1. In the Gospel of today there are included words of Christ which promise a double testimony; that of the Holy Ghost, the spirit of truth, and that of the apostles (John 15. 26-27).

2. *Testimony is the proof or justification of a truth:*

One bears witness to a fact or to a doctrine; the first form is that which most properly fits the role of the apostles, the second that of the Holy Ghost.

The Testimony of the apostles

1. They will be witnesses to the facts which concern Jesus, because they saw them from the beginning (John 15. 27). The apostles fulfilled faithfully the words of our Lord and were very conscious of the importance of this commission. They say it explicitly.

(a) St Peter:

- i. with regard to the transfiguration (cf. 2 Pet. 1. 16-18);
- ii. before the people (Acts 3. 15);
- iii. before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4. 20, 5. 32).

(b) St John (we extract some texts only as being the more important):

- i. He who saw it has borne his witness; and his witness is worthy of trust. He tells what he knows to be the truth, that you, like him, may learn to believe (John 19. 35).
- ii. It is the same disciple that bears witness of all this and has written the story of it; and we know well that his witness is truthful (John 21. 24).
- iii. *He says much the same with emphasis in his first epistle:* Our message concerns that Word who is life; what he was from the first, what we have heard about him, what our own eyes have seen of him; what it was that met our gaze, and the touch of our hands (1 John 1. 1).

2. *The historical veracity of the Gospels:*

- (a) The direct testimony of those who lived with Jesus gives a unique value to the Gospels, considered merely as human documents and history. They are direct witnesses, taking part at times in the very scenes they describe.
- (b) The recent investigations have proved that these documents were written during the first century of the Christian era.
- (c) There is no single book which offers such a guarantee.

The witness of the Holy Spirit

It is threefold:

(a) He instructs the apostles:

Before they did not understand the words Jesus spoke to them. The Spirit teaches them all truth and brings back to their minds all that they have heard and seen. It was like a second preaching of the Gospel to them.

(b) He gave them new doctrine.

(c) He prepares the hearts of those who listen to the apostles (and to their successors):

The witness of the apostles has its effect on the hearts of their hearers because of the grace of the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 3. 16, 18, 19). This means that the interior testimony of the Spirit completes and perfects that of the exterior preaching.

The Holy Ghost in the Church

1. He assists those who govern the Church, especially the supreme Pastors.

The phrase used at the Council of Jerusalem is significant: It is the Holy Spirit's pleasure and ours . . . (Acts 15. 28).

2. There are also the manifestations in the lives of the saints and the constant proof of their heroic virtue.

We might add, under this heading, the flourishing of vocations, the holy lives of so many thousands of the faithful, the open confession of the name of Christ among those who belong to the persecuted Churches, etc.

Applications

1. The preacher should draw from all these facts an apologetic proof for the truth of the Catholic faith,

(a) always laying emphasis on the fact that the greatest proofs of all are miracles and prophecies.

(b) He should also exhort the faithful to be, in their turn, witnesses to the Gospel,

- i. that they should relate their lives to their beliefs,
- ii. that they should pay special attention to the commandment of love—that charity which is the special mark of the Christian,
- iii. and avoid any discord or any distinction between their faith and their conduct, which could and does give scandal to others, not only outside the Church but also to the weaker brethren.

2. He should also point out that those who, while observing a type of exterior piety, do not show in the administration of justice and charity, that spirit which is truly catholic, do not build but rather destroy the body of the Church.

K: The witness of the martyrs

1. *It was foretold:*

Christ did not merely tell his disciples that they would bear witness to him; he also told them that they would do it by their deaths.

(a) They would be cast out of the synagogues (which typifies all persecutions) and they would be killed.

(b) This was fulfilled in the case of all of them.

2. *The martyrs as witnesses:*

(a) They gave witness—the meaning of the word martyr.

(b) Witness to what?

i. *Not merely to what they have seen with their eyes:* This applies to many of the first century, but not to those who came later.

ii. *The testimony of the martyrs is not a mere juridical fact:* i.e. they must not merely be thought of as bearing witness to what they have seen; it goes deeper—they are, as St Thomas says, witnesses to the faith (2-2. q. 124. a. 4).

(c) The testimony of St Stephen is interesting, because his words could be put into the mouth of any martyr for the faith (Acts 6 and 7).

(d) The apologetic value of martyrdom lies in the heroic nature of its fact and circumstances, so much so that many pagans have been converted because they have seen the way in which Christians have suffered and died for an ideal.

3. *A serious objection:*

(a) But could it not be said that every cause has produced its martyrs—even such things as communism and protestantism?

(b) There are two answers to this; one less profound and one more so.

i. *The first is this:* There has never been a cause which produced so many martyrs, at all times in history of all social classes and education, all with the same hall-mark.

ii. *The second is based on a statement of St Augustine:* That the martyr is made not by the fact of death, but by the cause from which and for which he suffers. In other so-called martyrs the cause for which they died will be different in each case; but the true martyrs will all have died for the same cause.

4. *The virtues of the martyr:*

(a) St Thomas explains the four main virtues which exist in the true martyr:

i. *fortitude and patience;*

ii. *charity*—love which is inspired to give one's life for Christ;

iii. *faith*—martyrdom is a confession of Christ and his teaching.

(b) Think of the martyrdom of St Paul:

i. We might compare it with the death of any of those who have suffered for another cause, for their country, for example, or to support a civil or political cause.

ii. Paul despised all this: the mere death was nothing to him unless something else was present. He says: I may give myself up to be burnt at the stake; if I lack charity, it goes for nothing (1 Cor. 13. 3).

iii. For Paul, death and life, suffering and the fire mean nothing of themselves.

iv. He hands himself over to death from the motive of love buoyed up by hope.

5. *The martyrdom of one's own will:*

Martyrdom is so proper to the Catholic that we may say that all the saints have desired it. St Francis and St Teresa come to one's mind at once.

Whit Sunday

THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Acts 2. 1-11

Gospel: John 14. 23-31

Some texts concerning the Holy Ghost

1. Only when they hand you over thus, do not consider anxiously what you are to say or how you are to say it; words will be given you when the time comes; it is not you who speak, it is the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you. Matt. 10. 19-20. Cf. Luke 12. 11; Mark 13. 11.

It is written in the book of the prophets, And they shall all have the Lord for their teacher. John 6. 45.

And then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another to befriend you, one who is to dwell continually with you for ever. It is the truth-giving Spirit, for whom the world can find no room, because it cannot see him, cannot recognize him. But you are to recognize him; he will be continually at your side, nay, he will be in you. John 14. 16-17.

The Spirit himself thus assures our spirit, that we are children of God. . . . Only, as before, the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; when we do not know what prayer to offer, to pray as we ought, the Spirit himself intercedes for us, with groans beyond all utterance: and God, who can read our hearts, knows well what the Spirit's intent is; for indeed it is according to the mind of God that he makes intercession for the saints. Rom. 8. 16-27.

It is he who has anointed us, just as it is he who has put his seal on us, and given us the foretaste of his Spirit in our hearts. 2 Cor. 1. 22.

In him you too were called, when you listened to the preaching of the truth, that gospel which is your salvation. In him you too learned to believe and had the seal set on your faith by the promised gift of the Holy Spirit; a pledge of the inheritance which is ours, to redeem it for us and bring us into possession of it, and so manifest God's glory. Eph. 1. 13-14.

Do not distress God's holy Spirit, whose seal you bear until the day of your redemption comes. Eph. 4. 30.

2. *The promise:*

I will pour out my spirit upon thy race, my blessing on all thy line, and where the grass springs up they shall spring up too, like willows by running water. Isaias 44. 3-4.

One mind they shall have, and a new spirit shall fill their inmost being; gone the heart of stone, and a human heart theirs in place of it. Ezech. 11. 19. Cf. 39. 29.

And afterwards? Afterwards I will pour out my spirit upon all mankind, and your sons and daughters will be prophets. Your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men see visions; everywhere servants of mine, handmaids of mine, inspired to prophesy! Joel 2. 28-29.

He was speaking here of the Spirit, which was to be received by those who learned to believe in him; the Spirit which had not yet been given to men, because Jesus had not yet been raised to glory. John 7. 39.

And yet I can say truly that it is better for you I should go away; he who is to befriend you will not come to you unless I do go, but if only I make my way there, I will send him to you. John 16. 7.

3. *Proceeds from the Father:*

Well, when the truth-giving Spirit who proceeds from the Father, has come to befriend you, he whom I will send to you from the Father's side, he will bear witness of what I was; and you too are to be my witnesses, you who from the first have been in my company. John 15. 26-27.

4. *And from the Son:*

And he will bring honour to me, because it is from me that he will derive what he makes plain to you . . . because all that belongs to the Father belongs to me. John 16. 14-15.

5. *He is called the Spirit of God, of Christ, of the Son:*

But you live the life of the spirit, not the life of nature; that is, if the Spirit of God dwells in you. A man cannot belong to Christ unless he has the Spirit of Christ. Rom. 8. 9.

To us, then, God has made a revelation of it through his Spirit; there is no depth in God's nature so deep that the Spirit cannot find it out. 1 Cor. 2. 10.

To prove that you are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out in us, Abba, Father. Gal. 4. 6.

6. *He dwells in us:*

Do you not understand that you are God's temples, and that God's Spirit has his dwelling in you? 1 Cor. 3. 16.

Surely you know that your bodies are the shrines of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you? And he is God's gift to you, so that you are no longer your own masters. 1 Cor. 6. 19.

He saved us; and it was not thanks to anything we had done for our own justification. In accordance with his own merciful design he saved us, with the cleansing power which gives us new birth, and restores our nature through the Holy Spirit, shed on us in abundant measure through our Saviour, Jesus Christ. So, justified by his grace, we were to become heirs, with the hope of eternal life set before us. Titus 3. 5-7.

7. *His work of regeneration:*

As for me, I am baptizing you with water, for your repentance; but one is to come after me who is mightier than I, so that I am not worthy even to carry his shoes for him; he will baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Matt. 3. 11. Cf. Mark 1. 8.

Believe me, no man can enter into the kingdom of God unless birth comes to him from water, and from the Holy Ghost. John 3. 5.

John's baptism, I told you, was with water, but there is a baptism with the Holy Spirit, which you are to receive, not many days from this. Acts 1. 5.

8. *Conferred by the imposition of hands:*

Then the apostles began to lay their hands on them, so that the Holy Spirit was given them, and Simon, seeing that the Holy Spirit was granted through the imposition of the apostles' hands, offered them money. Acts 8. 17-18.

And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came down on them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Acts 19. 6.

9. *Visible manifestations at his coming:*

So Jesus was baptized, and as he came straight up out of the water, suddenly heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting upon him. Matt. 3. 16. Cf. John 1. 32.

Before Peter had finished speaking to them thus, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who were listening to his message. The faithful who had come over with Peter, holding to the tradition of circumcision as they did, were astonished to find that the free gift of the Holy Spirit could be lavished upon the Gentiles, whom they heard speaking with tongues, and proclaiming the greatness of God. Acts 10. 44-46. Cf. Acts 2. 1-12.

10. *He convinces of sin and inspires the saints:*

He will come, and it will be for him to prove the world wrong, about sin, and about rightness of heart, and about judging. John 16. 8.

It was never man's impulse, after all, that gave us prophecy; men gave it utterance, but they were men whom God had sanctified, carried away, as they spoke, by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1. 21.

11. *He gives the power to forgive sins:*

With that, he breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit; when you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven, when you hold them bound, they are held bound. John 20. 22-23.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

1. *The meaning of this Feast:*

The Feast of Pentecost, old in name but relatively modern in its Christian significance, was celebrated in the Old Law fifty days after the Pasch, as a reminder of the promulgation of the Law on Mount Sinai.

In the New Testament it is also celebrated fifty days after the Pasch to celebrate the promulgation of the New Law, not written on tables of stone, but on the hearts of those waiting in the Cenacle, by the Holy Spirit. He, sent by the Father in the name of Christ, poured out the gift of tongues and other wonders upon the Church. It is the feast of the promulgation of the Church which was born from the pierced side of Christ on the Cross. The promulgation of the new Law of love.

2. *Its history:*

There is no certain mention of it in the New Testament, although some have given this interpretation to 1 Cor. 16. 8. But it would appear to date from apostolic times, according to Tertullian. It is also mentioned by Origen, the Apostolic Constitutions, by Hypolitus, and is described in many of its details by the pilgrim Etheria, in the fourth century. She tells us that, in Jerusalem, it was celebrated by a Vigil and Morning Office in the Church of the Resurrection, and with a procession to Mt Sion, where the passage of the Acts was read which refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit. There were also ceremonies on the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane.

In the centuries of liturgical splendour the feast was celebrated at St Peter's, Rome. The Night Office on this occasion was duplicated; it was carried out first in the crypt where the tomb of the apostle was venerated, and afterwards at the high altar. At this latter celebration, which was the more solemn of the two, the Canons sang the first lesson, the Cardinals the second and the Pope himself the third (Schuster, *Lib. Sacr.*, vol. 2, p. 389).

As a feast, it closes the cycle of the Redemption, since the mission of the Holy Spirit marks the last act of Christ's redemptive acts in favour of humanity. For this reason at the beginning it had no Octave and the summer fasts began at once.

Its solemnity is equal to that of Easter and it includes in its liturgy the most grandiose and the most intimate sentiments, the strong mingled with the gentle. There is, on the one hand, the majesty of the Introit, followed by the tenderness of the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. This Sequence, attributed to Innocent III, is one of the finest in the Church's liturgy.

It is the Feast of Love, because it is the Feast of the Holy Spirit. It is also one of rejoicing, of prayer to the Holy Spirit, of thanksgiving to Christ for all his benefits. It is also a day of instruction on the Third Person of the Trinity. Today, there are many, like the Christians of Ephesus, for whom the Holy Spirit is still almost the Unknown God. The Church in her liturgy of today tries to make us all appreciate the benefits conferred on souls by the Holy Ghost.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: Acts 2. 1-11

This is, naturally, the point of focus of all our attention, and we shall deal with it at greater length than usual.

1. *The time of waiting:*

Christ has ascended into heaven. At first sight it would seem that the society founded by him on earth lacks nothing, since it has received from him the deposit of doctrine, authority and his very own mission. Go, teach all nations (Matt. 28. 19). Nevertheless, the attitude of the apostles is still one of expectation. Obeying the commands of their Lord, they await the coming of the Spirit which he promised them (cf. chap. 1. vv. 8 and 12-14). They went to the upper room—that is all we know for certain, and it is impossible to say if this was the house of Mark or some other place.

They persevered in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Christ:

From the earliest times the ascetical writers have seen in this the necessary conditions for prayer and for the reception of the graces of the Holy Spirit.

They prayed because they knew that the divine promises are given to us as a reward for prayer, especially those which are spiritual gifts (Luke 11. 13). They were of one mind, because the prayer of many has a special efficacy (Matt. 18. 19). They remained together, undistracted by external things, until the promise should be fulfilled. Christ made a preparation of forty days for his public life and he wished his apostles to devote at least ten days to theirs; it is a great example to those who, like the apostles, are going to dedicate themselves to the apostolate.

Mary was at their head—and what better intercessor could they have had to implore from God the gift of the Spirit? They did as

they were told; but at the same time they had another motive for this long preparation, they were mindful of their own weakness which had led to the betrayal of Christ.

2. *The coming:*

The feast of Pentecost arrived, celebrated fifty days after the Pasch to commemorate the promulgation of the Law on Mt Sinai. The coincidence could not be greater, because it was deliberately arranged by divine providence.

(a) **They were all gathered together . . .**

Probably not only the eleven, together with the new member, Matthias, but also the one hundred and twenty mentioned in the former chapter (v. 15).

(b) **A sound came from heaven like that of a strong wind blowing . . .**

Such were the immediate signs; there was no trace of fear or terrible signs—God is not in the tempest (3 Kings 19. 12). This exterior manifestation signified the inner fullness which was granted, the impulse of love and the majesty of God. Christ had already likened the action of the Holy Spirit to that of the wind (John 3. 8) and the fire. This wind from heaven signifies also the inspirations of the Holy Spirit which, if they are well received, will be followed by greater ones. Sudden inspirations, because the Spirit breathes when and where he wills, like one who does not act through our merits, but through his own mercy.

(c) **Other signs: The tongues of fire which rested on each one of them . . .**

It is difficult to imagine this heavenly illumination in the room. The fire signifies warmth and light to know and love, to understand and penetrate, converting into a flame the body which it possesses. The form of the tongue seems to indicate the faith and love which must inspire the word; the end and essential element in all social apostolates.

(d) **They were all filled with the Holy Spirit:**

He—that is God—dwelt in them already through the grace which they possessed. However, the granting of new powers or new effects of grace implies a new mission, a new renewing of that presence. It becomes very much more intimate. This is what happened to them at this moment.

We should remember that all external operations of the Trinity are the work of the three Persons; this mission is appropriated to the Holy Ghost because it fits so well with what we know of his Person.

They were all filled . . . the Holy Ghost is one and the same for eternity; but his graces are many. This has been a common theme in

the Fathers and theologians of the Church. He came to each, and to each he gave the graces necessary for his mission. To Mary that which she would need as universal mediatrix; she did not receive that which was peculiar to the Evangelist, for example. The missions of Peter and Matthias were also distinct. The same thing happens in souls all through the Church. In all the Holy Spirit does his common work, that of uniting them to Christ in divine sonship and full sanctification; but for each he chooses a different path.

3. *The manifestation:*

It was about nine o'clock in the morning, that is, the third hour (v. 15). The apostles appeared in the court of the Temple where the Jews had gathered in their thousands to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. The ship of Christ began its journey. The Church was promulgated and begins to be of obligation for all. The synagogue is dead. From this moment the Church of Christ shows those characteristics which will be hers for ever; she is catholic and universal, speaking in all languages; she is one around the apostles and the Father; she is the sanctifier, because she preaches penance and regeneration through baptism, knowing no other foundation but that of the Risen Christ and his preachers, the apostles.

(a) *They spoke in strange languages . . .*

This is a different gift from that which will be mentioned later in the first reunions of the Christians, when some of them spoke tongues which they could not themselves understand, needing to be interpreted by others. This is another gift altogether, but it is not quite clear from the text whether the apostles spoke the actual language of these different countries, which would seem to be implied in verse 4, or whether they spoke only their own and were understood in all the others—which seems to be the idea of verse 6. The first is the more probable interpretation.

(b) *According as the Spirit gave utterance to each . . .*

The idea of following his inspiration in what they preached. The apostle has to make use of all his natural gifts, but by putting them at the disposal of the Holy Spirit, whom he has first won over to his side by prayer and penance. The divine knowledge is not in the mere persuasion of human language (1 Cor. 2. 4).

(c) *The admiration of the Jews was very great:*

Both of those who were evil and those who were pilgrims in the city. The case of the latter is easy to understand; they were astonished at the miracle and were probably ignorant of what had happened previously. The good Jews, among them some of the priests, were baptized and converted in a great mass, astounded at the preaching of these eye-witnesses to the resurrection. We know what the effect was on Annas and Caiphas, together with their followers. It is sad

to see how one and the same grace which will serve for the conversion of one person will be the cause of the damnation of another.

(d) *Peter:*

The Church has begun her work in the world. How? But Peter stood there and raised his voice to speak to them. Peter justifies his companions and begins his first sermon, which has as its centre a doctrine and a proof. The doctrine is that of the divinity of Christ; the proof is that of the resurrection.

B: *The Gospel: John 14. 23-31*

1. *General comments:*

On the third Sunday after Easter we have already said that, since this is Christ's last discourse, it is full of diverse sentiments and repetitions. There is no need for us to insist several times on the same theses, and that makes it less necessary to go to great length in our explanation of today's Gospel. Chapter 14 is the end of the first part of this final discourse of Christ. The piece chosen for today's Mass is the continuation of what he was saying before when Jude interrupted him. Like the others, he has not understood the doctrine of the messianic kingdom. Now he answers Jude indirectly, telling him and the others how he must manifest himself to all who love him. This love for him will have as its effect the keeping of his commands and as a reward the love of the Father, who, together with the Son, will manifest himself in a new and unexpected way through the indwelling.

From this truth there follows a host of considerations far too abundant for us to give even a summary of them. There is the value of our soul and of God's goodness; the fear of saddening the Holy Spirit who dwells in us; the worth of our neighbour in God's sight; the divine life according to the Spirit, not the flesh.

2. *Texts:*

(a) *And we . . . v. 23:*

He speaks in perfect equality between himself and the Father.

(b) *The man who has no love for me . . . v. 24:*

The conclusion is a logical one: he lets my sayings pass him by; but we might also add that it would be equally logical to say that the Father and I will not come to him. This indwelling demands from us a return of love and works in a life which is intimate, reciprocal and mysterious (cf. 1 John 4. 15). It is at once a union of wills and of life.

(c) *So much converse I have held with you, still at your side . . .*

This is the inheritance which he is leaving behind him, his doctrine, and the Holy Spirit whom he will send. The work of this Spirit will be to explain the doctrine, the mission and its consequences.

Outside those limits it will not go, so that it is useless to dream of new revelations of the Spirit outside the ambit of those of Christ. Christ is the Head of the Church; the Holy Spirit its soul.

(d) and recall to your minds everything I have said to you . . . v. 26:

Thus he taught the apostles and so he will teach each one of us. Without him we cannot even say the name of the Lord Jesus!

(e) Peace is my bequest to you . . . v. 27:

On the lips of Jesus these words mean more than the ordinary Jewish salutation. He leaves us peace as a legacy and as a gift. In no order, whether spiritual, social or international, can peace be found outside Christ, because only his doctrine can give rise to it.

Complete peace demands that a man should be rightly ordered in his life towards God, towards his neighbour and towards himself. There can be no right order in our lives so far as God is concerned unless we go to him through the one who reconciled us to God, and through whom we can offer to the Father our adoration and petitions. So far as our fellow men are concerned there can be no order in our relations with them unless we think of them as our brothers in Christ. The different social classes will live in harmony if they look on themselves as brothers, with the same rights before God and equal in his sight, and nations only if they recognize his tribunal which will one day judge all mankind.

If this was Christ's legacy, why do men not enjoy this peace? Is it not because, instead of being Christ's, they belong to the world? Because the world also offers its peace, but a very different one from that of Christ. These are two powers which are incapable of being reconciled one to the other, instead they are in a state of open war, according to our Lord's discourse. The spirit of Christ is that of truth; while the spirit of the world is that of lies. The fruit of one is tranquillity and order; that of the other the joys of passion, the ambition of the triple concupiscence, disorder with its restlessness and consequent sadness. All can participate in the good things offered to them by Christ; while the world's good are the object rather of disputes, from which follow hatred and wars.

(f) I have told you of this before it happens . . . v. 29:

Had there been no warning given them about the passion it might have appeared to them a failure; but once foretold to them, it will become a criterion of truth, just as all prophecy is. After so many predictions of it the apostles will know that Christ dies because he wills it (John 10. 17). Such is the divine plan.

(g) One is coming who has power over the world . . . v. 30:

It was as if he were to say: I have not much time to talk to you now, because the devil is coming and his hour is near. Even though

he has no real power over me, nevertheless I have to permit him to demonstrate his hate upon me. The passion was the devil's hour. How mysterious is this struggle of Satan against God! And shall I be surprised that he also fights against me, who have been redeemed by such a passion? If I remain faithful to Christ then he will have no power over me either.

(h) But the world must be convinced that I love the Father . . . v. 31:

Why? So that we may know the love of Christ; so that we may know how to love the Father in our turn by passing through the shadow of the cross if needs be; that we may see a divine application of those words: He that loves me will keep my commandments as I kept those of the Father, even though they were as hard as death itself.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

(We shall give a summary of his doctrine on the Holy Spirit. PG. 33, 918-966 and 966-1012.)

A: The power of the Holy Spirit

1. *The assisting Spirit:*

There are young girls who, on the point of contracting honourable marriages or living in sumptuous palaces, renounce all for Christ. There are young men who know to how close their eyes to the beauty which lays siege to them, Christians who embrace poverty and humility. Why? Through the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. On many occasions man, through the power of the Holy Spirit with which he is endowed, manages to overcome, with a simple prayer, the untamed demons whom stout chains could not hold. . . .

God has given us, therefore, a most powerful protector and helper. He has placed at the head of his Church a wise teacher and a formidable defender. The devils are no longer to be feared, because this protector of souls overcomes them. Let us remain ever vigilant to open to him the doors of our hearts. He never tires of looking for those who are worthy of him and pours out on them his gifts.

2. *The consoling Spirit:*

He is also called the Paraclete and Consoler, because he consoles us and encourages us in our weakness. . . . When we have to suffer a thousand insults for Christ, or see ourselves in dishonour, then is suddenly heard the voice of the Holy Spirit, who encourages us, saying: Endure it for the Lord. It is only a little that you will have

to suffer now, and so much that will be given to you later. Therefore make an effort for a while, so that you may be able to say with the angels: The sorrows of this world are not to be compared with the glory which is prepared for us. The Holy Spirit shows to men constantly the kingdom of heaven. For that reason the martyrs, although they found themselves bodily in the presence of the judges, in spirit were transported to heaven, thus being able to mock at their torments. Do you wish to know how they could support these tortures through the power of the Spirit? The Saviour said to the apostles: When they bring you to trial before synagogues, and magistrates, and officers, do not consider anxiously what you are to say, what defence to make or how to make it; the Holy Spirit will instruct you when the time comes, what words to use (Luke 12. 11-12). It is impossible to suffer martyrdom for the Lord without the aid of the Consoler. For if it is certain that no one can say the name of the Lord Jesus but by the Holy Spirit, much more certain is it that no one can give his life for Christ without him.

3. *The universal distributor of God's graces:*

If the omnipotent greatness of the Spirit is to be admired as he distributes his gifts among the millions of beings on this earth, and gives to each that grace which is convenient, rise up to heaven and see him there as the sanctifier of the very angels, and their perfect master.

4. *Pentecost:*

The Holy Ghost came down from heaven to baptize the apostles and to increase their strength. The Lord had told them: There is a baptism with the Holy Spirit which you are to receive, not many days from this (Acts 1. 5). They were not to receive a little grace, but the fullness of it. Just as, in the case of baptism, the water covers the one who is baptized completely, so they, on being baptized with the Holy Spirit, were completely surrounded by him. The water only touches the outside of the body, but the Spirit penetrates into every nook and corner of the soul. . . . I am going to give you another example which is evident, even if rather simple. Just as the fire, on penetrating the iron, changes it all into a fiery substance, and what was before cold metal becomes hot, what was black and dark is transformed into brilliance and light, and this is done without any obstacle, what reason is there for being surprised that the Holy Spirit can penetrate into the soul?

(Speaking of the mysterious signs which accompanied Pentecost, he says:) They received, not a destructive fire, but a salutary one, perfectly fitted to burn up the thorns of sin and change the soul into something brilliant and beautiful. The Holy Ghost rests on the heads of each one of them in the form of fire, as if to gird them with a heavenly diadem, for just as a sword of fire prevented the entrance

into Paradise, so the tongues of fire, bringing the promise of salvation, will return its rights to the human race.

5. *The fullness of the Spirit:*

Before this coming our fathers possessed the graces necessary for salvation, but now they are poured out in abundance; before they received a share of the Holy Spirit, now on the other hand they are submerged and baptized in him.

He who was, at that moment, filled with the Holy Ghost knew well what he possessed. That is why he exclaimed: Men of Judaea, and all you are who dwelling in Jerusalem, I must tell you this; listen to what I have to say. These men are not drunk as you suppose; it is only the third hour of the day. This is what was foretold by the prophet Joel: In the last times, God says, I will pour out my spirit upon all mankind . . . (Acts 2. 14 ff.). They are drunk, but it is a drunkenness which implies death to sin and delights the heart, very different from the bodily drunkenness. This makes us forget even the things we knew; the other makes us know things which we were ignorant of before. They are drunk from having partaken of that spiritual vine of which it was said: I am the Vine, you the branches (John 15. 5).

If you wish to understand the testimony of the prophet then listen carefully to what Joel has to say: In the last times, God says, I will pour out my spirit upon all mankind. The words *pour out* indicate a great abundance, because God does not give his Spirit in any measure. . . . And your sons and daughters will be prophets. . . . I will pour out my spirit in those days upon my servants and handmaids. The Holy Spirit is no respecter of persons, nor does he look for dignitaries; he looks for piety of soul. Therefore, if the rich should not be proud, neither should the poor be saddened; instead each one should prepare himself to receive the heavenly grace.

B: The work of the Holy Spirit

(Here St Cyril begins with the apostles, pointing out the preaching of Peter, his miracles, the charity of the first Christians and the rapid extension of the Church as the main works of the Spirit in the early days of the Church's life. Then he addresses those who are preparing themselves for baptism.)

Be careful not to present yourselves for baptism as did Simon Magus, wishing to deceive the ministers and not seeking the truth. . . . The Spirit tests souls, and does not cast his pearls before swine; therefore if you approach without faith, men may baptize you, but he will not. On the other hand, if you approach with faith, then men will administer the exterior rite to you, while the Holy Spirit will deposit in you his invisible treasures. . . . Your soul will be illumined and fortified with a new strength; you will receive effective weapons

with which to fight the demons, to such an extent that, if you do not cast them away, but conserve the seal of your baptism, you will be inaccessible to Satan. . . .

If you believe, not only will you obtain pardon for your sins, but you will acquire superhuman strength . . . as much grace as you can hold will be poured out on you . . . and I may fall short of the truth, because the faith is like a vessel which cannot be measured. You will always be assisted by a consoler who will protect you as if you were a soldier, and will shelter you from your enemies. If you do not sadden him with your crimes he will grant you every kind of grace and gift, as it is written: Do not distress God's Holy Spirit, whose seal you bear until the day of your redemption comes (Eph. 4. 30).

II. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

(He gives us a complete exegesis of the Gospel text, and among other things solves the apparent difficulty concerning the various forms under which the Holy Spirit appears visibly. Hom. 30, n. 8 in John 14. 23.)

A: On the Gospel of the day

1. *The Spirit is all love:*

The Holy Ghost is all love. For which reason St John says that God is love (1 John 4. 8-16). He who desires God with the whole of his soul now has someone he can love. . . . If anyone were to ask you if you love God you would all reply: I love him. At the beginning of the Gospel you will have heard what Truth itself says: If any man has any love for me he will be true to my word. Wherefore, the proof of love are deeds. That is why St John in his epistle says: If any man boasts of loving God, while he hates his own brother, he is a liar (*ibid.* 20).

2. *The delight of the indwelling:*

Attend carefully to these words of Truth: And we will both come to him, and make our continual abode with him. God comes to the hearts of some but does not dwell there, because while they do manage to fear him and have remorse, in the moments of temptation they forget the motives for their repentance and fall again into the same sins, as if they had never been sorry for them. God comes and dwells in the heart of the man who loves him perfectly and who keeps his commandments; one who is so permeated with the love of the Divinity that he does not leave him or separate himself from him, even in times of temptation. Therefore he truly loves who does not allow himself to be overcome and who does not consent to evil pleasure, because the more we delight in earthly love so much the more do we separate ourselves from that which is heavenly.

3. *The man who has no love for me, lets my sayings pass him by:*

Examine well your consciences, beloved brethren. See if you really love God. Let no one believe in himself unless what he believes corresponds to his works. Let us ask this question of our soul, our life, our tongue. The love of God is never idle, and will work great things if it exists in us; but if we refuse to do good works, then it is a sign that we lack it.

4. *The Paraclete:*

Many of you know that the Greek word Paraclete is equivalent to the Latin *Lamyer*, because he defends us or pleads our cause as sinners before the tribunal of God. Of him it is said that he pleads for sinners, he who has the same nature with the Son and the Father, because he makes all those pray in whom he has poured out his love. That is why St Paul says, in his epistle to the Romans: The Spirit himself intercedes for us, with groans beyond all utterance (8. 26).

He who pleads and supplicates is less than he with whom he pleads. Therefore how can it be said that the Holy Spirit pleads, since he is not less than the other Persons? The Spirit himself pleads because he inflames with love those whom he has filled with his presence, making them plead and supplicate. The Spirit is also called the Consoler, because he lifts up the souls of those who repent of their sins, preparing them to obtain pardon. Opportunely did the Lord say of this same Spirit, He shall teach you all truth. Unless the Spirit is in the hearts of those who listen, then the words and exhortations of preachers will be in vain. Let no one attribute to the preacher those things which he hears, because unless the Holy Spirit were in the heart of the one who teaches, in vain would his tongue be occupied with exhortations to lead a good life. . . . Therefore the word itself is useless to instruct unless your minds are anointed with the Holy Spirit.

B: The Feast

1. *The meaning of the miracle:*

You have heard how the Holy Spirit appeared over the disciples in the form of tongues of fire and granted to all the gift of tongues. What is the meaning of this miracle? Surely that Holy Church, filled with this same Spirit, has to speak through the mouths of all peoples. Those who tried to erect a tower against the designs of God's providence lost the use of the same language; while in those who humbly feared God were united all the tongues of the earth. On this day humility received this gift as a reward, while in the construction of the tower pride received, as punishment, confusion.

2. *The form of fire:*

The Holy Spirit, co-eternal with the Father and the Son, appeared under the form of fire, because God is an incorporeal, ineffable and invisible fire, as St Paul says in his letter to the Hebrews: Our God

is a consuming fire (Heb. 12. 29). It is said of God that he is fire, because he consumes the rust and filth of our sins. About this fire Truth says: It is fire that I have come to spread over the earth, and what better wish can I have than that it should be kindled? (Luke 12. 49). The hearts which are so fixed on the things of this world are called earth, because while they accumulate in themselves such base thoughts, they are trodden under foot by the evil spirits. The Lord spreads fire on earth when he inflames carnal hearts by the breath of his Spirit. The earth catches fire when those hearts abandon the concupiscences of this present life and burn with the love of God. Then again, it was fitting that the Spirit should appear under the form of fire, because fire drives from the heart all laziness and coldness, lighting up in it the desire for what is eternal.

3. *The form of tongues:*

The Holy Spirit showed himself under the form of tongues of fire because he is co-eternal with the Son and the tongue has a close relationship with the Word . . . the tongue gives sensible form to the word, and therefore the Spirit appeared under the form of tongues, because all who are touched by the Spirit confess the Word of God, that is, the only-begotten Son of the Father, and cannot deny him because he has the tongue of the Spirit. Put in another way we may say that the Holy Spirit appeared under the form of tongues because he gives strength to and makes to speak those whom he fills. The teachers in the Church have tongues of fire because when they preach they inflame the hearts of their hearers. The word of him who teaches would be idle and useless unless it were capable of enkindling the fire of love. The disciples on the way to Emmaus felt the effects of this fire, produced by the words which Jesus spoke to them. Were not our hearts burning within us when he spoke to us on the road, and when he made the Scriptures plain to us? Truly the soul is set on fire by what it hears, it casts from it idleness and coldness, it is inflamed with supernatural desires and puts far from it carnal and earthly lusts. The true love which takes possession of the soul torments it with tears, and on being tormented with such ardour, it nourishes itself with those very torments. . . . The Spirit appeared under the form of a dove and fire because those whom it fills are made simple and encouraged to work. It makes them simple through purity and encourages them to work through zeal. God is not pleased with simplicity without zeal, or with zeal without simplicity. You must be wary, then, as serpents, and yet innocent as doves (Matt. 10. 16). . . . Of what use is simplicity without rectitude, and rectitude without simplicity?

4. *The form of a dove:*

Lastly, why did he appear over our Redeemer and the Mediator between God and man in the form of a dove, and over the apostles

in the form of fire? The Only-begotten Son of God is the judge of all mankind. But who would be able to support his justice if he were to examine our faults with the full rectitude of his zeal, without before having procured through his meekness our emendation? He became man for men, and he shewed himself to them full of meekness and humility. He did not wish to chastise sinners, but to draw them to him. He wished first of all to correct with meekness, so that, on the day of judgement, he might have someone to save.

5. *The Holy Spirit, spirit of meekness:*

Therefore the Holy Spirit had to manifest himself over the Lord in the form of a dove, because he had not come to chastise sinners with zeal, but to tolerate them yet by his meekness. He had to shew himself over the disciples on the form of fire, so that these, who were nothing but men, and therefore sinners, should be able to stimulate others to reflect and chastise in themselves by penance the sins which God pardons through his meekness. According to the words of St John, even those who follow the precepts of the Master cannot be exempt from sin: Sin is with us, if we deny that, we are cheating ourselves; if means that truth does not dwell in us (1 John 1. 8). Therefore the Spirit appeared to men under the form of fire and to the Lord under the form of a dove, because we must examine ourselves with diligence and care; we must burn up and wipe out through penance those sins which God, in his mercy, has pardoned in his meekness.

C: The love we should have for the Holy Spirit

(Having described the work of the Holy Spirit in the Fathers of the Old Testament, St Gregory goes on to sing the praises of the Spirit.)

Who was it who raised them to such heights of glory? What did he do with them except transform them from carnal into heavenly beings? Think, beloved brethren, and meditate on the greatness of this feast of the coming of the Holy Ghost which we are celebrating. In the Incarnation of the Son of God he took our flesh; but in the coming of the Holy Ghost men received God. In the mystery of the Incarnation God became man. In the mystery which we are celebrating today men became like God by adoption. For which reason, if we do not wish to remain in carnal death, let us love the spirit which gives us life.

D: The splendour of the Spirit in the apostles

Since the flesh is ignorant of the things of the spirit, perhaps someone, under the influence of some carnal thought, will say within himself, How can I love one whom I do not know? Often we think

in this manner because . . . the more we become familiar with, occupy ourselves in and think of corporal things, so much the more do we find ourselves ignorant of the Creator. In spite of this, however, when we see wonderful things, then we are sure that God dwells in the souls of those who do them. Not one of us can look at the sun when it rises, because our sight would be hurt by its splendour. But we see the mountains lit up by it and we know that it is risen. Neither can we see the Son of justice in himself. Let us, therefore, at least make sure that we see the mountains lit by his splendour, that is, the holy apostles who shine in their miracles, in all their virtues, and are filled with the brightness of the risen Sun, who, up to now invisible, becomes visible through them, just as the material sun does when it lights up the mountains. The power of the Divinity is like the sun in the heavens. The power of the Divinity is in men as the sun on the earth. Let us then contemplate the Sun of justice on the earth, since we cannot see it in the heavens, so that, by doing all kinds of good works by his help, we may be able to contemplate him there one day. There, in the heavens, is the abode of peace and tranquillity eternal, there is true and eternal rest. All this our Lord will give us, who reigns with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end.

III. ST BERNARD

(We shall limit ourselves to some brief extracts taken from his first Sermon for the Feast of Pentecost, on the six operations of the Holy Ghost. Cf. *Collection of St Bernard's Sermons*, vol. II, pp. 286 ff.)

1. *The manifestation of the Holy Spirit:*

If, therefore, we honour the festival days of the saints, with how much more reason should we honour his feast to whom the saints owe their very sanctity? . . . Today, then, is the Holy Spirit's feast day, because it was today that he, invisible in himself, appeared to the apostles in visible form. . . .

2. *What we receive from him in order to turn us away from evil:*

Accordingly, with the purpose of turning us away from evil, he operates three things within us, namely, compunction, supplication and remission. Repentance for sin is the beginning of our conversion to God, and this repentance, not our own spirit, but the Spirit of God, operates in us, as reason manifestly teaches and authority defines. Where is the man who, having come cold to the fire and warmed himself, can seriously doubt that the heat which he could not have enjoyed without the presence of the fire, has come to him really from the fire? In the same way, therefore, he that was once cold in impiety and began afterwards to glow with the heat of a fervent repentance, ought to feel assured that another Spirit has descended

upon him, and is reproving and condemning his own. For this we have the authority of Christ himself, who tells us in the Gospel, speaking of the Spirit whom the believers were about to receive, that: When he, the Paraclete, is come, he will reprove (D.V. convince) the world of sin (John 16. 8).

But what is the use of repentance unless it be accompanied with supplication for pardon? It is necessary, therefore, that the Spirit should operate this in us also, replenishing our minds with the peculiar sweetness of hope, so that we may ask in faith, nothing wavering (James 1. 6). Do you wish me to prove that this, likewise, is the work of the Holy Spirit? I say, then, that as long as he is absent, you can discover no such power of supplication in your own spirit. Besides, we have it on the authority of St Paul that he it is by whom we cry Abba, Father (Rom. 8. 15). And the same apostle assures us that the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings (*ibid.* 26). Both these operations of repentance and supplication the Holy Ghost accomplishes within our own hearts. But what does he do in the heart of the Father? As dwelling in us, he makes intercession for us; so, dwelling in the Father, he forgives with the Father: he is our Advocate with the Father in our hearts, he is our Lord in the Father's heart. . . . That you may know with full certainty that the remission of our sins is also an operation of the Holy Ghost hear what Christ once said to his apostles: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them (John 20. 22-23). So much for the operations whereby the Spirit helpeth our infirmity in the avoidance of evil.

3. *What we receive from him to help us to do good:*

Let us now consider what help to do good we receive from the 'good Spirit' (Luke 11. 13). He admonishes us, he moves us, he instructs us. He admonishes our memory (John 14. 26), he moves our will, he instructs our reason: of which three faculties our souls entirely consist. He suggests that which is good to the memory in holy meditations, and thus banishes from our minds pusillanimity and sloth. Therefore, my brethren, as often as you become conscious of these promptings to good in your hearts, give glory to God and reverence the Holy Spirit, whose voice is sounding in your ears.

When therefore, the Spirit comes and thus takes complete possession of the soul, by admonishing and instructing and moving her; speaking ever in our thoughts, so that we can hear what the Lord God is saying to us, enlightening our understanding and inflaming our will: does it not seem to you, brethren, that the whole house of our soul has become filled 'with parted tongues, as it were, of fire'? For, as I have said already, the soul is constituted entirely of memory, intellect, and will. The division of the tongues may be taken to represent the multiplicity of our thoughts, which in their

very multiplicity can be said to resemble flames of fire, when the same light of truth and the same heat of charity appear manifest in all. Or perhaps I had better say that the filling of the whole house is reserved for the end, when, good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over they shall give into your bosom (Luke 6. 38). But, when shall these things be? Doubtless when the days of Pentecost shall have been accomplished. Happy they who have already entered upon the *quingagesima* repose and the year of Jubilee. I speak of our brothers to whom The Spirit hath said that they may rest from their labours (Apoc. 14. 13).

There are two spiritual seasons which we have to celebrate. The one may be called *quadragesima*, the other *quingagesima*; the one precedes the passion, the other follows the resurrection; the one is passed in compunction of heart and the lamentations of penance; the other in joy of spirit and the chanting of solemn alleluias. The one is the time of this present life; the other begins after death and is the period of the repose of the saints. But when this *quingagesima* also comes to an end in the general resurrection and final judgement, 'the days of pentecost being accomplished', then the Spirit shall descend in his fullness and the whole house shall be filled. For the whole earth shall be filled with his majesty (Ps. 71. 19), when not only shall the soul be purified, but the body too, 'shall rise a spiritual body', if yet, according to the apostle's admonition, it has been sown in Christ while still an animal body (1 Cor. 15. 43).

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIAN

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

(The matter which follows is of supreme importance in order to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul.)

A: The gift of fortitude

1. *Overcomes obstacles to action:*
The human will is hindered in two ways from following the rectitude of reason. First through being drawn by some object of pleasure to something other than what the rectitude of reason requires; and this obstacle is removed by the virtue of temperance. Secondly through the will being disinclined to follow that which is in accordance with reason, on account of some difficulty that presents itself. In order to remove this obstacle fortitude of the mind is requisite, whereby to resist the aforesaid difficulty, even as a man, by fortitude of body, overcomes and removes bodily obstacles (2-2. q. 123. 1).

2. *It is a condition of every virtue:*

The term fortitude may be taken in two ways. First, as simply denoting a certain firmness of mind, and in this sense it is a general virtue, or rather, a condition of every virtue, since as the Philosopher states, it is requisite for every virtue to act firmly and immovably (*ibid.* a. 2. c).

3. *It is also a special virtue:*

Secondly, fortitude may be taken to denote firmness only in bearing and withstanding those things wherein it is most difficult to be firm, namely, in certain grave dangers. Therefore Tully says that fortitude is deliberate facing of dangers and bearing of toils. In this sense fortitude is reckoned a special virtue, because it has special matter (*ibid.*).

4. *The object of fortitude—fear and daring:*

It belongs to the virtue of fortitude to remove any obstacle that withdraws the will from following the reason. Now, to be withdrawn from something difficult belongs to the notion of fear, which denotes the withdrawal from an evil that entails difficulty. . . . Hence fortitude is chiefly about fear of difficult things, which can withdraw the will from following reason. And it behooves one not merely to bear firmly the assaults of these difficulties by restraining fear, but also moderately to withstand them, when, to wit, it is necessary to dispel them altogether in order to free oneself therefrom for the future, which seems to come under the notion of daring. Therefore fortitude is about fear and daring, as curbing fear and moderating daring (*ibid.* a. 3. c).

5. *Principally about the dangers of death:*

It belongs to the notion of virtue that it should regard something extreme: and the most fearful of all bodily evils is death, since it does away with all bodily goods. Wherefore Augustine says that the soul is shaken by its fellow body, with fear of toil and pain, lest the body be stricken and harassed with fear of death lest it be done away and destroyed. Therefore the virtue of fortitude is about the fears and danger of death (*ibid.* a. 4. c).

6. *Endurance is its chief act:*

Fortitude is more concerned to allay fear than to moderate daring. For it is more difficult to allay fear than to moderate daring, since the danger which is the object of daring and fear tends, by its very nature, to check daring, but to increase fear. Now, to attack belongs to fortitude in so far as the latter moderates daring, whereas to endure follows the repression of fear. Therefore the principal act of fortitude is endurance, that is to stand immovable in the midst of dangers rather than to attack them (*ibid.* a. 6. c).

7. *Fortitude in the fight against our enemies:*

The spirit gives evidence of fortitude to some extent by resisting that concupiscence of the flesh which is opposed to it; yet a greater fortitude of spirit is shown, if by its strength the flesh is thoroughly overcome, so as to be incapable of lusting against the spirit. And hence this belongs to Christ, whose spirit reached the highest degree of fortitude (3 P. q. 15. a. 2. *ad 3ium*).

8. *The gift and the virtue:*

The gift of fortitude regards the virtue of fortitude, not only because it consists in enduring dangers, but also inasmuch as it consists in accomplishing any difficult work. Wherefore the gift of fortitude is directed by the gift of counsel, which seems to be concerned chiefly with the greater goods (2-2. q. 139. a. 1. *ad 3ium*).

9. *The fourth beatitude corresponds to the gift of fortitude:*

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill (cf. *ibid.* a. 2. c).

B: Confirmation:

1. *Fortifies the spiritual life:*

Confirmation is the sacrament of the fulness of grace, wherefore there could be nothing corresponding to it in the Old Law, since the Law brought nothing to perfection (Heb. 7. 19) (3 P. q. 72. a. 1. *ad 2um*). So, therefore, does a man receive spiritual life in baptism, which is a spiritual regeneration; while in confirmation man arrives at the perfect age, as it were, of the spiritual life (*ibid.* c). In this sacrament the fulness of the Holy Ghost is given for the spiritual strength which belongs to the perfect age (a. 2. c).

2. *Chrism signifies the effect of confirmation:*

Now the grace of the Holy Ghost is signified by oil: hence Christ is said to be anointed with the oil of gladness (Ps. 44. 8) by reason of his being gifted with the fulness of the Holy Ghost. Consequently, oil is a suitable matter of this sacrament. And balm is mixed with the oil, by reason of its fragrant odour, which spreads about: hence the apostle says: We are the good odour of Christ . . . (2 Cor. 2. 15).

3. *The form, a symbol of spiritual vigour:*

. . . a sacramental form should contain whatever belongs to the species of the sacrament. Now here as is evident from what has already been said, the Holy Ghost is given for strength in the spiritual combat. Wherefore in this sacrament three things are necessary: and they are contained in the above form. The first of these is the cause conferring fulness of spiritual strength, which cause is the Blessed Trinity: and this is expressed in the words In the name of the Father etc. . . . The second is the spiritual strength

itself bestowed on man unto salvation by the sacrament's visible matter; and this is referred to in the words I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation. . . . The third is the sign which is given to the combatant as in a bodily combat: thus are soldiers marked with the sign of their leaders. And to this refer the words I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, in which, sign to wit, our King has triumphed (*ibid.* a. 4. c).

4. *For the spiritual combat:*

Baptism is the regeneration unto the spiritual life, whereby man lives in himself. . . . But this sacrament (confirmation) is ordained, not only to the sanctification of man in himself, but also to strengthen him in his outward combat. Consequently not only is mention made of interior sanctification, in the words I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation; but furthermore man is signed outwardly, as it were with the standard of the cross, unto the outward spiritual combat: and this is signified with the words: I sign thee with the sign of the cross (*ibid.* a. 4. c).

II. DAVID GREENSTOCK

(Extracts concerning the effects of Confirmation taken from the article 'The Problem of Confirmation', *Thomist Reader*, 1957.)

1. *Confirmation as the perfection of baptism:*

The fact that confirmation gives grace to those who receive it in the proper dispositions is beyond all question, not merely because it is a defined doctrine of the Church, but also because it is clearly proved from Scripture and from the teaching of the Fathers. In biblical and theological language the phrases 'receive the Spirit' and 'Pour out the Holy Spirit' always signify the infusion of grace into the soul.

2. *The effects of baptism compared with those of confirmation:*(a) *Confirmation perfects the re-birth to a new spiritual life which is begun at baptism:*

We find an argument to support this conclusion in the fact that confirmation was instituted by Christ to give to those who receive it the perfection of the spiritual life begun at baptism. What is begun at baptism is perfect *ex officio* by confirmation because it is Christ's will that those who have been baptized should reach the age of spiritual maturity through the graces given in confirmation.

St Thomas lays down the principles from which this conclusion follows. . . . He says that, besides generation by which one receives bodily life, there is also growth by which man reaches maturity. In the same way, a Christian receives spiritual life at baptism, while through confirmation he attains maturity in that life.

(b) Confirmation perfects the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul:

We may safely conclude that the indwelling of the Trinity is made more perfect by any substantial increase in sanctifying grace, especially by an increase which leads the soul into a new state of life. Now, we have already proved that confirmation leads those who receive it to the state of spiritual maturity, while at the same time it confers upon them a new mission in life, that of professing the faith with courage and fighting against its enemies. We may therefore conclude that through this sacrament there is given to the soul a new invisible mission of the Trinity which perfects that already received in baptism. . . . What is more, the perfection of the spiritual life consists in charity, as St Thomas says so frequently. Confirmation increases the operation of this virtue in the soul, thus perfecting its union with God as he is in himself, One in nature and Three in Persons. Through confirmation, then, this special presence of God in the soul of the just man becomes deeper, more actual, i.e. more part of the daily life, and also reaches the perfection of maturity.

(c) Confirmation perfects the union of the soul and Christ within the framework of the Mystical Body:

This perfection is attained by means of the special character given in this sacrament.

First of all let us examine the truth of the conclusion itself. We find the first proof for it in the Acts of the Apostles, since the Samaritan converts were not considered to be perfect Christians until they had received confirmation. Although this one text taken by itself may not be sufficient proof of the truth of our conclusion, still it becomes clear once we have added to it the interpretation of the Fathers of the Church. We have already mentioned the testimony of St Cyril of Jerusalem; he says: By the holy chrism you are made worthy to be called Christians; because before receiving this grace you were not properly speaking worthy of that name, rather you were labouring to be Christians. . . .

Here is the real explanation of the perfection given by this sacrament. By baptism we become members of the Christian family. But this family is, at one and the same time, the kingdom of Christ—a kingdom which has to be like an armed camp, defended against its enemies and in which the citizens must be also soldiers of Christ, their King. This dedication of the Christian to a soldier's life in the world is the special effect of confirmation. Here we find the perfection of our union with Christ insofar as the Christian is concerned, because by it he is commissioned as a soldier of Christ and is given the arms with which to fight successfully under the standard of his King.

(d) Confirmation perfects baptism by a more abundant infusion of the virtues, grace, the gifts of the Holy Ghost. . . .

We can conclude that the perfection which confirmation adds to that already received at baptism is a new mode or formality of sanctifying grace which determines it to produce new and special effects which could not have been achieved, at least in a connatural way, without that grace. We also note, in passing, how this sacrament makes us more like Christ, our Head, through a new and important sharing in his grace.

But confirmation does not merely increase and perfect sanctifying grace in the soul; it also extends the efficacy of the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. . . . If we study these principles (of St Thomas with regard to infused habits) we come to the conclusion that, in the case of the infused virtues and gifts, the increase in perfection which they acquire through confirmation consists in their greater intensification in the soul, by means of which they can perform more perfect acts and with the special orientation which they receive from the sacrament of confirmation. In other words, those virtues and gifts operate now with the force and vigour necessary to perfect the life of grace in the soul and to profess the faith by means of a truly Christian life in all its varied aspects. At the same time it is more difficult to act contrary to those infused habits and thus man becomes more influenced by the movements and inspirations of the Holy Ghost. . . .

From all this it is clear in what sense we can say that confirmation gives us a share in Christ's priesthood and in his apostolic mission. By this sacrament we are dedicated in a special way to the service of God in so far as we have the obligation of professing the faith, making it known to others by our lives and our example, and offering ourselves in union with Christ as the members of his mystical Body for our salvation and for that of others. By this sacrament we are also given the power to take a more perfect part in the liturgical life of the Church, especially in the reception of the sacraments and in the Sacrifice of the Mass. On no account, however, must we imply by this phrase that the faithful have a share in the sacramental character of the sacrament of Orders or in the priesthood as such in the strict sense of that term.

III. EMILIO SAURAS, O.P.

The Soul of the Church

(Summary of the doctrine explained in his *El Cuerpo Místico de Cristo*; B.A.C., c. 5, pp. 737 ff.)

1. *The Holy Ghost, soul of the Church:*

The Church is a Mystical Body and therefore it is logical to ask if she has a soul. Neither the apostles nor the Father use this word,

but they do use the idea, in so far as they attribute to the Holy Spirit those vivifying and unifying functions which belong to the soul in physical beings. The impossibility of thinking of the Holy Spirit as the form led many to say that this soul was grace itself, but in the Encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XII, *Divinum illud* and *Mystici Corporis*, we return to the traditional expression, which does not exclude the existence of a created thing which can also play the part of a forma, together with the Uncreated Soul.

2. Preliminary notions:

The soul gives life to the body, in our case the Church, or mystical Body of which Christ is the head from whom it receives grace, but whose soul, that vehicle which makes it pass down from the head to the members and whose presence unifies the whole, is the Holy Spirit.

(a) The functions of this soul in the Church:

Apart from the function of giving being and forming it into a unity, the soul has other functions, i.e. those of unifying the parts of the body, giving life to it and moving it:

- i. *The soul unifies all the parts*, by uniting head and members;
- ii. *it gives life*—vital movement of assimilation, growth, etc.;
- iii. *it moves the body*, since life is intrinsic movement.

(b) This the Holy Spirit does for the Church:

- i. *an interior principle of life*: Mission implies being with the person to whom one is sent, and the Spirit was sent to the Church, to be with her all days, even to the end of the world.
- ii. *there to work*: first of all by giving life, so that we may live not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, since he who raised Christ to life will also give life to our bodies by the power of the Spirit who dwells in us (Rom. 8. 11). He also gives us the spirit of adoption, transforming us into creatures who are endowed with eternal life.

He unites us all, first of all with Christ, our head, to such a degree that, if the Spirit should leave us, we are also separated from Christ (Rom. 8. 9). Secondly, he unites us with one another, as the apostle explains in 1 Cor. 12. 7-13; we have been baptized in one Spirit so that we may be constituted one body.

iii. *He moves and governs the Church*: In two ways, one remote and the other proximate and direct. Remotely by illuminating the mind and inflaming hearts through the truth which he teaches. Apart from this the Scripture attributes a direct movement of government to the Holy Spirit, for example, in the choice of pastors of the Church, whom he afterwards guides and inspires (Acts 20. 28).

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

(Extracts from a sermon of the Feast. Cf. *Opera omnia Manilae*, 1881.)

1. Introduction:

We shall say why he came, how he came and comes to us, this Holy Spirit. His comings are visible and invisible, according as he uses or does not use signs which have a relation to the internal effects produced. The invisible coming happens every day, because the Spirit breathes where he will, and even though his voice is heard, we do not know whence he comes or whither he goes, as the Lord said to Nicodemus (John 3. 8). There is no exterior movement, but at times we do notice it even physically within us (Ps. 28. 4-7).

2. Why did he come? For three reasons:

(a) Because he was unknown:

The Father was known, or at least could be known, in the whole world. The Word had been half-guessed at by some of the ancient philosophers, and, what is more, had manifested himself magnificently in Christ; but the Holy Ghost remained unknown, probably because there is no created likeness of his origin in the world.

(b) To show God's goodness and charity:

The magnificence of the Incarnation and redemption could not have been known were it not for the teachings of the Holy Spirit, who, having spoken by the mouths of the prophets, now makes clear for us those ancient figures. What would the Incarnation and redemption be to us unless we knew them? Our Lord announced a Paraclete who would give testimony of him and would teach us the truth on his behalf (John 15, 28; 16. 13).

(c) To complete the work of Christ:

How wonderful is the supernatural generation of the world! Christ left the seed—the apostles. But the Holy Ghost descended, spread his wings over them, and that divine warmth brings forth the new generation of eagles who launch themselves forth to overcome the world. In the same way as Christ was born of Mary through the power of the Holy Ghost, see here these sons of a virgin Mother, the Church, whom the Holy Ghost made fertile.

3. How did he come?

There is a profound mystery in the fact that the law and the consummation of the law were both given on the same day, at the foot of Mt Sinai and on Mt Sion. But what a difference between the two laws! One was a law of death, engraved on stone; the other

was the law of grace, engraven on the hearts of men by the life-giving Spirit. Well has Jeremias described it: No, this is the covenant I will grant the people of Israel, the Lord says, when that time comes. I will implant my law in their innermost thoughts, engrave it in their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jer. 31. 33). An eternal law this, not like that of Moses, but written in living books, the apostles, in whom we read, not merely teachings, but also works and examples. A time is coming, the Lord says, when I mean to ratify a new covenant with the people of Israel, and with the people of Juda. It will not be like the covenant which I made with their Fathers, on the day when I took them by the hand, to rescue them from Egypt; that they should break my covenant, and I, their Lord, should abandon them (*ibid.*).

4. *How does he come to souls?*

He will also come to us if we strip ourselves of the old man, by his help. Just as we cannot change one of our black hairs into white, so the more efforts we make to advance in the spiritual life without his help, so much the more shall we sink in the flesh. Have no confidence in yourselves, but look to that mountain from which comes the help of the Lord, who made heaven and earth (Ps. 120. 1). To do that we must first of all esteem it, then ask him for it; because no one makes an effort to acquire anything which he does not esteem.

You know that, apart from the spirit of God, there exist also those of the world and the flesh, entirely opposed to it. If you let yourselves be carried away by worldly desires and shameful pleasures, you can be sure that the Spirit does not dwell in you. Offer him a soul which is pure and at peace, and he will surely come to you at once.

Peace is necessary, peace in your consciences, which you will secure by renouncing the world: peace with your brethren, like those who were together in one place, awaiting the coming of the Paraclete: peace with God. Seek peace first of all, and the God of charity will be with you (2 Cor. 13. 11).

II. ST TERESA OF AVILA

False and true Peace

(Extracts from her *Conceptions of the Love of God*, called by some the *Meditations on the Canticle of Canticles*.)

1. *Worldly peace:*

(a) God preserve you from many kinds of peace experienced by worldly people! God forbid that you should ever know these, for they bring perpetual war. When some worldly person, deeply involved though he is in grievous sin, leads a very placid life, resting so content in his vices that he never feels the sting of conscience,

this peace, as you will have read, is a sign that he is on good terms with the devil. For as long as such people live, the devil will never wage war on them, because if he did then they would return some part of the way to God out of their very wickedness—not because they love him, that is to say, but because they wish to save themselves strife. Those who act thus, however, never serve him for long. As soon as the devil sees this, he begins to amuse himself once more; they have what they want, because he gratifies them and they become friendly with him again, until he has them in that place where he makes them realize how false his peace really was. . . .

(b) *The peace of riches:*

Now, as to riches. Some people have everything they need and a good sum of money in their coffers as well, and if they keep free from grave sins they think that they have done everything. They enjoy what they have, and from time to time give alms, but they never reflect that this property is not their own but that the Lord has given it to them as stewards, so that they may distribute it among the poor, and that they will have to render a strict account for the time they have kept a surplus in their coffers, if the poor are suffering because of the way they have withheld it from them. . . .

The essential thing, daughters, is that we should be satisfied with a little; we must not desire as much as people possess who have to give a strict account of their possessions, as any rich man must, even though his wealth is not in his own hands but in those of stewards. And how strict that account will be! If he realized it he would not take his meals so contentedly, nor squander his wealth on vain, meaningless things.

(c) *The peace of honours:*

Against the peace which is given by the world in the shape of honours there is no need for me to warn you, as little honour is done to the poor. What may do you great harm, unless you are careful, is praise, which, once it begins, never ceases but always casts you down the more. As a rule this praise consists in your being told how holy you are, and in such attractive terms that you would think they had been learned from the devil. And so sometimes they are; if they were said in your absence, they would not matter; but if you are there, what fruit can they bear, unless you walk very warily, except evil?

For the love of God I beg you never to allow such remarks to lull you into a state of peace, for in that case they might gradually come to do you harm and you would think they were true and suppose that you had done all you had to do and finished all your work.

(d) *The peace of the flesh:*

A great deal could be said about the peace which our own flesh can bring and the harm that comes from this. . . . The body, as you

know, is very fond of indulgence, and if we understood this, we should realize how highly dangerous it is for us to find peace in such things. I often think of this and I can never understand how people who indulge themselves so much have such peace and rest. Did the most Sacred Body of our Example and Light merit more indulgence than ours? Had he done anything to merit having to suffer so many trials? Have we read of any saints—and they we know for certain are in heaven—who led a life of indulgence upon earth? Then how can we so calmly permit it to ourselves? Who has told us that it is a good thing? How is it that people can spend their days so happily in feasting and sleeping and in pursuit of recreation and of all the ease they can get? I am astounded when I think of it. One would imagine that there was no other world than this, and that living in this way involved only the minimum of danger.

2. *The Peace of Christ:*

(a) Introduction:

Let us return to our subject. When the Bride indicates what kind of peace she is asking for she says: Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth, and this is a sign that the Lord has other ways of granting his peace and of revealing his friendship . . . there are many people who have attained to friendship with our Lord through making a sincere confession of their sins and repenting of them, and yet, within a couple of days, return to them. This, most certainly, is not the friendship for which the Bride asks. Oh, daughters, try not to go to your confessor every time with the same fault.

(b) Another type of friendship:

There is another and a better sort of friendship than this—namely, that of persons who keep themselves from mortally offending the Lord; as the world goes, those who have arrived thus far have done a great deal. Such persons, though they carefully abstain from mortal sin, do not, I think, avoid occasional falls, for they attribute no importance to venial sins, though they commit many such every day, and thus they come very near to mortal sin. 'Do you think that matters?' they ask. 'There is holy water for that,' I have heard many people say, 'and the remedies of our Mother the Church.' This is really very distressing. For the love of God, take the greatest care about it, and never be neglectful about a venial sin, however small, just because you have remembered this remedy, for it is not right that good should be an occasion of our doing evil.

(c) The will never to sin in anything:

There is another kind of friendship and peace which our Lord begins to give to certain persons who would be sorry really to offend him in any way although they do not flee as often as they might from occasions of falling. They have their set times for prayer; our

Lord grants them tender feelings and tears, and they like to lead good and well-ordered lives. But they would be sorry to give up the pleasures of this world, for they think that these help to make their lives happy. This life brings many changes with it; for it will be hard for such persons to continue in virtue, for if they do not abandon the pleasures and consolations of the world they will soon falter on the Lord's path, where there are powerful enemies to bar our way. This, daughters, is not the friendship desired by the Bride, and you must not desire it.

III. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

The Gifts of the Holy Ghost

(Extracts from *Compendio de la doctrina cristiana*, p. 1, chap. 11.)

By means of his gifts the Holy Ghost governs the just and strengthens and sustains them in their spiritual life. It is fitting, therefore, that we should consider these gifts—what they are and how many they are—for it is important that the Christian should have a clear knowledge of this matter.

I. *Description of them:*

The gifts proceed in an orderly fashion and gradually ascend by degrees. From the fear of the Lord the soul rises to the other gifts one after the other, to arrive at the most lofty and excellent of all, which is the gift of wisdom. Fear of the Lord arouses and awakens in us a fear of God; not the servile fear which the apostle calls the spirit of bondage, but a fear proper to the adopted sons of God. Such a fear enables the Christian to venerate his merciful Father with filial reverence, striving conscientiously never to offend him in the slightest way nor to lose his grace and love. St Augustine calls it a chaste fear which is born of charity.

The gift of piety teaches us to honour God with ardent and joyful affection and to love our neighbour with the love of God, even when he is not deserving of our love.

The gift of knowledge implies that we recognize our defects and learn how to live innocently and prudently in this sinful world without ourselves committing sin.

The gift of fortitude enables us to remain strong and constant in Christ, so that neither the pleasures nor the difficulties of this world can separate us in any way from the honour and the service of God. It makes us yearn and thirst for the just life.

The gift of counsel teaches, advises and directs us so that we may diligently put into effect those things which we prudently judge to be most conducive to our salvation and for the greater glory of God.

The gift of understanding discloses to us the true and catholic meaning of divine things.

Through the gift of wisdom the soul is completely detached from all temporal and earthly things, so that it may enjoy the contemplation of God and experience the most tender consolation and a taste for divine things.

2. *Another effect of the gifts:*

The gifts of the Holy Ghost also facilitate the operations of the virtues, animating and strengthening them so that they will always be ready for the performance of their proper acts. Faith, hope and charity are perfected by the gifts of wisdom and understanding; prudence by the gifts of knowledge and counsel; justice by the gift of piety; fortitude by the gift of fortitude, and temperance by the fear of the Lord.

3. *Effect against evil:*

The gifts also help to destroy the seven evil inclinations which the prince of devils arouses in those who live according to the desires of the flesh and the law of sin. Thus the fear of the Lord destroys pride and disposes for true humility . . . the gift of piety which makes us desire the good of our neighbour with a joyful heart, replaces envy. . . . The gift of knowledge represses anger . . . the gift of fortitude dissipates the spirit of sloth and spiritual sadness, and rids the soul of its morbid boredom . . . the gift of counsel uproots avarice, because he who is instructed by this gift readily selects what is better. He enriches his soul with spiritual goods and lays up treasures in heaven, where they can never be lost. . . . The gift of understanding destroys gluttony, which enslaves those who give themselves to this vice. . . . The gift of wisdom destroys lust, for they who possess the spirit of wisdom delight in God and abhor the pleasures of carnal men, who are like beasts. . . .

Let us therefore beg God our Father to grant us these seven gifts through the merits of his Son, Jesus Christ, saying with the Psalmist: Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels. Cast me not away from thy face and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

IV. BOSSUET

The New Law

(The first of three sermons preached on the Feast of Pentecost.)

1. *The new law:*

The joy of this feast lies in the promulgation of the new law of Christ, abolishing the old one. Reconciled by the Saviour, it was now necessary that peace should be declared. St Peter preaches it in all tongues, because the new law must be universal. The pride of Babel had divided mankind; the humility of the Lord re-unites this diversity of languages.

Why this joy in the new law? I shall tell you with St Paul: because this is the law of liberty; the old law was that of the letter, which kills; this is the law of the spirit, which gives life. The commandments of the law alone kill; the grace of the spirit gives life.

2. *Letter which kills:*

It seems hardly possible that the decalogue should kill; yet St Paul calls it the ministry of death (2 Cor. 3. 7). A ministry of death which begins: Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God! We can explain this following the ideas of St Augustine.

(a) *St Paul does not censure the law, but our weakness:*

Because having been raised to the loftiest of destinies, sin lost grace for us and now, instead of following the dictates of reason which moves us to subject our passions to our dominion, we allow them to rise in rebellion against reason, and reason against the Creator. . . .

We should not be ashamed to confess our weaknesses, because such shame is only proper to those who do not know the remedy of him who set us free. All wise men know that the road of vice is steep, because the senses dominate us. That is why the Gospel, which can only appeal to the intellect, suffers contradiction from sensible things. Do you not all, at times, feel a mysterious warmth when you hear about the kingdom of God? But how short a time it lasts! There are those who do not feel this struggle, I know, but they are the ones who allow themselves to be carried away; to notice the strength of the river's current it is necessary to breast it.

(b) *The law was given by Moses; grace by Jesus Christ:*

That law does not produce grace, therefore the thunder which accompanied its commands serves only to confuse the sick and frighten the weak. Do this and thou shalt live, it says. But of what use is it to show the sick man the water, if he cries; I have no man to help me (John 5. 7).

Has the law no strength, then? Yes, but it is a harmful strength, because it increases our knowledge and therefore our responsibility and our punishment. The law without grace, says St Augustine, is no help to those who believe, but merely a witness against those who sin.

Let us know our illness better so that we may be all the more grateful to our merciful Physician. The really grave thing is our pride, which no sooner knows a law than it rebels against it: The less licit it, is the more we like it, says Augustine. That is why St Paul adds that sin, taking occasion of the commandments, deceives us and leads us to death, making us even greater sinners (Rom. 7. 13).

(c) *The law makes us desire grace:*

What is the use, therefore, of the law? It makes us desire grace in order to make us understand that we need God, not merely as a

teacher, but also as a helper, as Augustine says. That we may burst forth in that wonderful prayer of his: Send me, O Lord, that which I cannot fulfil, or rather, that which I am unable to do without your grace, that I may go on my knees before thee, and that he who glories may do so only in the Lord.

This true justice of Christianity which consists in the keeping of the law comes to us from the Holy Spirit, who preaches it through the faith and charity which he pours out upon us. To believe in Jesus Christ and to love him with a love which makes all things easy; this is what the Spirit brings to us.

3. *The Spirit gives life:*

(a) **It is one thing to be beneath the law and quite another to be with it:**

Because the law produces great effects by directing those who obey it and by punishing those who rebel against it. The latter put themselves under the law, the former are its friends; they follow, love, and are with it. The Holy Spirit has given us the grace to fulfil that law, and thus from a punishment it becomes a reward. Now it can be said: Do these things and thou shalt live (Luke 10. 28), because we have the Spirit who gives life and strength to a law which, without them, would lead to death.

(b) **Peculiarity of the new law:**

An essential quality of this law is that it is written in the hearts of men. It is the law of love. Fear cannot change the wolf, who will continue in his desire to hurl himself against the flock, and if it is true that the Council of Trent defends the fear of punishment, it is also true that it ends by saying that this is itself due to an impulse of the Holy Spirit, who does not yet dwell in us, but moves us. It is a fear which is directed towards love.

Only love and charity can soften our hard hearts. The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom we have received (Rom. 5. 5). This is today's feast, one in which the new law of love begins. He who leaves it returns to the captivity of the Synagogue, and to him St Paul writes: The Spirit you have now received is not, as of old, a spirit of slavery, to govern you by fear; it is the spirit of adoption, which makes us cry out Abba, Father (Rom. 8. 15). To call him Father; to know that he gave his Son for us—and then not to love him! To know him for a King, and then not to obey his first command!

(c) **Motives for love:**

Do you need another motive for love? See, then, the gift which the Spirit has given us, nothing else than the love of the Father and the Son. Motives for love you need? The law of Sinai was promulgated amidst the thunder, and is there anything sweeter than

Christ, who promulgated ours? Why all this? Because he wishes to lead you away from the servile fear of one who lives under a law that threatens, to the love of one who was lifted up on a cross to found his law.

V. LUIS MARIA MARTINEZ

(Extracts from his book *El Espiritu Santo*, ed. *Studium-Cultura*, Madrid, 1952.)

1. *Pentecost, a consoling feast:*

It is a joyous feast because it is the feast of love, which follows from it as logically as the flame from the fire, the perfume from a flower and splendour from light. The Preface, synthesis of the whole liturgical spirit of this Sunday, tells us that Christ, by pouring out his Spirit upon us, spread joy throughout the whole world.

But the only true and complete joy is that of heaven, because here on earth all our joys are those of exile, mixed with sorrow, for which reason they receive the name of consolations. It is the joy which includes sorrow, which is almost a form of sorrow. Therefore the Holy Spirit is called the Paraclete, because he pours out on our souls the joy in exile, the joy which is not incompatible with sorrow, but which in some way supposes it.

2. *Sorrow and consolation in Christ and the Christian:*

Jesus did not eliminate sorrow. We might even say that he came to make it more profound and universal, since he says: Do not imagine that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have come to bring a sword, not peace (Matt. 10. 34). Let those who wish to follow me take up their cross and come after me to Calvary.

But if he did not suppress it, he did something equally beautiful; he surrounded it with joy and made perfect happiness bud forth from the very sorrow itself. This is the consolation of which the Scripture speaks as well as the liturgy—and it is poured out by the Holy Spirit. . . .

How are we to verify in ourselves this union of sorrow and joy; the spirit of love?

3. *Consolation of liberty:*

We are not happy because we are slaves, even though our ignorance of our condition makes us kiss the very chains at times. What impedes our happiness are those things to which our hearts cleave; riches, which make us materialistic, pleasures which weaken us, pride which takes us out of our rightful place—and all these obstacles exist as such, even though we feel that we can find true happiness in them. The slave can never be happy. Only when we break these chains, purifying our soul and heart, do we realize the true consolation of happiness. . . .

The Holy Spirit is the liberating Spirit. Have you not heard it said that love is as strong as death? (Cant. 8. 6). Death breaks all earthly bonds; so does love. The Spirit frees us from our chains, giving us the joy which only the free man feels. How? By means of the joy of love.

4. *The joy of love:*

When the heart is free of earthly affections it enters triumphantly into heavenly love. We possess God precisely to the extent to which we abandon creatures. . . . Love means two, fusing into one. And this fusion is never brought about more perfectly than in divine love. The Scripture tells us this: Whereas the man who unites himself to the Lord becomes one spirit with him (1 Cor. 6. 17).

We shall bear God in our hearts, and in that sea of infinite love, in spite of all our sorrows, we shall always find consolation and happiness, because we possess the Beloved, source of all consolation. Donoso Cortes said: 'When love calls me I do not ask it whence it comes or whither it is going; I follow it because, wherever it may lead me, there we shall be, my beloved, myself and our love—and that is heaven.' Of course, it is not heaven, but it is a most solid consolation which covers sufferings with a heavenly mantle of joy. It is the consolation of union.

5. *The consolation of hope:*

We carry this treasure around with us in very fragile vessels, which can break at any moment. We do not possess perfect happiness, but the Holy Spirit gives us the consolation of hope. St Paul has a profound phrase about this: In him you, too, were called, when you listened to the preaching of the truth, that Gospel which is your salvation. In him you, too, learned to believe, and had the seal set on your faith by the promised gift of the Holy Spirit; a pledge of that inheritance which is ours, to redeem it for us and bring us into possession of it, and so manifest God's glory (Eph. 1. 13-14).

The Holy Spirit, dwelling within us, is heaven, not possessed in all its splendour, but of which the Third Person is the guarantee of what is promised. We carry around within us the substance of that which we hope for (Heb. 11. 1).

We have not merely a hope, but we rejoice in our hope, because its full pledge is in our hearts. If Abraham rejoiced in a promise he had received, what security and joy should be ours, when our pledge of it is the Holy Ghost.

6. *The joy of pain:*

It sounds absurd, but a golden ring joins these two—joy and pain—it is love. Love is a wonderful thing . . . the one thing which makes difficult things easy, bitter things sweet. There is nothing so sweet, nothing so excellent. It carries burdens without difficulty, never

tires of giving, is never disquieted (cf. *Imitation of Christ*). Give me someone who loves, and he will understand what I say, says St Augustine. For one who loves it is sweet and easy to suffer for the beloved. Let mothers give testimony to this!

Love is the most perfect gift of ourselves. I love you until death . . . until it hurts . . . these are earthly formulas; but the one who does not know how to pronounce them has not yet reached the heights of love. The Holy Spirit teaches us this love (2 Cor. 7. 4). St Ignatius M. longed to feel the teeth of the wild beasts, St Teresa felt the dilemma of suffering or dying; St Thérèse, said, shortly before her death: I find joy and happiness on this earth, but only in sorrow.

7. *The need to allow the Spirit to guide us:*

The consolations of the Holy Spirit are within our reach, but we are not always disposed to receive them or to perceive their exquisite savour. Gross palates, which do not appreciate delicate foods, need to be educated. The Holy Ghost knows how to accommodate himself to our weakness and littleness, but we must ask him to allow us to rejoice in him.

SECTION VI. HISTORICAL AND LITERARY NOTES

The place of the coming of the Spirit

Neither the gospels nor tradition have handed down to us the name of the generous owner of the Cenacle. But given the fact that the apostles and disciples were accustomed to meet there after the death, of Christ, it seems likely that it belonged to one of those who, according to St Luke (Acts 4. 34-35) gave their goods to the apostles for them to distribute the same among the others according to their needs. St Epiphanius (307-403) relates that when Hadrian arrived in Jerusalem in the year 135 the Christians still had a small church on the site of the Cenacle, i.e. on the first floor, where the apostles were united after the ascension of the Lord. It was built in the district of Sion, which escaped the general destruction of the city. About the year 350 St Cyril of Jerusalem also speaks of the 'upper church of the apostles', where the Holy Spirit descended on them (Catech. 6). St Sylvia and St Jerome also mention this coming as having taken place on Mt Sion. . . .

Nowadays the coming of the Spirit is venerated in what is called the second department of the upper room, that is a smaller room off the large one, built to commemorate the institution of the Eucharist. This room is reached by a flight of eight stairs situated at the end

of the Cenacle by the east door. The northern part of this space is covered with a dome and there one sees a second tomb, representing that of David.

(Cf. P. B. Meistermann, *Guide de Terre Sainte*, Paris, 1923, pp. 180 ff.)

SECTION VII. PAPAL TEXTS

(The two Encyclicals which need to be consulted in their entirety on this question are *Divinum Illud* of Pope Leo XIII, and also *Mystici Corporis* of Pius XII. Since they are easily obtained by all and need very detailed study we shall give no more than one or two extracts here.)

1. *Pope Leo says:*

These sublime truths, which so clearly show forth the infinite goodness of the Holy Ghost towards us, certainly demand that we should direct towards him the highest homage of our love and devotion. Christians may do this most effectually if they will daily strive to know him, to love him and to implore him more earnestly; for which reason may this our exhortation, flowing spontaneously from a paternal heart, reach their ears. Perchance there are still to be found among them, even nowadays, some who, if asked, as were those of old by St Paul the Apostle, whether they have received the Holy Ghost, might answer in like manner: 'We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost.' At least there are many certainly, who are very deficient in their knowledge of him. They frequently use his name in their religious practices, but their faith is involved in much darkness. Wherefore all preachers and those having care of souls should remember that it is their duty to instruct their people more diligently and more fully about the Holy Ghost—avoiding, however, difficult and subtle controversies, and eschewing the dangerous folly of those who rashly endeavour to pry into divine mysteries. What should chiefly be dwelt upon and clearly explained is the latitude and greatness of the benefits which have been bestowed upon us by this Divine Giver, so that errors and ignorance concerning matters of such moment may be entirely dispelled, as unworthy of the 'children of light' (*Divinum Illud*).

2. *The Church animated by the Spirit of Christ:*

If, now, we carefully consider this divine principle of life and power given by Christ inasmuch as it constitutes the very well-spring of every created gift and grace, we shall easily understand that it is none other than the Paraclete, the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and who is in a special manner called the Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of the Son. For it was with this Spirit

of grace and truth that the Son of God adorned his soul in the Virgin's immaculate womb; he is the Spirit who delights to dwell in the Redeemer's pure soul as in his favourite temple; he is the Spirit whom Christ merited for us on the Cross, with the shedding of his own blood: the Spirit whom he bestows on the Church for the remission of sins, breathing him upon the apostles. And while Christ alone received this Spirit without measure, it is only according to the measure of the giving of Christ and from the fullness of Christ himself that he is bestowed upon the members of the Mystical Body. And since Christ has been glorified on the cross his Spirit is communicated to the Church in abundant outpouring, in order that she and each of her members may grow daily in likeness to our Saviour. It is the Spirit of Christ who has made us adopted sons of God, so that one day, we all, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, may be transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

3. *The Holy Spirit, the soul of the Mystical Body:*

This Spirit of Christ is the invisible principle to which we must also attribute the union of all the parts of the Body with one another and with their exalted Head, dwelling as he does whole in the Head, whole in the Body, and whole in each of its members, and assisting these with his presence in divers manners according to their various functions and duties and their higher or lower degree of spiritual perfection. He, with his heavenly breath of life, is the source from which proceeds every single vital and effectively salutary action in all the parts of the Body. It is he himself who is present in all the members and divinely acts in each though he also acts in the lower members through the action and ministry of the higher. And, finally, it is he who, by the inspiration of his grace, giving ever new increase to the Church, refuses to dwell by sanctifying grace in members which are completely severed from the Body. This presence and co-operation of the Spirit of Jesus Christ has been vigorously and compendiously described by our wise Predecessor of immortal memory, Leo XIII, in the following words: It is enough to state that, since Christ is the Head of the Church, the Holy Spirit is her soul.

If, however, this vital force and power, through which the whole community of Christians is upheld by its Founder, is viewed not in itself but in the created effects which proceed from it, then it consists in those heavenly gifts which our Redeemer together with his Spirit bestows upon the Church, and of which he, giver of supernatural light and cause of sanctity, together with his Spirit, is the author. Thus the Church, as well as all her holy members, may make her own the eloquent words of the Apostle: I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me (*Mystici Corporis*, Pius XII).

SECTION VIII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

Come, O Holy Spirit!

The feasts of the year are not mere commemorations

1. This idea needs to be insisted upon, because it is fundamental for an understanding of the liturgical significance (sect. II, p. 57).
 - (a) Any feast is a reminder of some mystery in the life and work of our Lord;
 - (b) but it is also an actuality—mystical yet real—which has some resemblance to the actual thing commemorated.

2. Therefore the liturgical year, animated throughout by the devotion of the Church, is no cold and lifeless representation of past events, no mere historical record. It is Christ himself, living on in his Church, and still pursuing that path of boundless mercy which 'going about and doing good', he began to tread during his life on earth. This he did in order that the souls of men might come in contact with his mysteries and, so to speak, live by them. And these mysteries are still now constantly present and active, not in the vague and nebulous way which certain recent writers describe, but as Catholic doctrine teaches us. The Doctors of the Church tell us that the mysteries of Christ's life are at the same time most excellent models of virtue for us to imitate and also sources of divine grace for us by reason of the merits and intercession of the Redeemer. They live on in their effects in us, since each of them is, according to its nature and in its own way, the cause of our salvation (*Mediator Dei*, Pius XII).

The memory of Pentecost

1. *The feast commemorates the historical happening:*
 - (a) The Preface hymns it lyrically;
 - (b) the epistle gives the simple facts as they happened.
2. The feast also celebrates the coming of the Holy Ghost on the infant Church (120 disciples) united in the Cenacle; it is a memory of the coming of the Spirit into each of those souls, giving them gifts, both ordinary and extraordinary.
 - (a) *The Holy Spirit in Mary:*
 - i. the Mother of the real Christ and also of his Mystical Body;
 - ii. as the Holy Ghost came on her at the moment of the Incarnation to make her the Mother of God, so he came on her at Pentecost to proclaim her the Mother of the Church.

- (b) *The Holy Ghost in the Apostles:*
 - i. he gave them knowledge and wisdom;
 - ii. from cowards he makes them strong;
 - iii. gives them, with the gift of tongues, those of prophecy and miracles;
 - iv. confirms them in their faith, grace and love.

We cannot contemplate it coldly; instead from our hearts should

3. *Our gratitude faced with this memory:*
 - (a) to Christ who adorned his Church with such precious gifts;
 - (b) who made us worthy of belonging to her as members;
 - (c) who gave us his own Spirit.

The actuality of Pentecost

1. The extraordinary gifts have, in the main, ceased, because they were only needed at the beginning of the Church's life; but the ordinary gifts are still given today.

2. Pentecost is thus a reality in the Church and in souls.

(a) *In the Church there will be a greater outpouring:*

More grace of union, more sanctity, more assistance given to the Pope, bishops and priests. Each Pentecost is like a rejuvenation of the Church.

(b) *In souls:*

i. It is certain that the Holy Spirit is possessed by all in a state of grace and that he is given in each and every one of the sacraments.

ii. But at Pentecost special graces are poured out upon us to enable us to share in the Spirit and live by him in our lives, to enjoy ever more his gifts and their fruits.

iii. In a special way that which we ask for in the Mass will be granted to us;

Love: Enkindle in the hearts which are thine the fire of thy love (Alleluia).

Wisdom: Let us through the Holy Spirit savour holy things;

Consolation: Give us the eternal joy of thy consolation (Collect).

3. The beautiful Sequence of Adam of St Victor (twelfth century) reflects perfectly the wonderful effects of Pentecost in the soul:

Qui procedis ab utroque	Da contemptum terrenorum
Genitore, Genitoque	Ad amorem supernorum
Pariter, Paraclite.	Trahe desiderium.

Redde linguas eloquentes,	Consolator et fundator,
Fac ferventes in timentes,	Habitator et amator
Flamma tua divite.	Cordium humilium
O juvamen oppressorum,	Pelle mala, terge sordes,
O solamen miserorum	Et discordes fac concordes,
Pauperum refugium.	Et affer praesidium.

Application

1. We should have a profound faith in the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in souls.
2. We must be convinced that this action, of itself permanent, is also steadily increasing, because we are on the way to perfection.
3. In the desire of new outpourings of the Spirit, we must approach the Altar not merely with a song of gratitude in our hearts, but also asking with all humility: Come O Holy Spirit. Thus, in the communion of each one of the faithful, that coming will be reproduced.

II. THE EPISTLE

A: The origin of the Holy Spirit

The origin of the Holy Spirit is wrapped in mystery

1. We live in the religion founded by Christ and in Christ.
 - (a) Revelation has been more copious about the Son, because it is he who redeemed us;
 - (b) when we give him the names of Son and Word, we are more exact than when we call the Third Person the Holy Spirit.
2. The Spirit proceeds from the will, and that faculty, even in man, is less known in its actions than in the intellect.
3. However, we can ask theology for some explanation.

The Holy Ghost proceeds by way of love

The love between the Father and Son gives rise to him (St Augustine).

1. *What is love?*
 - (a) It is easier to feel it than to describe it.
 - (b) It is the attraction of one person towards another, like a weight which pulls them.
 - i. Its first effect is to incline towards the union of those who are in love. That is why mothers feel that their hearts will break when they are separated from their children. The usual expression of love is the embrace—symbol of union and the fusion of two in one. Those who are in love long to be together.

ii. The greater the love the greater the attraction and inclination for union.

2. *The love of God:*

(a) The Father and Son in mutual contemplation feel themselves attracted by the divine goodness. In the very heart of God there arises this impulse towards himself. That is the love of God for the one being worthy of his love—himself.

(b) But the love of God is:

i. *as strong as he is:* In God all is infinite, and therefore so is this impulse of love. Those anxieties of love which in me never go beyond a certain sentiment, in God are so strong that they form a new person.

ii. *as lasting as eternity:* God's love is not changed. God loves himself for eternity, because he is eternally good.

iii. *it is as holy as God* and as the object of his love—himself.

(c) From this eternal, infinite and most holy love there comes an infinite, eternal and holy person.

The names we give him

We have said that love is an impulse, like a breathing of the most intimate kind. That is what we mean when we call him the Holy Spirit.

(a) He is also called Love, simply, because he has come forth as God's love.

(b) Since love tends always towards giving he is called the Gift of God.

B: The Holy Ghost—soul of the Church

1. We mean by this, as St Augustine says, that the Holy Spirit performs in the Church those same functions which the soul performs in the members of the body. Together with him we form one body, and it is a living body. Life comes from the Holy Spirit, as in our natural body it comes from the soul.

2. We can see from this the grandeur of God's work in the soul of the Christian. This concept is useful in order to put far from us anything that could hurt or break this vital union.

The relations between the Holy Spirit and the Church

These are analogous with those of soul and body.

1. The soul lives in the body, dwells in it, penetrates the whole of it, making it a special species of being among the living things of this world. The Spirit lives and dwells in the Church; he dwells in each of its members as in a temple; he gives them life and transform

- them all, not according to the flesh, but the spirit of adopted sonship, by which we call God Father (Rom. 8. 15).
2. The Holy Spirit is the one to whom is attributed the special consecration of the leaders of the flock of Christ (cf. *Rites of Consecration of Bishops and Ordination of Priests*).
 3. As the Spirit of Truth he is especially active in the teaching magisterium of the Church:
 - (a) in an extraordinary way in the dogmatic definitions;
 - (b) in the ordinary way through the other teachings of Popes, Bishops and priests.
 4. Through him they have received the power to forgive sins (John 20. 23).
 5. The Holy Spirit descends on the altar at the Consecration of the Mass, to transform the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. This is an idea frequently found in the Fathers, and special expression is given to it in the Oriental Rites.
 6. He is the norm and internal law by which all the Church's actions are governed.
 - (a) The New Law, says St Thomas, is principally the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is given to Christians (1-2. q. 106. a. 1. c).
 - (b) He makes us lovers of God and so directs our actions, not from fear, but out of love (cf. *C. Gentes*, 4. 22).
 7. Finally, every vital act in the members of the Church comes from the Spirit:
 - (a) he leads us to say the name of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 12. 3);
 - (b) when we pray he does it for and with us (Rom. 8. 26);
 - (c) he prepares in us compunction and repentance;
 - (d) he gives us charity, which is the very life of the Christian (cf. Rom. 5. 5);
 - (e) he gives us the fruits of sanctification (cf. Gal. 5. 22).

As soul he brings unity

1. There is unity among the members of the Church, not merely because they are led by one authority, but also because there is between them an intimate interior union which comes from the same life which they possess.
2. From which follows the charity which should exist between them and the communication of all goods, spiritual and temporal.
3. There are some dead members; they belong to the Church through faith and baptism; these gifts they have not lost; but they do not receive life. The Spirit does not work in them because of the obstacle of mortal sin.

Applications

1. *If you are a dead member:*
Then may the feast of Pentecost lead you to reconciliation with God, so that you may live once more.
2. *If you are alive:*
 - (a) do not stifle the utterances of the Spirit (1 Thess. 5. 19);
 - (b) have pity on the dead members and pray for them, that they may return to life.
3. Gratitude to Christ because he wished to unite us to himself, giving us his own life and Spirit, so that, in the Mystical Body, his soul and ours would be one.

C: The contemplative life of the apostle

The Cenacle, the first school for apostles

1. The Holy Spirit transforms those first twelve, from rude and ignorant fishermen, into wonderful instruments for communicating the Gospel to the world and grace to souls.
2. But they had beforehand presented him with certain dispositions which are also indispensable in us, whether priests or laymen, in order that he may change us into apostles.

They are shown us in the Acts:

- i. *they were one*: the greatest possible union and charity.
- ii. *with the Mother of Jesus*: a necessary condition always.
- iii. *persevering in prayer*: this is also necessary.
- iv. *submission to St Peter as the head chosen by Christ*: we can see this in the verses which follow, as Peter acts with the authority which has been given him (Acts 1. 15-22).

3. *Prayer in the apostle:*

- Not any kind of prayer said in any way.
- (a) The apostles practised continual prayer, with recollection and solitude. They prepared themselves for action by contemplation.
 - (b) St Paul who could say: It would go hard with me indeed if I did not preach the Gospel (1 Cor. 9. 16), goes into the desert of Arabia before beginning his work.

Action without contemplation

1. St Bernard's remarks to Pope Eusebius are classical in this matter:
 - (a) I fear lest, in the midst of all your occupations you will despair of being able to finish what you have begun and your soul will become hardened. You would act sensibly by leaving them for a

time, so that they may not dominate you and drag you where you would not want to go. You may ask me—Where? . . . Towards hardness of heart. . .

(b) You can see now where these works can lead you if you continue, as you have done until now, to give yourself to them without keeping back anything for yourself (*De Consid.* 1. 2. c. 2).

2. Which means to say that, for the Holy Doctor, even such great works as that of ruling the Church can be 'evil' if they leave us with no time for interior things.

(a) They can diminish grace or even extinguish it altogether.

(b) We find the same hard doctrine in St Thomas (cf. 1-2. q. 52. a. 3. c).

3. *Therefore:*

(a) if even the best of apostolic works are done without real fervour of charity they tend to diminish and chill that charity. If they are done with real fervour they increase it.

(b) That is why St Teresa could say: Since I have been prioress, through my occupations and frequent journeys I have committed more faults, but since I have fought against them with generosity and have occupied my office for God, I feel that each day which passes joins me more intimately with him.

Contemplation and action

1. It is the foundation, the indispensable condition for all works of the apostolate.

(a) The essence of such work is to communicate the life of Christ to souls;

(b) the apostle receives his mission from him who said, I have come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly (John 10. 10);

(c) he should therefore possess the life which he intends to communicate, like Christ, in whom was life (John 1. 4).

2. From which it follows that every apostle, before he can transform, must be transformed. This is properly speaking God's work, but it demands man's co-operation, seeking the necessary contact with him by contemplation. If the apostle is not himself filled with Christ he will not succeed in communicating him to the world.

This is the constant teaching of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. Let St Thomas speak for them all: More perfection is required to communicate perfection to others than to be perfect oneself . . . because every cause is superior to its effect (*De Perf. Vitae Spirit.*).

3. The need is to join prayer and contemplation with action. We should try to be deposits, not mere channels, as St Bernard says.

D: The Sacrament of Confirmation

The sacrament of the Holy Spirit

1. That is why it is such a good theme for Pentecost.

2. All the sacraments give the Holy Spirit, but this one gives him to us in a special way, because by it we receive the same grace (although in different measure) as the apostles received at Pentecost.

(a) In it, as St Thomas affirms many times, we receive the Spirit himself;

(b) the oil is a symbol of the grace of the Spirit;

(c) it is the same sacrament which the apostles administered when they imposed hands on souls and the Holy Spirit descended on them (Acts 8. 17).

It perfects baptism (cf. above Sect. IV, n. II)

1. *The very name indicates this:*

It is the seal placed on the Christian initiation.

2. It ratifies, completes and gives definite character to the divine sonship we have received at baptism.

(a) In baptism we receive life; in confirmation it is strengthened.

(b) In baptism we are born; by confirmation we reach an adult status in the spiritual life. The same thing happens in the individual which happens in the Church.

i. She was born on Good Friday, but was not confirmed until the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

ii. That is why, in the old days, confirmation was administered immediately after baptism.

Soldiers of Christ

1. The Christian has an obligation to confess and profess his faith in Christ:

(a) before a world which either denies him or is scandalized by him, or at least does not profess him (Luke 12. 8);

(b) perhaps at times in the midst of persecutions.

2. In confirmation we receive the arms necessary to fight and win. It gives us a right to the graces necessary to confess Christ, both in normal and abnormal circumstances.

3. Thus the Christian becomes a soldier of Christ (cf. St Thomas, *in loc.*).

The need for confirmation

1. It is not an indispensable means of salvation as is baptism. But nobody should despise it.

2. The Church commands that we should receive it when we come to the use of reason so that we may know it better and make better preparation to receive it.
3. In danger of death it should be received earlier—and then even priests may give it under certain circumstances (*Spiritus Sancti Munere*, 14 Sept. 1946).
4. *The Christian needs it because:*
 - (a) it increases and perfects the grace of baptism; thus giving him a higher place in heaven.
 - (b) He frequently finds himself in circumstances in which it is difficult to act as a Christian should; when dogmas are rejected, bad books praised, or ill is spoken of the Church.
 - (c) Or again, a false human respect may take possession of him, the fear of loss of work or friendship.
 - (d) We need not say any more about active persecution.
 - (e) For these cases we need all the spiritual strength we can muster.
5. It has often been said that England would probably have kept the faith had she kept her bishops, who could have administered the sacrament of confirmation, during the Reformation.

The sacrament of Catholic action

1. It demands something of all who receive it. If it gives many rights, it also imposes an obligation—that of being an apostle.
 - (a) That is why St Thomas loves to compare it with mature age.
 - (b) The one who has been confirmed should not remain egoistic; he should do all he can to be a real apostle, in the factory, in the mine or workshop, in the office, school, home—wherever he may be.
2. Those who have received this sacrament should think frequently about the obligation it imposes on them to give, at least, good example by their ordinary lives, and perhaps something more active still in the apostolate of the laity. There are so many ways we can do this, yet the Church still needs more active apostles.

E: Christ, Model of the Church

Likeness and imitation

1. *The glory of Christ is the purpose of the Church:*
This is so because Christ is the model of the Church and also because the more brilliant an effect so much the more glory to the cause of it.
2. *Our theme is:*
 - (a) the Church, both visible and invisible, was made with Christ as the model;

- (b) this likeness can be seen by considering her general constitution, her offices, her sacraments and, lastly, her glory, here on earth in its beginnings and the full perfection of it in heaven.

The Word: Christ made man

We have to consider:

1. the unity of person in the duplicity of nature;
2. the divine value of Christ's human actions;
3. the exultation of the humanity of Christ because of this value.

The Word, model for the Church

1. The means chosen by God to restore fallen humanity was to form a Church to the image and likeness of the Word of God incarnate, just as man was formed to the likeness of the Word, firstborn of every creature.
 - (a) God's chosen body, organs of it depending upon each other (1 Cor. 12. 27). This formation of the mystical body is a reproduction of the real Christ.
 - (b) Christ is the foundation of the Church (*ibid.* 3. 11) and the building is developed according to the foundation plan;
 - (c) seed from which the Church germinates;
 - (d) vine of life (John 15. 5);
 - (e) second Adam, from whose flesh and bones comes the second Eve, the Church (Eph. 5. 30);
 - (f) first fruits of the dead, in whose likeness all rise again (Col. 1. 18).

General imitation

This can be detailed by considering the three ideas concerning the Word already mentioned.

1. *The unity of person in duality of nature:*
 - (a) As Christ is God-man, so the Church has two elements, one human and the other divine.
 - i. Human in her members, hierarchy, sacraments, etc.; divine, invisible and eternal in the other element, by which the human is sanctified and made ecclesiastical in the true sense of the word.
 - ii. The invisible gifts of the Spirit become visible, not in themselves, but in the human elements which they transform.
 - (b) The Holy Ghost dwells in the Church, making the members temples of God (2 Cor. 6. 16).

- i. This Indwelling Spirit produces visible effects, like that of uniting the members of the body by the same profession of faith and communion of sacraments.
- ii. The real value and reality of these effects is the work of the Spirit, who gives life to the body.
- (c) This is the nearest image we can have of the hypostatic union, in which the divine nature becomes visible in the human and the latter is lifted up to the divine level.

2. *Theandric operations:*

(a) The human actions of Christ participate in some fashion in the divinity, taking their value from it. In some way this is imitated in the Church.

i. The hierarchy founded by Christ is sustained and transformed by the Paraclete who remains with the Church for ever. The magisterium and authority derive from Christ the Head, and are divided into different grades by means of a greater or lesser communication of the Spirit of truth and sanctity (Rom. 12. 6).

ii. Therefore, just as Christ is Master and Lord because he is the Incarnate Word, the hierarchy of the Church enjoys the magisterium and authority through the divine gifts from the Spirit of Truth.

(b) More easily visible is the divine and supernatural force of the purely natural elements which make up the matter of the sacraments. Above all the Eucharist.

3. *Christ glorified:*

(a) The glorified Church is the image of Christ in glory.

(b) We can think of this in the two states of Church militant and Church triumphant, and also from the triple view point of resurrection, regeneration and renovation—the three essential elements in the Church and in her life.

i. *The resurrection:* in the militant stage consists in the resurrection of the soul, imitating the bodily resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6. 4). But together with this symbolic resurrection which St Paul calls the 'first resurrection' there is another which is real, that of the body, and the triumph of the Church.

ii. *Regeneration:* the renewal of that state of original justice through the renovation of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3. 5), putting on Christ (Gal. 3. 27). But the perfect regeneration will take place only when the Son sits on his throne (Matt. 19. 28). This will only take place after a death in and with Christ, so that afterwards death may be swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15. 54).

iii. *The renovation:* another word which means the triumph of the Church when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth. We do not know how far this will affect earthly things, but we do know that its centre and model is Christ: when a man becomes

a new creature in Christ, his old life has disappeared, everything has become new about him (2 Cor. 5. 17).

F: The missionary Church

The catholicity of the Church

1. The same day of Pentecost the Church shows one of her marks, that of catholicity. Peter's sermon to all those people of different nations is an example of it.

2. The Apostles, after Pentecost, went into all the known world:

(a) They could have remained in Palestine, because they were only twelve, there were quite enough Jews there to keep them all busy, and they were a perverse generation (Luke 3. 7; Matt. 12. 39).

(b) Yet only one remained in Jerusalem while the others crossed the frontiers to take the Gospel into the whole world.

A mistaken idea

1. Some people seem to have the idea that aid to the missions is not necessary while there are so many to be converted in those countries which are already Christian in name. We need missionaries here, they will say.

(a) As reply to this we may point out that, in spite of shortage of clergy and funds, religious indifference, atheism, persecution even, we still have the Church visibly and solidly established among us.

(b) The hierarchy and ecclesiastical organization subsist by themselves. A missionary country is one in which there is as yet no properly constituted hierarchy or visible Church, i.e. morally visible to all.

2. Although we recognize the fact that our own needs are great, still we should put the need to spread the Church ever wider before our own.

3. It is also said at times that the help given to the missions weakens our home efforts.

(a) This is entirely false; the opposite is true; it is prejudicial to all apostolates to make it an egoistic thing, closing it in the small circle of associations, parishes, diocese or country.

(b) On the other hand, to give oneself whole-heartedly to the work of the missions is to consolidate the graces and favours God has already given us.

4. *This is the constant teaching of the Popes:*

In *Rerum Ecclesiae* Pius XI said: If there be in any of your dioceses any young men or ecclesiastical students or priests who seem called to this most excellent apostolate, far from putting any difficulties

in their way, encourage them in their ambitions and inclinations, by your favour and authority . . . neither scarcity of clergy nor any need of the diocese ought to discourage you or keep you from giving your consent, since your faithful have at hand, so to speak, the helps to salvation, and are far less removed from salvation than are the heathens, particularly those who are still savages and barbarians. If the occasion arises, therefore, suffer patiently the loss of one of your clergy for the love of God and of souls, if indeed it can be called a loss, since if you deprive yourself of a co-labourer and a sharer of your toils, the Divine Founder of the Church will surely supply the deficiency by showering more abundant blessings on the diocese and by awakening new vocations to the sacred ministry.

Gratitude to God shown by helping the missions

1. Pentecost reminds us of a great duty—that of helping to extend the Church.

(a) Through God's mercy we already form a part of that Church through baptism. It would be unjust and not merciful to refuse our help to those who so far have not been baptized.

(b) We show our gratitude to God by praying for infidels.

(c) Pius XI mentioned this in his Homily for Pentecost, 1922:

We have all a share each day, to a greater or lesser extent, in the benefits of our religion. . . . All, even the lowest of the faithful can and should say: What shall I return to the Lord for all that he has given to me? . . . Here is a suitable occasion if ever there was one. To show our gratitude to God for the gifts which we have received from him, let us contribute with all our power to spread these treasures as widely as possible to the greatest number of creatures of the Good God.

2. Those who have little of this world's goods, apart from giving what they can should also be reminded that they can always pray and offer their sufferings (a most efficacious means of help) for the missions.

G: The Union of the Churches

Broken unity

1. On the day of Pentecost, amidst the diversity of tongues, comes the unity of doctrine. In that first Christian community the unity which existed was the admiration of all.

2. Nowadays Christian unity has been destroyed:

(a) the East in schism;

(b) heretics in the East;

(c) Protestantism in all its forms in the West.

Let us desire unity

1. *Because we love Christ and loathe to see his work ruined:*

(a) **His idea was one fold and one shepherd:**

Therefore unity is the theme of his last discourse to his apostles and his sacerdotal prayer.

i. To achieve this unity he founded one strong authority in his Church, ordering that those who did not hear that voice should be regarded as outside his fold.

ii. Therefore, because he understood this so well, Paul calls the Church 'one bread, one body', etc., in a word 'one Lord and one faith'.

(b) **Christ is the Truth:**

He came to enlighten the world; and truth is one. Therefore anyone who loves Christ must feel it when he sees that, in his name, so many opposing doctrines are taught, which, by the very fact of being opposed, cannot all be true.

2. *Because we love our brethren:*

(a) **We hate to see them far from the truth and life:**

i. *from truth because they have lost that of Christ:* because—and this is worse—they may have given the name of doctrine of Christ to teaching which is not his;

ii. *from life, because truth is the way to life.* Because outside the Church of Christ there is no salvation. Even though their good faith may save them, still their real ignorance places them in greater danger and deprives them of greater remedies.

(b) **we hate to see them far from the fold and shepherd of Christ.**

Let us really desire unity

1. Human interests can be given up to reach harmony. Those of God cannot, because he alone is their owner. Error may cede its position, truth cannot.

2. Religious truth, simply because it is truth, must be one, and because it is religious it belongs to God. We men must love our fellow men who are in error, but we cannot bargain with them by ceding any single one of God's rights or of his truths, which he has deigned to communicate to us. Error has no rights, let us remember that.

3. Our desire is that of God himself, who wishes all men to be saved and to reach a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2. 4).

III. THE GOSPEL

A: Be true to his word

If a man has any love for me, he will be true to my word
(John 14. 23. D.V. he will keep my word)

1. The teaching of Christ is not a cold science, but life and action. It is not enough to know—we must also act.

Christ teaches those things which he wishes us to do, and since all who love him should be of one mind, those who love him should also wish what he wishes. If love does not reach this conclusion then it is not love.

2. The words which are heard but which do not reach the heart are not heard religiously, but scientifically and that is not enough either for salvation or to love the Lord. Mary, who kept them all in her heart, is our model here (Luke 2. 51).

The Lord has warned us many times about this:

i. The kingdom of heaven will not give entrance to every man who calls me Master, Master; only to the man that does the will of my Father in heaven (Matt. 7. 21).

ii. But whoever hears these commandments of mine and does not carry them out is like a fool, who built his house upon sand (*ibid.* 26). Cf. James 1. 22.

The Jewish people did not hear the Lord

1. This is a summary of their whole history; a God who never tires of sending messengers to his people, and a people which has the words of God on their lips but not in their hearts.

2. The whole of this attitude on both sides can be summed up in four passages of the Scriptures: Deut. 6. 1-5; Ps. 17. 35-36; Heb. 3. 7; Ps. 94. 8; Matt. 20. 28.

3. However, the people of Israel did not deny or reject the whole law.

(a) In the time of our Lord they were most faithful to the dogmas and even exaggerated the observance of the ceremonial part of it.

(b) They limited themselves to a rejection of one command which did not interest them—and that was enough to lead them to ruin.

Does the Christian people hear God?

1. We may limit our remarks to those who hear the word, that is to those who do not doubt about the faith:

(a) But do they hear it completely, that is in the sense of observing it? Are we not too inclined to divide it up into compartments: the

morality of the single persons, of those who are married, of professional men?

(b) Do we realize that the law is of obligation; or do we tend to divide it into commandments which are practical and can be observed, and those which are best forgotten?

2. Do Christian people hear the voice of Christ on earth in the person of the Pope?

(a) Do they even read the great Encyclicals, especially those which refer to social problems? Do they make any attempt to put them into practice?

(b) Sadly we have to admit that the answer to this question is too often in the negative. We have reached a situation which is very like that of the Jews in the time of Christ; there is a good deal of ritual observance but a neglect of the word of God in those matters which have ceased to be of any interest.

(c) The call has never been more urgent. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts . . . (Ps. 94. 8) because the evils which are threatened remind us of those mentioned by Jeremias—the whole earth shall be a desert, the world shall weep, the destruction approaches (cf. Jer. 4. 27).

B: The Fruits of the Spirit

I have appointed you that you should go, and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain . . . John 15. 16

1. These words, usually applied to the apostolate, can also be applied to the interior life of every Christian.

(a) In this chapter of St John Christ uses the image of the vine and its branches; he states that the mission of his disciples is to bear fruit, because if they do not, then they will be dead branches who will be cut off from the vine and burnt as being sterile.

(b) St Paul explains this fruit or harvest in a practical way when he says that it is sanctification (Rom. 6. 22); but he also says that this sanctification must be through the Spirit (Gal. 5. 25; Rom. 8. 5-11).

2. From this it follows that holiness manifests itself in the fruits of the Spirit. The soul which possesses them has realized the wish of Christ and is a fertile branch of the vine.

The fruits of the Spirit

1. They are learned by heart in our study of the catechism, but few understand their hidden meaning or realize that they have a direct relation to our holiness.

2. The word fruit has been taken from the material thing to signify something spiritual.

- (a) The fruit is something produced by a tree according to its own nature, and which pleases the sense of taste.
- (b) In the spiritual life the fruit is that which a man produces as a result of his spiritual life and which also pleases him.
- i. If it is produced by the use of mere reason it is a fruit of reason;
 - ii. if it be produced through the action of the Holy Spirit it is a fruit of that Spirit.

3. Thus the fruits of the Spirit are the actions or works of a man in so far as they are effects of the action within him of the Holy Spirit, and which at the same time produce in him certain satisfaction or spiritual delight. St Thomas describes them as, All those good actions which cause us delight (1. 2. q. 70. a. 1-4).

Virtues, Gifts, Fruits and Beatitudes

1. Their mutual relationship:

- (a) The virtues and gifts are the causes; the fruits and the beatitudes are the effects.
- (b) The virtues and gifts are the faculties of the soul; the fruits and the beatitudes represent the exercise of these faculties and the result of this in the soul.
- (c) The virtues and gifts are habits; the fruits and beatitudes are acts.

2. But there are differences between them:

- (a) The virtues perfect a man so as to enable him to act in a human way by the use of his reason; the gifts perfect him so that he is able to act in a superhuman way.
- (b) The actions produced by the virtues are done with difficulty, with a struggle, with violence done to human instincts, often even with repugnance, for which reason they are not called fruits—on the contrary, those produced by the gifts are done with a certain pleasure and delight, since the soul is directed and governed by a superior power in their production. For this reason they are called fruits.
- (c) When these fruits are perfect, complete and stable, they constitute a certain *state* of joy and delight—in which case they are called beatitudes.

Their number

1. If any good work produced under the inspiration of the Spirit can be given the name of fruit then, obviously, they are numberless.
 2. But they can be reduced to those mentioned by St Paul: charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency and chastity (Gal. 5. 22).
- (a) Through the gift of wisdom the soul learns to measure all things in relation to God; it is led to despise all that is not related to

him in order to give itself entirely to him. From this come the fruits which are called by St Paul charity, joy, peace, patience and benignity.

(b) Through the gift of knowledge the soul sees God reflected in all things created and is thus led to seek him and his justice, doing his will in all things. From this come the fruits of continency and faith.

(c) The gift of fortitude gives rise to:

- i. patience and longanimity, which will not be disturbed by evils which can attack them;
- ii. meekness which checks anger, so that no harm shall come to the neighbour.

(d) the gift of counsel produces modesty in deeds and words,

(e) finally the gift of understanding which purifies the heart and the gift of fear of God which gives rise to repentance produce the fruit of chastity in so far as this is an abstention from what is not licit (cf. St Thomas 1. 2. q. 70).

To enjoy the fruits

1. It is necessary to teach souls this doctrine in order to persuade them to taste the sweetness of the full spiritual life;

2. *Two fundamental dispositions are necessary:*

(a) **To avoid the works of the flesh:**

The flesh and the spirit are radically opposed; to enjoy the fruits of the spirit the flesh with its concupiscences must be crucified first.

(b) **To follow with docility the inspirations of the Holy Spirit:**

St Teresa says that the number of persons who live only for the glory of God is very small. We love ourselves too much; there is in us an excess of that worldly prudence which makes us afraid of losing our rights (*Fifth Castle*, c. 4).

(c) This excessive human prudence is a great obstacle to the action within us of the Holy Spirit.

3. The main fault of sinners is disobedience to the commandments; that of the just, lack of docility to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

4. Only by living fully accordingly to the guidance of the Spirit of God can we hope to bring forth much fruit.

C: Peace

The world has lost peace

On the feast of Pentecost 1954 the Holy Father Pius XII, in his radio message to the world, showed the anxiety he felt at the trend

of affairs then, and things have not improved since he spoke. The world which calls itself a disciple of Christ, who came into it with the message 'peace on earth to men of good will' and who left it with the phrase: my peace I leave with you, is destroying itself with civil, international and social warfare of all kinds.

Why?

1. Nevertheless Christ did not merely desire peace, he gave it to us. Why, therefore, do we not enjoy it?
2. If we search the Scriptures we find a reason: There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord God (Isaias 57. 21) and: They healed the breach of the daughter of my people, disgracefully, saying: Peace, peace, and there was no peace (Jer. 6. 14).
3. The cause of the lack of peace in the world can be no other than the loss of the peace of Christ. Let us see in what that peace consists.

The Peace of Christ

1. Peace consists in the tranquillity of order, says St Thomas, following St Augustine; that is to say, an order which is permanently tranquil.

(a) If true order reigns in the family, loving authority in the father, loving subjection in the mother and obedience in the children, then the peace in which that family lives is something admired by all.

(b) Once disorder is introduced then there are disturbances of all kinds.

2. Peace in the world:

(a) Universal peace demands order in all its component parts:

(b) therefore it demands:

i. *order in ourselves*, the subordination of the passions to reason—otherwise there can be no peace in the individual himself;

ii. *order in the relations of men between themselves*, the observance of the restrictions imposed on all by justice and authority, etc. otherwise civil and class war is bound to arise.

iii. *the order of all to God*, recognizing him as supreme Lord and legislator.

3. Christian peace:

(a) St Thomas (2-2. q. 29. a. 3) says that it comes from charity, the love of God and the love of the neighbour for God's sake.

(b) Pope John XXIII said the same in his Christmas allocution, 1958: The birth of the Lord; the announcement of unity and peace on all the earth; a renewed pledge of goodwill in the service of

order, justice and brotherhood among all Christians gathered together in a joint desire for understanding and of great respect for the sacred liberties of collective life in the three-fold order—religious, social and civil.

(c) From this love breaks forth the interior peace of man, ordered within himself, and the harmony with those whom he loves as he does himself.

The essential elements of this peace

Of the three orders mentioned by the Holy Father which is the principal?

(a) The first is necessary, above all, because where the respect for God's law is lost the State can soon become absolute and without any control from any power whatsoever. The State imposes law, but if it does not recognize one above itself, then who imposes law on the State? We must apply to such a State the rules which certainly have application in the case of the individual who does not admit the rule of God—there is no authority to which it must answer, no superior norm by which it is guided.

(b) Once God is removed the laws of treaties become useless, because the State seeks merely its own good. Communism, which actively admits the use of lies and all types of false propaganda, does no more than draw the logical conclusion from its position as a State which does not admit God. Remove God's power and to whom does the State have to answer for its crimes and usurpations? To itself—and its norm is its own good.

(c) The second order is necessary, because where there is no social equality, justice and obedience there can be no peace.

(d) The individual order is necessary, because unless a man is prepared to subject his passions to the rule of reason, then in both the social and religious order he is his own ruler and subject to no one.

The world has lost the peace of Christ

1. In the twentieth century we have been approaching ever more closely in the social order to the lay State, which some—even Catholics—would like to consider a natural thing and one to be permitted.

2. The principles of family morality, the sanctity of marriage, etc., have been openly violated—and these are the fundamental principles of the social life of the State itself.

3. Freedom of religion has been proposed as a natural right—a thing hitherto unheard of in sound Catholic theology.

4. The State is no longer the guardian—under the law of God—of public morality in many cases; it prefers to wash its hands of all responsibility.
5. In the international sphere, the Church has been carefully excluded from having any say in peace treaties, etc.; the so-called public good has been put before the moral law and its precepts, thus leading to the complete failure of all international tribunals, etc.
6. Even Catholic countries have not distinguished themselves by their efforts to promote social justice.
7. To sum up: we have not kept the three essential elements which can alone lead to world peace.

The solution

It has been repeated by the Popes time and again:

- (a) The Holy Ghost must repeat the miracle of Pentecost and enkindle once more the fire of charity in the hearts of men.
- (b) The world and the individuals in it must return to the peace of Christ.
- (c) Each one of us must co-operate in his or her own way towards this, each in his own life and sphere of action. It may be a long drawn out task and apparently hopeless, but we must heed Christ's words, a little leaven can change the whole mass. Each one must convert himself—then we may see the conversion of the world to the peace of Christ.

D: Peace an effect of charity

Peace, justice and charity

Peace is not an effect of justice—but of charity.

The doctrine of St Thomas

1. Peace is the proper effect of charity in so far as love and charity attain to God and to the neighbour (2-2. q. 29. a. 3. c).
2. *Peace implies a double union:*
 - (a) that of each man within himself—so far as his own instincts and appetites are concerned;
 - (b) the union of these same instincts with those of others.
3. Both of these are governed by the commandment of charity in its two parts, love of God and love of the neighbour.
 - (a) He who loves God above all things refers all things to God, because he loves with his whole soul, heart, mind and strength (Luke 10. 27). He puts into practice the formula 'what is not God is nothing'—or, to put it another way: My God and my all.

- (b) The second precept of charity unites him perfectly with others, because he loves his neighbour as himself; he does not seek that which is his own, but that which is his neighbour's.
4. Interior and exterior peace cannot exist where there is no charity.

Peace, justice and concord

1. *Peace and justice:*

- (a) Peace is said to be the work of justice in so far as justice removes the obstacles to peace; without justice there can be no peace;
- (b) but peace is only indirectly the work of justice—directly it is the effect of charity.

2. *Peace and agreement:*

This agreement can exist without peace; but in all those who really desire peace there must be agreement.

The peace of the world

1. What we call worldly peace is often just a matter of external agreement and internal war; it may be dissimulated and hidden, but it is still war (the phrase 'cold war' has been coined to meet this ethical situation).

2. *Peace and disagreement:*

It is possible to have disagreement in the intellectual order together with peace in the social order—the will.

Thus St Thomas:

There is nothing to prevent men who are united by charity from holding different opinions (2-2. q. 29. a. 3. *ad 2um*). Nor is this an obstacle to peace, because opinions concern the intellect, which precedes the appetite, that is united by peace.

Perfect peace

This dissension is, however, against the perfect peace which is not to be found in this world, but in the next.

(a) The peace which Christ left to the world is imperfect, a beginning of the peace which is heaven, but only a beginning; just as the kingdom of Christ in this world is only the beginning of his full kingdom in the next life.

(b) There only will his followers enjoy that eternal, complete and most perfect tranquillity and rest, living for ever in true and perfect peace.

E: Ideals

A sad truth

1. One hears it mentioned several times by those entrusted with the education of youth or by spiritual directors, that the world needs

men of high ideals and that modern youth does not rise to this. They may be harder working than in former generations, more serious, more cultured, honest or even pious perhaps; but they are also more realists than in former generations.

It is said that young people of today think more of themselves and their own well-being or happiness. Since life is hard and expensive today, from the first moment they are thinking of their career and how to make money.

2. What is the cause of this—granting that it is true?

(a) Is it because there is no one to show them the way? No leader who can inspire them sufficiently by sacrificing himself for an ideal?

(b) All that may also be true, but perhaps the truth is that there are few really spiritual men today, few who have really high ideals, a really spiritual outlook.

3. The first question leads to a second—what do we mean by men of ideals and men of spiritual outlook?

A man of ideals

1. By this we understand one who falls in love with a grand idea which it is possible to put into practice and who devotes his whole life to making that idea a reality.

The greatness of one's country, the redeeming of a nation, of the workers, the triumph of social justice—all these are ideals which are truly worthy of youth which has the seeds of greatness in it.

2. Such ideals, which are mainly formed within our minds, even though they have some basis outside ourselves, are great sources of energy. However, they are not without their dangers, too, because they may become egoistic, self-centred, uninfluenced by any other spirit except our own.

3. There must be a mixture of ideal and spirit.

The spiritual man

1. A man becomes truly spiritual, not by any cultivation of his own ideals of his own soul even, but because, through the purification of it, he has placed himself in contact with the Divine Spirit, in whose life and love he shares.

2. This is a constant source of new life and light.

(a) In the spiritual man there is always new light, energy, fortitude, new charity and universal love.

(b) The spiritual man is, in a word, a new creature.

3. He judges all things in relation to their first principle and last end—God.

He refers them all to God; he gives them their true value in God; he puts them in their right order, as they stand before God; he brings them peace in God.

4. In the same way he puts his ideals in order.

(a) He knows that there can be only one true ideal, which is absolutely and totally perfect—God.

(b) This does not mean that he cannot have other and less perfect ideals; what it does mean is that he keeps them always in relationship to this main one and subject to it. No other ideal is allowed to have absolute value in his heart, but only that true value which it has before God.

(c) His earthly ideals are not, therefore, killed by this higher one—they are purified by it and acquire new strength and dignity through it.

The need of our age

1. First of all for spiritual men; men of true interior life who will receive supernatural and spiritual energy from the Divine source of it all; men who will live lives according to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, truly spiritual souls, in a word.

2. Only with this as a foundation will the true humanist structure of such souls have any real value; but together with it it is invaluable, to each according to his own profession.

3. The first necessity, however, is to seek the kingdom of God and his justice in the interior man.

Such souls as these are the ones who are called to great tasks by God in the missionary, political, economic or scientific fields—but to fulfil their tasks properly they must have a deep sense of religious responsibility and interior spiritual peace.

Trinity Sunday

THE BLESSED TRINITY

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Romans 11. 33-36

Gospel: Matthew 28. 18-20

A: Texts which refer to the Trinity

In the Old Testament we may say that there are few, and most of them are vague, in the sense that the doctrine is explained in images rather than in words. The main texts are:

(a) Those in which God uses the plural form about himself:
Gen. 1. 26, 3. 22, 11. 7.

(b) The triple repetition of the name of God:
Ex. 3. 6, 3. 15-16, 4. 5; Isaias 6. 5.

(c) Those which refer to Wisdom as a person distinct from the others:
Cf. Wis. 9. 17; Isaias 48. 16, 61. 1.

B: The New Testament

1. The trinitarian apparitions:

(a) In the baptism of Christ:

So Jesus was baptized, and as he came straight up out of the water, suddenly heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting upon him. And with that, a voice came from heaven, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matt. 3. 16-17.

Cf. Mark 1. 9-11; Luke 3. 21-22; John 1. 31-34.

(b) In the transfiguration:

Even before he had finished speaking, a shining cloud overshadowed them. And now, there was a voice which said to them out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; to him, then, listen. Matt. 17. 5.

Cf. Mark 9. 6; Luke 9. 34-35.

2. The testimony of Christ:

I will then ask the Father, and he will give you another to befriend you, one who is to dwell continually with you for ever. It is the truth-giving Spirit, for whom the world can find no room. John 14. 16-17.

It is not you who speak, it is the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you. Matt. 10. 20.

... since the words spoken by him whom God has sent are God's own words; so boundless is the gift God makes of his Spirit. The Father loves his Son, and so has given everything into his hands. John 3. 34-35.

He who is to befriend you, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send on my account, will in his turn make everything plain, and recall to your minds everything I have said to you. John 14. 26.

Well, when the truth-giving Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, has come to befriend you, he whom I will send to you from the Father's side, he will bear witness of what I was; and you too are to be my witnesses. ... John 15. 26-27.

3. A passage from St John:

Thus we have a threefold warrant in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, three who are yet one ... 1 John 5. 7.

4. Some Pauline texts:

Surely you know that your bodies are the shrines of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in you. And he is God's gift to you, so that you are no longer your own masters. 1 Cor. 6. 19. Cf. *ibid.* 12. 4-6.

It is God who gives both us and you our certainty in Christ; it is he who has anointed us, just as it is he who has put his seal on us, and given us a foretaste of his Spirit in our hearts. 2 Cor. 1. 21-22.

To prove that you are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father. Gal. 4. 6.

He saved us; and it was not thanks to anything we had done for our own justification. In accordance with his own merciful design he saved us, with the cleansing power which gives us new birth, and restores our nature, through the Holy Spirit, shed on us in abundant measure through our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Tit. 3. 5-6.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

1. The Trinity, the primary object of worship:

The Liturgy, as the official worship of God through and in Jesus Christ, is in a special way Trinitarian. We can notice this if we study the various parts of the liturgy, where we shall find numerous references to the Trinity at all times.

2. The history of the Feast:

In former days this Sunday which followed the vigil celebrated in St Peter's was a free Sunday—it had no special feast. It is

probable, according to the evidence of the Sacramental Books, that on such free Sundays a custom of celebrating a votive Mass of the Trinity existed in some churches. The Gregorian Sacramentary contains a Mass of the Trinity with the preface we use today, while in the tenth century Stephen of Liège drew up an office to go with this Mass. Soon the custom of celebrating this Mass with its office grew in the Low Countries, England, France and Germany. Rome, however, did not accept this custom until much later. 'It is not the custom in Rome to dedicate any special day to the Trinity, since properly speaking It is honoured and venerated every day,' says Alexander II. John XII admitted the custom in Rome and ordered the feast to be celebrated in the whole Church. The original office and Mass have disappeared, and those in use today date from the time of Pius V.

3. *Its character:*

Like all other feasts of the Church this one teaches the great mystery of the Trinity, unfathomable to the human mind. However, it does so in no abstract and cold fashion, but in relation to our supernatural life. It is a feast of thanksgiving to the Trinity for the graces of our redemption and sanctification. After the celebration in the liturgical cycle of the feasts of the Redemption and that of the mission of the Holy Ghost it is just that we should honour the whole Trinity in its indivisible unity. This praise is seen clearly in the Introit, Offertory and Communion. The epistle also sounds this note of praise in the final doxology.

The feast gives us an opportunity to instruct the faithful concerning this mystery, leaving aside all theological speculations, which they cannot understand, and limiting ourselves to the note sounded in the liturgy—the relation of this dogma to our spiritual lives. It is a perfect occasion for teaching the doctrine of the Indwelling, for calling the people's attention to that doxology which is so well known that it has become almost routine. We must learn to say it, not merely with external attention, but also with an interior humility and gratitude of heart.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: Romans II. 33-36

1. *Its liturgical and literal sense:*

The Church, lost in profound meditation on the mystery which she is celebrating, chooses these words of St Paul. O Lord, she seems to say, you have made manifest to us the great mysteries of the Word step by step through his life. You have shewn us the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and now you invite us to admire, although it be from afar, the august mystery of the Trinity.

However, the literal sense of the passage implies a hymn of praise to the wisdom and providence of God. The Jews rejected Christ and their blindness has been the occasion of the call given to the Gentiles, until one day the former shall also be converted in their turn. How profound and inscrutable are the ways of Providence; what riches there are in the divine goodness, which will save even those who have rejected it. Who is capable of even guessing the ways of such a providence? That is the thought of St Paul.

2. *Texts:*

(a) How deep is the mine of God's wisdom, of his knowledge . . .

The riches of God are shown to us through his graces, poured out on the Jews and now on the Gentiles. Wisdom and knowledge are related to the divine plan for the salvation of the human race. The knowledge here mentioned may also refer to the vision of the future, while wisdom refers to the elaboration of a wise plan which is carried out even by those who rebel against it.

(b) judgements and ways . . .

That is, the decrees of God and his government of the world.

(c) Who has ever understood the Lord's thoughts? . . .

These three questions are taken from Isaias 40. 3; Job 42. 3 and their meaning is simple.

Who ever was the first to give and so earned his favours? In the thought of St Paul this phrase has an intimate relation with the idea of predestination and grace, which have already been mentioned in the chapters which precede this one (cf. 9. 20). Who art thou, friend, to bandy words with God? Is the pot to ask the potter, Why hast thou fashioned me thus?

(d) All things find in him their origin, their impulse, the centre of their being . . .

From him all wisdom and grace come to us; through him they are preserved and we are led to give him glory. In both the natural and the supernatural orders, this is the cycle; things come from God and end in God.

3. *The lesson:*

Paul, although a Jew, can give thanks to God even in the time of the greatest calamity which could befall his people. In our misfortunes let us also see the hand of Divine Providence.

Never should we despise the grace of God, for we never know the moment when God has decided that he will give us no more, but will pour it out rather on others who know better how to make good use of it, as he did with the Gentiles. Whatever I have comes from him, and it is all good and a free gift.

B: The Gospel: Matthew 28. 18-20

1. *Its historic situation:*

St Matthew puts this episode in its place in a few words: The eleven disciples took their journey into Galilee. . . .

St Matthew is interested only in the apparition in which the apostles received their mission. Therefore he passes at once from the meeting of Christ and the women, in which Christ gave them a message for the apostles, telling them to go to Galilee, to the incident which he is about to describe here.

We are in Galilee, therefore, on the mountain where Jesus had bidden them meet him (v. 17). It is impossible to identify this place with any certainty. Was it the one on which Christ preached the famous sermon? It could be. It would have been most fitting that he should choose that place in which he had taught the compendium of his doctrine to send the apostles into the whole world to preach it. Nor do we know if this is the apparition which St Paul mentions as having taken place before five hundred brethren at once. One thing is certain, that the powers which are now being given were handed over to the apostles only, for whether there were other witness or not, St Matthew only mentions the apostles.

2. *Texts:*

Prostrate in worship (the usual oriental method), we are told that some doubted. There are various meanings given to this phrase. Some translate it as meaning that those who formerly doubted now worshipped; others take it to mean that some did not recognize him because of the distance.

(a) *But Jesus came near . . .*
having received their adoration and in order to give them confidence in him.

(b) *All authority in heaven and on earth, he said, has been given to me . . .*

This is the basic principle of the mission which he is about to give them, the plenitude of the authority of the Messias-King, that universal dominion which was so badly misunderstood by most of the Jews and which now begins to be fulfilled. Christ, the centre of all time and space, about whom all is grouped.

The more exact sense of this phrase seems to refer to Christ made man, triumphant through his passion and death. Through this death and the merits of his passion he has overcome sin, death and the devil; his blood has won for him the dominion over the whole earth and over all mankind, to convert them into his subjects by faith and grace, to place them under the care of his church, which is his kingdom on earth, so that he may also crown and beatify them in heaven. This is the universal kingdom of the Messias, so well

described by Daniel (7. 14), St Paul (Eph. 1. 20; Phil. 2. 10), St Peter (Acts 10, 36), and St John (Apoc. 17. 14) Christ is referring to that power which is mentioned in Psalm 2. 8 and 109. 1, a power which is given him by his Father; and also to that which he himself mentions in John 16. 33, the power by which he has overcome the world (cf. Maldonado, *Commentary on St Matthew in loco*).

(c) *you, therefore, must go out . . .*

The apostolate is necessarily dynamic; just as Christ had to leave heaven (in the metaphorical sense) to come on to this earth. So we must go out and seek the people wherever they are to be found—not wait for them to come to us.

(d) *making disciples . . . teaching them . . .*

It is the power of the magisterium of the Church, given to the eleven. Some translators would distinguish here two phrases: make my disciples by means of baptism . . . and, teach them to observe my commandments. This merely brings out the obvious sense of the passages concerned, so that it is enough to mention the fact. The magisterium of the Church implies two essential things, the teaching of the faith, bringing to all the baptism of Christ to join them to the one true Church, the Body of Christ, making them part of its development; then, as a continuation, teaching them the commands of the Lord, so that these may be their model or way of life.

This second element adds something to the first; it demands a permanent contact between the preacher and the baptized, in imitation of the first converts who: Occupied themselves continually with the apostles' teaching, their fellowship in the breaking of bread, and the fixed times of prayer (Acts 2. 42). Baptism is the sowing in us of the seed of the Gospel and the supernatural life, which afterwards must be carefully tended until it leads to the perfection of Christ in our souls. We may also note that faith without good works is as nothing.

(e) *of all nations . . .*

Here is the right of the Catholic Church—to teach everywhere, and with complete freedom. There is also the obligation of the missionary apostolate. The universality of preaching derives from the universality of the kingdom of Christ and his redemption, from his right to possess all mankind and his universal will to save all mankind.

(f) *baptizing them . . .*

The task of conversion begins with the preaching of penance, which leads to baptism and the keeping of the commandments. St Matthew adds that he who does not believe (and is therefore not baptized) will be condemned—there is the obligatory force of the teaching authority and the necessity of the sacrament of baptism.

God has made them both completely necessary in order to reach the supernatural end.

(g) in the name . . .

He who is baptized is consecrated to God—to the Holy Trinity, who begins to dwell in him as in a temple.

(h) Teaching them to observe all the commandments which I have given you . . .

The literal sense is obvious, as are also the two practical applications for the preacher, and for the faithful. These must believe and observe 'all', without making water-tight compartments for themselves, infrequent in matters of Dogma, but, alas, only too frequent in moral matters. In a word, they must observe the whole of the Gospel without mutilations or glosses.

But the preacher also needs to remember that he must teach *all* the Gospel; it is all too common to hear certain vices attacked in front of those who do not commit them, while the same questions are avoided when addressing those who need them most. Meekness and the charity of the Gospel are very different from glossing over or hiding the truth when we know that it will not please our hearers.

(i) Behold I am with you all through the days that are coming . . .

God's help is necessary to observe the commands of the Gospel; but that help is with us all days, even to the end of the world.

C: The Trinitarian formula of baptism

It was used, on our Lord's command, from the very beginning; the phrase 'the baptism of Christ' merely indicates its author. The names of the Persons (with the article in the Greek before each one), clearly indicates their distinction, while of all Three the same Godhead is predicated. That is the mystery which the Church celebrates on this day and which is enclosed in a solemn form in the baptismal formula.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(Extracts on preaching taken from the Saint's work on the priesthood, PG. 26, 665.)

A: Preaching and study

1. *The necessity of both:*

Preaching is so necessary that the apostles left all other work in the hands of the deacons in order to be able to attend to it

properly. A city which has stout walls can laugh at the enemy, while one which is weakly defended soon falls. The walls which defend the Church are preaching, founded on the sound doctrine of the word of God. There is one remedy for all the evils which attack the Church—preaching.

2. *The example of St Paul:*

If this is so, then why did St Paul not merely make little or no attempt to acquire this virtue, but also makes no attempt to hide his lack of skill; he says that he is a novice in this matter, and this in his letter to the Corinthians, famous for their eloquence and proud of it (2 Cor. 2. 16)?

3. I shall try to demonstrate that Paul was not so ignorant as some people would like to believe. He does not say that he is ignorant and a novice in every respect; he points out that he is a novice in the art of speaking, but not in his knowledge. . . . If this were not so, then tell me, how did he manage to confound the Jews of Damascus when, as yet, he had not begun to work miracles? . . .

His epistles demonstrate the truth of this. These writings do not merely serve to refute all spurious doctrines and for the confirmation of the truth, they also contribute in no small measure to the perfection of our life. . . . These letters of the apostle, together with his teaching, form and adorn the spiritual beauty of the chaste virgin the bride of Christ. Through them her wounds are healed, together with the illnesses which attack her; she is conserved in health when she is well. Such are the remedies left to us by a man who is ignorant, remedies of such power that they are well known to all who have tried them.

4. *Reading, preaching, instruction:*

What has been said reveals how much St Paul insisted on the point we are considering. What is more, we must listen to what he says in his letter to his disciple, Timothy: Reading, preaching, instruction, let these be thy constant care while I am absent. . . . Let this be thy study, these thy employments, so that all may see how well thou doest (1 Tim. 4. 13-15). Later he says: It is for thee to hold fast by the doctrine handed on to thee, the charge committed to thee; thou knowest well from whom that tradition came; thou canst remember the holy learning thou hast been taught from childhood upwards. This will train thee up for salvation, through the faith which rests in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3. 14-15). . . . Listen also to what the apostle adds when he addresses Titus with regard to bishops. It is necessary, he says, that the bishop: . . . must hold firmly to the truths which have tradition for their warrant; able, therefore, to encourage sound doctrine, and to shew the wayward their error (Tit. 1. 9). How, therefore, could he argue and put to silence his adversaries if he were ignorant, as some would have it?

And what need would there be to give oneself to reading and the study of the Scriptures if one should embrace this same ignorance?

B: Good example as well as the study of the word

Words and deeds:

When he speaks especially of priests he says: Presbyters who have acquitted themselves well of their charge should be awarded double consideration, those especially who bestow their pains on preaching and instruction . . . (1 Tim. 5. 17). Truly, the ultimate purpose of instruction is to lead our disciples to that happiness which Christ promised, and that both by our deeds and by our words; because deeds by themselves are not enough. It is not I merely who say this, it is Christ also: But the man who keeps them and teaches others to keep them will be accounted in the kingdom of heaven as the greatest (Matt. 5. 19). If mere action were enough to teach, then the last part of what the Lord says would be superfluous, it would have been enough to say: He who keeps them. By the fact that he distinguishes the two things we are given to understand that, in the education of souls, both works and words have their part to play. In order that this instruction should be complete the works need the doctrine and the doctrine the works.

C: True Christian eloquence

The priestly eloquence:

(a) There is a difficulty here—the great trouble which such public instruction of the people demands. First of all, the greater part of our hearers do not resign themselves to listening to those who teach them with that disposition of soul with which one listens to a teacher; rather, leaving aside their rôle as disciples, they assume the attitude of mere spectators, as if they were assisting at a mere profane comedy of some kind. Just as, in the theatre, some spectators take the side of one actor and others that of another, so the hearers in church are divided, some prefer one preacher, others another. They only listen to those who preach through friendship or enmity. . . . The people are accustomed to listen, not that they may be instructed, but for their own amusement; wherefore that power of the word of which we have spoken is reduced to a mere argument, as if we were in the presence of some pagan philosophers.

(b) There is obvious need for generous souls . . . in order to rein in this disordinate taste on the part of the people, teaching them to hear the word of God with profit, so that it may be the people who follow the priest, not the priest who allows himself to be carried away by the whim of the people. This can only be achieved under two conditions, namely, the despising of praise and facility in speaking. If one of these is missing the other is of little use.

(c) The people must be treated as children, who when they are angry with us, do not disturb us, nor when they praise us are we puffed up. This is difficult, because we delight in praise. However, he who enters into the realms of teaching dominated by this desire will have much to suffer and put up with. As the sea cannot exist without waves so neither can the soul of the ambitious man exist with sadness and misery.

(d) Let us suppose that the preacher be endowed with great facility in speech, which is not indeed given to many; let him not think that he is therefore free from continual work . . . unless this gift be constantly exercised with great diligence, and without interruption, there comes a time when this facility abandons him. Therefore those who are more capable of such eloquence need to work harder than those who are less adept.

(e) Therefore, let the man who enters these lists of divine teaching never take heed of the applause of the multitude nor let him be disappointed if it is lacking. Let him take as his only rule and the judge of his sermons the desire to please God; according to that rule let him work at them, without seeking applause or acclaim. . . . This despising of human praise is the first and principal thing in which we must train ourselves. It is not enough to speak well; if this despising of praise be missing it will be impossible for us to retain our eloquence.

(f) All this may appear to you unimportant, or you may think it an easy thing to despise such praise. It is obvious that you have little or no experience of what they mean. The truth is that such things are enough to extinguish all human enthusiasm in the soul, robbing it of all its strength unless it is cut off from all human passions, made like those spiritual beings who cannot be attacked by envy, by love of glory or by any other infirmity of soul.

II. ST GREGORY NAZIANZEN

(After explaining the theology of the mystery of the Trinity, St Gregory advises all to have faith and humility. These are his words: PG. 36, 372 ff.)

If you are convinced that you should not investigate with undue curiosity if it is necessary to speak of the generation of the Son or of his subsistence, then neither should you be unduly curious about the procession of the Holy Spirit. For me it is enough to hear that he is the Son, who proceeds from the Father; that one is the Father and the other the Son. Nothing more should be investigated, I think, nor inspected with curiosity, lest the same should happen to me as happens to the eyes when they wish to look the sun in the face. The more clearly and carefully they attempt to see, so much the more harm is done to the sense of sight; indeed, by looking at it for a

long time the sight can be lost altogether. Thus the sun overcomes the power of sight if one wishes to contemplate it in its entirety, and not merely in so far as it can be seen. You have heard that it is called generation. Then do not enquire into the why and the wherefore with too much curiosity. You hear that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son; do not study the manner of that procession with undue curiosity. . . .

Even though you may have more talent than others or be more clever, still you will be as far from the truth as is the difference which exists between your nature and that of God. We have the promise that, one day, we shall know as we are known. If it is impossible for us in this life to attain to a perfect knowledge of these things, respect that which you cannot know. What is it that we hope for? Undoubtedly, you will tell me that it is the kingdom of heaven. Now, I understand by that the attainment of all that is purest and more perfect, that is, the knowledge of God. Let us guard it now and possess it in part, at least. Let us make sure that we attain to it partially while we live on this earth, and let us reserve the other part of it for the future life, that we may obtain as fruit and reward for our work the full light of the Holy Trinity as it is in itself, through Christ, our Lord, to whom be glory and empire for ever and ever.

III. ST AUGUSTINE

(The profound theological sense of St Augustine can be clearly seen in these extracts from his *De Trinitate*, in which he explains the manner in which things are predicated of the Three Persons, the metaphorical sense of certain expressions, the lack of any analogical help in this doctrine, the essential inseparability of the Three Persons and the soul as image of the Trinity. (Cf. PL. 42. 916-917, 952-953.)

1. *The Three Persons in one God:*

Wherefore let us hold this above all, that whatever is said of this supreme divine excellence in respect to itself, is predicated of the substance, but that which is said with regard to anything else is not said in relation to its substance, but relatively; and that the effect of the same substance in Father, Son and Holy Spirit is that whatever is said of each of the Persons in themselves is to be understood, not in the plural, but in the singular. For as the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, which undoubtedly is said of substance, yet we do not say that the Sublime Trinity is three Gods, but one God. . . . So the Father himself is declared by the name of Father; but by the name of God both himself and the Son and Holy Spirit, since the Trinity is one God. . . .

Whatever, therefore, is said of God in respect to himself, is both predicated singly of each Person, that is of the Father, Son and Holy

Ghost; and together of the Trinity itself, not plurally, but in the singular. For inasmuch as to God it is not one thing to be, and another thing to be great, but to him it is the same thing to be as to be great; therefore as we do not say three essences, so we do not say three greatnesses, but one essence and one greatness.

2. *Lack of analogical help:*

But it is by love that we must stand firm in this and cleave to this, in order that we may enjoy the presence of that by which we are, and without which we could not be at all. For since as yet we walk by faith and not by sight, we certainly do not yet see God face to face, whom indeed we shall never see unless now we love. But who is there who loves that which he does not know? It is possible that something may be known and yet not loved; but I ask whether it be possible that what is not known can be loved; since if it cannot, then no one loves God before he knows him. And what is it to know God except to behold him and steadfastly perceive him with the mind? For he is not a body to be searched out by carnal eyes. . . . Except he be loved by faith it will not be possible for the heart to be cleansed in order that it may be apt to meet and to see him. For where are those three, to build up which the Sacred Scriptures have been given to us, namely faith, hope and charity, except in a mind which believes what it does not see, hoping and loving that which it believes? Even he, therefore, who is not known, but is yet believed, can be loved. . . . (*ibid.* 8. 4).

Our conception is framed according to this notion when we believe that God was made man for us as an example of humility and to show God's love for us. . . . So also, because we know what humility is, we believe the omnipotent God in the power of his miracles and of his resurrection; we frame concepts of this kind according to the species and genera which are either in us by nature or learned by experience, that our faith may not be feigned. For neither do we know the countenance of the Virgin Mary, from whom, untouched by husband, he was born. Neither have we seen Lazarus, nor Bethany, nor the sepulchre or the stone which he commanded to be removed when he raised him from the dead. . . . yet we believe these things most firmly, because we imagine them accordingly to a general notion of which we are certain. For we believe our Lord to have been born of a virgin who is called Mary. But what a virgin is, what it is to be born and what is a proper name we do not believe, we know most certainly.

IV. ST BERNARD

(Second of his sermons for the Feast of Pentecost. On what the Blessed Trinity has done for man and on the threefold grace of the Holy Ghost.)

Come, then, my brethren, and let us review in our minds all the operations of the Holy Trinity concerning us and for our advantage, from the beginning of the world unto the end thereof; and let us see how much solicitude has been shown by that Divine Majesty to whom belong the administration and government of the whole world, lest he should lose us, his poor creatures, for ever.

In the beginning he created all things with power, and he governed all things with wisdom, in the constitution and conservation of the universe. There was goodness in God, and goodness exceeding great. But it lay hidden as yet in the heart of the Father, although destined to be poured out at the proper season upon Adam's race. Nevertheless, even then the Lord was saying: I am thinking thoughts of peace (Jer. 29. 11), that is, he was thinking of sending to us him who is our peace, who hath made both one (Eph. 2. 4 ff.).

Therefore his own loving-kindness induced the Word of God, enthroned on high, to descend to us; his mercy drew him down; his veracity, wherewith he had promised to visit us, constrained him; the spotlessly pure womb of the Virgin received him, without the least prejudice to her virginity; he was brought forth by his own power; obedience he made his guide in all the different circumstances of life; patience was his armour; and his charity revealed itself in all his words and in all his wonders. . . .

I will give thee, he says, not alone my conception, but my life as well; and I will give thee that life in all its varied stages of infancy, childhood, youth and manhood, adding thereto my death, my resurrection, my ascension and the mission of the Holy Ghost; to the end that my conception may purify thine, that my life may be a pattern for thine, that my death may destroy thine, that my resurrection may be followed by thine, that my ascension may open the way for thine, and that, finally, thou mayest have my Holy Spirit to help thy infirmity. For so thou shalt clearly see the way wherein thou shouldst walk, with what circumspection thou oughtest to advance, and to what goal thy steps must be directed. In my life thou wilt see thy way; and as I walked unswervingly in the paths of poverty and obedience, of humility and patience, of charity and mercy, so must thou do also, following my footsteps, and declining neither to right nor left. In my death I will communicate to thee my justice, putting an end to the yoke of thy captivity, and beating off the enemies that are in thy way or beside thy path, so that they may have no power to hurt thee.

And lest thou shouldst complain or be cast down because of my absence, I will send the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, who will bestow upon thee the pledge of salvation, the strength of life and the light of knowledge. He will give thee the pledge of salvation. The Spirit himself thus assures our spirit that we are children of God (Rom. 8. 16), impressing upon thy heart and revealing to thy

conscience the most evident signs of thy predestination, filling thy mind with gladness and enriching thy soul, if not continually, at least very often, with the dew of heaven by his consolations. He will give thee the strength of life, whereby that which is impossible to thee by nature shall become, through his grace, not only possible, but also easy. . . . In these things, therefore, the Spirit will teach thee all things which are conducive to thy salvation; because in them, namely, in the strength of life, in the light of knowledge, thou shalt find full and absolute perfection.

Oh, the hard and stony-hearted sons of Adam, whom so much kindness cannot melt; who are not touched by the generosity of him who, in the excess of his charity, has paid so high a price for goods so worthless! For it is not with gold and silver that he has redeemed us, but with his own most precious blood, which he poured out abundantly in generous streams through the five wounds of his body. Well might he ask, What is there that I ought to do for thee that I have not done? (Isaias 5. 4). He has given sight to the blind, he has brought back the wanderers, he has reconciled the guilty, he has justified the ungodly.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

The Three Divine Persons

A: The mystery

1. *A supernatural one:*

It is impossible to attain to a knowledge of the Trinity by natural reason. For, as explained above, man cannot obtain the knowledge of God by natural reason except from creatures. Now creatures lead us to the knowledge of God as effects do to their cause. Accordingly, by natural reason we can know of God that only which of necessity belongs to him as the principle of all things. . . . Now the creative power of God is common to the whole Trinity; and hence it belongs to the unity of the essence, not to the distinction of persons. Therefore, by natural reason we can know what belongs to the unity of the essence, but not what belongs to the distinction of persons. Whoever, therefore, tries to prove the Trinity of Persons by natural reason derogates from faith in two ways. First of all, as regards the dignity of faith itself, which consists in its being concerned with invisible things, that exceed human reason. . . . Secondly, as regards the utility of drawing others to the faith. For when anyone, in the endeavour to prove the faith, brings forward reasons which are not cogent, he falls under the ridicule of unbelievers; since they suppose

that we stand upon such reasons, and that we believe on such grounds (1 P. q. 32. a. 1. c).

2. *What reason can do in this mystery:*

(a) Reason may be employed in two ways to establish a point; first for the purpose of furnishing sufficient proof of some principle, as in natural science. . . . Reason is employed in another way, not as furnishing a sufficient proof of a principle, but as confirming an already established principle, by showing the congruity of its results. . . . In the first way we can prove that God is one, and the like. In the second, reasons avail to prove the Trinity; as, when assumed to be true, such reasons confirm it. We must not, however, think that the Trinity of Persons is adequately proved by such reasons. This becomes evident when we consider each point, for the infinite goodness of God is manifested also in creation, because to produce from nothing is an act of infinite power. For if God communicates himself by his infinite goodness, it is not necessary that an infinite effect should proceed from God; but that according to its own mode and capacity it should receive the divine goodness (*ibid. ad 2um*).

(b) Therefore we must not attempt to prove what is of faith except by authority alone, to those who receive the authority; while as regards others, it suffices to prove that what faith teaches is not impossible. Hence it is said by Dionysius: Whoever wholly resists the word is far off from our philosophy; whereas if he regards the truth of the word—i.e. the sacred word, we too follow this rule (*ibid. c*).

B: The Father

The proper name of any person signifies that whereby the person is distinguished from all other persons. For as body and soul belong to the nature of man, so to the concept of this particular man belongs this particular soul and this particular body; . . . now it is paternity which distinguishes the person of the Father from all the other persons. Hence this name Father whereby paternity is signified, is the proper name of the person of the Father (q. 33. a. 2. c). Now, it is manifest from the foregoing, that the perfect idea of paternity and filiation is to be found in God the Father and God the Son, because one is the nature and the glory of the Father and Son. But in the creature filiation is found in relation to God, not in a perfect manner, since the Creator and the creature have not the same nature; but by way of a certain likeness, which is the more perfect the nearer we approach to the true idea of filiation. For God is called the Father of some creatures by reason only of a trace, for instance, of irrational creatures. . . . Of some, namely rational creatures (he is the Father) by reason of the likeness of his image. . . .

And of others he is the Father by the similitude of grace, and these are also called adopted sons, as ordained to the heritage of eternal glory by the gift of grace which they have received. . . . Lastly, he is the Father of others by the similitude of glory, forasmuch as they have obtained possession of the heritage of glory (q. 33. a. 3. c).

C: The Son

1. To show that he is of the same nature as the Father he is called the Son; to show that he is co-eternal, he is called the Splendour; to show that he is altogether like, he is called the Image; to show that he is begotten immaterially, he is called the Word. All these truths cannot be expressed by one name (q. 34. a. 2. *ad 3ium*).

2. Now *word* is taken strictly in God as signifying the concept of the intellect. Now the concept has of its very nature, to proceed from something other than itself, namely, from the knowledge of the one conceiving. Hence *word* according as we use the term strictly of God, signifies something proceeding from another, which belongs to the nature of personal terms in God, inasmuch as the divine persons are distinguished by origin. Whence the term *word* as we use it strictly of God, is to be taken as said not essentially, but personally (q. 34. a. 1. c).

D: The Holy Spirit

Here we include the ideas of the Angelic Doctor concerning the effects of divine activity which are appropriated to the Holy Spirit, as he explains them in the fourth Book of the *Contra Gentes*.

1. *The appropriations with regard to all creatures:*

(a) **He is the principle of their creation:**

The love wherewith God loves his own goodness is the cause of the creation of things; and it is laid down that the Holy Ghost proceeds as the love wherewith God loves himself. Therefore the Holy Ghost is the principle of the creation of things; and this is signified in Ps. 103. 30. Send forth thy spirit and they shall be created (Book IV, 20).

(b) **Government and life are also attributed to him:**

The government of creation is also fittingly attributed to the Holy Ghost, since government is the moving and directing of things to their proper ends. And because government of subjects is also aptly attributed to the Lord, the Holy Ghost is called the Lord: The Spirit is Lord (2 Cor. 3. 17). Life also particularly appears in movement. As then impulse and movement by reason of love are proper to the Holy Spirit, so too is life aptly attributed to him, as it is said: It is the Spirit that quickeneth (2 Cor. 3. 6) (*ibid.*).

2. Appropriations which refer to man:

(a) Since the Holy Spirit proceeds as love—that love by which God loves himself—and since by loving God we become like that divine love, it is said that God gives us the Holy Spirit. Thus the apostle says: The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom we have received (Rom. 5. 5).

Thus, the charity that is in us, though it is the effect of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is in a certain special aspect, said to be in us through the Holy Ghost (*ibid.* c. 21).

(b) Indwelling of the Trinity:

Hence, since the charity wherewith we love God is in us through the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost himself must be in us, so long as charity is in us. Know ye not that ye are the temples of God, and the Holy Spirit dwelleth in you? (1 Cor. 3. 16). Also, since through the Holy Ghost we become lovers of God, and since every beloved is in the lover, it must needs be that, through the Holy Ghost, there dwell in us also the Father and the Son. As the Lord said: We will come to him and will make our abode in him (John 14. 23).

(c) The light of hearts:

It is a point of friendship to reveal one's secrets to one's friend; for as friendship unites affections and makes of two as it were one heart, a man may well seem not to have uttered beyond his own heart those things which he has revealed to his friend. Hence the Lord says to his disciples: I will not call you servants, but friends, because all the things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you (John 15. 15). Since then, by the Holy Ghost, we are constituted friends of God, the revelation of divine mysteries to man is fittingly said to take place through the Holy Ghost: To us God has revealed them through the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 2. 10).

(d) The giver of gifts:

Besides the revealing of one's secrets to one's friend, which is part of the union of affections which goes with friendship, there is a further requisite of the same union, to share one's possessions with one's friend, according to 1 John 3. 17. And therefore all the gifts of God are said to be given us by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 7-11; cf. 1 Cor. 2. 9-10).

(e) Spiritual perfection:

In order that man may reach the blessing of the divine happiness, a thing which by nature belongs to God alone, he must become like God in his spiritual perfection and, secondly, he must act accordingly. Thus he will attain final beatitude.

Now, as it has been said, all spiritual gifts are given to us by the Holy Spirit; thus we are made like to God by the same Spirit. Through him we are able to do good and by him our way to heaven

is prepared. These three things are made known to us by the apostle when he says; God hath anointed us, and sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor. 1. 22). . . . The sealing may be taken to mean the likeness to God; the anointing, the fitting of man to do perfect acts; the pledge, the hope whereby we are set on the way to heaven, the inheritance of life eternal (*ibid.*).

(f) The adoption of sons of God:

And because goodwill leads at times to the adoption of a person as a son, that so the inheritance may belong to him, the adoption of the sons of God is rightly attributed to the Holy Spirit: You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father (Rom. 8. 15).

(g) The forgiveness of sins:

Again, by admission to friendship all offence is removed. Since, then, we are all rendered sons of God through the Holy Ghost, through him also our sins are forgiven by God; and therefore the Lord says: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them (John 20. 22). And therefore forgiveness is denied to them that sin against the Holy Ghost (Matt. 12. 31) as to persons who have not that whereby a man obtains forgiveness of his sins (*ibid.*).

(h) Spiritual consolation:

It is a mark of friendship to take delight in the company of one's friend, to rejoice at what he says and does, and to find in him comfort and consolation against all troubles. Hence it is in our griefs especially that we fly to our friends for comfort. Since then the Holy Ghost renders us friends of God, making him to dwell in us and we in him, we have through the same Holy Spirit joy in God and comfort in all the adversities and assaults of the world. Hence it is said: Give me back the joy of thy salvation and strengthen me with thy guiding Spirit (Ps. 50. 14). . . . The Church had peace, and was edified, walking in the fear of the Lord and filled with the consolation of the Holy Ghost (Acts 9. 31).

(i) Every interior and supernatural impulse:

Another mark of friendship is to fall in with our friend's wishes. Now God's wishes are unfolded to us through his commandments, the keeping of which, therefore, is part of our love of God. If you love me keep my commandments (John 14. 15). As then we are made lovers of God by the Holy Ghost, so by him we are also led to fulfil God's commands. Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, the same are the sons of God (Rom. 8. 14). But it is a noteworthy point that the sons of God are led by the Holy Ghost, not as slaves, but as freemen. He is free who is a law unto himself, and we do that freely which we do of ourselves, that is, of our own will. . . . The

Holy Ghost then, rendering us lovers of God, inclines us to act of our own free will, out of love, not as slaves prompted by fear (*ibid.* c. 22).

II. ST ROBERT BELLARMINE

The ceremonies and obligations of baptism

(In his work *Ars bene moriendi* he has a chapter devoted to the examination of conscience, based on the ceremonies and obligations of Baptism. This is a summary of his teaching on the point.)

The Catholic faith and the renunciation of the world

1. *The Creed:*

How many there are who do not know it or understand it, in spite of the fact that their godparents recited it for them at baptism. If, as St Paul says, God must dwell in our hearts by faith, how can he dwell in such as these? The faith is altogether necessary in order to reach eternal life.

2. *The renouncing of Satan and his works:*

Have we renounced him really and truly and do we follow the way laid down by Christ, whom no one can deceive? He reads the heart. Let each one, then, lay his hand on his breast and see what are his faults and vanities and if he lays up treasure in the things of this world.

3. *Baptism:*

He warns us of the singular mercy which is ours in this sacrament, by which we pass from the slavery of the devil and the filth of sin to the purity of grace through the merits of the blood of Christ. What blindness in the children of Adam, who as soon as their eyes are opened to the use of reason, return to the old chains! From childhood the soft yoke of grace, therefore do not prefer the heavy one of condemnation, and if you should feel it, hurry to seek pardon in penance.

4. *The white garment and the candle:*

What tongue could tell the wiles and traps of the devil to make us filthy again! He respects no occupation or state; but if the struggle is most hard and the danger greater, so too is the glory of our reward. If at any time, by misfortune, you should stain this white garment, hurry to wash it once more in the blood of the Lamb; recite the *Miserere*, especially that verse which says: Thou shalt sprinkle me with a wand of hyssop and I shall be clean; washed, I shall be whiter than snow (Ps. 50. 9).

The lighted candle is a symbol of the good works with which we should give an example all our lives until we end by saying that we have fought the good fight.

5. *The obligations of baptism:*

I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have redeemed my pledge; I look forward to the prize which is awaiting me, the prize I have earned (2 Tim. 4. 7-8). In these words the apostle mentions all the obligations which fall on the baptized. They have enlisted under the banner of Christ, they have pledged themselves to fight against the devil: who goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5. 8). They must persevere through the whole of life, without taking one backward step in the keeping of the commandments; strong in faith, as in all the particular obligations, because even though it be true that Christ, in baptism, made us heirs to his glory, he still wishes that we should merit it by his grace and by our works; thus he will be able to grant it to us finally as the crown which the just judge may grant to us.

Let each one, therefore, examine his conscience, to see if he has lived in accordance with his baptism, so that he may die as a Christian.

III. LOUIS BILLOT

Infallible and universal magisterium

1. *Infallibility:*

It is the power of not falling into error in matters of faith or morals. This infallibility does not depend on any human element, nor even on grace and the virtues; since these all leave man with the possibility of making a mistake. Nor is it the power to reveal new dogmas, but simply the power to conserve and faithfully explain the doctrine taught by the apostles.

2. *Infallibility in the Old Testament:*

(a) *The motives for revelation:*

It is incredible that God should have enlightened mankind from the beginning with his revelation and then should have taken no steps to preserve it. In the actual plan of providence revelation is necessary, and it unthinkable that God should have denied to man this means of salvation.

This is a new motive which demands the existence in the world of some infallible magisterium even in ancient times, especially when we remember that the entire religious economy of the world has Christ for its centre and that the revelation of the Old Testament was intended to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. If it was necessary then, much more so now, unless we are ready to admit that Christ, having overcome the devil, gives up the struggle.

(b) *The prophets, organs of revelation:*

After the dispersal of mankind to the four corners of the earth God's interest is concentrated on the Jewish people, whom he makes the deposit for his revelation, and to preserve it, apart from the

ordinary magisterium of the priests, which of itself is not infallible, he instituted, as a constant element which would supply the defects in the ancient priesthood, that of prophecy. This was not merely the organ of new revelations, but also the conserver and official interpreter of the former revelations, an element which was not to fail in Israel, even after the captivity, and which will only end with the coming of the greatest of them all, John the Baptist.

3. *Infallibility in the New Testament:*

With solemn words Isaias describes the future state of Israel when he says: All thy children, then, shall be disciples of the Lord . . . this covenant I will make with them, the Lord says: Spirit of mine that dwells in thee, words of mine entrusted to thy lips; on thy lips shall I dwell, on the lips of thy children and thy children's children, henceforth and for ever . . . Rise up, Jerusalem, and shine forth; thy dawn has come, breaks the dawn of the Lord upon thee (Isaias 54-60). This is the firm promise, like that which God made to Noe, not to destroy the earth again by water.

The prophecy was fulfilled, Israel gave place to the Church when Christ pronounced those words: All authority in heaven and on earth, he said, has been given to me; you, therefore, must go out, making disciples of all nations, and baptizing them in the name of the Father . . . teaching them to observe all the commandments which I have given you. And behold I am with you all through the days that are coming, until the consummation of the world (Matt. 28. 18-20).

4. *It is given to the apostles:*

It is evident that the power of teaching is given to the apostles, and that this refers to those things which Christ himself had communicated to them. It is also evident that it is given until the end of the world. . . . If then the Lord gave this power to his apostles until the end of the world it is obvious that he is not referring to them personally, mortal as they are, but to their office and therefore to their successors.

5. *The infallible magisterium:*

It is a universal principle that, in all those places in the Sacred Scriptures in which God promises his help, this means a special help and one which is efficacious to secure the realization of the mission which is entrusted (cf. Gen. 21. 22, 26. 3, 31. 3, 39. 2; Judith 8. 20; Joel 3. 2).

The efficacious help promised to the Church's teaching authority cannot be anything else but that of teaching without error, in other words, infallibility. In the light of these words we can understand perfectly the meaning of that promise to send them the Spirit of truth, who would remain always with them. . . .

There exists, then, an oasis in the desert of the world, watered by the most pure water of doctrine. . . . A happy paradise in which there is no hidden serpent, according to his promise in Isaias 35. 8-10.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST TERESA OF AVILA

1. *How the saint understood the mystery as far as she could:*

Once, when I was reciting the psalm *Quicumque vult*, I was shown so clearly how it was possible for there to be one God alone and Three Persons that it caused me both amazement and much comfort. It was of the greatest help to me in teaching me to know more of the greatness of God and of his marvels, and when I think of the Most Holy Trinity, or hear it spoken of, I seem to understand how there can be such a mystery and it is a great joy to me.

2. *The seventh mansion:*

But in this mansion everything is different. Our good God now desires to remove the scales from the eyes of the soul, so that it may see and understand something of the favour which he is granting it, although he is doing this in a strange manner. It is brought into this mansion by means of an intellectual vision, in which, by a representation of the truth in a particular way, the Most Holy Trinity reveals itself, in all Three Persons. First of all the spirit becomes enkindled and is illumined, as it were, by a cloud of the most extreme brightness. It sees these three Persons individually, and yet by a wonderful type of knowledge which is given to it, the soul realizes that most certainly and truly all these Three Persons are one substance, one power and one knowledge—one God alone; so that what we hold by faith the soul may be said to grasp, it seems better to say, by sight, although nothing is seen by the eyes of the body or with the imagination, for it is no imaginary vision. Here all Three Persons communicate themselves to the soul and speak to it explaining to it those words of our Lord in the Gospels, namely that he and the Father and the Holy Spirit will come to dwell in the soul which loves Him and keeps his commandments (*Interior Castle*, VII. c. 1).

3. *How the Saint felt this presence:*

I see the Persons distinct one from another, as clearly as I saw two people yesterday when your Reverence was talking to the Provincial; only, as I have already said, I actually see and hear nothing at all. Yet, although this may not be seen by the eyes of the soul, there is a strange certainty about it; as soon as the presence is no longer there, its absence is noticed. How this happens I cannot say, but I am

quite sure that it is not imagination; for even if I do the very best I can to recall the Vision, as I have done at times, I cannot succeed (*Spiritual Relations*, V).

4. *The mystery:*

O my soul; reflect upon the great joy and the great love which the Father has in knowing his Son, and the Son in knowing his Father; also upon the ardour with which the Holy Spirit unites with them, and how none of these can cease from this knowledge and love, since they are one and the same. These Sovereign Persons know each other, love each other and delight in each other. What need, then, have they of my love? Why dost thou seek it, O my God, or what dost thou gain by it? Blessed be thou; blessed, my God, for ever! Let all things praise thee, O Lord, without end, for there never can be an end in Thee (*Exclamations*, VII).

II. ST JOHN EUDES

The mission of preaching

1. *The grandeur of this mission:*

The principal mission of our Lord was that of preaching: For it is for this that I was sent (Luke 4. 43). For this the Father has sent me. To preach the Gospel to the poor (*ibid.* 18). Just as Christ gave us a share in the power of judging and forgiving sins, so now he wishes to associate us with himself in the quality of preachers: As the Father hath sent me, so I send you. My Father sent me to announce the divine word to men and to let them know his divine will. I send you to preach the same gospel and the same truths which I have taught.

(The saint then asks what is the reason why, with so many preachers in the world today, there are so few conversions to the life of grace. After pointing out that some of the fault lies on the side of the hearers of the word he also goes on to show the faults of the preachers themselves.) There is another (reason) on the part of those who preach the word, especially those who take on this task without a true vocation from God, only giving themselves to him from a spirit of ambition, self-interest, or some other human motive. Instead of preaching Jesus Christ, such as these preach only themselves; instead of preaching the truths of the Gospel and the word of God, they preach the word of men, thoughts and imaginings of their own, thus adulterating, as St Paul says, and corrupting the word of God (2 Cor. 2. 17, 4. 2). They preach those things which are more fitted for satisfying the curiosity of men's minds, than for feeding the faithful with the true bread of heavenly doctrine. . . . They are more concerned with pleasing their audience than with converting their hearers. Like the pharisees, they are content to

preach the truths of the faith without taking the trouble to practise them. They are hearers of the word, not doers (Matt. 23. 3). They serve up to the faithful exquisite foods, i.e. the truths of the Gospel, but these are not cooked in the fire of charity, because they preach with their lips, not with their hearts, like one who invites his friends to a banquet and then serves them with magnificent foods, but completely raw.

2. *The qualities of the preacher* (We shall give a summary of these.):

(a) *The glory of God:*

Those who are legates of Christ should neither refuse a command when it is necessary, nor be given to vain glory if they should receive it (St Bernard). When a man seeks to win credit for one who sent him, he tells the truth, there is no dishonesty in him (John 7. 18).

(b) *simplicity without avarice:*

Prudent as serpents, simple as doves (Matt. 10. 16); Meek and humble with all, as was the Lord (Matt. 11. 29; Tit. 3. 2); The love of money should not dwell in your thoughts (Heb. 13. 5); You should not run after gold nor put your hopes in riches and treasures (Ecclus. 31. 8); but as men of God you should seek only right living, holiness, and faith, and love, and endurance, and kind forbearance. (I Tim. 6. 11).

(c) *prayer and light:*

Devoted to prayer and the ministry of preaching (Acts 6. 4), you should rely always on the grace of God instead of on your own ability and effort (St Bernard). The light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5. 13), you should: Make thyself a model of speech and behaviour for the faithful, all love, all faith, all purity (1 Tim. 4. 12). We are Christ's incense offered to God, making manifest both those who are achieving salvation and those who are on the road to ruin (2 Cor. 2. 15).

(d) *given to the ministry of the word:*

When we preach. . . . It is with this in view; we would earn God's good opinion, not man's, since it is God who scrutinized our hearts (1 Thess. 2. 4). We should: Preach the word, dwelling on it continually, welcome or unwelcome; bring home wrong-doing, comfort the waverer, rebuke the sinner, with all the patience of a teacher (2 Tim. 4. 2).

3. *The excellence of this office:*

(a) *In itself:*

Considered in itself it is an office which is more holy and useful than that of the preachers of the Old Testament, who were the

prophets. The difference between the prophets of the Old Law and the preachers of the New is that the former deliver to their hearers nothing more than the letter of the law, while those who preach Jesus Christ administer to their hearers the spirit, i.e. grace, unless they put an obstacle in the way. It is he who has enabled us to promulgate his new law to men. It is a spiritual, not a written law; the written law inflicts death, whereas the spiritual law brings life (2 Cor. 3. 6). This ministry is common to us and to the Apostles, and also to Christ himself. So distinguished an office is this that Christ says about his preachers: He who gives you welcome, gives me welcome too (Matt. 10. 40); while on the other hands he affirms that it will be more tolerable for such cities as Sodom and Gomorrha at the day of judgement than for those who reject his preachers (*ibid.* 15).

(b) in its effects:

Preaching destroys the reign of Satan and extends that of the Church. It develops the life received in baptism, so that Christ can say to us also, you have the words of eternal life. Preachers are the heralds of the Trinity, wherefore they begin their preaching by the sign of the cross and the words which accompany it. They are the ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5. 20); God's helpers in the greatest of his works (1 Cor. 3. 9). They are the mouths by which Christ speaks.

(c) in its origin:

Preaching has its origin in the very heart of God himself, since from the bosom of the Father came the Word of God made man, the eternal Word, first of all the preachers, from whose source all others derive. Its purpose is to make men sons of God.

Since, therefore, preachers are associated in their mission with the apostles and with Christ himself, they should be careful to conform their lives to that of Christ and the apostles, and having consecrated their lips to the service of the Holy Spirit, having exchanged their own voice for that of Christ and their tongue for that of God, let them never speak anything but the divine language, as if it were God himself who speaks through them (1 Pet. 4. 11). Let them always speak as God, before God (that is, with his glory in mind) and in Christ Jesus.

Add to all this that to preach the word of God in the right disposition is a task more pleasing to God than the highest contemplation, because there is nothing so pleasing to him as co-operation in the work of saving souls, which is obtained more efficaciously through preaching than contemplation. Although Rachel is more beautiful than Lea, says St Bernard, the latter was more fertile than the former.

III. FERNAND PRAT, S.J.

Baptism in St Paul

(Extracts from the section of *The Theology of St Paul*, in which he gives a summary of the apostle's doctrine concerning the effects of Baptism. Vol. 2, pp. 255 ff.)

1. *The symbolism of baptism:*

(a) **Four main symbols:**

The rite of immersion in the primitive Church contains four main symbols.

- i. *as a sacred bath*, it signifies internal purification;
- ii. *as a return to the light*, it signifies spiritual illumination;
- iii. *as a mystical burial*, it is a symbol of the death of the old man and a renewal in union with the death of Christ;
- iv. *as a mystical resurrection*, it is a symbol of regeneration and of a new life.

(b) **Two new elements:**

Later this symbolism was enriched by two new elements: anointing, emblem of the grafting of the neophyte into the true olive tree, and the change of dress, emblem of moral transformation; but this two-fold symbolism, whether suggested or not by St Paul's language, must not occupy our attention here, for nothing proves that it goes back to the apostolic age. Of the four aspects pointed out above, the first—the one which the etymology of the word first evokes, and which most naturally suggests itself to the mind—was also the most common at the beginning. The second was specially honoured from the second century onwards; after the time of St Justin, *to illumine* and *illumination* became synonymous with 'to baptize' and with 'baptism'. These forms of speech and thought are common to St Paul. Christians have 'the eyes of their heart enlightened'; they are 'children of the light and children of the day'; much more the light which penetrates them at baptism changes them into luminous centres, which reflect it and disperse it, as a crystal, illumined by the sun's rays, becomes glittering and radiant; they shine like 'lights in the world', and are themselves 'light in the Lord'. Nor is St Paul unaware of the fact that baptism is a 'bath of regeneration and renovation'; that all the faithful 'are purified, sanctified and justified', and that Jesus Christ, wishing to prepare for himself a spouse perfect and worthy of him, sanctifies it (the Church), 'cleansing it by the laver of water in the word'. Certainly, it is not a question here of a material purification: the baptismal application owes its efficacy to the all-powerful word which elevates it to the dignity of a sacramental rite. It is not, however, the purification of the soul through the remission of sins, or the illumination of the intellect by faith that St Paul wishes to make prominent when

he speaks of baptism; it is the mystical death and resurrection, represented and produced by the sacrament.

2. *Mystical death and resurrection:*

The rebirth of man has a previous death as its essential condition. Jesus Christ is a Saviour only by the cross, and he saves us only by associating us with his death. But to become capable of saving us, this ideal death must be realized in each one of us, and this is what takes place at baptism (Rom. 6. 3-7). This text condenses into a few words of admittable fulness of meaning the direct effects of baptism, the benefits which it assures us in the future and the duties which it imposes on us now. Through failing to distinguish these different points of view exegetes and theologians amalgamate incongruous ideas and thus make one of the most beautiful pages of St Paul a piece of insipid nonsense. We have to consider here only the immediate fruits of baptism. To be baptized into the death of Christ is to be baptized into the dying Christ—that is, to be incorporated with Christ in the very act by which he saves us, to die mystically with him who suffered death in the name and for the benefit of all. This mystical death is a reality, because the effects of it are very real; death to the old man, death to the Law.

(a) *Death to sin:*

If we are to believe certain protestant commentators, death to sin is only the result of a legal fiction: God, they say, regards us as dead, in the same way as he treats us as just, although no change has taken place in us. At most they make the change consist in a decisive breaking-off from sin on the part of the will, with its instincts and desires, and this under the continually renewed power of faith in the death of Christ for sin. This explanation explains nothing. That the Christian, from the very fact of his baptism, is in duty bound to persevere in a state of death in relation to sin no one disputes, but this duty, if it is analysed, implies an internal change of a moral order. St Paul is not satisfied with saying 'die to sin', but he says: 'You are dead to sin.' To die to sin, therefore, is to lay aside the taint of sin; but it is at the same time to be delivered from its tyranny and to be enabled to resist its future attacks. There is no restriction, no exception; original sin, present sins, all that is called sin in the true sense of the word, has disappeared at baptism; for 'There is now no more condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 8. 1). Yesterday they may have been idolaters, fornicators, thieves, calumniators, and blasphemers; now they have been 'Purified, sanctified and justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. 6. 11).

(b) *Death to the old man:*

Death to the old man is a consequence of death to sin. When we were baptized into the death of Christ, our old man was crucified

with him (Rom. 6. 6). The old man denotes all that we have in common with the first Adam, and all that we inherit directly or indirectly from him, as the religious head of humanity. All this perishes through the fact of our union with the second Adam. It is very evident that death to the old man is progressive, for the inclination to evil persists even in regenerate man; but the old man has received a mortal blow; with the antidote of grace, concupiscence, called here the 'body of sin', is rendered inert and harmless.

(c) *Death to the Mosaic Law:*

For St Paul this ends completely with baptism (Rom. 7. 6).

(d) *Spiritual resurrection:*

It is not without a reason that the apostle always establishes a connection between the spiritual death and the spiritual resurrection. Indeed, it is impossible to die to sin without beginning to live to grace. 'If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ. . . . If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection' (Rom. 6. 8). Our new life may not be apparent, but it exists of necessity, because it is a corollary of our death; 'You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God' (Col. 3. 3). How could it be otherwise, since baptism, which is the grave of the old man, is also the cradle of the new?

In order to appreciate this language it is necessary to compare the following expressions: 'To be baptized into Christ' and 'to put on Christ' (Col. 2. 12). . . . To be baptized into Christ is to be plunged into the mystical Christ, as into the natural element of our new life; it is, therefore, substantially the same thing as to be baptized into the body of Christ—that is to say, incorporated into his mystical body. Similarly, to put on Christ is to be enveloped with that divine atmosphere, made a living member of Christ and subjected to that supernatural force known as the soul of the Church, which is nothing else than the Holy Spirit. . . . We put on Christ not so much as a mantle that covers our poverty, as a vital form which makes us participate in his life. . . .

(e) *Summary:*

St Paul sums it all up by saying: He (God) 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, in hope, of life everlasting (Tit. 3. 5-7).

Baptism is:

- i. *a washing*, a bath which purifies the soul;
- ii. *regeneration*, because it is a second birth by water and the Holy Ghost, which makes us children of God, as the first made us children of anger;

- iii. *renovation*, because having been stripped of the old man, our whole being is made into a new creature;
- iv. all this is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

3. *Faith and baptism:*

St Paul always speaks of them together. There are two reasons for this:

(a) *the historical reason:*

Almost all those to whom St Paul addressed his Epistles had received baptism at the same time as the gift of faith; both these recollections were blended in their memory. The instruction of the catechumens was then concise: the Saviour had said, as he ascended into heaven, Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved, as if the two actions were simultaneous. In fact, the three thousand men converted by Peter, at the first Pentecost, were baptized that same day; the eunuch of Queen Candace descended from his chariot to receive baptism at the hand of the deacon, Philip, who had just instructed him; St Paul's gaoler was baptized with all his family the very night on which he embraced the faith; the twelve disciples at Ephesus, who had as yet received only the baptism of John, 'believed in Jesus and were baptized'. A similar formula epitomizes the labours of the apostle at Corinth. There was no interval between faith and baptism.

(b) *The main reason:*

For St Paul, concrete, normal faith, the faith that justifies, is not a simple assent of the intellect to a speculative truth; it is the consent of the reason, the will and the whole man to the Gospel—that is to say, to the plan of salvation of which God is the author and Jesus Christ the proclaimer. This initial faith, with which St Paul especially concerns himself, for it was for him as for his first readers, the decisive point of his life and the critical moment of his destiny, necessarily includes, therefore, together with the offering of himself to God, the implicit desire for baptism. Not only is the baptism of an adult inconceivable without repentance and conversion to God—but sincere and justifying faith is inconceivable without a desire for baptism.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

The Holy Trinity and the Church

1. *The Blessed Trinity:*

Before we enter upon this subject it will be both desirable and useful to say a few words about the Mystery of the Trinity. This dogma is called by the doctors of the Church 'the substance of the

New Testament', that is to say, the greatest of all mysteries, since it is the fountain and origin of them all. In order to know and contemplate this mystery the angels were created in heaven and men upon the earth. In order to teach more fully this mystery, which was but foreshadowed in the Old Testament, God himself came down from the angels unto men: 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.'

Whosoever then writes or speaks of the Trinity must keep before his eyes the prudent warning of the Angelic Doctor: 'When we speak of the Trinity we must do so with caution and modesty, for, as St Augustine says, nowhere else are more dangerous errors made, or is research more difficult, or discovery more fruitful.' The danger that arises is lest the Divine Persons be confounded one with the other in faith, or worship, or lest the one Nature in them be separated; for: This is the Catholic Faith, that we should adore one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity.

Therefore Our Predecessor, Innocent XII absolutely refused the petition of those who desired a special festival in honour of God the Father. For, although the separate mysteries connected with the Incarnate Word are celebrated on certain fixed days, yet there is no special feast on which the Word is honoured according to his Divine Nature alone. And even the Feast of Pentecost was instituted in the earliest times, not simply to honour the Holy Ghost in himself, but to commemorate his coming, or his external mission. And all this has been wisely ordained, lest from distinguishing the Persons men should be led to distinguish the Divine Essence. Moreover the Church, in order to preserve in her children the purity of the faith, instituted the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, which John XII afterwards extended to the Universal Church. . . .

The worship paid to the saints and angels, to the Mother of God, and to Christ himself, finally redounds to the honour of the Blessed Trinity. In prayers addressed to one Person, there is also mention of the others; in the litanies, after the individual Persons have been invoked separately, there is added a common invocation to all; all psalms and hymns conclude with the doxology to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; blessing, sacred rites, and sacraments are either accompanied or concluded by the invocation of the Blessed Trinity. This was already foreshadowed by the apostle in those words: For of him, and by him, and in him are all things: to him be glory for ever (Rom. 11. 36).

2. *The Church of Christ:*

Our Divine Saviour himself also governs directly the Church which he founded; for he reigns in the hearts and minds of men, bending and constraining even rebellious wills to his decree. . . . And

by this interior government he, the shepherd and bishop of our souls, not only cares for each individual, but also watches over the whole Church, enlightening and fortifying her rulers, so that they may faithfully and fruitfully discharge their functions. . . .

The divine Redeemer rules his Mystical Body also visibly and ordinarily through his Vicar on earth. . . . For in virtue of the Primacy Peter is none other than the Vicar of Christ, and therefore this Body has only one principal head, namely Christ, who, continuing himself to govern the Church invisibly and directly, rules it visibly through his personal representative on earth; so that now, after his glorious ascension into heaven, that Church is built not only on himself, but also on Peter as on its visible foundation. . . .

It is therefore a dangerous error to hold that one can adhere to Christ as Head of the Church without loyal allegiance to his Vicar on earth. . . .

What we have said here of the Universal church must be said also of the particular communities of Christians, Eastern and Latin, of which the one Catholic Church is composed; for these also are governed by Jesus Christ through the voice and authority of their respective Bishops . . . each one of them (the Bishops) is also, as far as his own diocese is concerned, a true Pastor who tends and rules in the name of Christ the flock committed to his care. In discharging this function, however, they are not completely independent but are subject to the proper authority of the Roman Pontiff, although they enjoy ordinary power of jurisdiction received directly from the Sovereign Pontiff himself (*Mystici Corporis*, Pius XII).

3. False notions about the teaching authority:

Sad to say, these innovators are easily led on from contempt for scholastic theology into forgetting or even despising the Authority of the Church itself, which has so committed itself to the theology in question. Authority, so they would have it, is a drag on progress, a bar to the development of science. . . . Is not this Authority a sacred trust, an exact and all-embracing standard of measurement which every theologian must use? Has not our Lord committed to it the task of guarding, preserving, interpreting the whole deposit of faith, not only the Sacred Scripture, but the tradition which is no less divine in origin?

4. The force of encyclicals:

Nor is it to be supposed that a position advanced in an encyclical does not, *ipso facto*, claim assent. In writing them, it is true, the Popes do not exercise their teaching authority to the full. But such statements come under the day-to-day teaching of the Church, which is covered by the promise: He who listens to you, listens to me (Luke 10. 16). For the most part the positions advanced, the

duties inculcated, by those encyclical letters are already bound up, under some title, with the general body of Catholic teaching. And when the Roman Pontiffs go out of their way to pronounce on some subject which has hitherto been controverted, it must be clear to everybody that, in the mind and intention of the Pontiffs concerned, this subject can no longer be regarded as a matter of free debate among theologians (*Humani Generis*, Pius XII).

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

Private and liturgical piety

The liturgy leads us to true piety

1. Public and private devotions of piety should not be opposed as if one was the enemy of the other. Pius XII in *Mediator Dei* points out that each has its part to play and that each needs the other.

2. Nevertheless, it is true to say that many of our people have little or no idea of what true piety really means.

(a) This is one of the reasons for the renewal of the spirit of the liturgy;

(b) it is also the reason why Pius XII says that it is necessary for all Christians to live the liturgical life as fully as possible, that by so doing they may increase and feed the supernatural spirit within them (*Mediator Dei*).

The liturgy and devotion to the Trinity

1. One of the consequences of a wrong notion of what it meant by true piety is that devotions have been multiplied, often at the expense of devotion.

Here it is not a question of destroying such devotions, because they are useful to many souls; but rather to fit them in with true devotion which is essential. Devotions are only a means to it.

2. True devotion consists in the handing over of man to God, the giving of himself to God.

(a) Therefore devotion to the Trinity is necessary, because by baptism our souls and our whole being have been consecrated to the Trinity and it dwells in us.

(b) Unfortunately only too few people possess this sense of devotion, at least consciously. It is little preached and still less lived.

3. The Christian who feeds his piety on the liturgy must have a sense of devotion to the Trinity.

(a) The liturgy teaches us:

- i. that in baptism we were consecrated to the Trinity in the name of the three Persons;
- ii. our sins are forgiven in this same Name;
- iii. married love is sanctified by it;
- iv. that with an invocation to the Trinity we close the lips of the dying: Go forth, O Christian Soul, out of this world in the name of the Father who created you, in the name of the Son who redeemed you and in the name of the Holy Spirit who sanctified you.

(b) The liturgy invokes the Trinity:

- i. every day in its hymns and at the end of the psalms and prayers;
- ii. there are constant allusions to it in the individual liturgies;
- iii. there is a special feast in its honour;
- iv. in the Canon of the Mass; through him and in him and by him is all honour and glory to Thee, God the Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Spirit.
- v. Anyone who knows the way the Church prays in her liturgy should try to imitate her.

The liturgy and the prayer of adoration and thanksgiving:

1. Another error of private piety is its egocentric nature at times.
 - (a) There are many who think that all piety should have some reference to oneself, to one's own purification.
 - (b) They cannot conceive of prayer without looking at their own soul; they regard any devotion which does not centre round themselves as if it were no prayer at all.
2. At times piety is directed excessively towards purification, expiation or impetration, leaving on one side the prayer of adoration and of thanksgiving.
 - (a) The true concept of piety looks towards God, to whom we pay homage and adoration as our creator and author of our being;
 - (b) for which reason the prayer of praise and of thanksgiving should have pride of place in our prayers.
3. The feast of the Trinity gives us a splendid opportunity to teach these truths.
 - (a) We find this note in the liturgy: Blessed be the most holy and undivided Trinity; let us give glory to it, because it has been merciful with us (Introit., cf. Communion and Offertory prayer).
 - (b) The greater part of the Trinitarian formulas are doxologies.
 - (c) The Church's special prayer, the psalms, show us how she insists on this element of praise to God and thanksgiving to him.

Towards a new piety

1. We can observe a rebirth of the liturgical spirit, and this is a good thing, provided we do not go to extremes or condemn altogether private devotions, which are also indispensable for our salvation.
2. But the Church exhorts all that they should remember that they have been born again to God, consecrated to the Trinity; at the same time she wishes them to pay special attention to the prayer of praise as also to that of giving themselves to God in humble sacrifice.

II. THE EPISTLE**The depth of God's mercy****The purpose of the Epistle**

1. It is hard at first sight to see why this Epistle has been chosen for today's Mass; but a little thought about it will give us the reason:
 - (a) the expression of the dogma,
 - (b) the mercy of the Trinity towards us,
 - (c) our praise to the Trinity.
2. *The expression of the dogma:*
 - (a) All things find in him their origin, their impulse, the centre of their being; to him be glory throughout all ages (v. 36). With the first three propositions St Augustine proves the doctrine of the Trinity. They are classics among the Fathers of the Latin Church to express this dogma.
 - (b) They can certainly be considered as the Pauline expression of the Trinity as creator and organizer of all things.

God's mercy towards us

1. How deep is the mine of God's wisdom, of his knowledge; how inscrutable are his judgements, how undiscoverable his ways? (v. 33) Who ever was the first to give, and so earned his favours? (v. 35).
By the phrase 'mine of God's wisdom' many Fathers have understood the divine mercy which gives us the gifts of grace and of glory. It is used in this way in the Epistle to the Ephesians (1. 6; 2. 4, 8-12).
2. The apostle makes this declaration after having said, throughout the rest of the Epistle, that God has worked things out according to his wisdom and providence:
 - (a) God chose Israel; but he allowed the chosen people to fall away for a time so that he might acquire the Gentiles.
 - (b) This hardness of heart of the part of the Jews will last until all the nations have been gathered in, then Israel too will return to

its God. Hence this statement about the riches of God's mercy and the fact that his ways are inscrutable.

3. *The mercy of God is even more inscrutable:*

The branches have been thinned out, and thou, an olive branch, hast been grafted in among them . . . (Rom. 11, 17). We should often think of this goodness of God towards us.

To correspond with this mercy

1. When we read this chapter we can understand more perfectly why St Paul tells us to work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2, 12).

2. *This same idea is found here:*

(a) That is no reason why thou shouldst boast thyself better than the branches; remember, in thy mood of boastfulness, that thou owest life to the root, not the root to thee (Rom. 11, 18).

(b) Branches were cut away, you will tell me, so that I might be grafted in. True enough, but it was for want of faith that they were cut away, and it is only faith that keeps thee where thou art; thou hast no reason for pride, rather for fear; God was unforgiving to the branches that were native to the tree, what if he should find occasion to be unforgiving with thee too? (*ibid.* 19-21).

3. The best way of corresponding with this mercy of God is through our humility and by remaining faithful to his will: his graciousness is for thee, only so long as thou dost continue in his grace; if not, thou too shalt be pruned away (*ibid.* 22).

4. We should also pray frequently for those branches that have been pruned away for a time. St Paul gives us an example of this (*cf. ibid.* 13).

New depths of mercy

1. *A profound and consoling thought for souls:*

Thus God has abandoned all men to their rebellion, only to include them all in his pardon (*ibid.* 32).

2. *Applied to our daily lives we may say:*

(a) God sometimes permits our falls in order to prove his mercy towards us;

(b) therefore we should cast away all spiritual pessimism, since the falls and sins which might cause it are, in the inscrutable designs of God's providence, sources of his mercy.

Praise of the Trinity

1. Contained in the last verse of the Epistle: to him be glory throughout all ages. Amen (v. 36).

2. The apostle cannot contain himself; and after speaking of God's mercy, so obvious in his own case, he breaks out in praise of God.

3. The Church invites us today—the Epistle is one more motive for it—to consider the goodness of God towards each one of us.

(a) She instituted the feast of the Trinity in gratitude for the mercy of God towards her.

(b) Each one of us should break into peals of praise to God and thanksgiving for all his benefits to us.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: The Power of Jesus Christ

The fullness of power

1. *Christ on Calvary and on the mount of the Ascension:*

(a) On the Good Friday afternoon he hangs on the Cross, an apparent failure.

(b) On the day of his ascension he manifests the fullness of his power to his little flock; All power is given to me in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28, 18).

2. *The communication of this supreme power:*

St Thomas sums up the doctrine:

(a) Omnipotence is proper to God, therefore Christ possessed it as God, not as man; nevertheless, by the grace of union, God communicated to the human nature of Christ this same omnipotence, together with other attributes which were also exclusively divine.

(b) Therefore, even before the resurrection Christ possessed full and omnipotent power. He does not mention this explicitly until after the resurrection, because it was not to be fully manifested until then, especially as applied to the whole world.

(c) Then he lowered his own dignity, accepted an obedience which brought him to death, death on a cross. That is why God has raised him to such a height, given him that name which is greater than any other name; so that everything in heaven and on earth and under the earth must bend the knee before the name of Jesus (Phil. 2, 8-10).

Universality of this power

1. *The adjective all explains it perfectly:*

(a) all, without limitation in time or space;

(b) all, in the spiritual and material orders:

I will give you the Gentiles as an inheritance and as your possession all the ends of the earth (Ps. 2, 8).

2. *Christ has received:*

(a) the power of teaching:

- i. He is the universal Master, the truth, the light of the world.
- ii. He is going to spread himself throughout the whole earth, not merely the Jewish world but also the pagan, and for all ages.

(b) the priestly power:

- i. He is the supreme High Priest, eternal, with an eternal oblation which finished once for all the work of men's salvation.
- ii. Only from him come sanctity and grace: I have come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly (John 10. 10).
- iii. He sanctifies through the sacraments which receive from him power and efficacy; but he can also sanctify without them—he is not bound to the sacraments (3P. q. 64. a. 3. a. 7. c).

(c) the power to govern:

- i. St Thomas sees this expressly in today's Gospel, in the phrase, Teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you.
- ii. Christ is King in very truth, both in spirituals and temporals.
- iii. The supreme King with complete power of legislating, judging and execution.

(d) this power is eternal:

It transcends the limits of time and space, to lose itself in eternity (cf. Dan. 1. 13-14).

The power of the Church

1. She participates in the power of Christ; she continues it.
2. That is why she remains standing throughout all ages in spite of the storms which have disturbed her.
 - (a) The gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16. 18);
 - (b) because Christ has defeated the power of hell and he remains in his Church. He is with her all days, even to the end of the world.

B: The Omnipotence of Christ

What it demands

1. Kings exact tribute from their subjects, usually in a material form because their power is material.
2. Christ showed that he possesses all power in heaven and on earth;
 - (a) but his kingdom is not of this world, but spiritual (John 18. 36);
 - (b) therefore we have to render to this supreme power our homage of faith, hope, charity, honour, fear and submission.

Universal and unlimited faith

1. Because if Christ has received this supreme power he can command whatever he chooses.
2. Therefore the most profound mysteries, such as those of his presence in the Eucharist, the Incarnation, resurrection of the dead, are a reality:
 - (a) he who raised Lazarus from the dead can just as easily raise all men;
 - (b) St Augustine, commenting on this, points out that he speaks of waking Lazarus from sleep (John 11. 11) because, although for the rest of mankind Lazarus was dead, for Christ it was as easy to raise him up as it would be for us to awaken one from sleep.

Solid hope and confidence

1. In all calamities, hope in Christ.
2. In all temptations we should have confidence in him who is omnipotent and who has overcome all our enemies, who desires that we too should overcome with his power and help.
3. This gives great glory to God, as did the confidence of Abraham, whose faith justified him because he was certain that God would help him and fulfil the promises he had made (Rom. 8. 18).
4. In the same way lack of confidence in him dishonours him; Moses and his brother were not allowed to enter the promised land, not from lack of faith, but lack of confidence in God's power to draw water from the rock (Num. 20. 12).

Honour and reverence

1. *Christ's universal power demands this:*
 - (a) his title of Son of God demands it;
 - (b) in a special way his title as redeemer: Before that title all shall bow (Phil. 2. 10).
2. *We should, therefore, honour duly the omnipotence of God:*
 - (a) as the liturgy does, with a bow of the head;
 - (b) by a consecration of our whole person to him; We are his, in him we move and have our being. Kings of this earth have subjects who are willing to give their lives in their service. Our King is worth more than this.
 - (c) there is a special way of giving him honour: Through almsdeeds: since the poor are his special friends, what we do to them we do to him.

Holy fear

1. Because this same power makes him the universal judge of the living and the dead, without power of appeal from his sentence. He can commit body and soul to hell.
2. This is a most efficacious means to avoid sin; even if I should forget his eternal love, the thought of the possible penalties for my sins should make me avoid sin in the future.

Submission and obedience

1. Both respond to the power which Christ has over us all.
 - (a) This submission is perfect when our wills coincide with his;
 - (b) that is why he tells us to ask in the Our Father, that his kingdom come, his will be done on earth as in heaven.
2. In the eternal glory of heaven the full manifestation will come of this omnipotence. Power and Godhead, wisdom and strength, honour and glory and blessing are his by right, the Lamb that was slain (Apoc. 5. 13).
3. This is the kingdom to which we belong and the law of which we must follow.

C: Baptism

Dogmatic instruction; announcement and institution

1. From the first pages of the Old Testament the figures of baptism are manifested:
 - (a) the Fathers saw it in the Spirit moving over the waters (Gen. 1. 2);
 - (b) in the flood which purified the whole earth and from which those were saved who lived in the ark of the Church (Gen. 6. 8); in the waters of the Dead Sea, which freed from captivity; the cure of Naaman in the Jordan—all figures of the dominant idea of salvation and freedom, so common in the Old Testament.
2. In the New Testament there are not figures but announcements of it:
 - (a) the baptism of John purifies (Mark 1. 4-6);
 - (b) the Lord speaks to Nicodemus of the new birth (John 3. 5-8), and to the Samaritan woman of a fountain of living water (John 4. 13-14);
 - (c) it is not merely cleansing but liberating and regenerating.
3. Finally he institutes and commands baptism, because he has decided to incorporate us into him by this rite (Gal. 3. 27-28).

Its effects

All its efficacy has been summarized by St Paul: But now you have been washed clean, now you have been sanctified, now you have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, by the Spirit of the God we serve (1 Cor. 6. 11).

- (a) **Washed:**
the negative element;
- (b) **sanctified and justified:**
the positive element;
- (c) **in the name of . . .**
not merely by the authority of, but also as incorporated into.

The negative part: You have been washed

1. A capital point in the whole of Christian doctrine is original sin and its consequences.

(a) As the Council of Trent says, to understand what is meant by justification it is of the greatest importance to know what is meant by original sin and its consequences; we have all lost innocence in Adam, have become children of wrath, slaves to Satan and to sin. We could not raise ourselves up from this spiritual death.

(b) Therefore, when the fullness of time was come, God sent his Son; his mission was to redeem all—Jew and Gentile alike—and to make us once more the adopted sons of God.

i. *This is the first purpose of the mission of Christ:* to wipe out sin, freeing us from all its consequences, eternal condemnation, death, slavery to the devil, etc.

ii. *He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world* (John 1. 29). He condoned all your sins; cancelled the deed which excluded us, the decree made to our prejudice, swept it out of the way, by nailing it to the cross (Col. 2. 14).

2. Christ united the redeeming efficacy of his passion to the sacrament of Baptism.

Its symbolic elements are:

- i. the water which cleanses;
- ii. the tomb of Christ, represented by the font, in which we are incorporated by the symbolic death.

The positive side: regeneration and sanctification

1. Inseparable, in reality, and therefore in the texts of Scripture and of the Church. Sin is pardoned because we are incorporated into Christ, reborn to the life of grace by the infusion of this gift and the virtues, which make us like God.

2. Man is not merely free from evil; he is a partner in the divine nature (2 Pet. 1. 4).

(a) The old man dies that the new man in Christ may live;

(b) In the prayers for the blessing of the baptismal water on Holy Saturday the Church prays that God may send his Spirit of adoption on all those whom this font is to bring forth to a new life; she asks that the power of the Holy Spirit may bring true fertility to these waters, which will give back to man his former innocence.

(c) In the baptism of Christ the heavens were opened and the Father and the Holy Spirit descended on Christ;

i. in our baptism the Holy Ghost comes to us and makes us saints;

ii. through the baptismal character he gives us a fountain of water springing up into eternal life, always pouring forth the waters of grace;

iii. the Father recognizes us as his sons by adoption, with all the rights that go therewith; heaven, the inheritance of sons, is opened to us.

Conclusion

1. *Baptism does not merely set us free:*

It makes us saints; it also makes us sons of God; heirs to the kingdom, temples of the Holy Spirit.

2. *We are incorporated into Christ:*

He is not ashamed to call us his brothers (Heb. 2. 11).

(a) There remains for us to embrace the programme outlined by St Paul, to seek the things that are above, not those of earth (Gal. 3. 1-2);

(b) the life given us in baptism is hidden in Christ; we have to develop the seed then planted, until we attain its fullness in heaven.

(c) We can sum it all up in the ceremony and words of the giving of the white garment and the candle.

D: The baptismal character

The seal of the Spirit

1. Little is said about this effect, and therefore it is little appreciated; yet it is like a perpetual sacrament within us.

2. It is God who has 'sealed us' (2 Cor. 1. 22); we had the seal set on our faith by the promised gift of the Spirit (Eph. 1. 13).

The nature of the sacramental character

1. The name indicates a type of seal, something spiritually visible, which marks off those who have received the sacrament from those who have not. It endures for eternity.

The Council of Trent, in telling us that it is due to this seal that the sacraments which give it cannot be repeated, indicates our line of investigation as to its effects.

2. *The character makes the soul like to Christ:*

(a) **The images usually used by the Fathers are:**

i. *that of the emperor's uniform*, which distinguishes the soldiers of Christ;

ii. *that of the seal*, compared to the die which stamps out a coin; giving it the image of the ruler;

iii. *that of the wax*, which receives the impression laid upon it, or the fire which changes all it embraces into itself;

iv. *this is what the character does to the soul*: it gives it some special quality which likens it to Christ. Wherever the Christian is, there is the likeness of Christ seen on his soul—glorious in heaven, the object of the mockery of the devils in hell.

(b) **In what does this conformation consist?**

The doctrine of St Thomas is beautifully expressed. Christ is the High Priest; but all Christians participate in some way or another in that priesthood. Priests are instrumental causes who offer sacrifice in the name and power of Christ. Christians also offer it as well, united to Christ, who represents them.

i. *The sacramental character* is something which gives us a share in this priestly mission of Christ—something we might have expected in view of what we have said about the doctrine of incorporation.

ii. *Here is the great dignity of the Christian*: to be a priest with Christ. In so far as Christ offers his sacrifice eternally before the Father, there united with him by the baptismal character are all the faithful of his Church. The baptismal character is essentially a liturgical one, i.e. it enables us to take our part in the sacrifice and sacraments of the Church which he founded. It is orientated towards worship.

The character as a source of grace

1. The best description of this effect of the character is to be found in the words of Christ to the Samaritan woman: The water that I will give him will be a spring of water within him, that flows continually to bring him everlasting life (John 4. 14).

(a) The Christian needs grace in order to perform acts which are in full accordance with his new life, to live and not to die again by sin, to perform that sacerdotal action of worship of which we have spoken, and to which he is consecrated by the baptismal character.

(b) The sacraments, apart from the increase of habitual grace, also give us a special grace each one of them. From what source does

that grace spring? From the sacramental rite itself, which will only be effective through baptism, i.e. once we have received the character of baptism we have a right to receive the other sacraments.

- i. Christ has placed in our souls a source of continual graces, the baptismal character;
 - ii. God is the giver, but it is the character that enables him to give so generously.
2. Now we can understand fully the meaning of those liturgical phrases in which we are told to 'keep our baptism'.
- (a) Now we can understand why it is not necessary to repeat those sacraments which give a character;
 - (b) we can also see the glory of this seal which has been placed on our souls and which will be a source of glory in heaven as it has been a source of grace on earth;
 - (c) we can also understand the source of those death-bed repentances, which are but the effect of this seal at the last moment.

Conclusion

I have put on Christ; I am in some way a sharer in his priesthood; of his God-giving grace and justification. That alone will save me.

E: The magisterium of the Church

Its institution (see Papal Texts, *supra*)

1. The texts are plain: Going therefore, teach ye all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days . . . (Matt. 28. 19-20). He who believes and is baptized will be saved; he who refuses belief will be condemned (Mark 16. 16). With these words, a summary of the whole life and teaching of the Lord, was instituted the eternal, infallible and obligatory magisterium of the Church.
2. The world is divided into two sections, those who teach and those who listen to that teaching.
3. *In these words he indicates:*
 - (a) the magisterium:
Teach.
 - (b) the object of it:
Whatever I have taught you; and therefore whatever is necessary to explain that or guard it from error, etc.
 - (c) its subject:
You, the apostles whom I have chosen, and also your successors, because this mission is to endure until the end of time.

(d) its infallibility:

I am with you—which according to Scriptural usage, implies the success of the undertaking.

(e) its duration:

Until the end of time.

(f) its extension:

To all nations—to believers, to teach them and guard them; to non-believers, to instruct them in the faith.

(g) its obligatory nature:

Only he who hears and believes will be saved.

4. *Of these indications we shall develop three:*

- (a) the necessity of this magisterium;
- (b) the practical results of it;
- (c) the position of the faithful with regard to it.

Its necessity

1. *An historical fact:*

Even the most civilized nations, like the Greeks and the Romans, have been unable to know perfectly or to preserve from error even the most essential of the natural truths of religion. Nor were the most brilliant philosophers able to develop this natural theology.

(a) From this it follows that it is a moral impossibility for mankind, left to itself, to know and preserve intact the truths of religion, even in the purely natural order. St Thomas gives us three reasons for this:

- i. *Human life itself:* some are slow to learn, stupid; others are impeded by their work, their family obligations, laziness.
 - ii. *Religious truths* are profound and need much study and work to arrive at the right conclusions, they demand previous knowledge of certain things; they are also often opposed to our human desires and passions.
 - iii. *The weakness of our human intellects;* it always mixes truth with many errors and opinions, it leaves us in doubt frequently, and seldom reaches a definite, certain conclusion.
2. God, to remedy this, has chosen the simplest way of helping man, that of revelation, both oral and written.
 3. But even this revelation is subject to the same basic difficulty.

(a) As far as oral revelation is concerned:

We know that men can easily distort what they hear when they repeat it; it does not need a deep knowledge of human nature to see the truth of this statement.

(b) As far as the Scriptures are concerned:

They need long and difficult study and are also subject to different interpretations.

4. God has remedied this danger through the institution of an infallible magisterium which guards and explains revelation. To do this it was sufficient to establish a teaching authority with the power to impose its teaching and to assist it with the presence of the Holy Spirit, to preserve it from error.

The benefits of this: unity in truth

There is but one faith, clearly taught and with authority; this gives rise to unity in mind and heart—and action.

The attitude of the faithful

1. *Submission of the mind:*

(a) We do not submit to men, but to God who teaches us through them.

(b) In all walks of life we are ready to listen and believe those who know more than we do; this applies also in religion.

(c) It is confident submission, based on the freedom from any possibility of error in those who teach with this authority, because of the omnipotent power which preserves them in the truth.

2. *Obedience in the will:*

Many of the truths which are taught by this authority belong to the practical and moral order. We must obey.

3. *Total submission:*

(a) Obedience which is not total is not obedience; what is more, we must have the wish to learn what has been ordered and do it.

(b) The faithful must be careful to learn more about the faith and the moral teaching of the Church; they must also obey these teachings in every way, not distinguishing between them, keeping the law in some things and despising it in others.

i. Often we are ready to admit the Church's teaching in dogmatic things but not so ready to listen to her when she speaks in the moral order, for example, with regard to such things as justice, social obligations, marriage, etc.

ii. We must remember all the time that it is God we are listening to and obeying—not men.

F: Helping the missions

A command of Christ

1. *The Gospel makes it quite clear:*

The Church has received the mission of going into the whole world to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16. 15).

(a) This is a command which produces in us an obligation—that of obedience.

(b) This command is not given to the apostles only, but to the disciples who accompanied Christ in his last days on earth; therefore to the whole of the infant Church.

(c) Therefore all the members of the Church have this obligation of the apostolate.

2. *The meaning of this command:*

(a) Some will have to interpret it literally:

Those to whom the vocation is given. But this is obviously not the obligation of all.

(b) The general obligation:

This has to be met in some way or other, and all must co-operate as far as possible in it.

(c) Like an army:

In which there are first line troops and also the rearguard and supply columns.

Confirmation of the command

The obligation on all to co-operate in this work is to be found in their very condition as Christians—members of Christ's body, a visible society, in which all must work for the common good of the whole. As Pius XI says: The Church has only one reason for her existence, that of making all men share in the redemptive mission of Christ by extending throughout the whole world the kingdom of Christ (*Rerum Ecclesiae*).

Our co-operation

1. *By prayer:*

Conversion of all pagans is the work of grace; and grace can only come through prayer.

2. *Almsdeeds:*

(a) **Grace works through human instruments:**

It is necessary to provide missionaries who will do the actual work in the vineyard; this requires money—our alms.

(b) **Again Pius XI says:**

We are confident that Catholics will not allow themselves to be outdone in generosity by other sects who are all too willing to contribute freely to the spreading of their errors through the world (*Rerum Ecclesiae*).

3. There are many ways in which we can help, the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith* could do so much more if all would do their share as they should.

G: Fruits of faith in the Trinity**The possession of the Trinity itself**

1. The words of baptism are not merely an expression of the doctrine of this mystery; they have a deeper and more personal meaning.
 - (a) They indicate the spiritual life which results in us through baptism.
 - (b) The minister of the sacrament takes possession of our souls in the name of the Trinity—through baptism we belong to the Trinity.
2. This new life brings with it a new obligation with relation to the Trinity now dwelling in our souls.

We must know the Trinity

1. *By the profession of our faith:*
This is obligatory from the moment we come to the use of reason. It should be repeated from time to time and we have the obligation of defending that faith even if necessary with our lives.
2. *By the study of revealed truth:*
 - (a) A daily deeper knowledge of the faith is of obligation for all Christians.
 - (b) This should be obtained in a more or less intense way according to the means and capacity of each one.
 - (c) Religious ignorance is a grave danger to the faith and also to the practice of our religion.
3. *Through help from on high:*
 - (a) This comes through the gift of understanding, and is the result of being faithful to grace.
 - (b) Souls who are faithful to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit reach a deep personal knowledge of the truths of faith which it is impossible to acquire by study alone.

We must invoke the Trinity as does the Church in her liturgy

1. In the ceremony of baptism the Trinity was invoked on our behalf.
2. This is repeated in the prayers, hymns, etc., of the Missal and Breviary.
3. In the doxologies; in the blessings of persons and things especially on the feast of the Trinity.

We must give thanks to the Trinity

1. The Father has created us, the Son redeemed us, the Holy Spirit is our sanctifier. We were created images of the Trinity, and that has been brought to even greater perfection in baptism.

2. The Church sums this up in her prayers for the departing soul at the moment of death (cf. *Rituale*).

We must guard the grace we have received

1. *This grace gives us a share in the divine nature* (2 Pet. 1. 4):
 - (a) by giving us also faith, hope and charity it brings us a new image of the Trinity;
 - (b) man must put forth all his strength to preserve this precious gift and this great honour.
2. *We are temples of God because of this indwelling of the Trinity:*
 - (a) The relevant texts are:
2 Cor. 6. 16; 1 John 4. 2-16; 2 Cor. 6. 16; 1 Cor. 3. 16, 7. 19; John 14. 20; Eph. 3. 14-19.
 - (b) This temple guards and increases the divine presence by doing the will of God (John 14. 21).
 - (c) Sinners deserve the penalties reserved for those who desecrate the temple of God (1 Cor. 3. 16-17).

H: The Christian's obligation to the Trinity**A mystery of life**

1. This most profound of all the divine mysteries is not a merely speculative truth.
 - (a) It is something we have to know and adore imperfectly by the light of faith in this life, and in a more perfect way in the next.
 - (b) It is a divine truth which is dynamic and full of life, as is this intimate life of God.
 - (c) For us it is a source of a new spiritual life which is communicated to us; it demands vital activity from us.
2. Arising from it we have certain obligations.

Adoration of the Trinity

1. Apart from all that we know of God through the natural light of reason, revelation has taught us the intimate nature of that life in the Trinity.
 - (a) This is a truth unknown and unknowable to the light of human reason.
 - (b) The Son of God himself has taught us this most intimate of all truths about God. Without his revelation we would never have known it.
2. The attitude of mind demanded from us, face to face with such a truth, can be nothing but adoration and thanksgiving.

Love for the Trinity

1. *This intimate life has been revealed to us as:*

(a) The mystery of divine love in itself. God is love, as St John tells us (1 John 4. 16).

(b) This love has poured itself out in all the external works of God in creation and redemption—good tends to spread itself. The Father loves the world to such an extent that he has given us his Son to redeem us (John 3. 16). The Son redeems us because he loves us and has given himself up to death for us (Gal. 2. 20). The Holy Spirit is the love which sanctifies and saves us.

2. *Therefore the Trinity demands our love in return:*

(a) This is the great command of Christ, that we love God will all our strength (Matt. 22. 37).

(b) Our God is a God of love.

Imitation of the Trinity

1. The three Persons have one common intelligence and love.

2. The spiritual life of the Christian is only the indwelling and development of the Trinity in the soul.

3. Therefore the Christian should try to bring his life into conformity with that of God, having one mind and one love with God.

This is done by fulfilling the single command of loving God, and our neighbour for God's sake.

I: "I am with you always"

A great promise

1. Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (Matt. 28. 20). It is a wonderful promise because:

(a) it shows the goodness and love of Christ for his Church; he could have limited himself to helping her by the ordinary means only, but this phrase indicates that he takes a personal interest in her.

(b) also because it assures us that Christ is always present with us in all our difficulties.

2. We shall study the value and the precious fruits of this presence.

A promise which brings consolation

1. Christ had to separate himself, as far as his visible presence was concerned, from his apostles and from mankind.

(a) However, he will continue among us in many ways. We know that his words are true and that he can find many ways of giving us a special presence.

(b) This new presence is a consolation for the apostles and for the whole Church.

2. *Christ present in our lives:*

This opens up a whole source of consolation, especially for those who suffer.

The missionary far from home, the priest isolated in the country, the poor, the sick, the lonely and those in need have this consolation, that Christ is with them all the time. They suffer with Christ and he in them.

A promise that gives strength

1. The apostles had just received a difficult mission; Christ makes them a promise which implies success in their efforts.

2. By themselves they are incapable of bringing about the spread of the Gospel through the whole world.

(a) On their part they were ignorant, poor and fearful;

(b) before them lay other difficulties:

i. *The Jews*, who did not wish to see themselves deprived of their religious superiority.

ii. *The Gentile nations*, with their errors in dogma and morals; full of false gods who were merely representations of man's lower passions.

iii. *To this was added the power of learning, riches and arms*, which lay on the other side.

3. Christ, with the complete power given him in heaven and on earth will be with them to fortify them and to give them the hope of eventual triumph. The greater their weakness the more effective will be his presence (1 Cor. 1. 27).

4. This same presence has always given the Church her hope of success in the face of all the attacks directed against her.

5. Christ, dwelling in the soul, is the foundation of its strength in the face of all difficulties.

(a) *With Christ all things are possible:*

Which is the reason why St Paul says: I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me (Phil. 4. 13) and if God is for us, who is against us? (Rom. 8. 31).

(b) We have an example of this in the martyrs.

It is a promise which includes a demand

This presence implies grace—and God does not waste that. As our head, and also because of this constant help through his presence

in us, he has the right to ask an account of us for the use we have made of those graces.

J: The presence of Christ in his Church

Christ with his apostles and with us

1. The Saviour pronounces the words which reveal his promise to remain with his apostles for all time—until the end of the world.
2. *He had been with his apostles in two ways:*
 - (a) from the time of his choosing them until his ascension;
 - (b) after his ascension—to this his new promise refers.
3. In the first sense we are not equal to them; but we must keep in mind that the very apostles were not more happy when they had Christ physically present with them:
 - (a) they did not fully penetrate into nor live the true spiritual sense of the kingdom of God;
 - (b) nor were they bearing fruit through their preaching or works of the apostolate.
 - (c) All this happened after the coming of the Holy Ghost, when they enjoyed the second presence of Christ.
4. The promise of the Saviour could not be fulfilled merely in the persons of the apostles. He spoke to them as a moral body which would have to endure in the Church until the end of time.
 - (a) Therefore we enjoy the presence of Christ in the same sense as they enjoyed it to whom he said farewell in the words of today's Gospel.
 - (b) If we look at it as a whole, the Church of today enjoys the same privileges as the apostles, not excluding that of working miracles, and that of tongues—Christ has never deprived his Church of these gifts, as a glance at the lives of the saints will show.

How is he with us?

There are different kinds of presence.

1. *Bodily—in the Eucharist:*
 - (a) Although it is sacramental, this is as real as his bodily presence was in the time of the apostles.
 - (b) Through it the Church can say that there is no nation whose God is so close to it as ours (Deut. 4. 7).
 - (c) When we receive Christ in this sacrament he is united to us by a presence which is more intimate and of more benefit to us than was his merely physical presence to the apostles. They possessed him more perfectly in an exterior way; we possess him more perfectly in an interior and spiritual fashion.

2. *Spiritually:*

(a) Through sanctifying grace:

Christ, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, dwells in the soul of the just man. They are present there with a presence which is far superior to that which other creatures enjoy.

(b) The humanity of Christ is joined to the just man with a union more intimate and advantageous than any other which can be imagined; it is the union of head and members.

3. *The hierarchy:*

(a) Not only has Christ remained with us invisibly; he is also present in a visible way through the hierarchy of the Church. He that heareth you heareth me . . . (Luke 10. 16).

(b) The apostles and their successors have the same powers of Christ; that triple power of prophet, priest and king.

(c) The very sacrifice of Christ is perpetuated, together with his priesthood. The Mass is truly called the sacrifice of the Cross, because it applies its merits.

(d) We can hear Christ every day through the magisterium of the Church. His truth is there—and it is infallible.

(e) The government of the Church continues through the hierarchy, which leads us firmly but gently towards salvation.

4. *Moral presence:*

(a) Christ remains with us in our neighbours, especially in the poor and those in need of our help, the sick, the children.

i. He who gives welcome to such a child as this in my name, gives welcome to me (Matt. 18. 5).

ii. And the King will answer them: Believe me, when you did it to one of the least of my brethren here, you did it to me (Matt. 25. 40).

(b) In them we can help him, love him, come to his assistance.

(c) The words which our Lord spoke to Judas when he complained about the waste of Magdalen's ointment have a very deep inner meaning for us all: You have the poor among you always (Matt. 26. 11).

i. In the persons of the poor we may pour out on Christ the ointment of our love and the tears of our repentance.

ii. The debts we owe to God can easily be paid through the poor.

5. *Virtually:*

(a) He is with us through his providence and through the helps which he pours out on the Church and on the individuals. With him we can overcome all dangers; with him we are strong enough to walk along the road to salvation.

(b) This help of Christ is the foundation of our confidence. He is in our souls, and to those who are afraid he might well say, as he did to the apostles, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith (Matt. 8. 26).

When is Christ within us

1. *Always and constantly:*
Until the end of the world.
2. *In times of adversity:*
Unlike the friends of this world, he never abandons his own in moments of trial.
3. *He is with us for all eternity:*
As the object of our happiness. Then the veil will have been removed and we shall be flooded with the light of his presence.

Second Sunday after Pentecost

THE GREAT SUPPER

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: 1 John 3. 13-18

Gospel: Luke 14. 16-24

Texts concerning the poor

1. *Compassion towards the poor:*

For indeed there will be no lack of poor men in the land that is to be thy home; I must needs warn thee, to be open-handed towards thy brother, thy fellow countryman, when he is poor and in want. Deut. 15. 11.

Do not go over thy olive-trees again, the fruit once picked, leave the rest to alien, orphan and widow; leave to alien, orphan and widow the clusters that hang on thy vines when the vintage is over, still ungathered. Do not forget that thou wast once a slave in Egypt; not without reason I enjoin this upon thee. Deut. 24. 20-22.

Yet I would have thee patient with needy folk; do not keep them waiting for thy charity; befriend them, as the law commands, nor ever send them away in their misery empty-handed. It is thy brother, thy friend that asks; better lose thy money than leave it to rust in a vault. Ecclus. 29. 11-13.

Share thy bread with the hungry, give the poor and the vagrant a welcome to thy house; meet thou the naked, clothe him; from thy own flesh and blood turn not away. Then sudden as the dawn, the welcome light shall break on thee, in a moment thy health shall find a new spring; divine favour shall lead thee on thy journey, brightness of the Lord's presence close thy ranks behind. Then the Lord will listen to thee when thou callest on him; cry out, and he will answer, I am here at thy side. Isaias 58. 7-9.

2. *They should not be oppressed:*

Do not refuse alien or orphan his rights at law; do not make the widow give thee her cloak as a pledge; remember that thou wast once a slave in Egypt, and the Lord thy God rescued thee. Deut. 24. 17-18.

Learn rather how to do good, setting your hearts on justice, righting the wrong, protecting the orphan, giving the widow redress; then come back, says the Lord, and make trial of me. Isaias 1. 17-18.

Out upon you that enact ill decrees, and draw up instruments of wrong; suppress the claims of the poor, and refuse redress to humble folk; the widow your spoil, the orphan your prey. What shifts will you be put to, when the day of reckoning comes, when the ruin that is still distant overtakes you? *Isaias 10. 1-2.*

3. *The reward for mercy:*

Befriend the poor and lend to the Lord; he will repay faithfully. *Prov. 19. 17.*

Who shuts his ear to the poor man's plea, himself one day shall plead in vain. *Prov. 21. 13. Cf. ibid. 28. 27; 29. 7, 14; Ecclus. 4. 2-5, 7-8.*

4. *God looks after the poor:*

Thou hast eyes for the misery and the shame; thou wilt give them up to vengeance. The destitute are cast on no care but thine; to thee only the orphans look for redress. *Ps. 10. 35. Cf. 12. 6; 21. 25.*

5. *The Messiah, defender of the poor and himself poor:*

Here is judgement will give the poor redress, here is award will right the wrongs of the defenceless. Word of him shall smite the earth like a rod, breath of him destroy the ill-doer. *Isaias 11. 4. Cf. 32. 1.*

Glad news for thee, widowed Sion; cry out for happiness, Jerusalem forlorn. See where thy king comes to greet thee, a trusty deliverer; see how lowly he rides, mounted on an ass, patient colt of patient dam. *Zach. 9. 9.*

6. *The poor have the Gospel preached to them:*

How the blind see, and the lame walk; how the lepers are made clean, and the deaf hear, how the dead are raised to life, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. *Matt. 11. 5.*

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he has anointed me, and sent me out to preach the gospel to the poor, to restore the broken hearted; to bid the prisoners go free, and the blind have sight. . . . *Luke 4. 18-19. Cf. Luke 7. 22.*

7. *Evangelical poverty:*

If thou hast a mind to be perfect, go home and sell all that belongs to thee; give it to the poor, and so the treasure thou hast shall be in heaven; then come back and follow me. *Matt. 19. 21; Mark 10. 21.*

Sell what you have, and give alms, so providing yourselves with a purse that time cannot wear holes in, an inexhaustible treasure laid up in heaven, where no thief comes near, no moth consumes. *Luke 12. 33. Cf. James 2. 2-6.*

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

1. *Within the Octave of Corpus Christi:*

The liturgical formulas are prior to the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi; indeed, if we leave aside the second prayer, the Preface and the colour of the vestments, there is little in today's Mass to remind us of that feast. However, the liturgy of today does fit in very well with the idea of the Eucharist, especially since it is a hymn of praise to God for his goodness. In the Epistle God is praised for having given us his Son, while in the Gospel we read the story of the great feast which was prepared for the guests.

Both Epistle and Gospel can be applied to the Eucharist. The Epistle in so far as we live by the Son of God who is given to us and who has given himself to us in the Eucharist, which is the symbol of unity and the bond of charity. The Gospel refers literally to the feast prepared for us in heaven, but is it not easy to see in this feast a reference to the Eucharist, especially if we compare the different attitudes of the invited guests to the way men treat that Sacrament? As we look at the altar and tabernacle we can repeat the words of the 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. 17. 19-20*). The Eucharist is the school of Christ, where we must learn to live in possession of his love and fear of the holy Name of God. There he will purify us and detach us from this earth (Secret), leading us to heaven. Therefore we owe him our thanks for all that he has done for us (Communion).

This Sunday is a wonderful opportunity to preach on the Eucharist.

2. *The explanation of the ceremonies of the Mass:*

(a) *Introit:*

Since in this sacrament is contained the whole mystery of our salvation, it is celebrated with more solemnity than any other sacrament.

And since it is written: Look well what thou art doing when thou goest into God's house (*Eccles. 4. 17*), for that reason, before celebrating this mystery, there is a certain preparation necessary, so that what follows may be done in a worthy manner. The first part of this preparation is the praise we give to God in the Introit . . . which is usually taken from the psalms, because, as Dionysius says, the psalms contain in the form of praise all that is in the Scriptures.

(b) Kyrie Eleison:

The second part contains a reference to our present mystery, by reason of which we pray for mercy, saying *Kyrie Eleison*, thrice for the Person of the Father, and Christ have mercy on us, thrice for the Person of the Son, and again *Kyrie Eleison* thrice for the person of the Holy Ghost; against the threefold misery of ignorance, of sin, and punishment; or else to express the intimate union of the three Persons.

(c) Gloria:

The third part commemorates the heavenly glory, to the possession of which, after this life of misery, we are tending, in the words glory to God on high, which are sung on festival days . . . but are omitted in those sorrowful offices which commemorate our unhappy state.

(d) Prayer, Epistle, Gradual and Tract:

The fourth part contains the prayer which the priest makes for the people, that they may be made worthy of such great mysteries. Next comes the instruction of the faithful, because this sacrament is a mystery of faith. . . . Now this instruction is given dispositively when the lectors and subdeacons read aloud in the church the teachings of the prophets and apostles: after this lesson the choir sings the Gradual, which signifies progress in life; then the Alleluia is intoned, and this denotes spiritual joy: or in mournful offices the Tract expressive of spiritual sighing; for all these things ought to arise from the former teaching.

But the people are instructed perfectly by Christ's teaching contained in the Gospel, which is read by the higher ministers, as by the deacons. And because we believe in Christ as divine truth, according to John 7. 46. If I tell you the truth why do you not believe me? After the Gospel has been read the Creed is sung, in which the people show that they assent by faith to Christ's doctrine.

(e) Offertory:

Concerning the oblation two things are done, namely the people's praise in singing the offertory, expressing the joy of the offerers, and the priest's prayer asking for the people's oblation to be made acceptable to God. . . .

(f) Preface:

Then, regarding the consecration, performed by supernatural power, the people are first of all excited to devotion in the preface, hence they are admonished to lift up their hearts to the Lord, and therefore, when the preface is ended the people devoutly praise Christ's Godhead, saying with the angels Holy, Holy, Holy; and his humanity, saying with the children, Blessed is he that cometh.

(g) Canon:

i. *The Canon*: in the next place the priest makes a commemoration, first of those for whom this sacrifice is offered, namely for the whole Church and for those set in high places (1 Tim. 2. 2) and in a special manner of those who offer or for whom the mass is offered. Secondly he commemorates the saints, invoking their patronage for those mentioned above, when he says, Communicating with and honouring the memory of. . . . Thirdly he concludes the petition when he says: Wherefore, that this oblation . . . in order that the oblation may be salutary to them for whom it is offered.

ii. *Consecration*: Then he comes to the consecration itself. Here he asks first of all for the effect of the consecration, when he says, Which oblation do thou, O God. Secondly he performs the consecration, using our Saviour's words, when he says, Who the day before he suffered. . . . Thirdly, he makes excuses for his presumption in obeying Christ's command, saying, Wherefore, calling to mind. . . . Fourthly, he asks that the sacrifice accomplished may find favour in God's sight, when he says, Look down upon them with a propitious. . . . Fifthly, he begs for the effect of this sacrifice and sacrament, first for the partakers, saying, We humbly beseech thee . . . then for the dead, who can no longer receive it, saying: Be mindful also, O Lord. . . . Thirdly for the priests themselves who offer, saying And to us sinners. . . .

iii. *Preparation for Communion*: Then follows the act of receiving the sacrament. First of all, the people are prepared for Communion, first, by the common prayer of the congregation, which is the Lord's Prayer, in which we ask for our daily bread to be given to us; and also by private prayer, which the priest puts up especially for the people, when he says: Deliver us, we beseech thee O Lord. . . . Secondly, the people are prepared by the *Pax*, which is given with the words, Lamb of God, etc. because this is the sacrament of unity and peace. But in masses for the dead, in which the sacrifice is offered not for present peace, but for the repose of the dead, the *Pax* is omitted.

iv. *Communion*: Then follows the reception of the sacrament, the priest receiving first, and afterwards giving it to others, because as Dionysius says, he who gives divine gifts to others ought first to partake of them himself.

v. *Thanksgiving*: Finally the whole celebration of Mass ends with the thanksgiving, the people's rejoicing for having received the mystery (and this is the meaning of the singing after Communion); and the priest returning thanks by prayer, as Christ, at the close of the supper with his disciples, said a hymn (Matt. 26, 30).

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 1 John 3. 13-18

1. *Argument:*

In this chapter of his first Epistle St John explains the difference between the sons of God and the sons of the devil. The former keep the law of justice and love, while the latter are friends of sin, do not understand the new commandment and are full of fratricidal hate, as was Cain. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that they hate us. We can be sure that they are the sons of Satan while we are the sons of God because they hate and we love. However, we must not be content with mere words of love, since the true charity was demonstrated by Christ when he died for us. We must, therefore, be ready and willing to help those in need.

2. *Texts:*

(a) No, brethren, do not be surprised that the world should hate you:

This is the logical conclusion from the previous verse, also reminding us of what Christ said: If the world hates you, be sure that it hated me before it learned to hate you (John 15. 18).

St John remembered the discourse of the Last Supper. Truly, the struggle between the sons of this world and those of heaven is nothing but an extension of that other fight between the fathers of them both, that struggle which had two great moments, one in the Garden of Eden and the other on Calvary, and will come to an end when the Father puts all things under Christ, as a footstool for his feet (Ps. 109. 1).

Likeness breeds love, while opposition creates hatred. But it goes deeper than that; the evil man secretly feels nostalgia for good, hating his sin, even though he will not confess it. The presence of the good is a living law which reminds him constantly of his sins, a permanent correction and one which brings ever before his mind those heavenly goods which he is losing. He longs for the good, yet he will make no effort to attain it. Instead he hates, or pretends to hate, that which he secretly desires.

(b) Remember that we have changed over from death to life, in loving the brethren as we do:

St Paul uses the words new man, re-birth, etc., to convey the idea of justification; St John prefers the word life, with the same meaning, the life of grace. We know that we are in a state of grace because we love our brethren. Where there is no love for Christ there will be no real love for the neighbour. In his day a Jew's love was confined to his own race, and even then was not just or universal. The Romans needed the Gospel before they could abolish slavery. In the world of John love is the distinguishing mark of the true Christian. The love

for one's neighbour, as St John sees it, is something which is difficult, indeed impossible without the grace of God, reaching at times an heroic degree.

(c) **A man cannot hate his brother without being a murderer:**

He calls murder not only hatred (which is potential murder), but also the lack of love. Not to help a person in need is to kill him; and murder is a mortal sin. It chases the grace of God from the soul.

(d) **God has proved his love to us . . .**

We know the love of Christ through his deeds, and we have known what true charity means because we have seen it practised by Christ. He gave his life, and we must be prepared to give ours without seeking personal gain. If, then, we are bound to risk our lives, what must we say of our goods?

(e) **Let us show our love by the true test of action:**

An exact definition of love, which is not always translated into terms of sensible devotion, but which is inseparable from good deeds.

3. *The lesson:*

(a) **Love and deeds:**

Love tends to consider the beloved as one with his own person; from which comes as its first effect, that I should desire for him all that I long for myself. I also try to free him from all that I consider evil. Where there is true love there must also be effective good works.

(b) **To give one's life:**

If the one who loves thinks of the beloved as one with himself, then his love must run on the rule of treating him as he would treat himself. This love may even mean the risking or the giving of our life for the beloved.

(c) **Giving one's goods:**

The best measure is not in percentage but in charity.

B: The Gospel: Luke 14. 16-24

1. *History:*

After preaching the Gospel in Galilee our Lord spent some months in a tour of Judaea. On one occasion, in the region of Peraea, he was invited to the house of an influential Pharisee, probably the chief of the synagogue. St Luke tells us a great deal about our Lord's way of using such occasions to let fall his doctrine, usually prompted by something he had observed. The seating of the guests, for example, showed the good pharisaical custom of discussion as to precedence, and the Lord, turning to his disciples, takes the opportunity of warning them: When any man invites thee to a wedding, do not sit

down in the chief place; he may have invited some guest whose rank is greater than thine. If so, his host and thine will come and say to thee, Make room for this man; and so thou wilt find thyself taking with a blush the lowest place of all . . . (Luke 14. 8-9).

Then, directing his attention to the host, Jesus says: When thou givest a dinner or a supper, do not ask thy neighbours to come, or thy brethren, or thy kindred, or thy friends who are rich; it may be they will send thee invitations in return. . . . Rather, when thou givest hospitality, invite poor men to come, the cripples, the lame, the blind . . . thy reward will come when the just rise again. One of his hearers at once makes a typical pharisaical remark: Blessed is the man who shall feast in the kingdom of God. Naturally, he considered his own invitation to that banquet as being certain. Our Lord points out that it is not enough to be a Jew in order to enter heaven; we have to co-operate with the call of God and overcome certain obstacles in our way.

The question has given us the genuine sense of the parable, but that does not exclude the messianic sense which lies behind it. The banquet may refer to that future kingdom which is the antechamber to the kingdom of heaven.

St Matthew has another version (or is it rather another parable similar to this one), in which the sense is entirely messianic; but we shall leave that to be dealt with on another occasion and restrict ourselves to St Luke.

2. The parable:

(a) A man gave a great supper:

We know something of the magnificence of these banquets from the Sacred Scriptures, which give us examples of some of them (Esth. 1. 1-8; Luke 15. 23). The more important the host the greater the number of the guests. It was regarded as an insult not to assist.

(b) when the time came for his supper . . .

It was a custom (not merely among the Jews) to invite twice, once a good while before and then another shortly before the date fixed. To leave someone out from the second invitation was a grave insult, while an equally grave offence was given by accepting the first invitation and refusing the second.

(c) all of them, with one accord, began making excuses . . .

The lack of courtesy is stressed by the fact that they made their excuses at this moment, when all was prepared, that they were all of one mind in the matter and that their excuses were so weak.

(d) The excuses:

Our Lord did not mention them without thought. They represent the earthly and sensual motives which bind a man so to earth that

he cannot even think of heavenly things. What, if not these excuses, prevented the Pharisees from following Christ?

(e) The anger of the master of the house:

The second act of the parable begins. In the first we are told of the munificence of the host; in the second we see the same thing, but its object has changed, because the former friends are wiped off the list of guests and the invitation is extended to others.

(f) There is still room . . .

Our Lord stresses in these words the grandeur of the banquet prepared for us.

(g) so that my house may be filled . . .

Who gave the Jews the right to limit the messianic kingdom? The seed of Abraham shall be as the sands on the shore of the sea, the kingdom of David shall have no limit.

(h) none of those who were first invited . . .

Although the Lord is generous he is still aware of his dignity as God. When a similar parable to this one was told to them in the Temple the Jews were furious at the thought of their being excluded from the messianic kingdom.

3. Application:

We propose as a model the Homily of St Gregory, a source of many sermons on this Gospel.

(a) The messianic kingdom:

The supper is this kingdom, abounding in doctrine and sacraments, as is the Church. Several servants, the prophets, had extended the divine invitation to the Jewish people throughout the ages; now the Son of God himself preached it through the whole of Palestine. The doctors of the law would not accept it because it did not fit in with their idea of this kingdom, nor were they prepared to abandon their idea, their minds being so close to earthly rather than heavenly things. Once they had rejected the invitation and had been rejected themselves the good news was extended to the Samaritans and then, later, to the Gentiles. On their fate who were rejected and on the future conversion of Israel see St Paul to the Romans, chapter 11.

(b) Glory and holiness:

To enter into this kingdom is to enter heaven, because the kingdom and the future glory it offers are two parts of one whole. We can, therefore, refer this parable to the holiness which is necessary as a condition for glory. The only difference then will be the extent of the parable, because those who reject the invitation will be, not only the Jews, but all who refuse to accept God's grace.

(c) A great feast:

Things no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart conceived, the welcome God has prepared for those who love him (1 Cor. 2. 9).

(d) The invitation:

Given to all, to the Jews through the prophets and Christ, to us through the teaching of the Church, the grace of God, examples of holiness, the punishments we witness, the voice of conscience—and a thousand other ways known only to God himself.

(e) The excuses:

Adam was the first one to excuse himself. Sometimes we even try to deceive our own selves into thinking that our excuses are genuine.

The different pretexts have always received the same interpretation. One does not attend because of his inordinate affection for worldly goods; another because of his preoccupation with material things; the third through sensuality. Here it is worth noting that none of the three was engaged in sinful occupations. All are lawful as means to an end; but when God calls, then he who has many riches must answer that call as if he had nothing. That is to say, he must make sure that his material possessions do not impede his salvation.

This is the difficulty, because the love of the world and its pleasures—to say nothing of sensuality, which clouds the intellect—is bondage of the worst kind. It takes such a hold of our hearts that it absorbs all their attention. It blinds us to the great fact that there are other goods worth much more than these, and of a different kind. Thus grace is often despised and rejected.

On the other hand, God is light, while creatures are darkness, as St John of the Cross says. Therefore, while we walk among creatures God cannot enter into our hearts. How futile the excuses, and how the evil man deplores them too late (Wisdom, chap. 5).

(f) Graces given to others:

When those who were first called, those born into a Christian family, rejected grace it was given to the publicans and the harlots (Matt. 21. 31), because the first shall be last and the last first (*ibid.* 19. 30).

(g) The Eucharist:

i. *Who invites?* Christ who said: If anyone eats of this bread he shall live for ever. And now, what is this bread which I am to give? It is my flesh, given for the life of the world (John 6. 52).

ii. *In what does it consist?* His own flesh and blood, which communicates life to us by changing us into Christ. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives continually in me and I in him (John 6. 57).

iii. *Whom does he invite?* All of us.

iv. *The excuses:* Business matters, pleasures, work of all kinds, not to wish to change one's way of life; time for everything except God.

v. *The punishment:* Exclusion from the banquet and from heaven. You can have no life in yourselves, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood (John 6. 54).

(h) Rejection of grace:

An obvious application. God gives it to all; but who will deny that we, as Catholics, are privileged above all others? There are abundant means by which we receive it. But passion opposes it. The mercy of God has its limits and although he will stand without and knock repeatedly at the door of our hearts, there may come a time when he rejects us as we have rejected him. What a terrible thing it will be if, one day, we have to stand before God and confess that all the interior and exterior graces we have received in life have been given to us in vain.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

The Eucharistic Banquet

(One of the things on which St John insists is the impediment to union with Christ which arises through riches, but we shall not insist on this point at the moment. Therefore the extracts are taken from his *Homily on 1 Cor. n. 24* and *Homily 83 on the Gospel of St Matthew*.)

1. *The great banquet:***(a) The body of Christ, victor over death:**

This body can no longer be dust, ashes or a captive, but free; through it I hope for heaven and the good things which await me there, immortal life, like that of the angels, in the company of Christ. This is the body which, though scourged and crucified, could not be overcome by death entirely. When the sun gazed on it crucified it hid its light, the veil was rent, the stones themselves were moved and the earth trembled. This is the body which, on being opened by a lance, poured forth, like a salutary fountain, water and blood for the whole world. Do you wish to know its power. Then ask the woman who was cured merely by touching his garments; ask the sea, which sustained it without it sinking, ask the devil, whom it has made lose his power and strength; ask mother earth, who was anxious to return to the world that which it could not hold captive, because it was not born of her.

(b) Charity and fervour in the reception of the Eucharist:

Let us approach with prudence, because just as to draw near to this banquet carelessly is very dangerous, so not to approach it is hunger and death.

2. Worldly desires and the Eucharist:

Tell me, will you not detest and cast away from you all love for earthly things, so as to enjoy only him? Do you still look at the earth, do you still love money and long for gold? And yet you desire to obtain pardon and relief? Do you not know how much God hates such worldly magnificence? Have you not seen him born in a stable, of a humble mother...? If we think of it reasonably we shall see that this world is not worthy of us. Therefore adorn your souls, prepare your house.

3. Union with Christ:**(a) In the Eucharist:**

What shepherd is there who will feed his sheep with his own body? . . . Think how Christ was born of our substance. You will tell me that this does not refer to all, even though in a way it does, since, by coming in our nature, he came to all . . . and if he came to all, he came to each one. But how—you insist—do all not receive the fruit? You must not blame him who came to all for that, but those who would not receive him. He has come to all the faithful and with all he unites himself in this mystery, and those to whom he gave birth he feeds with his own flesh.

(b) The unworthy:

The blood of Christ will be demanded at your hands. Even though he who approaches unworthily were a leader of the people or a prefect, even though he wear the royal crown itself, in this you have a greater power than he. . . . This is your dignity, your safety and your crown. But to have been honoured by God with the office of judge and then not to go before him dressed in the white garment . . . I am speaking about sins which are known, not the hidden ones, and still I must say something even more terrible to you, namely, that it is better to admit those possessed by the devil than to permit those of whom St Paul wrote (Heb. 10. 29), who tread Christ under foot, who treat as a low thing the blood of the Testament and heap insults on the grace of the Holy Spirit. He who communicates in sin is worse than one possessed by the devil, because the latter is nothing but a victim of the persecution of Satan. . . . Fear God, not men; if you fear them He will laugh at you; if you fear God then even men will honour you.

II. ST AUGUSTINE

The Eucharistic symbolism of the banquet (Serm. 35)

I. Explanation of the parable:

(a) The farm: pride:

Those who were invited refused to attend giving different pretexts. What pretexts . . . three things. . . . Are not these the same things which nowadays keep others away from this banquet? Let us examine them in order to flee from them. The buying of the farm is the spirit of domination. Therefore here the Lord is attacking pride; because to possess a farm, to live there, to consecrate one's life to it and to act the part of owner and lord is pride, an evil vice, a capital vice. The first man sought to dominate, he did not wish to have any master; for indeed what is meant by dominion if it is not to enjoy authority as one's own right? Over us, however, there is a superior power. Let us be subject to him if we wish to live.

(b) The yoke of oxen: curiosity of the senses:

Another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen. . . . Would it not have been enough to say, I have bought some oxen? There is a mystery here, undoubtedly, and one which we must unravel, a closed door which is saying to us: Knock. The five yoke of oxen are the five bodily senses. . . . Why call them yoke of oxen? Because the bodily senses busy themselves about earthly things, just as the oxen are used to plough the earth. There are men so far away from the faith, so given over to earthly and carnal things, that they refuse to believe anything which does not come to them through the five senses, which to them are the only rules and guides for their will. I do not believe, they tell you, unless I see. . . .

(c) The impediment of faith:

Thomas the apostle suffered from the same defect, since he refused to believe even the testimony of his eyes where the resurrection was concerned. . . . Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed, said our Lord. As far as we are concerned, we have found no difficulty at all in assisting at the supper. . . . He gave his disciples a supper, consecrated by his own hands. We did not assist at that feast, yet each day by faith we eat of the same meal. Do not hold it to have been a great thing to have assisted at that supper without faith. Today the faith is greater than the perfidy of those days. Paul was not there, but he believed; Judas was there, Judas who sold our Lord.

(d) The sensuality of the flesh:

That is the sensuality of the flesh which keeps many away from assisting at the feast, and would that it was only exteriorly and that

it did not keep their hearts far from him. Some say, There is no way in which a man can enjoy himself if he lacks the pleasures of the flesh. These are they who, according to the apostle, say: Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we must die. Who has ever come back from there? Who has told us ever what happens there? Our only advantage are those things which we enjoy here. He who speaks thus has married a wife. Embracing the flesh, he does not know any other delights than those which are sensual and excuses himself from attending the supper. But will he not perish from internal hunger? Listen to John the Apostle, Do not wish to love the world or the things that are in the world (1 John 2. 15). Oh, you who come to the supper of the Lord, do not wish to love the world or the things of the world! He did not say do not wish to have them, but do not love them. The love of what is earthly is bondage for the wings of the spirit.

(e) Let no one delay in approaching this supper:

Let us leave aside, therefore, evil and vain excuses and let us go eagerly to that supper which feeds us interiorly. Let not the vice of pride keep us away, nor any illicit curiosity keep our hearts down to things of earth, and far from God; nor let the vice of sensuality impede the happiness of the heart. Let us approach and feed. Who came to the supper except beggars, sick people, the lame and the blind? The healthy rich did not come, that is those who are well-off; nor the clever, presumptuous, those who are far from any remedy because of their pride. Let the poor come, because he invites them who, being rich, became poor for our sake, so that his poverty might enrich the poor. Let the sick approach, because the healthy do not need a physician, but those that are sick. Let the blind come and let them say, enlighten my eyes that I may never sit in the shadow of death.

(f) The flesh is nothing unless it is given life by the spirit:

The Lord himself says: It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh profits nothing. Good Master, how can you say the flesh profits nothing when you have just told us that he who does not eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood will not have life in him? Does life profit nothing? Why are we, and why do we live, then, if it is not to obtain eternal life which you promised us through your flesh? What does that mean, the flesh profits nothing if it is because of charity. In the same way, the flesh profits nothing if it is alone. Let it be joined to the spirit as it is by charity and then it profits much. For if the flesh profits nothing then the Word would not have been made flesh to dwell among us. . . .

2. Poverty and riches:

(a) Poor in spirit:

Be ye therefore poor in spirit and the kingdom of God shall be yours. Remember the riches of the kingdom of God . . . as a result of the poverty of the just there will come an immense happiness, a perfect security. But among us, while the amount of our so-called riches increase, so does our fear, without diminishing our greed. You can show me many rich men, but can you show me one who is secure? He burns with the desire to acquire while he fears to lose. When is such a slave ever free? . . . What do we mean by the poor in spirit? The poor in desires, not in goods. The poor in spirit is humble, and God who hears the groans of the humble, will not cease to hear his pleas. From this humility, or should we say poverty, our Lord began his sermon. There are to be found religious men, abundant in this world's goods, and there are also to be found poor men who have not even a penny, but also without resignation. The former is poor in spirit because of his humility, the latter is poor, but not in spirit.

(b) Let the rich be poor in spirit:

Writing to his disciple, Timothy, St Paul says: Warn those who are rich in this present world not to think highly of themselves . . . (1 Tim. 6. 17). Nothing breeds pride so easily as riches. If the rich were not proud he would trample his riches under foot to serve God; the proud rich man does not possess, he is possessed. The proud rich man is like the devil. The proud rich man what has he that has not come from God? The apostle also adds: Warn the rich . . . not to repose their hopes in the riches that may fail us. Let him have his riches as one who knows how perishable they are.

(c) The poor are God's carriers, who take our alms to him:

The Head, who is in heaven, has his members on earth; let one member of Christ help another member in need. You are a member of Christ, and what have you to give; he also is a member of Christ and needs your gift. Both of you are travelling along the same road; give him part of your burden, give the needy part of that which weighs you down, in which case you will relieve yourself and relieve him.

(d) Warnings to the rich:

. . . not to repose their hopes in the riches that may fail us, but in the living God, who bestows on us so richly all that we enjoy (1 Tim. 6. 17). He bestows both temporal goods and eternal, although it is the eternal which we are to enjoy, the temporal are for use. The temporal goods we have as travellers; the eternal as dwellers in heaven. The temporal for doing good; the eternal to make us good. . . .

Are the rich then expected to lose their riches? Let them give, the apostle says; not that they should give away all they possess. Let them keep for themselves what is sufficient; let them keep more than what is sufficient, and give away a part. The tenth part? The Pharisees gave that (Luke 18. 12). We may well be ashamed, since those for whom Christ had not yet died gave the tenth part of their goods. . . . Do not imagine that you are doing anything extraordinary when you share your bread with a poor person, bread which is hardly a thousandth part of your possessions. However, I do not reproach you; do that if you like. . . . But I will not keep silent about what he said who lives after having been dead: that if your justice does not give fuller measure than the justice of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5. 21).

(e) Rich and poor:

You have been told what you must do; you have heard what you must fear; how to gain the kingdom of heaven and the great obstacles in the way. Take heed to the word of God, who made both rich and poor. . . . You, rich man, do not grind the face of the poor; and you who are poor, do not defraud. This one is in need, this one has plenty; but both were made by the Lord. By making use of him who has riches God approaches the poor; by making use of the needy he tries the strong and rich.

III. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

Commentaries on the Gospel

1. Difference between material and spiritual pleasures:

There is this difference between spiritual and material pleasures, my brethren, in so far as the latter, when they are lacking, inspire us with a strong desire to possess them, but once they are obtained then we soon become weary of them. On the contrary, spiritual joys do not attract us when they are not possessed, but once we have them, then they produce a strong desire for more. . . . Thus spiritual joys increase the desire for them in our souls, at the same time as they satisfy us; because the more we appreciate their savour, so much the more do we love them.

2. The excuses of the invited guests:

(a) Greed and idle curiosity:

What is the meaning of the farm except material things? He, therefore goes to see his lands who only thinks of material goods for the profit they bring him.

And what is it that we see in the yoke of oxen but the five bodily senses? . . . Those who cannot understand spiritual things and only

know material and earthly things, leaving the former on one side, are a symbol of curiosity. . . . This, in so far as it seeks to know all about the lives of others, although it does not know their internal intentions, always enjoys busying itself with the externals. A grave and evil vice this of curiosity which, while inciting someone to discover all about the life of his neighbour, leads him to ignore what is within himself, so that, knowing all about others, he does not know himself.

(b) Sensuality:

Another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. What must we understand by this woman, surely the delights of the flesh? . . . There is no reason why something which is wrong may not be represented by something lawful. . . . He who gives himself up to earthly business more than is right is refusing to attend the Lord's banquet. He who is over-curious about the lives of others despises the food the Lord offers him, and finally he who indulges in the pleasures of the flesh rejects the heavenly banquet. . . .

(c) The different types of invited guests:

Let us see why it is that, in this third kind of invitation, the servant is not told to invite them, but to compel them to come in (Luke 14. 23). Truly, some are called and do not wish to come; others are called and come; and of others it is not said that they are called, but that they are forced to enter. They are called and do not wish to come who, having received the gift of understanding, do not act according to the light. They are called and come who, through their works, perfect the supernatural grace which they have received. But there are others who are called in such a way that they are forced to come. There are men who know perfectly well what they should do in the way of good actions, but they do not do it. They see how they should act, but they do not wish to do it.

(d) Tribulation—a call of God to the man who is indifferent:

These are the ones who, as we have already said, are most frequently hurt by the adversities of this world, and especially in their carnal desires. They attempt to achieve worldly honours and they do not succeed, and while they are attempting to sail the high seas in search of great worldly affairs, they are thrown on to the coast of humiliation by contrary winds. Thus, seeing themselves thwarted in all their desires, they remember their duty to their Creator, and return to him, full of shame, whom they have previously abandoned in favour of the world. There are also cases of those who, wishing to reach the heights of human glory, are victims of a long illness, or fall a prey to calumnies, or are overcome by evils. Thus they learn never to trust such earthly delights, and condemning their evil desires, are converted to God in their hearts.

(e) The return of the heart to God:

How useful this salutary adversity is and how advantageous to us in the spiritual life. . . . Once the soul has found its evil way surrounded by thorns, when it cannot attain its desires, then it returns to the love of its first husband (God). For often, when we find that we cannot achieve what we desire, when we grow tired of trying to put into effect our earthly lusts, then it is that we turn our hearts to God again; then those things begin to please us which up to now have displeased us. Then we remember with pleasure him whose commands had previously been disagreeable to us; and then the sinful soul which had tried so hard to commit adultery, decides to become a faithful spouse.

(f) A terrible sentence:

I tell you, none of those who were first invited shall taste of my supper. See that he calls them himself, he calls them through his angels, through the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the priests. Sometimes he calls through miracles, at other times through punishments or through the very fact of worldly prosperity or even adversities. Let no one despise the call, lest, excusing himself from obeying it, he may not be able to enter when he himself chooses. Hear what is said through the mouth of Solomon: Then they shall call me and I will not hear; they shall seek me and I am not to be found. That is why the foolish virgins, who arrived late, call and say: Lord, Lord, open to us. But then it is said to those who seek to enter, Amen I say to you, I know you not. Before this threat, dearly beloved brethren, what other course remains open to us except to abandon the things of this world, to put aside all our earthly preoccupations and aspire only to those heavenly delights?

(g) Possess the earth, but do not be possessed by it:

I would like to advise you to give up all earthly things, but I do not hope for that. If, therefore, you cannot give up all worldly things, at least have them in such a way that they do not chain you to earth, so that the earthly does not possess you, but is rather possessed by you. Keep them so that they are under your dominion, so that your heart will not be overcome by love for such things and so be possessed by them. Let us keep earthly things for our use, heavenly things for our one desire at the end of the journey. Let us look, as it were, with indifference on all the things of this world. Let the eyes of the soul be open to seek those things towards which we are going. Let us extirpate the roots of vice, tearing them up from our works and also from our thoughts. Never let us be kept away from the Lord's Supper either by the pleasures of the flesh, or by curiosity, or by ambition's fire. On the contrary, let us deal in holy indifference with even the good we do here in this life, so that in such a way earthly things which we find pleasant may do no harm to our hearts.

(h) Use them as if you did not use them:

He weeps as if he did not weep who is afflicted by temporal evils in such a way that he consoles himself with heavenly desires. He rejoices but as if he did not rejoice who takes pleasure in earthly delights in such a way that he has always before his mind eternal torments, and who tames the joy of his heart with salutary fear. He purchases, but as if he had nothing, who exteriorly gathers together all that he needs for his use here, but reminds himself that he is shortly to leave it. He uses this world as if he did not use it who disposes externally of all that he needs to live, but who does not allow it to dominate his heart or to impede the road of the soul which is aiming at higher things. . . . Such souls rejoice more in good works than in goods possessed.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIAN

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

The Eucharistic Sacrifice

1. *The sacrifices of the Old Law:*

And for this reason all the other sacrifices of the Old Law were offered up in order to foreshadow this one individual and paramount sacrifice—the imperfect forecasting the perfect. Hence the apostle says (Heb. 10. 11) that the priest of the Old Law often offered the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but Christ offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever. And since the reason of the figure is taken from that which the figure represents, therefore the reasons for the figurative sacrifices of the Old Law should be taken from the true sacrifice of Christ (1-2. q. 102. a. 3 c).

2. *Christ's sacrifice is the greatest of all:*

Now of all the gifts which God vouchsafed to mankind after they had fallen away by sin, the chief is that he gave his Son: wherefore it is written (John 3. 16) God so loved the world. . . . Consequently, the chief sacrifice is that whereby Christ himself delivered himself . . . to God for an odour of sweetness.

3. *The Eucharist, a true sacrifice, commemorating the Passion of Christ:***(a) Victim and sacrifice:**

This sacrament is called a sacrifice in as much as it represents the Passion of Christ; but it is termed a host in as much as it contains Christ, who is a host (Douai—sacrifice) . . . of sweetness (Eph. 5. 2); (3P. q. 73. a. 4. *ad 3ium*). The sacrifice which is offered every day in the Church is not distinct from that which Christ himself offered, but is a commemoration thereof. Wherefore as Augustine says: Christ is both the priest who offers it and the victim; the sacred

token of which he wished to be the daily sacrifice of the Church (3P. q. 22. a. 3. *ad 2um*).

(b) **The Priest should partake of it:**

The Eucharist is not only a sacrament but also a sacrifice. Now whoever offers sacrifice must be a sharer in the sacrifice, because the outward sacrifice he offers is a sign of the inner sacrifice whereby he offers himself to God, as Augustine says. Hence by partaking of the sacrifice he shows that the inner one is likewise his. In the same way also by dispensing the sacrifice to the people, he shows that he is the dispenser of divine gifts, of which he ought himself to be the first to partake, as Dionysius says. Consequently, he ought to receive before dispensing it to the people.

(c) **A true immolation:**

The celebration of this sacrament is called a sacrifice for two reasons. First because, as Augustine says, the images of things are called by the name of the things whereof they are the images; as when we look upon a picture or a fresco we say, that is Cicero and this is Sallust. But as was said above the celebration of this sacrament is an image representing Christ's passion, which is his true sacrifice. Accordingly, the celebration of this sacrament is called Christ's sacrifice. Hence it is that Ambrose, in commenting on Heb. 10. 1 says, In Christ was offered up a sacrifice capable of giving eternal salvation; what then do we do? Do we not offer it up every day in memory of his death? (3 P. q. 83. a. 4. c).

Secondly, it is called a sacrifice, in respect to the effect of his Passion; because by this sacrament we are made partakers of the fruit of our Lord's Passion. Hence in one of the Sunday Secrets (ninth after Pent.) we say: Whenever the commemoration of this sacrifice is celebrated, the work of our redemption is enacted.

II. J. B. FRANZELIN

(A summary of some of his teaching with regard to points not usually mentioned or clearly expressed. Cf. *Tract. De S. Euch. Sac. et sacrificio*. Ed. 5, Rome, 1899.)

1. *Union of charity—an effect of this sacrament:*

The unity with Christ which is described by St John (chap. 6) and which is both signified and caused by the sacramental union with him under the form of food and drink, is that other spiritual union of charity which unites us and keeps us united to the Head and members.

2. *Sacramental grace of the Eucharist—charity itself:*

It might be thought that this sacrament has no effect peculiar to itself, since all give us grace and charity. But it should be noted that,

although the sanctifying grace given by the sacraments is ontologically the same in all of them, in each one it receives a special relation, which is called sacramental grace. . . . Christ in the eucharist, by uniting himself with us interiorly as food and drink, does so to perfect life and union with him through charity, love for him and for our neighbour. This he does, not for any other purpose, but merely from that of charity itself.

3. *The centre of charity:*

For that reason this sacrament is the intimate centre of all the rest, to which they are all directed as spokes to the hub of a wheel, which do nothing but prepare for a union with Christ which will be perfected in this. In the other sacraments Christ, God made man, gives grace by applying through his ministers the sanctifying signs; but in this, he himself is the sacrament, and by means of an intimate union under the form of food and drink, he pours out on the soul the abundance of his grace.

4. *Effects of the Eucharist on the bodies of those who receive it:*

The Fathers of the Church refer to these effects in several ways;

(a) They say explicitly that it is the work of this sacrament to sanctify both soul and body (Clem. Alex.).

(b) They speak of a special affinity with Christ and ourselves, obtained by the union of his body with ours, a union which is achieved not merely while he remains sacramentally present within us, but afterwards, making us of the same blood as he, a relationship of consanguinity.

(c) They explain that the union with the body of Christ, principle and cause of incorruptibility, translates us from the state of fallen sinners to that of a restoration of our former dignity (Greg. Naz.) and to our former integrity, in this act they compare the eucharist to the eating of the fruit by Adam. This complete restoration, for the Fathers, implies two elements; the tempering and weakening of concupiscence and that of being the medicine of immortality. Our bodies which have received the eucharist are no longer corruptible, because they now have the hope of resurrection (Irenaeus).

4. *Explanation of the facts:*

(a) Christ considered as his own flesh, through a special affinity, that of those who receive this sacrament worthily. That flesh is now consecrated through its contact with his Sacred Body. Even though in very truth our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit by grace, and therefore members of Christ, part of his blood and body, . . . still this mystical union between Christ's Body and ours receives a fuller consummation here, and almost, one might say, a sacramental consecration, through the union of his glorified body and blood with ours.

(b) The resurrection:

So far as the resurrection is concerned, . . . it is sufficient to admit that Christ our Lord, given the affinity with him which arises through the eucharistic union, considers our body as being in a special way his own, which must be conformed to its exemplar in the glory of the resurrection. Our bodies get from the Eucharist a special aptitude and title to the resurrection.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

Causes of the institution of the Eucharist

1. *Introduction:*

The preacher does not always have to restrict himself to moral truths, he should also be prepared to manifest the greatness of the Lord. A sermon on speculative truths is capable of producing as much fruit as one which is entirely practical, because the contemplation of these divine works has great advantages, illuminating the mind and inflaming the will. It can lead us to admire the divine wisdom and majesty, from which arise salutary fear and respect. It can make us understand the need to love, serve and praise God.

2. *Four causes for the institution of the Eucharist:***(a) To console man:**

For which reason it was instituted just before Christ left his disciples. What would become of the Church and of us if we did not have this consolation of the Eucharist.

(b) As a reminder of the passion:

Do this in commemoration of me. It would not be right to forget the passion, and everything in the mass, from the vestments, the words of the priest, to the very eucharistic Presence itself, should remind us of it. This is the Lamb of our Pasch.

(c) A new sacrifice:

The figures of it having been abolished, this new sacrifice is given to us. It should be noticed that the blood of the ancient sacrifices was not merely offered in adoration, but also served to purify and sanctify, because priests, kings and people were sprinkled with it. The blood of the Lord in the Eucharist is also something more than a sacrifice of adoration, because, in uniting itself with us in the form of a sacrament, it sanctifies us and makes us like Christ.

(d) The sacrament of sanctification:

We have reached it at last. If the blood of animals did it in the days of old, what will this bread not do which feeds the very life of man. Bread and wine, symbols of food. The bread which I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world (John 6. 51).

II. DOM COLUMBA MARMION

(Various extracts from his works which deal with the Mass and Communion.)

1. *Uniting ourselves with Christ:*

The Eucharist is not merely a sacrifice, it is also a sacrament, the sacrament of union, as the word 'communion' recalls to our minds. It is in order to unite himself with us that our Lord comes to us. To unite is to make of two things only one. But we unite ourselves to Christ as he is. Now, every Communion presupposes the sacrifice of the altar, and consequently, the immolation of the cross. In the offering of the Holy Mass Christ associates us to his state as High Priest, and in Communion he causes us to share in his condition as victim. The Holy Sacrifice supposes that inward and entire oblation that our Lord made to the will of his Father when he entered into the world, an oblation that he renewed frequently during his life and completed by his death on the cross. All this, says St Paul, is recalled to our minds by our holy Communion. As often as you shall eat this bread and drink this chalice, you shall show forth the death of the Lord till he come. Jesus Christ gives himself to us as food, but only after having first been offered as a victim. Victim and food are, in the Eucharist, sacrifice and sacrament, two inseparable characteristics. That is why this habitual disposition of giving oneself to him, to his Father, to our neighbour are so important. . . . This essential disposition makes us one with Christ, but with Christ as victim; it establishes sympathy between the two terms of the union (*Christ, the Life of the Soul*, p. 2, c. 8).

2. *In his whole life:*

The life that Christ gives us in Communion is his whole life, which passes into our souls to be the exemplar and the form of ours, to produce within us the different affections of the heart of Jesus, to make us imitate all the virtues he practised and to shed within us that special grace which he merited for us while living his mysteries. . . . When therefore we receive Christ at his Holy Table we may contemplate him and converse with him in any of his mysteries; although he is now in a glorious state, we find in him the one who has lived for us and merited for us the grace that those mysteries contain; dwelling in us, Christ communicates this grace to us in order to effect, little by little, the transformation of our life into him, which is the proper effect of this sacrament.

Jesus is in us really present, he who was present in the crib at Nazareth, upon the mountains of Judaea, in the supper room, on the cross. It is this same Jesus who said to the Samaritan woman, If thou didst know the gift of God. Thou who art athirst for light, peace, joy, happiness, if thou didst know who I am thou wouldst

ask of me living water . . . that water of divine grace which becomes a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.

He is in us, really present, who said: I am the way, the truth and the life. . . . He that followeth me walketh not in darkness . . . no man cometh to the Father but by me . . . I am the vine, you the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. . . . Him that cometh to me I will not cast out . . . come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you . . . and you shall find rest in your souls.

He is in us, the same Christ who healed the lepers, stilled the tempest, and promised to the good thief a place in his kingdom. We find there our Saviour, our friend, our elder brother, in the fullness of his almighty power, in the ever fruitful virtue of his mysteries, the infinite superabundance of his merits and the ineffable mercy of his love (*Christ in his Myst.*, p. 2, c. 18).

Every day in holy Communion Christ gives himself entirely to us; he takes us and gives us to the Word. If our whole day could flow from our Communion of the morning, little by little Christ would transform us and raise us to sublime holiness. What we cannot do Jesus does for us. In the world the bridegroom is the strength of his bride who is weak, and the more powerless she is, the more he acts for her. . . . The more weak, powerless and miserable you are, the more Christ becomes your strength, the more he supplies for you. . . . When you cannot say the prayers you would wish, Jesus says them for you.

III. J. B. SCARAMELLI

(Summary of his teaching with regard to the three excuses given by the invited guests in the parable. Cf. *Directorio ascetico y mistico*, ed. G. del Amo, Madrid, 1900.)

The farm, the yoke of oxen and the marriage represent ambition for honours, desire of riches and sensuality. He explains why these three are so dangerous and why they impede our salvation.

1. *Ambition:*

It consists in an inordinate desire for honours which are not in accordance with our actual merits. St Ambrose and St John Chrysostom point out that many spiritual men who have managed to overcome other kinds of temptation, fall into the snare of this one. It is easy, says Chrysostom, to despise riches, but it is difficult to reject or despise honours. St Cyprian admits that it is the sin of many priests, while St Bernard calls it the moth which destroys sanctity.

2. *Enemy of perfection and salvation:*

To kill someone means to separate soul from body. That is what vain glory does for virtue. We give alms, vain glory enters into the

picture, and at once what appears to be virtue is nothing but a dead body. God looks on it with disgust, because it has lost all holiness and virtue. Works are good according to the purpose for which they are done; vainglory substitutes a bad motive for the good ones. For this reason our Lord advises those who are giving alms not to let their left hand know what their right hand is doing.

3. *Leads to condemnation:*

St Thomas did not include pride among the capital vices, because he considered it to be the queen of them all; instead he puts in the first place vainglory, which is like a seven-headed hydra, since from it come seven other vices which are related to it, boasting, presumption, hypocrisy, discord in the will, disputes in words, and disobedience to superiors (2-2. q. 132. a. 4).

4. *A difficult vice to overcome:*

Sensuality can be overcome by chastity; but vainglory is not overcome, even by acts of humility, because it can arise from and because of those very acts which are done to destroy it. Evil usually comes from evil; only vainglory comes from good acts, says Chrysostom. It is the shadow which follows virtue, says St Jerome. This is the reason why the saints were so afraid of it.

5. *Remedies:*

(a) Prayer—necessary to overcome all vice, but essential to conquer this one. We have to be careful, because we can even give rise to vainglory in our prayers unless we are.

(b) Think how contrary it is to the spirit of Christ, who rejected it on the mount of the temptations. He even ordered people to keep silent about his miracles.

(c) We have to convince ourselves that all we have, whether spiritual or temporal, comes to us from God,

(d) do all for the glory of God,

(e) hide our good works as a treasure that might be stolen from us.

6. *Riches:*

(a) *They are opposed to perfection:*

i. *They poison charity.* They distract the soul, preventing her from giving herself up to her own sanctification, because the love of money leads to a great desire to obtain more, to great fear of losing what we have and sorrow if we do lose it. They are the thorns which choke the seed.

ii. *They are devil's snare.* He who has an inordinate love for them falls into the arms of the devil. They are the mother of infidelity (1 Tim. 6. 9). St Ambrose gives us the explanation, saying that they so obscure the reason that they do not allow it the light to see God.

Unjust contracts, usury, theft, frauds, oppression of the poor, perjury, lies, homicides, quarrels, loss of grace . . . all these evils

can come easily from an inordinate love of riches. According to St Gregory the salvation of a rich man demands a moral miracle.

(b) Remedies:

Poverty of spirit—a total detachment from riches, whether we have them or not—that is the secret of perfection. We must be like statues, which are indifferent to whether they be dressed or naked. St Gregory asks; what did the apostles give up? Nothing, he replies, then he corrects that—they gave up everything, because they gave up any affection they might have had for riches.

Almsdeeds are the best way of attaining this detachment.

7. *Sensuality:*

The senses, from which the soul obtains her knowledge, present things to us, not as they really are, but under the guise of sensual pleasures, thus making the soul fall in love with false goods which can lead to her damnation.

The first impediment we experience, not merely against perfection, but also salvation, comes from such pleasures.

Sexual sin is the greatest tyrant of them all and the most brutal. It is worse than many others in its effects, because while other sins are like scissors, which cut the stem of a plant, this one is capable of destroying all virtues, not merely one. Pleasure of this kind transforms the intellect, perverts the will, obscures reason, and upsets all the powers of the soul. We have a sad example of this in Solomon, who was at the same time the builder of a most beautiful temple to God and then, later, a builder of temples to idols—all through his illicit love for this sin.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

The Holy Eucharist

1. *Renewal of family life through the Eucharist:*

Few needs are so pressing today as the welding together of the Christian family. It is the supporting arch on which human society rests. It is, we may say, the dome that crowns the fabric of creation. Few needs are so urgent as the healing of that natural source of life, if men really wish to save the very existence of mankind and to prevent its losing the fruit of the redemption. . . . The very unity and indissoluble character of the Christian family and its supernatural purposes are today in jeopardy. Unbreakable is the union of man wedded to woman, and of parents with their children. They are unions anchored in love. And how could that Sacrament which is the fount of charity and through which we form one spirit with him fail to strengthen that bond? (Message to Eucharistic Congress, Colombia, 31 Jan. 1949.)

2. *A source of peace:*

We think with joy of your gathering, because everything connected with the Eucharist speaks of peace; brethren sharing the banquet after the kiss of peace, and then the symbol of many grains of wheat. Peace is unity; where then does one go to seek it if not in this Sacrament 'of all ecclesiastical unity' (3P, q. 83. a. 4-5)? Peace is the fruit of charity; and so where is it to be found if not in this 'sacrament which signifies and produces charity' (*ibid.* q. 78. a. 3-6)? And if, as we well know, the enemies of peace are pride, greed, and, in general, disordered passion, what better remedy could we desire than this heavenly means of healing through which grace and virtue increase, by which we are preserved from sin and our spiritual life is made perfect, and the passions are restrained because of the increase of grace in the soul? (*Int. Euchar. Congress, Barcelona, 1 June 1952.*)

3. *Preserves vocation to priestly life:*

These and the other priestly virtues can be easily acquired and firmly possessed by students if, from the beginning, they have acquired and fostered a sincere and tender devotion to Jesus present truly, really and substantially in our midst in the sacrament of his love. They will see him present in the Blessed Sacrament, the inspiration and the end of all their actions, aspirations and sacrifices. Then, if besides devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, they have childlike devotion to Mary, with complete trust and abandonment to her, they will try to imitate her virtues (*Menti Nostrae, 25 Sept. 1950.*)

4. *To live the Eucharist in the priestly life:*

As he is in such close contact with the divine mysteries, the priest cannot but be hungry and thirsty after justice (Matt. 5. 6) nor can he fail to be moved to liken his life to his lofty dignity and direct it towards that sacrifice in which he must needs offer and immolate himself with Christ. It follows that he will not merely celebrate Holy Mass, but will live it intimately in his daily life. In no other way can he obtain that supernatural strength which will transform him and make him a sharer in the life of sacrifice of the Redeemer. . . .

The priest should, therefore, be at pains to reproduce in his own soul what is done upon the altar. As Jesus Christ immolates himself, so his minister should be immolated with him. As Jesus expiates the sins of men, so he, by following the hard road of Christian asceticism, should labour at the purification of himself and others (*ibid.*).

5. *Eucharist, sign of union between Christ and his members:*

Our treatment of this intimate union of the mystical body of Jesus Christ with its head would seem to us unfinished without at

least a few words on the Most Holy Eucharist, through which that union reaches its culmination in this mortal life.

For Christ our Lord willed it that in the Eucharistic Sacrifice this wonderful and inestimable union, binding us with one another and with our divine head, should find a special manifestation before the eyes of the faithful. Herein the sacred ministers represent not only our Saviour but the whole mystical Body, and each one of its members; in that sacrifice the faithful are associated in the common prayer and supplication, and, through the hands of the priest, whose voice alone renders the Immaculate Lamb present on the altar, they themselves offer to the eternal Father this most pleasing Victim of praise and propitiation for the needs of the whole Church. And as the divine Redeemer, when he was dying on the cross, offered himself as the Head of the whole human race to the Eternal Father, so in this 'clean oblation' he offers to the heavenly Father, not only himself as head of the Church, but in himself also his mystical members, for he encloses them all, even the weak and frail among them, most lovingly in his heart.

Moreover, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, while also presenting a vivid and marvellous picture of the unity of the Church—since the bread to be consecrated results from the kneading together of many grains of wheat—gives to us the very author of supernatural grace, from whom we are enabled to draw that Spirit of charity which bids us live not our own life, but the life of Christ, and whereby we love the Redeemer himself in all the members of his social Body.

If therefore there be in these unhappy times many souls united with Christ our Lord hidden under the Eucharistic veils, and united so closely that nothing—'whether tribulation or distress, or hunger or nakedness, or danger or persecution, or the sword'—can separate them from his charity, surely then Holy Communion, whose frequent reception, even among children, has in recent times been providentially restored, may well become the source of that fortitude which often raises up and fosters Christian heroes (*Mystici Corporis*, 29 June 1943).

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. THE EPISTLE

On hatred in the Christian moral code

1. *The malice of this sin:*

- (a) It is intrinsically and radically evil.
- (b) Besides this there is the law preached by Christ; But I tell you, love your enemies . . . (Matt. 5. 44). If you do not forgive them, your heavenly Father will not forgive you your transgressions either (*ibid.* 6. 15).

2. The fundamental reason why we are forbidden to hate our neighbour is because Christ has commanded that we love him.

Two moral questions

1. This prohibition against hatred of our neighbour can pose some delicate moral problems.

(a) It is simple to see the reason for the condemnation of hatred for good people, either because of their virtues or from jealousy. It is a hatred which is completely inadmissible, even among pagans.

(b) But when our neighbour becomes our enemy unjustly can we hate him then? What should our attitude be then?

i. Even in this case we should distinguish between the neighbour and the enemy, the man and his sin against me, the man and his qualities. We have to separate the work of God's hands—the man who has been redeemed, and the work of that man, his sin. Human nature is always good and cannot be hated; sin is evil and should be hated. Therefore the sin should be hated but not the person who commits it and whose repentance is so desired by God.

ii. It was a grave sin on the part of the sheep to leave the flock; grave too was the injustice done to Christ on the cross, but the Lord hated the evils which could overtake the sheep, he hated the blasphemy, but loved the sheep (Luke 25. 34).

2. No matter how much of a sinner your enemy may be, he is still a human being, joined to you by bonds of nature, and to God by those which bind every rational creature destined to a supernatural end.

(a) We must therefore distinguish between hatred and friendship.

(b) We must not hate our neighbour, nor deny him anything which is his by right, neither in the natural or supernatural order, socially or humanly. He is still a man, even though our enemy, with all the rights which are attached to that state.

i. We must not exclude him from collective prayers or alms-deeds;

ii. nor from those obligations of charity such as saving our neighbour in danger or helping him in grave need;

iii. nor can we deprive him of those courtesies which are common in society, such as returning his salutations, unless our state as superior requires it for his correction, looking for his own good.

(c) Now, there is a grade of friendship which we can dispose of freely and which we are allowed to withdraw from those who offend us, since we have no obligation of giving it to anyone.

i. In this case we must ensure, without any danger of self-deception, that we do not hate him, that we pardon the offence,

even though friendship is withdrawn, and we demand the reparation due to us in justice.

ii. We may even be allowed to deprive him of some signs of courtesy for a time.

iii. Our enemy has no right to those signs of affection given to our friends.

Obligation and advice

1. But just as we have distinguished between hatred and friendship, so we must distinguish between obligation and counsel, between not sinning and what is perfect.

2. Except in those cases when our authority or special circumstances counsel it sincerely, who can doubt that the return of our friendship and the full pardon of the offender makes us more like Christ, who became flesh and died for his enemies?

II. THE GOSPEL

A: The messianic call

Introduction

1. This parable, besides giving us a synthesis of the history of the Jews, also contains a lesson for all.

2. If the ancient rites were figures of the future (1 Cor. 10. 11) the history of Israel is an example in which we can see ourselves.

3. St Paul in his letter to the Romans, expounds this lesson.

The great feast

1. *The blessing announced:*

(a) God prepared the messianic kingdom, not merely for the Jews, but also for all who wished to believe.

(b) He directed his promises to Abraham, making him the father of all the Christian world presided over by Christ.

(c) Jews and non-Jews alike, we would all have formed one people in order to receive the promised blessing.

i. Abraham was the father of the circumcised and uncircumcised alike (Rom. 4. 11),

ii. of those also who follow in the steps of that faith which he had (*ibid.* 12),

iii. for God is God of Jew and Gentile alike (*ibid.* 3. 29).

2. *The first invited:*

(a) But to prepare the way for Christ and to be sure of a people who would believe in the true God, he chose the Jews, who were later to preach that truth to all mankind.

(b) To this people was given the adoption by God, the visible presence, the temple, and the promises (*ibid.* 9. 4).

(c) This is the glory of the Jewish people, which we must contemplate with admiration and regret, as did Paul (*ibid.* 3. 1).

3. *The messengers ill-treated:*

(a) The Jews were always a hard-hearted race;

(b) they stoned the prophets, among them Jeremias;

(c) last of all the Lord himself desired to take them under his protection as the hen does her chicks, and they would have none of him;

(d) they refused to attend the banquet, they killed the only Son (Luke 20. 13).

4. *Reprobation:*

(a) Then the prophecies were fulfilled which talked of the reprobation of Israel.

(b) The kingdom was preached to the Gentiles because the Jews refused it (Osee 2. 21 and 25. Cf. Rom. 9. 25-27).

(c) This glorious remnant were the fisherman of Galilee, the first preachers of the gospel.

The universal call

1. *The exclusion of the Jewish people:*

(a) The call of the Gentiles was nothing new in God's plan.

(b) The novelty, if we can call it that, was the exclusion of the Jews, who had formed the centre of the messianic hope. Rome succeeded Jerusalem.

(c) Isaias says: Those who never looked for me have found me; I have made myself known to those who never asked for word of me.

(d) And he says of Israel: I have stretched out my hands all day to a people that refuses obedience and cries out against me (Rom. 10. 20-21).

(e) Even after the repudiation of Israel the apostles received the command to preach the word, first of all to the House of Israel, but the persecutions they had to suffer made them turn more quickly to the Gentiles.

2. *A definite fall?*

(a) *It would seem not:*

I must not fail, brethren, to make this revelation known to you; or else you might have too good a conceit of yourselves. Blindness has fallen upon a part of Israel, but only until the tale of the Gentile nations is complete; then the whole of Israel will find salvation, as we read in scripture, A deliverer shall come from Sion, to rid Jacob of his unfaithfulness; and this shall be the fulfilment of my covenant with them, when I take away their sin (Rom. 11. 25-27).

(b) What may we not expect then from the people to whom the promises were originally made?

The lesson

1. It is quite clear; we see how God is wont to punish the rejection of his graces.

2. *St Paul makes some splendid and terrible deductions:*

(a) **Humility in the face of the designs of providence:**

What we have received has been freely given to us, through no merit of ours.

(b) **There is graciousness, then, in God, and there is also severity:**

His severity is for those who have fallen away, his graciousness is for thee, only so long as thou dost continue in his grace; if not, thou too shalt be pruned away (Rom. 11. 22).

(c) **Let us fear to despise his call:**

Or is it that thou art presuming on that abundant kindness of his, which bears with thee and waits for thee? Dost thou not know that God's kindness is inviting thee to repent? Whereas thou, by the stubborn impenitence of thy heart, dost continue to store up retribution for thyself against the day of retribution, when God will reveal the justice of his judgement (Rom. 2. 4).

(d) **Once we have received grace and faith let us live in accordance with them, that we may not hear addressed to us what is said to the Jews:**

Thou hast confidence in thyself as one who leads the blind, a light to their darkness; admonishing the fool, instructing the simple, because in the law thou hast the incarnation of all knowledge and all truth. Tell me, then, thou who teachest others, hast thou no lesson for thyself? Is it a thief who preaches against stealing, an adulterer that forbids adultery? Dost thou rob temples, thou who shrinkest from the touch of an idol? Thy boast is in the law, wilt thou break the law, to God's dishonour? (Rom. 2. 19-23).

3. God will reward to every man according as his acts have deserved ... the Jew in the first instance, but the Gentile also (*ibid.* 2. 6 and 9).

B: Three lessons from these guests

A complete social lesson

1. The kingdom of heaven is compared to a great banquet, i.e. to a social act.

(a) **All men assist at the social banquet, i.e. in the life of society.**

(b) **The Gospel gives us practical lessons for all, whether it be in the temporal society or the supernatural.**

2. *The personalities of the banquet:*

(a) **The host who sends the invitations:**

i. Perfect grading of the invitations, but special attention to the poor.

ii. Both in the temporal and the supernatural order God has prepared an abundance of good things for the feast.

(b) **He who is in any position of command has a perfect lesson as to his mode of action:**

i. *If he be a temporal owner*, let him think of the social function of his wealth. Let him remember that he is an administrator of God and exercises authority in his name. If in all things he must be just and to all men, still he must have special mercy on the poor.

ii. *If he be a spiritual leader or superior*, let him also think of his obligations to his neighbour.

(c) **Those who are invited:**

These give us three separate lessons. Since we are all invited let us study them carefully.

The worldly or rich guests

1. These are included among those who presented their excuses, the farm, the oxen and the wife.

2. They teach the rich how dangerous riches and worldly goods can be, since they may even impede us from entering into the Lord's supper.

(a) In the Gospel riches also appear under the guise of thorns which choke the sower's good seed (Matt. 13. 22).

(b) For which reason Christ says that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven (Luke 18. 25).

(c) The young man invited by Christ to the supper of greater perfection found the way blocked by his wealth.

(d) Greed reached even the table of the Lord himself, to rob him of an apostle.

3. The reason for this is that riches:

(a) blind man with their brilliance and make him appreciate more the vile things of this world instead of the good things of the next;

(b) enslave us by the cares they bring with them.

The poor

Let the poor learn that in the supper prepared for them by Christ—grace, the Eucharist, penance, glory—they are not only attended to, but are considered before many who are rich and powerful.

2. The world acts in a very different way. The poor do not sit at the tables of princes, but beg an alms at their door.
3. They are in a state which may easily be a more sure way to heaven, because:
 - (a) they are not held back by the bonds of this world,
 - (b) therefore they should go with joy to the feast prepared for them by Christ, both here and in heaven.

Those who are married

1. *Those who are married may find in marriage an occasion of sin:*
 - (a) Marriage has been raised to the dignity of a sacrament;
 - (b) those who are married must not forget that their state is a way to greater perfection, a way of sanctification which should lead them closer to God through the fulfilment of their obligations.
2. *Some find in marriage an occasion of grave sins:*
 - (a) abuses of marriage—birth control a grave sin,
 - (b) sins of infidelity,
 - (c) because conjugal life, unless it be lived in accordance with the dignity of the sacrament, can lead us to give up prayer and distract us from the worship of God.
 - i. Moderation and temperance is obligatory in every state;
 - ii. because of the extraordinary care necessary in marriage, both from the point of view of the married people themselves, and parents in their relation with their children.
3. *It is necessary to form the consciences of the young people:*
 - (a) So that they will live good married lives in accordance with the law of God, making it an ideal of Christian perfection within their state of life.
 - (b) They should learn that the greatest good they can do for their children is to leave them an example of virtue in their carrying out of all their obligations towards God.

C: Invite the poor

Our conduct

1. Society is divided into strata difficult to change—rich, poor, middle class. Rich and poor usually live in different districts, go to different places of amusement, etc.
2. *The poor annoy us:*
 - (a) Let it be because of a different type of education, culture, cleanliness, etc; the point is that their presence is not usually desired.
 - i. We speak to them as if they were inferiors.
 - ii. Even alms are given to them in such a way, at times, that it lowers us and them.

- (b) We have servants and, above all, workers:
 - i. Even in those cases in which all the precepts of justice and charity are observed, we seldom treat them as we should or know them intimately.
 - ii. An examination of conscience will soon show us how little we have lived with the poor.

The conduct of Christ

1. Nevertheless, Christ, in the parable, calls the poor to sit at his table.
 - (a) **It was not a simple metaphor:**
 - i. It had a complete realization in the messianic sense, because, as is well known, the majority of the early Christians were poor.
 - ii. God has chosen what the world holds base and contemptible, nay, has chosen what is nothing, so as to bring to nothing what is now in being (1 Cor. 1. 28).
 - (b) During his life he was surrounded by the poor and the greater part of those who benefited from his miracles were of this class.
2. *Christ loved the poor and usually found his friends among them:*

Do I live among them in any sense? If I do not, then it is possible that I shall neither find Christ nor be invited by him.

To live with the poor

1. This is not just to give the poor man an alms without thinking much about him or taking care of him, perhaps just to be rid of him.
2. *It means:*
 - (a) **not to think oneself superior to him:**

There are many things which do grant a title to superiority, but the one which certainly does not do so is a difference in the economic position, riches.
 - (b) **to feel that he is my brother:**
 - i. We are all so before God—it is not a mere rhetorical expression.
 - ii. Brothers belong to the same family and we form part of Christ's family.
 - iii. Those who are members of the same family feel the same problems. I must, therefore, feel for the poor and know his needs.
 - iv. Personal interest is the primary work of charity, and that which most unites and gives greatest pleasure.
 - (c) help by thinking that one does not give a poor man anything which is not his, because the family goods are held in common;
 - (d) to love him and like being with him, even though it may mean some sacrifice, for the reasons already given;

(e) recognize that the poor are the well-beloved of Christ, because they are the most unfortunate, they are the most loved;

(f) know that he represents Christ for me, to oblige me to love them and care for them;

(g) that when I treat with the poor the one who benefits is myself, who receive more than I give. I give a little money and receive heaven in exchange.

In practice

It is wise to remember always that at the heavenly table we shall all be together, and that heaven is a reflection of good works here below. My entry there will depend on how I treat the poor—to a great extent at least. This is where I and Christ can most easily become one.

D: Rejected graces

The Jews and myself

1. The parable shows us the Jews despising the invitations of the Lord until they succeed in filling him with anger and suffer his just punishment.

(a) It is the history of the chosen people, given us in summary by St Stephen:

Stiff-necked race, your heart and ears still uncircumcised, you are for ever resisting the Holy Spirit just as your fathers did. There was not one of the prophets they did not persecute; it was death to foretell the coming of that just man, whom you in these times have betrayed and murdered; you who received the law dictated by angels and did not keep it (Acts 7. 51-53).

(b) The pages of that history are opened with the continued rebellion in the desert and are closed with the complaint of Jesus and his tears at the sight of Jerusalem and at the thought of these people to whom he was forced to tell the parable of the murderous husbandmen (Mark 23. 36; Luke 19, 41; Matt. 21, 33).

2. Is this also my history?

(a) God has called me a thousand times: See where I stand at the door knocking; if anyone listens to my voice and opens the door, I will come to visit him, and take my supper with him, and he shall sup with me (Apoc. 3. 20).

i. *External calls*—preaching, reading, examples, deaths, especially sudden ones, misfortunes, the great wars of our time.

ii. *Interior grace*—illuminations, thoughts, holy desires, truths which I have suddenly understood in a clearer light, remorse, movements of the will. . . .

(b) But distracted by my worldly cares, passions, laziness, etc., I have replied—'Tomorrow'.

The need to take heed of grace

1. God calls but he will not force anyone.

(a) The co-operation of my free will is necessary; if I do not heed, or despise the call, then the grace is wasted and I do not reach heaven.

(b) All the parables of the Lord (the talents, seed, etc.) suppose a free personal effort.

2. Grace represents what Christ gained and also what it cost him to win it. In each of them the redeeming blood shines forth.

3. Each grace is one link in a long chain.

Rejected graces

1. *The teaching of the Scriptures:*

(a) The book of Proverbs says: Since my call is unheard, since my hand beckons in vain, since my counsel is despised and all my reproof goes for nothing, it will be mine to laugh, to mock at your discomfiture, when perils close about you (1. 24-26).

(b) The man who did not labour with his one talent saw it taken away from him (Matt. 25, 28).

2. *Truly each rejected grace is:*

(a) **a motive for sadness to God:**

i. At the thought of our ingratitude, the danger to which we expose ourselves and the separation from his love, which we choose freely. Also the treasures we are despising. If thou didst but know (Matt. 23, 36).

ii. Today he cannot weep, but in his mortal life he did, before Jerusalem.

(b) **a motive for anger:**

i. Graces are never lost—God collects them in his heart and returns them in the form of angry darts. The worst punishments come from a loving heart which has been insulted. Hide from the anger of the Lamb (Apoc. 6. 16).

ii. The parable of the vineyard (Isaias, 5. 1).

iii. God's present mercy would not be perfect unless it gave way later to justice.

(c) **a motive for condemnation:**

i. It is a consequence of what we have already said. The Lord closes his preaching in Galilee with two terrible threats: Corozain and Bethsaida shall be judged with greater severity than Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 11. 21; cf. Matt. 23. 36).

ii. But at the moment we are insisting on the danger which lies behind each rejection of grace. Each one is the beginning of a

chain which reaches the heights of heaven. Therefore in a similar fashion each rejected grace can be the beginning of a slope which leads to hell.

iii. We do not know God's plans. Today's grace may be a decisive one. For Judas it may well have been the reproach he received when he complained about the anointing at Bethany by Mary.

(d) a motive for greater torment, because it supposes greater ingratitude:

i. Greater will be the remorse because we shall know that we had in our hands the chance of salvation.

ii. The devils will throw in our face the graces and the efforts of God to save us, because they were not given a second chance, nor time to repent.

Conclusion

1. The Lord, after rejecting the Jews, called other and more docile nations.

2. The one who did not use his talent had it taken from him and given to another.

(a) Who knows if one day God may not decide to diminish the number of my graces to give the others to some poor infidel who will know how to make good use of them.

(b) Will the loss of my soul be the good of others, as happened in the case of the Jews?

(c) How much better it would be to follow the example of St Paul and out of the riches we possess in the form of grace give an immense banquet to others ourselves.

E: The use of creatures

Our situation

1. We live in the world surrounded by its creatures, some attract us and other repel us.

Whatever our reaction, one thing is quite certain, we cannot prescind altogether from these things. What is our attitude to be?

2. The parable presents us with a picture of three creatures, lawful in themselves, but which impeded the guests from assisting at the supper and brought in their train condemnation.

3. Let us study what our use of creatures should mean.

Two classes of things—ends and means

1. The soul enjoys those which are ends in themselves and rests in them, e.g. health, the end of the journey, etc.

2. Others are means to an end:

(a) The soul should not rest in these but use them to attain the end.

(b) One walks along a path and the beauty of it is useful to make the journey more agreeable, but it is harmful to entertain oneself too much with it. Medicine is taken to attain health.

(c) Only the fool acts without knowing why or without being able to distinguish ends from means.

(d) When there is a end which is above all others then the rest must be subordinated to it. In the natural order, for example, health is above all other ends, and everything else must be subordinated to it.

3. In this case other things have to be classified thus:

(a) Some are impediments, and never means to attain the end, because instead of leading to it they take us away from it—they are harmful.

(b) Others are certain means to attain the end and must be used.

(c) Others are indifferent and their use will depend on whether they help us to attain the end or not.

Creatures

1. They are not an end in themselves. The ultimate and necessary end is God and the salvation of my soul.

2. Creatures can be impediments, certain means to attain that end or indifferent.

(a) To choose wisely I must not judge by what I like, or by the greater or lesser beauty of the creature, since the fact that it is not an end in itself means that I must not rest in it but use it. We do not choose the most comfortable train, but the one which will take us to our destination.

(b) Creatures which are an impediment—sin:

i. They are the supreme evil, even though at the moment they give us pleasure.

ii. Think of the stupidity of one who becomes gravely ill through drinking one glass of water, or one who does not arrive at his destination because he chose a more comfortable boat in which to travel.

(c) Creatures which are means to the end—virtues, sacraments:

i. They must be chosen even when they do not please us.

ii. Medicine may be bitter, the surgical knife is necessary, if unpleasant.

(d) Creatures which are indifferent:

i. I should also be indifferent to them and use them in so far as they help me.

- ii. This is an intellectual indifference, not an affective one—I feel pain, but I can still be indifferent to it in my mind.

The enjoyment of the end

1. The guests, had they heard the call and obeyed it, would have enjoyed the banquet, had they been able to rid themselves of their business and their family ties.
2. We shall rejoice when we reach the end destined for us. The way may be rough and hard; we may have to give up many earthly pleasures, but the end is worth it all.

F: Compelled to enter

The force of the truth—advantage in violence

1. The problem of liberty is always a difficult one, especially with regard to its use and abuse.

(a) Man is obliged to embrace the truth and therefore the true religion—to enter the banquet hall now, so that he may enjoy the eternal feast in heaven.

(b) Those, however, resist:

- i. who defend a liberty to embrace whatever form of religion a man may choose;
- ii. who wish to rid themselves of the yoke imposed on them by the Church;
- iii. sinners in general, who will not listen to the repeated calls of God.

2. Yet those who are 'forced to enter'—something which God is doing every day—can console themselves by the thought that it is a great act of generosity and mercy on God's part.

(a) It is unjust to complain, because God is all goodness.

(b) He may appear to demand much, there may be bitterness in the call, too; but the good things he offers us are above all compare.

With arguments which cannot be resisted

1. The Gentiles:

They are invited and obliged to enter into the Church by convincing them of the truth and of the uselessness of their pagan gods. A good natural theology is enough to convince them of this.

2. Heretics:

The following arguments can convince them, if they are in good faith.

Taking as an example the reformers of the Protestant religion:

- (a) Before the fifteenth century their religion did not exist:

(b) Either these false reformers had the truth or they did not:

If they were right then the religion of Christ which had apparently existed for centuries before their time, had in fact not existed at all. If they were wrong, then they have distorted the truth which had existed for centuries. According to Christ, his Church is eternal and nothing can prevail against it.

(c) Possibly the best argument is the lack of authority to teach which is obvious in all branches of protestantism today. Can contradictory truths really come from God? Obviously not.

3. Catholics:

(a) Sinners can be obliged to come back to the truth:

- i. by considering the omnipotence of God;
- ii. by thinking of the penalty which is the result of mortal sin in the next life;
- iii. by remembering that death can come when we least expect it, as a thief in the night;
- iv. that it is not in our power to fix the time for conversion, when God is the one who knows and determines the end of our life.

(b) These considerations will always move the soul to repent for the past and bring about a change of life for the future.

By constant preaching

1. Preaching of the word of God is the means by which the apostles go out in the name of the great king to invite all.

- (a) Go and preach is the command of the Master (Matt. 28. 19),
- (b) they gave themselves up entirely to preaching (Acts 6. 4),
- (c) this is also the opinion of St Paul (1 Cor. 1. 16),
- (d) it is the command of the Popes and councils.

2. Preaching in the right way:

(a) So far as doctrine is concerned:

- i. The doctrine, if it is solid and properly prepared, also well presented to the people, enters into their hearts, moving them as it should.
- ii. With sinners this is most important, because God uses his human instruments as he pleases—we must make ourselves efficient instruments.

(b) So far as the preacher is concerned:

He must make himself an efficient instrument:

- i. preaching with true zeal, for the love of souls,
- ii. with the example of his own life, which alone will give force to his words.

G: Those who enter

A surprising lesson from the Gospel

1. *Jesus did not come to destroy the Law and the prophets, but to fulfil them:*

- (a) So far as the destiny of the Law was concerned, it had been drawn up for Israel and now had to be extended to become universal,
- (b) the chosen people had adulterated it with their false and pharisaical interpretations; it had to be restored to its former state,
- (c) new truths would have to be added to perfect it,
- (d) the figures of the Old Law had to be perfected in the light of the Messiah and his coming.

2. *Thus the Gospel destroys a twofold false idea:*

- (a) the Jewish one, which considered that people as privileged above all others,
- (b) the pagan, which defended the superiority of earthly values.

3. *Christ is never tired of dealing the death blow to these two ideas:*

(a) *Against the idea of an easy life, full of pleasure:*

- i. he chooses to be born in a stable, of a poor and virgin mother,
- ii. he works, and carries out his apostolic mission in an atmosphere of poverty,
- iii. he surrounds himself with ignorant, uncultured men, of no privileged class,
- iv. his kingdom is a spiritual one, not political.

(b) *To the Jews he says:*

- i. childlike simplicity is necessary to enter that kingdom (Matt. 18. 3),
- ii. there will be even public sinners who obtain a high place in it before God (Matt. 21. 31),
- iii. that he has not found the faith in Israel that he found in a Gentile (Matt. 8. 10),
- iv. that he will take the kingdom away from them and give it to those who are more worthy of it, and they will not be Jews (Matt. 21. 43).

The Gentiles enter into the kingdom

1. They fulfil all the conditions which surrounded the poor who entered into the supper.

(a) *Wanderers over the face of the earth:*
They were like sheep that have no shepherd.

(b) *poor:*

- i. without a law which would show them the way and would oblige them to take it,
- ii. without prophets who would feed them with the true bread of God's doctrine,
- iii. without sacraments to give them the treasure of justification,
- iv. without the sure hope of future glory in another life,
- v. without God, because in every way they lived far from him.

(c) *weak:*

- i. abandoned to the law of nature alone, wounded by original sin, and by the sin of paganism,
- ii. these personal sins were of such a foul nature that they had lowered the pagan to such an extent that it was difficult to see a way out for him.

(d) *blind:*

- i. they did not know the true God; the more they multiplied the numbers of their false gods, so much the farther did they go from him,
- ii. they did not think of the immortality of the soul,
- iii. nor of the resurrection of the body,
- iv. nor did they realize the effect of the devil's actions on men.

(e) *lame:*

Even though some of them did have some idea of the truth and of the practice of virtue, nevertheless they lived as their pagan society demanded, without paying too much attention to the dictates of their consciences.

2. In a word, the Gentiles received the invitation of Christ to the great supper.

(a) The apostles preached the Gospel throughout the whole of the known world.

(b) The rapid spread of the Gospel through the pagan world and the result in the form of exemplary Christian communities, with saints of proven virtue, was the greatest possible blow to Jewish pride, to those who were the first to be invited and were later repudiated.

The poor enter into the kingdom

1. *Those who are poor in this world's goods:*

- (a) Riches cause a man to live preoccupied with material things, pleasures, etc., while forgetting his soul.
- (b) The poor, the sick, the weak whom God has allowed to fall into that state, should remember that God has removed from their path one of the greatest impediments to salvation, that they may walk more freely towards heaven.

(c) At times God makes use of his extraordinary providence to save a soul of one who is poor in this world's goods.

2. *The spiritually poor:*

These are the ones who properly speaking enter into the kingdom of God.

(a) *The poor in spirit:*

To whom this kingdom belongs by right (Matt. 5. 3).

- i. Poor because they have left all things for God or because they have killed self-love, so that the spirit of God may dwell in them.
- ii. They will not only enter into the future kingdom, they are even now blessed.

(b) *The weak:*

Those who are truly humble, who do not trust in their own strength, but in that of the God whom they serve.

(c) *The blind:*

Those who live by faith in the eternal kingdom and in the belief in God's providence which watches over them.

(d) *The lame:*

Those who do not walk in search of material goods but of the spiritual.

Conclusion

1. This is the new doctrine which Christ came to teach.
2. Let us study and follow the ways which lead to his supper.

H: *The supper is the kingdom*

The theme

1. The parable of today's Gospel refers to the kingdom of heaven, as the story itself shows.
2. This is a constant theme in the Gospels, and here we shall give a brief summary of it which may be useful for many Sundays throughout the year.

Nature of this kingdom

The kingdom has three meanings in the Gospels, all related and all applicable to this parable.

(a) *These three meanings are, grace, the Church, heaven:*

- i. *The spiritual and internal meaning—grace.* The indwelling of the Trinity in the soul of the just; the sharing by them in the divine life. The knowledge of eternal life and the love of Christ for us.

ii. *The external social aspect—the Church.* Here there are two ideas we have to consider: the Church as a visible, juridical society, historical and organized; the Church as the mystical Body of Christ, the sharing in it of the faithful, by that grace which came down to all through Christ and his merits; the mutual communication of the members, etc.

iii. *The kingdom of heaven.* The future life; eternal glory.

Application of the parable

1. The supper to which Jesus invites us is first of all that of grace. He invites us to share in his divine life, to live that life of grace, to renounce sin, that inordinate affection for creatures which separates us from God.

2. They did not merit the kingdom—the supper—who, through preoccupation with material things, riches, etc; or honours, or pleasures, despised God's invitation.

(a) They were left outside, in sin, in darkness, for them there was no salvation.

(b) They did not repent or do penance, wherefore the kingdom passed them by without their noticing it.

(c) They expose themselves to a death outside the bosom of the Church, even though they be Catholics, because they are not united with that Charity which is the Head of the mystical Body.

(d) Consequently, they expose themselves to eternal damnation, to the loss of eternal happiness and glory.

3. Remember the two sentences, one for the good and the other for the wicked (cf. Matt. 25. 34, 41).

I: *Grace*

The life of grace

1. The first meaning of the kingdom is the life of grace, that new birth of the soul.

(a) It supposes a new birth, which makes us sons of God (John 1. 12).

(b) The kingdom comes from a share in the life of Christ, who appeared, full of grace and truth (John 1. 16-17).

(c) It is all spiritual—I have come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly (John 10. 10).

2. *Nicodemus:*

(a) The Pharisees and doctors of the law had another idea of the kingdom, and could not understand the idea of Christ.

(b) St John gives us this idea perfectly when he tells us the story of Nicodemus (John 3. 1-21).

3. *The Samaritan Woman:*

(a) Jesus repeats his teaching in another form, that of the living water which will become a fountain of water springing up into eternal life (John 4).

(b) That water is grace (cf. John 7. 37-39; Apoc. 21. 6).

The eucharistic kingdom

1. In the great eucharistic sermon preached near Capharnaum the same ideas concerning this spiritual kingdom are repeated under yet another form.

(a) Christ came to give us a food which would take us to eternal life.

i. The manna in the desert was only a figure of the true bread, which came down from heaven (John 6. 32-33).

ii. I am the bread of life . . . he that believes in me shall never thirst . . . (*ibid.*).

(b) In this passage the kingdom begins here with the life of grace, which has its perfection in the life of glory, to which it leads.

Exterior manifestation of this kingdom

1. The kingdom is essentially grace, but by grace we are also given:

(a) the theological virtues,

(b) the gifts of the Holy Ghost,

(c) the infused moral virtues.

2. The most precious gift is that of the theological virtues, superior even to the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

(a) Among them the first is charity. The life of grace is, therefore, essentially one of charity. This supposes the love of God and of our neighbour, and the most sure proof that we love God is this love for our neighbour.

(b) For this reason the epistle of today's mass is applicable to the kingdom, in so far as it refers to the concepts of light and darkness, life and death, in relation to the love of our neighbour.

(c) The new kingdom begins in us, then, by the life of grace and charity. We know that we have charity if we love our neighbour.

i. *How is this manifested?* We must be prepared to give our life for our brethren, as he gave his life for us (1 John 3. 16), therefore much more so we must be ready to share our goods with him (1 John 3. 17).

ii. *This is to love in effect, not in word only*, and by these works we shall be known and judged (*ibid.* 3. 19).

J: The kingdom is the Church

A universal kingdom

1. It is easy to find in the Old Testament passages which refer to the kingdom and which indicate its universality.

i. *It follows logically from monotheism*—one God and all men adoring him.

ii. *The Jews had priority*, but they lost it through their infidelity. The kingdom is then extended to others—to all.

iii. *East and West shall come and sit at the table with Abraham*, while the sons of the kingdom shall be cast into exterior darkness (cf. Matt. 8. 11-12).

2. Those who will one day sit down to the eternal feast in heaven have already been members of the Church (the same kingdom) on earth.

3. The Gospel says clearly that the kingdom is for all men (cf. Matt. 28. 19).

An external kingdom

1. The parables which speak of this kingdom indicate that it is something external. There is a special relationship between all who are called to the life of grace.

(a) Sometimes it is called a field in which seed is sown (Matt. 13);

(b) at others a net in which there are all kinds of fish (*ibid.*);

(c) or a dining room at a wedding feast in which there are many guests (Matt. 22);

(d) a supper (Luke 14);

(e) a sheep fold (John 10).

2. In this parable there is no direct mentions of a society, but rather of a union or reunion.

In the theological order it is better to speak of a body united in itself rather than of a society (in relation to this parable).

Worthy and unworthy

1. All the parables of the kingdom coincide in this, there are both worthy and unworthy members of this kingdom at the beginning; then they are separated. Some remain within it in the next life, some go to hell (cf. Matt. 22. 11-13; Matt. 13. 24-30; 47. 52; John 6. 70).

2. Therefore the presence of good and bad is inevitable in the present life. It is a characteristic which will cease in the future life.

The kingdom in St John

1. There is a beautiful expression used by St John to signify this kingdom, it is that of spouse (an idea which runs through the whole of the Old Testament).

(a) When the disciples of the Baptist see all men flock to Christ they begin to wonder whether he or John is the true prophet who shall save Israel. John's reply is that the bridegroom is the only one who has the bride. The Church is this bride.

(b) St John the Evangelist repeats this idea in the Apocalypse (cf. 21, 9; 22, 17).

2. Later St Paul takes up the same idea. He compares the marriage of man and woman with that of Christ and the Church (cf. Eph. 5, 24-25).

The kingdom in St Paul

1. St Paul is the one who develops the idea of body and head—the main characteristics of this kingdom being:

- (a) diversity of functions;
- (b) mutual communication of life;
- (c) one source of life—the head (cf. Rom. 12, 6-10);
- (d) this kingdom is arranged like an army for battle, or better, for victory (cf. Eph. 4, 11).

2. *The growth of the kingdom:*

- (a) It grows by charity and grace.
- (b) St Paul develops this idea in Eph. 4.

The union of the two kingdoms

1. There appears in St Paul's writing a tendency to unite the two kingdoms in Christ.

2. He describes in a solemn form the unity of the two in the eternal kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 15).

K: The kingdom of heaven

The kingdom in St Paul

1. We may begin with the apostle of the Gentiles to unite this scheme with the former one.

In 1 Cor. 15 he indicates the union between the kingdom on earth and that of heaven, the entry of the elect into heaven, the perfection of the kingdom on earth.

2. *Christ, the only true food:*

(a) the food of the spiritual banquet is spiritual also:

- i. On earth the body demands material food; in glory the spiritual food will keep the body healthy as well as the soul.
- ii. In heaven the food will transform the carnal man into a spiritual one.

(b) There we shall see that the only food is Christ, a food which is eaten by the faithful in three stages:

- i. it begins on earth, with the banquet of grace;
- ii. it is perfected in heaven, so far as the soul is concerned, with the banquet of glory;
- iii. it reaches its full perfection in the resurrection of the body and the last victory over death.

The sermon at the Last Supper

1. Christ, both at the beginning and the end of this sermon, speaks of the kingdom of glory.

(a) He tells them that in his Father's house there are many mansions and that he is going there to prepare a place for them (John 14, 2).

(b) He then tells them that, once he has gone and has prepared this place for them, he will come again and take them to himself (*ibid.* 3).

2. *The sacerdotal prayer:*

Also in his sacerdotal prayer Jesus speaks of his kingdom.

i. He asks his Father that all may be one, as they are one, in the Son and the Father;

ii. what is more, that they may be saved through him (John 17).

The Apocalypse

Here the life of glory is described for us by St John in a way which completes the various parables of the Gospels:

(a) the marriage feast of the Lamb (Apoc. 19, 7);

(b) the spouse, dressed in her good works (Apoc. 19, 8);

(c) the invited guests (*ibid.* 9). Then the image of the Lamb is repeated (*ibid.* 17), and he describes the bliss of those who reach heaven, where there shall be no more sorrow, only peace and happiness.

Recapitulation

1. The supper represents the kingdom and the life of grace in its three stages:

- i. that life in the soul;
- ii. that life in the Church;
- iii. the life of glory in heaven.

2. We may express this in another way:

- i. the life of Christ in the soul;
- ii. that same life in the Church.

Jesus, Lamb of God, Word of God, one with the Father in the glory of heaven.

L: The sacrifice of Christ

The Mass and the Last Supper

1. By reason of the Octave of Corpus Christi this Gospel can be accommodated to the Eucharistic banquet. A man made a great supper.

2. Let us study the grandeur of the Mass as reflected in this banquet.

The new sacrifice

1. *This was the end of the levitical sacrifices:*
 - (a) The imperfect victims were finished, as was foretold by Malachy (Mal. 1. 10).
 - (b) God was not pleased with the sacrifices of bulls and goats (Heb. 10. 4 ff.).
 - (c) The old law did not lead to perfection, it was merely a prelude to something infinitely better (Heb. 7. 19).
2. *The levitical priesthood was succeeded by something better:*
 - (a) *The priesthood of Christ:*
 - i. Of those other priests there was a succession, since death denied them permanence; whereas Jesus continues for ever, and his priestly office is unchanging (Heb. 7. 23).
 - ii. He is a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech. (Ps. 109. 4).
 - (b) *This new priest offers also a new sacrifice:*
 - i. One who has no need to do as those other priests did, offering a twofold sacrifice day by day, first for his own sins, then for those of the people. What he has done he has done once for all; and the offering was himself (Heb. 7. 27).
 - ii. By a single offering he has completed his work, for all time, in those whom he sanctifies (*ibid.* 10. 14).
 - (c) This one sacrifice is that of the Cross, which fulfils perfectly all the end of the sacrifices of the old law.
 - i. adoration,
 - ii. thanksgiving,
 - iii. expiation,
 - iv. impetration.

The Mass, reproduction of Calvary

- Cross, Last Supper and Mass are one and the same sacrifice with but accidental differences.
- (a) In the Mass there is the same victim, Christ, the same priest as on the cross;
 - (b) there is also immolation and destruction, not bloody but mystic;
 - (c) the sacrifice of the Mass has the same ends as that of the cross;
 - (d) there are accidental differences because:
 - i. in the mass the sacrifice is an unbloody one, and the cross was a sacrifice of blood,
 - ii. on the cross the sacrifice had an absolute value, while that of the mass is relative to that of the Cross,

- iii. on the cross Christ alone was the priest, here in the Mass he offers himself through the ministry of earthly priests, who act in his name and with his power,
- iv. the redemption was effected on the cross, in the Mass its application.

The infinite value of the Mass

1. *A consequence of what has just been said:*
 - (a) if the sacrifice is essentially the same then so will be its value;
 - (b) an infinite value, because the priest, the victim, the offering and the immolation are infinite;
 - (c) this is the greatest and most transcendental act of the Christian:
 - i. the one which is most pleasing to God,
 - ii. in it we are not giving homage to God, it is Christ and ourselves through and with Christ. Thus we can give the Father perfect honour and glory.

2. *The Mass is the best devotion of all:*

Let the faithful learn to appreciate the dignity to which they have been raised by the Sacrament of Baptism. They must not be content to take part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice by the general intention which all the members of Christ and children of the Church ought to have; they ought also, in the spirit of the liturgy, to unite themselves closely and of set purpose with the High Priest and his minister on earth, especially in the moment of the consecration of the Divine Victim, and join with him in offering it. . . . And as the people answer Amen, let them not forget to offer themselves and their anxieties, their sorrows, their troubles, their miseries and their needs, in union with their Divine Head crucified (*Mediator Dei*, 20 Nov. 1947).

M: The richness of the Mass

Introduction

1. Pius XII, speaking of the Eucharist, says that it is the compendium and centre of the Christian religion and the highest point of the sacred liturgy.
2. This has special application to the Mass.

The value of the Mass

1. *The treasury of Christ:*
 - (a) The greatest value of the Mass is derived from the fact that it is the sacrifice of Christ, since it reproduces for us the sacrifice of the Cross,
 - (b) but not only that, because the whole of Christ's life was one continuous sacrifice.

- i. It began when he came into the world, and made a voluntary offering of himself to the Father (Heb. 10. 9);
 - ii. it continued through every step and every mystery of his life until the moment of his death on the cross;
 - iii. in the Mass the whole of this sacrifice—in life as in death—is presented to us.
- (c) Therefore in the Mass we are presented with the sentiments and virtues of Christ, his humility, his adoration of the Father, his mercy. It is a sublime lesson in all the virtues, above all his love.
2. *It reminds us of his love:*
- (a) The passion and death of Christ is the greatest proof of his love (Gal. 2. 20).
 - (b) In the Mass we are reminded of this—and what is more, it is repeated for us as individuals. Once more he gives himself for us and loves us.
3. *The beauty of the prayers:*
- (a) The missal is the most beautiful of all books of devotion for the beauty and sublimity of its prayers.
 - (b) These prayers are universal and not egoistical:
 - i. The petitions contained in them refer to all men and to all human needs.
 - ii. The way in which they are framed implies always going to God through Christ.
4. *The human value of the Mass:*
- (a) It uses all the faculties of the human mind and all their acts, repentance for sin, adoration, thanksgiving, supplication, etc.;
 - (b) in it we have a special, intimate reminder of everyone:
 - i. our family, friends, relations,
 - ii. the dead, especially those in whom we are most interested,
 - iii. sinners, infidels, etc.
 - (c) We also find in it the union of the Church militant with the saints in heaven.
5. *Other lessons:*
- Each Mass is said in honour of some mystery of Christ's life or in honour of some saint. In accordance with this the lessons of life are taught us which are most closely related with the mystery or the life of the saint.

Consequences

1. *Love for the Mass:*
It has a supreme value in our salvation and sanctification.
2. *Love for the missal:*
 - (a) He who knows it well has an endless source of solid piety,
 - (b) even more so if he uses it for meditation.

N: Fruits of the Mass

To taste of the supper

1. We can see the Mass in the supper mentioned in today's gospel.
2. In it we are offered the best and sweetest food of its four fruits, those of impetration, propitiation, satisfaction and merit.

The four fruits

1. *Impetration:*

- (a) It is the supplication of Christ himself and therefore has a great value for our requests.
- (b) Christ, during his earthly life, offered prayer and entreaty to God who could save him from death, not without a piercing cry, not without tears; yet with such piety as won him a hearing (Heb. 5. 7).
- (c) On our altars he acts with the same power and effect, bringing us all kinds of blessings and graces.
- (d) It also has power as being the sacrifice of the Church:
 - i. this comes first of all from the very action itself (*ex opere operato*),
 - ii. then from the activity of the Church, the immaculate bride of Christ, because she is holy and acts together with Christ.
- (e) Lastly because of the action of the individual:
There is no private act of devotion so efficacious as this one.

2. *Propitiation:*

- (a) He who offered himself on the cross continues to offer himself on our altars for the redemption of the individual. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world (1 John 2. 2).
- (b) The Mass placates the divine anger and God, thus appeased, pours out on us all kinds of graces which would not otherwise have come to us.
- (c) The Mass also wins for us the grace of repentance and sincere purpose of amendment.

3. *Satisfaction:*

- (a) The sinner must pay a debt of temporal punishment for his sins, either in this life or the next.
- (b) The Mass produces a satisfactory fruit which removes some of this punishment:
 - i. it is the sacrifice of Christ, infinite in itself but limited in its application according to the will of God and the devotion of those who offer it;
 - ii. from which it follows that one Mass would, of itself, remove all this temporal punishment, but it is necessary to apply many

Masses because normally the whole of this fruit is not gained at once.

4. Merit:

(a) If all good works done in a state of grace merit for us, how much more this one, the best of them all,

(b) but this is exclusive to the person assisting at Mass and will depend on his dispositions.

i. He who hears Mass in mortal sin does not gain any meritorious fruit from it.

ii. The greater the fervour and devotion of the soul in grace the greater the merit.

The Mass in our life

1. There is no better way of pleading with God than the Mass, well offered.

(a) Nothing so efficacious for the conversion of sinners.

(b) Nothing so valuable to repay the Lord for our frequent sins.

2. From which it follows that the Mass must be an essential part of the Christian's life.

(a) Both individuals and families will find in the Mass a great source of strength and comfort in their many spiritual and material needs,

(b) while we have such needs it is indispensable.

(c) It is impossible that the individual or family which uses the Mass as the Church demands should not find peace, happiness and sanctity.

O: Mass for the dead

We must do satisfaction for the souls in purgatory

We know that souls go to purgatory on account of the temporal punishment due to their sins.

(a) They cannot make satisfaction for themselves, but only suffer and purge their souls until the whole debt is paid.

(b) But through the sublime dogma of the communion of saints we can pay that debt for them.

(c) The Christian who is conscious of this solidarity will do his best for these souls.

The Mass, the best possible satisfaction

1. In the Old Testament we read that Judas ordered that sacrifices should be offered for those who had died in battle (2 Mach. 12. 43-46). These sacrifices had a limited value.

2. Today, in the New Law, we have an infinite sacrifice which we can offer for the souls in purgatory.

(a) The Council of Trent affirms that these souls are helped principally by the sacrifice of the Mass.

(b) There is no need of a long reasoning process to prove this:

i. It is the infinite sacrifice of Christ.

ii. If applied to a soul it should, in one instant, wipe away all punishment.

Masses for the dead

1. From the third century there is abundant evidence that the Church used the Mass for the dead.

(a) St Monica says to her son, Augustine: Put this body where you like . . . one thing only I beg of you, that you remember me at the altar of the Lord, wherever you may be.

(b) St Augustine mentions the fact of his saying Masses for the soul of his mother.

2. In many of the old sacramentaries there are Masses for the dead.

3. *Today it forms part of the funeral rites:*

(a) The Church has introduced the custom of saying Mass on the anniversary, and on the third, seventh and thirtieth day after death.

(b) On the day of All Souls every priest may say three Masses.

4. Undoubtedly the best way of reminding ourselves of the dead and of helping them is the sacrifice of the Mass. The flowers, adornments, etc., of the tomb of our dead are all very well to comfort the living, but they are of no use for the dead themselves.

P: The people and the Mass

Sacrifice of the Church and of the Christian

1. Since the Mass is the Church's sacrifice it can be said that (in a very restricted sense) all the baptized are priests, i.e. that they have a share in the sacrificial rite of the Mass and in its fruits.

2. But each Christian should play an active part in the Mass, a part which demands our co-operation.

(a) This may be by way of internal co-operation (the intention), by which we voluntarily offer with Christ the sacrifice of the Mass and also ourselves with it;

(b) or it can also be external (more valuable still), in which we part take in the rites and prayers with the intention of offering Christ's sacrifice and ourselves with it.

The Christian, a sharer in the priesthood of Christ

1. *Pius XII has explained this clearly:*

(a) The celebrating priest and he alone representing Christ is the one who sacrifices; it is not the faithful, the clerics or religious, nor

even other priests who assist him, even though all can and do take an active part.

(b) However, we should not deny or doubt that the faithful share in some kind of priesthood, which it would not be licit to despise . . . but whatever may be the reality and the true significance of such a title of honour, it must be firmly maintained that this priesthood differs in grade and essence from the true priesthood which consists in the power to bring about the sacrifice of Christ in the person of Christ. (Allocution to Cardinals and Bishops in Rome, 2 Nov. 1954. Cf. *Mediator Dei*. 86.)

The Christians must offer the sacrifice of themselves

The Christian who shares in the above sense in the priesthood of Christ must also share with him the rôle of victim.

(a) But if the oblation whereby the faithful in this Sacrifice offer the divine Victim to the heavenly Father is to produce its full effect, they must do something further; they must also offer themselves as victim.

(b) As we stand at the altar then we must change our hearts; uproot the sin that is in them, and carefully tend and foster in them everything that, through Christ, may avail for supernatural life. So, together with the immaculate Victim, shall we become an oblation pleasing to the Father.

(c) We must die mystically with Christ, hanging with him on the cross (*Mediator Dei*).

The Offertory

1. It should not pass unnoticed by the faithful:

(a) It is the moment when we should offer ourselves together with the bread and wine which the priest offers on the altar. The drop of water which he puts in the chalice represents the sacrifice of the people.

(b) Each one should place on the altar at this moment his work, his sacrifices, his sufferings, etc., the whole collection of small sacrifices of which human life is made up.

(c) But above all he should offer his heart, his life and his soul.

2. We might remember the prayer which follows the Offertory. In a spirit of humility and with a contrite heart may we be received by thee, O Lord, and let our sacrifice be presented to thee in such a way that it may be pleasing to thee.

The Consecration

1. The gifts of bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, into the infinite sacrifice of Calvary.

(a) Our own sacrifice is there also and attains a new value as being united with that of Christ,

(b) the two victims are now joined and form one whole—Christ—who is presented to the Father.

2. What strength this gives the Christian to face the struggle of daily life, when he knows that the little he does during the day has already been transformed by the sacrifice of the Mass.

Third Sunday after Pentecost

THE LOST SHEEP

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: 1 Peter 5. 6-11 Gospel: Luke 15. 1-10. Cf. Matt. 18. 12-14

Texts concerning jealousy and zeal

1. *God jealous of us:*

Thou shalt not defy me by making other gods thy own. Thou shalt not carve images, or fashion the likeness of anything in heaven above, or on earth beneath, or in the waters at the roots of earth, to bow down and worship it. I, thy God, the Lord Almighty, am jealous in my love. . . . Ex. 20. 3-5.

2. *He asks of us perfect love:*

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with the love of thy whole heart, and thy whole soul, and thy whole strength. Deut. 6. 4. Cf. Matt. 22. 37.

A man cannot be the slave of two masters at once; either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will devote himself to one and despise the other. You must serve God or money; you cannot serve both. Matt. 6. 24.

3. *For love of us he wishes us to love him:*

Two wrongs this people of mine committed; me they forsook, the fountain of living water, and thereupon they dug cisterns of their own, leaking cisterns, that water had none to give them. Jer. 2. 13. Cf. Cant. 8. 6-7.

4. *The terrible zeal of God:*

Was it not jealousy for the honour of thy house that consumed me; was it not uttered against thee, the reproach I bore? Ps. 68. 10. Lord, must we always taste thy vengeance, must thy jealous anger still burn unquenched? Ps. 78. 5.

That faithfulness is the breastplate that arms him, that saving power the helmet that guards his head; vengeance the garment he wears, jealous love the mantle that wraps him round. Isaias 59. 17.

5. *The work of redemption an effect of this zeal and love:*

Ever wider shall his dominion spread, endlessly at peace; he will sit on David's kingly throne, to give it lasting foundations of justice and right; so tenderly he loves us, the Lord of Hosts. Isaias 9. 7. Cf. 63. 7.

6. *The zeal we should feel for God:*

Zeal for the purity of souls:

After all, my jealousy on your behalf is the jealousy of God himself; I have betrothed you to Christ, so that no other but he shall claim you, his bride without spot. 2 Cor. 11. 2.

Does anyone feel a scruple? I share it; is anyone's conscience hurt? I am ablaze with indignation. *Ibid.* 29.

7. *What holy zeal must be like:*

Then they drew nearer the camp, and he saw the calf standing there, and the dancing. And so angry was he that he threw down the tablets he held, and broke them against the spurs of the mountain; then he took the calf they had made, and threw it on the fire and beat it in to dust; this dust he sprinkled over water, which he made the Israelites drink. And he asked Aaron, What grudge hast thou against this people, that thou hast involved them in such guilt? Ex. 32. 19-21.

So he made a kind of whip out of cords, and drove them all, with their sheep and oxen, out of the temple, spilling the bankers' coins and overthrowing their tables; and he said to the pigeon-sellers, Take these away, do not turn my Father's house into a place of barter. John 2. 15-16.

8. *Zeal for redemption of the people:*

Then, when day came, he went out and retired to a desert place. The multitude who had set out in search of him and caught him up, would have kept him there, and not let him leave them. But he told them, I must preach the gospel of God's kingdom to the other cities too; it is for this that I was sent. Luke 4. 42-43.

And he sent messengers before him, who came into a Samaritan village, to make all in readiness. But the Samaritans refused to receive him, because his journey was in the direction of Jerusalem. When they found this, two of his disciples, James and John, asked him, Lord, wouldst thou have us bid fire come down from heaven and consume them? But he turned and rebuked them, You do not understand, he said, what spirit it is you share. The Son of Man has come to save men's lives, not to destroy them. Luke 9. 52-56.

What I was born for, what I came into the world for, is to bear witness of the truth, Whosoever belongs to the truth, listens to my voice. John 18. 37.

9. *Zeal for sinners:*

And afterwards, when he was taking a meal in the house, many publicans and sinners were to be found at table with him and his disciples. Matt. 9. 10.

And so, I tell thee, if great sins have been forgiven her, she has also greatly loved. Luke 7. 47. Cf. Luke 15. 22-24.

Then Jesus looked up and asked her, Woman, where are thy accusers? Has no one condemned thee? No one, Lord, she said. And Jesus said to her, I will not condemn thee either. John 8. 10-11. And Jesus said to him, I promise thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. Luke 23. 43.

10. Zeal until death:

Our weakness, and it was he who carried the weight of it, our miseries, and it was he who bore them. A leper, so we thought of him, a man God had smitten and brought low; and all the while it was for our sins he was wounded, it was guilt of ours crushed him down; on him the punishment fell that brought us peace, by his bruises we were healed. Strayed sheep, all of us, each following his own path; and God laid on his shoulders our guilt, the guilt of us all. Isaias 53. 4-6.

He dispossessed himself, and took the nature of a slave, fashioned in the likeness of men, and presenting himself to us in human form; and then he lowered his own dignity, accepted an obedience which brought him to death, death on a cross. Phil. 2. 7-8.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

1. Although today's Mass is anterior to the institution of the Feast of the Sacred Heart, were we to choose one which would fit in with the theology of that feast it would be hard to discover one more suitable. All the formulas used today speak to us of the mercy of Christ and of our confidence in him, both characteristic elements in the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

2. Mercy for the sinner:

In the Gospel, through the means of two parables, this mercy is explained to us. Both were preached by Christ to oppose the pharisaical attacks against him for eating with publicans and sinners. Just as Christ, by this preaching, inspired confidence in his hearers, who flocked to him afterwards, so the Church has tried to surround this passage with other texts which will excite similar confidence in us. That is the reason for the Gradual and the Offertory.

The Epistle is also a recommendation of St Peter to have confidence and to cast all our cares on him, for he will look after us.

The Introit and the prayer have the same sentiments. In the Postcommunion we are told that the Eucharist is the best guarantee of this confidence, and that through it we can more easily come to partake in the mercy of the Lord.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 1 Peter 5. 6-11

1. Argument:

St Peter, conscious of his position as head of the Church and thoughtful for her in the difficulties she has to meet, preaches to all unlimited confidence in God, the need for complete purity of conscience and a firm conviction of the truth of our faith. To be persecuted for Christ is an honour and a source of great blessing.

This last chapter of his letter is a summary of what has gone before. After exhorting the pastors of the Church (5. 1-4) he turns to the faithful and warns them to have both humility and confidence (6-7), to be watchful (8), to be strong in their faith (9) and joyful with the hope of their reward to come (10).

2. Texts:

(a) Bow down, then, before the strong hand of God . . .

It is the immediate consequence of the quotation from the book of Proverbs, God thwarts the proud, and keeps his grace for the humble (3. 34), which must have been in frequent use in the early days of the Church, because we find it also in James (4. 6). Obedience to our seniors and to the pastors of the Church demands humility, a virtue which lowers us in the eyes of men, but which does put us in the right relation to God and his strong hand. To put oneself under that hand is to enjoy his omnipotence, because God raises up and protects the humble.

(b) throw back on him the burden of all your anxiety . . .

Humility is not a destruction of our own personality, but a recognition of the source of our strength, God. Since the proud man really sets himself up against God, he is rejected; while the humble man is helped. Therefore, once the humble has submitted himself in this way, he has no need to do anything more than repeat the sentiments of the psalmist, as St Peter does here. Throw back on him the burden of all your anxiety; he is concerned for you (Ps. 54. 23; 33. 17).

(c) be sober and watch well . . .

Our co-operation is necessary, because in our struggles we have a powerful enemy, apart from the world and the flesh—the devil himself.

(d) but you, grounded in faith, must face him boldly . . .

It would appear that St Peter is dealing here mainly with persecutions, but in spite of that fact, the doctrine is universal. The devil fears those who bear the name of Christ. Faith is light and the devil is the prince of darkness, and what has darkness to do with light? (1 John 1. 5).

(e) and God, the giver of all graces . . . will himself give you mastery, and steadiness, and strength:

God, who has called us, will give us the glory he has promised us, after a short time of suffering here, which is not to be compared to that glory which is to come. Here St Peter mixes the ideas of glory with those of grace, but it would seem that he is insisting more on the motive of confidence in the grace we have received as an arm in our struggle.

B: The Gospel: Luke 15. 1-10

1. Occasion and argument:

The place, Transjordan, a few days after the Feast of the Dedication, when our Lord was a fugitive from Jerusalem but without going very far away from the city. The occasion was the wrath of the Pharisees as they saw Jesus make a point of associating with sinners, among whom they classed all publicans. Here are two points of view contrasted, that of goodness itself and that of selfish egoism, hypocrisy dressed as a virtue.

In view of their scandal Jesus speaks in the terms of the three parables of mercy, two of which are read in today's Gospel. We have another occasion in the call of Matthew, when our Lord said that the people who are well do not need a doctor, while they do need him who are sick. He advised the Pharisees to remember what the prophet had said, I will have mercy and not sacrifice (Matt. 9. 13).

The parables of the lost coin and the prodigal son are exclusive to St Luke, St Matthew notes the one about the lost sheep, but with a different purpose, that of inciting the apostles to save the humblest of souls entrusted to them.

2. Texts:

(a) When they found all the publicans and sinners . . .

The publicans were classed as sinners by the Pharisees because of their opportunity to defraud the people, the system of taxation being what it was.

(b) coming to listen to him . . .

The mark of a true apostle is to get sinners to listen willingly to him, even though he may preach to them of virtues which they do not yet possess. Notice how true it is to say that those who are usually cast out or despised are longing for some kindness, and where they find it in all sincerity they are willing to draw near. It is a lesson, not merely for the apostle, but also for sinners. They should draw near.

(c) the Pharisees and scribes were indignant . . .

They were angry because he spoke to and even ate with sinners. The proud despise sinners, the saint seeks them out; but that will not free him from calumny at times. True justice is merciful.

(d) The lost sheep . . .

The flock of a hundred was not a very large one by Palestinian standards, but what our Lord is after is a round number to oppose to the one lost. There is no need to insist on the question as to whom the sheep represent, since the point of the parable is to show the interest of the shepherd for one, just as God is interested in one soul among many.

(e) has lost one of them . . .

A stupid animal, remaining behind after the others had followed the call of the shepherd. More important is the attitude of the latter:

- i. he goes to look for it as soon as he notices that it has gone,
- ii. without rest,
- iii. without thinking of the darkness or the fatigue of the search.

(f) rejoicing . . .

Why blame the poor sheep? Are not the solitude and the darkness punishment enough? The shepherd loves it too much to punish it; on the contrary, he places it on his shoulders because he sees that it is tired, and after having put it with the others he runs off to rejoice with his friends at its recovery.

3. The application:

(a) God is like this shepherd:

The sheep strays because it is distracted by the feeding on the pasture and loses the shepherd. This sheep is the whole human race, any sinner, I myself. . . .

The shepherd leaves everything. There is no need to repeat the story of Christ, or the Samaritan woman, Magdalen, etc. Nothing puts him off in his search for the lost sheep, the sinner. An example to pastors and to sinners alike.

(b) The joy of the angels:

The meaning is not that they prefer repentance to innocence, but that of the father in the story of the prodigal son; You, he says to the elder son, are always with me, and all I have is yours, but now we rejoice because your brother who was lost is found again (Luke 15. 31-32).

4. The lost piece of silver:

The parable is so similar in meaning to the former one that there is no need to insist further, except to point out that the Fathers of the Church mention the fact that, just as the coin had on it the image of Caesar, so the soul bears that of Christ.

5. The lesson:

We must have pity on the sinner, look for him and rejoice at his conversion. Holiness is charity, and the charitable man loves his

brother in a state of grace because he sees God in him, he also loves the sinner because he wishes him also to be like God. Charity is loving and kind. There is total opposition between the mentality of Christ and that of the Pharisees.

We must never despise anyone; today's sinner may be tomorrow's saint; Saul may become Paul at any time.

The zeal of an apostle. Love for Christ who is always searching for me. Conversion is the work of Christ, I must co-operate, but it will be easy after the first step, because I shall be on his shoulders.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(We shall give a summary of the ideas in a letter of St John to his friend, Theodore, who was at the time living in sin. In this letter the saint explains the reasons why he should retain hope, even though he be a sinner. PG 47, 288 ff.)

I. *Motives of hope for the sinner:*

(a) *In spite of his many sins:*

Anyone who thought of the heights from which the sinner has fallen and the depths to which he has now sunk might think it impossible to save him; but no such thought exists in God, who is able to raise up the poor from the dust and from the dung-heap and seat him among princes (Ps. 112. 7. 9).

If the devil has been able to overthrow you, God is sufficiently powerful to raise you up again, to your former liberty and confidence. . . .

It is not the number of the sins that should make us despair, but the desire to remain in them. They are like an iron collar round our necks, which does not permit us to raise our eyes to the Lord. The wise man breaks these bonds and casts them from him. . . .

No matter how difficult the conversion may appear at first sight, once the step towards God has been taken it becomes easy, because while we remain in the furnace of pleasure this conversion appears impossible; but once we take the first step away from it, then we soon leave it behind us and the path seems easy.

(b) *Justice without anger in God:*

i. *God punishes us to draw us to him.* Even though he punishes, it is not from anger but through his loving desire to attract us to himself. He does not punish us because we have deprived him of some good, but to re-establish the right order of things which our sin has broken.

ii. *The lesson of the parables of mercy.* In that lost sheep we can see nothing else but the fall of the faithful and his conversion, because it was not a sheep from another flock, but fed by the shepherd, and when it wandered away it did so by the most difficult roads, in the mountains and woods, far off from the truth. Did he, the shepherd, take no notice of it? Quite the contrary, he searched for it, did not punish it, but took it on his shoulders. A doctor is more careful with patients who are seriously ill.

Another parable is that of the prodigal, who, had he not had confidence in his father, would never have returned home.

iii. *The road to God is not difficult.* Begin to tread it and you will see that it is easier than you thought. . . . Even though you may have fallen repeatedly, remember that there are merchants who have been shipwrecked many times, but they still return to their business in spite of that. . . . At least, let us never despair.

2. *The search for the sinner:*

(Some Christians had been observing the Jewish fast, and Chrysostom, although he had to preach against them, also directed one sermon to those who were inclined to be uncharitable towards them. PG. 26, 297 ff.)

(a) *Secure his conversion:*

i. Before he had committed the sin there was need for every effort to avoid it, but now that it has been committed of what use are such methods? Let no one think like this, because if he realized what it means to work for our brother he would know that, in these circumstances, we must put forth an even greater effort. It is absurd merely to work to avoid a fall in others, because we must not merely try to preserve his innocence, but also stretch out our hand to those who have fallen. If God had acted like that with us, taking care merely to avoid our damnation or our fall, and abandoning us after it, then indeed he would have to consent to our eternal damnation and none of us would have been saved.

ii. *The Lord's example.* God does not act like that. Remember the example of Adam. Before the fall he admonished him repeatedly and warned him about the coming death which would follow his infidelity. When, in spite of all he had received, Adam was disobedient, God did not leave him in anger at his fall, instead he drew near to him, spoke to him, consoled him and provided him with a remedy, work in the sweat of his brow. And since that did not seem to him sufficient, he restored him to that state from which he had fallen, freed him from death and took him to heaven, convincing the devil that his wiles had not served for anything, since he would see in heaven among the angels those very men whom he had tried to damn. . . . Another example is Peter, whose tears restored him to his place among the apostles.

iii. *We should not cease to care for sinners.* This is the way good doctors work; they prescribe what they think necessary to preserve health, but if the patient, through not taking the advice given him, falls ill, they do not leave him in that state, but look after him to cure him.

(b) **The obligation which lies on all:**

To imitate the Samaritan (Luke 10. 30-36). He might easily have said, What is it to me; I am a stranger to this Jew. Or, In what danger shall I be, carrying a wounded man who may die on my hands, which might provide an occasion for them to lay his death to my charge. If a Samaritan was so merciful and humane in his treatment of someone unknown to him, who will forgive us if we are careless about our brothers in a far worse evil. . . . Do not say, I am a man of the world, married and with children. These things are for priests and religious. The Samaritan did not ask where are the Pharisees and doctors? . . . Neither should you say, Why did not they cure him? Do you cure him, and do not take anyone to task for negligence. If you were to find a gold coin I am quite sure that you would not say, Why didn't someone else pick it up! On the contrary, you would bend down to pick it up as quickly as possible. You must know that, when you find your brother wounded, you have found something which is worth more than any treasure, the power to heal him; because if you anoint his wounds with the oil of sound doctrine, binding them up with meekness and curing them with patience, God will make you richer than money can make you.

(c) **The way to obtain mercy:**

Neither fasting nor sleeping on the ground, nor passing the whole night in vigil, nor indeed any other thing can enrich you so much as to give back health to one of your brethren. Think of how much you have sinned, of how many obscene words you have pronounced, how many quarrels you have promoted . . . and all this will move you to look after him who has fallen, because by one such good work you can wipe away all your faults.

(d) **Some pastoral advice:**

- i. *Do not reveal the sins of your neighbour, but correct them.* Do not go about counting the sins of others; search for those who have fallen so as to amend them, because it is a very bad custom that of accusing our brother instead of correcting him, divulging the illness instead of curing it. Let us root out once for all such a dangerous habit. . . .
- ii. *Do not rejoice at the sin of another.* When David heard of the ruin of Saul, in spite of the fact that it was public knowledge, he ordered that no one was to spread it abroad, so that the enemies of Israel would not rejoice (2 Kings 1. 20).

II. ST AUGUSTINE

A: The sheep lost in heresy

(We have already translated part of *Serm.* 40 on Good Shepherd Sunday. Therefore now we shall limit ourselves to those passages in which St Augustine refers to the sheep lost in heresy. Cf. PL. 38, 281-294.)

1. *The necessity of looking for these sheep:*

If we are careless about the welfare of those who, having gone astray, are on the point of being lost altogether, then error itself will not only rejoice, but will be able to pervert even the strong ones who remain within the fold. I long to gain those who are outside, but I am still more afraid of the inner damage they do. If good Christians do not see me reprove and search for heretics then they will soon no longer be able to distinguish between truth and error.

2. *On the mountains of heresy:*

So my sheep fell a-wandering, that shepherd had none . . . all over the hills they strayed, all over the countryside were scattered, this flock of mine . . . (Ez. 34. 5-6). Wolves set snares for them, lions devour them, because the sheep are not near their shepherd. The shepherd is there, but for those who are evil it is as though he were not. And they go after those who are not shepherds, because they feed themselves, not the sheep, from which comes mortal error. . . .

And the beasts come down from the hills and mountains, which is the pride of this life. . . . All the authors of errors, puffed up with earthly pride, promise the sheep rest and good pastures; and it is true that at times they find them, because heretics too can have the Scriptures and the sacraments; but they are not pastures proper to the mountains, although they be found there.

3. *Catholicity, sign of the flock:*

(a) **The Catholic Church is the vine; the heretics are dead, useless branches:**

Nevertheless, this Catholic mother looks all over the world for those who are lost, she comforts the sick, cures the languishing, unites those who live apart from one another without knowing each other. But she does know them all, because she has spread to all parts of the earth. . . . She is like a vine which spread far and wide; they are not. They are useless branches, cut by the knife of the farmer because they were sterile. . . . Call them what you will, lost sheep, branches cut from the true vine. God is no less powerful in calling the sheep than in reuniting to the vine the branches separated from it, because he is the true shepherd and the true farmer.

(b) The Church extended over the whole earth:

But what do you say to me? The faction of Donatus is the Church. Well, I wish to hear the voice of the shepherd. Read me the psalms, read the law, tell me what it says in the gospels and in the Apostle, There you will find that there is one Church which is spread over the whole earth and one Lord who says, My sheep hear my voice and follow me (John 10. 4). And what does the voice of the shepherd go on to say? That in his name shall be preached penance and remission of sins to all nations (Luke 24. 47). . . .

But, continues the heretic, they adore idols and they are not worthy of the good shepherd. What does that matter? You produce human documents, I divine ones. All the peoples of the earth shall bless him (Gen. 22. 18); ask of me and I will give you the nations for an inheritance, and for your possession all the ends of the earth (Ps. 2. 8). . . . Who could count all the texts? There is not one page which does not sing of Christ and the Church extended over the whole earth. Let there be one voice lifted to defend Donatus. . . . They tell me that this Church, extended over the whole earth, must perish. That she will have to perish about whom so many texts affirm that she will live for ever? There is not one voice in the Law and the Prophets which says so. . . . Do you wish to recognize the flock of Christ; see then if she be extended to the four parts of the globe.

(c) The apostolic teaching, as a sign of the flock of Christ:

The mountains of Israel (mentioned in Ezech. 34. 13-15) are formed by the authors of the Scriptures. Come and find pasture here, where you are safe. All that you hear there will do you good; so reject anything outside. Do not long to be among the mists, hear the voice of the shepherd and come to the mountains of the Scriptures. Make of them the delight of your hearts, because there is nothing in them which is poison, nothing strange; merely abundant pastures.

B: The Samaritan woman

(St Augustine deals with this scene in *De Diversis*, PL. 35, 1510-1522.)

Jesus was tired . . . (John 4. 6). The mysteries begin. Not for nothing is Jesus tired; not for nothing is the power of God tired, he by whom those who are tired are created once again. Not for nothing is he tired whose presence strengthens us and whose absence tires us. . . .

It is for you that he is tired. We have found Jesus our strength and now we find Jesus weak. Weak and powerful at the same time. Powerful and strong, for it is written of him, that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Do you wish to understand his power? All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing. Can there be anyone more powerful than Jesus, who made all things without effort? The strength of Christ gave you the weakness of Christ and created you anew. . . . He created us by his power, he searched for us in his weakness.

1. The Samaritan woman, figure of the Church:

There came a woman—figure of the Church, not yet justified, but who is going to be, because that is the theme of the story. She approaches in her ignorance, she finds him and he talks to her. . . . The Samaritans did not belong to the Chosen People . . . it is enough then to consider the Samaritan as a stranger . . . because it is part of the allegory to consider this woman thus, who is the figure of the Church, which had to come from all nations, peoples who were strangers to Judaism. Let us hear ourselves then in her, let us learn from her and give thanks to God in her for ourselves.

2. The gift of God:

The Lord asks for water and she is astonished, because it was a sin for a Jew to use even a glass belonging to a Samaritan. He who asked for water was thirsty, but it was for the faith of this woman. Jesus replied and said, If you did but know the gift of God. He asks for water to drink and promises to give her to drink. . . . This gift of God is the Holy Spirit, but as yet he is hidden from her and is entering little by little into her heart.

3. The Lord's promise:**(a) A spiritual promise . . .**

The Lord begins to speak more clearly; from within him springs a fountain of water which will lead to eternal life, and he who drinks of this water shall never thirst again (John 4. 14). Could he have made it more clear that his promises did not refer to anything material, but to things invisible; that he was not speaking carnally, but spiritually?

(b) Of the water of eternal life:

Never let us forget that the Lord promises spiritual water. What do those words mean, 'he who drinks of this water shall thirst again'? The truth is that they refer to the water which was there present, and it is also true if we remember what that water signified—because the water in the well represents the pleasures of this life, collected together in dark depths, from which men draw it up in the water pots of their desires. He who attains the pleasures of this life, be they in food or drink, amusements or fornication, will he not certainly thirst for them again? . . . But he who drinks of the water I will give him shall never thirst again.

(c) **The promise not understood:**

He promises the fulness of the Sacred Scriptures, but she does not yet understand him. And since she does not understand, what does she say? Lord, give me of this water that I may not thirst nor have to come here to draw water. Her need obliged her to work but her weakness rejected it. Would that she had heard what he said, Come to me all ye that labour and are burdened and I will refresh you.

C: The Lord's lesson**1. Pray within yourself:**

What does the Lord teach her? Woman, believe me, the Church is coming, which begins with faith; the Father seeks true adorers, who pray, not on a mountain or in a temple, but in spirit and truth. . . . We went outside and he commands us to go within. You may say: If I could only find a high and lonely mountain; I think that I would be nearer to God and he would hear me. Do you think that you are nearer to God because you are on a high mountain, and that because of it he will hear you more quickly? Yes, it is true that he dwells on high, but he looks at the humble. The Lord is very near. Near to whom? To those who have a contrite heart (Ps. 33. 19). . . . You were looking for a mountain? Rather come down that you may draw near. . . . Do you wish to pray in the temple? Pray then within yourself, but first of all be converted into a temple of God, because he hears prayers within his temple.

2. The woman, symbol of the Church:

The Samaritans believed at the beginning because of the testimony of the woman, later they believed because they had seen the Lord. The same thing happens today in the case of those who live outside and are not yet Christians. Christ is preached to them by the Christians who are his friends. They come to Christ through the woman, that is, the Church, who announces him. They believe because of that preaching, but Christ remains two days—the two commandments of charity are given to them, and then many believe in him more firmly, because they see that he is, in very truth, the Saviour of the world.

III. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

(Extracts from Hom. 34 in Evang. PL. 76, 1246)

1. The search of the shepherd:

You will deduce from this that true justice is compassionate, while false justice is full of anger; even though the just are sometimes angry with sinners, still they are not moved by pride, but by zeal for good. They are indignant without being angry, they despair without despairing, they chastise, but with love; because even

though externally they appear to be hard, because of their desire to correct they maintain interiorly the sweetness of charity. Nearly always, in the secret places of their hearts, they prefer those whom they are correcting and think themselves to be inferior to them.

On the contrary, the proud, full of false justice, despise others, have no pity for the weak and so much to worse do they treat the sinner as they consider themselves to be free from all fault. . . .

He put the sheep on his shoulders because, on taking our human nature, he also took upon himself our sins. . . . Having found the sheep he returns home, because our Redeemer, having once won salvation for us all, returned to heaven. There he finds his friends and neighbours, that is, the choirs of angels, his friends because of their constancy in doing his will, and neighbours, since they enjoy the beatific vision. . . .

It is well worthy of note that he does not say, Rejoice with the lost sheep, but rejoice with me, because his greatest joy is in our life and we bring that joy to perfection when we enter heaven.

2. Greater joy over the sinner than over the just:

Because many times those who know how to live without sinning are content with that and live a life of apathy, weak so far as any really good works are concerned, because they know that they have not done anything which is to their discredit. On the other hand, many sinners, once they are converted, take up with such zeal the way of God that they leave far behind those who are good and so make reparation for the harm they have done by their present gains. So also the farmer thinks more of the earth which is most fruitful, and prefers it, even though it was once full of weeds, to that earth which does not produce much, even though it be clean, and without weeds.

3. The coin:

The woman is divine wisdom; the coin the human soul, which has impressed on it the image of God. The woman lost the coin when man, created to the image and likeness of God, wiped out that image by sin.

Divine wisdom lit the lamp, by kindling in the earth of our humanity the fire of the Word. Once the lamp was lighted she swept the whole house, because the preaching of Christ was a true revolution of our consciences. Sins were lit up and the whole house was turned upside down. As soon as the conscience is moved and realizes how far it has strayed, then the image of God appears once more on the coin.

4. Applications:**(a) Threats and mercy:**

Let us meditate, if we can, on the supreme piety of this. The just are threatened with punishments if they fall. Sinners are promised

mercy so that they may rise up again. Some are frightened so that they may not weaken; others are encouraged so that they may not despair.

Are you just? Fear his anger so that you may not fall. Are you a sinner? Have confidence in the mercy of God and then rise up.

(b) True penance:

He opens to us the floodgates of his mercy and desires that we should do sincere penance. This consists in giving up, not one, but all our sins, because of what use is it to repent of sins against the flesh when we are still falling into that of avarice?

We should take one more step and, having made an abuse of what was unlawful, we should now abstain from that which is lawful and thus check in small things him who once fell in big things.

Look at the repentance of David, for example. First of all he fell into what was gravely sinful, with the wife of Urias, and then he knew well how to sacrifice the licit pleasure of a glass of water, of which he thought himself unworthy (2 Kings 23. 17).

5. The call of God:

The very one we despise calls us; we separate ourselves from him, but he does not separate himself from us. He put his law before our eyes to guide us, but we turn away from our creator; and behold how he follows us, calling out to us, and even though he is despised, he never ceases to cry out to us. . . . He calls by means of his precepts and waits for us with patience. If a servant set himself up against us, would we tolerate his lack of respect? Well, that is our situation; we turn our backs on God and not only does he tolerate it, but he promises to reward us if we return to him. May such great mercy on the part of the creator soften the hardness of our evil, and may man who could have been punished feel shame at least when he sees that God is waiting for him.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

Mercy

A: The virtue

1. Definition:

As Augustine says, Mercy is heartfelt sympathy for another's distress, impelling us to help him if we can. For mercy takes its name *Misericordia*, from denoting a man's compassionate heart (*miserum cor*) for another's unhappiness.

2. The merciful man considers the misery of others as something affecting himself.

(b) The fact (2-2. q. 30. a. 1. c.):

Since pity is grief for another's distress, from the very fact that a person takes pity on anyone, it follows that another's distress grieves him. And since sorrow or grief is about one's own ills, one grieves or sorrows for another's distress in so far as one looks upon another's distress as one's own (*ibid.* a. 2. c).

(b) How this happens:

Now this happens in two ways; first through union of the affections, which is the effect of love. For, since he who loves another looks upon his friend as another self, he counts his friend's hurt as his own, so that he grieves for it as though he were hurt himself. Hence the Philosopher reckons grieving with one's friend as being one of the signs of friendship. . . .

Secondly it happens through real union, for instance when another's evil comes near to us, so as to pass to us from him. . . . Hence the Philosopher says that men pity such as are akin to them, and the like, because it makes them realize that the same may happen to themselves (*ibid.* a. 2. c).

3. Mercy for sinners:

It is essential to fault that is should be voluntary; and in this respect it deserves punishment rather than mercy. Since, however, fault may be, in a way, a punishment, through having something connected with it that is against the sinner's will, it may, in this respect, call for mercy. It is in this sense that we pity and commiserate sinners.

4. The proud not usually merciful:

For the same reason the proud are without pity, because they despise others, and think them wicked, so that they account them as suffering deservedly whatever they suffer.

5. Mercy is the most excellent of all virtues:

A virtue may take precedence over others in two ways; first, in itself; secondly, in comparison with its subject. In itself, mercy takes precedence over other virtues, for it belongs to mercy to be bountiful to others, and what is more, to help others in their wants, which pertains chiefly to one who is above others. Hence mercy is accounted as being proper to God; and therein his omnipotence is declared to be chiefly manifested (*ibid.* a. 4).

6. The most acceptable sacrifice to God:

We worship God by external sacrifices and gifts, not for his own profit, but for that of ourselves and our neighbour. For he needs not our sacrifices, but wishes them to be offered to him in order to rouse our devotion and to profit our neighbour. Hence mercy, whereby we supply others defects, is a sacrifice more acceptable to him, as conducive more directly to our neighbour's well-being. . . .

The sum total of the Christian religion consists in mercy, as regards external works; but the inward love of charity, whereby we are united to God, preponderates over both love and mercy for our neighbour (*ibid.* a. 4. *ad 1 et 2um*).

B: The mercy of God

1. *Mercy is a perfection in God:*

Mercy is especially to be attributed to God, as seen in its effect, but not as an affection of passion. In proof of which it must be considered that a person is said to be merciful as being, so to speak, sorrowful at heart (*miserum cor*); being affected with sorrow at the misery of another as though it were his own. Hence it follows that he endeavours to dispel the misery of the other as if it were his; and this is the effect of mercy. To sorrow over the misery of others does not belong to God; but it does most properly belong to him to dispel that misery, whatever be the defect we call by that name (1. q. 21. a. 3. c).

2. *His mercy compatible with his justice:*

God acts mercifully, not indeed by going against his justice, but by doing something more than justice. Thus a man who pays another two hundred pieces of money, though only owing him one hundred, does nothing against justice, but acts liberally or mercifully. The case is the same with one who pardons an offence committed against him, for in remitting it he may be said to confer a gift. Hence the apostle calls remission a forgiving. . . . Hence it is clear that mercy does not destroy justice, but is the fulness thereof (*ibid.* *ad 2um*).

3. *Mercy and justice to be found in all God's works:*

Mercy and truth are necessarily found in all God's works, if mercy be taken to mean the removal of any kind of defect. Not every defect however can properly be called a misery, but only defect in a rational nature whose lot is to be happy. . . . For this reason does God, out of the abundance of his goodness, bestow upon creatures what is due to them more bountifully than is proportionate to their deserts; since less would suffice for preserving the order of justice than what the divine goodness confers; because between God's goodness and creatures there can be no proportion (a. 4. c).

4. *Certain works attributed to each:*

Certain works are attributed to justice and certain others to mercy, because in some justice appears more forcibly and in others mercy. Even in the damnation of the reprobate mercy is seen, which, though it does not totally remit, yet it somewhat alleviates, in punishing short of what is deserved (*ibid.* *ad 1um*).

5. *In justification of the sinner:*

In the justification of the ungodly justice is seen when God remits sin on account of love, though he himself has mercifully infused that love. So we read of Mary Magdalen, Many sins are forgiven her because she has loved much.

6. *In the case of the just:*

Justice and mercy appear in the punishment of the just in this world, since by afflictions lesser faults are cleansed in them and they are the more raised up from earthly affections to God (*ibid.* *ad 3ium*).

II. ST BONAVENTURE

(Extracts taken from his work entitled *The Six wings of the Seraphim*)

A: The patience of the pastor of souls

Its necessity:

The third wing of the ecclesiastical seraphim, who is the prelate, is patient, long-suffering in trials. . . . This is shown mainly by three things:

(a) *Because of his many works and preoccupations:*

Truly his life is full of cares, both in so far as he has to watch over the spiritual discipline and also the material well-being of his subjects. This happened in the case of the apostles, who were not only zealous in looking after the spiritual needs of the faithful, but also for their temporal ones, among other things, their special care for the poor. . . . What is more the prelate is burdened with many other occupations, among which we find journeys, vigils, business affairs and many others. . . .

(b) *Because of the slow advance of his subjects in the spiritual life:*

Moreover the prelate needs patience in view of the fact that many of his subjects, over whom he watches with great care, are slow to take advantage of his teachings. See how few make any real progress; see, too, how easily discipline is relaxed and those religious observances which it cost him so much trouble to institute. . . . It is like a seed, of which much is sown but little grows. He can also see his orders carried out with negligence, and how evil under the cloak of good insinuates itself, without his being able to condemn it openly, for fear of reproving as evil what is really good.

(c) *The relaxation in religious poverty:*

For example, let us suppose that to save souls many more members are received into the Order than it can look after. In the long run this great crowd manages to obscure the brilliance of poverty, since there will be many who do not wish to deprive themselves, but are desirous of gaining wealth. From this comes the frequent going out

in search of what is necessary, the adopting of unusual methods of begging, the incautious way they deal with the rule in matters of almsdeeds, the extinguishing of religious devotion, the relegation of certain religious observances into oblivion . . . the seeking of alms from penitents, the flattery of the rich, the building of great palaces without worry about the scandal this may give to others; thus God's honour is tarnished, that fruit which should be born of a holy life and the edification of our neighbour.

(d) Lastly the prelate needs patience:

This is because of the open ingratitude of many of the faithful for whose benefit he works unceasingly. First there are the constant complaints. They complain without ever being satisfied, because they say that the prelate could, if he wished, act otherwise towards them; for which reason he is sometimes uncertain whether to give in to their demands or maintain an inflexible attitude towards them. . . . Secondly there are the twisted interpretations. They interpret in this twisted way many of his actions, giving them the worst interpretation; because of which he is the object of visits, murmurings, detractions, so much so that he finds he has given motives for scandal even there where he thought he was doing a great service to God and to them. There is no act or decree of his which is safe from the calumnies of some of them. Then, lastly, there is opposition. Some openly defy him, censure him in writing, despise him and incite others to be insubordinate; or, full of cunning, they impede him in the execution of his office.

B: The patience of the pastor

In these and all other trials let the prelate defend himself by taking refuge behind a threefold patience. First of all let him reply modestly, kindly and with deliberation to each of the things which are brought against him, and let him suppress his anger, not allowing any impatience to creep into his voice, show itself in his features or gestures. . . . Anger is never calmed with anger, nor vice cured by vice. So far as the anger of a prelate is concerned, it is enough to point out that it cheapens all that he does for good and that in many ways. First in so far as it is a cause of scandal to others. . . . Secondly because it causes him to lose the respect of his subjects. . . . Thirdly because it makes him terrible and abominable in the sight of others. Fourthly because it drives others to be impatient; it deprives them of their confidence in him, because they will be slow to tell him of their needs. . . . It fills a house with discontent and criticism. Lastly it tends to isolate him, so that he never knows the things which really need correcting.

In the second place let him take refuge in meekness, in such a way that he will never stoop to revenge for injuries received, or hate the

offenders in his heart, nor try to separate them from him. Rather he will be more pleasant with them, thus giving edification to them and others; he will do good to the ungrateful ones. . . . Since it is properly speaking the office of the pastor to teach virtue, if he drives from him those who are vicious whom is he going to teach? If the doctor flees from the sick whom is he going to cure? If a brave soldier runs away from his opponents how will he ever attain the triumph of victory? If the merchant despises his wares, which alone can make him rich, where will he get his money from? This is the reason why so many bishops and prelates have sanctified themselves, both by the practice of good works and by the suffering of many trials. By giving example to others in their office they have reached the heights of perfection. . . .

Lastly, he must be long-suffering, so that neither the fatigues of his work nor the lack of apparent progress, nor impertinence, nor other trials he has to suffer from his subjects will ever become a motive for doing the task given to him with less decision or energy in his pastoral office. Let these prelates realize that, in this way, great merits are won.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

(Extracts from additions to *Memorial of the Christian Life*, I. 4)

The road to conversion

1. *The task of the Good Shepherd:*

Mountains and valleys:

Who can ever explain the hard work it cost our Lord, the Good Shepherd, in his task of looking for the lost sheep over the mountains and valleys to find it and bring it home? . . .

How far he had to walk for this, what fasts, what pilgrimages, from city to city, from province to province! What little village was there so poor and humble that it was not honoured by his presence and where this new Sun of Justice did not rise, leaving there the memory of his virtues?

The disciples themselves are witness to it, those who out of simple hunger, had to crush the corn between their hands on the Sabbath. Witnesses, too, were those of Capharnaum, who once tried to cast him headlong; those of Judaea, who tried so many times to trap him and stone him. . . . What must such a delicate body not have suffered from these laborious toils and with such poor dress and provisions! The apostle, in his epistle (2 Cor. 11. 23) mentions some of his journeys and sufferings, many of which the Lord also could have mentioned, as could his disciples.

2. *The call of the shepherd:*

Just as art and nature do not make things in an instant, but little by little prepare the material and after it is ready give it the form, so God first of all disposes and changes the heart of man by means of those inspirations in which, all in secret, he says to him: Look how much time you have wasted living an evil life; see how many thousands of sins you have committed against God, and how long he has suffered you and waited for you. In spite of all, see how many graces and blessings he has heaped upon you, and from how many evils he has preserved you. . . .

Remember that so-and-so died suddenly, . . . See how God has not grown tired of waiting for you as he did with those others. . . . The pain of hell is not a light thing—it is eternal. . . . These are the representations God makes to the soul and the calls he gives it. On the one hand man feels these calls and understands the importance of them for him; but on the other hand the flesh summons up all its weapons, representing to him the difficulty of this change of life and the divorce it will imply from all the pleasures of this world.

3. *The finding of the sheep:*

Thus the soul struggles on, beaten this way and that by the waves; one brings it nearer while another takes it further away; until finally God comes near with his special help, which is a powerful movement which enlightens the mind of man and moves his will in such a way that it makes him say 'I will' firmly and sincerely. That is, I will to return to God, I wish to amend my life. . . . At that moment, God with him, man is justified and received back again as a son of God.

4. *On his shoulders:*(a) *The new light:*

If anyone should ask what is this new light which God gives to the mind I say that it is a supernatural knowledge which God gives to man, which in a wonderful way makes him know the goodness of God, the beauty of virtue, the ugliness of sin, the vanity of the world, the danger of being deceived—a danger in which he has been living too long. This light carries the will along behind it, making man put aside the vanities of this world, love his creator and hate sin. . . .

(b) *The bitterness of penance:*

He who wishes to reach this mountain must first climb another. I mean that he who wishes to receive the spirit of love must first of all feel that of fear, and the one who wishes to feel in his soul the labour and consolation of the Gospel must first of all feel the fear of the law.

To a soul which is disposed to do this and ready to accept it there are promised and offered all the graces of the Gospel, which is what the Prophet meant when, speaking in the person of the Saviour,

he says: The Lord hath anointed me, on me his spirit has fallen; he has sent me to bring good news to men that are humbled, to heal broken hearts, promising the release of captives, the opening of prison doors, proclaiming the year of the Lord's pardon, the day when he, God, will give us redress. Comfort for every mourner; Sion's mourners, what decree should I make for them, what gift offer them? Heads shall be garlanded, that once were strewn with ashes; bright with oil the faces that were marred with grief; gaily they shall be clad that went sorrowing . . . (Isaias 61. 1-3). See here how, under many figures, the law and penance are signified.

II. TAULER

1. *The lost sheep—four classes of sinners:*(a) *Those who are carnal, given to malice:*

Perhaps they go to communion once a year and would be better if they did not go at all. When the end of their lives comes either they are not worried or they fall into despair. Would that they might find confessors who would forbid them to receive communion, and so show them the hardness of their hearts. They live in sin all the time and have no wish to get free from it.

(b) *Hypocrites:*

These fulfil their religious duties frequently, seeking themselves and their own pride. They judge their neighbours easily, as did the Pharisees. Judge yourselves and pardon others, and even when you see them sin, make excuses for them. The Lord does not usually seek out these sheep either.

(c) *Men who are cold, tepid and indifferent:*

Exteriorly they pray, but without any devotion or pleasure. They keep no watch over their senses and think that they never commit mortal sins, but they are like sick stomachs which spoil even good food. All that is good seems bitter to them; they long for nothing but this earth and its impure vanities and do not realize the value of the divine spark that shines in the depths of our souls. How much these will owe God who have received so much! They are like the foolish virgins, whom the Lord did not recognize, not because they committed grave sins, but because neither did they do anything and were not ready. Blind men, who ill-treat the body and blood of the Lord without receiving any fruit from it, even though they may belong to a religious order with its abundant practices of piety.

They make excuses for themselves by saying that they have never thought they were doing wrong. Is that enough? They give God the exterior, which is worth nothing, and give their wills to creatures. These also are sheep who remain in the desert, because one can hope for very little fruit from them. Will they be saved? Perhaps; but think of the purgatory which awaits them.

(d) Those who draw near to God:

Happy sinners. Now I do not mind how grave their sins have been; when they know God they draw near to him with all their strength and do not wish to know any other thing now. They have turned their backs entirely on their sins to turn to God.

2. *The return of the sheep:*

God, the good shepherd, wishes to find a sheep which is humble, gentle, poor, pure, abandoned to him. This is what you have to be like if you wish the Lord to carry you on his shoulders. To make yourself humble and tender you will have to break yourself with sufferings at times; to make you poor, he has to deprive you of your goods and friends; to make you pure he himself purifies you with trials.

3. *The lost coin:*(a) *Qualities of the soul:*

The woman is God, the light the divine humility of our Saviour; the coin is the soul.

The human soul is a coin of incalculable value, which like all money, must have its weight and stamp. The weight of a soul is greater than the whole of the heavens and the earth, because God is within it; the stamp, that of the divinity which is graven on it. God, on seeing himself, loves himself in the soul which, rather than the image of a king, bears that of God. By grace it is what he is by nature, to such an extent that, if it could see itself, it would mistake itself for God or at least would see itself with the habits and form of God, not those of a creature or of the devil—horrible and repugnant—which is on the soul of the sinner.

(b) *Two ways of looking for the soul:*

The woman turns the house upside down; God does the same for the soul in two ways, in one of which the soul is the active element and in the other it is passive.

In the first case man, moved of course by God's grace, gives himself up to the practice of good works and humility, etc. In the second God shuts the soul up within itself, obliging it to find God there.

III. ST FRANCIS DE SALES

(Extracts from his *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book X, chaps. 12-24)

1. *The zeal of God for men:*(a) *Definition:*

Zeal is no other thing than love in its ardour, or rather the ardour that is in love. And therefore such as the love is, so is the zeal. . . . If the love is good its zeal is good; if the love be bad then so is its zeal. . . .

(b) *Zeal and jealousy:*

Now when I speak of zeal I also mean to speak of jealousy, for jealousy is a species of zeal, and if I am not mistaken there is only this difference between them, that zeal regards the whole good of the thing loved with the intention of removing any evil from it, and jealousy regards the particular good of the friendship, that it may drive away all that opposes it.

When therefore, we earnestly desire worldly things and temporal goods, beauty, honour, riches or rank, this zeal that is the ardour of love, ends ordinarily in envy; because these base and vile things are so small, limited, finite and imperfect that, being possessed by one, another cannot entirely possess them.

(c) *The difference between envy and jealousy:*

i. *Envy is always unjust:* but jealousy is sometimes just if it be moderate, for have not married people the right to hinder their friendship from being diminished by being shared?

ii. *Envy makes us sorry that our neighbour enjoys a greater or like good to our own,* although he is taking from us nothing that we have; and here envy is unreasonable, making us consider our neighbour's good as evil for ourselves. But jealousy is not grieved at our neighbour having some good, provided it is not ours.

iii. *We do not presuppose any imperfection in the person we envy:* on the contrary, we consider that he has some good which we envy in him; but we do suppose that the person of whom we are jealous is imperfect, fickle, changeable and easily led away.

iv. *Jealousy proceeds from love, envy from the lack of love.*

2. *How God is jealous of us:*

God speaks thus: I am the Lord thy God, a jealous God. . . . Truly it would seem at first to be a jealousy of cupidity, such as that of husbands for their wives. . . . He demands all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and all our strength; for which reason he calls us his spouses and names all separation from him as fornication or adultery. And good reason indeed has this great God, all goodness, to demand most rigorously all our heart, for ours is a little heart, which cannot supply love enough worthily to love the divine goodness. Is it not, therefore, reasonable, that at least we should give him all we can? . . .

However, God's jealousy of us is not really a jealousy of cupidity, but one of sovereign friendship; for it is not in his interest that we should love him, but ours. Our love is useless to him, but to us it is a great gain; and if it be pleasing to him, it is because it is profitable to us; for being the sovereign good, he takes pleasure in communicating himself by love, without any kind of profit which can return to him therefrom. . . . Consider a little, I pray you, how delicately this divine lover expresses the nobility and the generosity of his jealousy. They have left me, he says, who am the fountain of living water.

As if he had said: I do not complain that they have forsaken me because of any injury that could cause me, for what the worse is a living spring if men do not draw water from it? . . . But I grieve for their misfortunes who have left me, because they have chosen for themselves wells that have no water. And if, by an impossible supposition, they could have found some other fountain of living water, then I would bear lightly their departure from me, since I aim at nothing but their love, their own good.

It is then for the love of us that he desires we should love him, because we cannot cease to love him without being lost, and whatever part of our affections we take from him, we lose.

3. *Our zeal for God—its qualities:*

(a) Its office is first to hate, flee from, and detest, reject and overthrow if one can, all that is opposed to God, that is to his will, to his glory and to the sanctification of his name. . . .

(b) Secondly, zeal makes us ardently jealous for the salvation of souls and for the purity of those who are the spouses of Christ. . . .

(c) Thirdly, in human jealousy we are afraid lest the thing beloved should be possessed by someone else, but our zeal for God makes us fear, on the contrary, that we should not be sufficiently possessed by him. Hence jealousy makes us fear not to be loved enough; Christian jealousy troubles us with the fear of not loving enough. . . .

IV. BOSSUET

The glory of God in mercy and justice

(Sermon for third Sunday after Pentecost)

1. *The pardon and the glory of God:*

All God's works turn on these two attributes, according to Ps. 25. 10, in which the word *truth* stands for justice, but among those works there is one in which both shine at the same time, namely the pardon of the sinner. This will be our theme—to show how the glory of God shines forth in the conversion of the sinner, because in it are stressed both his mercy and his justice.

2. *Mercy in pardon:*

(a) *The three acts of God in favour of the sheep:*

This parable shows God looking for and finding the sinner. A merciful Samaritan who seeks that which is lost and loads on to his shoulders the full weight of our sins (Isaias 53. 4).

These three acts of the Lord correspond to three acts of the sinner, the unfortunate sheep, who first abandons the shepherd, then, having forgotten him, wanders far away until it ends in that state of absolute fatigue and total impotence.

(b) *The sheep far from the fold:*

i. *Separates itself from the Church.* It is true that sinners are not always heretics, but they do not live in God's house, according to St Augustine. . . . Sinners who live in the Church and subject to her hierarchy, even sharing at times in her sacraments, live in her, but they are like the straw in the corn. They belong to the external unity of the fold, but not to that internal and invisible unity which joins the saints in charity and makes them living members. They are like sheep which have gone astray and which no longer feed on the pastures of life.

ii. *Without charity they live separated from the heart of the Church.* Let the sinner admit it and let him understand that he cannot glory in belonging to the Church, for of what use is it to a gangrenous arm to be joined to the body when it does not receive anything from the heart? The heart of the Church, principle of her life, is charity. Do not glory in your faith then, because it is a dead faith.

I will say more—you are in hell. Do not reply that you can get out of your present state, while no one can leave hell, because I will say to you that the sinner has done all in his power to condemn himself. And how can you get out of that state without the omnipotent power of Christ? He who can only be cured by a miracle has no right to say that his illness is curable.

iii. *He needs the visit of the good shepherd.* That is why the good shepherd has to come in search of us. We cannot get out of such a sad state, and so this liberator, who once descended into hell, returns to that darkness in which we live and by means of the brilliant and beautiful light of his inspirations, looks for the lost sheep and brings them into the heaven of his grace through their conversion.

(c) *The sheep that runs away:*

At times those who are sick feel such repugnance at the sight of food that they reject it completely, in spite of the fact that it will bring them back to health. We are like that; we flee from Christ who can alone save us. We long to satisfy our appetite with the forbidden fruit and we have lost the taste for heavenly foods. Show the sinner the Promised Land and his eyes turn towards Egypt; give him manna and he has no taste for it. O Sinner, do you not hear God calling through your conscience every day? Yes, but you do not want to restore that good thing which you have acquired in an evil way, putting an end to your evil life; you do not want to hear Jesus who is calling to you. Do not reply asking him to wait until tomorrow. Foolish man, what has Jesus done to you that you should despise him so? And why must the sheep refuse to know the shepherd? Nor tell me that you do not dare to walk along the narrow path, because there is Jesus, ready to take you on his shoulders.

(d) **The exhausted sheep:**

Our soul is made for God and it must receive all its strength from him who gave it being. If it abandons him then it grows ever weaker, like a sick person who for a long time has rejected food. That is why the prodigal found himself with nothing to eat and that is why we suffer from repeated falls, a sign of the fatigue we are suffering from. . . . But do not fear. God's grandeur is his abundance. His fulness is made manifest by his munificence and that is why he rejoices at the sight of his works, because in them he sees a manifestation of his riches and his goodness. This goodness is manifested in two ways; one when he does not find anything to hinder his activity, for example, in the creation of the world; the other when he has to overcome the forces which are drawn up against him, and then it is called mercy. This is the true manifestation of his abundance, that with his power he is capable of raising the exhausted soul.

3. **Justice in pardon:****Sacramental satisfaction:**

We have seen the mercy in the conversion of the sinner; justice has its part in the satisfaction which is demanded of him. It may seem that there is no room for anything in the sinner's conversion except mercy; yet behold the angels of the Lord rejoiced at one sinner doing penance, that is producing fruits worthy of penance (Luke 3. 8).

When the sinner trembles as he notices the hand of God turned against him, then penance approaches and whispers in his ear; showing him the Scriptures, if we judge ourselves we shall not be judged, and encouraging him more and more, says to him; take courage, disarm divine justice with your own. God wishes to take revenge, you take it instead. He will receive the sacrifice of a contrite heart. Then the sinner rises up and, seeing that the only possible thing is to unite himself to divine justice, and so to avoid his anger, he takes the side of that justice against himself and decides to revenge with his own hand the violated rights of Jesus, his Spirit which has been afflicted, and his offended majesty. He transports himself in spirit to that tremendous judgement in which God accuses sinners and putting himself in his place, from criminal he becomes judge, he accuses himself in the confessional, he condemns himself in his contrition and chastises himself by doing satisfaction.

V. J.-B. MASSILLON

The lost sheep, Mary MagdalenI. **Two impediments to conversion:**

The sinner, in spite of the obvious examples of the Gospel, does not return to God sincerely, because he does not yet understand that

conversion implies ceasing entirely from a sinful life and because he thinks of Christian penance as something horrible for weak human nature.

In the first part we shall give as a model for repentance the sinner of the Gospel; in the second the mercy of the Lord for sinners.

2. **A change of life:**

Repentance implies a re-establishing of the right order of things wherever the sinner has upset that order.

(a) **In the affective life:**

The sinner of the Gospel made a bad use of her heart, degrading it by handing it over to creatures. . . . The first reparation of penance is to return to God's love. It is not difficult to love God; it is enough to think about him and know him.

(b) **The right use of things:**

The sinner abused all the gifts of God, converting them into instruments of passion. The sinner, by abusing creatures, uses them to corrupt his heart and that of his neighbour. Just as this woman now uses her hair, perfume and tears in the service of God, so everyone who is converted should use creatures for his salvation and the glory of God, looking with horror on sin.

(c) **Reparation for the scandal:**

The sinner scandalized the whole world, and with her penance she repairs the damage. She does not hide herself and go to the Lord by night, as did Nicodemus. She should be our model in this reparation.

3. **The mercy of God:**(a) **Unjust love:**

Come to me, says Christ, come all those who are tired from walking along the road of iniquity, and I will make you experience the sweetness of my yoke. The sinful woman saw this promise fulfilled, and all that had been for her an endless pit of misery turned into a well of peace. Let us begin with this unlawful love which is converted to love for Jesus.

i. *Earthly love.* Worldly love had attached her to creatures, the indignity of which she did not attempt to deny. Her new love unites her to Christ, the model of virtues, a faithful friend. It is a love which places her above all the other women of Juda more than did her past miseries.

ii. *The excess of passion.* Excess of passion had impelled her to a thousand acts which were against her reason, sacrifices from which she could expect nothing else but repeated demands for more, such is the ingratitude of men, who, the more quickly they are allowed to possess our hearts, so much the more quickly do

they become tyrants. On the other hand, Jesus, in his love, takes into considerations even the smallest acts, to reward them. He defends the soul of Mary, and in doing so he enumerates all the little things she has done for him.

It is a great consolation for the soul to be able to say, I have lived for vanity all these years, but now, from this moment, Jesus loves me and notes all my smallest actions.

iii. *Certitude of return of love.* Lastly we note the certainty of a return of love, so difficult in worldly people.

(b) **Sacrifice of the passions:**

She lays at the feet of Jesus her perfume, her hair, etc. . . . No matter how much the world may lie about it, passion demands great care and suffering if it is to retain its object, even though it be only beauty, which disappears so quickly and withers. And ambition? Those preoccupations of the sensual man for his reputation? The vacuum when the passions leave us for a moment in peace?

On the other hand, when the soul places itself at Christ's feet, it strips itself of all worry and begins a life of peace, which before it did not know or dream of. Go in peace (Luke 7. 50).

(c) **The praises of a hypocritical world:**

The world praises evil and delights in the sinner. It is Jesus who has to defend him. . . . Thus is penance and thus too is Jesus, who restores us to the land of honour and rights which we had abandoned. Why then, be afraid of such a penance?

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

1. *The priest and those who are abandoned:*

In a special way we remind priests of the exhortation so many times repeated by Our predecessor, Leo XIII, to go among the workers; an exhortation which We ourselves make Our own and complete: 'Go among the workers, especially the poor; even more than that—go among all the poor', thus following the teachings of Jesus and of his Church. The poor are those who are more exposed to the dangers from agitators, who exploit their needy condition to stir up envy against the rich and to take by force that which it would seem fortune has denied them unjustly; and if the priest does not go to the workers and the poor, to warn them or undeceive them about these false theories, they will fall an easy prey to the apostles of communism (Pius XII, *Divini Redemptoris*, n. 61).

2. *The priest should love those who err, even though he attacks error with all his might:*

Let your apostolic zeal shine with great kindness and charity. Because, if it is necessary to fight against errors and oppose vices, a

duty to which we are all bound, the spirit of the priest must always be moved with compassion; because it is necessary to fight error with all one's might, but to love intensely the brother who has erred and through an effective charity, to bring him back to the fold. (Pius XII, *Menti Nostrae*, n. 32. Cf. *ibid.* n. 59).

3. *An invitation to return:*

But we are far indeed from being exasperated by these injustices, or dejected by Our fatherly sorrow. We have no wish to drive away or repel Our children who have been so unhappily deceived, and who are wandering so far from the paths of truth and salvation. On the contrary, We invite them with all possible solicitude to return to the maternal bosom of the Church. God grant that they listen to Our voice. God grant that whence they set out, thither they may return, to their Father's house; that where their true place is, there they may remain, amongst the ranks of those who, zealously following directions promulgated by Leo XIII and solemnly repeated by ourselves, strive to reform society according to the mind of the Church, on a firm basis of social justice and social charity. Let it be their firm persuasion that nowhere, even on earth, can they find greater happiness than in company with Him, who being rich, became poor for our sakes, that through his poverty we might become rich; who was poor and in labours from his youth; who invites to himself all who labour and are burdened, that he may refresh them bounteously in the love of his heart; who, in fine, without any respect for persons, will require more of him to whom more has been given, and will render to every man according to his works (*Quadragesimo anno*, n. 126).

SECTION VII: LITERARY AND HISTORICAL NOTES

1. *St John Bosco's first sheep:*

John saw clearly that something would have to be done about the children who were running wild in the poorer districts of Turin, something which would keep them from the depths of hell and despair, and bring them to the love and service of God. On one occasion Divine Providence sent him the first of many sheep. On going to say Mass he found a young boy in the sacristy and asked him to serve. The lad, ashamed to confess that he did not know how to do so, merely refused.

Instead of being angry with him John called him and began to question him.

What is your name?

Bartolome Garelli.

Where are you from?

From Asti.

Is your father alive?

No.

And your mother?

No.

How old are you?

Fifteen.

Do you know how to read and write?

I know nothing.

Have you made your first communion?

No.

And you don't go to catechism, I suppose?

No, because since I know nothing I would be ashamed to be there with the others.

And if I were to teach you Christian doctrine, would you like to learn it?

With great pleasure.

Then John explained: Poor boys, They are not evil in themselves, but merely perverted because they are ignorant.

From that incident was born the great work of John's life.

2. *An incident from the Life of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus:*

Someone once asked Thérèse if the Lord was discontented with her because of her many imperfections and sins. The saint replied:

Don't worry about that. He whom you have chosen for your Spouse is obviously one who possesses all possible perfections; but if I can speak like this, he also has at the same time a serious illness—blindness; and there is one science which he knows nothing about, mathematics. These two great defects, which would be lamentable in an earthly spouse, make him lovable.

If he were able to see quite clearly and could calculate, do you think that, at the sight of our innumerable sins, he would not wipe us out and reduce us to nothing? But not now, because the love he professes for us makes him blind.

There is something more. If the most hard-hearted sinner in the whole world repents at the very moment of death and makes an act of love, at once, without considering on the one hand the great graces which that sinner has in the past despised, and also his sins, our Lord pays attention to nothing more, he does not heed anything except his last prayer and takes him at once into the arms of his love.

To make him blind and incapable of doing the smallest sum in arithmetic it is necessary to win his heart—that is his weak point.

SECTION VIII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

The Feast of the Sacred Heart

Liturgy and piety

1. *Our piety depends to a great extent on the ideas we have about God:*

(a) There are three classes of piety, that of fear, that of hope and that of loving, confident charity. According to our ideas of God so our piety.

(b) When we think of God, our Father, his goodness, providence and love . . . there springs up in us loving confidence and the absolute abandonment of ourselves into his arms.

2. *This is the kind of piety which the liturgy inspires:*

(a) It shows us God as a Father of all consolation, from whom all good comes; Christ, loving us and pardoning us; the Holy Spirit as the sweet gift of the soul.

(b) Therefore even a summary study of the liturgical formulas reveals that one of the most frequently expressed sentiments is that of love and confidence in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

We need only look at the collect for the Mass *in die obitus* and also to the prayers for the departing soul to see this clearly.

(c) From which it follows that souls who feed their piety on the liturgy must necessarily love with cheerful confidence, even in the midst of their miseries, the God who has first loved them.

The feast of the Sacred Heart, a feast of mercy

1. This feast recapitulates liturgically all we have said about God's mercy.

(a) The apparitions to St Margaret Mary are intended to inspire us with ever increasing love and confidence. 'I have a burning thirst to be loved and honoured by men . . . and I find hardly anyone who will try to slake that thirst by corresponding as I desire.'

(b) *This feast was instituted to teach men to love Jesus:*

When the charity of men grew cold the love of God made itself known so that it might be honoured with a special cult (Pius XI, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*).

(c) The liturgy, both of the breviary and the missal, insists on the same idea. There we see the Church calling on Christ as the ark which contains, not the old law of fear, but the new law of love, grace, pardon and mercy. The Preface of the Mass is a good example of this.

2. The Sacred Heart is a fount of love and mercy, a symbol of the treasure of the moral life of Christ, his virtues, prayers, sufferings, merits—all showered on the human race to reconcile it to God.

Our sentiments

1. *Love, under the special form of reparation—love repaid with love:*

The creature's love should be given to Christ in return for all that he was given us and to make up for the ingratitude of some who have rejected his graces.

2. *Confidence, especially on the part of sinners:*

St Bernard's description is very beautiful:

Where can our weakness find a firm and secure resting place except in the wounds of the Saviour? I remain there with greater confidence because he is so powerful to save me. The world rages, the body weighs me down, the devil lays snares for me; but I do not fall, placed as I am on a most firm rock. If I were to commit some grave fault my conscience would trouble me, it is true, but I would not despair because of it, remembering the wounds of my Saviour, because he has been covered with wounds for our sins. What is there so deadly that it has not been cured by the death of Jesus? Remembering that I have at hand a remedy which is so powerful and efficacious, no evil can cause me to fear.

3. *Imitation:*

- (a) To put on Christ we must clothe ourselves in his mercy.
 (b) Today's Mass, so full of references to that mercy, should remind us of this truth.
 (c) God wills it that, following the example of his Son, we should have mercy on others. I will have mercy, not sacrifice (Osee. 6. 6).

II. THE GOSPEL

A: Christ's love for the sinner

The mercy of God

1. *We need not analyse the parables:*

- (a) Both sing the mercy of God to the sinner, and as often happens in parables, the thing they signify is more important than the symbol.
 (b) The shepherd goes in search of the lost sheep—and in the case of the human shepherd it is his obligation to do so. Not so in the case of God and sinners.

2. *This is the true concept of mercy, which demands three things:*

- (a) The evil on the one hand; and according as this material or spiritual so will be the mercy.

- (b) The application of the remedy, by all means in our power.
 (c) That there shall be no obligation of ties of blood or other reason for succouring this misery.

3. Keeping this in mind we may say that mercy is especially a divine virtue and that man can only share in it in an analogous way. Mercy is the fundamental element in revelation.

Mercy in the Old Testament

1. The Old Testament religion is mainly one of fear; the circumstances of Sinai and the history of Israel reveal this plainly.

2. Yet even in the Old Testament God's mercy towards the sinner is revealed.

(a) Immediately after the first sin God reveals the promise of a redeemer (Gen. 3. 15).

(b) The more mankind drifts away from God so much the more does he reveal his mercy towards it.

(c) It may be said that the history of Israel is nothing less than the story of man's fall and God's mercy towards the sinner.

(d) This mercy is the constant preaching of the prophets and the psalms (cf. Ps. 32. 5; 31. 10).

The testament of mercy

1. *The New Testament is essentially that of mercy:*

- (a) The Gospels preach it;
 (b) they begin with a word of mercy (the Incarnation) and end with the most sublime act of the same virtue, the death of Christ on the Cross, which reconciled the world with God and obtained pardon for sinners.

2. *In the Gospels we see the contrast between the spirit of the Pharisees:*

It is bitter and hard with sinners, as a contrast to that of Christ. They are scandalized because the Master consorts with such as these.

3. *Christ preaches mercy constantly, both by word and by example:*

St Luke has many special scenes to illustrate this, for which reason he is called the Evangelist of the meekness of Christ.

- (a) *Preaching:*

That is what the son of man has come for, to search out and save that which was lost (Luke 19. 10). The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he hath anointed me, and sent me out to preach the gospel to the poor, to restore the broken-hearted; to bid the prisoners go free,

and the blind have sight; to set the oppressed at liberty, to proclaim a year when men may find acceptance with the Lord (Luke 4. 18-19).

(b) The parables of the prodigal son, the lost coin, the lost sheep:

Example: He pardons the Samaritan woman (John 4. 26); Mary Magdalen (Luke 7. 47-48); the woman taken in adultery (John 8. 11); the paralytic (John 5. 8); the good thief (Luke 23. 43).

The sacrament of mercy

1. *Christ continues his office of pardon:*
 - (a) through confession, which is the medium for the forgiveness of sins;
 - (b) confession is a meeting between the sinner and the all-merciful God.
2. *Before anything else confession means pardon:*
 - (a) All sins, no matter how grievous, are capable of pardon in it.
 - (b) Jesus wipes them out and make the soul white as snow.
3. In the confessional, more than the priest, we must think of Christ; Christ who, like the shepherd in the parable, does not punish, but longs to take the lost sheep on his shoulders and carry it to the flock again with joy.

The confidence of the sinner in Christ

1. *A sinful soul easily falls and allows itself to be discouraged:*
 - (a) It becomes afraid of confession. It considers that its sins are so great that they are incapable of pardon.
 - (b) Such souls neither understand or know Christ.
2. *Two great sins were committed in one night:*
These were perhaps the greatest of all, that of Peter and that of Judas.
 - (a) While Judas despaired (Matt. 27. 3-5) Peter obtained pardon because he looked at Christ (Luke 22. 6).
 - (b) Today there are the two classes of sinners, those who know how to have confidence and those who despair.
3. *Every sinner should go to the Lord with unlimited confidence:*
 - (a) He will give them joy: So it is, I tell you, in heaven; there will be more rejoicing over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine souls that are justified, and have no need of repentance (Luke 15. 7).
 - i. God rejoices when he is able to use his mercy; he rejoices in pardon. The more he forgives the more he rejoices.
 - ii. No one should wish to sin or rejoice in having sinned. But if we have sinned we should think of the joy we will give him when we go to him.

- (b) Meanwhile we are well assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God (St Thomas adds—even sin).
- (c) Each confession is a fresh proof of God's love for the sinner.

B: The Heart of Christ

The love of Christ

The two parables of today speak to us of the mercy of God:

Mercy is not the same thing as love, but the former is the manifestation of the latter; therefore these parables speak to us of Christ's love as well.

All the mysteries of Christ preach his love to us

1. *In the first parable:*
 - (a) The lost sheep represents the human race, fallen into sin.
 - (b) The shepherd is the Word of God.
 - (c) The redemption was the greatest act of mercy and of love.
2. The love of Christ can be thought of as an inexhaustible fountain of graces, the incarnation, the passion, the sacraments.
 - (a) All this love can be considered as being for me personally.
 - (b) All of it finds its best symbol in the Sacred Heart; the door which was opened by the soldier's lance, so that all could enter into it, no matter how sinful or how ungrateful they may have been.
 - (c) The Sacred Heart is, above all, the symbol of his human love; but it is also the symbol of divine love.

Our return of love

1. *Love is paid with love:*
Therefore the best way of corresponding to this love of Christ is through our love.
2. *For this love to be complete it must be effective and affective:*
 - (a) *Affective love:*
 - i. Consists in the sentiments of the soul in the presence of the person loved; it comprises admiration, praise, etc.
 - ii. We need to love Jesus in this way; on the one hand our own love needs it, what is more, Jesus himself said it. When the Pharisees asked him to reprove the crowd which shouted Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord, our Lord replied that if these did not shout it the very stones would cry out.
 - iii. The saints have all possessed it.
 - (b) *But affective love is not enough—it must be transformed into works:*
 - i. *If you love me, keep my commandments* (John 14. 15).

ii. *This is the touch-stone of all true affections.* There are people who dissolve into tears easily, but are not capable of mortifying their passions, destroying their evil habits and separating themselves from occasions of sin. These do not love the Lord.

iii. *We love by singing his praises with all our hearts, it is true;* but what is more, we must lament the injuries done to his Heart, offering him humble reparation, accepting the dispositions of his providence and spending ourselves for his glory if necessary.

The example of St Paul

He was able to measure, in all its breadth and length and height and depth, the love of Christ . . . (Eph. 3. 18). Therefore he exclaims: Who will separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom. 8. 35). Paul loved him and for his sake suffered all that he did (cf. 2 Cor. 11. 24-27).

The lack of love

1. *There is a lack of true love in the world:*

(a) In the relations of one nation to another, in those of rulers with their subjects.

(b) In social matters, where envy and hatred rule rather than charity.

2. *Even Christians love Christ only a little:*

We need only mention existential ethics—that morals vary with circumstances.

3. *The true love for Christ must be unconditional:*

Our religion should be reduced to one simple theme—to see this love in Christ and to correspond to it in our lives.

The extent of the love of the heart of Jesus

1. Manifested in the Incarnation, life, preaching, example, passion and death of Christ; also in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist—he loved me and gave himself up for me (Gal. 2. 20).

2. There are here two loves, one divine and one human; but this union of the two in one person is merely a manifestation of God's nature, for God is love (1 John 4. 8).

C: The joy of the Sacred Heart

The feast of the Sacred Heart

We are within its octave:

In this feast we pay homage to Christ who has loved us so much and yet has received nothing but ingratitude from men. To celebrate this feast worthily let us see:

- (a) what are the joys of that Heart;
- (b) what we must do as individuals to increase them; so that we may be one of them;
- (c) how we can bring others to do the same.

Joy at the conversion of the sinner

1. *Christ affirms this in the Gospel:*

When he finds the sheep that was lost he rejoices, as the Good Shepherd. He has come for this purpose, as he says many times in many ways.

2. *We can learn from this:*

(a) the true justice of Christ:

- i. which hates the sin and loves the sinner;
- ii. this should be the Christian's attitude when faced with a sinner.

(b) The false justice of the Pharisees:

- i. who separated themselves from sinners as a race apart;
- ii. were inordinately proud of their false justice;
- iii. despised sinners and had no compassion for the weak.

3. *We should have the same sentiments as Christ had:*

(a) The lost sheep is always one of Christ's sheep; and even more his since he needs more than others the doctor who can cure him.

(b) If the giving of a glass of cold water is rewarded abundantly, what will be given in exchange for the bringing back of a sinner to Christ, the true work of the apostolate?

A joy which is shared

1. The shepherd and the woman in the parables share their joy with friends.

(a) They did not share their sorrow with them, they kept that for themselves.

(b) A perfect example of the dogma of the communion of saints—there is a communication between the faithful on earth and also between them and those in heaven and purgatory.

2. Thus is poured out in all directions the joy of the heart of Jesus at the sinner's conversion:

(a) There is joy in heaven:

God rejoices because one of his creatures has returned to his arms; there is joy in the heart of Christ, the redeemer; Mary, the mother of the human race, the guardian angel, the blessed in heaven—all these rejoice with Christ.

(b) There is joy on earth:

In the heart of the sinner and in the Church.

Conclusion

1. For those who are sinners, think of these two parables and give joy to God by a sincere conversion.
2. For those in a state of grace, make every effort to get others to share in our life, especially those who live far from God in sin.

D: The sinner—a lost sheep

The parables of mercy

1. They complete each other, to give us, together one picture;
 - (a) that of Christ in his mercy;
 - (b) that of the sinner in his misery; he is the lost coin, the sheep, the prodigal son who has left his father's house.
2. They show us the life of every man; each has, in them, a summary of his own life story.
3. They teach us and encourage us to detest sin and to return with confidence to the shepherd's arms. Let us study the picture of the sinner.

The sinner goes far away

1. *From God:*
 - (a) because no man can serve two masters (Matt. 6. 24);
 - (b) nor can there be any alliance between Christ and the devil (2 Cor. 6. 15).
 - (c) *The sinner leaves:*
 - i. He is the one who first of all breaks the bonds which hold him to God, and as a consequence God leaves him.
 - ii. The sinner says to God, Leave me, I want nothing to do with your commands (Job 21. 14).
 - iii. It is the cry of the Jewish mob, they prefer Barabbas to Christ; they do not want Christ to reign over them.
 - (d) God does not abandon anyone unless he is first abandoned;
 - (e) but neither does he wish to retain anyone against his will; he leaves man free.
2. *From society:*

That is the Church (to some extent at least):

 - (a) by mortal sin: he cuts himself off from supernatural life, closing the door to grace, which would increase continually in his soul did he possess charity;
 - (b) by heresy and schism he separates himself entirely from the Church, both visible and invisible.

The causes for this flight

1. *Ignorance:*

We have not the perfect knowledge:

 - (a) of the goodness of the shepherd,
 - (b) of the goods which he possesses,
 - (c) nor of the advantages which come from being one of the flock.
2. *Because it costs an effort:*
 - (a) to obey God's commands, which impose limitations on our desires;
 - (b) to follow the footsteps of Christ on the road of the cross and mortification, which is the one path known to the good Shepherd.
3. *Because the sinner prefers the pastures of this world:*

They flatter his senses and captivate his passions; and he does not like the pastures of Christ, which are his doctrine and his sacraments.
4. *Because he keeps everything for himself:*
 - (a) the lost sheep does not give milk, wool or lambs to the flock,
 - (b) the sinner does not wish to sacrifice anything for God,
 - (c) all is related to his self-love, his faculties, his works, his goods.

He loses the true pastures

1. *He wastes all his treasures, both of nature and of grace:*
 - (a) the grace of God, charity, the virtues, and supernatural gifts;
 - (b) his intelligence is dimmed, because he does not know God, or the riches of virtue or the evil of vice;
 - (c) his memory is weakened, because he no longer recalls the law of God, the benefits he has received from his creator and the obligations proper to him;
 - (d) his will is perverted to the point where it prefers the creature to the creator, the devil to God and hell to heaven;
 - (e) even his bodily strength is employed in the service of sin.
2. *He lives in poverty and hunger:*
 - (a) in the end the sheep realizes the hunger it is experiencing far from God;
 - (b) the prodigal son is the perfect image of this (Luke 15, 14 ff.).
 - (c) St Augustine gives us the reason: Our hearts were made for God and they can find no rest until they rest in him.
3. *His strength grows weak:*
 - (a) the will is the strength of the spirit, while passions and sins weaken it;
 - (b) the remorse which follows sin cast down the sinner;
 - (c) he lacks grace, which is the real strength of martyrs, apostles and saints;
 - (d) sometimes even his bodily and mental health suffer.

He falls into the hands of the devil

1. He who does not wish to remain in the flock of Christ must pass into that of the devil, which is slavery of the worst kind.
2. The wild beasts of his own passions also make a slave of him.
3. The world is his master.
4. And if he does not return to the flock of Christ then he will be, for all eternity, under the yoke of Satan.

E: The lost sheep—the people

The great scandal of our time

It is not necessary to insist on the fact that a mass of people has, to a great extent, forgotten God—there is what has been called mass apostasy.

(a) In all nations to some extent, but in some more than in others, so much so that the apostolate to convert them has been given the name of mission.

(b) There is far too much religious ignorance today, both in matters of faith and morals.

There are three attitudes we can adopt

1. First that of Horace—*odi profanum vulgus et arceo*; which has become a common enough attitude, if we think of it in terms of the indifference towards the fate of these unfortunate people on the part of the richer classes—and sometimes this touches priests too.

(a) It is easy to live among our own comforts and cultural atmosphere, forgetting the poor.

(b) It is a cruel attitude, but a real one; goods separate a people into classes.

2. The other attitude is that of communism—going to the people to stir them up with hatred and class war.

3. Lastly we can go to the people, looking for their good; but even then there are several ways in which this can be done:

(a) The Christian way implies that we remember the true destiny of those we are trying to help:

i. *The people are God's sheep*; God's love for men, the redemption etc.—all these have to be kept in mind.

ii. *People find their supreme Good in heaven, not on earth*. The first act of charity to men is to direct them towards heaven.

iii. *The people are the lost sheep far from the fold of the Lord who loves them*; are we going to leave them like that, when we know

that anyone who does not search diligently for the lost sheep has no real love for their shepherd?

iv. *Let there be as much material help for these people as possible*, but there must also be true charity, a desire to infuse into them the grace of God and his love.

(b) But even within this Christian approach there are some false illusions:

i. One of these is to think that we have done something for the worker when we have founded one or two small institutions in which we find a dozen or so who have been educated in fairly good Catholic homes. It may be good, but it is not what we mean by going to the worker.

ii. Another is that of thinking that we are going to the people when what we are really doing is to get the people to come to us—to see to it that he is like us, without worrying about our being like him, becoming all things to all men.

To go to the people is to love them

1. *He who loves feels for the one he loves:*

That must be our first step in the search for the lost sheep.

(a) We must adapt ourselves to their way of thinking, know their problems intimately.

(b) To feel for him and as he does need not imply living like him in all things, but it is necessary to live a little more with him than perhaps we have done up to now. We have to learn from him in order to be able to work on him.

2. One grave mistake would be to do nothing because we believe that there is too much to be done; not to go in search of the worker because we think that it is necessary to undertake great enterprises if we are to do any good.

The Church has her age-old methods, which still yield the best results:

i. Visits to the sick, charity, time to listen to problems, catechetical work.

ii. It is a hidden work and one which is difficult; but it gets results, and the more hidden it is the better the results at times.

iii. It means that we must become all things to all men. Would not St Paul probably have preferred to mix with students of the Bible rather than with the types he had to deal with?

3. *And what do I do about all this?*

(a) Am I content to lament the loss of so many sheep; do I make any attempt to go to the people, to get in touch with them?

(b) Is it because it is a hard task? I find myself so far from them in culture, circumstances, etc. Was Christ any nearer to them than I?

F: After the lost sheep

Always

1. *He came on earth to look for sinners:*

(a) He affirms that himself. I have not come to call the just, but sinners (Mark 2. 17).

(b) St Paul says: How true is that saying, and what a welcome it deserves, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim. 1. 15).

2. His public life is spent among sinners and the most beautiful pages of the Gospels tell us of his treatment of them.

(a) Not only does he refuse to defend himself against the accusation of the Jews, but he confirms them, telling them the parables of mercy.

(b) Matthew, Zachaeus, the Samaritan woman, Mary of Magdala, the woman taken in adultery, the good thief, his way of dealing with Judas. . . .

(c) For sinners he institutes the sacraments of Baptism and Penance.

3. *In his search for the sinner he mounts the cross:*

(a) In the Old Testament it was said of the Messiah that he would expiate for our sins, taking them on himself.

(b) The apostle Paul sees him so close to the sinner that he is almost contaminated by his sins (2 Cor. 5. 21).

4. The Church was founded to perpetuate the Redemption and to carry on this task of looking for the lost sheep.

How he looks for it

1. *Inflamed with infinite love:*

(a) Not merely does he consent to receive it if it wishes to return to him; he looks for it diligently, no work of humiliation is too much, until the final one of the cross.

(b) It is the greatest mystery of all, that God should look for man, not content to wait patiently until man returns to him—yet God gets nothing from the creature nor does he need man for anything.

(c) Until the end of time there is a longing in the heart of Christ to attract the sinner to himself which is to man's advantage. I must bring them, he says of those outside the fold (John 10. 16).

2. If he searches in this way for the sinner who strays afar off, how much more will he be willing to receive the ones who return in good will.

When he finds it

1. In these parables Christ describes his joy at the return of the sinner; but he does not always obtain that.

(a) rebellious sinners make his labour in vain;

(b) thus Judas perished;

(c) authors have always seen as a reason for the terrible agony of Christ in the garden the knowledge of how many would not learn to profit by his love and passion.

2. *But if he does find his sheep:*

(a) there are no reproaches, no harshness, no punishment; he does not even ask it to walk on its own feet;

(b) full of joy he takes it on his shoulders and carries it;

(c) his love supplies for the defect and weakness of his sheep, he becomes its eyes, hands, mouth, etc.

3. *This conduct of Christ is the example of how to treat sinners:*

(a) all difficulties should be swept away as far as possible;

(b) the shepherd should have a greater care for those who are far away, he must use every means and study even the minutest details;

(c) nothing is demanded of the sinner except that he allow himself to be found and carried by Christ;

(d) great zeal for souls is necessary to leave the ninety-nine and go after the one.

The elder brother of the prodigal son

1. He does not help his father in the task of rehabilitation, on the contrary, he is rather annoyed that his brother should be received like this.

2. It is the same attitude as that of the men who accused our Lord of eating and drinking with publicans and sinners.

(a) We must be like Christ, rejoice and help to save sinners.

(b) One of our greatest joys and surprises in heaven will be to see the numbers of those who have been saved by divine mercy, although men have perhaps condemned them. Even we ourselves might have judged them worthy of hell. He died for them.

G: The sheep which is found

1. *All mankind has been a lost sheep:*

This is true of all descendents of Adam, with the one exception of the Virgin Mary.

(a) We all needed the coming of the shepherd to save us,

(b) therefore we are all included in today's parable.

2. This quality of being lost sheep who have been found again is another reason why we should correspond with Christ's love, by giving him ours.

The prayer for the Mass of the Sacred Heart gives us a summary of what this correspondence should be: grant, O Lord, that together with the loving gift of ourselves to you, we may also offer worthy reparation.

A loving handing over of ourselves

1. Love demands love in return, and love is the giving of oneself.
2. *This giving implies:*
 - (a) An earnest desire that Jesus should be known and loved by all, also zeal for his honour;
 - i. satisfaction when we see his interests triumph, or his teaching and his Church;
 - ii. it is the generous love a friend has, who does not seek his own interests.
 - (b) A noble and sincere sorrow for all sin: Jesus invites those who are most intimate with him to share in his agony, so that they also may suffer for the sins of the world.
 - (c) To put all our confidence in Jesus: To be busy about his business, but to place ours in his hands.
 - (d) Weep for our own sins and imperfections.
 - (e) Reveal to him all our worries, troubles, difficulties no matter of what kind they may be:
 - i. seeing in them something which he has sent to us or at least permitted for our good,
 - ii. but at the same time confident that he can and perhaps will take them from us or at least increase the grace necessary to suffer them as we should, with merit.
 - (f) This loving gift of ourselves constitutes us a living image of Christ, who gave himself for us: This love should make us imitate his virtues, live a life of renunciation and mortification.
 - (g) It demands that we put our wills at his disposal, as he did with his Father:

A will which is ready to:

 - i. keep the commandments;
 - ii. live a holy life in accordance with our state.
3. This giving of oneself in the way we have described it is the best way of returning the love of Christ. By it we can say with St Paul, I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me (Gal. 2. 20).

A worthy reparation

1. He who loves Jesus suffers with him for the offences that are committed against his love; what wounds him wounds us also. Therefore reparation is an essential part of the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

2. *This desire to expiate:*

- (a) means that the more we notice coldness and sin in others, the more eager we shall be to make reparation for them;
- (b) it means more care in avoiding faults and infidelities;
- (c) more renunciation of self and mortification;
- (d) more desire to give him glory and honour;
- (e) in a word, it means more union with him especially in his sufferings; all of these will help us to penetrate more deeply into his Heart and share in the joys of his consolation.

H: The Samaritan woman

The meeting

1. *We see the apostolic method employed by our Lord:*

There was so much to be done, so many to save, the fields were white to the harvest; yet Christ leaves them for the time being to devote his whole attention to this one soul.

2. *He is tired and thirsty:*

But it did not matter; once a sinner appears all that is forgotten.

The drama

1. *Tired:*

A proof of the reality of his human nature and also of the trouble he took over our salvation—he was tired, yet he was no weakling, because his body was as perfect as God could make it.

2. *Thirsty:*

Thirst for souls mainly, which does not exclude the ordinary human thirst.

(a) He asks the woman, a sinner, for water to drink, he a Jew, she a Samaritan. Two reasons why he should not have spoken to her, to the Jewish way of thinking; but he was the redeemer and saw here one in need of that salvation. He is anxious to give it to her.

(b) His request is the first call of grace given to her, a pure gift, unsolicited.

3. *The woman's reply:*

The reply is brusque; the first opposition to grace. But Jesus knows how to overcome that and he goes on calling to this lost sheep, deep in her soul. He promises her water to drink. Her reply to this

shows that she is being overcome little by little, because she merely asks him where he is going to get it from.

4. He gives her a clearly drawn demonstration of grace, a fountain of living water, which is capable of slaking any thirst.

(a) The mystery of grace, the deepest concept in theology, he has no hesitation in explaining to this poor woman.

(b) See how his doctrine here fits what he says on another occasion: If any man is thirsty let him come to me and drink. If a man believes in me . . . fountains of living water shall flow from his bosom (John 7. 37-38).

5. *Give me that water:*

The moment of her conversion is approaching. She who at first denied him a drink of material water is now asking him for that of the Spirit. She does not yet understand fully, but he will lead her on slowly until she does.

6. *Fetch your husband:*

(a) She will now be made to open her conscience, even though it will take a miracle to show her that she need have no fear, because he already knows what is in her heart. She will try to evade the truth at first, but he still pursues her to the end.

(b) Notice how he has no hesitation in telling her the truth—salvation is from the Jews, the Messiah is from their race. She admits that, and when she is told that before her is the Messiah she believes, adores, and the story is complete.

(c) She who came to the well a sinner returns converted. What is more, she has become an apostle.

7. *The apostles return:*

(a) Christ points to the vast harvest which needs many hands if it is to be reaped. We might ask him what he has done face to face with that harvest; he has used an occasion, when he was tired and thirsty, to reap one ear of that corn, one soul.

(b) If many souls are worth much it is because one is also worth everything.

I: Joy in heaven

The meaning of this expression in the parable

1. Obviously it does not mean that the merit of the just is not appreciated, or that it is better to fall into sin and then be converted. The expression must be taken in conjunction with the whole meaning of the parables. It signifies the fact that a son who was dead has come to life again—nothing more.

2. The motive for this joy is love or charity, which unites those who love and makes them rejoice mutually.

The angels in heaven rejoice because they see in the conversion of a sinner the glory of the Trinity and the good of man himself.

The glory of the Trinity

1. *The glory of the Father:*

(a) The Father's plan was to make us his image (the coin) and adopted sons with a right to heaven.

(b) Sin upsets that plan, but not for long, because his will remains the same.

(c) The conversion of the sinner means that the plan is fulfilled.

2. *The glory of the Son:*

(a) The Incarnation had only one purpose—our redemption and salvation;

(b) but it is necessary to apply this redemption to the individual soul;

(c) the sinner who does not repent robs the work of redemption of some of its brilliance.

(d) **When he is converted then heaven rejoices because:**

i. Christ has triumphed over the devil;

ii. his blood is having its effect in this soul, his will is being done at last;

iii. the means of sanctification which he gave us are bearing their fruit.

3. *Glory of the Holy Spirit:*

(a) The redemption is applied to the soul in the form of grace and sanctification, the work of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of sanctification and adoption.

(b) The conversion of a sinner means a new field of operation for the Holy Spirit, new worship of God, new sanctity, new life where there was none before.

The good of man

1. *There is no need to go into details:*

It is enough to point out that supernatural life is returned to the soul, the right to be called and to be a son of God, the right to heaven, the means of sanctification can now have their full effect, condemnation has been avoided, etc.

2. The saints in heaven see in this sinner now converted one who is made like themselves, but even more, one who now bears the image of Christ, in which they are all united.

3. *A double lesson for us:*

(a) joy at the conversion of a sinner;

(b) zealous work to bring that about—at least we can all pray for them, if nothing else.

J: Zeal

Zeal, an effect of love

1. The conduct of the shepherd who goes in search of the strayed sheep is an act of zeal.

Zeal is always an effect of love (cf. St Thomas). Love is, as St Augustine says, a movement of the lover towards the beloved. When it is intense it excludes or rejects everything which is contrary to it and to the end which it pursues.

2. But here are two kinds of zeal, just as there are two kinds of love, the love which is selfish and that which is real friendship.

(a) selfish love wants things for itself, not for the good of the person loved;

(b) the zeal to which this gives rise is also egoistic.

3. *The love of friendship:*

(a) desires always the good of the person loved;

(b) the zeal which arises from it does the same;

(c) the most perfect natural example of it is the zeal of parents for the good of their children;

(d) the supernatural example is the love of God, charity;

(e) it implies doing all we can to promote God's honour and glory; a wish to gain souls for him; it hates anything which offends God and tries to make some reparation for it.

The effects of the two zeals

1. That which arises from self-love destroys all unity, that of friendship tends to unite.

2. One is egocentric, the other reaches outside oneself.

3. At times even in societies or institutions founded to promote God's glory there are divisions. When this happens we must look for only one cause—the wrong type of zeal.

They began with the love of friendship, but now this has been lost and the love is carnal (in the Pauline sense, i.e. as opposed to spiritual).

(a) The spiritual man lives for God alone and tries to do all for his honour.

(b) The carnal man looks for what he can get out of the good works he does, especially in the sense of worldly honours and ambitions.

A safe rule of life

1. Today's Gospel gives us a safe rule for judging the spirit which inspires both individuals and associations.

(a) There are souls which appear to have a deep spiritual life, full of mortification, prayer, etc.

i. but they are rigorous in the judgements of others, especially sinners,

ii. at times they can only be placed in the same light as the scribes and Pharisees in this Gospel;

iii. there are solid motives for thinking that such people are not motivated with the true spirit of Christ.

(b) There are others who, though they hate sin as an offence against God, nevertheless have a great love and mercy for the sinner and for the poor:

i. They love sinners in the right way, without excusing the sin, they try to win these souls back to God;

ii. they pray for sinners;

iii. they think that they themselves, in similar circumstance, would probably have acted even more sinfully;

iv. they rejoice at the sinner's return to the fold.

2. Charity towards sinners, especially those whose sin arises from weakness, is an infallible sign of the authentic minister of God.

The sinner knows at once when and by whom he is truly loved in the right spirit. If one approaches who does not love him in this way then he is rather liable to be impeded in his return than helped.

K: The zeal of Christ

Our example and perfect model

1. St John of the Cross tells us that we should be careful not to take any man for our model, because then the devil will have a chance to show us all his defects. Instead we should imitate Christ, who is perfect, then we shall never go wrong.

2. In Christ we have the perfect model of zeal.

3. Christ fulfilled the scenes of these parables perfectly many times in his life.

He is the shepherd who goes about looking for the lost sheep one by one; Nicodemus, the apostles, the Samaritan woman, Magdalen, the woman taken in adultery. . . .

4. *The dark mist:*

(a) In chapter 34 of Ezechiel, verse 12, we see the dispersal of the flock in the day of the dark mist: but we are also told that the shepherd will look for them on that day and gather them together again.

(b) Christ fulfilled this prophecy after his resurrection. He had applied these words to himself during the last supper (Mark 14. 27), but having risen from the dead he goes about collecting the sheep again: the Magdalen, the holy women, Peter, the two disciples on

the way to Emmaus, the apostles and disciples in the upper room, Thomas, much later Paul, etc.

The zeal of holy anger and of meekness

1. *The zeal of anger:*

Both in deeds and words Christ demonstrated this, casting out the buyers and sellers in the temple, against the Pharisees in words, and also at times to St Peter (Matt. 16. 23; cf. John 8. 10, Matt. 23).

2. *The zeal of meekness:*

(a) This he showed much more often; he even said that we are to learn of him because he is meek and humble of heart (Matt. 11. 29).

(b) Examples of this:

- i. the three parables of mercy (Luke 15. 3-32);
- ii. washing the feet of his disciples (John 13. 1-20);
- iii. his last efforts to gain the lost sheep; Judas is called friend by our Lord, (Matt. 26. 50); with St Peter a look was enough (Luke 22. 61);
- iv. after the resurrection in his appearances to them all;
- v. the supreme example in the case of Thomas (John 20. 26-29).

A text of St Francis de Sales

1. More flies are caught with a drop of honey than with a barrel of vinegar.
2. He answers the possible objection of the example of such great servants of God as Moses, Elias, etc., by saying that it is dangerous for us to imitate them, because whereas they had their anger under strict control, we have not.
3. Christ reprobated the disciples who wanted fire to come down from heaven on that city of Samaria which refused to give him hospitality (Luke 9. 54).

The sadness of Christ

He was sad and wept at the death of Lazarus and at the sight of the Holy City (John 11. 35, Luke 19. 41); but his deepest moment of sadness was that of the garden (Mark 14. 33-34, Matt. 26. 37-38).

(a) The physical causes were his weariness and the thought of his passion and death;

(b) but there were other reasons too:

- i. the thought of the insults which awaited him;
- ii. the sufferings which his disciples and mystical body would have to endure;
- iii. the rejection of his passion and its merits by so many in the future;

- iv. the flight of his friends;
- v. the offences against his Father in all sin;
- vi. the thought that he would have to take these sins upon his shoulders.

Consolations

1. He sought that of his friends, but he did not find it, because they slept.
2. He sought it in prayer to teach us a lesson; and God sent him an angel from heaven. Then he could face his persecutors calmly until the very end.

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

THE MIRACULOUS CATCH OF FISH

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Romans 8. 18-23

Gospel: Luke 5. 1-11. Cf. Matt. 4. 18-22; Mark 1. 16-20

Texts on obedience

1. *Obedience to God and his law:*

If thou wilt listen to the voice of the Lord thy God, and obey his commandments, and observe all that he bids thee observe, then I will never again bring upon thee all that misery I brought upon thee in Egypt; I, the Lord, will bring thee only health. Ex. 15. 26.

If you live by the law, if you remember my commands and obey them, rain shall fall on you, when fall it should; the land will yield its increase, and the trees will be bowed with fruit. Lev. 26. 3.

His laws and decrees thou must observe, as I have proclaimed them to thee, if thou and thy sons after thee are to prosper, and have long enjoyment of the land the Lord thy God means to give thee. Deut. 4. 40.

A blessing, if you will obey the commands I give you from the Lord your God; a curse if you disobey those commands, and forsake the path I am shewing to you, and follow the worship of other gods, untried till now. Deut. 11. 27-28.

2. *Obedience to the Gospel:*

It is through him we have received the grace of apostleship; all over the world, men must be taught to honour his name by paying him the homage of their faith. Rom. 1. 5. Cf. *ibid.* 6. 17.

It is not for me to give you any account of what Christ has done through agents other than myself to secure the submission of the Gentiles, by word and action. Rom. 15. 18.

This administration makes men praise God for the spirit of obedience which you shew in confessing the gospel of Christ, and the generosity you shew in sharing your goods with these, and with all men. 2 Cor. 9. 13.

Till now, you had been shaping your course well; who is it that has come between you and your loyalty to the truth? Gal. 5. 7.

3. *Of servants to their masters:*

You who are slaves, give your human masters the obedience you owe to Christ, in anxious fear, single-mindedly; not with that show of service which tries to win human favour, but in the character of Christ's slaves, who do what is God's will with all their heart. Yours must be a slavery of love, not to men, but to the Lord; you know well that all of us, slave or free, will be repaid by the Lord for every task well done. Eph. 6. 5-8.

4. *Of wife to husband:*

Many are the pangs, many are the throes I will give thee to endure; with pangs thou shalt give birth to children, and thou shalt be subject to thy husband; he shall be thy Lord. Gen. 3. 16.

Live at ease with the wife that is thy heart's love, long as this uncertain life is granted thee; fugitive days, here beneath the sun. Eccles. 9. 9.

Let every man give his wife what is her due, and every woman do the same by her husband; he, not she, claims the right over her body, as she, not he, claims the right over his. 1 Cor. 7. 3-4.

Wives must obey their husbands as they would obey the Lord. The man is the head to which the woman's body is united, just as Christ is the head of the Church, he, the Saviour, on whom the safety of his body depends; and women must owe obedience at all points to their husbands, as the Church does to Christ. Eph. 5. 22-24. Cf. Col. 3. 18; 1 Tim. 2. 11; Tit. 2. 4-50; 1 Pet. 3. 1.

5. *Obedience to the Church:*

Keep watch, then, over yourselves, and over God's Church, in which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops; you are to be the shepherds of that flock which he won for himself at the price of his own blood. Acts 20. 28. Cf. 1 Pet. 5. 2-3.

The reason why I wrote to you, after all, was to test your loyalty, by seeing whether you would obey me in full. 2 Cor. 2. 9. Cf. 2 Cor. 7. 15; Philemon, v. 21.

6. *Examples of obedience:*

Abraham. Gen. 22. 15-18; Moses. Deut. 34. 5. Cf. Jos. 1. 17; Jerem. 35. 8; *ibid.* 18-19.

7. *The obedience of Christ:*

But he went down with them on their journey to Nazareth, and lived there in subjection to them. . . . Luke 2. 51.

It is the will of him who sent me, not my own will, that I have come down from heaven to do. John 6. 38.

And then he lowered his own dignity, accepted an obedience which brought him to death, death on a cross. Phil. 2. 8.

I said, See my God, I am coming to do thy will. He must clear the ground first, so as to build up afterwards. Heb. 10. 9.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

1. *Preparation for the feast of the Prince of the Apostles:*

The Mass of this Sunday was a preparation for the feast of the Apostles, which was celebrated in Rome with such splendour and devotion that, after Easter, it was the greatest of all feasts there. Crowds came from miles around for it, and at one time there were pilgrimages from Europe itself. It is easy to see, then, why this Sunday came into existence as a preparation for the feast.

2. *The Gospel:*

That seems to be the reason for the choice of this passage, in which we see Peter changed into a fisher of men, with the two great virtues which adorn him, humility and obedience.

It is especially interesting since it gave rise to some of the very early symbolism in the Church, as we can see from the paintings on the walls of the catacombs, the fisherman and the fish, the boat to represent the Church, etc. The anchor of the boat is also a symbol of hope.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: Romans 8. 18-23

1. *Occasion and argument:*

This chapter is the centre of the Epistle to the Romans, because it is a summary of the whole letter and a hymn to Christian hope. After having described the benefits of justice, liberation from sin, and from the law which faith brings to us, in this chapter the Apostle sums them all up in the divine sonship, which has been won for us by Christ (v. 3), thanks to which we are able to live above the fleshly level (vv. 5-13) since the Holy Spirit makes us like God (vv. 14-18). He also gives us the inheritance of sons.

At this moment Paul pauses, he concentrates on the future—for him, he says, there is no suffering in this world which can be compared to the future glory which awaits us, and then, in an eloquent phrase not usually found in his writings he cries out, We are saved by hope. Why? Because the whole of nature speaks to us of it, the Holy Spirit within us gives testimony to it, so does the Father who has chosen us. The sure pledge of it is the love which Christ has for us.

There is no other ending possible: neither death nor life, nor angels, nor anything else can separate us from Christ's love.

From this chapter on divine sonship the liturgy has chosen the passage in which the sufferings of this life are compared with the

glory which is to come, and there is mention of two of the motives we have for hoping that one day we shall achieve it.

The first is the testimony of nature; the second, more intimate and real, is the desire of our own hearts which has been planted in us by the Spirit.

2. *Texts:*(a) *These present sufferings and the future glory . . .*

Verse 17 ends by telling us that we shall be co-heirs with Christ provided we share in his sufferings. But since this suffering might scare people, St Paul adds that no misery in this present life can be compared to the glory which awaits us. The glory which has to manifest itself one day is that proper to the adoption of sons, and when this manages to break through the veil which at present covers it, then we shall know the truth—that our sufferings were worth while. Among the effects of this glory St Paul enumerates the immortality of the body as well after the resurrection (v. 23).

This glory, even though something belonging properly speaking to the future, is still present now in one way—in Christ, in whom our lives are hidden. Today, being members of his body, we have a right to the glory which is enjoyed by our Head, and we know by faith that his resurrection and happiness are not a personal thing merely, but a privilege and an anticipation of the inheritance which, even for Christ, will only be completed when he manifests himself in his glory in the whole of his body. Until that moment our happiness is on deposit, hidden in Christ, hoping for its manifestation.

Within us we have grace, the seed of glory, which when developed, flowers in immortality. . . . Though the outer part of our nature is being worn down, our inner life is refreshed from day to day. This light and momentary affliction brings with it a reward multiplied every day, loading us with everlasting glory; if only we will fix our eyes on what is unseen, not on what we can see. What we can see lasts only for a moment; what is unseen is eternal (2 Cor. 4. 16-18).

(b) *The witnesses to our hope:*

i. *The continual desire.* Here St Paul pictures for us the whole of nature, with fixed and glowing eyes, longing for the day in which it will be associated with the total restoration of man. When man sinned the whole of creation suffered with him, being 'condemned to frustration'. In Genesis we see God cursing the earth, rather as part of man's punishment than for any fault of the earth itself. Now he would have to toil with it to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow. In this sense the earth was frustrated, losing its rightful place as the royal throne for man. It lost its priest, that rational creature who alone could offer it to God. Now man could not even read in its beauty that of its creator.

Then it also lost its docility to man, whom it ruins by frequent catastrophes. On it and over it there are terrible wars and all kinds of evils. It is a beautiful idea this of St Paul, in which we see that same nature sharing now in man's longing for the restoration of all things in Christ.

ii. *We also.* It is the Holy Spirit who sows this longing in our hearts (vv. 26-27), and therefore this desire is the sign of what lies ahead in the future. Even though we do not see it, we have it already in firm hope.

3. The lesson:

(a) Hope:

The dominant idea of the second part of this chapter. Christian hope is:

- i. the only thing which can enable us to bear the misfortunes of this life. Even if we could change the world and make it into an economical paradise, would there not still be death, sickness, worries, etc., to fight against?
- ii. the only thing that can sustain us in the fight against our passions;
- iii. certain, because it is based on the truth and promises of God. To infuse it into us he shed his blood.

(b) Suffering:

- i. It is universal, attacking both soul and body, individuals and nations;
- ii. the source of it is partly the very limitation of nature, partly original sin, which is made worse by actual sin;
- iii. but these sufferings are in part at least beneficial; pain warns us of illness, misery of all kinds brings to light fraternal charity, mercy, etc.
- iv. above all hope, by uniting us to the eternal merits of Christ, converts our sufferings into merits for eternal glory.

B: The Gospel: Luke 5. 1-11

1. Historical situation:

It happened at the beginning of our Lord's public life; the situation is near Capharnaum. This first stage of the life of Christ is as it were preparatory. He does not yet reveal himself openly as the Messiah, but he does encourage the people while at the same time selecting a small group who will be witnesses to what is to come. The lake of Genesareth contains many fish.

2. The two scenes:

The evangelist describes two scenes for us, one apostolic (with some graphic details about the fishermen mending their nets), the other the miracle itself.

At this stage in his preaching the apostles, although they followed him part of the time on his journeys (for example to Cana), still carried on with their usual occupation. Now the time has come for their definitive call to leave all things and follow him. The miraculous catch and the apostolic vocation are so strictly united one to the other that there is no point in separating them, as some have tried to do.

3. Texts:

(a) The crowds pressing round him to hear his doctrine:

This is worth noting; when great crowds gather it is to hear the word of God, not mere eloquence; to get that they can go elsewhere. Is it not on occasions such as missions that the churches are filled?

While we say this to preachers, the laity also must be reminded that the spiritual health of their souls can be best judged by their anxiety to hear the word of God, because in the spiritual as well as in the material life, one's appetite is a sign of health. The obligation to preach carries with it that of listening; an obligation which was borne in mind when the Sunday rest was established. The neglect of this hearing of the word soon leads to indifference, spiritual blindness and ignorance—possibly also to hardness of heart and will.

The people of Galilee left their homes at dawn to hear Christ; our laziness often keeps us at home.

(b) He saw two boats . . .

A great deal has been said about the social status of the apostles. They were simple folk, ignorant to a certain extent, but at least those called on this occasion did not live in poverty. Their business was one which usually paid fairly well, since fish was a staple diet in Palestine, especially in Galilee. They owned boats and nets. John was even well known in Jerusalem, and in circles as important as the household of the High Priest (John 18. 16). They represented the middle class of working men.

(c) he went up into one of the boats, which belonged to Simon . . .

From the first moment this apostle was specially favoured by Jesus. The symbolism of the boat and the Pope is common; the first invitation is given to him, the second to those of us who are with him.

(d) he began to teach the multitudes from the boat . . .

Preaching is a special grade of perfection; and although at first sight it belongs to the active life, still the doctrine of St Thomas is clear—it is part of the life of contemplation; it implies the overflowing of that contemplation in words. The preacher must imitate the virtues of his Master, patience with the crowds, his attitude and his affability. Notice that the teaching is from the boat—the Church

is the source of all truth; he who teaches anything else is far from the truth.

(e) All the night they had laboured and caught nothing . . .

Peter knew his work as a fisherman; he realized that, humanly speaking, there was nothing to be gained by fishing at this moment, but he obeyed at the word of Christ. Labour without Christ is in vain.

(f) but at thy word . . .

Labour with Christ is fruitful. Obedience, the cardinal virtue. The voice of Christ comes to us from the Church and her commands. Superiors represent Christ, when we hear and obey them we hear him. Small results need not worry us so long as we labour for and with Christ. Our task is to cast out the nets.

(g) they took a great quantity of fish . . .

Results of labour with Christ and in obedience to him. We should begin with the intention of doing all for Christ; labour as hard as we can, then at the end give humble thanks to him, as did Peter. The catch of fish was the reward for a very simple act of obedience; to remind us that our actions are rewarded, not merely for what they are worth, but according to the divine munificence.

(h) the nets were nearly breaking . . .

Without Christ's aid the soul cannot withstand the fulness of the divine gifts. In the aid given by the other group of fishermen we see the need for human co-operation. Members of the same mystical body should be ever ready to help one another.

(i) St Peter at our Lord's feet . . .

The best proof that this was a miracle is his astonishment. His generosity makes him compare the grandeur of this Man with his own nothingness.

(j) fisher of men . . .

The reward for his obedience and also the real key-point in this scene. This is the final vocation of Peter and the others.

(k) they left all . . .

We should not measure it in quantity but in affection; whatever they left, it was all they had. They gave generously and completely. Nothing was kept back from the sacrifice. Then they completed it by following him, the real element of perfection. To give all is relatively easy; to follow him on the road to Calvary is difficult.

4. Apologetic and symbolic significance:

(a) Apologetic:

It is enough to mention the fact that Peter and those who were with him in the boat were experts at their job. If they were con-

vinced that they had witnessed a miracle—and we know that they were slow to realize this, as the resurrection history shows—then we can accept their testimony.

(b) Symbolic:

The apostles were to be fishers of men; they would spread their nets over the whole world and the results would constitute a moral miracle. St Peter is pictured in the catacombs as seated on a rock with a fish on the end of a line.

But there are other symbolisms too; as St Augustine says: Ask the miracles, and see what they say to you about Christ. They also have their tongue.

i. the bark of Peter is the Church, in which the word of Christ is constantly taught;

ii. *the multitude* on the shore, who do not enter the boat, the Jewish people and all who remain outside the Church;

iii. *Peter, the leader*, is the visible head of that Church—the Pope;

iv. *the sea*, this world, submerged in paganism;

v. *the net* is the gospel preached by the apostles and their successors;

vi. *the great quantity of fish* represents the pagans who were converted and entered the Church—also all who enter even now;

vii. *the breaks in the net*, heresies and schisms;

viii. *the fact that the boat nearly sinks* represents the troubles and difficulties of the Church in the modern world;

ix. *the great catch* after a night spent in vain labour represents the fertility of the Church in comparison with the efforts of the synagogue; also the fact that her success is due more to Christ than to human efforts.

5. Other lessons:

(a) Vocation:

God calls all kinds of people and in different ways; they can be of all social classes and grades of intelligence. He calls the devout, sinners, those whose intentions are good, persecutors (like Saul). Some he draws to him little by little; others get a sudden call, like Levi; with others he has to use force, like Saul.

All have to co-operate with that call, surrendering their minds to his truth, putting up no resistance. They must also give up their wills to him without delay or argument.

Until we get a special call from God our vocation is sufficiently indicated for us in our daily occupations, which, if it be done with our whole heart and in a spirit of faith, can be as meritorious as anything done under a special command from God.

(b) The apostolate:

Nowadays every Christian should feel himself called to this apostolate in some way or another. There is much to be done by all; at least in prayer.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST AMBROSE

The Church and the Synagogue

(God chose two boats, the synagogue and the Church; the former was rejected for its lack of faith, the second is at times storm-tossed, because, besides Peter, Judas is in it. PL. 17. 640 ff.)

1. *The multitudes around our Lord:*

We can understand from the Gospel of today the great number of miracles Jesus did, because it tells us that so great were the benefits these brought to the people that in their excitement they pressed about him, that is, they attempted to obtain their remedies and health, not so much by humble supplication as by their very importunity. They did not abandon him, even in the desert; the synagogue could not keep them away from him, neither was the reverence due to his divinity sufficient to contain them. Such is always the way with the sick. While they await the remedy for their ills, they never cease to ask for it, paying attention neither to time nor place; for the more the doctor cures people so much the more will they flock to him. . . .

See in this the mercy of the Lord. He separates himself bodily from men (by going up into the boat), but he continues to pour out on them the benefits of his teaching.

2. *The Church and synagogue:*

(a) We have already seen the Lord embarking on another ship and running grave risks, since he journeyed with Moses over the Red Sea, when he led the people of Israel through the walls of water. But then he had to suffer great insults . . . The unbelief of the synagogue was an insult against the Saviour, who because of it chose the bark of Peter, abandoning that of Moses, that is the synagogue. Instead he chose the faithful Church. . . . The synagogue is abandoned because it lost Christ, in spite of the teachings of the prophets. The Church is directed to put out to sea, because she receives Christ in the doctrine of the apostles. The synagogue is left on the shore because she preferred earthly things; the Church puts to sea, because her gaze is always turned towards the profound mysteries of heaven.

(b) The faith of the Church:

Therefore the Lord says to Peter, Launch out into the deep, that is the depths of the knowledge of the divine generation. For what thing more profound could Peter have said to the Lord than, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God? And could there be anything more earthly than what the Jews said to him: Is not this the Son of Joseph, the carpenter? The former, inspired by heaven, confesses the divine generation of Christ; the latter, with evil intention, consider the heavenly birth as if it were a carnal one. For which reason Christ said to Peter, Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven, while to the Pharisees he says, How can you speak well when you are evil? Our Lord then goes up into that one boat of which Peter is the pilot, as he himself says, And upon this rock I will build my church. This ship floats in such a way that, even though it may appear to be in danger on the high seas of the world, she will bring to safety all those who voyage in her.

(c) The Church, ark of salvation:

The figure of this ark we find even in the Old Testament; for just as the ark of Noe saved all those who were enclosed therein, so the Church of Peter, when the world perishes, will save those she receives in her bosom. And just as a dove, after the flood, carried the symbol of peace to the ark, so too, after the judgement Christ will lead the Church to joy and peace, according to his promise: I shall see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice.

3. *The storms which attack the bark:***(c) Peter and Judas, or fidelity and treason:**

But, as we read in the Gospel of St Matthew, the Lord having fallen asleep in that boat from which he communicates to us now the sacraments of his heavenly teaching, the stormy waves beat upon it with such ferocity that the apostles were afraid for their lives. Let us see how it is that the same ship which now spreads to all peoples the doctrine of Christ should then have produced in the disciples the fear of death on account of the storm, in spite of the fact that Peter also was in it. The cause of the danger is this. Peter was there, but Judas, the traitor, was also with them. And even though the faith of the one assured the safety of the vessel, the treason of the other put it in danger. There is peace where Peter alone navigates; but there are storms wherever Judas is to be found. Although Peter may be safe by reason of his merits, he is still disturbed by the crimes of the traitor.

(b) The calmness of Christ:

While the disciples were afraid and Peter full of anxiety, Christ slept. Perhaps it may seem hard that Christ should sleep while

Peter is worried; but the Lord slept because of Peter, the sea was lashed with storms because of Judas. Therefore the merits of all are disturbed by the crimes of one. Christ sleeps and the winds arise because he who sins immediately makes Christ as it were asleep, so far as he is concerned, and the stormy winds of the unclean spirits arise. When the calm weather of the Lord has sunk to sleep it needs be that the devilish tempest will rise up again.

If, therefore, by the sin of Judas, all the apostles were placed in danger, let us by this warning be on our guard against the faithless and the traitors, lest through one, many be placed in danger of the waves.

II. ST AUGUSTINE

(Extracts from various texts, especially a sermon on this catch of fish.)

1. *The miracle and its symbolism:*

(a) *The call of the humble:*

Our Lord Jesus Christ chose the weak of this world to confound the strong, and thus he formed his Church in the whole world. He did not begin with emperors and senators, but with fishermen. Had he chosen the former, being already placed in a position of authority, they would have dared to attribute all to themselves, instead of to God. . . . But today both the noble and the ordinary folk draw near to the Church, the learned and the ignorant, rich and poor. To receive that grace rank is worth no more than humility, than ignorance, than poverty.

(b) *Two catches of fish:*

We must distinguish two catches of fish completely distinct; one which took place when the Lord chose his disciples, and another of which we have just heard in the gospel, after his resurrection. . . .

In the first the Lord says: Let down your nets. . . . After the resurrection the Lord shows us another kind of catch, very different from the former. In the first one he says let down the nets, without specifying whether they were to be let down on the right side or the left. Had he said to the left it would have meant the evil alone; had he said to the right, only the good. But since he does not say which side, it signifies both bad and good, of which the gospel speaks when the father of the family, the supper now being fully prepared, sends his servants to bring in all they can find, both bad and good.

i. *The apparent triumph of the evil.* The Church of today is full of good and bad. Crowds fill it, but at times this very multitude brings it to the point of shipwreck. The enormous number of those who live evil lives does harm to those who live properly, so that the latter think themselves stupid when they see the evil

and account them to be happy, at least according to the goods of this world, while many of the good are unhappy. How dangerous it is that some should think like that and so be drowned. How dangerous it is for those who live good lives to say: Of what use is it? Look at that bad man who is happier than I.

You say that the other is bad and is happy. You are wrong; he is unhappy, and so much the more unhappy the more he thinks himself happy. Foolish it is not to recognize one's misery. If you saw a man burning up with fever, and yet he laughed, you would weep for his stupidity. What has been promised to you has not yet arrived. He who appears to you to be happier is feeding on material things. He did not bring them into the world with him, neither can he take them away. He came naked, and naked he will have to leave it. From false joys he will taste true sorrows.

ii. *Heresies.* Something else happened in that catch which is even more harmful; the nets began to break. The nets are broken; heresies have come upon us. What are schisms except breaks in the net? . . . The evil must be tolerated, not expelled; I sing always the mercy of the Lord, not his judgements. First comes mercy, then justice is done. The separation will occur on that day. Let the good hear it that they may live better; the evil that they may become good, because there is still time for penance, not sentence.

(c) *Fishermen, not orators:*

See the mercy of Christ. This Peter who speaks to us was a fisherman, and now the orator who could be heard by this fisherman would be honoured indeed. That is why St Paul says to the early Christians, Consider, brethren, the circumstances of your own calling . . . (1 Cor. 1. 26). If Christ had chosen an orator first of all, then he would have thought: Because of my eloquence I have been chosen. Had he elected a senator he would have said: Because of my dignity I have been chosen. If an emperor, I have been selected for my power. Let such as these rest a while and wait; they have not been abandoned, nor despised. But they have been left for a little later who might take pride in their own glory and in themselves. Give me, he says, that fisherman, give me that ignorant one, give me that man to whom the senator does not even deign to utter a word, even when he buys his fish. Give me him, because if I fill him, then it will be evident that the work is mine.

2. *The following of Christ:*

How we have to follow him:

(a) *In humiliation:*

Let us study how we must follow Christ, when we do not shed our blood or suffer the passion. The apostle says of Christ that: His

nature is, from the first, divine, and yet he did not see in the rank of Godhead, a prize to be coveted. What majesty! And yet: He dispossessed himself, and took the nature of a slave, fashioned in the likeness of men, and presenting himself to us in human form. (Phil. 2. 6-7) What humility! Christ humbled himself. There O Christian, you have something to imitate. Christ became obedient; why are you proud? To what point did Christ become obedient? To the point of the Word becoming incarnate; to that of partaking in our mortality; sharing in the triple temptation of the devil, in the insults of the Jews, the blows, the saliva, the bonds, the scourging; but it is still too little—unto death on a cross. Here we have the example of humility and the cure for pride.

(b) In the pardon of offences:

Do you desire to take vengeance? If you are a Christian, wait for your king; let Christ take vengeance first. Until now he has not taken revenge who suffered for you. And that in spite of the fact that such Majesty as his could either suffer or take immediate revenge. But in spite of such great power which was his, his patience was even greater, because he suffered for us to leave us an example that we might follow his steps.

(c) In the renunciation of all that is temporal:

Let us listen to the apostle who says: Risen, then, with Christ, you must lift your thoughts above, where Christ now sits at the right hand of God. You must be heavenly-minded, not earthly-minded (Col. 3. 1-3). Let us reject everything that is delightful in this world and temporal things; let us despise them. Let him who acts like that be sure that he is following Christ and that he can dare to say, as did St Paul, Our dwelling place is in heaven.

(d) In true charity:

There is something more; you can have a virtue which is never overcome if you have true charity. . . . How is it that blessed Lawrence could have no fear of the fire which they applied to him from without if he had not been burning with charity within? In comparison with the fire which was consuming him within, that of his persecutors was cold. . . . How could he despise this life unless he loved another more? And who is to do you wrong, says St Peter, if only what is good inspires your ambitions? (1 Pet. 3. 13).

3. Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord:

Or again, Peter speaks in the name of the Church, filled with men who are not spiritual. . . . As though the Church, laden with carnal-minded people and almost brought to the point of sinking through their evil ways of life, rejects, as it were, the rule of the spiritual men, in whom there shines forth the life of Christ. Because it is not merely by word of mouth or tongue that men tell the worthy sons

of God to depart from them; but also through the voice of their deeds and evil living, they persuade them to depart, so as not to have good men over them.

III. ST BERNARD

Sanctity of life in the clerical state

(Some extracts and a summary of the saint's main theme will be given here.)

1. Those who confided to me the care of souls should first of all have made an investigation to see if I can look after my own. But, how long has it been unlearned, uncultivated, deserted and abandoned! It gave very little wine, the branches of the virtues being dead, because they did not receive any strength from faith. Certainly faith remained in it, but it was almost dead, not being given life from any good works. Such was my life in the world, even though, when the Lord converted me, I began to look after my soul a little more, but even then, less than I ought. And who, then, will be worthy of it? . . . How grievous was the danger to me, then, from him who, in ambush, launches his arrows against the innocent! Of how much has he robbed you, my vineyard, in spite of all my attempts to protect you with greater care? How many good works were made to wither under the blasts of anger? How many were pulled up by the roots through pride? How many were lost because of vainglory? How many evils have ensnared me through gluttony, tepidity, weakness and timidity of spirit in the midst of the tempests which arose therein? Such a one was I, yet in spite of all that, the care of the vineyard was given to me, without any consideration of what I had done with my own.

Thus do I apply to my imperfections the words of the Spouse. But he will be perfect who can say I have not kept my vineyard in the sense in which our Redeemer speaks in the Gospel: He that loses his life for my sake shall save it. Certainly he merits that the charge of the vineyard of the Lord should be confided to him, who is not disturbed by the care which he should take of his own, but who watches over those of others with diligence and exactitude, not seeking his own interests, but the glory of God and the good of souls.

2. A warning—better few priests and good ones than many evil:

The Church appears to grow and with it the priestly order too; the number of priests is as never before. But even though your Church has grown, Lord, your joy has not grown with it, since it would seem that it has lost in merits what it has gained in numbers. Men flock from all sides to take sacred orders, and we see some who load themselves down, without due consideration, with terrible powers of

ministry, which would make even the angels tremble. They do not fear to take into their hands the heavenly sceptre and don the imperial crown, while all the time they are enslaved with avarice, dominated by pride, subject to the tyranny of lust. . . . Stained with all kinds of sins they enter into the tabernacle of the living God and live, with all their impurities, within his temple, defiling it with their presence and provoking against themselves a thousand sentences of condemnation for having on their consciences such grave sins and for daring to enter with them into the sanctuary of God himself. . . . Would that, before beginning to build the tower, they had sat down to reconsider their own strength, to see if they could finish it! Please God, those who do not even feel strong enough to remain chaste would at least fear, and would not embrace celibacy lightly! Because celibacy is in truth a most beautiful tower and a heavenly name which few are able to understand. It would be better, without doubt, to marry than to burn, a greater happiness to save one's soul in a humble position, as one of the faithful, rather than to live a disastrous life in the clerical state, and hereafter to be judged with inexorable justice.

3. Exhortation:

Respect your souls, my brothers; respect the blood shed for you! Save yourselves from danger and keep away from that fire which is ready to devour sinners. Let your profession of the Christian faith cease to be a mockery, and let your virtues shine forth at last in demonstrations of piety. Let not your celibacy be a vain appearance, empty of all reality. And how can chastity not fall into danger in the midst of pleasures, and humility among riches, piety amidst the noise of business matters, truth in vain gossip and charity in the midst of this world? Flee from Babylon; flee and save your souls. Take refuge in the city of penance for your past lives; there you can gain graces for the present struggle and await confidently the glory which is to come. Do not let the thought of your sins hold you back, because where these abound so does grace too. Neither let the austerity of penance frighten you, because all the sufferings of this world are not to be compared with sin forgiven.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIAN

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

Obedience

1. A special virtue:

A special virtue is assigned to all good deeds that have a special reason for praise; for it belongs properly to virtue to render a deed good. Now obedience to a superior is due in accordance with the

divinely established order of things . . . and therefore it is a good, since good consists in mode, species and order, as Augustine says. Again, this act has a special aspect of praiseworthiness by reason of its object. For while subjects have many obligations towards their superiors, this one, that they are bound to obey their commands, stands out as special among the rest (2-2. q. 104. a. 2. c).

(a) Consists in a mean:

It is, however, a moral virtue, since it is part of justice, and it observes the mean between excess and defect. Excess thereof is measured, not in respect of quantity, but from other circumstances, in so far as a man obeys either whom he ought not, or in matters wherein he ought not to obey (*ibid. ad 2um*).

(b) The greatest of the moral virtues:

Among the moral virtues, the greater the thing which a man contemns that he may adhere to God, the greater the virtue. Now there are three kinds of human goods that man may contemn for God's sake. The lowest of these are external goods, the goods of the body take the middle place, and the highest are the goods of the soul; and among these the chief, in a way, is the will, in so far as, by his will, man makes use of all other goods. Therefore, properly speaking, the virtue of obedience, whereby we contemn our own wills for God's sake, is more praiseworthy than the other moral virtues, which contemn other goods for the sake of God (*ibid. a. 3. c*).

(c) Even in things that are pleasant it may be meritorious:

Yet this must be understood as regards external appearances; because according to the judgement of God, on the other hand, who searches the heart, it may happen that even in agreeable matters obedience, while holding its own, is none the less praiseworthy, provided the will of him who obeys is tending no less devoutly to the fulfilment of the precept.

(d) Is a subject bound to obey his superior in all things?

Having pointed out that if a higher power commands the contrary then the lower is not to be obeyed, St Thomas continues:

Secondly, a subject is not bound to obey his superior, if the latter command him to do something in which he is not subject to him. . . . Consequently, in matters touching the internal movement of the will man is not bound to obey his fellow-man, but God alone.

Nevertheless, man is bound to obey his fellow man in things that have to be done externally by means of the body; and yet since by nature all men are equal, he is not bound to obey another man in matters touching the nature of the body, for instance in those relating to the support of his body or the begetting of his children. Wherefore servants are not bound to obey their masters nor children their parents in the question of contracting marriage or of remaining in

the state of virginity or the like. But in matters concerning the disposal of actions and human affairs, a subject is bound to obey his superior within the sphere of his authority; for instance, a soldier must obey his general in matters relating to war, a servant his master in matters touching the execution of the duties of his state, a son his father in matters relating to the conduct of his life and the care of his household and so on.

(e) Prompt obedience takes into account tacit precepts:

Wherefore obedience is a special virtue, and its specific object is a command tacit or express, because the superior's will, however it become known, is a tacit precept, and a man's obedience seems to be all the more prompt, forasmuch as, by obeying, he forestalls the express command as soon as he understands his superior's will (*ibid.* q. 104. a. 2. c).

(f) It should come before other goods:

There are two kinds of good. There is that to which we are bound of necessity, for instance, to love God, and so forth; and by no means may such a good be set aside on account of obedience. But there is another good to which man is not bound of necessity, and this good we ought sometimes to set aside for the sake of obedience to which we are bound of necessity, since we ought not to do good by falling into sin.

(g) We ought to submit to the civil power:

Now the order of justice requires that subjects obey their superiors, else the stability of human affairs would cease. Hence faith in Christ does not excuse the faithful from the obligation of obeying secular princes (*ibid.* a. 6. c).

(h) Within limits:

Man is bound to obey secular princes in so far as this is required by the order of justice. Wherefore, if the prince's authority is not just but usurped, or if he commands what is not just, his subjects are not bound to obey him, except accidentally, in order to avoid scandal or danger (*ibid.* ad 3um).

2. Disobedience:

(a) A mortal sin:

A mortal sin is one that is contrary to charity which is the cause of spiritual life. Now by charity we love God and our neighbour. The charity of God requires that we obey his commands . . . therefore to be disobedient to the commands of God is a mortal sin, because it is contrary to the love of God (*ibid.* q. 105. a. 1. c).

Again, the commands of God contain the precept of obedience to superiors. Wherefore, also, disobedience to the commands of a superior is a mortal sin, as being contrary to the love of God. . . . It

is also contrary to the love of our neighbour, as it withdraws from our superior, who is our neighbour, the obedience that is his due (*ibid.*).

(b) but not necessarily a sin against the Holy Ghost:

Not every disobedience is a sin against the Holy Ghost, but only that to which obstinacy is added; for it is not the contempt of any obstacle to sin that constitutes sin against the Holy Ghost, else the contempt of any good would be a sin against him, since any good may hinder a man from committing sin. The sin against the Holy Ghost consists in the contempt of those goods which lead directly to repentance and the forgiveness of sin (*ibid.* q. 106. a. 2. ad 2um).

(c) Sin of first parents:

The first sin of our first parents was not disobedience considered as a special sin, but pride, from which man proceeded to disobey (*ibid.* ad. 3um).

II. MARTIN HARRISON, O.P.

Obedience

(Extracts from *The Everyday Catholic*, Blackfriars, 1947.)

1. Various degrees:

There are various degrees of obedience: there is (a) external obedience, which does with exactness what is commanded, though unwillingly; (b) internal obedience, which joins willingness to external obedience, even though the judgement or opinion doubts the wisdom, value or good faith of what is commanded; (c) blind obedience which submits the judgement as well and is virtuous so long as what is ordered is not clearly sinful.

The true virtue lies in the internal submission of the will, joined to the performance externally of the command. For this certain qualities are necessary:

(a) The submission must be prompt and willing, so differing from a forced or unwilling submission, or from mere self-interest;

(b) it must be shown to a superior, i.e. one who has authority . . . ;

(c) it must be in compliance with a command, i.e. a law or precept imposed by authority;

(d) the obedience is given solely because the will of authority has been expressed in a command.

One is not therefore strictly bound to do what is known to be merely a wish or a desire on the part of a superior when no expressed command has been given, nor is it want of obedience to neglect the advice given or a request made by a superior, provided that these are not of themselves of obligation nor in the nature of a command. At times a 'request' is a form of command which is more acceptable

than an 'order' to do some thing; it is usually obvious when a request is in the nature of a command, and then it must be obeyed.

Defect in obedience or disobedience is either the voluntary neglect or refusal to do what is ordered, or the doing of what is forbidden, against a lawful command, particular or general, of authority. As was noticed above, it is not disobedience to ignore advice or requests not in the nature of a command, unless they be of obligation from some other cause. Formal disobedience may be a grave sin. . . .

2. *Its necessity:*

But the virtue of obedience goes far beyond being a convenience to the ordering of social affairs. It is a precept imposed on us by our Lord: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself. There is no way of self-denial more perfect than that of obedience to authority for God's sake. It strikes at the very root of self since it entails giving up one's own personal desires in order to do the will of another and there can be no greater mortification than to obey or submit to the will of another, especially when what is ordered runs contrary to one's own will or desire. . . .

3. *Obligation of parents:*

Since obedience does not come naturally to us, parents have a grave obligation of teaching their children to obey and of punishing them accordingly if they are not obedient; they must be taught that disobedience is sinful. It is much easier for a child to learn obedience than for an adult, and the earlier a child is trained in this important matter the better it is for his whole future career, for no matter what position in life he may hold, no matter what form of work he may choose, at least in the beginning he must obey those over him; beginning at school and for many years in his working life, he will be under the orders of others and he must learn to obey before he can be fit to have authority entrusted to him. Being so essential in all walks of life, it should be the chief lesson of childhood, when it may be the more easily acquired, and the child who is taught to obey from his infancy will find it a blessing throughout life.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST TERESA OF AVILA

(Extracts from Chap. V. of the *Foundations*.)

Obedience in the first place:

How will this love be acquired? By our resolving to work and to suffer and by our doing so whenever the occasion arises. It is very true that by thinking what we owe the Lord, and who he is, and

what we are, a soul will be led to make such a resolution. To do this is great merit and very fitting for beginners—that is to say, of course, when there is no impediment in the shape of things which concern obedience or the profit of our neighbour. If either of these two things stands in the way, we must renounce for a time what we so much desire to give to God, which we feel we are doing when we are alone and thinking of him and rejoicing in the favours which he bestows upon us. To give up all this for either of these two reasons is to please him and to work for him; for, as he said with his own mouth, When you did it to one of the least of my brethren here, you did it to me. And in all that concerns obedience, he would not have that one that loves him well take any other road than that which he himself took—obedient unto death.

. . . I know some people (apart as I say from what I myself have experienced) who have taught me this truth when I have been dreadfully worried at having so little time, and so have been sorry to see that they too were always full up with business and many other things, imposed on them by obedience. And I would think to myself, and even tell them, that amid such a hurried life spiritual growth was not possible—and at that time they had certainly achieved very little. But, O Lord, how different are thy ways from our clumsy imaginings! When once a soul is resolved to love thee and has resigned itself into thy hands, thou wilt have nothing of it save that it shall obey thee and find out for itself how best it may serve thee and desire to do so. It has no need to look for paths or to choose them, for its will is thine. . . . Even though our superior has no mind to our soul's profit, but is satisfied with seeing that we do such work as is judged advantageous to the community, thou, my God, hast a mind to our profit and dost dispose the soul and prepare things for it to do in such a way that, without knowing how, we find ourselves so much more spiritual and so greatly benefited that we are astounded.

. . . While wanting nothing such persons possess all things. No earthly thing do they either fear or desire; no trials can disturb them; no pleasure can excite them; no one, in fact, can rob them of their peace, since it comes from God alone. And, as no one can rob them of God, only the fear of losing him can cause them distress; about everything else in the world they feel as if it did not exist, for it can neither add to nor distract from their joy. O happy obedience, and happy the distraction it brings, which is so fruitful in achievement. . . .

So come, my daughters, let there be no disappointment when obedience keeps you busy in outward tasks. If it sends you to the kitchen, remember that the Lord walks among the pots and pans, and that he will help you in inward tasks and in outward ones too. . . .

What I do want to make clear is the reason why, as I believe, obedience brings us the sooner to that happy state and is the best

means of attaining it. It is because we are in no way masters of our own wills, and cannot employ them purely and sincerely in the service of God until we submit them to reason; and the true way for us to submit them is by obedience. This cannot be done by reasonings, for our nature and our love of self can argue so effectively that reasoning would never get us anywhere. Very often what seems to us the best of reasons for not doing something if we have no desire to do it seems ridiculous when we want to do it. . . .

We must resolve to give up arguing and searching for reasons, to trust the words of the Lord, who says: He that heareth you heareth me, and to pay no further attention to our own wishes. Such great attention does our Lord pay to this submissiveness (and rightly so, for it makes him Lord of the free will that he has given us) that if we practice it, now entirely annihilating our own desires, now winning only after a thousand battles, and thinking the judgement given in our case to be folly, we shall come, by means of this painful exercise, to doing what we are commanded. . . .

O God, if only we could understand what a plight we are in! Unless we understand this there is danger for us in everything. For that reason it is very good for us to be under the orders of others, so that we may appreciate our own nothingness. And I think it is a greater favour if the Lord sends us a single day of humble self-knowledge, even at the cost of many afflictions and trials, than many days of prayer. The more so because the true lover everywhere loves his beloved and continually remembers him. It would be a bad business if we could practise prayer only by getting alone in corners. I know that I cannot be alone for many hours, but, O my Lord, how potent with thee is a sigh issuing from the heart, a sigh of sorrow at the thought, not only that we are in this exile, but that we have no opportunity to enjoy a solitude which might give us fruition of thee.

This makes it clear that we are his slaves, sold through love of him, and of our own free will, to the virtue of obedience, since it is through obedience that we have to some extent renounced the fruition of God himself. But this is nothing if we consider that it was by obedience that he came out of the bosom of the Father to be our slave. How, then, can we repay him this favour? What service can we render him for it?

II. ST IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

(We shall give a summary of his letter on obedience written to his followers in Portugal.)

1. *The advantages of obedience:*

The saint quotes the words of St Gregory to the effect that obedience alone is capable of making all the other virtues and especi-

ally good works grow ever deeper-rooted in the soul; with the increase in obedience all other virtues increase with it. He does not mind if other religious Orders surpass his own in fasts, mortifications, preaching, etc., so long as his Order surpasses the others in obedience.

2. *The fundamental principle:*

The superior should be obeyed, not because he is good, kind or for any other motive, but simply because he has the authority over us which comes from God. In any superior we must be able to recognize Christ himself.

3. *The grades of obedience:*

(a) *In externals:*

The lower grade, which does not really merit the name of obedience.

(b) *In the will:*

No matter what the motive, whether it be good or bad, which leads us to disobey, the fault is the same. We must give up our wills entirely to that of our superior; by this we give our free wills back to the God who gave them to us as his greatest gift. He then quotes St Bernard: Whoever traffics with God, his Father, either openly or with meekness, in order to get him to order those things which the subject himself wishes to do, that man is deceiving himself in thinking himself obedient, because in this he is not obeying his superior. It is necessary to reach this grade of obedience if we wish to possess the virtue.

(c) *Obedience of the mind:*

i. *This is possible*; because with the help of the will the reason can be inclined to one thing or another; it is possible therefore to think that our superior is right in all things;

ii. *it is just*; because obedience is self-sacrifice, and if we retain the independence of the mind we have not yet given up everything;

iii. *it is necessary*; because the complete subjection and subordination of ourselves to another is not complete without it. If we look at the purpose of the act of obedience we shall see that, there too, it is necessary, because the mind can err as much as or possibly more than the will, especially in things which we are not very willing to do;

iv. *it is perfect*; because it implies the subjection to another of that part of us which is the highest and most noble. He who gives this has no more to give.

(d) *How to attain this obedience of the mind:*

i. By not considering the person of the superior as a man who is subject to errors, but rather to see in him the one he represents

—God, who is infinite wisdom, goodness and charity. All that you do when you obey is serve Christ, and the service of Christ is the way of perfection.

ii. Be swift to seek reasons to support the commands of the superior and to defend his orders. It will help if we can love what is commanded; from which it will follow that we obey with joy, for as St Leo says, He does not serve with slave labour who loves and desires that which he is commanded to do.

iii. By presuming and believing that all the superior commands are commanded by God; then blindly, without any reasoning, proceed to obey that command. This is what Abraham did when he was ordered to sacrifice his son.

III. PHILIP HALLETT

Obedience in the priest

(We have no hesitation in including in this section selections from Chap. VII, *The Priest—Friend of Christ*. Murphy, 1950.)

We may at once confess that obedience is, to most men, one of the hardest of virtues. We have only to notice the behaviour of quite young children to learn how very dear to man it naturally is to follow his own will. . . . Often in our Divine Office we recite the words of St Gregory the Great: Perhaps it is not so difficult for a man to give up his possessions, but it is very difficult for him to give himself. It is a smaller thing to sacrifice what he owns, but a very great thing to sacrifice himself. . . .

For the practice of obedience, as of every other priestly virtue, inspiration is to be found in the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. The word of the wise man: The obedient man shall tell of victories, is especially true of our Lord, who by obedience redeemed the world. . . . There is abundant matter here for meditation. First we may think who it was who obeyed. It was the Incarnate Wisdom of the Father, the All-Holy, All-Powerful Son of God. If even he willingly submitted himself to the yoke of obedience, why cannot we do so? Next we may consider to whom obedience was rendered. To Mary and Joseph, holy indeed and wise, but incomparably less holy and wise than the Divine Child. Moreover, whatever their merits, they were but creatures, whereas he who was subject to them was true God. Then we may consider that this obedience was continued until long after the time when most men expect to set up a home for themselves in complete independence. . . .

Obedience, therefore, does not consist in merely outward conformity, but in the willing submission of the will. Unless one believes in God it is hard to see how one can render conscientious obedience. It follows that the duty of obedience bears no relation to the holiness, the wisdom or prudence of the ruler. . . .

Similarly of prudence. Superiors need wisdom and tact, and should pray for those so necessary virtues. But whether they have them or not we are equally bound to obey, and in proportion as they lack them, the merit of our obedience is greater. . . . There is a blessing upon obedience and even if it would seem that, according to human standards, that authority is making a mistake, God's loving providence will turn all to good. Thus there is safety in obedience. Even if inconveniences do follow that are not our responsibility. For many souls one of life's greatest trials is to be uncertain of the will of God. From this trial all are delivered who follow the path of obedience. . . .

Humility and obedience are closely connected. A priest may be given certain work to do which is distasteful to him; he may feel that others are preferred before him and that his merits and qualifications are being overlooked, for a priest, even a holy priest, is still human. Or it may be that he is set to work in uncongenial surroundings or with uncongenial personnel.

Yet, if his Bishop wishes it, it is the priest's duty to remain loyally at his post and to carry out his duties as generously and perfectly as he can. . . . Besides obeying his Bishop, the young priest who is appointed to a curacy must obey his parish priest. . . . The rector or parish priest has the chief responsibility for parochial arrangements. It is for him to decide both the policy and the means to carry it out. It is for his assistants loyally to obey. Later on, it may be, they will themselves be parish priests and then they will be free to follow their own line. If it appears to the assistant priest that he is being unfairly treated, there lies open an appeal to the bishop, though such an appeal should in fact be rarely, if ever, necessary. By good feeling, tact and kindness, disagreements can usually be composed.

It remains, nevertheless, that obedience is a difficult virtue, and one that can be practised satisfactorily only by the example and the grace of our Divine Friend who for our sakes was made obedient until death, even the death of the cross.

IV. RONALD KNOX

Obedience

(Extracts from *The Priestly Life*. This conference was for seminarians.)

Grown up people—what have they got to do with discipline? All right in the fighting forces, you've got to have it there, after all, it's only drill; it's not a virtue. . . . And so we reach the conclusion that obedience isn't a virtue at all; it's only a kind of graceful accomplishment which we learn when we are young, but aren't expected to keep up, like skipping. And then suddenly we are confronted

with the fact of the religious orders. Here are men and women all over the world, a great number of Christian people, and on the whole the pick of the bunch, deliberately binding themselves by life vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Obedience—they go into a sort of holy second childhood in which they are not their own masters any longer; they don't have to make decisions for themselves, only toe the line as it is marked out for them by their superiors. Not quite as thoroughly as the lay sister when the priest said, 'It's a lovely day, isn't it?' and she said, 'I'll go and ask Reverend Mother.'

Well, it's not difficult to see what I'm getting at. The seminarist is a sort of compromise, a rather uncomfortable compromise, between the school-boy and the novice; between the school-boy who obeys because it will jolly well be the worse for him if he doesn't, and the novice who obeys because obedience is the choice of his life-time—he wants to have everything arranged for him by superiors, so that he can be free to give himself without interruption to God. To put it in another way, the school-boy is supposedly being trained through discipline in order that he may become, at the age of seventeen, a responsible person, capable of looking after himself without interference from his elders. . . . The novice, on the contrary is being trained to habits of obedience, so that he may go on obeying without a murmur all his life. Anyhow that is the theory of the thing. Now, where exactly does the seminarist come in? Is he being trained in habits of discipline in order that he may become, at the age of twenty-five, a responsible person, capable of looking after himself without interference from his elders? Or is he being trained in habits of obedience, so that he may go on obeying rectors, and rural deans, and vicars-general, and bishops, all the rest of his life? The answer, I'm sorry to say, is 'Betwixt and between'. . . . On the one hand, when you go out on to the mission you accept the responsibilities of a grown man. You have to decide for yourself whether you will accept this invitation or that, whether you will take up this hobby or that, whether you will read such-and-such a book or not; you can no longer dispose of the difficulty by the simple formula, 'I don't think they'd want me to do that'. On the other hand, you have not finished with the duty of submission to superiors; you are part of the cadre of Christ's army, and discipline is expected of you. In what spirit are you going to meet that situation? . . .

By God's mercy you are going to be a priest. Don't forget that you are also going to be junior curate somewhere. Because you are the junior curate, you will do all the least interesting jobs; the other curates will see to that. You will find yourself down to talk to the Children of Mary on Thursday evening; and you will be assured that anything will do for them. If you let anything do for the Children of Mary, by the time you are a rector you will be incapable

of preaching a decent sermon. If you set about your ministry in a slave-minded way, everything will turn to slavery. No, when your rector tells you to preach to the Children of Mary, interpret that as an order to preach well to the Children of Mary. Give good measure from the start, and good measure will be poured into your bosom.

That first, then—interpret your instructions handsomely.

And next, let us hope your first curacy will be a great success. You and your rector will get on like a house on fire; you will be telling the bishop that you couldn't possibly be happier, he will be telling the bishop he had no idea they turned out such nice curates nowadays. Now, what is the temptation which comes to the bishop when that happens? I don't say he will succumb to it, but the temptation will be to say, 'It seems rather a waste to have Father X working with such an easy-going rector as Canon Y. Let us give Canon Y, that very difficult curate whom everybody finds such a nuisance; let us send Father X to that rather exacting rector who can never keep a curate more than six months.' And your dream will be over; your next curacy will be a time of probation, to test the metal you are made of. If you can accept the exchange without complaining about it, then there are some hopes of you. You have found the spirit of obedience.

And the third point—well, that is hardly worth developing. Thank God, the Church has a good record of heroism. The disciple is not above his Master; it may be, he wants you to be, like himself, *obediens usque ad mortem*.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

1. *Letting down the nets:*

We earnestly exhort you, therefore, to strive with all care for the salvation of those whom Providence has entrusted to your care, in close union with the Redeemer. With his help we can do all things (Phil. 4. 13). How earnestly We desire, beloved sons, that you emulate those saints who, in times past, by their great deeds, have shown the might of divine grace. May you, one and all, in humility and sincerity, always be able to apply to yourselves—your spiritual charges bearing witness—the words of the apostle: But I will most gladly, for my part, spend and be spent myself for your souls (2 Cor. 12. 15). Enlighten the minds, guide the conscience, comfort and uphold the souls who struggle with doubt and groan with sorrow. To these various ways of apostolate you should add others as the needs of the times demand. Yet let it always be plain to everybody that the priest, in all he does, seeks nothing beyond the good of souls, turns towards no one but Christ, to whom he consecrates his energy and his whole self (*Menti Nostrae*, 25 Sept. 1950).

2. *The spirit of obedience:*

Young men must acquire the spirit of obedience by becoming used to submitting their own will in all sincerity to that of God manifested through the legitimate authority of superiors. Nothing is more lamentable in the conduct of the future priest than that it is not in harmony with the will of God. This obedience must always be inspired by the perfect model, the Divine Teacher, who on earth had but one single purpose, 'To do thy will' (Heb. 10. 7).

After seminary days the priest must learn to give filial and sincere obedience to superiors, so as to be always ready to obey his Bishop with docility, according to the teaching of that unsurpassed Confessor of Christ, Ignatius of Antioch: Obey ye all the bishops as Jesus Christ obeyed the Father. He who honours the Bishop is honoured by God. Do nothing without the Bishop, keep your body like the temple of God, love union, flee discord, be an imitator of Jesus Christ as he was an imitator of his Father (Migne, PG. 5. 700.) (*Ibid.*).

3. *Obedience to authority:*

But, by its very nature, as an active and courageous company, the Catholic priesthood must have the spirit of discipline, or, to use a more deeply Christian word, obedience. It is obedience which binds together all ranks into the harmony of the Church's hierarchy. . . . This obedience priests promised to their bishop after ordination, the holy oil still fresh on their hands. On the day of his consecration the bishop, in his turn, swore obedience to the supreme visible Head of the Church, the successor of St Peter, the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Let then obedience bind ever closer together these various members of the hierarchy, one with another and all with the Head; and thus make the Church Militant a foe terrible to the enemies of God, *ut castrorum aciem ordinatum*, as an army set in array. Let obedience temper zeal on the one hand, and put the spur to weakness and slackness on the other. Let it assign to each his place and station. These each should accept without resistance; for otherwise the magnificent work of the Church in the world would be sadly hindered. Let each see in the arrangements of his hierarchical superiors the arrangements of the only true head, whom all obey, Jesus Christ our Lord . . . (*Ad Catholicum Sacerdotium*, 1935).

4. *To the teaching authority of the Church:*

Nor is it to be supposed that a position advanced in an encyclical does not *ipso facto* claim assent. In writing them, it is true, the Popes do not exercise their teaching authority to the full. But such statements come under the day-to-day teaching of the Church, which is covered by the promise: He who listens to you, listens to me. For the most part the positions advanced, the duties inculcated, by these encyclical letters are already bound up, under some title, with the

general body of Catholic teaching. And when the Roman Pontiffs go out of their way to pronounce on some subject which has hitherto been controverted, it must be clear to everybody that, in the mind and intention of the Pontiffs concerned, the subject can no longer be regarded as a matter of free debate among theologians (*Humani Generis*, 1950).

5. *Necessary to draw God's blessing on the apostolate:*

It will be incumbent on you, Venerable Brethren, to whom the Holy Spirit has entrusted the government of God's Church, to give the final practical decision in these cases, a decision to which the faithful will obediently and willingly conform. This We desire with all our heart, because a right intention and obedience are always and everywhere indispensable conditions for obtaining God's blessing on the pastoral ministry and on Catholic Action, and for acquiring that unity of purpose and that fusion of energies without which the apostolate cannot be fruitful. . . . He who obeys only with reluctance, as if under compulsion, and who gives vent to his resentment in bitter criticism of his superiors and fellow-workers, of everything that is not in conformity with his own opinion and judgement, averts God's blessing, weakens discipline and is destructive where constructive labour is required (*Firm. constantiam*, Pius XI, 28 March 1937).

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. THE EPISTLE

Hope

We are saved by hope

The epistle of today is taken from Romans 8. In this chapter the apostle teaches:

- (a) that we were freed by Christ from sin and death (vv. 1-2);
- (b) that we have received the spirit of adoption of sons, by which we are sons and heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ, destined to be glorified in him (vv. 15-16);
- (c) he concludes: We are saved through hope (v. 24).

The hope of creatures

1. If creation is full of expectancy, that is because it is waiting for the sons of God to be made known (v. 19).
2. St Paul sees the whole of nature, visible creatures put at man's disposal to serve him, handed over into slavery because of his sin.

(a) It is almost as though he heard them lamenting and sighing for their liberation. The whole of nature, as we know, groans in a common travail all the while (v. 22).

(b) All creatures await their liberation so that they may share in the liberty of the sons of God (v. 21).

3. From this we can deduce a theological argument for our hope:

(a) Creatures wait, not because of themselves, but because of their relationship to man;

(b) just as man's sin subjected them to vanity, so the final and definitive redemption of man will free them and bring them glory;

(c) if, then, all of them wait with groans for the day of their freedom to come, much more so man himself, the cause of their glory.

Our hope

1. *Another testimony, both psychological and spiritual, is that of the Spirit:*

(a) And not only do we see that, but we ourselves do the same; we ourselves, although we have begun to reap our spiritual harvest, groan in our hearts, waiting for that adoption which is the ransoming of our bodies from their slavery (v. 23).

(b) The apostle is referring to the glorification which is a consequence of the redemption and adoption.

2. *Within us there is a hope and longing inspired by the Spirit:*

(a) a longing which is efficacious, realizable, because in him is the hope of final redemption;

(b) and if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead will give life to your perishable bodies too, for the sake of his spirit who dwells in you (v. 11).

Christ, the foundation of our hope

1. To complete the passage of today's epistle, we find in the verses which follow that God is the author of our hope and Christ its foundation.

(a) He did not even spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all; and must not that gift be accompanied by the gift of all else? (v. 32).

(b) Who will pass sentence against us, when Jesus Christ, who died, nay, has risen again, and sits at the right hand of God, is pleading for us? (v. 34).

2. The Pauline idea that Christ is the foundation of all our hope is repeated many times in his writings:

(a) Wishing to make known the manifold splendour of this secret among the Gentiles—Christ among you, your hope of glory (Col. 1. 27).

(b) Two irrevocable assurances, over which there could be no question of God deceiving us, were to bring firm confidence to us poor wanderers, bidding us cling to the hope we have in view, the anchorage of our souls. Sure and immovable, it reaches that inner sanctuary beyond the veil, which Jesus Christ, our escort, has entered, already a high priest now, eternally with the priesthood of Melchisedech (Heb. 6. 18-20).

3. Our hope is certain and sure, once it is founded on Christ. As yet we do not see what we hope for; but we are the mystical body of that Head in whom all we hope for has been already fulfilled.

Analysis of hope

1. *It is, above all, a theological virtue:*

Through it we unite ourselves with God, our eternal happiness.

2. *It has a double object:*

(a) eternal life,

(b) the means necessary to attain it,

(c) as a secondary object—all material goods in so far as they can lead us to heaven.

3. *It shares in the unconditional certitude of faith:*

(a) Above all it is founded on the divine omnipotence and mercy, through which even he who has not grace may attain it, and with it eternal life (2. 2. q. 18. a. 4 *ad 2um*);

(b) looked at in this way we can see its absolute certainty;

(c) however, it is uncertain whether a man will persevere in hope, because he can destroy the spiritual life which is within him;

(d) however, this does not destroy the certitude of hope (2. 2. q. 18. a. 4. *ad 3ium*).

4. *Magnanimity and humility:*

These are the two virtues which conserve and increase our hope.

(a) **Magnanimity:**

i. a virtue which is usually forgotten, and which is a spirit for doing great things.

ii. he possesses this virtue who demands great things of himself and does them.

iii. it has its roots in unlimited confidence and in the possibilities which human nature has had placed in it by God.

(b) **Humility:**

i. a misunderstood virtue at times;

ii. not an external attitude or a relationship of men to each other, but the inner attitude of a man towards the greatness of God.

iii. to know that there is an infinite distance between God and creatures, admit this and realize it.

(c) Lack of magnanimity leads to despair, while lack of humility leads to presumption. The lack of both means the loss of supernatural hope.

5. *Prayer is the expression of hope:*

It puts it into words, as St Thomas says (2. 2. q. 17. a. 4).

Hope as part of the Christian life

1. This virtue is most important because of the effects it produces in the souls which have it in a vivid and active manner.

(a) It makes us face up to the sufferings and trials of this life (Rom. 8. 18), because we see them in the light of the brilliant future;

(b) it is a source of happiness and consolation (Rom. 12. 15, 10);

(c) it strengthens all the virtues; grandeur is their perfection, and hope gives this;

(d) it makes man young again; renews his strength as time goes on;

2. It alone can give man a grand heart, strong and valiant, together with the joy which characterizes a young man.

II. THE GOSPEL

A: The victory of Faith

The example of Peter

1. *In the miraculous catch of fish:*

(a) in difficult circumstances. Peter had caught nothing, although he had laboured all the night; at this hour of the day he knew that he would have even less chance;

(b) yet, in living faith and because Christ had spoken, he let down the nets;

(c) confidence in God must be the main support of the apostle in his labours.

i. *faith in God and in his grace* more than in his own talents;

ii. *to make full use of this faith* especially in adverse circumstances.

2. *In his mission as an apostle:*

(a) Peter is the foundation stone of the Church:

i. of a church which is invincible and for all time (Matt. 16. 18);

ii. the victory which really overcomes the world is that of faith (John 5. 4).

(b) Faith to carry out his mission:

i. Peter sees better than the others the lack of proportion between the mission which Christ entrusted to them after his ascension and the means at their disposal.

ii. There is only one word of Christ which illuminated everything—Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world (Matt. 28. 20).

iii. The discourses of Peter to the people of Jerusalem, his statement before the Sanhedrin, just like the speech of Stephen before his death and the preaching of Paul in Greece, the writings of James and Hebrews 11, all show a most firm faith.

3. *A faith which moves mountains:*

(a) On one occasion when the disciples could not cast out a devil, Christ had to do it himself. Both to the father of the boy and to the apostles he gave the same reason for their failure—Because you had no faith. I promise you, if you have faith, though it be but as a grain of mustard seed, you have only to say to this mountain Remove from this place to that, and it will remove; nothing will be impossible to you (Matt. 17. 19).

(b) The apostles had greater faith than the grain of mustard seed.

(c) This faith won the victory and they did move mountains:

i. a whole concept of paganism and philosophy was overcome;

ii. the tree of the church became greater than any other and all nations took refuge in its branches.

The example of Mary, the Mother of Jesus

1. *The annunciation:*

Mary presents her one simple difficulty to the divine messenger—what does God want her to do about her vow of virginity? She is willing to do what God wills in a complete spirit of faith.

2. *The Holy Spirit speaks later through the mouth of St Elizabeth:*

Blessed art thou for thy believing; the message that was brought to thee from the Lord shall have fulfilment (Luke 1. 45).

Motives for faith

1. Apart from the general motives by which we must believe God's word and have full confidence in his grace, there are some special ones for souls who live in difficult circumstances, especially for priests and those who have some spiritual task to undertake.

2. *A providential law:*

(a) Christ is the one who calls us to the priestly vocation (John 15. 16);

(b) and as St Thomas says commenting a text of scripture—the works of God are perfect (Deut. 32. 4). Therefore, whenever God gives any power to a person, he also gives at the same time everything necessary to reduce that power from potency to act (Supp. q. 35.

a. 4. c).

(c) From this general principle he makes particular applications to the cases of Mary and the apostles.

i. Mary conceived and became the mother of God because she was full of God's disposing graces.

ii. Not merely did he make the apostles his ministers, but also he made them fitting ministers for the task entrusted to them.

3. *The promise of Christ to the apostles:*

(a) At the Last Supper he asks the Father to make their apostolic mission efficacious through unity and sanctity.

(b) This prayer must of necessity have its effect, since he hands over to his apostles all the meritorious fruits of his redemption for the pardon of sins (John 17. 9 ff.).

4. *An infallible title:*

(a) For all Christians the sacrament of baptism;

(b) for those who are married—matrimony;

(c) for the priest—orders.

B: The faith of Peter

Christ's look at Peter

1. *He always paid him special attention:*

(a) he dwells in his house (Matt. 8. 14);

(b) he has him with him as a witness to the most wonderful happenings in his life:

i. the resurrection of Jairus' daughter;

ii. the transfiguration;

iii. the agony in the garden.

(c) it is from Peter's boat that he preaches;

(d) he makes him walk on the waters (Matt. 14. 29);

(e) he is the first to have his feet washed;

(f) he has a special announcement of the resurrection sent to Peter;

(g) he makes a special appearance to him after that event (Luke 24. 34).

2. Even more important is the way he treats him when he has to talk to him directly. His look is fixed on Peter's faith. On it he wishes to build his primacy and his Church.

(a) **When he sets eyes on him for the first time his look already sees the future:**

He changes his name. Thou shalt be called Cephas (which means the same as Peter) (John 1. 42).

i. *It is a name which means a foundation;*

ii. In biblical usage to change a name means to give a summary in the new name of the life of the individual.

(b) **On this rock I will build my church** (Matt. 16. 18):

i. before he gave him the new name, now its meaning;

ii. on Peter's faith the new Church will find itself on sure foundations.

(c) But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail; when, after a while, thou hast come back to me, it is for thee to be the support of thy brethren (Luke 22. 32).

(d) **Thou wilt thrice disown me** (Matt. 26. 34):

i. Peter's faith will have a lamentable parenthesis;

ii. for the future this will be a magnificent example against over-confidence in the human element.

(e) **Another shall gird thee, and carry thee where thou goest, not of thy own will** (John 21. 18):

i. before his eyes again Peter's firm faith is united to a great love;

ii. again his figure is raised up above the other apostles;

iii. an extraordinary consideration with Peter—he tells him that his faith and love will be so firm that he will one day do what he could not or would not do during the passion—die for his Master.

A model of faith

1. *But at thy word I will let down the net:*

(a) Faith means to believe something which we cannot understand simply because of the authority of the one who tells it to us.

(b) Not merely did Peter, on this occasion, have no suspicion of what was going to happen; but all his experience as a fisherman told him that the work would be in vain.

(c) As he finally confesses his unworthiness (having first shown his faith), Jesus gives him the reward of a vocation—a fisher of men.

2. *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God:*

(a) He stands out above the others on this occasion, some said that Christ was a great prophet, etc.—but Peter sees further than that;

(b) however it is a supernatural act of faith, as Christ tells him;

(c) Christ uses this to build the foundation of the Church.

3. Lord, to whom should we go? . . . We have learned to believe, and are assured that thou art the Christ, the Son of God (John 6. 69-70).

(a) This is pronounced by Peter at a difficult moment for our Lord, when others had already left his side.

(b) It is another profession of Peter's faith.

(c) He shows a temperament and character fit to be the head of the Church.

4. *A burning and live faith:*

(a) Peter's faith in Jesus is alive—it shows itself in good works; he gives his whole life to it.

i. he leaves all things, following Christ on the road to personal sanctity.

ii. from now on he lives for the apostolate.

(b) He seals it with his blood—the greatest testimony of faith.

C: Peter's obedience

His obedience appears clearly in the Gospel:

(a) He thinks that it is useless to let down the nets, but he submits to the judgement of Christ, At thy word. . . .

(b) Without going deeper into the nature of obedience, in this scheme we shall limit ourselves to an explanation of the strict relation between obedience and piety.

Piety and the will of God

1. *There is sometimes a lamentable confusion here:*

(a) It is easy to identify piety with a series of more or less religious acts; or else it is conceived as an internal fervour or an undefined sentimentalism.

(b) some people think that, if they go frequently to church, feel things deeply and even perhaps shed tears, they are truly pious.

2. *But it is not so: that is a distortion of piety:*

(a) Piety is the homage man pays to God as his creator and Lord;

(b) before all else this homage is in a will which is prompt and firm in its obedience to the will of God;

(c) that is why devotion is the first and principal act of piety; so that no one can be pious who has not got this conformity of will with the divine will.

3. *Therefore true piety implies:*

(a) a knowledge of God's will, manifested in the commandments, counsels and duties of one's state of life; a knowledge more of the spirit than the letter, which kills.

(b) love:

i. the concrete obligation which the will of God imposes is often hard, difficult; to love the will of God is to make the difficult easy and the hard sweet;

ii. instead of looking simply at the precept or the superior who gives it, it is first of all necessary to look at the heart; the pure heart must unite itself to God, loving his holy will.

(c) execution:

i. the acts which we have already mentioned are all directed to this;

ii. execution of God's will exacts from us generosity, an identification of our will with his, even in the smallest details.

4. *He is truly pious who knows, loves and does the will of God.*

Without obedience there can be no piety

1. The virtue which unites us to God and leads us to do generously whatever he commands us is that of obedience;

(a) from which it follows that it is impossible to imagine true piety without obedience;

(b) Christ who, according to the apostle, was born to teach us to live piously, was also obedient unto death;

(c) rebellious souls, while they remain in their rebellion, cannot be truly pious.

2. We can seek God out by faith, hope and love; but these will only have their true value and effect when they are accompanied by obedience.

The advantages of obedience

It is the supreme good of the spiritual life because of the advantages it brings with it.

(a) **It is the most secure road to sanctity:**

More exactly, it is the only road, because no one can reach sanctity without it;

(b) **it contains all the other virtues;**

(c) **it is the homage of our total submission to God, with all our being.**

i. God is absolute Lord of our being and alone can dispose of all that we possess, both material and spiritual, internal and external. There is one thing he respects—our liberty.

ii. By obedience we hand over this liberty freely to God; and in this is rooted the submission to him of our whole being, just as we are.

To live in obedience

Obedience is a difficult virtue because it demands that we give up our own will.

As St Gregory says: It is a light and easy thing to give up all we possess, but to offer as a sacrifice that which we most esteem—our own liberty—that is a much more difficult sacrifice. It is the supreme sacrifice, as we can show by the life of Christ himself, who was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

D: Obedience

At thy word . . .

1. *Peter, in today's gospel, gives us several examples of obedience:*
 - (a) he puts the boat out because Christ told him to do so;
 - (b) he puts out to sea to let down the nets at his command;
 - (c) at the Lord's call he leaves all things to follow him.
2. The obedient man shall sing of his victories the scripture tells us (Prov. 21. 28) because obedience is the way to triumph over all things.

The nature of obedience

1. It is a moral virtue which makes us prompt to obey the commands of a superior, in so far as he is the representative of God (2. 2. q. 104).
 2. It is not a theological virtue, but a moral one, and in some ways (see St Thomas) the greatest of them.
- The theological virtues unite us immediately to God; the moral virtues are concerned with our relations with temporal things in order to get closer to God.

The grades of obedience

(Cf. St Ignatius of Loyola).

1. *Obedience in execution:*
This is the lowest grade and not really worthy of being called obedience unless united with one of the others.
2. *Of the will—higher:*
By it we make the superior's will our own, we agree with it, so to speak.
3. *Of the intellect:*
Consists in submitting our judgement to that of our superior, even in those things in which the force of the truth does not fully convince us. St Ignatius says that this obedience is:
 - (a) possible;
 - (b) just;
 - (c) necessary:
 - i. to make our subjection perfect;
 - ii. to preserve us from the delusions of self-love;
 - iii. for true tranquillity in obedience;
 - iv. to preserve union.
 - (d) perfect:
 - i. man sacrifices what is most excellent in him;
 - ii. completes the sacrifice;
 - iii. is a great victory (cf. St Ignatius).

4. The submission of the intellect is perfectly logical in both the natural and supernatural orders, but here we can give the reasons for the supernatural.
 - (a) The superior has the grace of his state;
 - (b) may easily be moved to command us these things by the virtue of supernatural prudence or by the gifts of the Holy Spirit;
 - (c) even if he makes a mistake we shall not, provided we obey in this way, because we do not give our obedience to man, but to God;
 - (d) because God can give us extraordinary graces to allow us to fulfil those things which, at first sight, seem to us to be impossible.
5. *If this intellectual obedience does not exist there is danger:*
 - (a) for our perseverance . . . there is a state of interior violence when our judgement persists in separating itself from that of our superior;
 - (b) there is danger for the perfection of our obedience too, because this demands love and joy in obeying; if we obey with reluctance there will be no ready response;
 - (c) because a judgement contrary to that of our superior leads to laziness in obeying and also to doubts;
 - (d) our simplicity is in danger too; we must not be one thing externally and another within. Otherwise our obedience could be a cloak for malice;
 - (e) our humility is in danger, because we are full of ourselves when our judgement is given prior place;
 - (f) fortitude is weakened, because it is of use especially in difficult cases, and if our judgement is not behind our actions then the strength of the will is not fully behind them either.

Imperfections of obedience

1. *Imperfect obedience is a sad virtue:*
 - (a) religious who are not obedient are usually sad;
 - (b) priests who are not obedient are bitter;
 - (c) layfolk who are not obedient are critical, murmur against those in authority, etc.
2. *The common imperfections of obedience are:*
Discontent, slowness in action, sorrow, weakness, murmurings, excuses.

E: The ways of following Christ

Three types of vocation

1. Not because of him who calls us, Christ; nor because of the end he is seeking, our perfection; but three types because of the way they follow the call of Christ. In the three there seems to be generosity, a desire to follow the Master.

2. Nevertheless, they are very different, and at bottom their spirit is different.

- (a) the scribe (Matt. 8. 19);
- (b) the rich young man (Matt. 19. 16-26);
- (c) St Peter in today's gospel.

First type: the scribe

1. The Fathers are unanimous in denying his good intentions. Whereupon one of the scribes came to him, and said, Master, I will follow thee wherever thou art going.
2. It would seem that the miracles he has seen made him desirous of following Christ, together with the popularity he had won. The Master's company can give him riches, position, honours, influence.
3. Christ replies: Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air their resting-places; the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head (*ibid.* 8. 20).
4. Of this kind were those in Rome who sorrowed St Paul so much; those who looked for what was their own, not that which was of Christ (Phil. 2. 21).
 - (a) They preach Christ, but for the reward which they hope for from it; they are hirelings, not true shepherds.
 - (b) How many of these there have been in every age of the Church, who have drawn near (perhaps even to the priesthood) for what they can get out of it.
 - (c) Let us purify our intention, examining once again our motives. Are we looking for the glory of Christ or his cross?

Second type: The rich young man

1. *He approached Christ with good intentions:*
 - (a) He knelt at Christ's feet—a generous action;
 - (b) he was good—he had kept the commandments;
 - (c) Christ looked on him with love and invited him to perfection.
2. *Lack of generosity:*

His generous gesture was not perfect.

 - (a) The Gospel tells us that he had many possessions and that, on hearing that he would have to give them up, he was sad.
 - (b) It is one of the passages in the gospels which excites our compassion, this of the young man going away from Jesus sad in his heart.
 - (c) How many times this is repeated in the history of the Church:
 - i. Some will not leave riches, others honours, still more their particular pleasures (even though licit) such as art, literature, studies of all kinds.
 - ii. With others it is the family, friends.

(d) All have one thing in common—sadness because of their infidelity to the divine vocation.

Third type: The generosity of Peter

1. The scene, wonderfully described by St Luke, sets in relief what is the true soul of an apostle.
2. In a few lines a mass of detail passes before our eyes, a whole drama of life.
 - (a) *the first scene:* the multitude approaches our Lord, they throng there to hear the word of God;
 - (b) *second scene:* the fishermen washing their nets, the ships on the shore, our Lord's talk with Peter;
 - (c) *third scene:* Jesus seated in the boat; the crowd listening on the shore;
 - (d) *fourth scene:* launch out into the deep;
 - (e) *fifth scene:* the full nets, the half-sinking ship, the astonishment which overcame them all;
 - (f) *sixth scene:* Peter at the feet of Christ: Depart from me;
 - (g) *seventh scene:* the call of Jesus;
 - (h) *the eighth:* the abandonment of the nets, the fishing, the boats—there are three men totally transformed; until now they had been professional fishermen, now they are disciples of Jesus.

Peter's generosity and spontaneous gesture

The most sublime moment of this passage is when Peter throws himself at the feet of our Lord and says: Depart from me, because I am a sinful man, O Lord.

1. *There is the soul of Peter revealed:*
 - (a) at the sight of the laden nets Peter does not react in avarice at the thought of the money it represents to him;
 - (b) nor through vanity that he has a great prophet in the boat and a miracle has been done there;
 - (c) his reaction is one of humility. The saints tell us that true humility can only be attained through humiliation and prayer. Prayer, because when we approach God we realize his greatness and our nothingness.
2. And Peter throws himself at our Lord's feet on seeing clearly the magnitude of his sins.

Peter's virtues

Not merely humility but also:

- (a) Work—the fulfilling of his duty.
- (b) Hospitality.
- (c) Obedience to the will of Christ.
- (d) Obedience in his mind—at thy word.
- (e) Despising of riches, the catch is not important to him.
- (f) Faith—he recognizes Christ as his Master.
- (g) Humility—confesses his sinfulness publicly.

The full fruits

1. Perfect obedience, the renunciation of all things to follow Christ.
2. It is his second call; there were four in all, four steps on the way to perfection of the first Pope.
 - (a) The first in St John (John 1. 41-42), when Christ first makes him a disciple without obliging him to leave his fishing;
 - (b) the second in today's gospel when he leaves his work to dedicate himself more perfectly to Christ's;
 - (c) the third is the call to the apostolate (Luke 6. 12 ff.; Matt. 10. 1-4; Mark 3. 13 ff.);
 - (d) the fourth is described by St John in his last chapter (John 21. 15-19) when Peter is made the supreme shepherd of the Church.

Truth in the spiritual life

How many times do we deceive ourselves?

1. *We lack the spirit of truth:*
 - (a) We do not carry in our hearts that which we hold with our lips.
 - (b) We say that we are ready to give up all things to follow Christ, and that we are ready to search for insults with him, blows, the cross—but it is not true.
2. Truthful souls like Peter are, without doubt, many—but not as many as one would think.
3. Let us ask the grace from our Lord through Peter's intercession.

F: Peter's steps

Perfection

When we think of Peter giving up all things to follow Christ we may also believe that he has already won the heights of perfection. Yet there awaits us the scandal of his denial of his Master.

1. Was that a true act of apostasy and a big step backward? Perhaps it was not more than one of those possible falls on the way to God.

2. Perfection is a gradual thing, because grace is accommodated to nature and works with it—it does not destroy it. We do not normally proceed by leaps and bounds.

(a) Except in some cases which are moral miracles, the soul goes forward gradually, perfecting itself by successive purifications.

(b) Asceticism knows no other programme and the mystical grades come to the same thing.

3. *Grace means illumination of the mind and movements of the will:*

(a) The first flash of grace shows us that we must follow the call of God, then come others which point out to us the different obstacles we must overcome.

(b) If in each one of these the will corresponds with the grace given, then the soul ascends little by little, a step at a time.

The case of St Peter

1. *The Lord says to him: I will make you a fisher of men:*

Peter sees which is his road, it is the grace of a vocation and the first correspondence of the will.

2. *His faith, the beginning of perfection, a gift of God and his grace:*

In Caesarea he confesses Christ and his divine sonship—he had received another illumination from heaven. Christ himself says so.

3. *But had Peter really left all things?*

(a) It would seem not; he had not yet left his carnal love, nor his own judgement.

(b) Because then Christ began to announce his coming passion and Peter, taking him apart, began to argue with him (Matt. 16. 22). Our Lord's reply shows that Peter in this was not following him—he thought man's way, not as God thinks.

4. There still remained another obstacle for him to overcome, his self-love and vanity.

(a) Though all else should lose courage over thee, yet I will never lose mine (Matt. 26. 33).

(b) It was a hard purification that awaited him; he had to fall to know himself.

(c) He falls; then he receives another illumination when our Lord looks at him. He weeps bitterly (Luke 22. 62).

(d) In a moment Peter has 'remembered', i.e. he has realized something which he had not previously understood. He has seen his weakness and the love of Christ.

5. The passion of Christ was a new light which opened before his eyes the sight of God's love and mercy, in comparison with his own nothingness.

Results: Peter's giant strides**1. Lovest thou me?**

Peter weeps, he loves and is humble.

(a) The Lord sees that he is now strong enough to bear the prophecy of his own martyrdom—which Peter accepts without a word.

(b) He who was formerly scandalized at the thought of the passion sees that the supreme Pastor has a cross for his throne.

2. Is there anything else?

(a) Yes, we can pass from this Peter to the one who writes in his letter to the Church:

i. Your lot will be a blessed one if you are reproached for the name of Christ (1 Pet. 4. 14).

ii. Be sober, and watch well; the devil, who is your adversary, goes about roaring like a lion (*ibid.* 5. 8).

(b) How many graces were given to Peter and how great, finally, was his co-operation!

G: Obedience to God

St Peter, setting out into the deep with his little boat and letting down the nets at our Lord's command is an example of obedience.

To obey God is of obligation

1. He is the creator and Lord of all; which imposes on his creatures the obligation of obedience to his will: material things automatically; animals by their instincts, man by his free will.

2. It is the centre of the divine plan—the subordination of one thing to another in creation, and directing them all to their first cause and last end.

A most agreeable virtue in God's sight

1. We cannot place it above the theological virtues, because they are the essence of the spiritual life, and the union with God by faith, hope and above all, charity is well above the giving up of earthly things for God. The latter is but a means to an end—a means to rapid union with God by charity.

(a) Among these means obedience is the quickest way to God, because it leads us to renounce one of the deepest rooted of all our material possessions, our own self.

(b) For this reason St Gregory says that sacrifices immolate a flesh other than our own; obedience sacrifices one's own will.

i. Mary's 'I will' is at the heights of sanctity because it made her God's slave—handmaid.

ii. The obedience of Christ merited for him a name above all others. He gave even his very life.

2. It is a virtue which is most pleasing to God because by it we practice the abandonment of self, the most noble act of religion and well above any sacrifices or other offerings.

3. And it is one of the highest virtues, especially because of its union with charity of which it is both an effect and a sign.

(a) The man who claims knowledge of him without keeping his commandments is a liar (1 John 2. 4).

(b) Christ said this several times; if we love him we must keep his commandments.

The easiest of all to practise

1. It can enter into all our acts, even those of the other virtues.

2. It can have as its object things which please us, so long as we do them for God and because it is his will—even the preservation of life or marriage, etc.

3. It will reach its peak when it inhibits our own wishes, since then we do act out of pure obedience and we can truly say that our will has been simply that of God.

(a) All the steps of Christ's life were meritorious and obedient;

(b) the greatest of them all was that of accepting a death on the cross—repugnant to human nature as such.

H: Qualities of obedience**1. Obedience:**

To be acceptable to God, it must have certain qualities, which are thus expressed by St Bonaventure: it must be prompt, simple, persevering, joyful, courageous and universal.

2. Prompt:

Since all that we have comes from God and slowness to obey implies a misuse of his goods, not our own.

3. Simple:**(a) Without examination or argument:**

i. If it is God who commands, then his judgements do not need to be argued over;

ii. if it be man, then he knows the reasons better than the inferior;

iii. in any case, the obedient man never goes wrong.

(b) The reason for authority is not intellectual superiority or even moral goodness, but the position held by the superior.

4. Persevering:**(a) A virtue which begins and does not continue . . .**

He who perseveres to the end he shall be saved (Matt. 10. 22).

- (b) to begin is easy; merit lies in persevering:
- i. Of what use is it to start the race unless the goal is reached?
 - ii. Our Lord was obedient even unto death.

5. *Joyful:*

- (a) Forced obedience is that of a slave, not of a Christian.
- (b) He who obeys should feel the joy of one who serves God:
- i. If even almsdeeds have to be given joyfully (2 Cor. 9. 7), how much more obedience;
 - ii. Peter, when the hour came for him to suffer something for the name of Christ, went out joyful from the Council (Acts 5. 41).

6. *Courageous and animated:*

Because it is God we serve; fortitude is necessary in him who obeys and in him who commands obedience.

7. *Universal:*

- (a) It must stretch as far as authority stretches;
- (b) but it can even go further, because perfect obedience goes beyond obligation, and extends itself to all.

I: God and myself: humility

1. *A contrast:*

- (a) From the contrast between the greatness of God and the nothingness of Peter came that exclamation: Depart from me, because I am a sinful man, O Lord.
- (b) The knowledge of oneself together with that of God's greatness should produce these two immediate effects:
- i. humility;
 - ii. strong confidence.
- (c) For this reason the soul which desires perfection should take refuge in self-knowledge and only come out from thence to drink the nectar of the divine knowledge.

2. *Humility:*

- (a) **Black stands out if it is placed on a white background:**
We shall never know anything of ourselves if we do not make sure that we know God; considering his grandeur, let us take refuge in our nothingness; at the sight of his purity let us see our uncleanness; as we think of his humility let us see how far we are from being humble.

(b) *His grandeur:*

Lord thou hast laid the foundation of the earth at its beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They will perish, but thou wilt remain; they will all be like a cloak that grows threadbare, and thou wilt lay them aside like a garment, and exchange them for new . . . (Heb. 1. 10-12).

(c) *His purity:*

- i. he is the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world;
- ii. in comparison we might think of our sins, year by year, day by day.

(d) *His humility:*

- i. Being God, he was satisfied to become man . . . (Phil. 2. 6);
- ii. and man, who is as nothing before God and insignificant in the world, believes himself to be the centre around which it all revolves.

3. *Courageous confidence:*

(a) St Peter was capable of all things once he had learned his littleness through his denial of his Master and once he trusted absolutely in the power of the risen Christ.

(b) Humility is not merely negative—it receives its power from the knowledge that our nothingness is sustained by God's almighty power.

J: Priestly abandonment

The example and the voice of Christ

1. *The conduct of Christ:*

On getting into the boat:

- i. *He asks Peter to draw away a little from the shore*, that is, to leave the land so that he may be seen and heard by all the multitude.
- ii. *This petition implies a lesson in the apostolate*; the priest must live on the ship and separated from the land if he wishes to be seen and heard by the crowds, and if his preaching is to produce any results.

2. *His life:*

- (a) He is born poor and he lives poorly, as a preparation for his public life;
- (b) his preaching life is a continual exercise of poverty; the foxes have their holes and the birds of the air their nests, but the Son of Man has not a place where he can lay his head (Matt. 8. 20);
- (c) there is no record of his ever having touched a coin—when one was necessary to pay the tribute he tells Peter to go and catch a fish and pay it with the coin he will find in the fish's mouth;
- (d) it is not to be wondered at that he gave his life to preaching to the poor (cf. Matt. 11. 5; Luke 4. 18).

3. *His death:*

Poor at birth; poor during life, he was extraordinarily poor at the moment of death; when he is stripped of everything, including life itself, it is then that he pays the full debt of sin for the whole world. It was his own prophecy (John 12. 32):

- (a) the doctrine of Christ concerning detachment has its perfection on the cross;
- (b) because of this the cross has produced so much fruit.

The teaching of Christ

1. In general Christ taught all men:

- (a) that no one can serve two masters, God and Mammon (Matt. 6. 24):
 - i. riches enslave a man—and this is especially true of the priest who has dedicated himself to the service of God;
 - ii. he must adjust his way of life accordingly.
- (b) that it is easier for the camel to enter into the eye of a needle than for a rich man to be saved:
 - i. riches are the thorns which choke the seed of the word of God;
 - ii. the priestly heart is, of itself, good ground; that is proved by the fact that God has called him;
 - iii. not merely must the priest be careful to see that the thorns do not choke the seed of God's word in his heart, but also he must live free from such encumbrances, so that he may sow it in the hearts of others.
- (c) in a beautiful image Christ taught us to have full confidence in our heavenly Father, who clothes the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.
 - i. He means by that that the search for the kingdom of God must come first; the rest will be added unto us (Matt. 6. 33).
 - ii. The teaching is for all—but specially for the priest who has been called to spread the kingdom of God, without allowing any other preoccupation to disturb him in his task.

2. For the apostles in particular:

- (a) Abandonment of earthly things is an indispensable condition of the apostolate:
 - i. it is as necessary as the money to build the tower, of which he spoke on another occasion;
 - ii. just as it is necessary to have sufficient forces to attack a strong enemy, so it is absurd to attempt to become a soldier of Christ without first of all leaving all other things (Luke 14. 33);
 - iii. this is the cleanness of heart which Christ demands from the priest.
- (b) That is why he tells the apostles that they must not take with them on their apostolic journeys money, scrip, two pairs of shoes, etc. It is a lesson in abandonment of earthly things (Matt. 10. 9-10);
- (c) It is the reason for spiritual fertility in their work: St Peter asks what reward they shall have who have left all things for Christ. Jesus replies announcing a double reward: (1) heaven

for all eternity, where they will be seated as judges of all mankind; (2) the fruitfulness of their apostolate, a hundredfold. Those who have given up earthly families shall receive a multitude of heavenly children.

Priestly abandonment (scheme 2)

The voice of the Popes

1. In this scheme we shall limit ourselves to direct quotation from some papal documents on this question of detachment from earthly things.

2. Pius XII: Menti Nostrae:

(a) Detachment of will and of yourselves in generous obedience to Superiors, and renouncement of earthly pleasures which chaste living requires, must go hand in hand with detachment of heart from riches and things of earth. We earnestly exhort you, dear brethren, not to fix your affections on the perishable, passing things of this world. Take as models those great saints of ancient and modern times, who while keeping aloof from material goods, had at the same time a deep trust in divine Providence and a burning priestly zeal. Thus it was that they could produce truly marvellous results, confiding solely in God, who assuredly is never found wanting in our needs.

(b) Even the priest who is not specially vowed to poverty must always be guided by the spirit and love of this virtue, a love that ought to show itself in the simplicity and modesty of his manner of life, in his living quarters, and in his generosity towards the poor.

(c) More particularly let him abhor and refrain from taking part in economic schemes, enterprises which would hinder him in his pastoral duties, and lessen the respect which is due to him from his people. Since it is the office of the priest to use every endeavour to save souls, he should always be ready to apply to himself those words of St Paul: I do not seek yours, but you (2 Cor. 12. 14).

3. Pius XI: Ad catholici sacerdotii:

(a) Not less than by his chastity, the catholic priest ought to be distinguished by his detachment. Surrounded by the corruptions of a world in which everything must be bought and sold, he must pass through them utterly free from selfishness. He must spurn all vile greed for earthly gain, since he is in search of souls, not of money; of the glory of God, not his own. He is no mercenary, working for a temporal recompense, nor yet an employee who, while attending conscientiously to the duties of his office, at the same time is looking to his career and personal promotion. He is the good soldier of Christ who entangleth not himself with secular business, that he may please him to whom he hath engaged himself.

(b) The minister of God is a father of souls, and he knows that his toil and his cares cannot adequately be repaid with wealth and honours of earth. He is not indeed forbidden to receive fitting sustenance, according to the teaching of the apostle. They that serve the altar may partake with the altar (1 Cor. 9. 13); but once called to the inheritance of the Lord, as his very title 'cleric' declares, the priest must expect no other recompense than that promised by Christ to his apostles; Your reward is very great in heaven.

(c) Woe if he join the herd of the worldly over whom the Church, like the apostle, grieves: All seek the things that are their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's. Such a priest, besides failing in his vocation, would earn the contempt, even of his own people. They would perceive in him a deplorable contradiction between his conduct and his doctrine, so clearly expounded by Christ, which the priest is bound to teach: 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.

(d) Judas, an apostle of Christ, one of the twelve, as the evangelists sadly observe, was led down to the abyss of iniquity precisely through the spirit of greed for earthly things. Remembering him, it is easy to grasp how the same spirit could have brought such harm upon the Church throughout the centuries. Greed, called by the Holy Ghost the 'root of all evil', can incite to any crime, and a priest who is poisoned by this vice, even though he stop short of crime, will nevertheless, consciously or unconsciously, make common cause with the enemies of God and of the Church, and co-operate in their evil designs.

(e) On the other hand, by sincere disinterestedness the priest can hope to win the hearts of all. For detachment from earthly goods, if inspired by a lively faith, is always accompanied by tender compassion towards the unfortunate of every kind. Thus the priest becomes a veritable father of the poor. Mindful of the touching words of his Saviour: As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me, he sees in them, and with particular affection venerates and loves, Jesus Christ himself.

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

FRATERNAL RECONCILIATION

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: 1 Peter 3. 8-15

Gospel: Matthew 5. 20-24

Texts related to the theme of the Gospel

1. *Weigh one's words:*

Guard thy tongue, guard thy soul; thoughtless speech may bring ruin. Prov. 13. 3.

The speech of the wise is learning's ornament; the fool babbles on. Prov. 15. 2.

Skilful is he who has skill to check his tongue; learned he is that knows how to spare his breath. Prov. 17. 27. Cf. 21. 23.

Sure as dreams come from an overwrought brain, from glib utterance comes ill-considered speech. Eccles. 5. 2.

Wisdom keeps its utterance in reserve, where the fool's vanity cannot wait. The babbler cuts his own throat. Eccles. 20. 7. Cf. 23. 7.

And I say this, that on the day of judgement men will be brought to account for every thoughtless word they have spoken. Thy words will be matter to acquit, or matter to condemn thee. Matt. 12. 36-37.

Your manner of speaking must always be gracious, with an edge of liveliness, ready to give each questioner the right answer. Col. 4. 6.

It is for us men to be ready listeners, slow to speak our minds, slow to take offence. James 1. 19.

2. *Against detraction:*

Beware, then, of whispering, and to ill purpose; ever let your tongues refrain from calumny. Think not that the secret word goes for nought; lying lips were ever the soul's destroying. Wis. 1. 11. Cf. Prov. 4. 24.

You must put aside, then, every trace of ill will and deceitfulness, your affectations, the grudges you bore, and all the slanderous talk. 1 Peter 2. 1. Cf. James 4. 11.

3. *We should pardon others:*

Then Peter came to him and asked, Lord, how often must I see my brother do me wrong, and still forgive him; as much as seven times? Jesus said to him, I tell thee to forgive, not seven wrongs, but seventy times seven. Matt. 18. 21-22. Cf. Luke 17. 3 ff.; Eph. 4. 32; Col. 3. 13.

4. *Fraternal charity:*

Three sights warm my heart; God and man wish them well: peace in the clan, good will among neighbours, man and wife well matched. *Ecclus.* 25. 1.

May God, the author of all endurance and all encouragement, enable you to be all of one mind according to the mind of Christ Jesus, so that you may all have but one heart and one mouth, to glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. You must befriend one another, as Christ has befriended you, for God's honour. *Rom.* 15. 5-7. Cf. *1 Cor.* 1. 10; *Eph.* 4. 3; *Phil.* 2. 2.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

In the Office and Mass of today there is a certain unity grouped round the idea of fraternal charity. The Gospel warns us, not merely against the grave sin of murder, but also against sins of the tongue and anger. We are told that we must pardon our brother any offence against us before we offer our gift at the altar. The same thought is contained in the Epistle.

The foundation of this love for our brethren is the love of God; therefore, in the Collect, we pray that God may increase the fire of this love for him in our hearts, that we may love him in all things and above all things. Charity towards others is but a manifestation of our love for God. The means to acquire this love is insinuated in the Communion antiphon: One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. Those who remain close to God—in his house—will always walk in his love, and therefore will love their brothers in Christ. In the Epistle St Peter tells us to give glory to Christ in our hearts. This is impossible without true love for our neighbour. Indeed the best glory we can give to God is to love him in others, even if they have done us harm, because we have all been baptized in Christ, who is the common Head of the whole Body.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 1 Peter 3. 8-15

1. *Argument:*

St Peter wrote this Epistle with his mind fixed on the persecutions and false testimony brought against the Christians of his day. He tells them to destroy the evil effects of this by their exemplary conduct. This same idea runs through the passage assigned for today. Thus, not to return evil for evil no doubt refers to the persecutions, as do verses 13 and 14—indeed, the rest of this chapter.

Therefore the sum of Christian virtues taught by St Peter forms an extension or explanation of his first statement, in which he commands them to lead exemplary lives. Good example is the best weapon always against calumny, and also the best recommendation for a Christian way of life. This passage can be divided into two parts; in the first there are general counsels, while the second contains an exhortation to suffer for Christ.

2. *Texts:*(a) *In a word . . . (v. 8.)*

After dealing with the rules for particular states of life he now has some advice for all. They must all be of one mind, charitable and humble. With regard to the idea of having one mind with Christ, cf. *1 Cor.* 12. 12; *Rom.* 12. 16; 15. 5; *Phil.* 2. 2. Charity, mercy and humility are necessary virtues for all Christians, with which the pagan world was converted in the early days of the Church.

(b) *not repaying injury with injury . . .*

In the Sermon of the Mount Christ substituted for the *Lex Talionis* a more perfect law, that of love. St Stephen gives us a perfect example of its application. St Peter warns us that God's call to us demands this—we are heirs to the blessing of heaven and we must desire that for all men. St Augustine says, Do you desire that they should cease to persecute you? Then pray for them that they may cease to be evil-minded; thus you will lose an enemy and gain a brother.

3. *Yes, long life and prosperous days. . .*

St Peter, as a good Jew, always has the Old Testament in mind. God cannot but love those who seek to do good. He quotes from memory the LXX version of *Ps.* 33. 12-17.

4. *If, after all, you should have to suffer . . .*

The beginning of the second part. His hearers tried to be meek and humble, but this at times only increases the fury of those who persecute the good. Therefore he goes on to give the real reason for their patience. If we have to suffer then we can be glad, because thus we are more like Christ, who suffered and died for us. In this way he rose to glory and convinced his enemies. This thought is based on the teaching of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (*Matt.* 5. 29), in which we are warned to fear God rather than man (*Isaias* 8. 12 ff.).

B: The Gospel: Matthew 5. 20-24

Pharisees and Scribes

The word Pharisee means separatist, and that really explains their history and teachings. At the time of the restoration of Israel after the Babylonian captivity we can say that the whole Nation was

Pharisee in this sense. The Jews never recovered their entire religious or political liberty, but Nehemias erected two walls round them to preserve them, the physical wall round the City of Jerusalem and the moral-political wall of nationalism to preserve them from corruption from false doctrines.

This worked very well under the Persians, but with the Greek invasion came the difficulty. Alexander was determined to bring Greek civilization to the peoples he conquered, and the Book of Machabees gives us a perfect picture of the Jewish reaction to all this (cf. 1 Mach. 1. 13-16, 2. 19 and 27). Soon there was a union between all the pious Jews (the separatists), who left the city and began the war against the Greek innovations. God gave them the victory—but in that victory came the seeds of defeat, because the upper classes took on many aspects of the Greek civilization. It is then that true Pharisees appear for the first time, as rebels against this tendency. These were lovers of the old Jewish traditions and were opposed by the Sadducees, and between the two there was often open conflict, if not civil war.

The doctrinal difference between the two parties consists in the fact that, for the Sadducees, the main element—if not the only one—was the Law. The Pharisees, on the other hand, put on an equal level with the Law the traditions received from Moses and the Ancients. From these latter elements they took up, as special points, the sabbath observance, the paying of tithes and ritual cleanliness. These they pushed to such extremes that the observance of them became impossible for ordinary people; thus the Law became an intolerable burden. Interior sanctity took second place compared with ritual observance. This leads to the hypocrisy with which Christ challenged them many times. They were also guilty of avarice. However, there were many good men among their number, Nicodemus, Gamaliel and others whose names we do not know. (Cf. John 3. 1; Acts 5. 34, 15. 4.) They tended to apply the absolute letter of the law in matters of minor importance, while they took no notice of other precepts which were of greater weight. Some they even falsified, e.g. they changed the law which commanded love of one's neighbour into hatred for him (Matt. 23. 34).

The Scribes were chosen from the Pharisees, and were really men of letters, learned in the Law. Their office was to study it, teach it and so form the consciences of the people. Their apprenticeship was a long one and once it was over they enjoyed great prestige, teaching in the court of the Temple and in the synagogues, and occupying the position of judges even in the Sanhedrin itself. Sometimes the Gospel refers to them as the Doctors of the Law. Since they nearly all belong to the sect of the Pharisees, they were guilty of the same errors we have mentioned above, errors for which the Scribes, as the learned men of the party, were mainly responsible.

Texts

1. *If your justice does not give fuller measure than the justice of the Scribes and Pharisees . . .*

We should remember that pharisaical justice—a conduct which formally and exteriorly was correct and excellent, but only in some things—will not save us. There are Catholics who are generous with their money but not with their good-will towards their neighbour. They retain hatred or envy of him in their hearts. There are others who pardon offences easily, but fail to pay their just debts. There are others who are zealous in making pilgrimages, who are loaded down with scapulars and who multiply prayers, but who are far from the true spirit of devotion (cf. Boylan, *The Sunday Epistles and Gospels*, Dublin, 1942, 2, p. 122).

2. *You have heard that it was said to the men of old . . .*

(a) Most probably our Lord is talking about the doctrine of the Pharisees:

One of the arguments to back up this opinion is that our Lord corrects that law (v. 28). Perhaps he is speaking about the law as interpreted by the tradition of Moses and the teachings of the doctors of the law; he perfects the former and corrects the latter.

(b) **The law was good, but not perfect:**

Christ does not abolish the Law of Moses; he perfects it. In what does this perfection consist? Fr Puente answers this question in his *Meditaciones*: The New Law is summed up in those words of Christ, Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5. 48). God's perfection consists in three things:

- i. *the absence of all sin or defect*; therefore it is impossible for him to do anything imperfect or against his goodness;
- ii. *to possess all possible virtues and perfections*;
- iii. *to have each one of these in the greatest possible degree of excellence.*

(c) **The divine and the evangelical perfection:**

The law of the Gospel requires of us that our perfection should be like that of God in these three things:

- i. *First* we must remove all evil as far from us as possible, and by this we mean avoiding sin, both mortal and venial. We may notice how Christ, in the course of the Sermon on the Mount, goes through the negative commandments and shows us how we can remove all imperfection in our way of keeping them. For example, in the case of the seventh commandment, so as not to fall into the temptation of taking from others what is theirs by right, he tells us to give to them that which is ours (cf. Luke 6. 29).

ii. *Secondly*, the Law of the Gospel extends to all virtues, both theological and moral, by which we come into constant touch with God and with our neighbour.

iii. *Thirdly*, that Law tells us to possess these virtues in the greatest possible degree. It warns us that our intention must be so pure that we should not let our right hand know what our left is doing (Matt. 6. 3). We are told that we must love God with all that we have, body, mind, heart and soul (Luke 10. 27). The love of our neighbour must place special emphasis on our enemies, in direct imitation of our Heavenly Father, who makes his sun shine on good and bad alike.

From this it follows that my principal purpose in the spiritual life must be to keep this Law of the Gospel, which is the Law of Love, as perfectly as possible, in imitation of Christ, my model.

To these perfections of the New Law as enumerated by Fr Puente we may add the abundance of grace given under that Law, the helps to keep the commandments, the greater weight of the motives for keeping that law, the divine goodness manifested in it through the Incarnation and Redemption. There is also the application of that Redemption through the Sacraments. The Old Law was a law of fear; the New Law is one of love. Love must predominate in all we do and is the touchstone of our spiritual life. Therefore the New Law insists on the interior holiness required in its members, not the exterior; the perfect keeping of the commandments, and on the doing of the divine will instead of our own.

3. . . . *thou shalt not kill* . . .

Christ begins with this commandment because the breaking of it is principally against the law of love of the neighbour. He limits himself to pointing out that it does not merely command us not to take life, but not to cherish interior anger and its exterior manifestations. This teaching he develops according to the ideas in vogue at the time, and to understand this passage we must explain them briefly. There were three Jewish tribunals, one consisting of three judges capable of dealing with minor offences against the law, the second court of twenty-three judges dealt with crimes and could impose the death penalty; finally the Grand Sanhedrin of seventy-two members was the competent authority for handling crimes against religion. These three are mentioned here under the names of the court of justice, the Council and Hell fire.

The three offences mentioned by our Lord are first of all interior anger against our neighbour, exterior insults offered to him, and lastly, the worst insult of all, the accusation of impiety. The real meaning is probably this, Christ is teaching them and us not to give way to anger or to exterior sins of the tongue against our

neighbour. Anger tends to destroy in us God's image, which is essentially one of peace and harmony. It is opposed to the meekness and humility of Christ, our model. It blinds the intelligence and leads to graver sins, hatred and even murder.

4. *If thou art bringing thy gift, then, . . .*

God does not pardon the faults of those who will not forgive their neighbour or of those who have offended against their brethren. First they must be reconciled with their brothers. If this was true of those who came to offer the sacrifices of the Old Law, how much more is it true of those who come to offer that of the Mass, God himself.

By Jewish law one who had some legal complaint against another could challenge him with it in the open street and lead him before the judges. This is what Christ means when he says that we should come to terms with our enemy in the way, i.e. while walking along the road towards the tribunal; because once we get there we shall be faced with the judge and the full force of the law will be applied to the case. There can be no agreed settlements then.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST EPHRAEM

(Some extracts from *Sermo* 5, on Matthew 11. 29-30.)

Charity and forgiveness

Well did the Lord say that his burden is light, for what great burden is it to forgive a brother his offences against us? It is light, indeed nothing, that we should of our free will pardon, forget, and be ourselves at once held as just before God. He has not commanded us to offer riches, calves or goats, nor even fasts or vigils, so that you cannot say: I have no such things, I cannot do what he asks. Instead he commands what is light and easy: Forgive your brother his faults against you, and I will at once forgive yours against me. You condone small offences, little debts, a few pence; but I forgive you to the extent of six hundred talents of silver. You only pardon something, you do not give away anything that is yours. I both grant you healing of soul, forgiveness and a kingdom. . . . If you will not be reconciled to your brother how can you seek pardon from me? I, your Lord, command and you do not listen to me; you who are but a servant, how do you dare to come and offer sacrifices and gifts, prayers and first fruits, when you are all the time cherishing rancour against your brother in your heart? Just as you turn your face away from your brother, so shall I turn my face away from you, from your prayers and gifts. . . .

It remains to us therefore to hold nothing above charity; nothing is to be preferred before the possession of charity. Let us have nothing against another, nor render evil for evil, nor let the sun go down upon our anger. Rather let us forgive everything that is done against us and so procure for ourselves that charity which covers a multitude of sins. For what profit is it to us to have all things and yet to be without this life-giving charity? . . .

It is clear, therefore, that in no other way are you disciples of Christ except by the practice of true charity, for he who hates his brother while he believes that he loves God is a liar and deceives himself. . . .

Rare and wonderful thing this, that he who has true charity fulfils the whole of the law, for love is the fulfilling of the law according to St Paul (Rom. 13. 10). There is nothing in heaven or earth that can surpass the immense power of charity. It is the fulfilling of the law; it is perfect and certain salvation. . . . Blessed the soul that is endowed with charity, that is not puffed up, that does not envy, hates no one at any time, is not repelled by the poor, does not turn away from those in want or despise the widow, orphan or stranger. He who has this charity does not merely love those who love him, but also those who hate him and afflict him. To such a one the profits of charity increase in him day by day. His reward and crown is prepared for him while the kingdom of heaven is bestowed on him as a gift. The very angels proclaim him blessed while the Powers of heaven together praise him. The angels receive such a one with joy and gladness, the heavenly gates are opened wide to him and through them he passes to be brought before the throne of God to be crowned by him and with him he shall reign for ever.

II. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(In Matt. 16. PG. 31. 239-254)

Charity and pardon

1. *Charity, source of all virtue:*

Charity is the mother of all good, the distinctive mark of his disciples, and the compendium of all that we have. Therefore rightly does he tear out by the root enmity which destroys charity. Do not think that he is exaggerating in what he says; first think of the evils which his laws correct and then praise him for his gentleness. God desires nothing more than that we should be united and be in harmony one with another. Therefore, in himself and in his disciples both of the Old and New Law, he praises this virtue and commandment and shows himself as the enemy of those who break it. There is nothing which leads to evil so quickly as a lack of charity. . . .

2. *Charity worth more than sacrifices:*

He says: If thou art bringing thy gift before the altar and rememberest there that thy brother has some ground of complaint against thee, leave thy gift lying there before the altar, and go home; be reconciled with thy brother first, and then come back to offer thy gift. . . . What goodness and kindness beyond compare! He does not care for his own honour but for the good of our neighbour and by it he gives us to understand that even the former threats do not come from enmity or the desire to punish, but from love. Can there be any phrases which show greater meekness? Break off your adoration, he says, so that your charity may increase, because it is also a sacrifice to be reconciled to thy brother.

3. *The need for such reconciliation:*

Why does he command us to act in this way? To my way of thinking there are two reasons for it. First of all, he wishes to show us how much he esteems charity, holding it as the greatest sacrifice, without which he will not accept any other. Secondly, he wishes to show us the absolute necessity of reconciliation. . . . To bring about this union he made all things; for this reason God became man and worked all those wonderful miracles.

St Paul also stresses this need for reconciliation when he says, Let not the sun go down upon your anger. . . . During the day there are many things which distract us and seek our attention; but at night, when we find ourselves alone and thrown back upon ourselves the waves grow larger and the storm increases. That is why St Paul tries to get in first by handing us over to darkness reconciled and at peace, so that the devil will not be able to take advantage of the night to increase our anger and make it more deadly. Thus Christ himself permitted no delay, lest perhaps the sacrifice should be put off from day to day and never accomplished. Well does he know that this evil needs an urgent remedy; and just as a wise doctor prescribes not merely preventive medicine but also that which cures, so Christ does both these things. By forbidding us to call another a fool he gives us a remedy which prevents enmities arising; by commanding reconciliation he gives us a curative remedy for the evils which follow on enmity. . . . There is nothing which does more to destroy our life than long delays in doing good. Indeed it is this which causes us to lose everything more often than not.

III. ST CYPRIAN

Oppose hatred and vengeance with patience and love

Christian patience:

For we have this virtue in common with God; from him patience has its beginning, from him come its dignity and glory. The origin

and greatness of patience proceed from God as its author. Man ought to love the thing which is dear to God; the good which the divine Majesty loves, that it commands. If God is our Lord and Father, then let us imitate his patience, because it is fitting that servants should be obedient, no less than it is right that sons should not be degenerate.

But what and how great is the patience of God? . . . Although revenge is in his power, he prefers to be patient for a long time, bearing with us mercifully and putting off his wrath, so that, if it be possible, the long protracted evil may at some time cease, and man, plunged in the contagion of error and sins, may, even though late, be converted to God. As he himself says to us: Why do you choose death, men of Israel? Die who will, his death is none of my contriving, says the Lord God; come back to me, and live (Ezech. 18. 31-32). And again: Come back to the Lord your God; he is ever gracious and merciful, ever patient and rich in pardon; threatens he calamity, even now he is ready to forgive (Joel 2. 13). Referring to this the apostle, calling sinners to repentance, says: Or is it that thou art presuming on that abundant kindness of his, which bears with thee and waits for thee? Dost thou not know that God's kindness is inviting thee to repent? . . .

And so that we may more fully understand that patience is a thing of God, and that whosoever is patient and meek is an imitator of God the Father, when the Lord in his Gospel was giving us precepts for salvation and instructing his disciples towards perfection, he says: You have heard that it was said to the men of old . . . (Matt. 5. 21 ff.). He said that the children of God would thus become perfect. He showed that they were thus completed, and taught that they were restored to a heavenly birth if the patience of God our Father dwells in us, if that divine likeness which Adam had lost by sin be manifested and shine forth in all our actions. What a glory it is to become like unto God!

Nor did Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, teach this in words only, but he fulfilled it also in his deeds. Because he had said that he came down from heaven to do the will of his Father, so among the wonderful virtues which he displayed, he maintained the patience of the Father in his endurance. Finally, all his actions from his very birth are characterized by patience. Coming down from heaven, the Son of God did not scorn to take to himself the flesh of man and although he himself was not a sinner, he bore the sins of others. He suffers himself to become mortal so that the guiltless may be put to death for the guilty's salvation. The Lord is baptized by his servant, and he who is about to grant remission of sins, does not disdain to wash his body in the waters of regeneration. He is hungry and suffers need that those who had long been hungry for the word of grace may be fed by the heavenly bread. . . . He could bear Judas

to the very last with long-suffering patience, could take meat with his enemy, could know the foe in his own household and not point him out openly nor refuse his traitor's kiss. Moreover in dealing with the Jews how great is his equanimity and patience, turning the unbeliever to the faith by gentle persuasion, soothing the ungrateful by concessions, answering gently those who contradicted him, bearing with the proud in mercy, yielding with humility to his persecutors, wishing always to gather together the killers of the prophets and those who had always been rebellious against God, even to the very last hour of his cross and passion. . . .

And after all these things he will receive his murderers if they will only be converted and come to him; and with a saving patience he who is patient to preserve closes his church to none. His adversaries, his blasphemers, those who were always enemies to his name, if they repent of their sins acknowledging the crimes they have committed, he receives, not merely by giving them pardon for their sins, but also the reward of the heavenly kingdom. . . .

It is patience which both commends us to God and keeps us united with him; which assuages anger, bridles the tongue, governs the mind, guards peace, rules over discipline, breaks the force of lust, represses the violence of pride, extinguishes the fire of enmity, checks the power of riches, eases the needs of the poor. . . . It makes men humble in adversity, brave in time of sorrow, gentle towards wrongs and insults. It teaches us to pardon those who wrong us, resists temptations, suffers persecutions, perfects martyrs. It is patience which fortifies firmly the very foundations of our faith.

IV. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

The folly of anger

Let us consider how great a sin is that of anger, through which, when we cease to be mild, the meekness of the divine image is lost in us. Through anger wisdom is lost too, so that we no longer know what we do or in what manner we should do it . . . because it takes away the light of the mind, confusing it and stirring it up. . . . Through anger justice is abandoned, for it is written: The anger of man worketh not the justice of God. When the mind is thrown into disorder this blunts the judgements of reason so that whatever our anger may suggest is considered to be right. . . .

There are two ways by which anger can be subdued and made to abandon its hold on the mind. The first way is this; a cautious mind considers well before it begins to do anything, the possible affronts it is liable to meet and, mindful of the insults offered to our Redeemer, prepares itself for contradictions. Should these indeed come its way, then the more prudently it is armed beforehand the more courageously it meets them. For one caught unprepared by adversity

is like a man caught asleep by his enemy; he is slain the more easily because the enemy is striking a man who is unresisting. So before taking any action the mind should carefully dwell upon the opposition it may meet with, that, bearing this in mind at all times and confronting it with the breastplate of patience, it may through caution both overcome what it meets and count as a blessing that which it does not meet.

The second way of keeping our peace of mind is this; when we think of the faults of others we should also reflect upon our own sins, by which we have done harm to others. For when we look at our own frailty it moves us to forgive the ills that are done to us by others. For he will bear patiently with those who injure him who remembers that there may be much in his own conduct which demands patience in others. It is as though fire were extinguished with water when, should anger surge up in us, each one recalls to mind his own faults; for a man who remembers that he has himself committed sins against God and his neighbour is ashamed not to spare others.

But we should note carefully that, while one kind of anger rises from a lack of patience, another is caused by zeal. One comes from an evil source, the other from one which is good. . . . Of this anger the psalmist says, Be angry and sin not. This they interpret wrongly who would have us angry only with ourselves and not with our neighbours when they commit evil. For if we are commanded to love our neighbours as ourselves, it follows that we are to be angry with them for their offences as we are with ourselves for our own. . . . Anger that comes from evil sources blinds the mind, while that which comes from zeal opens our eyes. . . . For this zeal for justice in a short while opens our eyes to a wider vision of tranquillity of soul. . . . But when the spirit is roused by zeal we should be careful to see to it that this very anger which is used as a servant of virtue should not end up by dominating the mind nor rule it as a mistress, but like a handmaid ever ready to serve, it should never depart from its place, being subjected to reason. . . . Because of this it is all the more imperative that he who is moved by zeal for justice should be careful to see to it that his anger never pass beyond the control of the mind, so that, in punishing evil, he should always be careful as to the time and the measure of his anger, controlling the indignation of his mind by using it with precise care. He must be careful to restrain his indignation and subject the warmth of his own feelings to the rule of moderation and courtesy. The more he is master of himself the more he is fit to judge the punishment which should be meted out to another. For since he is to correct the faults of those who do wrong, let him first enlarge his own viewpoint through forbearance and let him judge the affair by rising above his own feeling of resentment, lest through being provoked immoderately by his own zeal for what is right he may himself deviate far from what is right.

SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

ST THOMAS AQUINAS

1. *Lawful anger:*

Anger is a passion of the sensitive appetite. . . . Now, with regard to the passions of the soul, it is to be observed that evil may be found in them in two ways. First by reason of the passion's very species, which is derived from the passion's object. Thus envy, in respect of its species, denotes an evil, since it is displeasure at another's good, and such displeasure is in itself contrary to reason. . . . Now this does not apply to anger, which is the desire for revenge, since the revenge may be desired both well and ill. Secondly evil is found in a passion in respect of the passion's quantity, that is in respect of its excess or deficiency; and thus evil may be found in anger, when to wit, one is angry more or less than right reason demands.

2. *It may or may not be a sin:*

A passion of the sensitive appetite is good in so far as it is regulated by reason, whereas it is an evil if it sets the order of reason aside. Now the order of reason with regard to anger may be considered in relation to two things. First in relation to the appetible object to which anger tends, and that is revenge. Wherefore, if one desire revenge to be taken in accordance with the order of reason, the desire of anger is praiseworthy, and is called zealous anger. On the other hand, if one desire the taking of vengeance in any way whatever contrary to the order of reason, for instance if he desire the punishment of one who has not deserved it, or beyond his deserts, or again contrary to the order prescribed by law, or not for the due end . . . then the desire of anger will be sinful. . . .

3. *What kind of sin:*

The movement of anger may be inordinate and sinful in two ways, as stated above. First on the part of the appetible object, as when one desires unjust revenge; and that anger is a mortal sin in the point of its genus, because it is contrary to charity and justice. . . . Secondly the movement of anger may be inordinate in the mode of being angry, for instance if one be too fiercely angry inwardly, or if one exceed in the outward signs of anger. In this way anger is not a mortal sin in the point of its genus; yet it may happen to be a mortal sin, for instance if through the fierceness of his anger a man fall away from the love of God and his neighbour.

4. *A capital sin:*

A capital vice is defined as one from which many vices arise. Now there are two reasons why many vices can arise from anger. The first is on the part of the object, which has much of the aspect of

desirability, in so far as revenge is desired under the aspect of just or honest, which is attractive by its excellence. . . . The second is on the part of its impetuosity, whereby it precipitates the mind into all kinds of inordinate action. Therefore it is evident that anger is a capital vice.

5. *The vices which arise from anger:*

Anger may be considered in three ways. First, as consisting in thought, and thus two vices arise from anger. One is on the part of the person with whom a man is angry, and whom he deems unworthy of acting thus towards him, and this is called *indignation*. The other vice is on the part of the man himself, in so far as he devises various means of vengeance, and with such like thoughts fills his mind . . . and thus we have swelling of the mind.

Secondly, anger may be considered as expressed in words; and thus a twofold disorder arises from anger. One is when a man manifests his anger in his manner of speech . . . and this refers to *clamour*, which denotes disorderly and confused speech. The other disorder is when a man breaks out into injurious words, and if these be against God it is *blasphemy*, if against one's neighbour it is *contumely*.

Thirdly, anger may be considered as proceeding to deeds, and thus anger gives rise to *quarrels*, by which we are to understand all manner of injuries inflicted on one's neighbour through anger.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. BLESSED JOHN OF AVILA

On the knowledge of our own true worth

(We shall give a summary of his teaching on this subject in *Audi Filia*, c. 62 and 63.)

1. *Examination of conscience:*

There is nothing so salutary as this particular examen of our faults. The soul which is not careful in this matter can be compared with the vineyard of the lazy husbandman (Prov. 24. 30). It is the best method of knowing how we stand before God and will lead to personal self-discipline. If we persevere with it then our sins will not last long without being corrected.

2. *A sure remedy against pride, ungratefulness and laziness:*

Pride can enter into our lives almost without our being aware of it—but not if we are careful in this examen of conscience. Thus we take true advantage of God's mercy, which pardons only those who acknowledge their faults and humble themselves before it in truth. This true knowledge of ourselves alone can make us free. We should

also take care with regard to two other vices which follow from pride, ungratefulness and laziness. By this examen we shall escape from these, because we shall be aware of our own misery and need, mindful of the great mercy of God who pardons us and pours out his gifts upon us. When we see the little good we do and the great sins we commit we shall awake from our dream of laziness, beginning to serve God better every day, aware of the little we have done in the past.

3. *Fewer devotions and greater self-knowledge:*

We should be careful to keep ourselves in God's presence, for this makes us more humble than anything else. We should not have too high an opinion of ourselves, because those who have this high idea of themselves spend a great deal of time in other devotions while passing lightly over their own defects, since they find no delight in that knowledge. In truth, there is nothing which makes God turn his eyes away from our sins and defects except this sorrow and repentance for them on our part. If we judge ourselves we shall not be judged by God (1 Cor. 11. 31).

4. *Examen of our own good works:*

We should be careful to realize that our sins are from ourselves, while the good we find in our actions is from God, to whom alone belongs the glory for it (James 1. 17). If we do find any good in ourselves we should treat it as something alien to ourselves, given to us from above.

5. *This is perfect humility:*

This humility is not that of sinners but of the just. This preserved the good angels while the lack of it was the cause of the fall of the wicked. Our Lady had this humility, since when she was glorified by her cousin St Elizabeth, she did not take pride in it, but attributed it to God. My soul doth magnify the Lord (Luke 1. 46). Christ himself gave this glory to his Father, whose doctrine he preached (John 7. 16), and gave it as the great lesson to all his disciples, who were to learn of him one thing—meekness and humility of heart (Matt. 11. 29). As St Augustine says, if you ask me the true way to heaven I shall answer you, Behold, that of humility, and the third time I shall answer the same way, and if you ask me the same question a thousand times I shall give you the same reply a thousand times.

II. ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

(Some Extracts from *The Dark Night of the Soul*, Book 1, chap. 2, following, which refer to the difficulties of beginners in the spiritual life.)

1. *Pride:*

As these beginners find themselves to be very fervent and diligent in spiritual things and devout exercises from this prosperity

(although it is still true that holy things of themselves cause humility) there often comes to them through their imperfections a kind of secret pride, whence they come to have some degree of satisfaction with their works and with themselves. And hence there comes to them also a certain desire, which is somewhat vain, to speak of spiritual things before others and sometimes even to teach such things rather than to learn them. They condemn others in their hearts when they see that they have not the kind of devotion which they themselves desire; and sometimes they even say this in words, resembling therein the Pharisee, who boasted of himself, praising God for his own good works and despising the Publican.

In these persons the devil often increases their devotion and the fervour that they have and the desire to perform these and other works more frequently, so that their pride and presumption grow greater. For the devil knows full well that all these works and virtues which they perform are not only valueless to them, but even become vices in them. And such a degree of evil are some of these people wont to reach that they would have none to appear good except themselves; and thus in deed and word, whenever the opportunity occurs, they condemn them and slander them, beholding the mote in their brother's eye and not considering the beam which is in their own. They strain at another's gnat and themselves swallow a camel.

2. *They have great ideas but do little:*

Sometimes too, when their spiritual masters, such as confessors and superiors, do not approve of their spirit and behaviour . . . they consider that they are not understood and that because they do not approve of this or comply with that, they are not themselves spiritual. So they desire and contrive to find someone else who will fit in with their tastes. . . . Presuming thus, they are wont to resolve much and accomplish little. Sometimes they are anxious that others shall realize how spiritual and devout they are. . . . They are too much embarrassed to confess their sins frankly, lest their confessors should think less of them, so they water them down and make them seem less evil, thus it is to excuse themselves rather than accuse themselves that they go to confession. And sometimes they seek another confessor to tell their wrong doings to, so that their own confessor shall think they have done nothing wrong, but only good. . . . Some of these beginners, too, make little of their faults and at other times become sad when they see themselves fall into them, thinking themselves to be saints already; and thus they become angry and impatient with themselves, which is another imperfection. . . .

From these imperfections some souls go on to develop many very grave ones, which do them great harm. But some have fewer and some more, and some only the first motions thereof and no further. There are hardly any beginners who, at the time of fervour, fall not

into some of these errors. But those who at this time are going on to perfection proceed very differently and with quite another spirit; for they progress by means of humility and are greatly edified, not only thinking naught of themselves and their own works, but having little satisfaction with themselves. They consider all others as far better, and usually have a holy envy of them and an eagerness to serve God as they do. For the greater their fervour and the more numerous the works they perform and the greater the pleasure they take in them as they progress in humility, so much the more do they realize how much God deserves of them and how little is all that they do for his sake; thus the more they do the less they are satisfied.

Together with great tranquillity and humility, these souls have a deep desire to be taught by anyone who can bring them profit; they are the complete opposite of those of whom we have spoken above . . . being far from masters of themselves, they are always ready to set out on another road than that which they are actually following, if they be so commanded, because they never think that they are right in anything whatsoever. They rejoice when others are praised; they grieve only because they serve not God like them.

These souls will give their heart's blood to anyone that serves God, and will help others to serve him as much as in them lies. The imperfections into which they see themselves fall they bear with humility, meekness of spirit and a loving fear of God, hoping in him. But souls who in the beginning journey with this degree of perfection are, as I understand, a minority, and we should be glad if there were only a very few who fell not into contrary errors. For this reason, as we shall afterwards say, God leads into the dark night those whom he desires to purify from all these imperfections so that he may bring them further onward.

III. BOURDALOUE

True and false piety

(We shall give a summary of this sermon, one of the best of the preacher's many works. Ed. Firmin-Didot, t. 1, pp. 49-59.)

1. *Three characteristics of false piety:*

The ideal of perfection given us by Christ is obviously a high one, since he tells us that we must be more perfect than the Pharisees, who were held to be very holy men. It may indeed seem at first sight impossible, but our Lord speaks as our Teacher and his word is truth itself. If he puts the example of the Pharisees before us it is to show us the disorders which can attack true devotion and corrupt it.

We are here in the world to serve God and so attain our salvation, which will depend on that service; but there are pitfalls to be

avoided, because the most brilliant metal is not always gold. Look at the Pharisees. Their works appeared to be splendid, but their piety was hypocritical in its substance, because it observed scrupulously all the minor details of the law and ignored the essential obligations of it. It was vicious in its purpose, because it sought personal glory; defective in its form, because it was exterior rather than interior. Let ours be complete, obedient to God in great and small things but above all not confusing counsels with commands; disinterested, seeking God and his kingdom; interior—of the heart.

2. *Piety false in its very substance:*

(a) *A frequent failing:*

The existence of a piety which observes the more serious commandments and gives itself a dispensation from the smaller things is easy to explain; it is a defect of our human weakness to do that. But a piety which is scrupulous in its observance of the most minute practices while it neglects the grave commandments is but a gross illusion and madness. Of what use is it to us to observe the counsels and despise the commandments? If I keep the commandments and do not manage to observe the counsels at least I demonstrate my fidelity to God and shall obtain my reward; but if the contrary is my way of life, then under the form of an exemplary piety I am disobedient to his will.

(b) *True piety:*

After giving examples of the false piety of the Pharisees (the rigid observance of the laws of tithes, the sabbath observance, etc.) he goes on to point out that there are similar examples to be found in modern life. Here is a man who has a daily rule of life, special times laid down for spiritual reading and other exercises of piety. But listen to his conversation or see him when he has been injured and you will soon see that he is malicious, vain, impossible with his fellow men, ready to judge them at once without trial, slow to forgive, etc. Or another case, a woman who is the first to join pious associations, aspires to the heights of sanctity, but who in her own home life has little or no consideration for her husband or children, careless about her obligations to her servants, proud, bad-tempered, etc. Woe to you, he says to the Pharisees, and also to the Christians who are unworthy of the name and religion they profess. Not merely those who live in vice and abandon God, but also those who pretend to serve him faithfully yet ignore the very foundations of that service.

(c) *The keeping of the commandments—the very foundation of religion:*

When the young man asked our Lord what he must do to be saved the answer he received was, Keep the commandments (Matt. 19. 17).

With St Paul we must hold that speaking with tongues of men and angels is as nothing without charity (1 Cor. 13. 1). If I do not keep the commandments then all my practices of piety are as but smoke vanishing into the air. What then? Am I to give up these practices? As usual, we tend to go from one extreme to the other. What is to be condemned is not the practice of such devotions but the limiting of oneself to them with little or no thought for the more important elements of the law. We must keep the law in all its rigour without leaving aside practices of piety.

3. *Hypocrisy and personal gain:*

(a) *A secret form of self-love:*

The one passion which is liable to mix itself into all that we do is personal gain. It is a form of self-love which reveals itself the same way in revenge, in avarice or in pleasure. However, its worst form is that of piety undertaken for personal gain. As one writer puts it: To serve the world for God is a virtue; to serve the world for the world is a disorder. But what is it to serve God for the world? Is it not the greatest insult we can offer to the Supreme Being? Such false piety is hateful even to men, because there is nothing of which it is not capable. It can hide the greatest crimes under a guise of piety. Such a man is happy no matter what his passions may demand of him. Does he seek vengeance? There is none can resist him. Does he desire to supplant his adversary? He is all-powerful. If he seeks to destroy the good name of his neighbour his very testimony alone is enough. Is it not by this path of false piety that so many useless men have occupied high places in the Church. The enemies of the Church soon fix their attentions on this as one of the greatest evils to be found in her, and in some ways they are right. We have only to think of the way some people are always trying to reap temporal benefits where they have only sown spiritual seed, or of the way some of us are so anxious to vindicate our rights no matter at what cost to others. . . .

(b) *Disinterested apostolic zeal refutes such accusations:*

In order to avoid such evils the Lord was concerned that his apostles should be disinterested, that the humble should be exalted, etc. (St Paul followed this advice and could boast of it. 1 Cor. 4. 10-11). Thus shall we also convince the world, and what is more important, we shall earn praise from God. We cannot serve God and Mammon (Matt. 6. 24).

4. *Exterior piety:*

(a) *The need for the general judgement:*

The Fathers of the Church often ask why there should be a general judgement when the definitive sentence has already been pronounced at the particular judgement. Their general answer is that

this judgement is necessary so that our consciences may be manifest to all. Many people appear to be religious when in reality there is no interior piety in them at all. The Lord called the Pharisees whited sepulchres. Why sepulchres? Chrysostom replies because their heart was dead to true piety. God is the God of hearts, and he was not within the hearts of the Pharisees, but only on their lips. All devotion which is merely exterior is useless.

(b) Sanctity of the priesthood and of the priest:

What a great and important lesson for us, the ministers of Christ, called to a sacred ministry, especially to the cult and service of God, our days are spent in acts of piety and religious practices. . . . We sing the praises of the Lord daily, whether in public or in private, we offer on our altars the sacrifice of the Lamb, we preach the Gospel to the people from our pulpits and explain it to them. . . . What an honour, and what sanctity in such a vocation! But here is a thought which should make us humble and fearful, because we should always fear lest this holiness should be something belonging merely to our ministry and not to the minister himself. By dint of familiarity with holy things we become accustomed to them, at times to the extent that we lose all taste for them or savour in them. Our hearts are no longer moved, and while our people are touched by the wonder of our ministry, we treat them with the same coldness and indifference as if they were something profane.

(c) Danger of double hypocrisy:

In this way we expose ourselves to the danger of falling into a double hypocrisy, because we deceive those who see us and also we deceive ourselves. Branches, leaves and flowers suppose a root. If you have nothing but flowers and leaves you are deceiving him who sees you; if you imagine that you have your hands full, when you awaken you will find that all has been but a dream and that they are empty. All that you do, do it in the name of the Lord.

SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

(Since we have already dealt with those which refer to charity and mercy in the 1st Sunday after Pentecost, here we shall limit ourselves to one or two statements which more directly refer to our present subject.)

1. Modern tendency to insincerity:

The stigma which our age carries stamped on its forehead, the cause of all its misfortunes and its ruin, is a tendency, every day more obvious, to insincerity. It is a lack of truth which is no mere occasional expedient or method of escape in moments of difficulty. Today

it appears as a system, raised to the dignity of strategy, in which lies, lack of co-ordination between words and deeds, together with deceit, have been turned into classical weapons of attack which some wield with great skill, proud of their ability to use them. To such an extent is the lack of any moral system, in their eyes an integral part of the modern technique in the art of forming public opinion, that they have no hesitation in using it without scruple to submit others to their political regime, since they are resolved to triumph cost what it may (Pius XII, *Christmas Message*, 1947).

2. Just punishment, but hope:

Perhaps there is even room for hope—God grant it may be so—that these calamitous times of ours will alter for the better the outlook and the principles of many who need it. Hitherto they have trusted blindly in the false notions current in our day and so walked light-heartedly and heedlessly on an uncertain road that was full of pitfalls. Many of them have attached little importance to the influence which is exerted at all times by the Church's moral education and pastoral care. Now perhaps they will have a better appreciation of, and attach a higher value to, those warnings. . . .

3. The errors:

The errors which proceed, as from a poisoned well, from this neglect and repudiation at once of religion and morality are manifold and differ widely in their character. . . . The first, disastrously widespread in our day, consists in losing sight of that kinship and love which ought to bind human beings to one another. . . .

There is a second error which beyond all doubt has equally baneful results for all nations and for the general commonwealth of humanity. It is the error of those who impiously endeavour to dissociate the civil authority from any connection at all with the Divine Being, forgetting that the community, quite as much as the individual, depends upon him as its first author and supreme governor (*Summi Pontificatus*, Pius XII, 1939).

4. Perfection:

When a Christian from morning till night, day by day, fulfils all the duties imposed on him by his state of life, his profession, the commandments of God and men, when he prays with recollection, works with all his strength, resists his evil passions, shows to his neighbour that love and duty owing to him and supports manfully without murmuring all that God sends him, his life is always signed with the Cross of Christ, whether physical suffering be present or not, whether he endures it or evades it by lawful means. Indeed, if one considers only those obligations imposed under pain of sin, a man cannot live or accomplish his daily work as a Christian without being constantly ready for self-sacrifice, and so to say, continually

practising it. The acceptance of physical pain is only one manner among many others of signifying that which is essential, the will of God and his service in all things. It is this voluntary disposition which constitutes the quality and heroism of the Christian life (*Allocution on the relief of pain*, Pius XII, 24 Feb. 1957).

5. *Social justice denied for personal gain:*

It is certainly lamentable that there have been and are even now some who, while professing themselves to be Catholics, are almost unmindful of that sublime law of justice and charity which binds us not only to give to each man his due, but to succour our needy brethren as Christ our Lord himself. Worse still, there are those who, out of greed for gain, do not fear to oppress the workers. Indeed there are some who even abuse religion itself, trying to cloak their unjust impositions under its name, that they may protect themselves against the manifestly just protests of their employees. We shall never desist from gravely censuring such conduct. Such men are the cause that the Church, without deserving it, may have had the appearance and might be accused of taking sides with the wealthy and of being unmoved by the needs and the sufferings of the disinherited. That this appearance and this accusation are undeserved the whole history of the Church shows . . . (*Quadragesimo anno*, Pius XI, 1931).

SECTION VII. MISCELLANEOUS

A: The three punishments mentioned by Christ

To give us some idea of the punishments which God reserves in the next life for those who allow their anger to dominate them, Jesus reminds his hearers of the three forms of capital punishment which were in use among the Jews, that of the sword, which was imposed by local tribunals, that of stoning which the Sanhedrin inflicted, and that of fire, which was reserved for certain graver crimes. Simple anger corresponds to the first type of punishment by the sword. If a man goes further and manifests his anger exteriorly by ill-treating his neighbour he draws down on himself a punishment which is likened to that imposed by the Sanhedrin, the supreme tribunal from which there was no appeal. For one who goes still further and treats his brother as if he were an impious madman, here is reserved the punishment of fire—an image which was clear to our Lord's hearers, because they knew that it referred to the valley of Gehennah outside Jerusalem, a dumping ground for the city refuse and the bodies of those who had been put to death. To avoid the foul smells which came from the valley huge fires were lit there at times. . . .

B: Anger and criticism

St Peter of Alcantara used to warn his disciples frequently against anger and criticism of our neighbour. He used to compare the latter to a snake which lies hidden in the grass, ready to bite the hand stretched out to pluck a flower. On the contrary, he says, charity does not merely avoid seeking out evil in others, but fears to find it there. When it does, then it turns its head away and pretends that it has not seen anything. Later, in holy simplicity, it feels that it did not really notice anything evil at all, and that it was but a dream. There should be nothing further from our hearts than to judge our brothers guilty of evil. Backbiting is the moth which corrupts all our good works, which are almost useless before God if they lack the value and worth which comes to them from perfect charity. When two are talking evil of their neighbour there is one devil on the point of the tongue of the one who speaks and another in the ear of him who listens.

C: Pardon

Remember, says St Francis de Sales, that once you begin to pardon others you will surely become more exigent with yourself. It is a common thing that those who are too quick to forgive themselves are excessively rigorous with others.

SECTION VIII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

The Sacrifice of Reconciliation

1. *There are many aspects of the sacrifice of the altar:*

Among them we may mention its ascetic and sanctifying value. Today gives us a perfect opportunity of teaching the relation between this sacrifice and forgiveness, through the passage from the Gospels. The general theme could be the sacrifice of the Mass and Christian unity.

2. *The carelessness of many:*

(a) To assist at Mass with hatred of our neighbour in our hearts, without pardoning him, plotting revenge against him perhaps . . . all this is frequent, sometimes in the case of pious people, slow to forgive.

Often this may be due to inadvertence rather than malice, but how many times people who cannot stand the sight of one another or who are critical of one another are to be found under the same church roof and partaking of the same spiritual Food.

(b) They satisfy the precept of hearing Mass, but the ascetical fruit of it will be small, because hatred for our brother, injurious words, etc., are taken very much into account by God, who will not receive gifts at the hands of those who commit such sins. For that reason the Gospel tells us, Leave thy gift lying there before the altar, and go home; be reconciled with thy brother first, and then come back to offer thy gift (Matt. 5. 24).

3. *The union of us all is realized in the Mass:*

(a) This pardon is required previous to the offering of the Mass if we hope to take full advantage of its sanctifying fruit. The Mass brings about a union between Christ and the faithful and between the faithful and each other.

i. In ancient times this was expressed in the symbolism of the offering of their gifts by the people during Mass.

ii. When the priest offers the Host and Wine we should offer with those elements our sufferings, works, joys, tears and prayers—together with those of our neighbour. There we are one with him and with Christ.

(b) *The Offertory, symbol of our union:*

i. Perhaps the most perfect of all symbols in this matter is the mingling of the drops of water with the wine in the chalice—just as the wine absorbs the water so Christ takes us unto himself. So effective is this union that nothing can break it, any more than the water can now be separated from the wine.

ii. This symbolism becomes stronger when we remember that the Apocalypse interprets the water as a symbol of the nations, peoples and tongues (Apoc. 17. 15).

iii. Perhaps that is the reason why, in the Middle Ages, the water at the offertory was presented by the cantors, who were usually taken from the common people, and therefore their most genuine representatives.

(c) Therefore it is clear that at the Offertory, at the very beginning of the Mass properly so called, there is mention of this union.

i. But how can we come to that union with the seeds of disunion in our hearts?

ii. How can there be union with Christ when there is hatred for the very brothers of Christ?

4. *New symbol of this union—the kiss of peace:*

(a) One of the most ancient rites of the Christian liturgy, described by St Justin:

Today it takes place before the communion.

i. In early times it was given before the gifts were taken to the altar as an open statement of friendship and Christian charity;

ii. in the time of St Gregory it was considered as a preparation for communion, and, inspired by the *Pater Noster*, it was placed there.

(b) *The meaning of this ceremony is union, pardon and peace:*

i. A wonderful and great mystery, says St Augustine, because it is the sign of peace. Let that take real place in your hearts which you express with your lips. Just as your lips approach his so do not let your heart be separated from his;

ii. one of the formulas used by the deacon as he told the people to give each other the kiss of peace was: Give to each other the bond of peace and charity, so as to dispose yourselves to receive the sacred mysteries.

5. *Other formulas of union:*

(a) They abound in the liturgy of the Mass; in the *Pater Noster*, in the *Agnus Dei*: . . . give us peace.

(b) Let the Mass be for us all a moment of pardon and reconciliation with our brother—thus we shall ourselves receive pardon from Christ.

II. THE EPISTLE

A: Sins of the tongue

The importance of this theme

1. In the midst of a world which was much given to gossip St Peter tells his Christian hearers what their own programme should be with regard to this matter: My counsel is, keep thy tongue clear of harm and thy lips free from every treacherous word (1 Peter 3. 10).

2. Was he speaking from personal experience? Possibly, because we know how much he had to suffer on account of his own quick tongue—his attempts to dissuade Christ from the Passion (Matt. 16. 22), his protests at the washing of the feet (John 13. 6), and the threefold denial.

3. However that may be, the theme must be important when James also dedicates a whole chapter of his epistle to it and our Lord warns us that it is not what enters the mouth which defiles a man, but what proceeds from it (Matt. 15. 18). Many of the psalms also ask God to place a padlock on our lips and to moderate our tongues.

A universal sin

Experience teaches us that it is almost impossible to have a long conversation without some criticism of religion, our superiors, our neighbours, etc. Two quotations will suffice:

(a) St Augustine:

It is difficult to find anyone whose tongue has not been the cause of some sin . . . not without reason is it closed within the mouth, since it falls so frequently.

(b) St Thomas:

This gloss does not assert that backbiting is to be found throughout the whole of mankind, but *almost*, both because the number of fools is infinite, and few are they that walk in the way of salvation, and because there are few or none at all who do not at times speak through lightness of heart to injure someone's good name, at least slightly, for it is written (James 3. 2), if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.

The sin of good people

1. These try to avoid grave sins of the tongue, but fail to see the many daily faults they can commit through careless talk or through talking too much. To such as these St Ambrose gives a stern warning. Be careful to guard your tongues, lest your words should reap a rich harvest of sins. A river which bursts its banks soon picks up a great quantity of mud.
2. Sometimes it is vanity which prompts such chatterbox conversations, often at least it is to show ourselves better than others. The prudent man moderates his actions, he who is more prudent still, his thoughts, and the most prudent of all, his words.

A sin of those who are careless

1. *Very few worry about sins of the tongue:*
 - (a) There are few in the world who, in certain types of gatherings, do not fall into the vice of smutty talk—even among women this is true.
 - (b) Fewer still there are who have some hesitation in taking away the good name of others.
 - (c) Salmeron copied from the writings of Alexander of Hales a list of sins of the tongue which corresponded to every letter of the alphabet . . . adulation, blasphemy, calumny, detraction, etc.
2. *There is little need to speak of their gravity:*
 - (a) Read chap. 3 of the Epistle of St James.
 - (b) From the devil's temptation of Eve and Eve's temptation of her husband there is scarcely a sin which has not been caused by this; scandal, hatred, family quarrels, marriage disputes, public men calumniated, lying on the part of the press, etc.

The remedies

1. *The example of Christ:*

Silent before Herod and with measured words before Pilate, silent before the false accusers, and at the insults of the soldiers.

2. *The gift of speech and its purpose:*

(a) Distinguishes men from animals.

(b) Its purpose is to transmit the thoughts of our minds and hearts—the mind which is destined to know truth and communicate it, the heart to love. Therefore the spoken word should be at the service of these two things—nothing else.

(c) From the Christian point of view there is also the fact that our tongues should praise God and bless both him and our neighbour.

(d) As Tertullian says, God forbids us to curse our neighbour because he commands us to bless those who curse us. All men are made to the image of God and we do not know if any one of them is really evil. Even if he was, we should hope that he will become good.

3. *Man lives in three worlds, heaven, earth and hell:*

(a) In heaven God is blessed, in hell there are nothing but curses and hatreds.

(b) The language we speak reveals our nationality.

B: Backbiting

Keep thy tongue clear of harm

1. Sins of the tongue are frequent, even in good people. We might even say that this is their most common sin.

With difficulty do they realize the possible gravity of this offence. It is a grave obstacle to spiritual progress. Spiritual writers tell us that the checking of the tongue is a sure sign of spiritual progress and one of the quickest ways to perfection.

2. The gravity of such sins must be measured from the serious nature of the precepts against which they offend:

(a) they are against fraternal charity;

(b) they rend the unity of the Mystical Body;

(c) they can make religion hateful to others, when they see that people who are supposed to be pious sin in this way.

3. Today's epistle warns us to guard our tongues against such sins.

Backbiting

1. *Its main effect—and harm:*

It tends to separate those who were formerly friends (we shall deal with other aspects of it later). It consists in saying something

which is either true or false in order to set one person against another.

2. *Its gravity:*

(a) To say the least of it, it reveals a mean spirit, a heart which is rotten with envy. Because such talk is born of envy and so partakes in some measure of the lowness of that vice.

(b) It often presents itself under the appearances of good, almost as a proof of friendship, from the desire to open the eyes of another so that he will not be taken in, etc. Thus we relate what others are saying about him, even when the matter is disagreeable. At heart the real motives are envy and self-love.

(c) Its real gravity comes from the intention and purpose of it—to sow discord among men—and this is a very grave sin. As St Thomas says, it despises the precept of charity, and in this sense it is even graver than detraction.

(d) It is also against God, who is love and friendship personified. God is therefore said to hate this sin (cf. Prov. 6. 16-19).

General remedies for all sins of the tongue

These are general remedies—we shall speak of others later:

(a) We should never say anything against one who is absent; even in his presence we should not say anything which could hurt him or cause him sadness.

(b) Once this is attained then we should try to speak always with kindness and gentleness, avoiding contradiction, interruptions, speaking with bad temper in our tone of voice, etc.

(c) Try always to speak well of others (there is always something good we can say of all), affably, giving him pleasure where possible.

(d) See God in our neighbour all the time.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: The Sermon on the Mount

The scene

1. *Today's Gospel is taken from this sermon:*

It is the first long discourse of Christ which St Matthew records and it would appear to have been preached on the so-called Mount of the Beatitudes, some miles to the east of Lake Tiberias and near Capharnaum. This tradition dates back to the fourth century. According to St Luke (Luke 6. 17) it was not preached on the very top of the mountain, but in a shallow depression on the way down.

2. *The comparison between the two Laws:*

(a) The external circumstances seem to indicate a comparison between the two Laws, one given on the top of Mount Sinai and the other, that of the Gospel, on the Mount of the Beatitudes.

(b) The former preached from the top of Sinai, among thunder and lightning; the latter more accessible to man, preached a little way down, and Christ among men.

(c) In the case of the former the people could not even approach the foot of the mountain (Ex. 19. 12); in the case of the latter all the people came to Jesus and sought to touch him, because virtue went out from him (Luke 6. 19).

(d) On Sinai we have the penal code of the law; on the Mount of the Beatitudes the law of divine fatherhood and mercy.

Two spirits

The scene and circumstances correspond to two different spirits, that of the Old Law and that of the New; the spirit of fear and that of love. St Paul would say later: Those who follow the leading of God's spirit are all God's sons; the spirit you have now received is not, as of old, a spirit of slavery, to govern you by fear; it is the spirit of adoption, which makes us cry out Abba, Father (Rom. 8. 14-15).

Apostolic liberty

1. *Christ in this scene is a model of true apostolic liberty:*

(a) He begins with a terrible accusation against the Pharisees and Scribes:

If your justice does not give fuller measure than the justice of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5. 20).

(b) The accusation is basic:

He does not go into details. He condemns the whole of their 'justice'—which means their manner of interpreting the law and applying it.

2. At the same time he corrects the Old Law itself. Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old. . . . But I tell you . . . (Matt. 5. 33). He corrects the Old Law by adding to it that which was to make it perfect.

Christ the Messias

1. *This is one of the classical texts* which is used to prove that Christ was the Messias promised in the Old Law and also that he is God.

Only the Messias would know himself to possess the authority necessary to make such an attack on the Scribes and Pharisees. More still, only the Messias would dare to say that he had come not to remind them of the Old Law precepts nor even to interpret that Law, but to perfect it.

2. Such words could only be spoken by one who knew himself to be God and who could justly call himself the Messiah long-awaited by Israel.

The apologetic argument

1. There were other declarations like this one from Christ in the course of his public life. From them all the following argument can be drawn up.

- (a) There can be no doubt about the fact that Christ considered himself to be the Messiah and the Son of God;
 (b) either he was mad, an impostor, or his words are true;
 (c) it is easily proved that he was not mad or an impostor. Therefore we are left with the last alternative.

2. The proof that he was not mad or an impostor is not difficult to see:

(a) Throughout his life he showed himself to possess the greatest gifts of wisdom, prudence and knowledge. Not only was he a normal sane man, but also he showed himself always to be in complete possession of his faculties.

(b) Again, an impostor would not have gained the reputation Christ had for sanctity and goodness, something which was repeatedly admitted and admired by the common people.

(c) Therefore he was and is God.

The new spirit

1. The hitherto unheard-of sentiments of the Sermon on the Mount stress the essential elements of the New Law:

(a) interior religion, not merely external;

(b) religion of love, not fear;

(c) in which thoughts matter as much as actions:

i. there are sins of thought (Matt. 5. 28),

ii. rectitude and purity of intention are demanded (Matt. 6. 1),

iii. our Heavenly Father penetrates into the secret depths of the heart and rewards us or punishes us according to what he finds there.

2. Because this Sermon stresses the perfection of the Father's love and his all-seeing providence, it is also the Sermon of a new idea of fraternity between all men, all sons of the same Father.

B: Christ, the Teacher

The scene from the Gospel

1. It shows us Christ teaching with authority: But I tell you. But he also shows knowledge of and connection with former teachers: It was said to them of old. . . .

2. This connection is principally to be found in the fact that he came to perfect the former teachings (Matt. 5. 17).

3. He is the teacher which mankind needed.

A theological paradox

1. It would seem that Catholic theology presents us with a paradox when it tells us that man can know God and the fundamental truths.

2. But at the same time it tells us that mankind, unaided by revelation, cannot know these truths without error.

3. *The solution lies in man's sad state after sin:*

(a) His intellect, in a normal man at least, is capable of knowing God and certain truths of religion; but the atmosphere in which he lives, his natural laziness, his very passions oppose themselves to that knowledge. Man can learn all these things, but owing to the many difficulties he has to overcome, it is morally impossible for most of men to achieve that end.

(b) Man's original position was not like this. God gave him intellect and will, filled him with knowledge and understanding. But sin destroyed all that, both original and actual sin. These raise an obstacle which the nature of man does not usually overcome (Wis. 4. 12).

The only real remedy lies in a teaching authority

1. *God does not abandon his works, even when they abandon him:*

(a) Even though man found himself deprived of that knowledge and privileged state, God came to his aid with revelation and teaching.

(b) The religious history of the world is grouped round the prophets more than around the kings and priests. The latter never assume the role of teachers in the name of God (Heb. 1. 1).

2. *This is the best and most natural remedy for this situation:*

(a) It is the easiest because it needs no other light than that of the teacher;

(b) most natural, because man is accustomed to listen to his teachers.

But not entirely an effective remedy

1. All the prophets from the time of Moses announced the coming of another who would be superior to them (Deut. 18. 15).

(a) In themselves they were not sufficient—they were Jews who taught one of the smallest nations on the earth;

(b) they could enlighten minds but could not give the grace which moves the will;

- (c) the law forbade things, but often this only served to increase desire (Gal. 3. 10-14).
2. To direct a small nation men were sufficient—to move the whole world God came on earth himself.

Christ, the teacher

1. *The fulfilment of a prophecy:*

(a) The Samaritan woman said at the well, I know that Messiah (that is the Christ) is to come; and when he comes, he will tell us everything. Jesus said to her I, who speak to thee, am the Christ (John 4. 26).

(b) Deep as the waters that hide the sea-floor, knowledge of the Lord, overspreading the world, says Isaias (11. 9). This prophecy has been fulfilled. Now at last in these times he has spoken to us, with a Son to speak for him . . . (Heb. 1. 2).

2. *It is God himself who teaches us:*

It is he who perpetuates his teaching through the infallible *magisterium* of the Church for all time; and who accompanies his teaching with the grace to respond to it.

The obligations of mankind

1. *We have the power to know:*

- (a) Our intellectual needs have been covered by Christ's revelation;
 (b) the weakness of our wills has been strengthened by his grace.

2. *All we need now is the good-will to learn:*

(a) If the Gentiles did not know how to read the secrets of nature and if the Romans were accused of foolishness for not discovering God in the book of creation what can be said of us if we refuse to read and learn from the words of God himself in the inspired Scriptures?

(b) To what master shall we go except to him who has the words of eternal life?

C: Christ's teaching methods

1. *There is little need to insist on his method:*

We know that the true teacher is one who has knowledge of his subject, knows his hearers and the way to reach them by his teaching methods. He who is the author of truth and of the created minds he is teaching will certainly have these qualities to the full.

2. *But any study of his methods comes up against a difficulty:*

- (a) Christ was an orator, and oratory once it is written down loses part of its vigour. Also the Gospels only give us short extracts.
 (b) However, in its pages we can discover something of his method.

The circumstances

1. To know Christ as Teacher and Preacher it is often necessary to think of the circumstances in which he spoke in order to see his methods perfectly.

(a) He taught people whose range of culture was strictly local, defective and of a semitic character;

(b) therefore we cannot look for any fine passages of studied oratory (such as those we find in Chrysostom); many of his oriental expressions may have little or no meaning for us. Yet this increases his merit, for he knew how to teach these people in accents which have a universal value;

(c) different atmospheres, at times in open air, from a boat, or in the court of the Temple (the university of Israel);

(d) stupid listeners, very often—even his apostles had to ask him to explain many of his doctrines, even though simple;

(e) in many cases a reluctant audience or one which tried to catch him out in every word;

(f) doctrines which were opposed to the ideas of his audience, the universal kingdom of the Messiah, his passion and death, etc.

2. Adapting ourselves to these circumstances and recognizing the difficulties which Jesus had to overcome, we can now study him and his teaching methods.

Friendly dignity

1. *Christ knew well how to use righteous anger when necessary and convenient:*

(a) His preaching in Galilee ends with a direct condemnation of the cities there, Bethsaida, Capharnaum, etc.;

(b) at the end his public life he openly condemned the Pharisees and Scribes.

2. *But the dominant note in his preaching is friendly dignity:*

(a) We have only to read his conversation with the Samaritan woman, drawing out her secrets little by little until he unveils her soul completely;

(b) the profound, severe, but friendly conversation with Nicodemus;

(c) the invitation to all who labour or are burdened to come to him, the command to learn from his meekness and humility;

(d) the jewel of the beatitudes;

(e) the patience with which he repeats his teaching and explains it;

(f) his parables and the calm dignity with which he replies to the servant who struck him in the house of the High Priest.

His authority and command

St Thomas derives the authority of Christ's teaching from the following four elements in it:

(a) His miracles:

Is there another teacher with such authority that he could say: That thou may know the Son of Man hath power to forgive sins . . . arise and walk (cf. Matt. 9. 6).

(b) The authority with which he speaks:

- i. I say to you. . . .
- ii. The Jews and his hearers in general wondered because he spoke with authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 7. 29).
- iii. His categorical affirmations, sometimes backed up by the Jewish form of oath (cf. Matt. 9. 21; John 1. 51, 5. 19, 24, 25, 6. 26-32; Matt. 16. 18).

(c) The perfection and rectitude of his life:

He challenged them to find him guilty of any sin (John 8. 46).

(d) His power of persuasion:

He drew the crowds and individuals with a like ease, and his teaching is always clear and definite.

His methods

1. Calm and slow exposition of doctrine—e.g. the Sermon on the Mount;
2. answers and replies;
3. parables;
4. all accommodated to his audience and their mentality.

Why then did they not believe?

1. It is the sad question which comes to all our minds when we preach on the life and teaching of Christ.

2. Why?**(a) Many did, until death:**

Who has ever believed his teacher to such an extent before or since?

(b) Many did not:

For the same reasons for which they do not believe today: pride, lust, prejudice, mistrust, etc.

3. We must humble our minds:

- (a) Faith is an act of intellectual humility in so far as pride is the one thing which is capable of setting us up against God;
- (b) it is not, if we look at it properly, because what humiliation can it be to submit one's mind to Supreme Truth itself? This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him, God says to us (Mark. 9. 6).

D: Christ, the reformer**The reform**

Reform, evolution, revolution—three words which have changed the world from the beginning of time, in the technical, religious, political and social aspects.

The religious reform

1. Religion is given to men for men. Therefore God, from the beginning, accommodated himself to human life and its conditions.
2. We know three states of religion in the world, the last of which is both essential and definitive.
 - (a) The first is that which existed from the beginning until the time of Moses.
 - (b) The second is that of the Mosaic legislation and liturgy, given to one nation alone.
 - (c) The third is the definitive revelation, and differs from that given to Moses as the realization differs from the promise and the reality from its figure.

Christ the reformer

1. He was one, and in every way, as we cannot be, because the New Law is definitive, constituted by his divine authority.
2. *But how did he reform?*
 - (a) We can never understand what he did if we do not keep in mind the words of The Sermon on the Mount, Do not think that I have come to set aside the law and the prophets; I have not come to set them aside, but to bring them to perfection (Matt. 5. 17);
 - (b) the true reformer must realize that truth existed before his time, so did good works and authority;
 - (c) if his life's work consists in getting rid of all that has gone before or bringing low all authority, then let him also realize that he is wrong and losing much that is good and fruitful.
3. *Christ did not pull down—he perfected:*
 - (a) He exacted obedience to the commands which had already been given before;

- (b) he told his hearers to do what the Pharisees told them, but not to imitate their works;
- (c) he corrected what was defective in the old law;
- (d) he explained and expounded it in greater detail;
- (e) he introduced new elements into it which had not been thought of before;
- (f) he preached to all, without exception, a new and more perfect way of life and ideals, that they should be perfect as their Father in Heaven is perfect.

Pseudo-reformers

These, while appearing to act like Christ, really do just the opposite. Instead of bringing about an evolution they destroy and corrupt. This is true both in religion and in politics.

E: The justice of the Pharisees

An explicit condemnation

1. Christ says: If your justice does not give fuller measure than the justice of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5. 20). The word justice in this context has the meaning of a general virtue or, if you like, of justification. It affects the whole of our relationship with God through the moral law and through religion as a virtue.
2. In the light of this wide interpretation of the word we can examine what this condemnation of the justice of the Pharisees really means.

St Thomas

In his commentary on this Gospel he designates the grave errors of the Pharisees:

- (a) presumption,
- (b) ostentation,
- (c) exterior purifications without any attention to the interior,
- (d) fasts and penances without any mercy towards others,
- (e) scrupulous observance of the minor precepts of the law without any attention to the major ones.

1. Presumption:

They considered themselves to be the only really religious and perfect men among the people and despised others (cf. Luke 18. 11-12, John 7. 49).

- (a) We can see it in their words, Here is a man, they said, that entertains sinners and eats with them (Luke 15. 2).
- (b) In the way they treated others (cf. John 9. 34).

2. Ostentation:

- (a) They took the first places in the temple when they prayed;
- (b) they prayed openly at the street corners;
- (c) they liked to be singular and different from the common people. They act, always, so as to be a mark for men's eyes. Boldly written are the texts they carry, and deep is the hem of their garments (Matt. 23. 5);
- (d) their heart is set on taking the chief places at table and the first seats in the synagogue, and having their hands kissed in the market place and being called Rabbi among their fellow men (*ibid.* 7).

3. Ceremonial washings:

- (a) To these they gave excessive importance, interpreting them in such away that they became ridiculous.
- (b) They gave to such washings a moral and religious value which they did not possess, while at the same time they took no notice of interior purity of heart (Matt. 23. 25).

4. Fasts and penances:

When you fast, do not show it by gloomy looks, as the hypocrites do . . . (Matt. 6. 16).

5. The minor precepts:

- (a) Our Lord condemned them for this especially: Woe upon you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites that will award to God his tithe, though it be of mint, or dill or cummin, and have forgotten the weightier commandments of the law, justice, mercy and honour . . . (Matt. 23. 23).

(b) He gives them a warning which should also serve for anyone who is trying to be truly religious: You blind leaders, that have a strainer for the gnat and then swallow the camel! (*ibid.* 24).

(c) It is easy for all of us to fall into the same fault—over-careful about the small and insignificant things (which we make out to be so important) and careless about the real essence of religion, which is love for God and our neighbour.

Conclusion

1. From all this we see clearly one principle which Christ develops in the whole of the Gospel teaching:
2. God does not want a mere appearance of religion; he rejects ostentatious piety. Nor does he accept mere penance or external piety. God wants and looks for interior religion. Piety without charity is a defective religious sentiment.
3. God does not accept anyone who comes to the altar, even though he bring material gifts or external signs of religion. He will not accept these if the offerer has not true interior piety, charity and purity of intention (see following scheme).

F: False justice

The justice of the Scribes and Pharisees

(Justice in the sense we have already explained in the previous scheme.)

1. *It is that which claims exclusively for itself:*
 - (a) the knowledge of the law (this was the error of the scribes);
 - (b) the only perfect observance of that law (this was the crime of the Pharisees).
2. This justice consisted in prayers, fasts, fulfilment of the law even in its most minute particulars.
 - (a) It is best represented by the story of the Pharisee and publican (Luke 18. 10 ff.).
 - (b) Christ repeated affirmed that this justice was not enough to secure entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
3. *A tree is known by its fruits:*
Therefore if such justice leads to hell it is not true justice in the sight of God. Here we shall see how a Christian can fall into the same faults.

An exclusive exterior justice

1. Religion which is entirely preoccupied with exterior things is not true but false.
 - (a) It merely avoids exterior vices;
 - (b) it only fulfils exterior duties.
2. This justice may satisfy men, but it does not satisfy God, as we shall see. If they are not careful men only look at the exterior. Such have already received their reward from the adulation of men (Matt. 6. 16).
3. God looks at the heart (1 Kings 16. 7).
 - (a) For this reason the Word of God was made flesh, to preach that true justice which alone is pleasing to God.
 - (b) That is what St James means when he says: If he is to offer service pure and unblemished in the sight of God, who is our Father, he must take care of orphans and widows in their need, and keep himself untainted by the world (1. 27).
 - (c) Therefore all pharisaical justice is an insult to God and Christ condemns it severely, calling them who practice it whited sepulchres—with an external covering of sanctity but interiorly full of the corruption of sin.

Exclusively interior justice

1. *That holiness is also false which pretends to exclude all exterior obligations:*
 - (a) Some sects try to propagate an entirely interior religion, basing their arguments on John 4. 24. Whereas Christ, in this statement, is merely condemning the opposite argument, of those who required a purely exterior religion and maintained that it was sufficient. He demands exterior actions which take their life from true interior justice.
 - (b) It is the fallacy of all those who would like to see a purely interior religion, without any external or social aspects.
2. *This justice also is condemned by Christ:*
 - (a) He demanded truth with good works (Matt. 5. 16).
 - (b) His disciples were to be known precisely because of their good works (Matt. 7. 15).
3. *The apostles preached this doctrine of their Master:*
 - (a) **St John:**
And now, suppose that a man has the worldly goods he needs, and sees his brother go in want; if he steels his heart against his brother, how can we say that the love of God dwells in him? (1 John 3. 17).
 - (b) **Also James:**
 - i. Of what use is it, my brethren, if a man claims to have faith, and has no deeds to show for it? Can faith save him then?
 - ii. Here is a brother, here is a sister, going naked, left without the means to secure their daily food; if one of you says to them, Go in peace, warm yourselves and take your fill, without providing for their bodily needs, of what use is it?
 - iii. Thus faith, if it has no deeds to show for itself, has lost its own principle of life (James 2. 14-18).
4. *Reason teaches us the same truth:*
 - (a) In man the interior and exterior acts are so united that the former are soon manifested in the latter.
 - (b) On the contrary, if the exterior acts of piety disappear, the interior spirit of piety is soon lost.
 - (c) Man has not merely received from God his soul, but also his body. He must serve his creator with both of them.
5. The history of religions show us that man needs an exterior and an interior religion to be happy in his service of God.

Conclusion

1. The true justice preached by Jesus is that which plants the seeds of grace in man's soul and then, like good trees, produces exterior fruit from that interior source.

- (a) Love of God, which is true when it keeps his commandments.
- (b) Love of the neighbour, which looks after him even when there seems to be as much difference between the two as between a Jew and a Samaritan.

G: Anger

For the Christian

Anger as a passion of the soul is not evil of itself.
It can be dangerous, is a bad counsellor or a help—it all depends. Anger which precedes the judgement of reason is bad. It can be a help if it is consequent upon a reasoned judgement and is governed by reason to the end.

Analysis of anger

It is the desire for revenge, and contains several elements:

- (a) the presence of some evil,
- (b) the sadness caused by that evil,
- (c) judgement by which we think we can reject the evil,
- (d) revenge by which we decide to repair the evil,
- (e) the execution of our wishes.

Its qualities

1. *As a passion it has special qualities:*

- (a) **It is personal:**
The ego enters very much into it.
 - (b) **It is very human:**
All men possess it.
 - (c) **It is intimate:**
At times it is a long-enduring thing and gives rise to hatred.
 - (d) **At times it is sudden:**
This is more usual. Of itself it can be more violent than lust and can bring about the diminution of the power of reason over the other faculties or at times blind the reason altogether.
 - (e) **It can be a hereditary factor in our character.**
 - (f) **It is noble:**
In so far as it desires to restore order where before there was a breach of it.
 - (g) **It can also be good:**
Because at times justice demands revenge.
 - (h) **At times it can be necessary.**
2. Therefore we should never envy those who seem to have no tendency towards it.

Anger in Christ

1. *It is compatible with many virtues:*
 - (a) with meekness which moderates it,
 - (b) with fortitude which can be strengthened by it,
 - (c) with clemency and sweetness—in fact with all the virtues.
2. It is enough to point out that in Christ were all the virtues and yet he could be angry.
 - (a) **There is no anger in God:**
The use of the word then is analogous.
 - (b) **But in Christ as man anger existed:**
Like any other passion which is ordered according to right reason.

Its moral aspect

1. *Two rules for judging if anger is righteous or not:*
 - (a) Does it come before or after the judgement of reason?
 - (b) That which comes before is always wrong, that which comes after is not if it is according to right reason.
 - (c) Anger which dominates is wrong; that which is dominated is good.
2. Vengeance can be necessary if it is sought from the right motive of the love of God.
3. For any other motive it is evil.

The nature of the sin of anger

1. It is a mortal sin *ex genere suo*, because it is against both charity and justice.
2. But frequently it is venial either through lack of grave matter or through the imperfection of the act itself. The passing burst of anger of those people who are prone to it are usually venial.
3. Passing fits of anger are like straw, while the long-enduring anger which smoulders and then bursts into hatred is the beam.

It is anti-social

1. Because it is directly against charity and justice, it separates, destroys and ruins.
2. It may not be the worst of all sins, but it can be such through its circumstances.
A sudden fit of anger can break up a friendship, or even love itself; it can separate husband from wife, father from son.

3. In those who are in charge of the education of others, it can be a grave sin and in every case it is unpardonable in them, because education is a work of patience and meekness—even of love.

H: The pardon of injuries

Something unknown

1. The forgiveness of injuries is to be found among the spiritual works of mercy as part of the Christian programme.
2. What is more, this pardon is a perfection which is characteristic of the Christian religion, at least in the grade in which it is demanded.
 - (a) The pagans thought they had reached the heights of their wisdom when they said, Revenge is the pleasure of the gods.
 - (b) The old law contained the *lex talionis*—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (cf. Matt. 5. 38-43).

The command of Christ

1. Jesus affirms in the Sermon on the Mount from which today's Gospel is taken that he has come to perfect the old law.
2. The doctrine of Christian charity—love for one's neighbour—is the real pre-eminence of the New Law over the Old. Christ gave certain definite commands about it in this sermon.
 - (a) If a man strike thee on thy right cheek, turn the other cheek also towards him.
 - (b) If he is ready to go to law with thee over thy coat, let him have it and thy cloak with it.
 - (c) Give to him who asks.
 - (d) Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute and insult you (Matt. 5).
3. Is this new law possible? At first sight it would appear not, but we must remember that the examples Christ gives are not to be taken literally, they are merely examples of the Christian spirit as opposed to the old law. What is commanded is pardon, love and good done to all—even to our enemies.

The qualities of this precept

1. It is not a counsel, as is for example virginity, the distribution of one's goods to the poor, etc.
2. *It urges under pain of condemnation:*
Christ makes it clear both from the negative and positive points of view: Your heavenly Father will forgive you your transgressions if you forgive your fellow-men theirs; if you do not forgive them, your heavenly Father will not forgive your transgressions either (Matt. 6. 4-15).

3. *It is universal:*

It has as its root the most universal of all virtues—charity.

(a) We must follow the example of our heavenly Father in this: who makes his sun rise on the evil and equally on the good, his rain fall on the just and equally on the unjust (Matt. 5. 45).

(b) It must be greater than the actions of the publicans who also know how to love those who love them; it must be a higher sort of perfection in his followers (Matt. 5. 46).

The example of Christ

1. *Christ gave us an example in all his actions:*

Well could he say at the Last Supper: I have been setting you an example, which will teach you in your turn to do what I have done for you (John 13. 15).

2. *The example of pardon:*

He always confirmed by example what he taught in words, and nowhere is this so true as in the case of pardon of one's enemies—we need only mention his words from the cross and his attitude towards Judas after his betrayal (cf. Luke 22. 48).

The example of the saints

1. This doctrine of pardon finds at the foot of the Cross of Christ a whole army of saints and doctors of the Church who preached it afterwards and lived it, to such an extent that it becomes the distinctive mark of Christianity.
2. From the blood of the martyrs of the Church springs pardon for their persecutors.

I: The fate of those who will not forgive

The Gospel of today

1. We might consider in it the fruits which come from pardon for injuries and the evils which come from anger, rancour and hatred—especially if these are fomented.
2. Here we shall deal with the second element—the evils.

He who does not forgive dwells in darkness

1. *St John tells us:*

He who claims enlightenment, and all the while hates his brother, is in darkness still. It is the man who loves his brother that lives in light; no fear of stumbling haunts him. The man who hates his brother is in the dark, guides his steps in the dark without being able to tell where he is going; darkness has fallen and blinded his eyes (1 John 2. 9 ff.).

2. *He who lives with his heart blinded by hatred lives:*

(a) Outside the light of reason, which considers pardon as the act which is most rational, humane and perfect;

(b) outside the supernatural light of the faith, which tells us that we must live the divine life which is in us to the full, act as God would act who, far from punishing at once, shows his mercy towards all men, pardoning sins over and over again;

(c) above all, outside the light of the Gospel.

i. *He does not walk in Christ's footsteps* and therefore is in darkness;

ii. *does not follow Christ to Calvary*, where he gave to all the most perfect pardon.

(d) As a blind man, who walks into a pit—so the man who hates his brother is walking towards the eternal condemnation of hell.

3. This passion of hatred and anger makes the reason useless more than any other vice could do, because it robs us of that peace and serenity which are necessary for the true contemplation of God and his revelation.

He who does not forgive commits a crime

1. St John says: A man cannot hate his brother without being a murderer (1 John 3. 15). Truly, he who hates another kills him in his heart, casting him out and wishing him evil.

2. At the same time he kills within himself the love of God and with it his own spiritual life, because it is impossible to have in one and the same human heart the love of God and hatred for our brother (1 John 4. 20 ff.).

He who does not forgive refuses God's pardon and mercy

1. The refusal to forgive is such a sin that, if we persist in it, God will not pardon us. On the other hand, if we forgive, then we shall be forgiven in our turn.

2. *Christ states this firmly:*

Your heavenly Father will forgive you your transgressions, if you forgive your fellow-men theirs; if you do not forgive them, your heavenly Father will not forgive your transgressions either (Matt. 6. 14-15).

3. *St James sums it up in one phrase:*

The merciless will be judged mercilessly; mercy gives its judgement an honourable welcome (James 2. 13).

He who does not forgive condemns himself

1. The formula of the Our Father—Forgive us our trespasses. . . .
(a) Christ wishes us to say these words every day so that we may never be able to plead ignorance.

(b) The eternal Judge can condemn us with our own words if we fail to observe this command to forgive.

2. According to Ecclesiasticus he is not worthy of pardon from the offended God who will not pardon his brother a much slighter offence against himself (28. 3-5).

He who will not pardon shows his weakness

1. *The idea is St Augustine's:*

(a) The saint compares the weakness of those who do not know how to forgive with the fortitude of the martyrs, many of them women and children, who did not hesitate to forgive their persecutors.

(b) It would seem that there is no room for these two classes of persons in heaven together.

2. *This weakness has several consequences:*

(a) The one who refuses to forgive is beaten by his own hatred and anger: bitterness, envy, etc., are his lot.

(b) He is overcome by the devil—he carries in his soul the most perfect image of Satan, who hates the good and tries to destroy them.

Conclusion

1. How different are the ways of God and those of man.

2. What to pagans appears a triumph and a victory is, to God, a terrible weakness and a defeat. The pardon of injuries is God's way to triumph over our enemies.

J: To pardon is to overcome

Great souls pardon

1. Christ preached the law of pardon of our enemies as the sublime height of his doctrine with regard to Christian charity.

(a) He himself is the supreme example of one who forgives enemies.

(b) He makes us lift up our eyes to his heavenly Father, who opens heavens to all, sends his rain and sunlight upon all.

(c) This is an example which has always been followed by the saints and by all who have tried to keep the law of the Gospel.

2. The very pagans regarded pardon of one's enemies as the fruit of special virtue:

(a) Cicero said of Caesar: He does not usually forget anything—except injuries done to him.

(b) Seneca says that the wise man knows how to overcome injuries done to him.

A mistaken idea

1. The world thinks that the perfect revenge on one's enemies, the refusal to forgive them, is a means to overcome them completely.
2. It thinks that pardon is almost a weakness and cowardice.
3. This mistaken idea is common, not only in the case of individuals, but also in that of nations, where the spirit of revenge against others can do much harm.
4. It is materialism personified. Right is might, and force the only argument.

Heroic virtue

1. The act of pardoning our enemies, being reconciled to them, is not an act of weakness, but one which comes only from heroic virtue.
2. Pardon is a most glorious method of overcoming our enemy because it is divine revenge on him.
3. Thus Christ took revenge on his enemies, by pardoning them. See the case of Saul—who became Paul, the Apostle of Christ.
4. This has always been the revenge of the saints.

The victory of pardon

1. *By the fruits a virtue is known:*
2. *The fruits of pardon of one's enemy are numerous:*
 - (a) Victory over the devil, because the exercise of humility is a definite victory over him;
 - (b) because by pardon we reproduce in ourselves the victory of Christ over Satan.
 - (c) Victory over the one who injures us, because by pardon his attack is made useless, we heap coals of fire on his head.
 - (d) On the contrary, an injury which is revenged by another injury merely sets up a circle of hatred which ever grows greater.
 - (e) **Victory over oneself:**
 - i. the most difficult of all victories to accomplish is that over one's own passions—it is also the most fruitful;
 - ii. such souls are already blessed through their meekness and mercy;
 - iii. the first to obtain the fruits of pardon is the one who pardons, because he is filled with peace and happiness in his soul.
 - (f) **Victory over God:**
 - i. who rewards such pardon in a special way, because it makes us like him;

- ii. God looks after those who forgive—he will take revenge in his own inimitable way.
- (g) Victory in the sight of others, who will have to admire our virtue, patience, meekness, charity, etc., and who will be encouraged to imitate us.

K: Before offering our gifts

The chief commandment

1. Christ affirmed that the first and most important of all the commandments is that of the love of God and of our neighbour—in this is all the law and the prophets (Matt. 22. 39-40).
2. Today Christ speaks to us of the excellence of the New Law with regard to the old.
 - (a) He makes special reference to the importance of the law of charity towards others;
 - (b) charity in words—no offence given to our brother in Christ;
 - (c) charity in thoughts and desires—there is need of purification here for all of us.

The sacrifice without charity

1. Christ speaks to the Jews knowing well that their ideas conflicted with his—to them the sacrifice was the all-important thing, but the idea of Christ was very different.
2. He affirms that even the law of sacrifice must give way to that of charity, of reconciliation with one's brother.
 - (a) He puts reconciliation and charity above the law of sacrifice;
 - (b) this was nothing new, because the Lord had already said in the Old Law that mercy was to be preferred to sacrifice (Osee 6. 6);
 - (c) but in the eyes of the Jews, which were fixed always on the daily sacrifices in the temple, it may have appeared something new. Their religion was an exterior one, not interior.
3. *It is a fundamental teaching in the New Law:*
 - (a) We cannot appear before the altar to offer our gift without a heart which is perfectly clean of hatred and revenge.
 - (b) otherwise our offering will not be pleasing to God.
4. *The moment of reconciliation:*
 - (a) exterior reconciliation cannot always take place at once, while we still remember with clearness the insult;
 - (b) but interior reconciliation cannot be put off until later. It must come at once;
 - (c) we must take advantage of the first possible moment to bring about the external reconciliation also.

5. *What men think of this new law:*

- (a) The world laughs at it and even Christians are sometimes lamentably ignorant of the law of the Gospel;
- (b) but it would appear that Christ wishes that this fundamental part of the law should never be forgotten. Without exception all the Fathers (and the whole array of the Doctors of the Church) consider this law of charity as the foundation of the New Law.
- (c) Each day it must be lived with greater intensity and more perfectly. When our love is extended to our enemies and persecutors, then indeed Christian justice has surpassed that of the scribes and Pharisees.

Prayers which do not reach heaven

Many prayers and gifts are offered in the course of a Christian life which are not effective and which are not received by Christ, because they come from those whose hearts are not full of love for their neighbour.

- (a) God does not listen to one who does not ask for or grant pardon; he refuses peace to him who refuses to grant it.
- (b) The measure of divine justice is that he will forgive us in so far as we forgive others.
- (c) It is necessary to insist on this condition of our prayers. A prayer which is sincere, from the heart, not a matter of routine, full of life and charity, can alone reach the heart of God and attain his mercy.

L: On approaching the altar

A fundamental theme

1. There can be no real love of God unless there is love for the neighbour.
2. This is a theme which is well known but forgotten in practice by many, even spiritual souls. Many people make a particular examen of conscience about all kinds of details in the spiritual life, but never bother to examine their consciences with regard to the love of their neighbour.

The theological reason

1. Love itself—the act by which we love God is specifically the same as that by which we love our neighbour (St Thomas, 2. 2. q. 25. a. 1).
 2. Eternal happiness: we love God because he is our eternal happiness; and our neighbour because he is destined to share that happiness with us (2. 2. q. 26. a. 2).
- (a) The life of grace should be like the life of glory.

(b) In the life of glory all the blessed will love one another with divine love. Others will be worthy of our love because they are worthy of the love of God and share in it.

(c) On earth we must think of all our brethren as destined to that love, because God's will is that all should be saved.

The Scriptures

1. *God deals with us as we deal with our brethren:*

It is easy to find texts in which God tells us that he will deal with us as we deal with others.

(a) As you have judged, so you will be judged, by the same rule . . . (Matt. 7. 2).

(b) Judge nobody, and you will not be judged; condemn nobody, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven (Luke 6. 37).

(c) Then Peter came to him and asked, Lord, how often must I see my brother do me wrong, and still forgive him; as much as seven times? Jesus said to him, I tell thee to forgive, not seven wrongs, but seventy times seven (Matt. 18. 21-22).

2. *In continuation:*

Our Lord expounds the parable of the king who settled the account with his servants, pardoned one and then punished him because he refused to pardon the debt of a fellow-servant (Matt. 18. 32-33).

3. *This servant did not love God:*

(a) He who does not pardon his brother sins, not merely against the second part of the first commandment of the law, but also against the first part.

(b) He who does not see God in his brother does not love God (1 John 4. 20).

(c) One thing stands out in *all* the saints, pardon of offences and love for their neighbour. St Teresa says of those who are nearing perfection: I cannot believe that a soul which has approached so nearly to Mercy itself, and has learned to know itself and the greatness of God's pardon, will not immediately and readily forgive, and be mollified and remain on good terms with a person who has done it wrong (*Way of Perfection*, Chap. 36).

(d) Again she says: But here the Lord asks only two things of us, love for his Majesty and love for our neighbour. It is for these two virtues that we must strive, and if we attain them perfectly we are doing his will, and so shall be united with him. . . . The surest sign that we are keeping these two commandments is, I think, that we should really be loving our neighbour; for we cannot be sure if we are loving God, although we may have good reasons for believing we are, but we can know quite well if we are loving our neighbour, and be certain that, the furthest advanced you find you are in this,

the greater the love you will have for God; for so dearly does his Majesty love us that he will reward our love for our neighbour by increasing the love which we bear to himself, and that in a thousand ways (*Interior Castle*, 5. 3. 6).

M: The essence of the Gospel

1. *Love of God and of our neighbour:*

From the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount the Gospel teaches us that the very substance of religion is charity, and that charity has two aspects, love of God and love of our neighbour.

No other element in religion is pleasing to God—no matter what it may be—unless we have love for our neighbour.

2. *Without it God refuses our gift:* Matt. 5. 23-24:

In these words we have the beginning of a theme which find its perfect conclusion in the Last Supper discourse.

There is no sincere friendship with God unless we are friends with our brethren, what is more, unless we try sincerely to win over our enemies.

Spirituality in St John

1. He explains this idea not only in the Gospel but also in his epistles.

2. One of his favourite comparisons is that of light and darkness. He sees two immense camps in the world, the camp of light in which people know and love God, and the camp of darkness, that of those who do not know and love him. He who does not love cannot know God, because God is love (1 John 4. 8).

3. This is what Christ prayed for when he said: It is not only for them that I pray; I pray for those who are to find faith in me through their word; that they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee. . . . And I have given them the privilege which thou gavest to me, that they should all be one as we are (John 17. 20-22).

4. Christ with the Father and all his disciples form the light of this glory of which he speaks. By light and glory we mean grace and charity. He who has hatred for his brother and refuses to put it aside is a dark zone in that city of light. It cannot be said of him that he has the charity of the Father, because the presence of that love in the heart means also love for one's neighbour.

Human fraternity

1. This idea of the light as applied to our relations with our brethren is developed by St John in his epistles.

(a) He who claims enlightenment, and all the while hates his brother, is in darkness still. It is the man who loves his brother that lives in light; no fear of stumbling haunts him (1 John 2. 9-10).

(b) The man who hates his brother is in the dark, guides his steps in the dark without being able to tell where he is going; darkness has fallen and blinded his eyes (*ibid.* 11).

2. *A society in charity:*

(a) This society of which St John speaks, the very soul of which is love, formed by Christ, the Father and the Holy Spirit together with all Christians, is the most perfect imaginable.

(b) It is a union by means of grace, which comes to all of us from our Head, Christ, and is one and the same grace in all—that of Christ. This is the union to which Christ refers in John 17 (see above).

3. Therefore we are liars, hypocrites, offering a false gift if we attempt to please God by approaching the altar while having hatred for our brother in our hearts.

Thus St John says: If we claim fellowship with him, when all the while we live and move in darkness, it is a lie; our whole life is an untruth (1 John 1. 6).

Conclusion and applications

In v. 24 then we have a summary of the whole Gospel message as developed for us by St John (and St Paul, Rom. 12). If we study this chapter of St Paul we shall find precepts and counsels which derive from this doctrine.

N: One Body

The doctrine of the Mystical Body

1. Nothing can illustrate better the full meaning of v. 24 than a deep study of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ.

(a) The theology of this doctrine is explained in St John and above all, in St Paul.

(b) The Fathers develop it—especially St Augustine.

2. St Augustine repeats several times the idea of Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? (Acts 9. 4), as a foundation for his teaching on this subject—the Body is not separated from the Head, and the Head, even though in heaven, watches over and protects the Body.

We are all one in Christ

All men, says St Augustine, are one man in Christ, and the unity of Christians forms this one man.

1. *One wayfarer:*

Since we all have a new life, he says, may that be a joy to us on our way through this life.

2. *The perfect man:*

He sees in this phrase of St Paul (Eph. 4. 13) the man whose life has been renewed in Christ, whose head is Christ and whose members are all mankind.

3. *The beloved Son:*

This is Christ, Head and Body. One day the whole Body will rise in glory, because it is the Body of the beloved Son. The head is in heaven, but the Body remains on earth in the person of all Christians who receive life from the Head.

Communion

1. He points out that here we have the very Mystery of our Body and head—one together, all of us.

2. For which reason, before the distribution of Communion, we say the *Pater Noster* and give the kiss of peace—all members of one and the same Body, joined in a mutual effort of prayer and sacrifice.

3. He says: Let your charity, enflamed by love, extend over the whole world if you really wish to love Christ; because his members are spread over the whole world. If you love but one part of the Body you are separated from the Body; and if you are so separated, then you are not in the Body. And if not in the Body then you are outside it and you do not receive the vital life from the Head. Is it possible to believe and blaspheme at one and the same time? Can you adore him in the Head and blaspheme him in his Body? . . .

It is as if one who wished to kiss your face stood on and wounded your feet. Would you not answer him saying: What are you doing? Do you not see that, while you wish to take my head in your hands and kiss it, you are trampling and wounding my bleeding feet?

*Sixth Sunday after Pentecost*SECOND MULTIPLICATION OF
LOAVES AND FISHES

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Romans 6. 3-11 Gospel: Mark 8. 1-9. Cf. Matt. 13. 32-8

Text concerning the goodness and mercy of God
(Cf. 4th Sunday of Lent)1. *The mercy of God:*

And thou wilt find it ever the same; the Lord thy God is God Almighty, is God ever faithful; if men will love him and keep his commandments, he is true to his word, and shews mercy to them while a thousand generations pass. Deut. 7. 9. Cf. 5. 10; 10. 18; 28. 1; 30, 2; 32, 10.

2. *In the Psalms:*

Now youth is past, and I have grown old; yet never did I see the good man forsaken, or his children begging their bread. . . . The Lord is ever just and will not abandon his faithful servants. Ps. 36. 25-28. Cf. 35. 7; 85, 5.

How pitying and gracious the Lord is, how patient and rich in mercy! He will not always be finding fault, his frown does not last for ever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve, does not exact the penalty of our wrong-doing. High as heaven above the earth towers his mercy for the men that fear him; far as the east is from the west he clears away our guilt from us. . . . But the Lord's worshippers know no beginning or end of his mercy; he will keep faith with their children's children, do they but hold fast by his covenant, and live mindful of his law. Ps. 102. 8-18.

3. *The Prophets:*

What if the Lord waits his time before he will have mercy on you? The more glorious, when it comes, his deliverance. The Lord is a God who makes award justly, blessed they shall be that wait for him. Isaias 30. 18.

If I abandon thee, it was but for a little moment, and now, in my great compassion, I bring thee home again. Hid I my face from thee, it was for a short while, till my anger should be spent; love that takes pity on thee shall be eternal, says the Lord, thy ransom. Isaias 54. 7-8. Cf. Jer. 12. 15; 18. 8.

It is your hearts, not the garments you wear, that must be torn asunder. Come back to the Lord your God; he is ever gracious and merciful, ever patient and rich in pardon; threatens he calamity, even now he is ready to forgive. Who knows but he will relent, and be appeased. . . . Joel 2. 13-14.

4. *The goodness and mercy of Christ:*

Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened; I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon yourselves, and learn from me; I am gentle and humble of heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light. Matt. 11. 28-30.

Be merciful, then, as your Father is merciful. Luke 6. 36. Cf. Luke 15.

I promise thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. Luke 23. 43.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

Keeping in mind that the liturgy of these Sundays after Pentecost has been composed in the light of the Easter mystery and to add leaven to the Christian life, we may well see in the clear allusions to baptism and the Eucharist a continuation of this same idea.

1. *The Epistle:*

Not merely are we reminded of our baptism as a share in the death and resurrection of Christ, but also our attention is fixed on the double obligation it implies. One is negative—death to sin and the disorders of our passions; the other is positive, to live the life of Christ and develop it within us. To live for God in Christ Jesus must be our ideal.

2. *The Gospel:*

The multiplication of the loaves and fishes is a symbol of the Eucharist (it was thus represented many times in the Catacombs). It is impossible to preach the doctrine of life in Christ without mentioning frequently the source of that life, which is the Eucharist. If he came that 'they may have life, and may have it more abundantly' (John 10. 10), he is still with men for that end in the Eucharist.

3. St Thomas sees in this following of Christ for three days the symbol of the triple immersion in baptism. Christ does not wish his followers to be starved of the truth, and the food he gives them is the preaching of the ministers of the Church. The fact that he first handed the bread to the apostles signifies that to them and their successors he gave the bread of truth to be distributed.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: Romans 6. 3-11

(Since we have already dealt with Baptism on Easter Sunday we may limit ourselves to a few notes from Prat on baptism, followed by brief exegetical comments.)

1. *Baptism is mystical death:*

Life and death bring two correlative notices, it is impossible that a modification of the meaning undergone by one should not react on the signification of the other. For St Paul as for St John, life in all its fullness is at one and the same time the life of grace and the life of glory, participation in the justice of Christ, the celestial blessedness which is the spontaneous fluorescence of charity and the glorious existence of the resuscitated body, which is the complement of blessedness. In the same way death signifies sometimes the physical separation of soul and body, sometimes the deprivation of sanctifying grace, sometimes the eternal perdition called by St John a second death, sometimes all these things together, united as they are to one another by a bond of intimate dependency. All the effects of sin are comprised under the name of death; all the effects of grace are comprised under the name of life. . . . We live in proportion as we are associated with the life of Christ. Now it is in his death that Jesus Christ makes us participate in this life; we live in him only so far as we die in him. This takes place *de jure* on Calvary, *de facto* at baptism. For one who has once become imbued with the apostle's thought, his mode of reasoning is very simple. Baptism applies to us the fruit of Calvary. In it Jesus Christ associates us, in a mystical yet very real way, with his death and his life. By associating us with his death he neutralizes the active principle which sin had implanted in us, and which constituted the old man; by associating us with his life, he destroys all the germs of death and confers upon us the privilege of an endless life: life of the soul and life of the body, life of grace and life of glory.

2. *Incorporation in Christ:*

To be baptized into Christ is not simply to be made subject to him, like a slave to his master, or like a liegeman to his lord, nor is it merely to be bound to him by an oath like a soldier to his general, nor even to be consecrated to him as a temple to a divinity; it is still more and above all to be incorporated with him, to be immersed in him, as if in a new element, to become a part of him as another self. . . .

It is evident that for St Paul baptism is not a purely figurative imitation of the death of Christ, nor a simple act of the neophyte, who seeks to appropriate the Saviour's death by considering it his own, for this fiction would not at all change the reality of things;

baptism truly deadens the old man in us, truly infuses into our veins the divine sap and truly creates in us a new being. . . . Now baptism represents sacramentally the death and life of Christ. It must therefore, produce in us a death, mystical in its essence but real in its effects; death to sin, to the flesh, to the old man, as well as a life in conformity with the life of Jesus Christ risen from the dead. . . .

But the efficacy of baptism is not his principal objective; he takes it for granted rather than proves it. His design is to show that baptism is the entering into an immortal and never-failing life. All the neophytes know that baptism destroys sin and puts us, as regards sin, into a condition of death which, according to the intention of God, is to be lasting and definite. This same baptismal rite, the apostle concludes, will have no less efficacy in so far as it symbolizes and reproduces the resurrection and the glorified life of Christ.

3. Texts:

(a) You know well enough that we who were taken up into Christ by baptism . . .

To share in the death of Christ is to die to sin completely. It may remain in us as to its consequences, and against these we must continue to struggle.

(b) that so, just as Christ was raised up . . .

To die is the negative element. To participate in the resurrection and the new life is the positive element. The idea is to walk in a new life, a new way.

(c) grafted on him . . .

The essence and root of this new life is to be grafted on Christ (root and branches of the vine?). Incorporation into the Mystical Body. Our perfection is to develop this life.

(d) our former nature has been crucified with him . . .

There is no more need to think of it. Guilt makes no more claim on a man who is dead (v. 7).

(e) You, too, must think of yourselves as dead to sin . . .

This is the conclusion which interested St Paul and which he develops in the verses which are not included in today's Epistle. The Christian must be dead to concupiscence and live a life of sanctity in Christ. This is Paul's main idea, that the Christian must struggle against sin in order to develop the life of grace.

B: The Gospel: Mark 8. 1-9

1. Historical situation:

The last year of Christ's life (unite this Gospel with that of Palm Sunday for that reason). The first multiplication of the loaves and fishes occurred in spring, and a few days later Christ went to

Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast. His enemies were waiting for him there, and because of his cure of the paralytic, and his claim to be God, he was forced to abandon the city. He was not safe in Galilee (remember the reception given to his sermon on the Eucharist), nor had Herod any reasons for protecting him. Therefore he went into the country of the Gentiles, passing through the north of Galilee. The journey finished in the cities of the Decapolis, a federation of towns free from Herod's jurisdiction. The most northern of these was Damascus and the most southern Philadelphia, the population of which was half Jew and half Greek. He worked miracles on the way (the Phoenecian woman's daughter, for example), and more in the Decapolis (the cure of a deaf and dumb man). This drew the people after him for three days—and thus the second multiplication of the loaves and fishes. He crosses the Lake of Genesareth and at once he is attacked by the Jews, who demand a sign from him that he is the Christ. It was now summer. From this moment we may say that the Saviour considers as finished his mission in Galilee and dedicates himself almost exclusively to the formation of his disciples, whose faith is expressed by Peter and whose messianic ideas he corrects and amplifies by the Transfiguration.

2. One or two multiplications of the loaves and fishes?

It is impossible to say with certainty, but it would seem that there were two distinct miracles.

(a) Applications:

We also, like the people of the Decapolis, have a long and weary journey through the desert of life before we reach heaven. It is a journey in which we are beset with the heat of temptations, our passions, vainglory, ambition, hatreds and envy. But on this journey we have a food, the Eucharist, which not merely nourishes us but also cures and guides us. The longings of our soul are infinite and can only be satisfied by the infinite pleasure of heaven.

(b) Compassion:

Thought of the infinite mercy and compassion of Christ should encourage and uplift the heart of the sinner. Similar to this mercy should be that of the Christian.

i. *He had compassion on the multitude.* First on their material hunger—hunger is always a bad counsellor. Then on their spiritual needs (Mark says, because they were like sheep that have no shepherd). The world needs zealous priests and lay people grouped round them if it is to be converted to Christ.

ii. *His compassion took a practical form in deeds.* On other occasions we shall develop this idea more fully; here it is enough to remember that, when God sees people in need, especially if that need has come about through their following him, he knows

well how to relieve it. He works a miracle in this case, but notice how he makes full use of the human element around him; he asks the apostles for the little food they have and uses them to distribute it, etc. Am I one of these human instruments for good in the sight of divine Providence?

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(In Hom. 53-54 he gives exegetic and moral notes on this Gospel. In his commentary on the Ephesians, Hom. 3, nn. 3-6, PG. 62. 27-30, he speaks of the preparation and purification necessary before receiving the Eucharist. We shall give here a summary of this latter.)

1. *A share in his body:*

Since we are dealing with the body of the Lord, all those who partake of that body should remember that they are partaking of a body which in no way differs from his real body which is now in heaven. He made us his body and he gives us his body. How many ways there are towards our salvation and yet none of them succeed in turning us away from evil.

2. *The food of the spirit:*

I notice, he says, that many partake of this body in a mechanical and routine fashion, more from custom or because it is laid down, than through real desire for it. When Lent comes round, or the Feast of the Epiphany, all partake of this body. However, neither Lent nor the Epiphany makes us worthy to receive this body; what is required is purity of soul and intention. Always approach with these virtues; without them, never.

3. *How we should prepare:*

Think of how carefully they prepared who took part in the Old Law sacrifices. There was nothing they did not do to purify themselves constantly. You, on the other hand, limit this to certain days, when you approach that sacrifice which frightens even the angels. How can you stand before the tribunal of Christ if you dare to touch his body with hands and lips which are stained? You do not wish to approach with dirty hands? Undoubtedly you would prefer not to approach at all, rather than do so with hands that are not clean. If you are so careful and religious about what is a small thing after all, will you dare to approach and touch the body of Christ with a soul which is unclean? He is held in the hand for but a moment, while in the soul he dissolves entirely. Do you not see how brilliant and clean are the sacred vessels? We should have souls which are

more purified and brilliant than they. They do not partake of what they contain, they do not feel it; but we do.

4. *A clear conscience is a necessary condition:*

He uses the symbol of the man at the feast to warn his hearers that they should not approach this sacrament in sin. The Lord is at the table, and therefore those servants who have offended him should not seat themselves at table with him.

5. *Often it is laziness which makes us unworthy:*

If a king should say: He who does such and such a thing, let him be cast out from my table, would you not do all that you could to obtain admission? He has called us to heaven, to the table of the great King, and yet we refuse, absent ourselves and take no notice of his call. What hope of salvation remains to us then? It will not serve to plead weakness and put the blame on our nature; only laziness makes us unworthy. We have said all these things to you, but would that he who alone can move souls and infuse in them the spirit of contrition, should touch your hearts and implant in them his seed, so that you may conceive true fear and give birth to the spirit of salvation—thus you will approach with confidence. Let there be nothing old, nothing harsh, nothing which is immature; in this way those who are renewed have life and can bring forth fruit.

II. TERTULLIAN

(PL. 2. 806)

The flesh is washed that the soul may be made clean, the flesh is anointed that the soul may be consecrated, the flesh is signed that the soul may be fortified, hands are imposed on the flesh that the soul may be flooded with the Holy Spirit, the flesh is fed with the Body and Blood of Christ in order that the soul may be filled with God. They cannot be separated at the moment of reward who have been united in that of struggle.

III. ST AUGUSTINE

(We shall select various passages from his works which may be of use in the preaching of today's Gospel.)

1. *Love of Christ in order to follow him:*

It would appear that the words of our Saviour, in which he says that anyone who wishes to follow him must deny himself, are very hard. But his commands are not hard once he gives us the help necessary to obey them. It is also true, as he says, that his yoke is sweet and his burden light. It is true, charity changes into gentleness anything that may be hard in his commands. We know the force of

love; many times even profane love reaches these heights. How many things a man will suffer, to how many indignities will he not submit himself so long as he attains that which he loves! There are the lovers of riches, the misers; those who love honours, the ambitious; those who love bodily beauty. Think of how much all these labour and how they overcome all obstacles in their way. If this is true of carnal love, why should we be surprised if those who love Christ and desire to follow him should deny themselves for his love? If man was lost through loving himself, it is necessary that he should find himself by denying himself.

2. *Leaving ourselves to find Christ:*

Put the will of God before all else; learn to love yourselves by ceasing to love yourselves. To know that the love of oneself is a vice listen to the apostle who says to us, Men will be in love with self, in love with money . . . (2 Tim. 3. 2). He who loves himself, do you think that he will remain within himself? No, because as soon as he abandons God to love himself he launches out beyond himself and is obliged to love things outside himself, for which reason the apostle says: In love with money, boastful, etc. . . . As soon as human love begins to go out of itself to seek that which is without, then it immediately dissolves into vanity and wastes its strength; it lowers itself, impoverishes itself, feeds pigs, until, working at that task, it must remember former things and say: How many servants in my father's house eat bread, and here I am dying of hunger (Luke 15. 17).

3. *But before saying that what did the son have to do?*

We are told that: He came to himself . . . (Luke 15. 17). He came to himself where before he had gone out of himself. But he must not remain there; what does he do? I will arise and go to my father. . . . There you see him; when he abandoned himself he also left his father, because he left himself to go to things which were outside himself. Now he returns within himself and goes to his father, where he will be safe.

4. *To go to the Father it is necessary to abandon oneself:*

What do we mean by denying himself? Simply that a man should not have confidence in himself (Jer. 17. 5). Let him leave himself to have confidence in God. All that he has which is good let him attribute it to him who gave to him. All the evil that he has, let him attribute it to himself.

5. *We must go to heaven with Christ, our head:*

Heaven was far from us until Christ, our head, had suffered for us and had gone there before us. But now why should we despair who are members of that Head? Certainly we have to follow him, and who would not follow him to such a place? More so since on

this earth we live full of fear and sufferings. Who would not wish to follow Christ to the place of supreme happiness and peace.

6. *Humility is the road:*

Is the road difficult? Are you afraid? Do you not wish to follow him? Follow him! That road is hard which man made for himself, but that road is sweet which Christ trod with his own feet. Because who is not prepared to follow one who is triumphant? Greatness attracts anyone, but humility is the road to follow. You who desire the heights of greatness, can you drink of the chalice of which he drank? That of humility. That is why he does not merely say, Let him humble himself, but, Let him take up his cross and follow me.

IV. ST BEDE

(Some extracts from his commentaries on this Gospel)

Mystically we are shown by this Gospel that we cannot hope to pass along the road of this present life unless we are nourished by the grace of the Redeemer, by the food of his word. . . . Food is therefore given to those who come from afar off, for the food of holy instruction must also be offered to those who are converted from sin, that they may regain in God the strength they have lost in evil-doing.

We must meditate on the words 'for some of them came from afar off', because not everyone in the Church is in this state, e.g. those who love and serve God cannot be said to have come from afar. The phrase refers especially to those who return to God after a life of sin.

The Lord, receiving the loaves, began to give them to the apostles, so that they, once they had received them, might pass them on to the people; for in giving the apostles the gifts of spiritual understanding he wishes that the food of life should be distributed to the Church throughout the world by their ministry. That he broke the loaves signifies the revelation of the sacraments by which the world was to be nourished. . . . They eat of the loaves and fishes of the Lord and are filled who, hearing the word of the Lord and meditating on his parables, rouse themselves from sleep because of them and rise to a new and a better life. . . . And justly is it said of the multitude that though they could not partake of the fragments of the Lord's supper that remained, yet they did eat and were filled. For there are those who, though unable to leave all things, or take upon them what is laid down for virgins and other things of this kind, nevertheless eat and drink and are filled, when through obeying the commandments of the law of God, they attain to eternal life by the grace and favour of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

ST THOMAS AQUINAS

(A summary of his teaching with regard to Baptism—the central theme of the Epistle for today.)

1. *The necessity of this sacrament:*

Men are bound to that without which they cannot attain salvation. Now it is manifest that no one can attain salvation except through Christ. . . . But for this end is baptism conferred upon man, that being regenerated thereby, he may be incorporated in Christ, by becoming his member. . . . Consequently it is clear that all are bound to be baptized and that without baptism there is no salvation for men.*

2. *The names given to baptism according to its effects:*

(a) Seal:

St John Damascene defines baptism according to its inward effects, seal and safeguarding—in as much as the character of this sacrament safeguards the soul for good.

(b) Regeneration:

This refers to the fact that man, by this sacrament, begins the new life of justice.

(c) Illumination:

This refers especially to faith, by which man receives spiritual life.

(d) Sacrament of faith:

This because it is a kind of protestation of faith.

3. *Baptism represents the death of Christ:*

By baptism man is made conformable to Christ's passion and resurrection, in so far as he dies to sin and begins to live anew unto righteousness. . . . (3P. q. 66. a. 2. c).

Christ's burial is more clearly represented by immersion. . . . yet in the other ways of baptizing it is represented after a fashion, albeit not so clearly; for no matter how the washing is done, the body of a man, or some part thereof, is put under water, just as Christ's body was put under the earth (Art. 7, *ad 2um*). As Chrysostom says, When we dip our heads under the water as in a kind of tomb, our

* In this connection it seems wise to include here a reference to the decree of the Holy Office of 18 Feb. 1958, AAS. 1958 (50), 114, in which some opinions regarding the salvation of infants who die without baptism are said to be 'without solid foundation'.

old man is buried, and being submerged is hidden below, and thence he rises again renewed (Art. 3. c).

4. *The symbolism of certain ceremonies:*

(a) The anointing of the head:

As Rabanus says: The baptized is signed by the priest with chrism on the top of the head . . . to symbolize the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him, in order to consecrate a dwelling to God . . . (q. 72. a. 11. *ad 3ium*).

(b) The salt and the spittle:

The salt which is put in the mouth, and the anointing of the nose and ears with spittle, signify the receiving of doctrine, as to the ears, consent thereto, as to the nose, and confession thereof as to the mouth. The anointing with oil signifies man's ability to fight against demons (q. 71. a. 3. c).

(c) the baptized are given a white garment to signify the newness of life (a. 3. *ad 4um*).

5. *The effects of baptism:*

(a) The spiritual life:

i. *A regeneration.* Baptism is a spiritual regeneration, in as much as a man dies to the old life, and begins to lead a new life . . . (q. 66. a. 9. c).

ii. *Giving grace and the virtues.* As Augustine says: The effect of baptism is that the baptized are incorporated in Christ as his members. Now the fullness of grace and virtues flow from Christ the head to all his members, according to John 1. 16: Of his fullness we have all received. Hence it is clear that man receives grace and virtues in baptism (q. 69. a. 4. c).

iii. *Illumination and good works.* Just as a member derives sense and movement from the material head, so from their spiritual head, Christ, do his members derive spiritual sense consisting in the knowledge of truth, and spiritual movement, which results from the instinct of grace. . . . it follows from this that the baptized are enlightened by Christ as to the knowledge of the truth, and made fruitful by him with the fruitfulness of good works by the infusion of grace (q. 69. 5. c).

(b) Forgiveness of sins:

i. *The guilt.* By baptism man dies to the oldness of sin and begins to live unto the newness of life of grace. But every sin belongs to the primitive oldness. Consequently every sin is taken away by baptism (q. 69. 2. 1. c).

The sin of Adam was not as far-reaching as the grace of Christ which is bestowed in baptism: For judgement was by one man

unto condemnation; but grace is of many offences unto justification . . . (*ibid. ad 1um*).

ii. *Punishment*. It is clear that the passion of Christ is communicated to every baptized person so that he is healed just as if he himself had suffered and died. Now Christ's passion as stated above is a sufficient satisfaction for all the sins of all men. Consequently, he who is baptized is freed from the debt of all punishment due to him for his sins, just as if he himself had offered sufficient satisfaction for all his sins (Art. 2. c).

iii. *But it does not remove all the sufferings of this life*. The punishment of sin is twofold, the punishment of hell and temporal punishment. Christ entirely abolished the punishment of hell, so that those who are baptized and truly repent should not be subject to it. He did not, however, altogether abolish temporal punishment, yet awhile; for hunger, thirst and death still remain. But he overthrew its kingdom and power, in the sense that men should no longer be in fear of them; and at length he will altogether exterminate them at the last day (q. 69. a. 3. *ad 2um*. Cf. *ad 3ium*).

iv. *This is fitting*. It is fitting that what takes place in the head should take place also in the member incorporated. Now, from the very beginning of his conception Christ was full of grace and truth, yet he had a passible body, which through his passion and death was raised up to a life of glory. Wherefore a Christian receives grace in baptism, as to his soul; but he retains a passible body, so that he may suffer for Christ therein; yet at length he will be raised up to a life of impassibility. . . . Secondly, this is suitable for our spiritual training; namely in order that, by fighting against concupiscence and other defects, man may receive the crown of victory. . . . Thirdly, this was suitable lest men might seek to be baptized for the sake of impassibility in the present life, and not for the sake of life eternal (q. 69. a. 3. c).

v. *Fourth effect, the diminution, but not extinction of concupiscence*. Difficulty in doing good and proneness to evil are in the baptized, not through their lacking the habits of virtues, but through concupiscence, which is not taken away in baptism. But just as concupiscence is diminished by baptism, so as not to enslave us, so also are both the aforesaid defects diminished, so that man be not overcome by them (q. 69. a. 4. *3ium*).

vi. *Fifth effect is to open the gates of heaven*. To open the gates of the heavenly kingdom is to remove the obstacles that prevent one from entering therein. Now this obstacle is guilt and the debt of punishment. But it has been shown above that all guilt and all debt of punishment are taken away by baptism. It follows therefore that the effect of baptism is to open the gates of the heavenly kingdom (q. 69. a. 7. c).

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. LEO TRESE

(Some extracts from *Many are One*, pp. 80 ff.)

Baptism is the greatest thing that ever happened to anyone, and yet we view it almost with nonchalance. The trouble goes back, perhaps, to our childhood catechism days. We learned that baptism is the sacrament which takes away original sin. We did learn also that baptism makes us children of God and heirs of heaven. But that didn't mean much to us. 'It takes away original sin.' That was the important fact to remember. And so all through our later years we have been handicapped by this purely negative idea of Baptism: as a kind of spiritual dry-cleaning that rubbed out a dreadful spot . . . it is necessary to know what an enormous transformation took place in us when we were baptized. As the water was poured upon us, the stream of divine love dipped down, as it were, and took us up into his flow. Somewhat as a stream of electricity might dip down to flow through a piece of base metal, and give the metal a warmth and a brightness that were not its by nature. . . .

As the earth becomes beautiful and fruitful under the rays of light that flow from the sun, so does the soul become beautiful and fruitful as it is bathed in the love which flows from the Holy Spirit. More than that, the soul becomes vibrantly alive, on a new level of existence, with powers which it never possessed before. The sun only bathes the earth in light. The Holy Spirit more than merely bathes us in his love; he permeates it with his love, so that his love, his life, flows through the soul like blood through our body. We are infused with the Holy Ghost, the soul of the Mystical Body. We receive powers that are divine, powers that belong only to God. Ours is the power to know God, now, as he knows himself; power to love him as he loves himself; powers that we exercise but imperfectly in this life, but which will have their full flowering in heaven.

II. DOM COLUMBA MARMION

The Bread of Life

When, in prayer, we ask our Lord to tell us why he willed, in his eternal wisdom, to establish this ineffable Sacrament, what does he reply?

To begin with, he repeats those same words with which he first announced the institution of the Eucharist to the Jews: 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. . . . It is as if he said: My desire is to

communicate my divine life to you. I hold my being, my life, all, from my Father, and because I hold all from him, I live only for him; I desire with an intense desire that you, likewise, holding all from me, live only for me. Your corporal life is sustained and developed by food; I will be the food of your soul, so as to preserve and develop its life, which is myself. He that eats me lives by my life; I possess the fullness of grace, and those to whom I give myself as food partake of this grace. . . . I give you life because I give myself as food. I am the living Bread, the bread of life come down from heaven so as to give you eternal life; that bread which gives the heavenly life, the everlasting life, of which grace is the dawn. . . .

One of the intentions of the Heart of Jesus in instituting the Sacrament of the Eucharist, then, is to be the heavenly Bread which maintains and increases the Divine life in us. But our Lord has willed another end which completes the first. . . . He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him. What is the meaning of the word *Manere*—abide?

When we read the Gospel of St John . . . we see that he nearly always uses this term when he wishes to express perfect union. . . . To abide in Christ is first of all to share by grace in his divine Sonship: it is to be one with him by being, as he is, although in a different manner, the child of God. That is the essential and fundamental union, which Christ himself points out in the parable of the vine. . . .

This union is not the only one. 'To abide' in Christ is to be identified with him in all that relates to our intelligence, our will, our activity. We abide in Christ through our intelligence when we accept with a simple, pure and integral act of faith all that Christ tells us. . . .

To abide in him is also to submit our will to his, it is to make all our supernatural activity dependent on his grace. That is to say, we must abide in his love by accepting to do his will. . . . It is to prefer his desires to our own, it is to espouse his interests, it is to yield ourselves to him entirely without counting the cost, reserving nothing and taking nothing back, for one cannot abide unless one is stable and firm, with that absolute confidence that a bride should have in her bridegroom. The bride is never more pleasing to the bridegroom than when she relies only upon his wisdom, his power, his strength and his love. . . .

He is in the soul, he abides in it, but he is not idle. He wills to work in it, and when the soul remains given up to him, to his every will, then Christ's action becomes so powerful that this soul will infallibly be carried on to the highest perfection, according to God's designs. For Christ comes to the soul with his divinity, his merits, his riches, to be its light and way, its truth, wisdom, justice and redemption. . . . in a word, to be the life of the soul, to live himself

within the soul. . . . this is the dream of the soul; to make only one with the beloved. Communion, in which the soul receives Christ as food, brings about the realization of this dream, by transforming it, little by little, into Christ.

The Fathers of the Church point out the great difference there is between the action of the food which serves to nourish our corporal life, and the effect produced in the soul by the Eucharistic bread.

When we assimilate the food of the body, we change it into our own substance, while Christ gives himself to us as food in order to transform us into himself. St Leo writes these remarkable words: Participation in the Body and Blood of Christ produces in us none other effect than to make us pass into that which we take. St Augustine is still more explicit; he makes Christ say: I am the food of the strong; have faith and eat me. But thou wilt not change me into thyself, it is thou who wilt be transformed into me. . . .

How is this spiritual transformation brought about? . . . 'The efficacy of this Sacrament', St Thomas tells us, 'is to work a certain transformation of ourselves into Christ by means of charity. And that is the fruit proper to it. . . . the property of charity is to transform the one who loves into the object of his love.' That is to say that the coming of Christ in us tends, of its nature, to establish between his thoughts and ours, between his sentiments and our sentiments, between his will and our will, such an exchange, such a correspondence and similitude that we have no other thoughts, no other sentiments, no other desires than those of Christ. And this through love. Love yields our will to Christ, and through it, all our being, all our energies; and because love thus yields up the whole man, it is the means of our supernatural transformation and growth. St John has well said: He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him (1 John 4. 16). (*Christ the Life of the Soul.*)

III. ST THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

(Summary of Sermon for 6th Sunday after Pentecost)

Mercy

I. *Divine mercy:*

It is the divine attribute which is most stressed in Sacred Scripture (Cf. Ps. 114. 9, 102. 8). God is merciful for three reasons:

(a) because of his omnipotence:

St Augustine tells us that God is merciful because he is all-powerful. It is a proof of supreme power to be merciful. The creation shows us his infinite power; the redemption, his infinite mercy. We are more in God's debt for the redemption than for the creation. He shows his power to all creatures; his mercy only to man.

(b) by his very nature:

St Augustine says: O my God! Shall I dare to say it? Have mercy on my boldness, but I am overflowing with joy. . . . If you were not God, you would be unjust! If you were not God, you would not be just! Why? Because we commit so many grave sins, persist in them and rejoice in them, provoking your anger, and you, O Lord, show us nothing but your mercy, you permit the sinner to glory in his crime. O God . . . is not that unjust? No, because there can be no injustice in God; God knows no other way of acting except to bow down and take pity on our misery. There is nothing so just as your mercy and were you not merciful you would not be God, because it is most just and necessary that he who does not need anyone should be merciful to all.

(c) because of his own experience:

His sufferings taught him to be merciful. He was full of this virtue by reason of his divine nature, but he chose to become man in order to experience it according to the flesh. For his own worshippers the Lord hath a Father's pity; does he not know the stuff of which we are made, can he forget that we are only dust? (Ps. 102. 13-14. Cf. Ez. 33. 11; Lam. 3. 31.) The apostle speaks of the blood of Jesus which cries out louder than the voice of Abel (Heb. 12. 24) because one demanded justice, the other mercy. And what is the cry of Jesus? Be ye merciful as God is. Be merciful then while it is yet day, because the night of death shall come, in which the fruits of mercy shall be known.

2. *Our mercy:*

What should this mercy of ours be like? St John Chrysostom tells us that Christ has, in a way, been born again in all the poor, so that we might not be ashamed to give them alms. Think of the passages of the Scriptures which deal with almsdeeds, and the poor (cf. Matt. 5. 3; Luke 16. 9, 6. 36; Os. 6. 6; Col. 3. 12). This is the mercy which God expects of us. Mercy makes us like to God (Col. 3. 12). We must not be as hard as nails; we must try to love one another; we must be interested in the needs and sufferings of others (Rom. 1. 31).

3. *Motives for mercy:*(a) *Our own misery:*

The experience of misery and unhappiness should make it easy for me to remedy it.

(b) *The great advantages of mercy:*

The merciful shall obtain mercy (Matt. 5. 7). God will reward those who care for the poor (Prov. 19. 17; Ps. 40. 1-4). These are great benefits for a very small outlay.

(c) *The abundance of unhappiness and misery:*

The world is one great hospital, full of sick of all kinds (not merely those who suffer material poverty). The sufferings of soul are greater than those of the body.

(d) *Our obligation is to give help where we can:*

The needs of the poor cry to heaven. There are rich and poor, but God will lay his just claim against the rich man who does not heed the cry of the poor. To the rich he may well say: The little you give to the poor really takes nothing from the store of worldly goods that I have given you. Almsdeeds increase wealth if you are faithful administrators of God. Consult experience and you will find that God well knows how to reward those who give alms in his name.

4. *The poverty of Christ:*

He came down from heaven to take our flesh—there can be no greater poverty than that. Once he was asked where he lived, and his reply was that, The birds of the air have their nests and the foxes their holes, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head (Luke 9. 58). On another occasion the apostles had to gather some ears of corn to satisfy their hunger. Who can say how great was his poverty, who died without tomb or winding sheet of his own? God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9. 7).

IV. R. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O.P.

(A few extracts from *The Love of God and the Cross of Jesus*, in which he speaks of fruitful communion and the way to attain it.)

Nevertheless, among even daily communicants, we find arrested souls, no longer making enough progress and consequently not being called either beginners or proficient or perfect; for a dwarf is neither a perfect child, adolescent or adult. Retarded souls manifest an analogous deviation from the spiritual norm. They are in a state of grace, and when they communicate their communions are not entirely ineffectual, really producing in them a slight increase in charity. But a contrary growth of venial sins covers over this minimum increase, and progress may become slower and slower, like a stone thrown into the air. . . .

Conditions for fervent communion:

For Holy Communion to produce its effects in us, we must receive it with the right intentions. For fervent communion, we must have a living faith and that ardent desire called hunger for the Eucharist. There is no question here of a desire of the sensible order, like certain consolations accorded to us by our Lord, but of spiritual aspiration, founded on the absolute certitude of supernatural faith in the Eucharist as the food and refreshment for our spiritual forces,

fire for our heart, light for our intellect, strength for our will, peace for our passions.

If we wonder how it can happen that we do not experience any spiritual hunger for the Eucharist, we ought to remember that doctors advise people who have lost their appetite to take exercise. The same can be said in regard to our spiritual life. We lack exercise. At least one act of mortification a day is a necessity for us; and little by little we should develop a spirit of sacrifice. It will give us peace and joy by putting to death our egoism, self-love and pride, and by making room in our souls for love of God, our neighbour, until they take first place there. We shall indeed hunger for the Eucharist.

. . . Blessed Grignon de Montfort advises us at Communion time to ask Mary to share with us her own sentiments in receiving; to obtain for us a loving faith in the mystery of redemption, and in the infinite value of the sacrifice of the Cross perpetuated on our altars; to give us a deeper understanding of how Holy Communion ought to be daily a more intimate participation in that sacrifice, that is, in the sentiments our Lord himself had when he offered himself for us on Calvary and in those ever living in his heart as he continues to offer himself through the ministry of his priests.

If we always had these dispositions, every communion would be more fervent than the one before, and our journey to God would be, by the same token, made at greater and greater speed, like the saints. . . . Those who are in the state of grace ought to grow spiritually all the more as they near the end of their journey to eternity.

V. DAVID GREENSTOCK *

Communion in time of sickness

When we think of the Eucharist, not merely as a sacrifice, but also as a sacrament, we reach the same conclusion. Our Lord's gift of himself in Holy Communion is essentially a life-giving gift. . . . By its very nature this sacrament is an act of vital union between the soul and Christ. He is as truly present within us at Holy Communion as he was in the stable at Bethlehem and on the wood of the Cross. That union has one supreme object—to increase the love which exists between us.

If we consider how our Lord does this in Holy Communion, we discover one of the intimate secrets of divine Love. Whereas human love is attracted by good qualities which it finds in the object of its affection, divine love is essentially a giving—it produces good in the one it loves. God, in loving me, makes me good. This is true in a special way of the Holy Eucharist. It is an act of supreme divine love that Christ should wish to come to me and dwell in me. Being an

* *Death, The Glorious Adventure*, pp. 47 ff.

act of love, this indwelling tends naturally to increase my goodness. This it does first of all by an increase in the sanctifying grace which I already possess, rooting it ever deeper in my soul, and activating it, so that it flows into acts of fervent faith, confidence and love.

Alternatively, we can think of Holy Communion as an intimate reunion of two friends. In this sacrament our best friend comes to visit us—and we can be quite sure that he does not come empty-handed. All the treasures of his grace are at our disposal during those moments. He comes to help us to live in very close union with him in the ordinary circumstance of our daily lives. When those circumstances include sorrow or suffering we can be even more certain of his help. If he knows that it is good for us and for the Church, he may not remove the sorrow; but he will give us all the strength we need to bear it properly and with spiritual profit for ourselves and for others. In that sense he will comfort and sustain us in our efforts.

Through this sacrament the life-giving sap of the true Vine flows through us, its branches. That increase of grace means a corresponding increase in our perfection and brings us ever nearer to our full perfection in heaven. He will purify us in this life so that we shall have less to suffer in purgatory. This, although we may not always appreciate it, is a great favour.

In all these senses, then, our Holy Communion is a constant pledge of our future glory in heaven. 'He that eateth this bread shall live for ever' was our Lord's promise, and he will keep his word.

SECTION VI. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

Mass, Communion and the Christian life

The Eucharist—most excellent of all sacraments

1. *The miracle related in today's Gospel is a symbol of the Eucharist:*

The catacombs contain many pictures of the Eucharist represented either in the form of seven loaves marked with a cross or seven baskets containing loaves. As Christ fed the multitude with seven loaves, so with one Bread he feeds the whole world.

2. *It is the necessary complement of baptism:*

(a) This is the relationship between the Epistle (which speaks of baptism) and the Gospel. Baptism gives us a share in Christ's life, but it is necessary for us to perfect and develop this by the constant practice of virtue—this is where the Eucharist comes in; it enlightens our minds and strengthens our wills.

(b) The transformation which began at the font is renewed each time we receive the Body of Christ, until we are entirely changed into him and his spirit.

(c) If we could only draw all its force from this sacrament we would be free even from the slightest imperfection.

(d) Therefore it is interesting to see how we should prepare to receive it.

Communion and Mass

1. *Two preparations:*

(a) There is an immediate preparation which most people are careful to make, and which consists in certain prayers, acts of faith, humility, etc.;

(b) but there is another which is intimately related to the Mass—we shall see in what it consists.

2. *Communion is a share in the fruits of the sacrifice of Christ:*

(a) Therefore only at Mass can the hosts be consecrated for communion.

(b) The Christian who goes to communion receives Christ—but it is Christ, the victim, the Body which was delivered for us;

(c) therefore there can be no better preparation than to present ourselves as victims together with him, prepared to be sacrificed in the daily struggle as he was;

(d) never better moments than those of communion to fulfil the words of the apostle and present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy, pure, pleasing to God (Rom. 12. 1).

(e) It is true that, to receive communion worthily, it is enough to approach in a state of grace and with the right intention;

(f) but it is also true that, to obtain the full fruits of our communions, we should approach in a spirit of sacrifice.

If it is a real present sacrifice—some cross which we accept, even better; but at least the spirit of sacrifice should be there.

3. The prayers at Mass will help us to make this offering with Christ and then to receive him during the Mass itself with greater fruit.

(a) The offertory prayer—we offer together with him our sins, offences and negligences—in a word, all that we are;

(b) the drops of water put into the wine remind us of our union with his sacrifice;

(c) the consecration is surely the supreme moment for this offering of ourselves, that he may make something of us, poor sinners as we are;

(d) the Our Father reminds us of our union, not only with him, but also with our fellow men in the Mystical Body;

(e) the three prayers before communion are most useful for this purpose. We should learn to recite them with the priest.

II. THE EPISTLE

A: The theology of baptism

Remind ourselves of our baptism

1. Both the fact that we have been baptized and also the greatness of this sacrament.

2. For that reason today's epistle gives us a complete theology of baptism.

Baptism—a re-birth in Christ

1. St Paul's words remind us of the discourse between Christ and Nicodemus (John 3. 5).

2. Baptism is a regeneration (cf. St Thomas, p. 388 above).

3. St Paul elsewhere describes it as a Cleansing power which gives us new birth, and restores our nature, through the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3. 5). But in what does this renovation or regeneration consist? It is both a death and a new life (cf. Marmion above and also Rom. 6. 3).

Buried by baptism

When baptism was administered by immersion it was as though the person being baptized was buried under the waters. For this reason the font can be thought of as a mystical tomb into which the soul descends to die to sin.

(a) It is the death of the 'old man' with his vices and concupiscences—all that is sin. Baptism forgives all sin, both original and actual; so much so that death immediately after baptism implies immediate entry into heaven.

(b) With sin disappears also all punishment, both eternal and temporal.

A new life

St Paul also indicates, together with the destructive element in baptism, its constructive element (cf. Marmion). Just as Christ was raised up by his Father's power from the dead, we too might live and move in a new kind of existence (Rom. 6. 4).

(a) By baptism we become a new man, a new creature.

(b) This new life consists in living the life of Christ. Another text tells us that by it we have put on Christ (Gal. 3. 27).

i. *This is not something purely exterior, like a garment; it is a share in Christ's life to the extent of making that known by our good works.*

ii. *We receive a new life*, flowing from Christ our Head, a share in the divine life through grace. We are grafted on to him, form part of him, to bring forth new fruit.

Consequences

1. *There are many:*

- (a) The whole of Christ becomes ours to share, his merits, graces, etc., as members of one Body, of which he is the head.
- (b) We become the sons of God, can call God our Father in justice and truth; share in his inheritance.
- (c) When the Christian prays, Christ prays in and with him; when the Christian suffers, Christ suffers with him.
- (d) There is now no distinction between Jew and Gentile, slave and freeman—all are one in Christ (Gal. 3. 28).

2. *The obligation of the baptized:*

- (a) to fight—to preserve and increase this new life in me;
- (b) the germ or seed is infused at baptism—now I have to care for it and develop it;
- (c) the best way of showing our gratitude to God for all that he has given us is to live this new life to the full, be worthy of the vocation to which he has called us.

B: Christian mortification

Baptism demands mortification

1. Baptism infuses spiritual life into us, makes us share in the life of Christ.
2. By baptism we also die with Christ. The life of the Christian has to be a continual death in order to develop, strengthen and carry to its full perfection the life of Christ.
3. Because we are baptized we have received the highest possible vocation to union with God. We must desire that and work for it by a destruction of anything which is contrary to it, not merely sin but also other things, such as our passions.
4. This implies mortification—to kill our lower nature and to bring it into subjection to reason, so that it may serve good instead of evil.

Without mortification there can be no spiritual life

1. If you live a life of nature, you are marked out for death; if you mortify the ways of nature through the power of the Spirit, you will have life (Rom. 8. 13).
 - (a) Even though we have been baptized, we are still subject to concupiscence, which can lead us into sin (Rom. 6. 12).

(b) There is within us the conflict of two laws, that of the flesh and that of the spirit (Rom. 7. 2). It is the law of the flesh which leads us to do the evil we would not do and omit good that we would like to do (Rom. 7. 19). The list of sins to which this can lead is mentioned by St Paul in Gal. 5. 19-21.

(c) This can only be crushed by mortification (Cf. Col. 3. 5. ff.).

2. But mortification is not an end in itself—it is a means to a life of grace.

(a) God wills for us the true life of the soul; our part lies in destroying sin.

(b) Our life must always be one of mortification, it is an essential condition of our new life in Christ. The members must follow the example of their head.

(c) The more sanctity, the more mortification—because mortification leads to sanctity, while sanctity demands mortification.

3. That is why St Paul, after speaking of our incorporation in Christ, says: We carry about continually in our bodies the dying state of Jesus so that the living power of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies too (2 Cor. 4. 10; cf. *ibid.* 3. 18).

Criterion in mortifications

1. *Mortification is one thing—mortifications another:*

In the latter we must be prudent and guided always by our confessor.

2. *The following norms are merely therefore directive:*

(a) True mortification is that which really destroys what it should destroy, while at the same time it fortifies that which it should fortify. Only too frequently, badly chosen mortifications do not kill the passions, they merely kill the man (making him at times inhuman).

(b) One of the most certain signs of good mortification is when we accept with gladness those appointed by the Church, such as fasting and abstinence.

(c) Those which concern our duties are also certainly good—harder work, less relaxation, etc.

(d) Others come directly from God, sufferings, humiliations, etc., and these too are certain to attain their effect if we accept them. By our spirit of willingness to accept them we can judge our spirit of mortification.

(e) In the case of voluntary mortifications, these should always be under the control of our confessor—in this way they will also have the added value of something done under obedience to him.

i. Not every mortification is suitable for all—it is a remedy, a medicine, and one does not prescribe the same medicine for all illnesses.

- ii. In this we should imitate the saints in their spirit of mortification, but not necessarily in the mortifications themselves.
- iii. In all bodily mortifications we should be careful to undertake nothing which is liable to injure our health.

Mortify oneself

1. It is indeed useful and necessary to preach mortification nowadays, when there is so little of it.
2. It is impossible—according to the masters of the spiritual life—to control one's passions and advance in the spiritual life without it.
3. Unpleasant word that it is, there is no reason why we should allow our people to be deprived of such a powerful means of control and sanctification. Since it is so necessary, some mortification will be possible in every life, no matter what the circumstances.

C: The spirit of sorrow for sin

Its nature

1. *We should be dead to sin:*
 - (a) In the epistle of today the apostle not only states that by baptism we die with Christ, but that we should also die to sin, not serve sin any more, be absolved from it.
 - (b) This daily death to sin is attained through the spirit of true contrition or compunction as it is sometimes called.
2. *The spirit of contrition:*
 - (a) It means repentance, sorrow, penance.
 - (b) But here we are not concerned with one act of the will; rather we are talking about a habit or disposition of soul by which we remain in a spirit of sorrow and repentance.
 - (c) It is a habit—an habitual hatred for sin, an habitual renunciation of sin.
3. *It extends to all sins:*
 - (a) to mortal sin which kills the soul and deprives it of life;
 - (b) to venial sin, which lessens the fervour of charity and renders ineffective the divine activity in the soul;
 - (c) imperfections—especially if they are salutary. These nearly always come from self-love, vanity, comfort, etc.

Its efficacy

1. It is so strong that, if properly made, the act of sorrow makes it impossible for us to fall again into sin for some time—at least at the moment when it is made.

2. The spirit of sorrow is nothing less than this act of sorrow made more or less habitual. A sentiment of contrition which dominates the soul little by little.
3. Therefore by means of it we live in a continual state of death to sin—which is what St Paul tells us to do.

In the saints

1. It is always found in them, we have an example in St Paul (in his confession of former faults), in St Teresa, in whose writings it occurs frequently, to such an extent that, if we did not know her, we would believe that she had committed grave crimes. We see it in St Catherine of Siena, who constantly implored the divine mercy: Lord be merciful to me, because I have sinned.
2. It is the patrimony of souls who have received great graces from God. It increases as their fervour increases.

The spiritual fruits of it

St Francis de Sales sums them up for us when he says that the true sadness for sin is really a hatred of it and disgust at having committed it. Such sadness does not cast down the spirit; on the contrary, it lifts it up and makes it more active and diligent, full of prayer and confidence, stimulated to greater fervour. In its greatest bitterness it produces sweetness and incomparable consolation.

Means to attain it

1. *Prayer—it is a gift of God:*
We must ask for it constantly—the Church has a special prayer for the gift of tears.
2. *Meditation on the passion of Christ:*
An excellent means of attaining true sorrow. By it we see the horror of sin in the effort it cost the Son of God to wipe it out.
3. A consideration of the evil done to our own souls by sin and the little advantage we have got out of it.

D: Dead to sin

The epistle of today leads us to a consideration of our incorporation in Christ, which has many aspects. Here we may take one only, i.e. the reasons we find in baptism for avoiding all sin and keeping close to Christ.

1. *It is the symbol of the whole Christian initiation:*
It makes us one with Christ.
 - (a) Without more details this should be enough—Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

(b) Our renovation takes place by means of our incorporation into Christ, we become one with him; and what greater sacrilege could there be than the sin which makes Christ feel sin in his very own flesh?

2. *Baptism gives us the grace (the life) of God:*

(a) Our nature becomes divine, we are citizens of the kingdom of God, sons of God, heirs to heaven;

(b) but grace and sin are incompatible; grace wipes out sin; sin (if mortal) wipes out grace.

Grace comes to us with the infused theological virtues

1. *Faith:*

(a) In ancient times only adults were baptized outside danger of death:

i. What a long preparation they had before it, and with what zeal they went to the font, knowing that there they would have to leave the old man of sin.

ii. What renunciation must have been behind those three promises to renounce Satan and all his works and pomps.

(b) Nowadays we are baptized young, but it is up to us later to re-live our baptism and our faith.

(c) We call that man dishonest who does not live up to his ideas. What shall we say about a man who does not live up to his baptism and his faith?

2. *Hope:*

(a) The Christian is a man who walks lightly on this earth, knowing that here he has no abiding city. Sin alone can keep his feet stuck to the earth and not allow him to rise to heaven.

(b) Does the sinner ever stop to weigh one thing against the other? If all the sufferings of a St Paul were not worthy to be compared to the glory of heaven, what shall we say of the momentary pleasures of the sinner? This is the real madness of sin, which made St Augustine call it the mystery of iniquity.

3. *Above all, charity:*

(a) Charity is love. Sin is an offence against one who should be loved above all things.

(b) Charity is gratitude; sin is base ingratitude.

Together with grace and the virtues the Holy Trinity dwells in our soul

By sin we can cast out this presence, just as those of Nazareth cast our Lord from their territory. Why should we do such a thing?

III. THE GOSPEL

A: Exegesis

The compassion of Christ

1. *A description of the scene.*

2. *The compassion of Christ is:*

(a) the keystone of this Gospel; moved by it he teaches and feeds the multitude;

(b) it is also the key to the whole of the spiritual life; thanks to that mercy we have been redeemed and pardoned after our many falls;

(c) it is the key to the whole of Christianity, since love and mercy are the centres of our religion;

(d) Christ knows our needs, both material and spiritual; even before we manifest them to him he is ready and anxious to help us;

(e) when we too are without food, especially in the spiritual life, let us lift up our eyes to him, and have supreme confidence in him.

3. *Mercy and love are at the heart of the Christian religion:*

(a) If we are true Christians, imitators of Christ, we should feel within us the needs of our neighbour.

(b) We should make an effort to get to know them. (How many loaves have ye?)

(c) Our charity should not be merely in words.

Two major necessities

1. Christ our Lord saw the two major necessities which oppressed the people—they are always present.

2. *The first he remedies by his teaching:*

(a) *The world needs teaching:*

i. We know how, in our own countries, there are masses who do not even know what religion really means, and who do not care to know.

ii. In some of our parishes there is need for workers who are willing and prepared to teach Christian doctrine.

(b) *We must teach them:*

i. All can do their share, some with alms to establish Catholic Action centres or help to buy books, etc., others in the education of their own children,

ii. others in Evidence Guild work,

iii. others simply in the office and workshop by being ready to present the Catholic case in all its force when necessary.

3. *The second necessity—Material hunger: Christ gives them bread:*

(a) To divide it among them he uses the apostles. God has given abundant fertility to the world, but he intends in his providence to make use of men to distribute it.

(b) To some God has given talents and riches—but they must remember that such things are intended for all men, not in the sense that they must of necessity give away all they have, but in the sense that what they have is not theirs merely—it is in many ways a world-wide gift.

(c) What they have should be directed towards the common good.

(d) In this connection we have to be sure that our alms are sufficient enough according to our means. There are many who give something; but often it is not in proportion to what God has given them.

(e) Those who are generous with what God has given them surround in this life the figure of Christ, in this miracle; and in the next life they will be together with him as the Rewarder in heaven.

B: Living for God in Christ

Christ the way and the life

1. Christ is:

(a) The way. No one can go to the Father except it be through Christ. His Gospel, his teachings, his life are all models which we must imitate if we are to reach heaven.

(b) He is also truth—the light which cometh into this world to enlighten every man.

(c) He is the way by which we should walk (John 14. 6).

2. When St Paul, in today's epistle, talks of our share in the life of Christ by baptism, he is merely applying the doctrine of the vine and the branches.

Our life in Christ

1. *We share in the life of Christ:*

(a) As the vine branches share in the life of the vine (John 15. 1–8).

(b) St Paul says that we have been buried and have died with Christ so that, with him, we may live a new kind of existence (Rom. 6. 5–11).

2. *This same idea is found in his doctrine on the mystical body:*

(a) A man's body is all one, though it has a number of different organs; and all this multitude of organs goes to make up one body; so it is with Christ. We too, all of us, have been baptized into a single body by the power of a single spirit, Jews and Greeks, slaves and

free men alike; we have all been given drink at a single source, the one Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 12 ff.).

(b) And yet I am alive; or rather, not I; it is Christ that lives in me (Gal. 2. 20).

3. *In Christ we have the divine life:*

(a) His life is none other than that of the Father (John 6. 58).

(b) Through baptism we share in that divine life which permits us to live and act the life which will one day be ours in heaven.

Christ in us

1. The communication of his own life unites us to Christ and him to us. He lives in us. Cabasillas says: There are many things we need in order to live; air, light, food, clothing, faculties and members. Not one of those is used in every single action of ours; instead we use some on one occasion and some on another. Clothing is not used to feed us; he who seeks food must look for it elsewhere. Light is of no use to breathe, nor does the air serve as a source of illumination. . . .

The Saviour, on the other hand, is present in all those who live in him; in such a way that he attends to all their needs and is everything to them . . . he gives them birth, feeds them, is their light and the very air they breathe. He is their eyes, their light by which they see and the object of their contemplation.

2. *In everything the Christian does Christ is present:*

(a) Christ suffers in and with them, as St Felicitas pointed out in prison.

(b) He prays in their prayers. As Augustine says: When we speak of the prayer of Christ it may mean his direct prayer, made by him in person for us, or our own prayer; both are one sole prayer, because the Head and the Mystical Body are so united that there is no possibility of their being separated.

(c) He humbles himself anew in our humiliation.

(d) Our poverty is his.

(e) In our struggles he is fighting with us; in our triumph he is our crown.

Our sanctification in Christ

Our sanctification is nothing else but a development of this life of Christ in us.

Frequently we hear of Christ as our Way—forgetting at times that he is also our life. He is our model, it is true, in prayer, in humility, in work, etc., but he is also our intimate life. The faithful must be told and be convinced of the fact that it is Christ who works in them and brings about that wonderful transformation which is true sanctity.

C: The following of Christ as our Master

The example of the crowd

1. *Christ's praise of them:*
 - (a) Christ does not need our merits in order to do mercy to us;
 - (b) yet he declares on this occasion that he is moved because the crowd has followed him without thought for their own needs.
2. *They did not seek material food:*

Otherwise, as Augustine says, they would have been abandoned to their own devices.

 - (a) They seek the light which shines through the words of Christ and his works;
 - (b) their anxiety is centred on the Messiah who was promised to them;
 - (c) they seek in Christ the portrait painted for them by the prophets.
3. We, like the crowd, have in Christ the true Teacher (Matt. 23. 8).

Christ the living Book

1. *His own affirmation:*
 - (a) Eternal life is knowing thee, who art the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17. 3).
 - (b) Through knowledge of this living Book men will find living and life-giving truth.
 - (c) God has drawn near to us in Christ, and therefore we must find the life-giving pastures through the Door of Life—Christ (John 10. 9).
2. *St Paul can say:*
 - (a) that he does not wish anything except the knowledge of Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor. 2. 2);
 - (b) that all other things are to be thought of as nothing in comparison with this knowledge of Christ (Phil. 3. 8).
3. *Reason alone confirms this:*

All spiritual knowledge is found in Jesus alone, because he is:

 - (a) the eternal Word of God, incarnate. He is the light which enlightens every mind and which shines in our darkness;
 - (b) the development of our interior life consists in the knowledge of Christ as he is in himself and what he means to us as Redeemer and Head of the Mystical Body;
 - (c) but we must be careful not to study Christ as we would a book of history or natural science—he is not something dead, but a living entity which breathes life into all that we do and are. The whole of our life depends on him. We must listen to him as a teacher and as one who instructs us with words and works;

(d) we must allow ourselves to be dominated by that life. As the crowd in the Gospel sought him, so must we.

D: Following Christ as our sanctification

The crowd which followed Christ

1. These people were searching for the words of eternal life; it is not bodily food which attracts them, but spiritual. This food is Christ.
 - (a) Through him and in him our spiritual life increases.
 - (b) He is truth itself and love itself; therefore through him our knowledge of divine truth increases as does our love for God. No other master or director of the spiritual life possesses these qualities.
2. *The Eucharist:*
 - (a) Sacrament of grace and of the author of grace;
 - (b) the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves is a symbol of this sacrament.
3. The Eucharist is a synthesis of the doctrine, life and activity of Christ since it is Christ himself communicated to us, in a most perfect fashion.

Food for the spirit

1. *The spiritual life:*
 - (a) needs food for its development;
 - (b) there is a constant growth of charity and truth in the soul in a state of grace;
 - (c) Christ is, as St Paul says, our wisdom, our justification, our sanctification and our atonement (1 Cor. 1. 30).
2. *Christ has a special part to play in our spiritual life:*
 - (a) as our model:
 - i. According to St Paul (Rom. 8. 29) the loving providence of God, which begins with the knowledge he has of us and ends with our glory in heaven, consists in his having predestined us to reproduce perfectly the image of his Son.
 - ii. The delight of the Father is the Son; that is his message to us from Mt Tabor.
 - iii. In order that he may delight in us too, we must reproduce the image of his Son in us, that is why he ends his message by saying, 'Hear ye him'.
 - (b) as the cause of our redemption:

He merited for us all the graces given to man since the fall of Adam.
 - (c) as our mediator:
 - i. In Christ the human and divine natures are joined in one person.

ii. We are joined to the divinity in the measure of our union with Christ.

(d) as our head in the Mystical Body:

- i. the closest union possible for us;
- ii. one and the same life with him and in him;
- iii. he is not content to apply his merits to man as to a person distinct from himself, but as one united to himself in the closest union;
- iv. our Head unites us to the Spirit which animates his own life, and through this Spirit we are led to an even more perfect union with Christ through the living image of him which the Holy Ghost reproduces in our souls (Gal. 4. 6).

E: Moved with compassion

The greatness of divine mercy

1. The words pronounced by Jesus in today's Gospel explain everything, I have compassion on the multitude. Greater than the crowd, deeper than their need, is the mercy of Christ.
2. In this scheme we shall study the divine mercy in comparison with his other attributes.
3. As a preliminary we may say that mercy is above all the other attributes of God, but this needs understanding in the right way.
4. It does not mean that it is greater than the others, because in God all his attributes are equal; this is especially true of his justice. It means:
 - (a) that in his dealings with creatures in this life it is the attribute which is most in evidence;
 - (b) and that, compared with its effects, it is the greatest of them all.

Mercy and justice

1. When God shows forth his justice in order to punish, he has already shown his mercy a hundredfold.
2. *Mercy precedes justice:*
 - (a) God does not punish except after repeated calls to repent and to be converted on to the right road.
 - (b) The punishment administered to Sodom shows this clearly; the interesting conversation with Abraham (Gen. 18. 23-33) shows that justice is ever ready to give way as much as possible.
 - (c) In the New Testament there is a parable which demonstrates the same truth. A man had a fig tree which did not give him any fruit, not even after several years of patient waiting. Instead of

destroying it, he decides to wait yet another year and in that year he gives it special attention (Luke 13. 6-9).

3. *Mercy accompanies justice:*

- (a) that is to say, God, in making use of his justice, never totally hides his mercy from man;
- (b) there is a clear proof of this in the first chapters of Genesis with the story of the fall of man and his punishment (cf. Hab. 3. 2).

4. *Mercy follows up justice:*

- (a) God, in punishing, always seeks good—it is the path of mercy, in this life;
- (b) the cross of Christ, supreme manifestation of God's justice towards sinners, is at the same time God's supreme work of mercy;
- (c) in the same way, our crosses and the sufferings we have to endure in this life are but means for the application of the redemption of Christ. When God punishes he does not look for the death of the sinner, but that he should be converted and live (Ez. 18. 23).

Mercy and omnipotence

1. In human life it would seem that the more power a person has the more he is feared.
2. *In the case of God the opposite is the truth:*
 - (a) In him the words of the Wise Man find their true applications: he has pity on all because he is powerful (Wis. 11. 24).
 - (b) And thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life (Ps. 22. 6).
 - (c) These two things have I heard, that power belongeth to God, and mercy to thee, O Lord (Ps. 61. 12-13).
 - (d) The meaning is plain: in God mercy and justice are one and that his infinite power rejoices when it is at the service of his mercy.
 - (e) What is more, God is merciful because he is omnipotent, i.e. the actions of his mercy come from his omnipotence.

3. We may have a very mercenary idea of power, but God manifests this by creating, elevating, restoring and pardoning.

The greatness of the divine mercy

1. The tree is known by its fruits, and God's invisible works are known by their results (Rom. 1. 19-20).
2. The whole of the Old Testament is a struggle between man and God, the Chosen People against their Liberator:
 - (a) on the part of man, repeated sins;
 - (b) on the part of God, repeated manifestations of his mercy.
3. In the New Testament, we can sum up all the manifestations of God's mercy in one word, Christ, his words and his deeds. St Paul

gives us the most magnificent expression of this in words when he says: And so he must needs become altogether like his brethren; he would be a High Priest who could feel for us and be our true representative before God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. It is because he himself has been tried by suffering that he has power to help us in the trials we undergo (Heb. 2. 17-18).

Conclusion

1. The works of God's mercy are obvious in today's Gospel.
2. In it we see Christ moved by compassion and ready to provide a remedy for the needs of a people who do not yet understand what they really need.

F: Goods which do not satisfy

The hunger of the crowd

Christ is aware of it and is ready to work a miracle to satisfy it, because if he sends them away empty they will faint on the way.

The sinner's hunger

1. *The Prodigal Son:*

- (a) when he had spent all he had then he felt hunger and need;
- (b) he wanted to fill himself with the very husks of the swine;
- (c) when he realized this he said: Here I am dying of hunger (Luke 15. 14 ff.).

2. *The very image of the sinner:*

This is the real lesson Christ wishes to teach us in this parable.

- (a) The misery in which the sinner lives;
- (b) the infinite mercy of God, the one thing which can satisfy the hunger of man.

3. *The sinner's need:*

In the supernatural order, mortal sin means spiritual bankruptcy;

- (a) the sinner loses sanctifying grace;
- (b) he is without God;
- (c) if he remains in that sin then he must throw away any hope he may have of seeing God for ever in eternity—the one thing which can satisfy his hunger.

(d) St Augustine sum sit up: We are made for thee, O Lord, and our hearts can find no rest until they rest in thee.

Christ feeds the multitude

1. *He does it in today's Gospel:*

It is a manifestation of his omnipotence—but more still of his mercy. He was moved by compassion.

2. *Christ satisfies the sinner's hunger:*

(a) The sinner is essentially a lonely man, one who cannot merit pardon or do anything to help himself in the spiritual life. He has no cure for his own illness.

(b) The Incarnate Word of God alone can help him. Christ came to save sinners and he is the greatest manifestation of God's wisdom, power and mercy.

i. Thus the Church prays: O God who didst so wonderfully create human nature and still more wonderfully redeem it . . . (Offertory of the Mass).

ii. Christ has made full and perfect satisfaction for all sin.

3. *The food he offers:*

(a) His words:

i. With these he fills the sinner with hope; the parable of the Prodigal Son is something which has converted more sinners than all the great sermons of famous preachers.

ii. At moments of recollection, such as a retreat or mission, this parable can work wonders in the soul, which at such times is ready to receive its message.

(b) His law, the law of life:

i. His rule is essentially one of a shepherd (John 10).

ii. His law is one of love—that is its very basis.

(c) His grace:

The Samaritan woman, who had drunk of the bitter waters of sin, seeks the living water of life, which will become in her a fountain springing up into eternal life—the very picture of grace (John 4. 14).

(d) The Eucharist:

i. its image is the miracle of today's Gospel—the multiplication of the loaves;

ii. in it we have the summary of all that Christ came to do and teach (John 6. 31-52).

4. *Man's reply:*

Face to face with the Christ, whose invitation is always the same; If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink; the reply should be that of St Peter, who, faced with the desertion of so many disciples, says to Christ: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thy words are the words of eternal life; we have learned to believe and are assured that thou art the Christ, the Son of God (John 6. 69-70).

G: The Eucharist, Bread of Life

The Christian sacrifice

1. The multiplication of the loaves is a symbol of the other multiplication of bread in the Eucharist (St Augustine).

2. It is a common ritual in all sacrifices that the worshippers eat of the victim offered to the gods; after the oblation the victim is considered as united to God, and man, on eating of it, wishes to share in some way in the godhead.

3. The Christian religion has put this tendency on a supernatural basis. In our sacrificial banquet we unite ourselves truly to God, sharing in his very life.

(a) Christ came to give us life, the life of God. For that he died on the cross. But it was not enough for him to give this life to men in general—he wishes each individual to share in it personally.

(b) The steps in the realization of this plan are as follows: he becomes man in order to die for us; he dies to give us life; he communicates that life to us through the Eucharist. . . . You shall not have life in you, he warns all those who do not receive his gift (John 6. 54).

(c) The other sacraments also give life—but they are all a preparation for the Eucharist and are grouped round it (St Thomas, 3. q. 79. a. 1. *ad 1um*).

4. *The Eucharist gives us the divine life in the form of a sacrament:*

(a) God wills that the matter of the sacraments should signify and convey to us his life, and here in the Eucharist he chose the accidents of bread and wine to signify the divine life given to the soul as food;

i. our flesh is nourished with the body and blood of Christ so that our souls may be filled with God (Tertullian);

ii. the flesh of the Lord is life-giving because it has been made one with the Word of God in order to give life to all (Council of Ephesus).

(b) How is this life given to us? By communicating to us grace and charity in a very special way:

i. the divine life in man is grace and charity;

ii. the physical contact with Christ in the Eucharist brings us into communion with the very source of grace and charity.

iii. *O Sacrum convivium, in quo Christus sumitur . . . mens impletur gratia*, sings the Church.

The effects of the Eucharist

1. The Eucharist produces in the supernatural life the same effects as food and drink in the natural life, i.e. it sustains life, develops it, repairs lost tissue and brings good cheer (St Thomas 3. q. 79. a. 1).

2. *The bread which sustains life:*

(a) The supernatural life of grace needs sustaining against the forces which oppose it. Since we have not yet reached the goal of

immortality we need some food which will help us along the road—the Eucharist does this. The bread which comes down from heaven is such that he who eats of it never dies (John 6. 50).

(b) Supernatural death comes through separating ourselves from Christ, with whom the Eucharist keeps us united.

3. *The bread which restores:*

(a) Our freedom, venial sin, all these tend to diminish the strength of our spiritual life. Christ, who is life itself, cannot remain idle in these circumstances.

(b) A specific effect of this sacrament is the increase of charity—the mortal enemy of venial sin—and an increase of actual graces which repair the damage done by those sins. Through it we are transformed into Christ, and so we increase in virtue and our sins diminish; the effects of sin are repaired in the soul.

4. *The bread of spiritual growth:*

(a) The spiritual life is one in which there is no going back—unless sin intervenes.

(b) *The Eucharist is the bread of growth:*

i. *The more frequent our communions the more we are transformed into Christ*—the very aim of the spiritual life, as we have already seen.

ii. *God is love*—and this sacrament has for its special effect an increase in charity. Through it we become ever more like God in Christ.

5. *A bread which brings delight with it:*

(a) This joy comes from our union with Christ, our Beloved. To be together is the ideal of lovers all the world over. We are united with Christ in this Sacrament more than in any other.

(b) In order that this may be more and more perfect we have to be sure that we receive this Bread in good dispositions. Make our preparation as perfect as possible.

H: The Ministers of Christ

St Paul's definition

1. The priest, minister of Christ, mediator with him between God and man.

2. St Paul's definition of such a mediator tells us what the priestly life should be:

(a) The purpose for which any high priest is chosen from among his fellow-men and made a representative of men in their dealings with God, is to offer gifts and sacrifices in expiation of their sins (Heb. 5. 1).

(b) Four elements in this definition:

- i. the priest is a man,
- ii. chosen by God from among men,
- iii. for men,
- iv. for those things which pertain to God.

Mediators

1. *The proper office of a priest is to be a mediator between God and men:*

The meaning of the word tells us this—*Sacerdos*—one who gives sacred things.

(a) He offers sacrifice for his own sins and for those of the people (Heb. 5. 1-5).

(b) He gives to the people the word of God and divine mysteries.

2. *Christ, the mediator:*

(a) In the Gospels the true mediator between God and men is Christ. He blessed the bread before handing it to his disciples, and with this blessing he offered to God the needs of the people and asked for a miracle to satisfy them.

(b) The bread is multiplied in the hands of the disciples, but it is through the influence of Christ, the true author of the miracle.

(c) The earthly priests share in his mediation.

3. *The mediation of the priest:*

(a) **The primary origin of sacred things—lies in God:**

The priestly office is essentially to 'give sacred things' and the priest gives those gifts to men:

- i. first the words of truth;
- ii. then things which affect the will, such as charity, divine love and, as the fountain of all, divine grace.

(b) **The second origin of divine things is man:**

- i. man gives to God his prayers, his oblations and sacrifices;
- ii. the one who has official power to offer these things to God is the priest.

The two moments of the priesthood

There are two moments in the priestly office, the first in which he addresses himself to God in order to present to him the pleas of the people, and the second in which he addresses himself to the people in order to preach to them God's commands. This has been eloquently expressed by Bossuet in one of his sermons:

(a) **The temple of God has two sacred places in it, the altar and the pulpit:**

- i. *on the altar* our prayers are offered; *in the pulpit* the commandments are preached to us;

- ii. *at the altar* the sacred ministers speak to God on behalf of the people; *in the pulpit* they speak to the people on behalf of God;
- iii. *on the altar* Christ is offered for our adoration in the very truth of his own body; *in the pulpit* he is to be found in the truth of his doctrine.

(b) **There is a strict relationship between these two:**

i. The mystery of the altar prepares us to receive the sacred teaching; that of the pulpit prepares us to approach the altar more worthily.

ii. In both these sacred places there is a distribution of heavenly bread.

iii. The altar brings alive before our minds the Sacred Passion; a sermon without words; in the pulpit we are again instructed by the voices of living men.

iv. In both altar and pulpit there is brought about a wonderful transformation. In the one case that of the bread into the body of Christ; in the other there should also be a transformation of the faithful as members of Christ into a closer union with him.

(c) **St Augustine says:**

I ask myself, dear brethren, which of these two things has the greater dignity, the word of God or the Body of Christ? If you reply truthfully you will have to say that the word of God does not appear less worthy than the Body of Christ. You approach the altar with great care so as not to let fall the body of Christ to the earth. Hear his preachers with the same care, lest through any fault of yours his words should fall to the ground, those words which are destined to find a place in your hearts.

I: Bread, through the word

The power of preaching

1. *The weapon of preaching:*

The priest, although poor in this world's goods perhaps, still has a powerful weapon to hand to give the bread of God to his people through his preaching.

(a) **It is an element which can enlighten and unite the parish:**

The ideal is that every parish should be one united family, rich and poor, saints and sinners combined in a united effort.

(b) **The principal work of the priest in a parish may be summed up this:**

He must be a man of prayer, full of mercy and loving-kindness towards his people, understanding of their problems and an efficient (which does not necessarily mean an eloquent) preacher.

2. *His prayer:*

(a) An essential element in the life of the priest if he is to save his own soul and those of his flock—without prayer the work of the parish will be merely material, not spiritual.

(b) His visits to the Blessed Sacrament are more important than his visits to the homes of his flock.

(c) In prayer he will find both the remedy for his own defects and the courage to fight against those of his people.

(d) Prayer is the power house for his preaching—without it his words will be merely mechanical and without life.

3. *His mercy:*

(a) In the confessional—always; outside it, in his readiness to sacrifice himself and his time (an important element this) for his flock.

(b) He may even have to help them in their material needs, even at some sacrifice to his own comfort.

(c) He must be ready to deal with their problems, even though they may come with them at times when he is otherwise engaged—meal times, for instance.

(d) To this absolute dedication he has pledged himself at his ordination.

4. *Understanding of their problems:*

(a) This means patient listening and sympathetic understanding;

(b) it also may mean a certain amount of study—labour problems are not outside his sphere of work by any means;

(c) there is the problem of the over 40's, for example, and the difficulty they find in getting work; there are housing difficulties, schools, etc.; all this falls within the task of the priest who is really dedicated to his work as pastor of souls.

5. *Efficient preaching:*

This does not mean eloquence, necessarily—it means:

(a) consideration of the needs of his people;

(b) understanding of their intellectual level and what they can take in at that level;

(c) careful preparation, of which we shall have more to say immediately.

6. *Preparation for preaching:*

(a) **In his spiritual reading and in his dogma text books:**

i. Serious preparation for preaching demands a certain amount of spiritual reading.

ii. No better source can be found than the sermons of the great Fathers of the Church, now printed in cheap editions and ready of access to all.

iii. Neglect of this source can lead to a lack of life in preaching—the Word of God can so easily become a dead letter, badly delivered, with moral applications which are out of date or not suited to the people.

(b) *Dogma—the main source of the Christian life:*

i. Our people need and welcome instruction—there are so many things about which they are ignorant and the knowledge of which would enliven their spiritual lives.

ii. The great dogmas of the Church are the very centre of our faith; the Sacraments need explaining to the people if they are to get the most out of their reception.

iii. The greatest defect in modern preaching is the neglect of dogma.

(c) *Presented in an attractive form:*

i. The priest must be prepared to give careful consideration to this element in his sermons.

ii. He must use his imagination and also draw on the Gospels for his inspiration.

iii. Christ, the greatest Teacher of all time, knew well how to adapt his doctrine to the capacity of his listeners—the priest must be able to do the same.

iv. For this he must return to his Master and learn from him.

7. *Catechism—the key to good preaching:*

Our people need a careful and detailed explanation of the catechism, worked out with examples from the Gospels and delivered in such a way that it will be interesting to them. Given this, they will respond in every way. That should be the preacher's ideal.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Romans 6. 19-23

Gospel: Matthew 7. 15-21
(cf. Luke 6. 43-46)

Texts concerning hypocrisy

1. *God condemns it:*

So frail their happiness, who leave God unremembered; so fade the hopes of false hearts. Job 8. 13.

What is the sinner's hope worth after all . . . when God takes the life away from him? In that hour of need, his cry for reprieve will go unheard; he cannot go on for ever basking in the Almighty's favour, calling God to his aid. Job 27. 8-10. Cf. *ibid.* 20. 5-8; 12-13.

2. *The evil of hypocrisy:*

A bad breed that owns no blot, yet is all unpurged from its defilement. A bad breed, all haughty looks and scornful brow. A bad breed that has teeth sharp as swords, jaws that grind slowly on, till poor folk none are left, their friendless neighbours. Prov. 30. 12-14.

Do not play false in thy dealings with men, nor suffer thy own words to ensnare thee. Watch those words well, or they may trip thee up; thou wilt have compassed thy own disgrace, if God should reveal thy secret thoughts at last. Wouldst thou be thrown down, in full sight of all thy neighbours assembled, a heart that came to meet the Lord grudgingly, full all the while of treachery and deceit? Ecclus. 1. 37-40.

Here is one that wears the garb of penance for wicked ends, his heart full of guile; here is one that bows and scrapes, and walks with bent head, feigning not to see what is best left unnoticed . . . Ecclus. 19. 23-24.

This people, the Lord says, makes profession of worshipping me, does me honour with its lips, but its heart is far from me. If they fear me, it is a lesson they learned from human precepts. What remains but some great, some resounding miracle, to strike awe into such hearts as these? Bereft of wisdom their wise men shall be, cunning of their counsellors vanish. Out on you that would hide your designs from the Lord in the depths of your hearts, plotting on in the dark and telling yourselves none can see, none can find

you out! What a strange thought is this! As well might clay scheme against the potter; handicraft disown its craftsman, or thing of art call the artist fool. Isaias 29. 13-16.

Tongues that wound like an arrow, with deceit for poison, ever the smooth word of friend laying snare for friend; what, shall I let this pass me by, the Lord says; shall I not take my fill of vengeance against such a nation as this? Jer. 9. 8-9.

3. *Hypocrisy in the Gospels:*

(a) *That of Herod:*

Then, summoning the wise men in secret, Herod questioned them closely upon the time of the star's appearing. And he sent them on their way to Bethlehem, saying to them, Go and enquire carefully for the child, and when you have found him, bring me back word, so that I too may come and worship him. Matt. 2. 7-8.

(b) *Alms and fasting without hypocrisy:*

Again, when you fast, do not shew it by gloomy looks, as the hypocrites do. They make their faces unsightly, so that men can see they are fasting; believe me, they have their reward already. But do thou, at times of fasting, anoint thy head and wash thy face, so that thy fast may not be known to men, but to thy Father who dwells in secret; and then thy Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward thee. Matt. 6. 16-18.

(c) *Hypocrisy in judgements:*

How is it that thou canst see the speck of dust which is in thy brother's eye, and art not aware of the beam which is in thy own? By what right wilt thou say to thy brother, Wait, let me rid thy eye of that speck, when there is a beam all the while in thy own? Thou hypocrite, take the beam out of thy own eye first, and so thou shalt have clear sight to rid thy brother's eye of the speck. Matt. 7. 3-5. Cf. Matt. 15. 3-9.

(d) *The invectives of Christ:*

Woe upon you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites that shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in men's faces; you will neither enter yourselves, nor let others enter when they would. Woe upon you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites that swallow up the property of widows, under cover of your long prayers; your sentence will be the heavier for that. . . . Woe upon you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites that will award to God his tithe, though it be of mint or dill or cummin, and have forgotten the weightier commandments of the law, justice, mercy, and honour; you did ill to forget one duty while you performed the other; you blind leaders, that have a strainer for the gnat, and then swallow the camel! Matt. 23. 13 ff. Cf. *ibid.* 23. 28-32; Rom. 2. 17-23; 1 Pet. 2. 1.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

There are two ideas running through the Mass of today—not easy to detect, but they are there. First there is the central idea that words are not enough to honour God—there must also be deeds (the clapping of hands in the Introit gives us this sense, according to Schuster). Secondly, the Mass teaches us that the handing over of our wills to God is the main element in sanctity and in the road to salvation. The Offertory versicle gives us the example of Azarias in his martyrdom (Dan. 3. 40). Both the communion antiphon and the postcommunion prayer contain the same idea. In them we ask God for his help to do his will in all things.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: Romans 6. 19-23

1. *The theme:*

There is one central idea running through the whole of the Epistle to the Romans, that of our liberty in Christ. Adam and original sin made us slaves; Christ set us free (chap. 5). Concupiscence and original sin made us slaves to the flesh; baptism and his justice subject us to a new law which is true freedom (chap. 6). We no longer live under servitude of the old Law, but under that of the freedom of the sons of God (chap. 7).

Last Sunday we commented on verses 3-11 of chapter 6, in which we are reminded of our death to sin and our resurrection in Christ. Verse 12 begins a new idea, that of sin as a tyrant, whom we can allow to reign in our hearts or not, as we choose. There is an escape from the bondage of sin, but only if we become the servants of right-doing instead (v. 18).

Then St Paul passes on to the moral consequences:

- (a) If before we were slaves to concupiscence, now we should serve holiness in the same way;
- (b) the reason is simple; the first slavery will lead us to hell, while the other gives us eternal glory.

2. *Texts:*

- (a) **Just as you once made over your natural powers . . .**
It is the natural application of what has gone before; just as you were once given over entirely to sin and its consequences, now that you are justified, give yourselves entirely to that justification. However, as St Paul himself will say later in this Epistle and in other writings, the motives we have for sanctity are much greater than

the former ones we had for evil conduct. We may quote some of these motives as he lays them down in this letter:

- i. the fruits of evil actions, eternal death and shame (v. 21);
- ii. we are heirs to the promises made to Abraham (chaps. 4 and 5. 2);
- iii. this is a most firm hope, since the Holy Spirit has been given to us as a pledge of it;
- iv. while we were still powerless to help ourselves, Christ died for us (chap. 5. 6);
- v. he destroyed Adam's sin and its consequences, so that now grace abounds more than did sin in former times (5. 20);
- vi. we partake of these merits through baptism, which has joined us to Christ (6. 3).

(b) **Thus you escaped from the bondage of sin . . . and became the slaves of right-doing instead . . .**

The two standards, God or the world, justice or sin. Reason demands that we should follow the dictates of conscience; once those bonds of reason are broken, as St Thomas says, liberty means following our own desires.

(c) **your reward is eternal life . . .**

St Paul contrasts the results of the two slaveries; on the one hand sin, with its results, death and shame; on the other hand justice, sanctity and eternal glory. This glory is the development of the grace which is given us through Christ.

We must note the opposition between death (both material and eternal) and eternal life, which St Paul calls a gift, that is a grace. To merit hell sin is enough; so that even in a purely natural order of things, hell would have existed. To merit glory good works are not sufficient. It is also necessary that these good works should be meritorious, with that true merit which comes through grace. When he sees us full of merits the Just Judge will reward us with heaven as the prize which we have merited in justice by our good actions. But those good actions will not be meritorious without grace—they must be on the same plane as the reward granted to them; and grace is a free gift of God. Therefore at times heaven is spoken of as the just reward for virtue, and at other times as a gift, since it is consequent on grace, which is a free gift of God.

B: The Gospel: Matthew 7. 15-21

1. *Occasion and argument:*

This Gospel forms part of the Sermon on the Mount. Some commentators connect this passage with the last part of that discourse, in which we are taught the conditions necessary for Christian perfection. Four means are necessary to attain that

perfection: prayer (vv. 7-11); charity and mercy (v. 12); mortification or the narrow door (vv. 13-14) and care to avoid false doctrines. Others, however, say that this passage is merely an explanation of the verse which goes before it: how small is the gate, how narrow the road that leads to life, and how few there are that find it (v. 14).

Both aspects of this passage give sufficient material for preaching. The general argument of these verses contains two elements; in the first we are warned about false teachings (vv. 15-18); in the second we are told that, in order to enter into the kingdom of God, good works are required. In the verses which follow (not included in today's liturgy) Jesus warns us that many of those who profess to believe in him, and even of those who work miracles in his name, will be condemned.

It would appear that there has been a slight confusion in the textual order of this passage and that v. 18 should be taken in conjunction with v. 20 rather than with v. 19. The best reading would be: That worthless fruit should come from a sound tree, or good fruit from a withered tree, is impossible. I say therefore, it is by their fruits that you will know them. Any tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. The kingdom of heaven will not give entrance. . . .

2. Texts:

(a) Be on your guard against false prophets . . .

According to the Greek text we should read: Take special care to be on your guard. . . .

There is one principle which should be kept in mind in order to interpret correctly the sense of this passage. The holiness, power and wisdom of God will not allow any man to be deceived by a false prophet, not even by the devil himself disguised as an angel of light. From this principle St Augustine concludes—and with him the Church—that anyone who allows himself to be deceived by a heretic does so because it is his own fault.

This precaution against false doctrines is often remote (and sometimes that is the most effective), consisting in a good Christian life and conscience. Christ grants to those who are united to him a sixth sense in spiritual matters, especially where false teachings are concerned.

(b) False prophets . . .

The direct application of these words is probably to the scribes and Pharisees, although the history of Israel reveals other false prophets in the Old Law. These also exist under the New Law. In the first place the heretics (a frequent application in the Fathers of the Church); those who preach rebellion against authority, false doctrines about marriage, etc. Against all these we have to be on our guard.

(c) who come to you in sheep's clothing . . .

The first requisite for any prophet is that he should be sent by God—and by the Church. Therefore, anyone who lacks this essential qualification is a false shepherd, a robber who enters not into the sheepfold by the door. The sheep's clothing mentioned here can be interpreted as the false zeal (often very great in appearance) with which such men preach their doctrines, the natural virtues with which they are clothed and which can lead us into error if we are not on our guard.

We have only to remind ourselves of the case of Pelagius, apparently a most saintly man, yet a heretic; of that of the nuns of Port Royal, of whom it was said that they were as pure as angels and as proud as devils. Their purity could not completely cover their pride and disobedience. Cornelius à Lapide puts it thus: The sheep's clothing which the wolf uses to conceal his error and heresy are the preaching of liberty of conscience, the use of those texts of the Scriptures which appear to support his doctrine, the pretence of reform of the Church, and principally the reform of the clergy, smooth words, flattery and oratory in abundance. . . . Sometimes this disguise takes the form of a desire to expose vice or evils in society, the unhappy lot of the common people, even our own faults.

We must ask ourselves if, through our passions, our sins and offences against God, we have not at times been wolves in sheep's clothing. We have attempted to deceive, not others, but ourselves with excuses which appear justified but which are not. It is so easy!

(d) you will know them by the fruit they yield . . .

The heretics have descended on these verses like vultures on their prey, to prove, from evils in the Church, that she cannot be the Church of God. We shall see how St Augustine, for example, had to fight against both Manichees and Pelagians, the former because they wanted to divide the divinity—one God who created evil, the other who was responsible for the good in life; the latter teaching that man's will alone can produce good works without the help of divine grace.

We know that not all the works done by sinners are evil; we must admit that, if they are done under the influence of actual grace, they can even lead to eventual justification. The question still remains, how can we interpret the phrase that a sound tree will bear good fruit, while a tree that is withered will bear fruit that is worthless? And how are we, human as we are, to preach on this point without the faithful drawing the conclusion from our faults that our doctrine is false?

We shall try to explain these texts as simply as possible, without complicating the issue too much, because it would seem that there, as in many other places in the Scriptures, the truth is simple. Just

as a theologian must not (or should not) force texts to prove points with which they have no connection, so we may ask of all that they do not try to conclude from our Lord's words more than the meaning he gave to them himself.

Here our Lord is making use of what we may call a popular argument rather than a strictly theological one. He is talking about the scribes and Pharisees in comparison with himself. And what was their evil fruit? Surely that of not recognizing the kingdom of the Messiah and its King when they saw him, their refusal to accept his doctrines and his miracles—the sin against the Holy Ghost, in a word.

The situation as our Lord saw it (and to that he refers here) is this: Here am I, with my doctrine and my works to prove it, doing good, without a place to lay my head. If you do not wish to believe in my word alone, look at the works that I do; they speak for me. On the other hand you see them; they are hypocrites, proud, misers, who refuse to accept my doctrine and my works because they are afraid of losing their position as heads of the nation. Judge them, then, by their works—and judge me by the same criterion. That is his argument, and it is a popular one, which must not be forced to mean anything more than what he had in mind to teach at the time. As he told the people, when they, who are seated on the chair of Moses, teach you good things, listen to them; but if they teach you anything which is contrary to my doctrine then judge them by their works.

Once we have grasped this literal sense of the words we can pass on to consider the value which this doctrine can have for us.

(e) any tree that is withered will bear fruit that is worthless:

This cannot be interpreted to mean that all the works of sinners or heretics are evil. Therefore it is not a standard by which we can judge the individual—but it does serve to help us to judge the community to which the individual belongs. The true faith must produce its fruit in true sanctity, heroic virtue—not ordinary good works—which will stand out as a clear sign that this is indeed the truth, because only the truth could give rise to such actions. As Maldonatus says, Christ is not speaking here of the exception which proves the rule, but of the general rule itself; nor is he talking about what happens because of man's evil will, but of the nature of faith itself. Faith, if it is good, gives good fruits; if it is evil, it will give bad ones.

One thing is fundamental in all that Christ has said in this passage—obedience to his infallible Church. St Augustine follows St Paul in his enumeration of the good works that follow from true faith and justice before God (Gal. 5. 22-24). We can judge our Lord's opinion about hypocrites from the texts we have already cited (cf. Luke 6. 43; Matt. 12. 33).

(f) The kingdom of heaven will not give entrance . . .

It is the Lord, Lord of the Old Douay version, which in some ways is better than the Knox version, because the word used here means rather less than God and rather more than Master (Knox translation). The idea seems to be, not so much a belief in his divinity as a belief in his authority as teacher and King of the human race—as one of us, specially sent by God to teach us the way to heaven and whose authority must be obeyed. The important point is, obviously, that those who reject this authority will not enter into the kingdom, but will be 'cut down and thrown into the fire'.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(Although the *Opus Imperfectum* from which these ideas are taken is now regarded as not being the work of St John, still it has always been esteemed by the Church, and for that reason we shall give a summary of its doctrine under St John's name.)

Heresy an effect of sin and a test for the just:

(a) Sheep's clothing:

The appearance of religion without its reality. Such are simulated almsdeeds, prayers, fastings and all the other appearances of virtue with which wolves are liable to dress themselves. There is nothing so destructive of good as fictitious good, because evil which is manifest is both easily detected and avoided. But evil disguised under the appearance of good gives no warning, is accepted as good and destroys the true eventually.

(b) The danger and usefulness of heresy:

Heresy is a danger, but it is also useful. It is a danger because it leads to the perversion and the loss of many souls; it is useful because by it the faithful are separated from the infidels. By it the just are tried, and without trial there is no reward.

(c) The standard by which to judge them—good works:

The very cause which can cast us into error can also serve to detect it; thus, just as sins obscure the senses of the sinner so that he may not see the error and falls into it, so when we act righteously, the light of justice opens our eyes to the truth. From the very first moment when errors against faith were sown among men, it was not the devil's malice which made men evil but rather evil men who propagated diabolic error. In our case the fault is man's, who of his free will chooses lies, since error can never prevail among men unless there is first of all sin. Man is first blinded by his sins and then the

devil is free to sow error in his heart and make him fall into death. Just as the night cannot descend on the world while the sun shines but must wait until it sets, so while the light of justice shines in a man the darkness of error cannot prevail against him.

(d) The heretics—false prophets:

So that the heretics cannot hide themselves behind Christ's words, saying that these refer to the true doctors of the Church, who are sinners . . . the Lord, to show you that he is not referring to them but to the heretics, does not merely say 'men who come to you in sheep's clothing'; he also adds: 'but are ravenous wolves within'. The true doctors of the Church, should they be sinners, merit the name of slaves to the flesh, because they have allowed it to overcome them, but they do not seek to pervert the faithful, and therefore they cannot be called ravenous wolves. These are they of whom the apostle speaks: I know well that ravaging wolves will come among you when I am gone, and will not spare the flock; there will be men among your own number who will come forward with a false message, and find disciples to follow them (Acts 20. 29-30).

Therefore, you who have allowed yourselves to be deceived by heretics and to be baptized by them, see how Christ calls them devourers. If you have been deceived by heretics, they have stolen you, they have not fed you with the true pastures. It is proper to wolves to devour—not to save.

II. ST AUGUSTINE

False prophets

(a) Lack of charity the distinctive mark of false prophets:

God makes his sun shine on just and unjust alike—there are some gifts of God which are common to good and bad alike. This is true even of some spiritual things, such as baptism and the Eucharist and the other sacraments. But Simon Magus had these. Prophecy is a gift too; but Saul also used it, at the very moment when he was persecuting David, God's holy one. Therefore those who use these holy gifts of God should not be proud of the fact—if they have not charity. Rather they should think of the account they have to render to God for using holy things in an unholy way. From their ranks come those who will say to him: We have prophesied in thy name. He will not say to them: You lie, but: I know you not (Matt. 7. 22-23).

(b) It is clear that prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit, yet he who possesses it and who has not charity is nothing . . . because without charity prophecy does not lead to the kingdom of God, while charity does, even without prophecy . . . even if you are condemned you may be able to say: We have prophesied in thy name; what you cannot say is: We have kept the love which you commanded. If

you could say that he would not reply: I know you not, because he said: By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.

(c) We do not deny you the gifts you possess, such as heretical baptism, but you should not therefore have undue confidence in your salvation, because even if we do not despise that which we admit you have received, nevertheless it is necessary to know that we are told to keep our society together with the bond of unity. Without that, no matter what holy and venerable things you may possess, you are nothing. What is more, you are even more unworthy of the eternal life of heaven because you have received greater gifts in this temporal life and have misused them. No one can make evil use of charity which endures all things (1 Cor. 13. 7), and for which reason it cannot break the bond of unity, of which it is the real strength (PL. 40, 136).

(d) The standard by which to judge:

But if anyone should say to me: I do not know what to do. This man preaches Christ, shows me the way to follow him, says that he is speaking the truth. How can I refuse to follow one who teaches these things? I will reply: He has one thing on his tongue and another in his conscience. You may say to me: How do I know that? Am I perchance the judge of conscience? I hear him speak of Christ and I believe that he professes that which I hear from him. Let not the son of lies deceive you, and if you are a child of truth then learn, O Christian, that you desire to hear and see Christ. If anyone preaches Christ to you, then examine and consider what Christ preaches to you and where he preaches it. Christ is the Truth shown to us by the Scriptures, not in any hole or corner and secretly, but before all men and in public: he has pitched his tent in the sun (Ps. 118. 5), that is, in a public place he has erected his Church.

(e) On purity of intention and hypocrisy:

Those who separate themselves from that intimate and most secret light of truth know not how to make their pride more complete except through deceits and lies. From this hypocrisy is born, and some are so clever at it that they can deceive those whom they wish (PL. 34, 208).

The eye which is pure in doing good should neither seek human praise nor do good works in order to gain it; that is, it should not do good in order to please men. If we were to seek nothing but human praise then it would be enough to simulate good works, because men, who do not see what is in the heart, easily give praise to what is false. Those who do this simulate good and are men of two hearts. They have not a simple heart, that is, a clean one which will despise the praises of men and seek only the approval of him who alone can see into the heart. . . .

He who, in the Church or elsewhere, in any other branch of human life, seeks to appear other than he really is, is truly called a hypocrite. He pretends to be a just man but he does not practise justice, since he seeks merely the praise of men. Such as these will not receive a reward from God, who sees the heart, but the real fruit of their lies. They have already received their reward from men, and with reason it will be said to them: Depart from me. You are liars, and have used my name but have not imitated my works (PL. 34, 1269).

III. THE CATENA

(We have included here one quotation taken from the works of Chrysostom. *Hom. in Mt.* because its doctrine rounds off the passage of the Gospels for today.)

He did not ask them to punish the false prophets, but merely to beware of them. He himself frightens those of whom he speaks by threatening them with punishment from God, when he says: Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire. In these words the Jews seem to be referred to, and he warns them of the words of John the Baptist, threatening them with punishment. He had already spoken to them in this way, warning them of the axe that would be laid to the root of the trees and the fire unquenchable. If you think of this matter carefully you will see that there are two punishments mentioned here; to be cut down and to be cast into the fire. Many only fear hell; but I believe that the loss of glory is a more bitter punishment than that of hell. What evil, great or small, will not a father endure in order to see and delight in a son who is dear to him? Let us think of glory in the same way. . . . Intolerable indeed is the pain of hell, but were there ten thousand hells, such pain would be as nothing to falling from that blessed glory of God and to be hated by Christ.

SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

ST THOMAS AQUINAS

Devotion, piety and sanctity

(We shall give some quotations from the *Summa* in which St Thomas deals with these three ideas, intimately related one with the others. A free translation has been used, because it appears to give the true mind of St Thomas more than a literal translation could do. The Editor takes full responsibility for this.)

Devotion

1. Devotion means the will to hand oneself over to the service of God readily—it is a special act of the will. By it a man gives himself over to the service of God entirely, to God who is his last end. It is, therefore, an act of the virtue of religion (2-2. q. 82. a. 1).

Charity causes devotion, because through love one is prompt to serve one's friend. But at the same time charity is increased by devotion, just as any friendship is preserved and increased by the practise of—and the thought of—the acts which are proper to friendship (a. 2).

2. *The causes of devotion:*

(a) God:

The extrinsic and principal cause of devotion is God, of whom St Ambrose says: God calls whom he wills and those whom he wishes to make religious. Had he chosen, he could have changed the Samaritans from indifferent people into devout.

(b) Contemplation:

The intrinsic cause on our part is obviously what we call meditation or contemplation. As we have said, devotion is an act of the will by which a man hands himself over to the prompt service of God. Now, every act of the will comes from some consideration, because the act of the will is prompted by some good, known by the intellect. Therefore it is clear that meditation is the cause of devotion, in so far as, by it, man conceives the project of handing himself over to God's service (a. 3).

3. *The two considerations which produce devotion:*

(a) The goodness of God and his benefits—the thought of this awakens love, which is the proximate cause of devotion.

(b) Man's own faults, because of which he needs to rely on God and which exclude presumption, by which man is inclined to rely on his own strength.

Apart from this the humanity of Christ is a great cause of devotion, because the hidden things of God sometimes leaves us cold, but what he did as God made man excite us to devotion, because we can see them and study them.

4. *The effects of devotion:*

(a) Joy:

The direct and principal effect of devotion is the spiritual joy of the mind; though sorrow is its secondary and indirect effect. We have already said that devotion is caused by a two-fold consideration; chiefly by the consideration of God's goodness, because this

consideration belongs to the term, as it were, of the movement of the will in surrendering itself to God, and the direct result of this consideration is joy. . . .

(b) But accidentally this consideration causes a certain sorrow in those who do not as yet enjoy God fully. . . . Secondarily devotion is caused by the consideration of one's own failings; for this consideration regards the term from which man withdraws by the movement of his devout will in that he trusts not in himself, but subjects himself to God. This consideration has an opposite tendency to the first; for it is of a nature to cause sorrow directly, when one thinks over one's own failings, and joy accidentally, namely, through hope of the divine assistance. It is accordingly evident that the first and direct effect of devotion is joy, while the secondary and accidental effect is that sorrow which is according to God (2 Cor. 7. 10).

The spirit which on the one hand is afflicted on account of the defects of the present life, is rejoiced on the other hand by the consideration of God's goodness, and by the hope of the divine help.

(c) Tears:

Tears are caused not only through sorrow, but also through a certain tenderness of the affections, especially when one considers something that gives joy mixed with pain. Thus men are wont to shed tears through a sentiment of piety, when they recover their children or dear friends, whom they thought to have lost. In this way tears arise from devotion (2-2. q. 82. a. 4).

Piety

(a) God is the principle of our being and government in a far more excellent manner than our father or country. Hence religion, which gives worship to God, is a distinct virtue from piety, which pays homage to our country and parents. But things relating to creatures are transferred to God as the summit of excellence and causality. . . . wherefore by way of excellence, piety designates the worship of God, just as God, by way of excellence, is called our Father.

(b) As Augustine says, the term piety is often used in connection with works of mercy, in the language of the common people; the reason for which I consider to be the fact that God himself has declared that these works are more pleasing to him than sacrifices. This custom has led to the application of the word 'pious' to God himself (2-2. q. 101, arts. 1 and 3).

(c) The gifts of the Holy Ghost are habitual dispositions of the soul, rendering it amenable to the motion of the Holy Ghost. Now the Holy Ghost moves us to this effect among others, of having a filial affection towards God, according to Rom. 8. 15: You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. And since it belongs to piety to pay duty and worship to one's father, it

follows that piety, whereby we pay duty and honour to God as our Father at the instigation of the Holy Ghost, is one of his gifts.

(d) As by the virtue of piety man pays duty and worship, not only to his father in the flesh, but also to his kindred because they are related to his father, so by the gift of piety he pays worship and duty, not only to God, but also to all men on account of their relationship to God. Hence it belongs to piety to honour the saints and not to contradict the Scriptures, whether one understands them or not. . . . Consequently, it also assists those who are a state of unhappiness.

Sanctity

The word seems to have two meanings, in one it means purity (from the Greek) as unsoiled. In another, it means firmness, wherefore in olden times the word *sancta* was referred to those things upheld by law and not to be violated. . . .

For purity is necessary in order that the mind be applied to God, since the human mind is soiled by contact with inferior things. . . . without purity the mind cannot be applied to God. . . .

Again, firmness is required for the mind to be applied to God, for it is fixed on him as its last end and first beginning, and such things must needs be most immovable.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

(We shall give a summary of this famous sermon on today's Gospel, because the ideas are excellent, although the language in which they are clothed is too elaborate for modern preachers. The last passages have been omitted for the same reason.)

The tree and its fruits

1. Hypocrisy:

(a) **He is a false prophet who appears to be what he is not:**

He is guilty of stealing another's good who robs another; but so is he who glories in his knowledge, because such glory belongs to God alone. The hypocrite is also a robber, so is he who attributes to himself what belongs to God alone, for example, the worker in the vineyard who seeks something other than the good of souls, and their salvation. Yet all those who do appropriate the goods of others will one day have to abandon all; they will have to give up their honours, dignities, offices, servants, houses even—because at the moment of death they can take nothing of these things with them (Ps. 48. 14). Their works only will count then (Apoc. 14. 13).

(b) **But we might ask: Who is there who does not try to hide his faults from others?**

It is one thing to hide evil and quite another to pretend to have a virtue which one does not possess. The latter is an offence against divine justice and truth. Is it not enough to be evil? But to pretend to be just, that indeed is grave. St Bernard says that humility is such an honourable thing that even the proud man seeks it and tries to appear humble in the eyes of others.

2. *Rash judgements:*

(a) **It is rash to judge actions when we are ignorant of their motives:**

Apart from that, it is rash to judge any action because we do not know whether God has permitted it for the humility of the person who has committed it and in order to raise him up from it stronger and better.

(b) **We do not know the future state of those whose actions we judge:**

For all we know, they may have a higher place in heaven than we.

(c) **The hour of death is the hour of truth:**

We should put all our attention on becoming vessels of gold and silver, because the breaking of vessels of clay is something that pertains to the Lord, not to us. No one should take it unto himself to wield the fan on the threshing floor, to extinguish the smoking flax or to weed out the cockle. That is God's business. If we seek to exact from men more than divine justice exacts—and that justice is full of mercy—then we may be far from the bosom of the Church of Christ.

(d) **Love—the power that transforms everything:**

You are what your love would have you to be! Reason must direct that love, not towards earthly things, but those of heaven. The mere will cannot make you rich materially—but in spiritual things it can. Do you wish to lift yourselves up to a level of spiritual riches? You can do it at once! Do you want to be powerful spiritually? Immediately it is yours.

(e) **There are three types of trees:**

Some abound in leaf—those people who speak well of God and heavenly things, but then produce no fruit in good works.

There are other trees which produce both leaf and flowers in abundance, but the frost cuts them off. These are the people who abound in good intentions but go no further than that.

The third kind of tree produces good fruit, and for that three things are necessary:

- i. *deep roots*—to be rooted and founded on charity (Eph. 3. 17);
- ii. *the moisture of devotion and a taste for the things of God*, such as Sacred Scripture and meditation on the Passion of our Lord. . . .
- iii. *thirdly, to kill off all the evils* that can spoil the fruit of the tree.

II. ST FRANCIS DE SALES

(Some extracts from the *Introduction to the Devout Life* concerning friendship in general and true and false friendships in particular.)

1. No one can deny that our Lord loved St John, Lazarus, Martha and Magdalen with a more tender and more special affection, for the Scriptures attest it. We know that St Peter deeply loved St Mark and St Petronilla, as did St Paul his Timothy and St Thecla. St Gregory Nazianzen boasts a hundred times of his incomparable friendship with the great St Basil. . . . St Augustine testifies that St Ambrose had a great love for St Monica on account of the rare virtues he saw in her, and that she, on her part, loved him as an Angel of God.

But I am wrong to take up your time with a matter which is quite clear. St Jerome, St Augustine, St Gregory, St Bernard and all the greatest servants of God have had very particular friendships without prejudice to their perfection. St Paul, upbraiding the Gentiles for their faults, accuses them of lack of affection—that is, of having no true friendship. St Thomas, like all sound philosophers, says that friendship is a virtue. He is speaking of particular friendship, because, as he says, perfect friendship cannot extend to many people. Perfection, therefore, does not consist in having no friends at all, but in having that friendship which is good and holy (chap. 19).

2. We must be careful so as not to be deceived in these friendships, especially when they are contracted between people of different sexes, no matter on what pretext; for very often Satan misleads those who are in love. They begin by virtuous loves, but if they are not careful frivolous love will soon enter in, and then that which is sensual and carnal. There is danger, even in spiritual love, unless we are on our guard all the time. . . .

Worldly friendship produces a great quantity of honeyed words and flattering speeches, with phrases drawn from beauty, grace or other sensual qualities; while spiritual friendship speaks a simple and frank language, with no praise except for the power and grace of God on which it rests. . . .

False friendship causes the person who indulges in it to reel and faint in both virtue and devotion, leading her to indulge in amorous flirting and immoderate looks, in sensual caresses, in inordinate sighs

and complaints of not being loved, in studied and alluring attitudes, compliments, seeking for kisses and other improper familiarities and favours—certain signs of the coming ruin of chastity . . . worldly friendship disturbs the judgement, so that these who are infected with it think that they are doing good when they are actually doing evil; they believe that their excuses, pretexts and words are rational; they fear the light and love the darkness. . . .

False friendships end in carnal and foul words; evil requests which, when refused, end in insults, calumnies, deceits, sadness, vexations and jealousies—sometimes in brutishness and even madness. . . .

Young people who indulge in airs, attitudes and caresses, or who speak words which they would not wish their fathers, mothers, husbands, wives or confessors to hear, give abundant testimony, by that fact, that they are dealing with something other than conscience or honour. . . .

3. Remedies:

But what remedies are there against this spawn of foolish loves, flirtations and impurities? As soon as you experience the first motions of them, turn the other way and, with an absolute detestation of this kind of vanity, run to the Cross of the Saviour, take his crown of thorns and put it around your heart. . . . But if you are already caught in the snares of such foolish loves, O God, what difficulty you will have then in freeing yourself. Place yourself before his Divine Majesty; acknowledge in his presence the greatness of your misery, your frailty and vanity. Then, with the greatest effort of which your will is capable, detest those incipient loves, adjure the foolish declaration which you have made of them, renounce all the promises received, and with a firm and unqualified act of the will, determination in your heart and resolve never again to take part in such things.

If you are able to go to a distance from the object of your affection, I would strongly recommend it . . . Change of scene is a very great help to alleviate the heat of restlessness, whether of sorrow or of love. . . .

But what is he to do who cannot get away? He must altogether renounce all private interviews, all secret intercourse, all looks of affection, smiles, etc.; and in general every kind of intercourse and attraction that can feed this reeking and smoky fire. At most, if he be forced to speak to his accomplice, let it be to declare, by a bold, brief and stern communication, the eternal separation which he has sworn. I cry aloud to all that have fallen into these flirtatious snares, Cut, hew, break; you must not waste time over unstitching these foolish friendships, you must tear them asunder; you must not unfasten the bonds, you must break them or cut them, more

especially since the bonds are of no value. You must have no consideration for a love which is so contrary to the love of God (chap. 21).

III. BOURDALOUE

(A summary of his sermon on hypocrisy.)

1. *Three classes of people:*

There are three classes of people affected by hypocrisy which they see in others. Those who are vicious use it as a rebellion against true piety; the cowards are made fearful by it, and it takes from them all taste for true piety; the ignorant are deceived by it, as is the case with many heresies.

(a) The vicious man:

He wishes to prove that all men are like him, even though he may admit that he is a sinner, his greatest joy is to show that others, who pretend to be good, are really as bad as he is. There are devout hypocrites, and from them he wishes to demonstrate that all men are in the same position, some commit sins which are more gross, others those which are more spiritual—but all are the same.

There are many literary works in which this is the main theme; they ridicule religious things and persons under the pretext that hypocrisy covers a multitude of sins. Thus such people try to undermine the very authority of virtue and even suggest that it is a cloak for vice.

i. *Their reasoning is false*, even if we were to admit—which we do not—that all of us are hypocrites. There would still be a God who is above all and who has to be given his due honour and reverence. There would still be a moral law which has to be obeyed. He—God—does not say to us: Honour me in the measure in which other men honour me; but: Honour me because I am God, your Lord and there is no other God. You will do this because I command it of you and you will not do that because I forbid it.

ii. *The principle on which the argument of these vicious men is founded is false*. There are good men, women, children who love God sincerely and do his will without hypocrisy. Even if the vicious man does not want to know such people, they still exist and will be his accusers before God at the day of judgement.

(b) The coward:

It is natural that the devil should use hypocrisy for his own ends, therefore it is necessary to speak of this temptation so that you will understand what it means. Hypocrisy can have three effects in the soul of the coward: first, the fear of being thought a hypocrite, from which comes a fear of devotion and a laziness in religious duties. Secondly it makes cowards afraid of all works of piety and religion; they feel that such things are too subject to human judgements,

that they lack solidity. Finally, they are afraid of the scorn of men, who will accuse them of hypocrisy if they practise religion as they should.

There is no real need for the true Christian to fear, because true virtue and truth can be known anywhere and the only thing necessary is to unite a solid virtue with absolute sincerity of life. If it should be true that there are hypocrites, then it is up to us to show the world that there are also those who really do practice virtue sincerely. It is a light which no one can extinguish; pure gold which is easily separated from baser metals. Be humble without affectation, charitable without reserve, be gentle with others and severe with yourselves, patient in suffering, and then no one will be able to say that you are a hypocrite.

(c) **The ignorant:**

In those who are ignorant hypocrisy can do great harm. It is the story of so many heresies; they pose as reformers, austere, with a piety which is harder than that of the Church herself. Thus they deceive many souls, but in reality they are nothing but wolves in the clothing of sheep. The very fact that they preach reform is enough to earn them applause from many people; this is an effect of the simplicity of the people and the hypocrisy of heretics knows well how to exploit it.

But there is still no excuse for those who allow themselves to be deceived because Christ has left us an infallible guide—his Church. Even if all the heresies of the world were to come against her, even if they had all the appearance of virtue and were against her teaching, they would still be false. If an angel were to come from heaven and preach a doctrine other than hers, he would have to be considered as a heretic and a pagan. Love the Church, obey her, and you will not be taken in by the false teachings of heretics, no matter how plausible they may appear at first sight.

SECTION VI. ON DOING THE WILL OF GOD

1. *Friends of St Vincent de Paul used to say of him:*
Vincent is always Vincent, by which they meant that, no matter what happened, in prosperity or adversity, he was always the same cheerful person. The reason was simple; having abandoned all into God's hands, he did not wish for anything which God did not wish. On occasion the Saint used to say: Conformity to the divine will is the Christian's treasure and the remedy for all our ills, because it implies abandonment of self and union with God and all virtue (*Vie, Abelly, I. 3, chap. 21*).

2. *M. Chantal used to say:*

When shall we seek the sweetness of the divine will in all that happens to us, without looking for anything except the divine good pleasure, which with the same love and seeking only our good, sends us prosperity and adversity? When shall we throw ourselves into the arms of our most loving Father in heaven, leaving it to him to take care of our person and our interests, reserving for ourselves merely the desire to please him? (*Life, p. 495.*)

3. *In one of his letters St Francis de Sales says:*

If it were not for the fact that there are people who voluntarily subject themselves to the divine will, all would want to change places with their neighbours. Bishops would not want to be bishops; those who are married would not wish to be married and the single would not want to remain so. What is the cause of this uneasiness of mind except a certain rebellion against what is imposed on us and an inclination to think that others are better off than we are? He who, because he cannot be resigned, changes from one place to another will never find rest. Those who are feverish can never find a restful position. A quarter of an hour after being in one bed they wish to be changed to another; but it is not the bed—it is the fever which really torments them. Those who are not thus feverish, of their own free will are content with everything; provided they can serve God they are not concerned with the manner in which they do it. All is good to their eyes as long as they serve him.

But it is not enough to do God's will; we must do it cheerfully. If I were not a bishop and if I knew what it meant to be one, it is probable that I would not want it; but, since I am one, it is necessary for me, not merely to do all that my office demands, but to do it generously, cheerfully and with pleasure. St Paul tells us that each one must do the task assigned to him. We must bear each one his own burden, not those of others. For this reason God wants us to abandon ourselves, i.e. our own wills. To think: I would rather have this or that; I would be better here or there, is a temptation. The Lord knows what he is doing; let us do what he wills; let us remain where he has placed us.

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

The principle and foundation of liturgical piety

St Ignatius

1. He begins his Spiritual Exercises with what he calls the principle and foundation, namely, that the true end of man is to praise,

reverence and serve God. There are many writers on this subject who phrase this principle another way: saying that man has been created to do the will of God.

2. In ancient times there were no such things as retreats, or schools of piety with their different methods of attaining perfection or sanctity. The early Christians and even those of the Middle Ages fed their piety mainly on the Scriptures, the writings of the Fathers and the Liturgy.

3. The liturgy was at one and the same times a way of giving glory to God and also a way of purification, of leading souls closer to God. It gave to these Christians the food of the Scriptures, the writings of the Fathers and the instructions of the Popes.

4. Today's liturgy expresses the same Ignatian formula in the Mass.

Freed from Sin

1. St Ignatius presents creation to us as the work of God from which comes the fundamental obligation of justice and gratitude which obliges man to do the will of God. In today's Mass we see the source from which this obligation springs—we have been freed from sin (Rom. 6. 22).

2. Through baptism the Christian has been freed from sin and has a share in the merits of Christ.

(a) He cannot choose for himself now; he should be faithful to his baptism and remove far from him all that implies sin or the consequences of sin: You must not, then, allow sin to tyrannize over your perishable bodies, to make you subject to its appetites. You must not make your bodily powers over to sin, to be the instruments of harm; make yourselves over to God, as men who have been dead and come to life again . . . (Rom. 6. 12-13).

(b) This is an obligation in justice.

(c) It is also owed in gratitude to Christ, who has made us share in his redemption. We should do all in our power to keep our souls free from sin.

Servants of God

Redemption has a positive side—it makes us servants of God:

(a) At the time when you were slaves of sin, right-doing had no claim upon you . . . (*ibid.* 20);

(b) now that you are free from the claims of sin, and have become God's slaves instead, you have a harvest in your sanctification . . . (*ibid.* 22);

(c) a new servitude, one that brings life with it, has been imposed upon us—there is no way out of this obligation, in justice and in

gratitude to God for our new freedom. Dead once, we have now come to life again (*ibid.* 13).

A harvest in your sanctification, and your reward is eternal life . . .

1. The Christian's submission to God has for its fruit his sanctification and for its final reward, eternal life.

2. Since we are slaves, we must hand ourselves over to God body and soul—it is the immediate effect of slavery this, of doing the will of our master, not our own.

3. In this lies our sanctity—Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord . . . (Matt. 7. 21). And our service must be a faithful copy of his, Christ's, who came not to do his own will, but the will of his Father (Phil. 2. 7. Cf. John 8. 55, 8. 47).

Our offering at Mass

1. The Mass has an ascetic value—the Christian should assist at it by making his own personal offering.

2. We are reminded of this today because of the connection between this idea and the Epistle and Gospel.

3. It is not enough to go to Mass with fine phrases on our lips or vague formulas of love and worship; it is also necessary to offer ourselves, as the Church tells us, dead to sin and to all that may lead to sin, occasions, dangers, affections, etc. We must offer ourselves as ready to do the will of God *today*. With a spirit of humility and a contrite heart may we be received by you, O Lord, and so complete our sacrifice before you this day, so that it may be pleasing to you, O Lord.

II. THE EPISTLE

A: The captivity of sin

Composition of place and petition

1. *Composition of place:*

The epistle shows us the sinner subject to the slavery of sin, the last effect of which is eternal death. St Ignatius, in his Exercises, tells us to imagine our soul and body subject to this exile, as if it were among animals. St Paul and Ignatius coincide in this idea. We are plunged by sin into the darkness of a prison, into death, in fact.

2. *Petition:*

May God give us the grace to see ourselves as we are; to see what I am doing for Christ, and what I should do for him. May he give

me the grace to make a firm resolution to hate sin above all things, because only mortal sin is against my last end.

3. The purpose of this sermon or meditation is to let us see the gravity of sin measured against the captivities to which it submits us.

4. It is said of the French kings that they used to punish young men in the presence of their own sons (who could not be punished by law) to show them their wrong-doings. We might imagine the same thing for ourselves—God summoning others to judgement before us, who are guilty of the same sins, and punishing them.

The first guilty people—the angels

The sin:

(a) They were loved by God, created in grace, their number was immense, they sinned through pride.

(b) One sin only—and the God who loved them was forced to create hell, for them. In spite of their number and their beauty they were punished with a terrible fate.

(c) My sentiments:

- i. *they were created in grace*—I was given grace at my baptism;
- ii. *one sin*—and I, how many have I committed?
- iii. God might well have buried me in hell by this time for my sins, but he has not done so yet. The God of mercy and compassion has allowed me to live on, in spite of my sins—he has given me time. But I may say: These were angels—therefore let us look at a human sinner. . . .

The second guilty person—man

1. The crime:

The first fruits of the human race, lord of creation, loaded down with God's gifts. Pride leads him to sin as it did the angels.

2. The number of sins—one only, original sin.

3. The punishment—subject to slavery:

- (a) that of hell;
- (b) that of sin;
- (c) concupiscence—a burden that we all have to bear;
- (d) death, suffering of all kinds—all a consequence of sin.

4. My sentiments:

They were in a state of grace. I have been restored to that state through the mercy of Christ. They were in paradise—I am surrounded by the care of the Church. They were ungrateful to God who created them; I am ungrateful to the God who died for me. They broke one of his commandments—I have broken all of them. What grave punishment I have deserved for all my sins.

The third criminal—a man like myself

1. For one sin, perhaps of thought or deed, it does not matter, death has overtaken this unfortunate individual, a man like myself, perhaps a Christian like myself. He had the sacraments at his disposal as I have, the teachings of the Church and of Scripture; perhaps at one time he was a holy man, devoted to God and the things of God.

2. But he was careless and little by little fell into the mortal sin which has led to his condemnation—he offended the infinite majesty of God. And I?

3. My sentiments:

(a) What must be the malice of sin if it takes with it eternal punishment?

(b) What must I do who am guilty of so many sins?

What I must do

1. Return to my Saviour, who alone is capable of breaking the bonds of my captivity.

2. See him on the cross:

(a) He was made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross—for my sins.

(b) I must ask him to give me a horror of sin, to allow me to see its dangers and avoid them now, while there is still time.

B: My sins

St Paul and St Ignatius

1. Our condition before the redemption was, according to St Paul, that of servants of sin, without holiness and capable of no fruit except that of death and shame (vv. 19-21).

2. St Ignatius meditates on sin by thinking of the captivities to which it submits those who have sinned much less than I have. He begins by asking God for the grace to weep for sins with sincere sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment for the future. Our disposition of soul should be that of one who is determined to break with sin once for all, willing to stand on our feet as new men, redeemed by Christ.

3. My sins:

It is not a question of examination of conscience, but rather a judicial process in which I list my sins and estimate them at their true worth:

(a) the number of times I have fallen into the same sin;

(b) sin is disorder, ugliness, an offence against a God who is almighty;

(c) the creature—who is nothing and was created from nothing—rebels against the creator, who is infinite. That is the true malice of sin;

(d) all that I have comes from God and when I sin I use his gifts to offend him;

(e) what is more, it is a slavery which becomes day by day more irksome, day by day the sinner finds less satisfaction in his sins.

My redemption

1. We can say that Mary, mother of God and mother of men, has two sons, one pure and holy, the other a criminal. She wishes both of them to come to true peace one with the other. Therefore we should ask her to grant us the gift of true repentance for our sins, a firm purpose of amendment, a resolution to avoid occasions of sin, a knowledge of the malice of sin.

2. Christ, our brother and our redeemer, offended by our sin but at the same time our mediator before the Father. Plead with him to make our redemption a fact; may his soul sanctify mine, his body be my salvation. *Anima Christi* . . .

C: Just punishment, reward, gift

Wages and gift

1. Sin offers death for wages, and your reward is eternal life (Rom. 6. 23).

2. St Paul contrasts hell and eternal life:

(a) hell is the reward for sin in absolute justice, the wages strictly speaking;

(b) eternal life is a gift of God rewarding sanctity.

Hell—the wages of sin

When God made hell he did not have to found any new order of things; hell exists in any order, natural or supernatural, as the logical consequence of the malice of sin.

(a) The terrible part of it is its eternity;

(b) when man sins he offends an infinite God, his sin has something infinite about it;

(c) therefore it demands an infinite punishment, not in intensity, because no created thing can have that quality; but at least in duration.

(d) Man chooses between God's enmity and God's friendship, and once the time for changing his mind has passed, if death surprises him in the state of enmity, so he must remain for ever. To such an extreme has man reached, small as he is—nothing and made from nothing—he can still commit infinite malice.

Glory—a gift of God

1. We like to think of heaven as the natural logical conclusion to good works, but it is not so; it is a gift of God.

2. God loved man and wished to grant him a share in the very life of God himself.

3. Man, left to himself, could never have merited heaven, no matter how good his actions may be and how holy he is. The reason? Because the reward is always in proportion to the nature which merits it and man's nature is finite. Heaven is the right of God alone, his privilege. To enter it by right one must be God. As Augustine says, in giving us heaven, God knew not how to give us anything more, he could not give us anything greater, he had nothing left to give us (*De civitate Dei*, 10).

4. God's happiness in heaven is infinite, and how could we hope to merit something which is not in our power, finite as we are? Even when it is given us as a gift we still need the special help of God to widen our faculties to take it in.

5. Yet God wished to grant it to us, he wanted man to share heaven with him.

At the same time I can merit it, with God's help

God gives me his gifts, his grace, and with that grace now I am on a level which will enable me to fight and to win eternal glory as a prize of my merits. The works are mine, but they are bathed in the blood and merits of Christ, who is God. Their value is now double, on the one hand, they are works of mine, on the other they are the works of Christ, sanctified by the blood of God himself—they are his.

Good and bad tree

1. The wages of sin is death, because sin offends an infinite God, a God who died for the one who offends him.

2. Heaven is the reward for good actions because the sap which flows through the branch is that of Christ, the true Vine.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: False miracles and virtues

The problem

Today's Gospel presents us with a picture of false prophets and how they may be detected by their evil works. Then we are told that

some of these who call Christ Lord, and even work miracles in his name, will be condemned. How are we to detect which are false miracles and in what sense do the works of a prophet serve to judge his mission and doctrine?

Miracles

1. Before our eyes we see verified an action or portent which appears to exceed the power of created nature. We at once tend to give credence to the doctrine of the one who does such an act. Should we do so? No; not at once, because the devils are angels, even though fallen, and can do things which are well above our power and knowledge—levitation, for example.
2. However, God will not allow man to be deceived inevitably by the devil.
 - (a) If he were to allow Satan to work miracles which were in no way to be distinguished from those of God it would be impossible for God to prove the truth of his own revelation;
 - (b) therefore, logically, we may say that Satan's marvels will always carry a mark by which they may be distinguished from those of God;
 - (c) this proof might consist in an analysis of the work performed, to see if, in reality, it does exceed the power of an angelic nature—but such a proof is far too difficult, in the state of our knowledge of the angels, and could lead us astray.
3. The seal must consist in something which reflects the evil one, so that he may be detected through it. There will be some evil circumstance which accompanies the supposed miracle.
 - (a) The easiest sign of all—by their fruits you shall know them—is to see if the so-called miracle is done to support doctrines which are known to be false, evil or opposed to divine revelation. There is a good example of this in the Church's clear attitude towards spiritism and its phenomena. There is no need to examine those phenomena to see if they are diabolic or not; the proof lies in the fact that they are done in support of doctrines which are ridiculous in many ways, contrary to revelation, etc.
 - (b) For the ordinary Christian the solution is a simple one; is this wonder done contrary to the teachings of the Church, in disobedience to her rules? Then it is a false, not a true, miracle.

The works of false prophets

1. The methods for detecting their falsehood are much the same as those outlined above:
 - (a) their words are liable to deceive us—they often preach austerity, faith in Christ, modesty, humility, charity in the extreme;
 - (b) but their doctrine conflicts in many things (or even in one) already revealed by God;

(c) they deny the value of one of the Sacraments, perhaps, the authority of the Holy Father—that is enough. Even if they work apparent miracles, no matter what the austerity of their other teaching, they are false prophets;

(d) the Pharisees had a reputation for sanctity of life—but they were opposed to Christ and the messianic kingdom.

(e) There is no need to study their personal morality; this is against charity and St Augustine, among others, would have nothing of it as a weapon against such teachers.

2. As always, the positive sign is heroic sanctity—that holiness either of group or individual, which is so great that it must be considered impossible without a special help from God; this must go in combination with true doctrine.

B: Christianity and holiness

A harvest in your sanctification (Rom. 6. 22)

1. Epistle and Gospel combine in one thought; not everyone that says Lord, Lord to Christ will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but the ones who do the will of the Father (Matt. 7. 21).
2. *Perfection in the doing of God's will is sanctity:*
 - (a) This is the fruit which Christ demands from his apostles and preachers—to whom this passage directly refers;
 - (b) it is also the fruit he demands of all his followers.
3. The Epistle to the Romans gives further expression to the idea latent in the Gospel: a harvest in your sanctification.
 - (a) This is not the only passage in which Paul preaches this doctrine to all kinds and conditions of men.
 - i. *To the Thessalonians he says:* What God asks of you is that you should sanctify yourselves, and keep clear of fornication (1 Thess. 4. 3).
 - ii. *To the Ephesians:* He has chosen us out, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be saints, to be blameless in his sight, for love of him (Eph. 1. 4).
 - (b) Sanctity therefore is not an exclusive thing to priests, religious, etc. It is a universal vocation for all Christians.

Our vocation to holiness

1. Every baptized person should desire sanctity; it is something which is within the condition of every Christian.
2. Everyone receives sanctifying grace, the seed of sanctity; this grace has a power for growth and development, and this growth is the increase in holiness.

St Thomas explains this doctrine very simply: Just as a man has a certain natural perfection as soon as he is born, something which is proper to the specific nature, and another to which he can only attain by steady growth, so too, there is a certain perfection of charity which belongs to its very nature, namely, to love God above all things and to love nothing against his will; and there is another perfection of charity in this life to which we can attain by continual growth, as for example, when a man abstains from things that are lawful in order to serve God more perfectly (2-2. q. 184. a. 3. *ad 3ium*).

Grades of holiness

1. *The absence of mortal sin:*

- (a) This is an essential element in perfection, consisting in the love of God above all things and the love of nothing against his will;
- (b) it is essential for salvation;
- (c) but it should not form the ideal of the Christian—we should do more.

2. *Greater perfection in our love:*

The baptized is under an obligation to perfect his love, i.e. to tend towards an ever greater perfection. It is this effort which counts.

The direction of this effort

1. Twofold, a more perfect conformity to the will of God in all things and a giving up of our own, especially in what refers to our affection for the things of this world.

St Augustine says that the thing which has most power to poison charity in the soul is the inordinate desire to attain or to retain temporal things.

2. We are not always asked to give them up in fact, but to control our affection for them and our desire to attain them.

(a) They are within us and outside us; we have to control all; our affections, love of personal judgement, egoism, riches, honours, ambition, comforts.

(b) We have to be prepared to give up any or all of these if it should be the will of God for us as manifested in the circumstances of our lives, state of life, etc.

The need for saints

1. Our religion must not be reserved for the times we go to church; the virile sanctity which comes from a control of our affection towards things of this world together with a careful obedience to the will of God is more than ever necessary in the world of today.

2. It would be a light shining in the darkness of a selfish world.

C: The tree of the Church: the apologetic value of its fruits

1. By the law of nature—causes can be known through their effects—this principle is the basis of the whole of natural theology.
2. Christ refers to this argument in the Gospel of today.
3. The fruits of sanctity which the Church has produced are of great value as an apologetic proof of her divinity as the Church of Christ.

The corruption in pagan customs

1. St Paul gives abundant testimony of this, especially in the letter to the Romans (cf. 1. 26-32; 1 Cor. 6. 9-11).
2. The eloquent testimony of the Fathers reveals the same situation.
3. So does the testimony of people like Seneca.

The change brought about by Christianity

1. The apostles call on this evidence with confidence; and they would hardly have done so if it could have been doubted or rejected.
2. The Acts of the Apostles (4. 32-37) bears witness to the fact that virtue began to flourish, giving the appearance of a golden age in the recently founded community. Especially fraternal charity and voluntary poverty.
3. St Paul, in two passages principally, describes the change wrought in the individual soul by Christianity (cf. 1 Cor. 6. 9-11; Eph. 2. 1-10).
4. The early Fathers are eloquent about this—there are two main reasons:
 - (a) We are accustomed to a civilization which is still full of Christianity, in spite of its moral decline; but the Fathers were able to enjoy the surprise of the birth of Christianity from paganism.
 - (b) They have to vindicate Christianity and its truth before pagan tribunals, a whole civilization which refused to die easily.

5. Pagan writers also add their testimony: we need quote only two, Pliny the Younger, who defended the customs of the Christians in his letters to Trajan, by saying that the Christians were careful to meet by night, so as not to offend anyone, and also that their reunions were for greater perfection in the knowledge and practice of the religion of Christ.

Julian the Apostate complained to the pagan priests, telling them to work harder to bring their conduct up to the standards of the

Christians, lest they should be shamed by seeing these feed both their own poor and others.

D: The tree of the Church: the fruit of unknown virtues

Introduction

1. The Christian religion has liberated even the virtues of natural religion, which had become stifled under paganism.
2. It has restored to their former purity the values and virtues of the Old Testament, which had become obscured by the false interpretations of the Masters in Israel.
3. What is more, it has introduced unknown values and virtues.
4. This is the Christianity which we can admire today in so many of our people, who practise their faith in all fidelity.

Mutual charity

1. St Augustine describes the customs of the early Church in this matter and sums up by saying:
 - (a) the principal thing they practise is charity and everything is measured by it:
 - i. *in food*—they had many things in common in the early days;
 - ii. *in words, in clothing*—avoiding unnecessary luxury; they are all of one mind and heart, mutual charity.
 - (b) if there is anything against charity it is cast afar off: Anything that offends it, is not allowed to last the day out. Christians know that it has been recommended in such terms by Christ and the apostles that, if it should fail, the rest is as nothing. If there is charity, all other works are fulfilled.
2. Works of mercy of all kinds have always been, from the beginning, the most glorious manifestation of Christian charity: almsdeeds, hospitality, the sick, widow and orphan; the missions.

The love of enemies

1. Christ made this the distinctive mark of his Church:
 - (a) he taught the doctrine (Matt. 5. 21-26);
 - (b) he practised it on the Cross (Luke 23. 34).
2. It is not to be wondered at that this forgiveness of one's enemies was the factor which caused most surprise among the pagans, among whom the axiom is to pay back in the same coin.
 - (a) To admit this as a consistent line of conduct is, without doubt, due to a special help from God;
 - (b) it is a moral miracle in favour of the Church.

3. Athenagoras describes this attitude of the Christians by saying that: Among us you will find unlearned men, workers, craftsmen, including old women who, although incapable of explaining the good things of Christianity and its usefulness, nevertheless demonstrate them by the works which come from their consciences, formed in a Christian way. They do not declaim the faith; they live it.

Virginity

1. Another exclusive fruit of the teachings of Christ.
2. It is not a question of some isolated incident, but of a legion of souls who have followed the example of Jesus and Mary.
 - (a) St Ignatius of Antioch says that virgins made up the greater part of the Church in Smyrna;
 - (b) St Justin affirms: There are many men and women educated in Christianity from their tender years, who arrive at sixty or seventy years of age quite pure.

Conclusion

1. The extraordinary fruits produced by the Church in her early years are today a moral miracle.
2. The priesthood, the religious life, secular institutes, works of charity, the missions—all these speak of the virility of that Church and her fruits even today.

E: The tree of the Church: fruits of sanctity in the family

Introduction

1. Just as in the case of the individual soul, so in the case of family life there was a real restoration in Christ.
2. It is enough to consider the state in which the family was before Christianity and after.

Married people

1. *Before Christ:*
 - (a) The father of the family had absolute power over the life and death of spouse and children;
 - (b) the woman was so much under the dominion of the man that not merely for crimes such as adultery, but also for drunkenness or some other offence she could be put away or even put to death at the command of her husband;
 - (c) divorce was common in all laws of the time.
2. *After Christ:*
 - (a) The unity and indissolubility of the marriage bond was restored;

(b) the husband must love his wife as Christ loves the Church; women are subject to their husbands as to the Lord; the bond between them can be broken only by death (Eph. 5. 22; Rom. 7. 2-3; 1 Tim. 5. 3 ff.);

(c) the special dignity of women is recognized and they take their rightful place in the Church—virgins, deaconesses and widows are given their tasks;

(d) the cult of the Virgin Mary helped greatly to restore women to their proper place in society.

Children

1. *Before Christ:*

The child was something of which the father could dispose as he pleased; sometimes even death was dealt out in certain cases.

(a) The Greeks:

i. Children are born to the Republic and not for the family; all deformed and weak ones are to be eliminated.

ii. Even a philosopher like Aristotle admitted this principle, and said that no child whose life would be useless to the State should be brought up. Abortion was lawful in cases where there were too many children.

(b) Romans:

i. deformed children were to be put to death;

ii. Seneca says: We procure abortion in cases of deformed children, while those who are born weak or monsters, we cast out. This is not the result of anger, but an act of reason which commands that we separate the useful from the useless;

iii. a father could send his son to prison, beat him as he pleased or even sell him.

2. *After Christ:*

The love which Christ had for children is shown in his Church:

(a) From the moment of conception the child has rights as a human person—abortion is a crime.

(b) The care of children is one of the prior duties of parents; parents now come to look on children as a blessing from heaven, the first end of marriage, future citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

(c) If the child is not cared for in the family the Church will open the doors of her charitable institutions to take it in.

Slaves

1. *Before Christ:*

(a) the slave was not a person, but a thing—one among many possessions;

(b) as principles admitted by all:

i. nothing is forbidden where the slave is concerned;

ii. he has no rights whatever;

iii. no injury can be done to him;

iv. in old age he could be killed or sold.

2. *After Christ:*

(a) The Church did her best from the very beginning, with the methods in her power at the time, to put down slavery—but it was a long and a hard task, against all the known social customs.

(b) She preached the equality before God of all men, clearly taught by Christ and Paul;

(c) in spite of the difficulties, the Church managed to do four things:

i. she received all men alike, freemen or slaves, gave to all the same doctrine and sacraments, the same love for all;

ii. recommended as one of the best works of charity the freeing of slaves;

iii. Christian emperors, at the command of the Church, began to make laws to protect the slaves;

iv. she ennobled the whole idea of work and the dignity of labour in general.

We cannot be sufficiently grateful for, nor appreciate too much, the seed of the Gospel which has led to so many wonderful fruits of holiness.

F: Two evil trees

A warning of the Master

In our moral life there are two evil trees, sin and concupiscence. Christ warns us that they must be cut down, because the evil tree only produces evil fruit.

Sin

1. *We all receive life from Christ, the true Vine, and we are branches of the vine:*

(a) Grace is the sap;

(b) given to each as an individual, with an individual's liberty.

We have to administer it to produce good fruits;

(c) he who administers well, will receive a reward for his good works, while he who is a bad administrator will receive his punishment and is cut off, more or less according to his sin, from the sap and the vine.

2. *Once this vital source of life has been cut we become evil trees:*

(a) None of our works has a spiritual, meritorious value;

(b) we cannot regain our life in Christ by our own merits;

- (c) we have lost all merit previously gained;
 (d) the soul in such a state is the plaything of the passions. Such are the fruits of the tree of sin.

Concupiscence

The sensitive appetite which is inclined towards some temporal good opposed to the right order of reason (St Augustine).

(a) Before original sin this tendency came under the complete sway of reason, but since that sin it has escaped, and now follows its natural bent. In this sense it comes from sin and is the cause of sin. St James says: When a man is tempted, it is always because he is drawn away by the lure of his own passions. When that has come about, passion conceives and gives birth to sin; and when sin has reached its full growth, it breeds death (James 1. 14-15).

(b) It is the interior struggle mentioned by St Paul (Rom. 7. 23), the law of the flesh and that of the spirit in open battle, which the free man has to win through the help of grace (Gal. 5. 18-19).

(c) It is insatiable. Once we allow it to get hold of us it is always demanding new pleasures, which slowly undermine reason and will. An evil tree indeed.

Conclusion

Cut down the tree of sin; bring concupiscence under the sway of reason once more, and into the service of God. Thus we shall bring forth fruits meriting eternal life.

G: Those who say, Master, Master

Introduction

1. Jesus is speaking directly to those who are before him at the moment; the conduct of the scribes and Pharisees is once more the subject of an open condemnation by Christ; they say, but do not do, good things.
2. But there are many other men of all ages of the Church's history, who are included in that condemnation.

Heretics

There is no need to waste much time on these—it is obvious. They teach a doctrine other than that of Christ, have cut themselves off from the faith and unity of Christ.

Evil Christians

1. *Those who confess God with their lips and deny him in their works:*
 - (a) They are without good works—evil fruits.

(b) They are more responsible than heretics in some ways, because they are in possession of the full truth of the Gospel, they know and confess that faith without good works is dead.

2. The Gospels give us repeated warnings about this method of acting; similar in every way to that of the Pharisees, a merely external religion.

St Luke, in the passage which corresponds to that we are commenting now (6. 43 ff.), gives us a picture of the loyal disciple of Christ, whose heart, works and tongue are in perfect accord.

3. *There are two parables which also illustrate this teaching:*

(a) *The first, that of the barren fig tree:*

This receives the special care of the farmer, who at last decides to give it yet another year—a warning to those who put off the day of their conversion or who do not heed the graces of God.

(b) *The story of the two sons:*

One of them received his father's command, said that he would obey, but did not do so. The other was annoyed at his father's command, said that he would not obey, but at last did so. He is the one who observes his father's wishes.

i. The evil man hates God's commands, knows that they are just, but does not obey.

ii. The good Christian at times finds it difficult to be generous with God, but he does his best to obey because his will is united with that of God.

iii. In the story of the Last Judgement we are told that both sides are judged according to their works; we are all labourers in God's vineyard and we will be paid our just wages.

Those who are content with good desires

1. *Easy to conceive:*

It is enough to hear sermons, read good books, etc., to have such good desires.

2. *Such people are disposed to obey:*

(a) But they ask for time from God, they put off their conversion to his will.

(b) These good desires are not good fruit, because they have sprung up in ground which is too shallow and the seed lasted a very short time in it.

(c) When they are cut down at the moment of the judgement they will soon see that all their good desires are as straw, and fit only for the fire.

Those who are content with external good works

1. There are Christians who forget the commandments and the practice of virtue, being content with hearing sermons, going on pilgrimages, benediction, prayers which are more or less long.
2. They also receive a hard condemnation from Christ, like the Pharisees: they make clean the outside of the cup, but within?

Conclusion: Let us be prudent men

1. Christ says they are prudent who build their house on a rock, not those who do so on shifting sand.
2. To build on rock is to hear his words and do them; to hear and not act on the knowledge is to build on sand. The first breath of wind and rain blows them down.

H: True piety

By their fruits you shall know them

1. A useful criterion to know apostles, preachers, priests, and to distinguish the Church of God from those which are false.
2. But also useful because it has an individual application, to one's own spiritual life.
 - (a) This must be fruitful;
 - (b) the first fruit and the best is conformity with the will of God.

The will of God

1. The life of every mortal is regulated by the designs of divine providence, which lays down for each one the path he has to follow on earth in order to earn heaven.
2. The will of God is manifested in the commandments and the duties of each one's state of life:

(a) Commandments:

- i. *General and absolute for all men.* The source of all obligations, the foundation of piety.
- ii. *The Church* clarifies and explains the commandments of God.

(b) Duties of one's state of life:

- These concrete the commandments and the counsels of perfection.
- i. *They are not entirely distinct from the commandments:* their object, so far as God is concerned, is to clarify and show in practice what each one must do here and now to fulfil the will of God.
 - ii. *All have obligations to fulfil* but these will vary at different ages and times. They are obvious manifestations of God's will for each one here and now.

To know, love and fulfil promptly our duties

1. Our obligation is reduced to this and in it is true piety.
2. The knowledge of our duty means the realization of all those obligations which I have to fulfil because God wants me to do so.

When it is a question of the commandments there is usually very little doubt; but when it is a question of individual obligations there can be some difficulty in deciding what is the will of God for me here and now. This doubt has to be settled, because at every moment it is important for me to know what the will of God is for me. Here is the importance of spiritual direction, which has, for one of its offices, the settling of these doubts—the indication here and now of what I must do to fulfil the will of God.

3. *Love of duty:*

(a) It may be difficult, hard, contrary to the sensitive part of our nature, but it is still the will of God; therefore I must do it.

(b) If the command is hard, the way difficult, it means that there is more love in the fulfilment of the obligation.

4. *The fulfilment of the duty:*

(a) A consequence of what has gone before; it must be exact and generous—the more generous the better, because then there is more real devotion.

(b) In duty there are no small things, because even the most insignificant enclose within themselves the will of God.

(c) St Augustine says: Small things may be small, but to be faithful to them is not a small thing—it is great.

The spirit of piety

1. Piety is homage paid to God the Father.
2. This homage, if it is true, is the seeing and the doing of God's will in all things; to do all for God.
3. This is the true spirit of piety—without which the rest is sham.

I: Piety and charity

He that does the will of the Father . . .

1. In today's Gospel the Lord says that true piety does not consist in words, but in love: The kingdom of heaven will not give entrance to every man who calls me Master, Master; only to the man that does the will of my Father who is in heaven (Matt. 7. 21).

2. The most excellent formula of the love of God is undoubtedly this of complete conformity with the will of God.

- (a) True piety is the giving up of our will to God—charity, in other words;
- (b) not any determined form of charity, such as almsdeeds, but charity in its widest meaning;
- (c) charity which alone gives to our actions their complete value for others; charity which looks on all as brothers and God as our Father; charity which makes no discrimination between rich and poor, race or colour.

The spirit of Christ is one of love and union

A Christian cannot be said to be profoundly or truly pious unless the spirit of Christ animates all he does.

- (a) The time has gone when a man's piety was judged by the devotions he practised or the number of confraternities to which he belonged.
- (b) He is truly a Christian who is grafted on Christ, rooted in Christ in such a way that both interiorly and exteriorly he reflects Christ.
- (c) Thus transformed into Christ, he can then pay the Father the homage due to his glory, because he shares in the homage of Christ.

Renewal in the life of piety

1. It is a fact that Christians who are careless do great harm to the Church—more than one would think, perhaps.
- (a) But for the example of good lives the world would turn its back on dogma, the sacraments and the Church.
- (b) It is the lives of good people which bring dogma and religion to the attention of others and also which give life to these things, which would otherwise be dead formulas.
2. Yet many Catholics are indistinguishable from those who are not Catholics except in the practice of certain religious rites; whereas the true Catholic should be distinguished by his charity—the true sign of a follower of Christ, and also of true piety.

Living in charity

1. In speaking of charity as the true fruit of piety we do not mean a general intention of serving God and our neighbour, nor determined works of charity, such as almsdeeds. We mean living in and by charity, the impregnating of the whole of our lives by charity.
2. This means living the interior life of Christ, by his spirit and teaching. Then our exterior lives will be but reflections of this real interior piety, while all our actions will be illumined by our interior charity.

3. This life makes demands on us, which must be known if we are to live in charity.
- i. *fraternity*—to know that all men are brothers and to live up to that knowledge, abandoning all selfishness and personal pride;
 - ii. *doing all we can for others, charity is demanding*—all that we can do is what it asks of us; from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks and good works come naturally;
 - iii. *to act from the motive of charity*; it is not enough to do good to others, we must do it from the right motive—that of love. In everything we do we must learn to think of others as our brothers and act on that.

The good tree brings forth good fruit

1. This is the true fruit of piety and a Christian life. He who has charity is a good tree in the garden of the Church.
2. The true Christian is one who is not content with words—Master, Master—but who gives himself up to the will of God. This will is that we should live in the spirit of Christ and with the love and union of Christ.
3. If we have not this true piety we can easily become wolves in sheep's clothing.

J: False piety

A modern piety

1. In the light of today's Gospel our idea is to examine this modern piety.
- While it is true to say that there are generous souls who give themselves up entirely to the service of God and salvation of souls, it is also true to say that an atmosphere of piety has grown up in the last few years which needs to be examined in order to see its defects and apply remedies.
2. Nowadays frequent communion is the order of the day, we have evening as well as morning Mass, well attended and followed according to the spirit of the Liturgy; evening services are better attended than formerly.
 3. Yet the world seems to draw further from God and charity grows cold.
 - (a) How are we to explain the co-existence of these two facts?
 - (b) Because there is less *true* piety than one would imagine. In many piety is only an appearance, something which at times borders on hypocrisy. It is the religion of Master, Master, but that of the will of God is missing. It is a piety without much fruit.
 4. Let us examine the defects of the modern piety.

Little repentance and much worldliness

1. In many cases modern piety shows signs of little real sorrow for sin and a great love of the material pleasures of this world.

(a) The fact that the world is an enemy of Christ is forgotten—there is a spirit of compromise.

(b) At times this reaches the stage when the works of piety are used as a screen for a life dedicated to sensual pleasures or material things. Piety then becomes an insurance policy against death.

(c) Works of piety are combined (if that were possible) with careless reading, occasions of sin perhaps, faulty education of children, lack of any real mortification.

(d) The life of pleasure and the life of true piety can never go hand in hand—there must be some mortification of the senses.

2. It is this austerity of life and penance which are so lacking today.

Human respect is a great enemy here, fear of ridicule by others, of being thought silly, fear of penance, excuses for not doing it, daily communion, yes, but fasting, by no means, if we can avoid it.

Superficiality

1. It is hard to say if this is an effect of our lack of sorrow or its cause—in any case it is there in many instances.

2. If we live as worldlings it will be difficult to enter into the interior of the soul and examine our relations with God in due fashion.

(a) From this comes a piety which has little sincerity about it, a caricature of true piety. Sincere piety is identified with progress in the spiritual life, which at the same time implies recollection.

(b) Souls are more concerned with themselves than they are with God and the search for God's will. They do not go very deeply into their relations with him. They are really afraid to know themselves as they are.

Sentimentalism

1. Confusing true devotion with sentiment, many are pious at times, when piety brings them sensible consolations, emotions, tenderness, etc.

2. They seek their own satisfaction more than the will of God.

St John of the Cross says: It is quite certain, and very usual, that some persons, because of their lack of knowledge, make use of spiritual things with regard only to the senses and leave the spirit empty. There will scarcely be anyone whose spirit is not to a considerable degree corrupted by sweetness of sense; since, if the water be drunk up before it reach the soul, the latter becomes dry and barren (*Ascent of Mt Carmel*, B. 3. ch. 23).

3. Because it is sentimental the piety of many is not constant.

The fruit of true piety

1. *Christ warns us:*

The branch that yields no fruit in me he cuts away; the branch that does yield fruit, he trims clean, so that it may yield more fruit (John 15. 2).

2. *The fruit of true piety is growth:*

(a) If we frequent the sacraments, pray for a long time, and yet do not advance in the spiritual life then defects increase rather than decrease; we continue seeking our own ease and comfort, laziness takes daily a greater hold on us, fear of making sacrifices, mortification avoided, vanity—all the usual faults of one who has no true piety.

(b) The one who is truly pious will be so in and out of church; with his family, his children, his reading, in his office or workshop; in all his relations with his fellow men.

(c) Because true piety is something practical, adjusted in all things to the will of God as manifested in our lives.

3. That is why we do need the sacraments, prayer, devotions—to increase our obedience to that will in all things.

K: Come to me, all ye that labour . . .

The spiritual life—an effort and a burden

1. In this text our Lord says to us: Come to me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. . . . For my yoke is sweet and my burden light (Matt. 11. 28 ff.).

2. At first sight these words appear strange to us, given the fact that sorrow and suffering of all kinds are our lot on this earth. How can the Son of God, who knew us so well, having a human nature himself, call these light burdens?

3. St Paul gives us part at least of the answer: I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed to us. St Augustine adds: Wherefore, those things which appear hard to those who labour, become easy to those who love. Love regards all difficulties as nothing.

4. This is the secret. The yoke of Christ is the yoke of love. We are no longer under the law of fear, but under the New Law of love, sons of God and heirs to his kingdom. It is not the law of death, but the law of eternal life. To those who love him and accept his law Christ promises an eternity of life in which God himself shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more: for the former things are passed away (Apoc. 21. 4).

From our point of view

1. From our point of view too, love is the answer to the burdens of this life. Once we accept the fact that God loves each one of us—and the proofs are beyond any doubt—then we at once find a reason for suffering. He would not ask us to accept it were it not necessary, in some mysterious way, for ourselves and for others. We know that what happens in our lives is permitted or willed by one who loves us above all things. In such circumstances we can surely leave the intimate reasons for suffering in the hands of God, knowing that he loves us, and that our suffering is a proof of our love for him.
2. The highest proof of love, even in this world, is the sacrifice of self for the person we love, no matter what hardship that may bring with it.
3. He has warned us that mere lip service is not enough—we must do his will. By accepting that will in our ordinary daily lives we prove, beyond any doubt, that we love him. The more we love the more we are willing to suffer; and the more we suffer willingly for his sake, the more rapidly will our love increase.

No need for fear

1. We shall never be as close to him as when we are suffering for his sake.
2. We must not make the mistake of looking for the big cross while ignoring the small ones, those trials of every day life. It is the daily grind which matters.
3. If we bear that for his sake then we can safely leave the reward in his hands, because God will not be outdone in generosity.

L: Our Model

Christ, the true prophet

1. There is a relation between all the verses of today's gospel; if the true prophet is a man of love and if love consists in doing the will of God, a love which proves itself in works, then it follows that the true prophet is the one who does the will of God.
2. Of this our Lord gave us a most perfect example.

In general

1. At times he says in a general way that he came to do the will of his father.
 - (a) My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish the task he gave me (John 4. 34).

- (b) It is the will of him who sent me, not my own will, that I have come down from heaven to do (John 6. 38).
- (c) Since what I do is always what pleases him (John 8. 29).
2. At other times he insists that he only does that which he has seen and learnt from the Father (cf. John 5. 19; 8. 38-40).
3. He insists that he transmits to us the doctrine he has learnt from the Father:

The learning which I impart is not my own, it comes from him who sent me (John 7. 16; cf. 8. 55; 14. 10; 12. 49; 12. 50).
4. Christ dies because it is the Father's will.

Am I not to drink that cup which my Father himself has appointed for me? (John 18. 11).

The work of Christ

He calls this his 'task', his 'work'.

- (a) My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish the task he gave me (John 4. 34).
- (b) . . . the actions which my Father has enabled me to achieve, those very actions which I perform, bear me witness that it is the Father who has sent me (*ibid.* 5. 36).
- (c) I have exalted thy glory on earth, by achieving the task which thou gavest me to do (*ibid.* 17. 4).

A profound quotation

1. All the divine commands are in the mind of the Father, since they are nothing but the ultimate reasons for all that is done. Since in the mind of the Father are the reasons for all things created by him, which we call ideas, so too are the reasons for all the things we have to do.
2. In the same way that, from the Son are derived the reasons for all things, as Wisdom of the Father, so too are the reasons for all things that are one. For this reason the Son can say: The Father who sent me gave me . . . as God . . . a command; i.e. by eternal generation he gave me what I should say both internally and exteriorly; just as our word, when we wish to speak the truth, expresses what our mind contains (St Thomas, *Com. in St John*, c. 12. 11; Marietti, 1925).

Consummatum est

The whole purpose of our Lord's life is contained in this remark; the work is finished; the model is perfect. My life as man has accomplished all that was designed for it by the will of my Father.

The synoptic Gospels

The quotations we have given up to now are from St John, but there are others which could have been quoted from the other Evangelists.

1. If anyone does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother (Matt. 12. 50).
2. Shall we not say, Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it? (Luke 11. 28).
3. In St Paul: Obedient unto death (Phil. 2. 8).
4. Cf. Ps. 39. 7-9.

The Virgin Mary

Our Lady was the only one who knew how to read this lesson perfectly and apply it—she always did the will of God. As she said to the waiters in Cana: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. That was her motto through life.

Applications

1. There are many, for all walks of life and professions.
 - (a) Sanctity is doing the will of God in the circumstances in which he has placed us. This can only be done with the help of God's grace, with which we have to co-operate to the best of our ability.
 - (b) In individual and social life this is translated into terms of obedience, either to the general mandates of the law of God, the duties of our state of life or the commands of our legitimate superiors.
2. It is impossible to insist too much on this basic principle of individual sanctification and the right ordering of all social life.

M: The obedient man

A sermon based on Ps. 118

1. This psalm was held in such esteem by Bossuet that he said it every day, while Pascal spoke of it every time he had a chance.
2. It is worth reading to the people and commenting on it for the rich spiritual teaching it contains. Its author is unknown, but it would appear to have been written about the time of Nehemias or Esdras.
3. It is a psalm of triumph, of petition for peace and health, but especially a prayer for life.

4. The writer understands by life not merely the preservation from death, but principally the preservation from all evil, interior and exterior. By evil he means everything that could hinder a man from developing to the full all his powers, both spiritual and material.
5. This idea of life approaches very near the full meaning of the word in the New Testament; for which reason it has been said that its spirit reminds us of and prepares us for the New Law. It is full of sentiments of filial piety, profound and mystic, which penetrates the whole psalm.
6. Its composition: it has 22 sections, each one made up of eight verses, and the first letter of each group is that which corresponds to the Hebrew alphabet.

A summary of the psalm

1. *The law, the profound joy of life:*

(a) Happy they who keep the law of God perfectly. An ardent love of this law is the safeguarding and the joy of life (vv. 1-16);

(b) a prayer to obtain a true understanding of the law together with a valiant practice of it in spite of all trials and tribulations of life (17-32);

(c) another prayer to understand the law, to follow it with firmness of purpose, and confess it, if necessary, before rulers (33-48).

2. *Even in the midst of persecutions and sufferings:*

(a) In spite of all these the law produces joy and happiness; the writer makes a firm purpose and resolution to keep the law in union with others of the same mind (49-64);

(b) God is good, even when he punishes; his chastisements conduce to a keeping of his law. The psalmist recognizes that his sufferings have been justly inflicted but asks for divine consolation (65-80);

(c) he has to wait for this consolation, but this only leads to a new insistence on prayer and fidelity to the law, because it is stable, immense, universal and a true source of joy and of life (81-96).

3. *The law, light of life:*

(a) The psalmist has found in the law light and consolation; he now makes a further resolution to keep the law all the days of his life (97-112).

(b) Again the same idea, but this time with the thought that it is time God put himself on the side of those who keep the law against those who break it (113-128).

(c) Full of renewed admiration for the law the psalmist renews his promises to know it better and keep its commands, because the divine precepts are to him justice, rectitude, truth and consolation (129-44).

4. *In the presence of God:*

(a) A fervent prayer, full of a burning zeal to keep the law in the midst of those who break it. A plea that God will free him from persecutions by the enemies of the law (145-60).

(b) The law inspires the psalmist with sentiments of joy, confidence, love, admiration. He walks in God's presence when he keeps the law. A last prayer to ask for help and health, with renewed promises to keep the law in spite of all difficulty and opposition. Perseverance (161-76).

The psalm of those who really triumph in life

1. *It is the psalm of obedience:*

(a) Triumph in life through the doing of one's duty in all spheres.

(b) It fits with the Gospel, which speaks to us of those who do the will of the Father.

(c) Face to face with superficial piety it is well to think about this psalm. Those who adjust their conduct to their beliefs, not those who say Master, Master, will enter into the kingdom.

2. *The psalm of triumph:*

The triumph of those who, in this life, obey the law of God, beginning: Blessed they who pass through life's journey unstained, who follow the law of the Lord.

(a) Blessed indeed, in this life, he who obeys and has been faithful to the law, and evermore blessed as he is faithful, and perfect in his obedience:

- i. blessed he who keeps the commands of God and the Church;
- ii. who keeps the law in his state of life;
- iii. who observes the commands of his superior;
- iv. the priest who submits heart and soul to his Bishop;
- v. the religious in his convent or monastery;
- vi. those who obey voluntarily with love, with submission of mind and will.

(b) To such may be applied the words of St Teresa, commenting on verse 32 of this psalm:

- i. For you God will enlarge your hearts, infusing into their very centre a new vital principle; he will give you a new peace, quietness and sweetness inside yourselves.
- ii. Do but open my heart wide and easy is the path thou hast decreed (v. 32).

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

THE UNJUST STEWARD

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Romans 8. 12-17

Gospel: Luke 16. 1-9

Texts concerning rich and poor

1. *Riches:*

So much for the man who would have none of God's help, but relied on his store of riches, and found his strength in knavery. Ps. 51. 9.

Put your faith in extortion no more, boast no more of plunder; set never your heed on mounting store of riches. Ps. 61. 11.

Fall he must that relies on riches; never shall the just fade or fail. Prov. 11. 28.

2. *They are useless for attaining happiness:*

Better a poor life lived honestly than crooked ways that bring riches. . . . Wealth that the usurer by extortion amassed, a more generous than he shall have the spending of. Prov. 28. 6-8.

What is his decree? Why, that covetousness should never fill its own maw; never did he that loved money taste the enjoyment of his money; here is frustration once again. Richer if thou grow, riches will give thee more mouths to feed; profit he has none that owns them, save the feasting of his eyes on them if he will. Eccles. 5. 9-10.

3. *Therefore it is not surprising that evil men have them:*

Do not be disturbed, then, when a man grows rich, and there is no end to his household's magnificence; he cannot take all that with him when he dies, magnificence will not follow him to the grave. While life lasts he calls himself happy: None but will envy my success; but soon he will be made one with the line of his fathers, never again to see the light. Ps. 48. 17-20.

Look at these sinners, how they live at peace, how they rise to greatness! . . . the truth is, thou art making a slippery path for their feet, ready to plunge them in ruin; in a moment they are fallen, in a storm of terrors vanished and gone. Ps. 72. 12, 18-19.

4. *Care of the poor:*

The ideal: There ought to be no poor man in your midst.

Deut. 15. 4:

Prov. 31. 8-9 set a happy mean and the Jubilee year was designed to eliminate permanent poverty, thus too inordinate differences

would not arise between rich and poor. The Law recognized that some poor would always remain in spite of everything, and so enjoyed consideration for all those in distress, widows and orphans (Deut. 15. 11; Ex. 22. 21-28); the Law summarized all duties in the verse: Love your neighbour as yourself, I am Yahweh! (Lev. 19. 18.) God stresses the fact that the poor are essentially *his*. What one does to the poor is done to God and he will give the reward. There is a text of Tobias which needs quoting here: Use thy wealth in giving of alms; never turn thy back on any man who is in need, and the Lord, in thy own need, will have eyes for thee. Shew to others what kindness thy means allow, giving much, if much is thine, if thou hast little, cheerfully sharing that little. To do this is to lay up a store against the day of distress; almsdeeds were ever a sovereign way of escape from guilt and death, a bar against the soul's passage into darkness; none has less to fear when he stands before the most high God than he who does them. Tob. 4. 7-12.

5. *The vanity of riches again:*

(a) The differences between rich and poor have been ordained by God and are a reflection of his providence (Prov. 22. 2; 14. 15; 17. 5).

(b) The rich have many advantages; they are secure from the vicissitudes of life (Prov. 10. 15); they may permit themselves many pleasures, have friends and influence. Yet riches do not imply happiness. Better to have a humble home in the fear of God than many possessions with anxiety (Prov. 15. 16). Moral dangers too accompany riches, they open the way to intemperance, avarice, self-esteem, etc. (Am. 6. 3-6; Isaias 3. 16). Often they are obtained unjustly (Isaias 10. 1-2; Jer. 6. 13; Prov. 19. 1). With such goods there is no lasting fortune. Misfortune will overtake such a man in the end (Prov. 20. 17).

(c) The rich should use their wealth to help others; if they do that, then there is no harm in their many possessions. They should keep in mind that riches have only a relative value. Look well and keep ourselves clear of all covetousness.

A man's life does not consist in having more possessions than he needs. Luke 12. 15.

Those who would be rich fall into temptation, the devil's trap for them; all those useless and dangerous appetites which sink them into ruin here and perdition hereafter. The love of money is a root from which every kind of evil springs, and there are those who have wandered away from the faith by making it their ambition, involving themselves in a world of sorrows. I Tim. 6. 9-10.

Is one of the brethren in humble circumstances? Let him be proud of it; it exalts him, whereas the rich man takes pride in what in truth abases him. The rich man will pass by like the bloom on the

grass; the sun gets up, and the scorching wind with it, which dries up the grass, till the bloom on it falls, and all its fair show dies away; so the rich man with his enterprises will disappear. James 1. 9-11.

6. *In the Gospels the poor are preferred to the rich:*

Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Matt. 5. 3.

You must serve God or money; you cannot serve both. Matt. 6. 24.

And Jesus said to his disciples, Believe me, a rich man will not enter God's kingdom easily. And once again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye, than for a man to enter the kingdom of heaven when he is rich. Matt. 19. 23-24.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

This is the third consecutive Sunday on which the Church refers to baptism in the liturgy of the Mass.

If we have received the spirit of adoption by which we call God our Father, two consequences follow at once: we are sons and heirs to the kingdom of heaven. Therefore we are also spiritual men with an obligation to kill the flesh in order to live by the spirit. This idea of our co-operation, by which we make a reality of the right to the inheritance we received at baptism is the theme of the Epistle and is repeated in the Gospel. The example is given of prudence in the use of riches, but the application is general. The two things demanded are prudence and co-operation.

Therefore in the Mass we pray for both these gifts, in the Secret for prudence, to enable us to make a right use of the gifts of God; in the Collect, for the spirit of thinking and doing what is right, that we who cannot exist without God may live according to his will.

The ideas contained in the Introit are of a very different character. As Schuster says: In the midst of thy temple. . . . No place on earth can contain the glory of God and his mercy. Nevertheless, having regard to human nature and the social character which unites all the children of Adam, God has disposed, in the present economy of creation, that the faithful shall obtain the fruits of redemption, not singly and directly, but in the supernatural and divine society which is the Church.

In this great society, which we may compare to an organism, or, more accurately, to the human body, as St Paul does, the channels of the exuberant life of the divine Essence, the arteries of grace, are determined by clearly distinguished marks, that is, by the sacraments and sacramentals, through which all the treasures of Christ's redemption are conveyed to us. It is here, therefore, in the Church's liturgy, that we must preferably seek the means of sanctification,

the essential food of our Catholic piety; to which are to be coordinated with very great advantage all other acts of private, intimate and personal devotion, by which the soul prepares and disposes itself, as it were, for the great liturgy of the sacraments (*The Sacramentary*, tome 3, p. 112).

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: Romans 8. 12-17

1. *Argument:*

We continue with the Epistle to the Romans, and even though chapter seven comes between the parts read on former Sundays and this passage, still we can say that today's ideas are a consequence of what has been said before.

From baptism and our incorporation in Christ it follows that sin, taken in the sense of concupiscence, even though it remains in us, does not imply condemnation (8. 1); but if we permit it to reign in us, consenting to it, then it gives birth to real sin, mortal sin, and through it, death.

Since those who live according to the flesh cannot please God (8. 8) and since the spirit of Christ dwells in us (8. 9), even though the flesh feels concupiscence, the spirit must live in holiness (8. 10), so as one day to share in the glorious resurrection of Christ (8. 11).

At this point the Epistle of today begins, taking its central theme from the former recommendation: that we should not live according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. There are two reasons given, first of all because life according to the flesh means death eternal, while eternal life is according to the spirit. In proving this second element St Paul goes deeply into our divine sonship by adoption. He who lives the life of the spirit is moved by the Spirit of God; and the one who is moved by the Spirit of God is a son of God; if sons, then heirs also, co-heirs with Christ and therefore citizens of heaven.

2. *Texts:*

(a) Nature has no longer any claim upon us . . . v. 12:

The idea is that we no longer have any obligation towards the flesh which could make us live according to it; but we have an obligation towards the Spirit of God. The last words 'to the Spirit of God' are understood in the context although St Paul does not actually write them down—a common thing when he is following another line of argument.

(b) Those who follow the leading of God's Spirit are all God's sons . . . v. 14:

Here it is a question of a permanent state of docility to the Holy Spirit. From him also come actual graces which move the sinner

to penance, but here St Paul is speaking of those in whom the spirit of Christ dwells (8. 9) and who, moved by him, habitually mortify the works of the flesh (8. 13). These are the sons of God. St Thomas says: Just as he who is moved does not act of his own accord, so the spiritual man does not limit himself to instructions from the Spirit concerning what he should do, but his heart also is moved by him. . . . In the same way the spiritual man is not impelled to action merely by the movements of his own will, but by the instincts of the Holy Spirit. . . . This does not exclude the use of our own wills and free choice, since it is the Holy Spirit who causes in us that free movement of the will, according to Phil. 2. 13. Both the will to do it and the accomplishment of that will are something which God accomplishes in you, to carry out his loving purpose.

This cannot be something entirely external; it must respond to an interior deification, a nature made a son of God by grace. That is the force of the argument.

(c) The spirit you have now received is not, as of old, a spirit of slavery . . . v. 15:

A parenthesis in which St Paul sings of the filial love of the Christian for God in terms of contrast between the old law and its spirit of fear and the new law of love. St Thomas in his commentary, speaks of the kinds of fear; earthly fear, servile fear and true filial fear which avoids sin because it separates us from God. The true centre of Christian devotion is this filial love of God which is rooted in our sonship by adoption, and from which comes the love which should motivate all our actions.

(d) The Spirit himself thus assures our spirit . . . v. 16:

As St Thomas says, the Spirit gives this assurance through the filial love which he produces in us and which is a testimony to the fact that we are sons of God.

(e) If we are his children, then we are his heirs too . . . v. 17:

Our sonship is not allegorical, it is real, and therefore it produces real, juridical effects, by making us God's heirs. So that there shall be no doubt St Paul places it on the same plane as the sonship of Christ. The argument is a strictly logical one; if sons, we are also heirs, if we are heirs we are also co-heirs with Christ. This is our great dignity. However, the glory we should receive will depend on one essential condition: we must share his sufferings if we are to share his glory 17 (v.).

B: The Gospel: Luke 16. 1-9

1. *Occasion and argument:*

This parable appeared so obscure and difficult to many of the Fathers that St Jerome found it worthy of special mention in his writings to St Damasus.

It is not certain whether Jesus spoke this parable immediately after the one about the prodigal son or whether St Luke gathered together all these parables in two chapters. Maldonatus, among others, is strong for the unity of theme, saying that in the former three parables Christ taught the mercy of God, while in this one he stresses the fact that sinners should use their powers to the full to take advantage of that mercy while there is yet time.

2. *The parable:*

Here we have a rich man who had many lands, farm and olive-growing lands apparently, from the nature of the rent contracts. His steward was robbing him, and someone, possibly from malice or because he wanted the job, denounced the steward to his master. The Greek word implies a certain malice in this denunciation. From this moment the story becomes dramatic. The master calls the unjust steward and tells him of his irrevocable decision to dismiss him. The steward's reactions to this news and his meditations on what he is to do, unfit as he is for manual labour and ashamed to beg. At last he reaches his decision. He calls his lord's tenants and asks them how much they are paying in rent. One said a hundred firkins of oil; he was told to sit down quickly and make out his bill for fifty. Another owed a hundred quarters of wheat, and he was allowed to bring it down to eighty. The idea was that gratitude would later be of profit to the steward once he had lost his job. At this point the difficulties begin.

3. *Difficulties and solutions:*

And this knavish steward was commended by his master for his prudence in what he had done; for indeed, the children of this world are more prudent after their own fashion than are children of the light (v. 8).

It is the steward's master who thus praises his conduct, not Christ. However, we may say without hesitation that our Lord approved, not of the fraud, but of the ability of the man who thought of such a way out. From this ability or worldly prudence he draws the moral of the parable.

The second point of difficulty has been raised by some writers concerning the words: the children of this world are more prudent . . . , etc. They say that this is an explanation given by the Evangelist himself, not by Christ. There seems to be no real point in this, because St Luke would not have added that phrase unless it represented the mind of Christ in his interpretation of this parable. The whole thing comes down to this, then; the man's master marvelled at his cleverness in dealing with this situation, and it is this worldly prudence which is made the point of the moral.

By children of this world are meant evil men, sinners; the children of light are the just. The point of the moral is that the just should

imitate the wicked in one thing at least, in their zeal with which they deal with their temporal affairs. Our Lord draws another application, make use of your base wealth to win yourselves friends, who, when you leave it behind, will welcome you into eternal habitations. We must give alms while life still lasts.

4. *The essential application:*

The praise of the master for the industry and ability of the steward, because the children of this world are wiser. . . .

If this steward did not even hesitate one moment to make use of unjust means and tricks in order to escape from a small and temporal evil, how much more should the sinner make use of all licit means to avoid the serious punishment which will never end! And if the steward was praised in spite of the evil means he used, how much more will the sinner who does this be praised, since he is doing something pleasing to God. In this we all need to examine our consciences, because in many of us there dwells at one and the same time the child of this world and the child of light. Which is more industrious?

The reason for this greater industry on the part of the wicked is the preponderance of the things of sense in man. The mind and will are dulled by earthly things, by the body and its concupiscence. Thus earthly things are stronger in their appeal, very often, than spiritual things.

It is possible that there may be another direct application here to those who are rich and misers with it. This would seem to be the case from the words of Christ addressed to all his hearers, among whom were the Pharisees, who, as St Luke tells us, were fond of riches and poured scorn on him (v. 14). Christ says: If you, then, could not be trusted to use the base riches you had, who will put the true riches in your keeping? Not merely is it a question of the Old Law as opposed to the New; but also a question of the right use of material wealth. Alms serve to restore unjustly gotten gains, i.e. those in which there has been no sin against commutative justice, but one against social justice. It serves to seek pardon from God. Just as we place the holy water fonts at the entrance to our churches, so too, we place the poor there, that you may wash your souls (St John Chrysostom). Almsdeeds are a magnificent remedy against our sins. What we do for the poor we do directly for Christ.

5. *Other applications:*

(a) *Administrators:*

A frequent idea in the New Testament, that we are only administrators of the goods God has placed in our hands, which include body, soul, our powers, goods—everything. The prime obligation of an administrator is to be faithful to the will of his master. The will of our Master is that all should be referred to him and to his

glory. This is also true in material wealth and has its application in social justice too. What we have left over after our strict needs are satisfied is not ours to keep and use as we like, because then at once the necessities of others have a claim on us. We shall have to give an account of our stewardship to God, who is just as well as loving.

(b) The hour of judgement:

The moment when we are called to account. We have a malevolent accuser, Satan. We shall be naked to God's gaze then, no lies will serve us. We shall have to render an account of our administration then in all things, spiritual and temporal, of nature or of grace.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST CYPRIAN

(Quotations taken from his *Treatise on Works and Alms*, which is perhaps the first Christian treatise on the subject and one which was drawn on by many later writers, especially by St Augustine. Owing to its importance we give rather more extent to this document than usual.)

1. The Holy Spirit speaks to us in the Scriptures and tells us that by almsgiving and faith sins are forgiven (Prov. 16. 6); not assuredly those sins which had been previously contracted, because they are purged by the blood and merits of Christ. He says again that as water extinguishes fire, so sin is quenched by almsdeeds (Ecclus. 3. 33). As in the laver of the saving water the fires of hell are put out, so by almsdeeds and good works the fire of sin is extinguished. . . . The Lord teaches this also in the Gospels, for when the disciples were pointed out to him as eating without first washing their hands he replied: Fools, did not he who made the outward part make the inward too? Nay, you should give alms out of the store you have, and at once all that is yours becomes clean (Luke 11. 40-41). By this he teaches and shows us that not the hands are to be washed, but the heart, and that foulness from within is to be done away with rather than that from outside. . . . He who is merciful teaches and admonishes us that mercy must be shown to others. . . .

Finally, beloved brethren, the divine admonition in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testament, has never failed, has never been silent in urging God's people always and everywhere to works of mercy. . . . God commanded Isaias to admonish the people for their sins, warning them that even though they were to use supplications, prayers and fastings, they would not be able to make atonement for them, nor if they were clothed in sackcloth and ashes would they be able to soften God's anger. Yet all can be done and God appeased by almsdeeds, because he goes on to say: The false claims learn to

forgo, ease the insupportable burden, set free the over-driven, away with every yoke that galls. Share thy bread with the hungry, give the poor and the vagrant a welcome to thy house; meet thou the naked, clothe him; from thy own flesh and blood turn not away. Then sudden as the dawn the welcome light shall break on thee. . . . Then the Lord will listen to thee when thou callest on him; cry out, and he will answer, I am here at thy side.

The remedies for propitiating God are given us in the words of God himself; the divine instructions have taught sinners what they ought to do, that by good works God is satisfied, that with the rewards of mercy sins are cleansed. So we read: The good deed treasured in poor men's hearts shall ransom thee from all harm, shall more avail that stout shield or lance to ward off thy enemies (Ecclus. 29. 15-16); and again: Who shuts his ear to the poor man's plea, himself one day shall plead in vain (Prov. 21. 13). . . . When king Nabuchodonosor was troubled by his evil dream Daniel gave him his advice; a remedy to obtain the divine help: Deign, my lord king, to be advised by me; with almsgiving, with mercy to the poor, for fault and wrong-doing of thine make amends; it may be he will condone thy guilt (Dan. 4. 24). As the king did not obey he underwent the misfortunes and evil which he had seen and which he might have escaped had he redeemed his sin by almsdeeds. Raphael also bears witness to the same truth when he says: Prayer, fasting and alms, said he, here is better treasure to lay up than any store of gold. Almsgiving is death's avoiding, is guilt's atoning, is the winning of mercy and of life eternal (Tob. 12. 8-9). He shows that our prayers and fastings are of less avail, unless they are aided by almsdeeds; that entreaties alone are of little force to obtain what we need unless they are reinforced by the addition of alms and good works. The angel reveals, manifests and certifies that our petitions become effective by almsdeeds, that life is redeemed from dangers by almsgiving, that souls are delivered from death by it. . . .

2. If you should dread and fear lest by acting with such generosity, your patrimony being exhausted through your liberality, you may perhaps be reduced to poverty; be of good courage and free from such worry. That can never be exhausted from which the service of Christ is supplied and the heaven work done. Neither do I vouch for this on my own authority; rather I promise it on the word of Holy Scripture and on the authority of the divine promises. The Book of Proverbs says: Give to the poor, and nothing lack; turn away from their plea, and blessing thou shalt have none (28. 27). This Scripture shows us that the merciful and those who do good works can never want, but rather that those feel need who are miserly and barren in such things. . . .

You are afraid lest your estate should fail if you begin to act liberally with it; and you do not know, miserable that you are,

that while you are fearful lest your property should fail you, life itself and salvation are slipping away from you. While you are anxious lest any of your wealth should be diminished, you yourself are being diminished, in that you are a lover of mammon more than of your own soul. While you yourself are fearful lest you should lose your patrimony, you are perishing for its sake. The apostle says: Empty-handed we came into the world, and empty-handed, beyond question, we must leave it; why then, if we have food and drink to last us out, let us be content with that. Those who would be rich fall into temptation, the devil's trap for them. . . . The love of money is a root from which every kind of evil springs, and there are those who have wandered away from the faith by making it their ambition, involving themselves in a world of sorrows (1 Tim. 6. 7-10). . . . Thinkest thou that to a Christian—thinkest thou that to a servant of the Lord—thinkest thou that to one that is dear to his Lord, anything will be wanting?

Unless you imagine that he who feeds Christ is not himself fed by Christ, or that earthly things will be wanting to those to whom heavenly and divine things are given. Whence this impious and sacrilegious suggestion? . . . You are the captive and slave of your money; you are bound with the chains and bonds of covetousness, and you whom Christ once loosed, are again in chains. You keep your money, which once kept, does not keep you. You heap up a patrimony which burdens you with its weight; and you do not remember what God said to the rich man who boasted of the abundance of his harvest: Thou fool, this night thou must render up thy soul; and who will be master now of all thou hast laid by? (Luke 12. 20). . . . Divide your returns with the Lord, your God; share your gains with Christ; make Christ a partner with you in your earthly possessions, that he also make you co-heir with him in his heavenly kingdom. . . .

. . . But you who are such as this cannot labour in the Church, for your eyes, overcome with the gloom of blackness and shadowed in night, do not see the needy and the poor. You are wealthy and rich and do you think that you celebrate the Lord's Supper, who come to the Lord's Supper without a sacrifice and yet take part in that sacrifice which the poor man has offered? . . .

Nor let anyone fancy that he can be excused on the grounds that he has to lay up store for his own children, since in spiritual expenditure we ought to think of Christ, who has declared that it is he who receives them; not our fellow-servants, but the Lord, since he himself instructs and warns us saying: He is not worthy of me that loves father or mother more; he is not worthy of me that loves son or daughter more . . . (Matt. 10. 37). . . . For if we love God with our whole heart we ought not to prefer either our parents or our children to God. And this also John lays down in his epistle, that

the love of God is not in them whom we see unwilling to labour for the poor. And now suppose that a man has the worldly goods he needs, and sees his brother go in want; if he steels his heart against his brother, how can we say that the love of God dwells in him? For if by almsgiving we are lending to God, and when it is given to the least of our brethren it is given to Christ, then there is no ground for anyone preferring earthly things to heavenly, nor for considering human things before divine.

3. Thus that woman, a widow, in the third book of Kings, when in the drought and famine, having consumed all she had, having made with the little meal and oil that was left a cake, and being about to die with her children, Elias came and asked that something should first be given to him to eat. Then, of what remained, she and her children could eat. She did not hesitate to obey; nor did the mother prefer her children to Elias in her hunger and poverty. . . . According to her faith in the divine promise, those things which she gave were multiplied and heaped up to the widow, and the vessels of meal and oil were filled. . . .

4. Therefore, dearest brethren, whose fear is inclined towards God, and who, having already despised and trampled under foot the world, have lifted up your mind to things heavenly, let us with full faith, devoted mind and constant labour give our obedience so as to deserve well of the Lord. Let us give to Christ earthly garments that we may receive heavenly ones in return; let us give the food and drink of this world, that we may come with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to the heavenly banquet. That we may not reap little, let us sow abundantly. . . .

5. For whatsoever is of God is common to our use; nor is anyone excluded from his gifts and benefits, so as to prevent the whole human race from enjoying equally the divine goodness and liberality. Thus the day equally enlightens, the sun gives radiance, the rain moistens, the wind blows, sleep is one to those that sleep, the splendour of the stars and the brilliance of the moon are common to all. . . .

6. What will be the glory of those who labour in charity; how great and wonderful the joy when the Lord begins to number his people and, distributing according to our merits and good works the promised rewards, gives heavenly things for earthly, eternal goods for temporal, great things for small; to present us to the Father, to whom he has restored us by his sanctification; to bestow upon us immortality and eternity, to which he has renewed us by the quickening of his blood; to bring us once again to paradise, to open the kingdom for us, in the faith and truth of his promise! Let these things abide firmly in our minds, let them be understood with full

faith, loved with our whole heart, let them be purchased with the magnanimity of our increasing labours.

An illustrious and divine thing is the saving labour of charity; a great comfort of believers, a wholesome guard of our security, a protection of hope, a safeguard of faith, a remedy for sin, a thing placed in the power of the doer, great and easy; a crown of peace without the risk of persecution; the true and greatest gift of God, needful for the weak, glorious for the strong, assisted by which the Christian achieves spiritual greatness, deserves well of Christ the Judge, makes God his debtor. For this palm of works of salvation let us gladly strive; let us all, in the struggle for life, run with God and Christ looking on. Let those of us who have already begun to become greater than this world, not slacken our efforts by any desire for the things of this life and the world. If the day of reckoning and persecution should find us running swiftly in this contest of charity, then the Lord will never fail to give us the reward of our merits. In peace he will give to the winners a white crown for our labours; in persecution he will add to it a purple one as a reward for our sufferings.

II. ST AMBROSE

(Summary of his doctrine in the sermon on the rich man as administrator. This sermon is freely quoted by many authors of the time and contains many thoughts similar to those of St John Chrysostom.)

1. We are not obliged, dearest brethren, to imitate everything the Lord tells us in the story of the administrator or steward in today's gospel, because the Gospel only includes those things to show us how pleasing it is to God when we distribute piously our goods. For if even he who made use of fraud to give to pious causes merits praise, how much more the man who distributes his goods among the poor with a generous heart. There are two kinds of temptation; in one tribulation makes a martyr of the human heart, and in this case man is tried and proved by patience as in a crucible. In the other the very prosperity of life becomes a temptation.
2. God gives, even to those who are ungrateful, the earth's fertility, a mild climate, the joy of much fruit, the help of oxen and everything else that makes the year rich to the harvest. Let us see now what return man makes. Having a miserly soul and thinking that everything is but little, he always imagines there is something lacking, for which cause he never finds a good reason for giving anything to anyone.
3. See, then, how ungrateful is the rich man for the divine benefits. He does not think that others have the same human nature as he, not does he think it equity to give anything, even those things which

are superfluous, to those in need. He does not read what the Scriptures say about doing kindness (Prov. 3. 27), or that it is commanded us never to allow faith or mercy to abandon us (Tob. 4. 6). The rich man does not hear nor see nor understand any of those things preached by the prophets and doctors.

Abundance consumes and wastes his mind and, with no single sentiment of humanity, he cannot understand that others lack what to him is left over. O Man, remember who he is who has given all things to you, and remember who you are. You are God's servant, and he has commended to you the distribution of divine gifts. Remember, then, who he is who has imposed on you the obligation of administering the goods of his family. Why then have you been preferred to others? There must be some reason why our Lord, good and just as he is, gives you the office of distribution while others feel need. Recognize, then, the fact that you are the administrator of your fellow-servants where divine goods are concerned. Do not imagine that the earth produces its fruits for your own stomach and gift. Recognize that all things whatsoever you possess have been placed in your charge, they have not been given to you as your own; you may rejoice in them for a short time or even take pleasure in abusing them; but when they cease to exist together with this life of ours, we shall be called upon by God to give an account of our administration.

When you are asked: With what poor did you divide the riches placed in your care? how many needy did you succour, how many did you free from prison with your money, or from captivity or death? To how many orphans were you a father and to how many widows a husband with chaste provision? What use has my money been in your hands and what good has my fruit done? To these questions you will of course reply: Everything, united and hidden away, I have defended with the strongest locks and seals; to no one did I give anything; rather I spent all my time guarding these treasures, putting in that all my care and watchfulness.

In consulting with yourself you are doing so with a stupid counsellor. The right procedure would have been, when thinking about these things, to have said: I will open my barns and satisfy the hungry souls of the poor; I will show where my goods are hidden and call in the needy; I will seek those who are in want or trouble; like Joseph I will call them all with the voice of charity and will say: If anyone needs bread, let him come to me and I will share with him the gift which the Lord gave me so liberally. As if it were a public fountain, let all drink at their good will, whatever they need. But you not merely do not say anything like that; you do not even think it; rather you deny to men the good things of the Lord. . . .

4. But if avarice should possess you to such an extent that it makes you want to make all things yours, then hear a salutary remedy to

free yourself from it. The benefits of liberality last longer in the case of him who gives than they do in that of him who receives. The needy receives mercy, but he who gives retains the grace of mercy multiplied a hundred-fold. You gave bread to one who was hungry, he ate it and was satisfied; but what you gave was returned to you with its fruits and interest. If you think this is difficult to understand, think if the grain of wheat sown in the ground does not give more fruit to the one who sows it than to one who keeps it safe.

Are you still doubtful and irresolute about being splendid with those gifts of which God is the Judge? Where the crowd of those who applaud you will be angels, where favour and praise will not end with the day, but will remain eternally; where you will receive a crown, not of gold, but of justice; where the honours will last, honours not of one nation, but of the kingdom of heaven. These things are to be won by charity to the poor, by alms given to the needy, with which, for the price of an earthly meal, we gain incorruptible glory and the eternal kingdom of heaven.

5. In all this Christ comes out to meet you; he who by reason of his divine nature is incomprehensible, nevertheless can be found through the works of mercy. As he himself said: I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty and you gave me to drink, naked and you covered me. Do you see what gifts the word of God prepares for you? Here Christ himself confesses that it is he who receives in the person of the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, sick and criminals.

6. The rich man in the Gospel met with an end which was in accordance with his evil thoughts. But you, brethren, if you will only listen to my words, reveal the entrances to your barns and make sure that your riches have an exit from them which is as generous and splendid as their entrance was doubtful. Let the abundance of your mercy extend to the whole world, just as a wide river is spread through its many branches to water the fields. Do you not know that the more water one draws from a well the more abundant and fresh it becomes; while on the contrary, the longer it remains stagnant the more filthy and corrupt it is? So likewise money, if it is kept, if it does not move, is sterile and useless; but if it runs it produces common fruit for all.

Store up, then, the abundant fruits of your riches, that is, the prayers of the poor and the intercession of the saints, who remembering your office before the great Judge, will beseech God for you, urging in your favour your good works. Let us not imitate the example of that rich man, from whom his riches were taken at the same time as his life, just when he was most occupied in storing up present wealth and thinking about the future. At that very moment he was taken before the dread tribunal of justice in which he has as his accuser that same avarice which was his inseparable companion in

life, while he will find there no one who can defend him or intercede for him. He will look around the great multitude of the saints who assist at that tribunal, with keen eyes seeking one person whom he has made grateful by his assistance, but he will not see one. There will be no one to say: He deserves to have this done for him; he is a good friend to our race, and has built our synagogue for us at his own cost (Luke 7. 4-5). There will be no widows to go before him weeping, presenting to Peter the garments which the rich had given them (Acts 9. 39). There will be no one to have pity on him who has not had pity on others; for it is written, Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy (Matt. 5. 7). And again: Give, and gifts will be yours . . . the measure you award to others is the measure that will be awarded to you. . . .

7. . . . When I have filled my second barns then I will give to the poor. You promise yourself many years of life and a long term. What is stopping you from doing works of charity now? There is abundance of grain, these are prosperous times for you and there is no lack of those in need. The naked are all around you; the guilty in their prisons and the sick from their beds cry out in lamentations which move the heart. Why do you put off until tomorrow such mercy, when today you could become just and merciful? . . . You do not know what will happen tomorrow. It is your avarice which closes your ears to these commandments. Should you not give thanks to God that you do not have to beg from others, that rather it is the poor who crowd around your door to ask you for mercy? But you are little prepared to give and you grow sad and avoid being troubled by anyone in need, just as if you could not easily have been one of those gathered round your door, wasting with hunger. You will be, one day, and with reason; because in desire, intentions and resolutions you are truly poor and have nothing. Because if one does not have charity, humanity, faith and confidence in God, if one does not have mercy, can there be any greater poverty or need than this?

8. But you say: Where is the injustice if, without stealing what belongs to another, I store up diligently what is my own? What an imprudent statement! Your own, you say? What is your own? What goods did you bring into this world with you? When you entered into it, when you came forth from your mother's womb, I ask you: With what faculties, subsidies did you come accompanied? Learn your real state on entering into this world, from the Apostle Paul, who says: Empty-handed we came into this world, and empty-handed, beyond question, we must leave it (1 Tim. 6. 7).

9. The earth was given to all men without any distinction; let no one call his own those things which remain over to him from that which

he has obtained from the common store. . . . Is God unjust because he does not distribute equally among us the riches of the earth and because you are living in abundance while others find themselves poor and in need? Did he not do it so as to give you a proof of his kindness on the one hand and a crown of glory for your patience on the other? But you, having received all these gifts of God and having guarded them in your house so carefully, do you not think that you are doing wrong when you alone rejoice in the means of life of so many others? Who is more unjust, more avaricious, than he who converts the food of many, not into things he can use, but in abundance and luxuries? Denying to the poor what they need when you have enough and can help them, is as great a crime as to steal from him who has something. Of the poor and hungry is the very bread you eat; of the naked the clothing with which you are covered; the money which you hide in the earth is redemption and freedom to the unfortunate captives. Know then that you steal those goods which you could give and do not wish to give.

10. Nice words, you may say, but gold is better. I am not surprised; for if we speak to those who are lustful on the matter of chastity it merely excites them to greater desires and lusts. I will show you once more the shadow of the future judgements of God so that you may know how much sorrow you are storing up for yourself. What value there will be for you in that sentence of which we have already spoken in the day of judgement: Come, you that have received a blessing from my Father, take possession of the kingdom which has been prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me food . . . (Matt. 25. 34). And what horror, what fear and darkness will not take possession of you when you hear the sentence of your condemnation: Go far from me, you that are accursed, into that eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you never gave me food. . . .

III. ST GAUDENTIUS OF BRESCIA

(PL. 20, 971. A wonderful exposition of the whole of tradition on this difficult parable; for which reason a summary, with some quotations, is given here.)

1. . . . And so the Lord Jesus, true teacher of the life-giving commandments of God, wishing at the same time to encourage his apostles, and after them all who would believe in him everywhere, to the practice of almsdeeds, puts before them the parable of the Unjust Steward, so that by the example of this man he might make clear to us that in this world nothing is really ours, but that we have

been commissioned with the stewardship of the good things of the Lord, to use them, giving thanks, to the extent of our needs, or to distribute them to our fellow servants according as they have need of them. Further, that it is not lawful to misuse indiscriminately the means that have been accorded to us or to claim the right to luxurious and extravagant display; for we must render an account of our stewardship to the Lord when he comes. . . .

2. Then, at the end of the parable he says: Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings. That is, make the poor your friends, by means of those earthly possessions which the injustice of human greed claims as absolutely belonging to it; afraid lest it be forced to bestow any of it on the people of God. Mammon is a Syriac word for money or riches. Make unto yourself, he says, friends—the poor—from the mammon of iniquity, that when you fail—when you have given your substance to relieve the needs of the poor and have spent it all—they may receive you into everlasting dwellings; that is, our friends will obtain our salvation, since they are the same poor in whom Christ, the eternal Rewarder, will confess that he himself received the kindness of our love for our fellow men. The poor themselves then do not receive us, except through him who is fed through them in the good works of our faith and obedience. . . . For the Lord Jesus, our protector, who is subject to no human need, himself declares that in them he was hungry, in them thirsty, in them a stranger, naked, sick and in prison. . . .

3. And a little later he adds: If then you have not been faithful in the unjust mammon, who will trust you with that which is the true? For who will believe that to a man who could not be faithful in the care of earthly riches, which are the most frequent source of iniquity, should then be entrusted the true riches of heavenly things, which are justly the reward of the faithful stewards? . . .

To the Lord's discourse is at once added again: And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? For whatever is in this world does in truth not belong to any of us who are commanded to live in it as strangers and pilgrims, looking to the future for our reward. . . . For no man can obtain that kingdom (heaven) who was not a fit and a faithful steward of that other patrimony of the world which was entrusted to his care for a time. And so in another place the Lord says: With what difficulty shall they who have money enter into the kingdom of God (Matt. 19. 23). And at the end of this lesson he says: You cannot serve God and Mammon. For the servants of Christ and his disciples should rather command money, not serve it; for fear that, should money rule us, as long as we are obedient to the desire for it, we separate ourselves from the love of his service.

4. Therefore according to the command of God, riches are to be distributed to those in need; for they are not ours and no covetous persons whatever may hold fast to them without injustice and disaster to his own soul. For according to the words of our Saviour, they hinder those who are attached to them from entering into the kingdom of heaven; for it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19. 24), for that rich man, namely, who is so swollen by avarice that he is more monstrous than a camel. For money is a heavy burden; and the man who is a miser has his neck pressed into the ground by the weight of it, which neither suffers him to raise himself up to higher things nor even lift his gaze to those things which are above. . . . And since the way that leads to life is straight and narrow, it does not allow those to enter upon it who are burdened with the load of earthly riches. It is open to those who are free, unencumbered, disciplined by self-denial of every kind, and those who, if I may say so, have become so spiritual, fine as thread, that they are even able to pass easily through the eye of this mystical needle.

5. . . . I am of the opinion that the unjust steward stands for the devil, who was sent into this world for the correction of mankind, so that we, fleeing from the cruelty and malice of this evil steward, might seek instead the compassion of God, through whose power and mercy we can alone be delivered from every assault. . . . And the devil wasted the substance of his Lord when he sought the ruin of mankind; that is, our death, who are the possession of God. . . . God, seeing that the insolence of the devil had become so great that those he had been permitted to try, solely for their correction, he had taken as his own and put to death, now threatens him with expulsion, so that his cruelty is broken through fear of eternal punishment. This most wicked one, reckoning the death of man as his reward, is filled with anxiety because the Lord is about to take away his power over others. . . . so he thinks within himself how he may still have power over the debtors of his Lord, not only by open persecution, but also by a pretext of benevolence, deceiving them with smooth words so that, seduced by his false kindness, they may more readily receive him into their homes, since together with him they must be judged for ever. . . .

6. The debts of his fellow servants he promises falsely to remit himself, when he offers an empty forgiveness to those who sin either in belief or action; when he persuades them that the sins they think are grievous are not so serious after all; for they confess the amount of their debt, knowing in their hearts that they cannot deny it before God. They have brought his faith into contempt and have failed to do his will. For those who give to God what is his are not

his debtors. And do not be surprised that he should so lie about their debts to men whom he is trying most cunningly to destroy by this very deceit, since he dared to promise Christ, the Lord of all creation, all the kingdoms of this world, impudently pretending they were his (Luke 4. 6-7).

7. . . . The wheat is the faith of Christ, the beginning of life for man. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world (John 6. 33) . . . oil stands for good works, and because the foolish virgins did not have any, their lamps were extinguished and they remained shut out in the darkness, far from the chamber of the bridegroom. For our souls must not merely be virgin and untarnished; they must also bear with them in their vessels the oil of good works; lest the lamp of faith go out through the lack of good works. For even as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without good works is dead (James 2. 26). . . .

That he persuades them, in place of a hundred barrels of oil, that is, good works, to write down fifty, and tells them to alter the debt of a hundred quarters of wheat to eighty, is an even more subtle deception and snare of the enemy. . . . For he tries to pervert our good works from their perfection, that is a hundred . . . leading us into an evil way of life little by little. For how many has the devil not softened by his evil counsel, leading them from good works to evil ones, the evil of bodily pleasures? How many who were devout and eager in paying by good works the debt of religion has he not cheated of their heavenly reward by infecting them with the desire for human glory, so that they may not receive the rewards promised to those on the right hand; for in their good works they now seek the praise and approval of men rather than that of God. . . .

8. The Lord does not, however, praise him for goodness, nor for piety, nor for justice, but he praises the cunning, the artful prudence of the unjust steward. He praised him because he had prepared his fraud with such evil cunning. He praises him with menaces, for his so-called prudence. With menaces, I say, because he calls him *unjust*; he condemns this wicked prudence of the devil. . . .

9. Accordingly, let us imitate the prudence of this unjust steward, but not his perfidy; his cunning, but never his wickedness. As he was skilled in doing injury to others by his evil deeds, so must we be prepared in salutary knowledge, instructed and armed with all prudence; having on us the breastplate of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit and the impregnable shield of justice; lest while we are as yet unaware of it, he may pierce us with the darts of the evil promises and temptations; lest, being unarmed, he may overcome us, asleep, and he should slay us. Lest, though armed and watchful, he should defeat us because we are not accustomed to fighting him.

SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

ST THOMAS AQUINAS

Prudence

(This is one of the treatises which is most complete in St Thomas and yet seldom preached. For that reason, and also because of its connection with avarice, we give here a summary of the most important points which would seem to have application to preaching. Because of the length of former sections the direct quotations have been reduced to a minimum.)

1. Prudence takes its name from providence, of which it is the principal act.
2. It consists in several actions together, that of consultation, election and finally, as its principal act, commanding what is to be done in certain circumstances.
3. It is an intellectual, moral virtue, located in the practical reason.
4. It is the most noble of all the moral virtues, because its object is to direct all their actions according to right reason and to find the *mean* which is half-way between excess and defect in these virtues.
5. Thus prudence is a practical virtue, whose term is action; it is the rule of action. It guides the will in the application of the other moral virtues, even though it is a distinct virtue with matter all its own. We may say that its duty is to prescribe for the will, urging it to act though the investigations, etc., which have been made by prudence.
6. It follows that sinners cannot possess true prudence in the supernatural order, because it is an infused gift of God, which is lost through sin. They may have merely natural or acquired prudence.
7. There are three kinds of prudence. First a false prudence, which only deserves the name because it has some similarity with the virtue. Thus we could call a thief prudent if he took all the means necessary to bring his action to a successful conclusion. This is the prudence of which the apostle said: The prudence of the flesh is death (Rom. 8. 6).
There is another kind of prudence which is good, but imperfect, and this imperfection may be caused in two ways. First of all, because the good which is taken as the end of the action concerned is not a good common to all human life, but a particular class of good. Thus a man may be called a prudent navigator, for example, or business man. Or again it can be imperfect because it fails in the principal act of prudence, which is command. Good advice may be given,

and good judgement after careful thought—all of which pertain to prudence. But unless there is effective command of the will, there is not perfect prudence.

Thirdly, there is perfect prudence, which counsels, judges and commands aright those things which pertain to the last and true end of human life; this alone is called true prudence, which is not to be found in sinners. The first class remains only in sinners, the second is common to good and bad alike.

8. Acquired prudence is not usually found in the young, because it is learned by actual practice in commanding. In any case, prudence is more often found in all its forms in older people, because of their greater experience; also because age has calmed their passions—the great enemy of prudence.

9. Prudence is lost more through passion than through forgetfulness, because the latter merely affects the judgement. But prudence does not consist solely in judging, but in other things as well. It is more easily destroyed or reduced to nothing by the passions.

10. The vices which attack prudence and are opposed to it arise from a defect in any of the three acts of prudence mentioned above. The lack of inquiry and investigation results in precipitancy. The lack of judgement is another fault against prudence. Inconstancy arises from the failure to direct the will aright, especially when the latter is under the influence of some evil passion. If the failure is due to sheer inertia the vice is called negligence.

It is well to observe that these vices are in the intellect, because it is the intellect which is directed towards good by prudence and then has to influence the will and command it if necessary.

The greatest obstacle to prudence is the dominance of the animal appetites, especially envy, anger, ambition, and lust—the last tending to suffocate all prudence.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

(Summary of his sermon on *Rendering an account*. We have given it on this Sunday, even though many of the texts he uses are taken from the parable of the talents—as an explanation of which it can also be used—because it has an application to this Gospel as well.)

1. God can do what he likes with his gifts, but in his wisdom he distributes them with an eye to the individual's qualifications, capacity or office. How often human pride resents the gifts given to others, while it is discontented with those itself receives. Sometimes the refusal of a grace may be a grace in itself.

2. Let us be content with what God has given us, because it will surely be the means of obtaining further gifts from him; what is important is not the number or greatness of the gifts received, but the uses we make of them. God does not reward results, but effort. In the Gospel you can see that an equal reward was given to the man who, with two talents, gained another two and with five another five. Greater gifts often mean a greater fall, and always imply more responsibility. This is one motive why those in high places should be more humble than others.

3. Humility does not consist in refusing to acknowledge the gifts God has given us, but in knowing that they are gifts, due to no merit of ours, and that we shall have to give an account to him for their use.

4. *The gifts we have received:*

(a) **Natural ones:**

A body, beauty, strength, health, good character and dispositions, the natural powers of memory, understanding and will, the senses, etc. God will demand an account of the use we have made of all these. We must be careful to make good use of *time*—one of God's most precious gifts to the sinner.

(b) **Riches, honours, power:**

These are also gifts of God, and how seldom they are used in his service. Yet what untold good one rich man could do for the poor of God if he really set himself to the task. The rich have to be careful to serve the needs of the poor, because the gifts God has given to them are the patrimony of the poor. St Gregory says that God will demand the same account as he demands from the rich from those who live round them and on their favours, because these are the lot of the poor, especially if these favoured ones do not intercede for the poor.

(c) **Ability, art or science:**

These are gifts, too, and of great use in the service of the poor; e.g. the knowledge of a doctor, chemist, lawyer or artisan of any description. All these will have to give an account of the use they have made of these talents. God has given them, as he says himself (Ex. 31. 3-6).

(d) **Supernatural gifts:**

The highest of them all, the Holy Spirit himself, together with sanctifying grace and the love of God. They are the most precious but also the easiest to lose if we do not guard them carefully and work with them. You may ask of what use to the Church are these gifts, which appear so individual. I tell you that they are of more use than others, such as the grace of working miracles, prophecy, etc.

One holy man is of more worth than a thousand wise men or preachers. His mere presence and example spreads among all the good odour of Christ, without saying anything about his prayer.

5. Good business men live all the time worried about their business, and thus should the true Christian live who has been granted so many riches. Unhappy man, he who is unable to give a good account of the five talents he has received. What do you say? That you already know your Lord is a hard man? That is a lie; God is not hard or severe; he is the God of mercy and all consolation. You are not thinking of the true God, but of an idol. That he reaps where he has not sown? Another lie. Would that he could reap one hundredth part of what he sows.

II. BLESSED JOHN OF AVILA

(This is a summary of the *Memorial* presented by John of Avila to the Council of Trent in order to expose the causes of and remedies for heresies at the time.)

1. *Negligent pastors and false teachers:*

Like priest like people is an old saying and a true one, just as the earth comes under the influences of the heavens, so do the people under that of the priest. The more our people need a pastor so much the more influence for good or evil does he have on them. We might remember the warning of Ezechiel to the pastors of Israel: Out upon Israel's shepherds, that had a flock to feed, and fed none but themselves; the milk drank, the wool wore, the fat lambs slaughtered, but pastured these sheep of mine never at all! . . . So my sheep fell a-wandering, that shepherd had none; every wild beast fell a-preying on them, and they scattered far and wide (Ez. 34. 2-3, 5).

He also gave a warning about false prophets, not merely those who taught error, but also those who deceived the people by allowing them to develop lax consciences, not reproving their vices, but rather giving in to them and allowing them to do as they please. The purpose was to make the people content with the lives they were living; not to live in fear of God's punishments, but rather to look for his peace and a time of prosperity.

2. *Unworthy pastors in God's Church:*

There have been such as these and they have caused the loss of many souls. Sometimes they are merely lazy priests who are afraid or run away from the hard work necessary to save souls. They are quite content with the external duties of their calling, tending rather to lord it over the people than to be a father to them.

3. *God's punishment on such:*

God's will is that the life of the priest should be a mirror of the doctrines he preaches; especially that of the narrow road to heaven and the need for the cross in order to reach that goal. This road is open to all, possible to all and even easy to travel once we know the way. The sheep, comforted by this type of example actually lived before their eyes, will lose their fear of the difficulties, because the shepherd will go striding before them on the way and they can follow him with confidence. He goes in the image of the Son of God whom he represents. In the hands of the priest is the honour of the faith and doctrine of God.

4. *False teachers:*

- (a) Those who teach false doctrines; but not merely these.
- (b) Those who despise the practice of the Christian faith in all its glory.
- (c) Others make sanctity consist in purely external works, without seeing that the principal things are faith, hope and charity, which must be built up in the soul by true devotion to the will of God and his sacraments.
- (d) Others are content to exact from their people the avoidance of mortal sin. In their sermons and instructions they are always harping on the same themes—what is sin, mortal and venial; the works of precept and counsel. All explained coldly. This is not enough for the nourishment of souls.

(e) *The grave evils that follow from such preaching:*

- i. *A tendency to despise the perfection of the law of Christ.* 'This is not a mortal sin' may then come to mean that it is licit to the minds of the people. 'This is not of precept,' therefore I do not have to observe it.
- ii. *A lack of real imitation of the life of Christ;* the great works of excellent and outstanding charity which he did and which can move hearts to imitate him, are forgotten.
- iii. *Those incentives are lost which can really urge us to a truly fervent Christian life.* Such are the thoughts of God as our Father and our obligation to produce good works as his children; the example given us by Christ who loved unto death.
- iv. *Slackness in even grave matters.* Through such preaching there are many who do not confess their sins more than once a year not having done it in the course of the year. Through not being careful about venial sins they fall into grave ones, so grave that there may be difficulty in rising again from them.
- v. *The great example of truly Christian lives is lost*—and more are converted by good example than by preaching.
- vi. *In the end the very natural light of reason itself is obscured;* sins are committed against reason to such an extent that those

outside the Church soon learn to say that if God were good then Christians could never be so bad.

5. *The remedy:*(a) *Saintly priests . . .*

God said in the Old Law that, had it not been for the fact that the priests had failed him, he would long ago have converted his people back to him. They had no zeal, no love for the law, no knowledge of the divine mind because they were far from him, no sorrow when offences were committed against God. The opposite would have given us a very different picture. So it should be now in the New Law of Christ.

(b) *who preach in the right way:*

If the people are well instructed and well founded in the doctrines of the Church and the value of the authority of the Pope; if they know the use of the sacraments and how to make the most of them; if they know the beauties of the truths of faith they will not be easily separated from them by error or by sin. Christ made use of the word of God three times to vanquish the evil one.

III. BOURDALOUE

Almsdeeds

I. *Introduction:*

And my counsel to you is, make use of your base wealth . . . (Luke 16. 9).

Is there anything more useful than to have powerful friends who defend our cause before God? Is there any obligation more important than that of enriching ourselves with merits? Well, these riches which may be called base can be changed, through Christian charity, into riches of justice and predestination. My sermon will be taken almost entirely from Chrysostom, who says that this is a subject which the minister of the Gospel cannot omit without failing in his duty.

To judge by appearances you might think that almsdeeds have as their main end the succour of the poor, since he is the one who seems to be in most need; but by the time I have finished you will see that there are so many advantages in almsdeeds that we may well say the poor exist for the salvation of the rich. The precept of almsgiving is little known, its efficacy generally badly understood; for which reason the precept is neglected and full advantage is not taken of almsdeeds.

In giving this precept the Lord provided for the poor, and in giving to almsdeeds the power they possess, he helped the rich.

2. *Alms; in benefit of the poor:*

(a) Three evils from which the poor suffer:

- i. *inequality in goods* which distinguishes them from the rich in such a way that some live in luxury and others have nothing;
- ii. derived necessarily from this lack of equality, *the need of the poor*, who suffer everything, while the rich enjoy life;
- iii. *the state of dependence of poor* on rich and the insults which they usually receive. Alms remedies these three evils and is a benefit to the rich.

(b) The unequal distribution of goods:

Do you know the cause of it? God created nature to serve all men with the means of life. It would seem natural then that such should take from it what he needs. But the inner corruption of the human heart did not permit this community of goods to last for long; avarice and ambition produced wars and division. No one would have wanted to give himself up to hard work or humiliating tasks; no one would have wished to obey and the world would have been in chaos. From this came the division of goods and the inequality, the existence of the poor and the social order in which some are subordinated to others. It was unfortunate for the poor, but, O Lord, your providence is so loving, even when it appears rigorous and severe, that you know how to grant, through your paternal care, that which your adorable wisdom seems to deny.

So it is, in effect: What does God do for the poor? He establishes the precept of almsdeeds. He said to the rich through the medium of St Paul: Divide your goods with your brethren, because, since they are your brothers, then you must provide for them as I command you. I do not wish that you should become poor that they may be rich; but that you should measure things out in such a way among yourselves that there may exist a certain equality (2 Cor. 8. 13-14).

(c) Abundance to the aid of necessity:

So that he that has not should enjoy what is necessary you should spend on him what is superfluous to you, so that one fills up what is wanting to the other. Thus all will be equal; the rich, although rich, will not enjoy that sumptuous life which is as harmful to him as it is to the poor; nor the poor, although poor, perish in sad abandonment. . . .

God the Father has other sons also, and if for good reasons he has not given them the favours he has poured out on you, still, he has not abandoned them. If you are the firstborn, you are no more than the deposit for a treasure which you have to share. . . . Therefore Chrysostom says that the rich man, on giving alms, should not boast of his liberality, because that alms is a debt which he is paying, the tithe of the poor, which he dare not deny unless

he wishes to be unjust. It is true that he honours God with his alms, but as a vassal who recognizes the dominion of his king and pays him due obedience. . . . The rich man is an administrator, and if God is the Lord, the servant must be faithful. He governs and directs, but it is the Lord who has given him his office, who has placed him over his other servants.

(d) The need of the poor:

One misfortune brings with it another, and from the lack of equality in the distribution of goods comes the need of the poor. Does not this appear to be a just motive for criticism of the providence of God? Dear God, I know that you owe nothing to any man, but you are still their Father. Yes, but if our poor should perish from want it is not God we should blame, but those whom he has placed in certain offices so that they may look after the poor, and on whom he laid the grave obligation of charity. He who understands the force and extent of this precept will rather be inclined to sing the praises and the mercies of the Lord.

There are so few who meditate on this precept that I wish to point out to you that God, jealous of the good of the poor, did not merely hint and advise the rich to succour them, but imposed a strict obligation. With the purpose of giving more force to his law he transferred to the poor the rights of God himself over the goods of the rich. He chooses the poor, if I may dare to say so, as his treasurers and gives them the task of collecting the contributions which God has a perfect right to exact and which the rich are bound in duty to pay.

It still did not seem to him to be enough, so he added a threat, the most terrible threat of all, because he announced to the rich that in this matter they risk their souls, their condemnation or salvation, and that he who has not used mercy in this life cannot hope for it in eternity.

He will be the avenger of the poor, the widow and the orphan, and he will need no other condemnation or accusation in order to damn the rich and punish them than this, that they did not look after the poor. Even this seems to him not enough, and so, to avoid all false interpretations which might serve as excuses for the miserly, he does not limit in any way at all this precept of alms to any particular or extreme need, but he extends it to all the common needs.

It is a rigid precept, my brethren, to which you will have to answer on the day of judgement, that day when those pleading voices you have not wished to hear now, will sound in your ears. What will you answer Christ when he says to you face to face: I wanted these clothed; you would not do it. I wanted them fed, but you did not give them bread. I wished that these men, weighed down with debts, should be encouraged and consoled, and you have not deigned to speak to them or hold out a hand to them. . . . Is it

thus that you obey my laws? Have I treated you like that? Since I have been so liberal with you, was it not fitting that you should have compassion on your fellow-servant? Depart from me, ye cursed!

(e) The insults to which the poor are subject:

The injustice of the world does not esteem men in any other way except by their external brilliance, and since the rich of this world shine out, they receive the honours and tend to despise the poor. One would not think they were even men like them. An alms given through others, because the presence of the poor repels them! And you, O Saviour of men, were born poor, dressed in a poor fashion, died poor, and here you see your Christian despising a poverty which you have consecrated.

But I do not need to have recourse to the example of God made man; his law is enough for me. Our affections should be regulated by those of God and if the poor are so beloved by him that he has made the salvation of the rich depend on them, even to the extent of rewarding with the eternal kingdom a glass of water given to them, then what an obligation we have of loving them and esteeming them! The worldly man, in his pride, may be ashamed of treating with them; but the Son of God is not ashamed, and when he recommends them to our care he calls them his brothers and recognizes them as members of his mystical body. . . . He is not ashamed to see himself pictured in them as in a living image. He is not ashamed to cry out before the whole world and say: I was hungry, I was thirsty, I had no dwelling place. When, Lord? When these poor, who are my representatives, were hungry and thirsty.

After this it is not to be wondered at that the Gospel speaks with such veneration of the poor; it does not surprise me that Chrysostom should say that we should hear their voice as if it were the voice of God, and that we should love their hands in one way more than the altar. On the altar Christ is sacrificed; through the hands of the poor he is succoured. . . . Poor of the earth, see your dignity. And you, rich, learn the dignity of the poor. Learn today, because if you do not, then you will have to learn on that day when you find yourselves on the left hand and see them on the right, near the throne of their brother, Christ.

3. Almsdeeds, in benefit of the rich:

(a) Three motives for humility in the rich:

- i. the opposition between their state and that of Christ;
- ii. the kind of necessity of sin in which the rich find themselves through the wealth of temptations open to them and the inclinations which money gives them;
- iii. the moral impossibility of salvation in such a state. Such a state should humble them if they give it thought.

(b) Alms—a consolation for them in this sad state:

Nevertheless, the goodness of God has given the rich man a consolation and help in the misfortune of his state precisely through the use of his riches in Christian charity. Through them they cannot merely diminish, but correct entirely the inequality between their condition and that of Christ. This is evident from the very moment when they decide to divide their goods with Christ, making him their administrator. This is the wonderful secret and trick of the merciful rich, who know how to turn Christ from a terrible judge into a co-administrator of their goods. Christ is too faithful to denounce and condemn riches which have given him his subsistence and which have contributed to feed those who represent him in this world. He has promised us that, and he will do it; the riches which have become his possessions have become blessings instead of a curse.

(c) A remedy against sin, expressed in the Scriptures:

Alms constitute a sure and the best remedy against sin, especially those sins which the rich are liable to commit. Is it not altogether surprising to see the vigour with which the Scriptures express this truth when they speak of the power of almsdeeds to wipe away sin? Never has there been anything stronger, not even when they talk of the power of the sacraments or even of the blood of the Redeemer, which is their source; nor do we find anything so decisive said about baptism as the expression used in St Luke about alms: You should give alms out of the store you have, and at once all that is yours become clean (Luke 11. 41). And this was said of the Pharisees!

It is not an authority to commit sin; no; it is merely that almsdeeds open the treasury of God's graces, God moves us to repentance and finally, thanks to it, takes us to heaven.

(d) Providence also looks after the rich who are merciful:

This providence is shown in three ways:

- i. The fact that providence has invented this easy means which is in accordance with the condition of the individual and his weakness; having made of his abundance something which hurts him. His avarice is turned against itself. To each class of men God gives special sources of pardon. The poor pay for their sins through their sufferings; the rich with their charity. Is not this latter easier? The rich should see that it is a privilege which God has granted to them and use it. There can be no excuse, because giving alms is so easy, no matter what our love for wealth may be.

St Ambrose says that it is a most easy way for the rich to expiate their faults. Once, he says, our Lord cured a man by saying to him, Stretch forth thy hand. I would say the same to you; Stretch forth your hand and you shall be cured.

ii. The riches which have been the instruments of their sins are now made instruments of penance. You sold yourselves for money? Then redeem yourselves through it.

iii. The poor man has been made mediator between the rich man and God. This is a great mercy and we should not hesitate to take advantage of it. It is, moreover, simple and safe, because there is no need to look too closely at the poor man himself, nor his innocence. He will plead for you without knowing it, without any word or deed, even without wishing to do so. Why? The reason is simple, because, according to the Scripture, it is not the poor man but the alms he gives to the poor which intercedes for the rich man. The good deed treasured in poor men's hearts shall ransom thee from all harm (Ecclus. 29. 15).

(e) Alms for salvation:

If the rich can have any security at all in the matter of their eternal salvation it depends on their alms. Of how many rich could it be said, as it was of Tobias, that their alms have gone up to the throne of God and have obtained for them pardon after a life which did not seem to merit it? Give and it shall be given unto you; give alms and you will be given grace.

We must not deceive ourselves here; we shall not be saved through our alms unless these are up to the necessary standard. If a rich man has no sins for which to satisfy God, he should still give to the poor what is superfluous to him of his goods, as has already been said, because they are not really his but the patrimony of the poor. Think then, what will be the state of the rich man who has sins for which to satisfy. I think that he should also give something of that which is necessary to maintain his state of life, and in this I base myself on the Fathers of the Church, who often obliged such rich men to dress more modestly, to live with less luxury, giving up some of their ease and comfort in the form of alms to pay their debt to God. It is right and just that it should cost him more to reach salvation who owes more and it is absurd that, in the bosom of Christianity, it should often be the most holy and saintly who give most abundantly. Make use, brethren, of the talent given to you, because later you will be asked to account for it.

SECTION VI. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

God, our Father

1. *We can call God our Father:*

- (a) because he created us (Deut. 32. 6);
- (b) because he governs and rules us in a special way, not as the rest of creation.

2. *But we have a special reason, given to us in the epistle of today:*

(a) The spirit you have now received is not, as of old, a spirit of slavery to govern you by fear; it is the spirit of adoption, which makes us cry out, Abba, Father (Rom. 8. 15).

(b) The Spirit himself thus assures our spirit that we are children of God (Rom. 8. 16).

3. In the Sermon on the Mount and also at the Last Supper Christ proclaims the Fatherhood of God.

Eternal love

1. One of the most useful consequences of this doctrine is the eternal love of God as our Father.

(a) The love of all parents in the world is a small thing compared with this;

(b) the grace of divine sonship makes us so beautiful in God's sight, so pure and great, that it is almost as though, in looking at us, God were contemplating himself, and therefore he embraces us with the love with which he embraces himself.

2. *This love is eternal:*

(a) He loved us before the world was made, so that we might be holy and pure in his sight (Eph. 1. 4);

(b) he loved us with a love of predilection, choosing us, caring for us in a special way.

All is yours

1. We can see how this love works if we remember that, because of it, we have received all things from God:

(a) the immense benefit of creation and conservation;

(b) the goods we possess, personally or by contemplation of them, natural and supernatural.

2. The whole world speaks to us of this love and every creature is a bond of love between God and us.

The attitude of the Christian to God the Father of men

1. *Honour thy Father:*

(a) We have a debt of love in response to his and of gratitude for all he has given us in his mercy;

(b) St Thomas says that this love debt has to be paid in terms of honour, imitation, obedience and patience in time of trial;

(c) honour, which has to be paid in several ways:

i. in terms of praise;

ii. in purity of body;

iii. in charity in our judgements of others.

2. *Imitation of the Father:*

(a) This consists first of all in love:

As God's favoured children you must be like him. Order your lives in charity, upon the model of that charity which Christ shewed to us, when he gave himself up on our behalf . . . (Eph. 5. 2).

(b) in mercy:

Love should go hand in hand with mercy towards others, manifested in deeds.

(c) In the perfection of both love and mercy:

Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5. 48).

3. *Obedience:*

(a) The first fruits of love;

(b) we are bound to it by three titles:

i. he is the Lord;

ii. the example of Christ;

iii. the advantages it brings us.

4. *Patience in time of trial:*

(a) showing that we love him by submitting ourselves to those trials which he allows to happen to us:

(b) all comes from him—from a Father who loves us. If we have confidence we shall submit.

5. *Praise, reverence and serve him:*

(a) Reverence means knowing the perfections of a person and praising them, proclaiming them to the world.

(b) It implies an interior and exterior subjection to that person, a true cult, with adoration, sacrifice and immolation.

(c) Service implies doing the will of another; we must be dedicated to the divine will.

6. *Through love:*

(a) This must be the keynote of our lives where God is concerned. We must do everything from the motive of love as far as we can.

(b) Thus his commands would prove a light burden indeed, because everything done from love is as nothing, sacrifice of self being the essential of love.

(c) Love sweetens sacrifice, leads to great acts of heroic virtue.

7. If we have not received the treatment of slaves, then let us act like that. In our example and teaching let us urge the love of God our Father.

8. Love must be proved in works rather than in words. The whole of a true Christian life should be no more than the love of a son for his Father.

II. THE EPISTLE

A: The Holy Spirit and the sons of God

Divine adoption and divine life

1. We are accustomed to say and to hear that God dwells in us as in a temple: Do you not understand that you are God's temple, and that God's Spirit has his dwelling in you? (1 Cor. 3. 16).

(a) But we must be careful not to imagine this as an inert presence, something like the local relationship between the tabernacle and the Eucharist which it contains.

(b) Today's epistle has many enlightening expressions in it, such as: the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8. 13), follow the leading of God's Spirit (v. 14), and the fact that it is the Spirit who makes us call God our Father (v. 15) and assures our spirit that we are the sons of God (v. 16).

(c) We shall try to explain this latter point, intimately related with the others, i.e. we shall try to show how the Spirit of God assures us and makes us feel our adoption as sons of God.

(d) There is nothing surprising in this fact, because the Lord has given us the Holy Spirit to teach us and to complete his work within us.

2. *The indwelling of the divine Persons:*

(a) It is important to realize that divine adoption and divine life are identical in reality:

i. If the second expression predominates in St John it is also to be found in St Paul.

ii. Divine generation has as its term a divine life: I have come so that they may have life, and have it more abundantly (John 10. 10); And yet I am alive; or rather, not I; it is Christ that lives in me (Gal. 2. 20).

iii. Divine adoption differs from human adoption precisely in this, that it does not merely give us a juridical title, but grants us the divine life.

(b) This divine life is produced in us by the indwelling of the three divine Persons in the soul:

i. The Trinity within us brings us forth in a new birth to a divine life by communicating to us grace, the vital principle of this life, which makes our life like that of the indwelling Trinity;

ii. this is not done by one single creative act, but by a continual presence which is the source from which the living water of grace flows in a constant stream;

iii. we are in a continued state of re-birth at every moment, just as we are conserved in being by a continued motion of creation, not by one single act which passes;

iv. this is what is meant by living by Christ (1 John 4. 9) and Christ living in us (Gal. 2. 20).

The movement of the Spirit

1. Life is an active thing; not merely does it manifest itself, but it is also defined by movement.

(a) The life of the soul consists in the fact that the acts of our intellect and will (faith, hope and charity) are divine acts;

(b) the exercise of our life then, and also of our adoption, means a use of these three supernatural virtues. Faith in our adoption; hope of our inheritance and love.

2. But who is the prime mover in these actions? St Paul answers: Those who follow the leading of God's Spirit are all God's sons (Rom. 8. 14).

(a) It is the Holy Spirit who moves us in these first acts of the supernatural life, and living in and with him, we mortify the flesh and are really alive (v. 13).

(b) This movement is completed and perfected by the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which make us attentive and apt instruments to receive these motions of the Spirit.

3. Therefore the first act of the Spirit within us is to make us have faith in and live our adoption as God's sons. Through it we long for God and call him our Father.

B: Filial fear

The spirit of adoption and fear

1. St Paul, in this epistle of today's Mass, contrasts the spirit of adoption and that of slavery, and since he says that fear is proper to the latter, he seems to exclude it from the baptized who have received the spirit of adoption.

2. Truly, there is an opposition between sonship and slavery; but not between servile fear and sonship; because the sons of God can still have this fear.

3. But there is another kind of fear which is proper to the sons of God, and it is of that fear we shall treat here.

(a) It is filial fear which springs from charity and is included in it;

(b) a fear which comes from love and affection with which a son loves his father.

Filial fear

1. *Its essence—union with God through the fear of guilt:*

(a) When one is converted to God through fear of guilt we have filial fear, because it is proper to sons to fear offending their father (St Thomas, 2-2. q. 19. a. 2. c).

(b) When we are afraid of offending God, not to avoid the punishments of hell or the loss of glory, but only because, since God is our Father, supremely good, we owe him honour, respect and obedience, then our fear is filial. A son who is well brought up does not obey his father because of the power the latter has to chastise his disobedience, nor because he can disinherit him, but simply because he is his father (St Francis de Sales, *Love of God*, I. II, c. 18).

2. *Filial fear is united intimately with charity—love for the Father:*

(a) It is necessary that filial fear should increase together with charity, just as an effect increases with its cause; the more we love someone, the more we fear to offend him and separate ourselves from him (2. 2. q. 19. a. 10. c).

(b) Nor is this fear contrary to hope; because by it we do not fear that the helps we need may be lacking (*ibid.* a. 9. *ad 1um a 10. ad 2um*).

(c) As hope increases, so filial fear increases too, because the more we hope to obtain something through the help of another, so much the more do we fear to offend that person and be separated from him.

Filial fear and initial fear

1. St Thomas calls initial fear that which is a mixture of filial and servile fear, and says that it is proper to beginners in the spiritual life.

2. That is, when there is a mixture of fear of condemnation, of the loss of glory and of offending God, our Father, we have initial fear, pleasing to God, but imperfect.

Filial fear and chaste fear

1. They belong to the same type of fear, but are distinct as the less perfect is distinct from the more perfect.

Chaste fear has its origin in perfect love—by it the soul is afraid of not loving God as perfectly or as much as love demands; it is a fear of not being sufficiently united with God. It is the fear of the great saints.

2. *In summary we can say:*

(a) Initial fear comes from a love which is imperfect, weak as yet, that of beginners, and takes with it some admixture of servile fear;

(b) filial fear is the fruit of a love which is firm, solid, safe and aspiring to perfection;

(c) chaste fear comes from perfect love.

The need for filial fear

1. *So as to avoid mortal sin:*

Even in the higher states of the spiritual life (Seventh Castle) St Teresa says that one can fall into many imperfections and venial sins, so that fear is necessary to avoid them.

2. *So as not to lose the perfection already acquired:*

(a) The whole of chapter one of the Third Castle is devoted to an exhortation not to abandon fear because, as the Saint says, in this life we can never be quite sure of not turning back and leaving the right path.

(b) Nor must you set store by the fact that you are cloistered and lead lives of penance. Nor must you become confident because you are always talking about God, continually engaged in prayer, withdrawing yourselves completely from the things of this world and (to the best of your belief) abhorring them. All that is good, but, as I have said, it is not enough to justify us in laying aside our fears. So you must repeat this verse and often bear it in mind: *Beatus vir que timet Dominum* (Interior Castle, iii. 1).

3. *So as not to admit the false peace of the world.*

The gift of fear

Not servile nor mercenary fear is the object of this gift, but filial and chaste fear.

(a) The gifts all perfect our faculties, making them receptive of the motions of the Holy Spirit.

(b) In order that someone may be subject to such a motion the first thing necessary is a willingness to submit to being moved in this way:

(c) that is the effect of filial or chaste fear, through it we fear God and refuse to separate ourselves from him (2. 2. q. 19. a. 9. c).

The spirit of sons

1. *How great is our dignity:*

(a) Being baptized, we can call God our Father;

(b) we can have blind and unlimited confidence in him; rest in his arms in love;

(c) the Holy Spirit moves us to greater love every day.

2. *But we must not forget fear; rather we should cultivate it and beg for it:*

(a) It is a good sign when love and fear go hand in hand in the soul.

(b) In our prayers we should remember the collect for the Second Sunday after Pentecost: Give us, O Lord, a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name.

C: False fear

Introduction

1. In today's epistle it would seem that fear is excluded from those who have been baptized (Rom. 8. 15).

2. There is a salutary fear, however, which leads to repentance and follows it up; one which is constantly put before us by the Scriptures, in which we are told that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 110. 10; 33. 12).

3. Is there a contradiction between this doctrine and that of the apostle? What part does fear play in the spiritual life?

Kinds of fear

1. *St Thomas indicates the following:*

(a) **Human or worldly fear**, by which man separates himself from God because of some bad thing of which he is afraid;

(b) **servile fear**, by which one adheres to God for fear of punishment;

(c) **filial fear**; by which one adheres to God for fear of the guilt of sin;

(d) **initial fear**, a mixture of servile and filial fear.

A false and sinful fear

1. From the above it is obvious that there is one fear which separates us from God and others which turn us towards him; the latter therefore are good (more or less, according to their kind) and the other is evil.

2. *Worldly or human fear is always evil:*

(a) It supposes human or worldly love, by which one adheres to material things, such as riches, honours, good name, ease and comfort, etc., the loss of which brings on human fear.

(b) The mere fear of losing such things is human, a natural thing to which Christ was subject in the Garden.

(c) The evil comes in when, because of the fear of losing such things a man turns away from God and commits sin.

(d) This did not happen in the case of Christ, who submitted to the Father's will; but it happens sometimes in the lives of Christians, who in spite of having the spirit of Christ, allow themselves to be dominated by the appetites of the flesh.

The effects of human fear

1. The feeling of such fear is not a sin; but we have to fight against it so as to prevent its evil effects.

2. Nearly always it produces a kind of spiritual paralysis, disquiet, worry.
3. As the cause of the fear increases so the will becomes weaker and the fear stronger.
4. It even produces excitation in the senses and imagination.
5. This leads to weakness and hesitation in the spiritual life.
6. The fear of the hard work involved in the struggle for perfection causes a lack of effort on the part of many, laziness in spiritual duties, refusal of divine grace and sacrifices which it may demand of us.

Fight against it

1. It leads to mediocrity in the spiritual life, which in its turn leads to venial sin and then to mortal.
 - (a) The Christian should fear only two things, God and sin.
 - (b) The loss of temporal goods must be accepted, no matter what they may be, even as a blessing in disguise from God (Phil. 1. 22).
2. The supernatural remedy is to be found in prayer and confidence in God.
 - (a) Both of these should be especially cultivated when the soul is beaten down to the ground or discouraged;
 - (b) Christ in the Garden is a living example of how to deal with such fears.
3. Finally, the Christian must feel himself in the possession of the spirit of Christ:
 - (a) With him there is nothing to fear;
 - (b) he lives in us and with us; he is our life; in him we have the key to strength and generosity.

D: Servile fear

Slavery and servile fear

1. In the epistle St Paul warns us against the spirit of slavery, not against servile fear, which is quite a different thing.
2. It is against the spirit of slavery to act through love; fear and fear alone is the motive of the slave. This is a spiritual evil and must be avoided.
3. This is not servile fear, which is a fear of God's punishments and is compatible with a true Christian life—the fear St Paul mentions when he says that we must work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2. 12).

The object of servile fear

Punishment:

- There are two kinds of punishment which are to be feared.
- (a) One is the whole collection of punishments, misfortunes, trials which God may send us or allow while we are on this earth.
 - (b) But there is another which we know of through our faith, and which is the main object of servile fear:
 - i. the eternal punishment of hell by which God punishes mortal sin;
 - ii. this produces good effects in the soul.

Servile fear is salutary and good

- It is not only good for the Christian to feel this fear, it also produces salutary effects in the soul.
- (a) It lifts us up to justification according to Trent;
 - (b) it is imperfect certainly, because it has a base in self-love, since it is caused by the fear of punishment in detriment to our own good;
 - (c) but it is the beginning of love, because it introduces charity into the soul as a needle passes thread through cloth;
 - (d) it is the beginning of wisdom because it prepares the way for it by withdrawing us first from sin.

Servile fear and the grace of God

1. Even in a state of grace it is necessary to conserve servile fear, so that, should the motive of love grow weak or disappear, fear may take its place.
2. This is St Ignatius's idea in the meditation on hell, that at least the fear of God's punishments may free me from mortal sin.
3. It is the idea of St Francis de Sales, following the example of the needle and thread:
 - (a) We don't leave the needle in the work once it is finished, but often, while the design is still being worked, the needle is left in so that it is more easily found when needed. So fear must remain until love is perfect.
 - (b) Since in this life our love is never so perfect that we cannot fear to lose God, fear is always necessary as a motive, together with love.

Educate in fear

1. *This applies to parents and teachers.*
2. *It also applies to preachers:*
 - (a) While we should not insist exclusively on the motives for fear or use exaggerated and false images to teach them;

(b) still, we must not neglect them altogether. The eternal truths are necessary for all, even those on the way of perfection.

III. THE GOSPEL

A: Riches and almsdeeds

The parable

1. *Almsgiving is one of the greatest of our Christian obligations:*
 - (a) In the early Church there was no need to preach it, because its practice sprang almost spontaneously from the doctrine of Christ;
 - (b) there is need today.
2. The parable of today's Gospel gives us a chance to explain this duty and also to show how riches should be used as a means to gain heaven.
3. Following the parable let us see the errors of the rich and what is the value of almsdeeds.

The error of the rich

1. *A triple one:*
They do not know what it means to be really rich; they err in their idea of ownership of goods; they do not know how to use them properly.
2. *Wrong idea of riches:*
 - (a) The true owner is God and his riches consist in two things:
 - i. he himself has no need of anyone;
 - ii. he pours out his riches upon others.
 - (b) The rich should imitate this model, but they do not do so:
 - i. stupidly they think of themselves as the centre of the universe, seeking only their own happiness, and thus they are truly poor;
 - ii. they increase in their desire for wealth to such an extent that they are never satisfied or happy; he who has not acquired enough is poor indeed.
3. *False idea of ownership:*
 - (a) They are administrators, not owners—the only Lord is God, who can remove them from their office by taking away their goods (cf. sermon of Bourdaloue for this scheme).
 - (b) They are foolish, because they forget that they will have to give a strict account of their administration to God—not to men. By increasing their wealth they are liable to increase merely the account they have to render to divine justice.

4. *Error in the use of riches:*

- (a) They dissipate their goods in vain things, pleasures, luxuries, while others go hungry.
- (b) They should remember:
 - i. that we are all pilgrims here below, we should live in tents rather than in dwellings, for here we have no permanent home;
 - ii. therefore why these luxuries, which could so easily be avoided?
 - iii. the traveller takes what is necessary for the journey, and even then it is a weight on him to have so much luggage;
 - iv. naked we came into this world, naked we must leave it.

The account of the rich man

1. We do not know who accused the unjust steward, but we do know who will accuse the unfaithful rich man:
 - (a) the poor, whom he has robbed of his alms and means of life. One of your meals, they could say, would have lasted me for a week;
 - (b) Christ, whom the poor represent;
 - (c) those who took scandal and were lost because they saw how badly Christians acted towards the poor. If Christians are so evil how can God be good?
2. *Death: you can be steward no longer:*
 - (a) A narrow tomb for one who was never satisfied with anything;
 - (b) his riches all left behind, because he must go empty-handed on that journey. How different he will feel about them then, when it is too late.
3. *The judgement: give an account of thy stewardship:*
 - (a) Your goods have gone to your heirs, but your soul will stand before God to be judged.
 - (b) The judge is the poor man you have defrauded of his alms.
 - (c) What excuse can you give or how can you defend your luxurious living in the face of a God who lived and died in poverty?
 - (d) What excuse can you give to a God who poured out riches upon you under certain conditions which you have not fulfilled?
4. *Hell:*
The rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16. 22), what a change in their rôles after death.

The rich and almsdeeds

1. *The point of comparison:*
Here is the way in which the astute steward managed to use wealth to provide a place for himself after he was dismissed.
 - (a) The rich can also assure their salvation by means of almsdeeds, and also pay God back for their sins;

- (b) indeed we may go further and say that they have an easy way to hand to do all this in almsdeeds;
 (c) they have an obligation to do it in any case.

2. *The reason:*

- (a) We are all sinners; therefore we all need to expiate our sins.
 (b) The main works of satisfaction mentioned in the Scriptures are:
 i. fasting;
 ii. prayer;
 iii. almsdeeds.

(c) **By fasting we mean all the works of mortification:**
 By his very nature the rich man is not liable to do much mortification—in the phrase of the unjust steward, he is not able to dig; his remedy? Almsdeeds; as Daniel told Nabuchodonosor.

(d) **Prayer:**

The rich man seldom has much time for it, neither is his spirit exactly adapted to it; he is ashamed to beg!

(e) **Almsdeeds constitute a prayer.**

(f) **It merits for us the grace to pray well:**

(The whole of this scheme has been simplified because it is all in the sermon of Bourdaloue, which has been quoted nearly whole and entire, pp. 491-496 above.)

B: Poverty

The parable

1. The unjust steward did not fear his Lord's anger, does not repent for his injustice; he is afraid only of one thing, poverty:

- (a) hard work which will break his back and earn him his living by the sweat of his brow: he is not able to dig, he says;
 (b) the clothes of poverty, the extending of his hands to beg alms—he is ashamed of that.

2. *Poverty feared:*

- (a) It is one of the things man fears most.
 (b) It is natural to be afraid of it, because it implies the lack of those things necessary for life.
 (c) We are not talking now about the extremes of poverty which, except in miraculous cases, finish a man to such an extent that he cannot even turn his eyes to heaven.
 i. We refer to that poverty which consists in obtaining only what is just necessary for life itself, by means of hard work. This oftens means a lack of things which most people consider necessary, and which in cases such as illness, may be necessary.

ii. We do not mean to indicate that God wants the poor man to be satisfied with his lot or that he must or should remain poor. We are not even saying that it is just that he should be poor.

iii. What we do intend to show is the benefits of poverty, as a consolation to all those who find themselves in such a state.

God's love

1. At court there is envy for the one who has the ear of the king and his confidence; the poor have God's ear and his confidence. He has said so in many places in the Scriptures, calling the poor 'his', saying that he will always listen to them and that he will protect them by his own divine methods (cf. Ps. 71. 12; 11. 6).

2. But the best way to see how much he loves the poor is to see him made man.

(a) He waited thirty years, labouring, before preaching his doctrine to the world. He did not wait to become poor—he was poor at birth and so he remained all his life

(b) Even though the prophets demanded that his mother should be of royal blood, he still seeks that condition in a village girl.

(c) If angels must announce his coming they shall do so to shepherds, the most despised among the Jews.

(d) When he begins his public life it is to preach the Gospel to the poor (Luke 4. 18).

(e) When in the Sermon on the Mount he announces who they are who shall have the first seats in the Kingdom he begins by saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit. . . .

(f) He died poor—stripped of all he possessed; he was even buried in a tomb which did not belong to him.

The privileges of the poor

1. It sounds strange to use the word, perhaps, but it is true, so far as God is concerned.

2. In one of his sermons Bossuet shows that the Church was founded for the poor and that the rich are allowed into it out of consideration for the poor, so that they can help them.

3. The rich exist to administer the goods of the poor, so that the latter are their masters in fact.

4. The poor man has the great privilege of representing Christ to the world:

(a) Would you like to have seen Christ while alive? Here he is, in the poor.

(b) In the scene of the last judgement Christ affirms solemnly that what is done to the the poor is done directly to him.

The consolations of the poor

1. *A great help to sanctity:*

(a) Poverty (especially true poverty of spirit) follows logically from the gift of fear; if we fear separation from God then we shall never allow ourselves to become too preoccupied with material things, nor shall we consider anything really ours; all comes from him.

(b) These are less dangers or occasions of sin in the poor than in the rich.

(c) Poverty leads us to confide in God for help, to greater spirit of prayer, etc.

2. *Poverty an imitation of Christ:*

(a) Poverty makes a man more like Christ every day;

(b) unattended in sickness, he is crucified with Christ;

(c) hungry and in need, he is like Christ in his thirst, when they gave him nothing but rough wine on a sponge;

(d) if he is cold, he is like the naked Christ on the Cross;

(e) if these things are borne with patient resignation and in the likeness of Christ, then those who live like this will have a higher place in heaven than others.

C: The priest—God's administrator

Graces

1. Some are given for our own sanctification; others are given for the benefit of other people—such is the grace of the priestly administration.

2. *We are God's administrators in relation to all the graces we receive:*

(a) They come from God and we shall have to render an account to him for them.

(b) However, it would appear that this aspect of our administration is seen and appreciated better in the case of those graces given to the priest for others. Of these he must give a most strict account.

The first beneficiary

1. Without doubt, this is the priest himself, not in so far as these graces sanctify him as sanctifying grace does, but because of the preparation needed before he can receive them.

2. He is separated from the world and dedicated to God:

(a) He has consecrated his life to the most perfect form of the evangelical counsels.

(b) An exquisite preparation is demanded of him, not ordinary goodness, but outstanding virtue.

3. Therefore, since this preparation is necessary, God will pour out his graces on the candidates for the priesthood, so that they may prepare themselves in a worthy fashion for such a task.

(a) The sacrament of the priesthood means greater sanctifying grace;

(b) right administration of the graces given him for others means greater merits for the priest himself;

(c) in the Mass—his greatest act—there is a special fruit which he alone can receive.

4. God will give a special reward to those who have thus dedicated themselves to the application (or administration) of his merits, won on the cross.

Greater dignity

1. *As God's administrator:*

The goods of Christ are his doctrine and his merits.

2. *Both of these have been confided to the priest:*(a) *His doctrine:*

Because being his friends, as he says himself, he has revealed to them all that his Father told him (John 15. 15).

(b) *His merits—in the sacraments:*

As the Father sent Christ, so Christ sends out his priests (John 17. 18).

The great responsibility

1. This corresponds to the excellence of the mission.

2. It lies in the fact that all the merits—goods—of Christ are in the hands of the priest:

(a) the things that cost Christ most;

(b) the most valuable things,

(c) destined for the salvation of souls.

3. By the ordinary laws of providence the fruit of his redemption is intimately linked with the better or worse administration of the priest.

4. There is also a correspondingly great reward for such work.

5. They will receive the reward of other Christs—if they are faithful administrators.

D: Prudence

Introduction

1. Christ advises us to follow the example of the unjust steward, not in his injustice but in his prudence; not in worldly prudence, but in spiritual.

2. *We are all administrators:*

- (a) Of ourselves always, we have to gain heaven through our co-operation with God and the right use of the goods God has given us;
 (b) for others too, in those cases in which we have any share in the apostolate.

3. In both cases the virtue of prudence is necessary.

For personal sanctification and government

1. *Prudence, for the avoiding of sin:*

(a) Sin cannot be avoided without a knowledge of its causes and the occasions of sin in order to provide the proper defences against them.

(b) This is the work of prudence.

(c) It acts on the following data:

- i. our past life;
- ii. the present dispositions of the soul, my fortitude, health, state of mind, etc.;
- iii. it indicates the measures which should be adopted in order to prevent sin;
- iv. it shows us the means to be used to overcome those temptations which could not be avoided;
- v. it shows us how to convert them into sources of merit.

2. *Prudence in the practice of virtue:*

(a) Prudence is necessary for this, and for our advance in the spiritual life.

(b) It is the practical reason which directs all the acts of the other moral virtues, since it finds the just mean between excess and defect. It has been called by the ancients the 'driver of the virtues', because it holds the reins in every case.

(c) It is also necessary where the theological virtues are concerned, insofar as they should be practised at the right time and with means appropriate to the varied state of the circumstances.

(d) Especially when there is a question of conciliating in one and the same person virtues which appear to be opposed, justice and goodness for example, meekness and fortitude, austerity and care of one's health.

For the apostolate

1. Prudence is the virtue most needed in those who govern, especially those who have to look after souls.

2. It has before its eyes the end of the whole apostolate and the means necessary to secure that end. How these means must be applied in order to secure the salvation and sanctification of souls.

3. *It shows us:*

(a) how to preach the word of God in the right way so as to lead to this end;

(b) in the confessional it is of prime importance in the functions the priest has to fulfil there as judge, doctor, father, etc.;

(c) in the administration of all the sacraments;

(d) in temporal administration;

(e) in the social formation of Catholics.

This is one of the most important points in which prudence is a prime necessity, to make sure that the priest does not mix in politics while at the same time he teaches the doctrine of the Church with regard to such things as social justice.

E: The prudent man

Prudence

In today's parable the Lord puts before us, for our imitation, the prudence of the unjust steward. What we have to do is sanctify his actions and apply them to our own salvation. We are not to imitate his vice but his ability.

Need for prudence

1. If thy desire be for honest living, man's excellences are the fruit she labours to produce; temperance and prudence she teaches, justice and fortitude, and what in life avails man more? (Wis. 8. 7.)

(a) If the Holy Spirit places these cardinal virtues among those most necessary for man, what doubt can we have about the position of prudence, which regulates the others?

(b) To live well we must act well; and to act well it is important not merely to consider what is done, but the way in which it is done, i.e. whether a thing is done with due use of reason or through the impulse of passion.

(c) Since the choice we have has two reactions, so to speak, the end and the means to attain that end, both of these need to be taken into consideration before any act can be said to be good.

(d) Therefore man needs an intellectual virtue which will orientate him both as to the choice of end and also the choice of means to that end. This habit is prudence.

2. Therefore prudence consists in the right choice of means which are convenient to attain our end. It will be so much the more necessary the more essential is the end to be attained.

Prudence in the parable

1. *The choice of the end:*

(a) The parable compares two things implicitly; the human purpose of the steward and the eternal end in view, 'everlasting dwellings', to which we are invited.

(b) It is an act of prudence to compare well what is passing with what is eternal, what is limited with what is infinite.

2. *The means:*

Their choice is the very heart of the parable.

(a) The unjust steward takes serious thought as to what he shall do next:

- i. do we worry at all about our eternal salvation?
- ii. or is it the subject to which we give less attention and time?

(b) He knows what he has to attain and what is convenient in the circumstances:

Do we know what our ultimate end is? Do we ever think about it seriously?

(c) He looks for and finds means to attain it:

I see what I must do, he says. We find time for everything else, but when it is a question of our salvation, then we discover nothing but difficulties and put excuses in the way. We have not considered well the importance of our end, our last end; more important than anything else.

(d) He takes his steps at once—quickly:

This attitude is opposed to ours with regard to our salvation—we put everything we can off until tomorrow, which never comes.

(e) The means he employs are those most apt for his purpose:

He seeks by unjust means to gain for himself evil friends, partners in his crime. We should seek the friendship of God, of the poor, the just, the chaste.

(f) The unjust steward knows how to use all the means he has, especially worldly goods, to attain his end:

i. *we also have an end in view.* Earthly goods, riches, senses, honours and the like can be either means to attain it or something opposed to it;

ii. *what shall we do?* In what way shall we convert them?

The principle and the foundation

1. The synthesis of all this is clear; man has been created to honour God and to save his own soul.
2. All other things are useless unless they conduce to this end.
3. We must know and must learn how to use all things for this end. This is the great principle of this parable.

F: Base wealth

To win yourselves friends

1. Here Christ teaches us an easy way and a safe one to reach heaven. The kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor. As Bossuet said in a famous sermon, the Church is a society for the poor.

2. Win over the poor then, says our Lord, so that when you die they may open the gates of heaven to you, welcome you into eternal habitations.

Base wealth

1. To what does this refer?
2. To that wealth acquired by a breach of strict commutative justice? No. That is not yours and restitution is not an act of merit but of obligation.
3. The Lord refers to other riches. What are they?
Almost all riches which are possessed in abundance can in one way or another be called 'base'.

The causes for this

1. *These can be reduced to:*
 - (a) the origin of riches which have been inherited;
 - (b) riches which have been acquired by doubtfully lawful means;
 - (c) riches which have been acquired against the principles of social justice;
 - (d) unjust division of benefits obtained;
 - (e) illicit use of riches in inordinate luxury, etc.;
 - (f) not having practised almsdeeds as we should in the past;
 - (g) having placed our whole desire and heart on the acquiring of riches.
2. Those who offend in any of these ways practise the prudence of the flesh, not that of the spirit.
3. This prudence of the spirit, true prudence in every sense of the word, teaches us, as Christ taught us, to act in quite another way.
 - (a) We must lift up our eyes to our last end and direct our life towards that.
 - (b) We must use those riches, no matter how they have been acquired or what we have thought of them in the past, as a means to gain friends for ourselves in heaven.
 - (c) Give generously to the poor. Hide your riches, as the Fathers put it, in the hearts of the poor, because by that you will give to your wealth an eternal and immense value; you will find them then in heaven.

(d) Let the poor be your bankers; let them come out to meet you when you die and lead you into heaven. Never forget that this is also an obligation; not merely a counsel of perfection.

4. In continuation our Lord told the story of the rich man who lived luxuriously and the beggar, Lazarus. The sin of the rich man was not giving alms to the beggar who sat at his gates. For that sin he was condemned to hell.

5. Think once more about the causes we have listed already, through which riches may be said to be base wealth. Perhaps your wealth is of this kind. If so, the remedy is in your own hands now. Do not put it off till tomorrow.

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

CHRIST WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 10. 6-13 Gospel: Luke 19. 41-47.
Cf. Matt. 21. 12-13; Mark 11. 15-17

Texts concerning penance

1. *The Old Testament*

Well for us that he, at least, is patient; repent we, and with flowing tears ask his pardon! Judith 8. 14.

So it was everywhere; never a province, town or district the cruel edict reached but there was mourning and fasting, wailing and weeping among the Jewish folk, and of sackcloth and ashes many among them made their beds. Esther 4. 3.

Daily wilt thou allot us, for food, for drink, only the full measure of our tears? Ps. 79. 6.

This day the Lord, the God of hosts, summons you to mourn and lament, to shave your heads and wear sackcloth. Isa. 22. 12.

Time now, the Lord says, to turn the whole bent of your hearts back to me, with fasting and with mourners' tears. Joel 2. 12.

2. *The New Testament*

Then came the second cock-crow; and Peter remembered the word Jesus had said to him. Before the second cock-crow thou wilt thrice deny me. And all at once he burst out weeping. Mark 14. 72.

She took her place behind him at his feet, weeping; then she began washing his feet with her tears, and drying them with her hair, kissing his feet. Luke 7. 38.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

We notice in the different parts of today's Mass a marked contrast; on the one hand punishment and fear; on the other the mercy and the goodness of God.

1. *The idea of punishment and fear:*

The liturgy in general does not abound in sentiments of this kind, desire for revenge, punishment, justice. The Lord is kind, patient

and merciful. In this it does no more than present to us the sentiments of Christ. Just as in the Gospels, so in the liturgical formulas one breathes an atmosphere of calm, of pardon and goodness which moves souls to confidence. But just as, in the Gospels, there are two passages which stress the terrible judgements of the Lord, so in the Liturgy we find an echo of them. They are the last judgement and the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. The second is a symbol of the former.

On the twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost the scene is the last judgement; here it is the prediction about Jerusalem. However, the tone is different, because there we are presented with a tragedy, destruction; here the atmosphere is one of lamentation, the tears of Christ as he contemplates the city of the chosen people, soon to be destroyed.

Christ weeps, and his tears are a proof of his compassion and the tenderness of his feelings, because he has no choice but to punish such infidelity and lack of response to his graces. In conformity with this idea is the thought of punishment in the 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. The prophet does not here invoke evil upon his enemies, says Schuster, but as he is symbolically representing Christ, of whom he is one of the most striking prophetic types, he foretells the final verdict which Jesus as Judge will pronounce upon his implacable enemies.

2. *The idea of mercy:*

In contrast with the idea of punishment we have that of mercy. As Schuster says again, The vengeance which God takes on sinners here in this world from time to time is really a manifestation of his mercy towards them, whether because it is intended to break down their obstinacy by moving them to repentance, or because God, by bringing their evil designs to naught, deprives them of the occasion of committing further transgressions, and thus rendering their condemnation still more terrible.

However, where the mercy and goodness of the Lord are most stressed is in the Offertory. The justices of the Lord are right, rejoicing hearts, and his judgements sweeter than honey and the honeycomb: for thy servant keepeth them (Ps. 18).

As a synthesis of the two ideas we have the Secret, which is one of the most beautiful in the whole year: Grant, O Lord, that we may approach the altar of thy mysteries not only with frequency, but also with the right dispositions and not merely from habit. For as often as this sacrifice is renewed, although Christ, at once victim and priest, can die no more, yet he offers to the Father, and pours forth upon us, all the merits of his expiatory suffering and death.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 1 Corinthians 10. 6-13

1. *Occasion:*

In the notes for Septuagesima Sunday we have explained why the two letters to the Corinthians were written and how in them St Paul answers various questions which had been proposed to him, as well as putting down the quarrels which had arisen there almost as soon as he had left the city, between the followers of Paul, those of Apollo and those of Peter.

Two of these questions were concerned with knowing if one could or could not eat food which had been offered to idols and secondly if one could take a part in those sacrificial banquets. To the first of these he replies that, since idols are vain things and of no importance in themselves, it is perfectly lawful to eat of this food, providing care is taken not to give any scandal to the weaker brethren. The second question meets with a round negative, since that would imply idol worship—taking part in an idolatrous rite.

The verses which form today's epistle form part of the beginning of the second reply and the idea of them is to present idolatry as something which is abominable, by setting before the eyes of his readers the punishments inflicted on the Jews of old each time they fell into this sin. He adduces four sins of the Jews, and certainly we must admit that it is difficult to see in the last two anything like idolatry. But it is well known that we must not ask for rigid dialectics from St Paul, even though the foundation is sound.

He then says that these things were done as a figure of the messianic kingdom, an idea which he repeats later in this passage, in verse 11. But on reaching this point he allows himself to be carried away by his ideas and, since he has mentioned temptation, he then goes on to give us a theological discussion on that subject in verses 12-13; and then ends by drawing the lesson.

2. *Texts:*

(a) **It is we that were foreshadowed in these events:**

The incidents from Jewish history which St Paul recalls to mind in verses 1-5 are a type of figure of what is to happen in the messianic kingdom, as also those which he mentions in verses 7-10. This is not a mere historical exposition which St Paul gives. The whole of the Old Testament is intended to teach us many lessons, and as St Paul points out, the main one here is that of not falling into these sins ourselves.

(b) **The people sat down to eat and drink . . .**

The first Pauline warning is based on an incident recorded in Exodus, chap. 32, when we find the Israelites adoring the golden

calf. The feast was almost certainly one of a sacrificial character. St Paul wishes us to learn from this incident to have a horror of the sin of idolatry. He does not mention the punishment which followed, probably because it was all too well known.

The second incident (Num. 25. 1. ff.) refers to the sins which the Israelites committed with the women of Moab and the subsequent idolatry of Baal, for which they were punished by the death of several thousands of them.

(c) We were not to try the patience of Christ . . .

Here he is talking about the complaints the Jews made when they were tired of the Manna (Num. 21. 5-6) and were punished by the plague of serpents.

The murmurings to which verse 10 refers were all too frequent; some of them are described in the book of Numbers 14, and 16. 41 ff. Again several thousands died because of it. St Paul says that these deaths were due to the destroying angel, which does not necessarily mean the intervention of a visible angel; it is the Hebrew way of attributing immediately to God and his angels things that happened through natural causes or ordinary divine providence. The words 'destroying angel' remind us of Exodus 12. 23; and appear again in 2 Kings 24. 16.

(d) . . . in whom history has reached its fulfilment . . .

The fullness of time in the messianic sense, not that the end of the world is near, as some thought at the time.

(e) He who thinks that he stands firmly should beware of a fall . . .

St Paul is thinking of the Corinthians, who were so inclined to be a little superior, confident of their wisdom, their sanctity and their teachers. He warns them of what happened in the Old Law, tells them that such things are a figure of what may happen in the messianic kingdom and then warns them again not to presume too much or they are preparing themselves for a fall.

(f) Not that God will play you false . . .

Neither presumption nor despair, as we shall see in the applications. It is one of the most useful ascetical teachings in St Paul.

3. Applications:

- (a) The fear of collective punishments inflicted for social faults;
- (b) the Pauline recommendation not to allow ourselves to be led away by concupiscence, of which we have spoken on other occasions;
- (c) the principal lesson is that contained in verses 12-13. Man in his life of grace and salvation must avoid two extremes, that of presumption and that of despair. For this it is necessary for him to know his situation and his strength.

Theology teaches us that man, without the help of God's grace, cannot resist all temptations or fulfil all the commandments. What is more, it is the common doctrine that without the divine help he cannot resist the graver types of temptations. Let it be said that here we are not talking about the supernatural order, but simply about falling into sin or not. The reason for this lies in the weakness of our nature, made up as it is of body and spirit, and also because of earthly desires which produce a struggle in the soul which is so constant, that it is morally impossible to come victorious out of it unless we have external help.

From this Christian dogma we see the foolishness of those who say: I know how far I can go; I know to what point I can expose myself to danger; what I can and cannot read, etc. What such a one does not know is how far he will go unless the grace of God sustain him. Even if it be true that God does not deny that help, it is also true that he does not promise to give it in situations in which we ourselves are to blame for exposing ourselves to danger.

A graver sin is that of the man who positively excludes the grace of God and denies its necessity. In actual practice this fault is not infrequent.

The other point to remember is that, no matter how strong tempting may be, they can never go beyond the strength of human nature aided by grace. God is faithful, says St Paul. This divine fidelity implies two things; the first of which, and the only one St Paul recalls here, is the subjection in which he holds the devil, to whom he does not permit attacks greater than our strength can sustain aided by grace. The second is his promise to give us that necessary grace. It is enough to read the innumerable texts of Scripture in which he bids us resist to know that this is true. He would not command it otherwise.

The last lesson we can learn from this is that God will ordain the issue of the temptation, i.e. he will decree the triumph, the advantage, not merely the help to resist. He will give us spiritual gain from these temptations, which is one of the reasons why he permits them according to the Fathers.

B: The Gospel: Luke 19. 41-47

1. Our Lord weeps:

(a) The scene:

The scene is Palm Sunday, half way along the road from Bethany to Jerusalem. The manifestation, as we shall say in the right place, reached the top of Mt Olivet, near Bethphage, when something happened which possibly only those nearest to the Master observed. Before them was the full splendour of the Holy City, with its palaces and buildings standing out clearly; the walls and towers

which surrounded it and, immediately below our Lord, appeared the Temple in all its magnificence. The afternoon sun shone on the golden roofs, gilded to prevent birds from nesting there, while the straight lines of its walls spoke of serenity and sanctity.

It was not the first time Jesus had gazed on this sight nor the first time that he had begun here to recite the pilgrim's psalms, but on this occasion he is overcome with emotion. It was his last visit. The shouts and hosannahs rang through the air; the exultant manifestation of a city that could be of God but would commit the sin of deicide instead. At the thought of all he had done for this city and its fate in the future the Lord wept.

For nearly two years or more Jesus had preached his doctrine among his people, showing them the road to peace and reconciliation with God. The people had heard his teachings and seen many of his miracles, but they still refused to believe in his divine mission and would not learn the need for penance which had been preached to them. If only today at least they would learn, now, in this last hour, if only they would accept Jesus as the Messiah and enter into the kingdom! The last grace is offered to them, the last opportunity to believe; and so much so that Jesus abandons his usual practice and allows them to form this triumphant manifestation, entering into the city amid the acclamations of the people. But the people of Jerusalem see but do not understand, and the real character of Jesus is hidden from them because their hearts have by this time become hardened.

(b) The words of Jesus:

Spoken with a catch in the breath through sadness. We are dealing here with the mystery of the hardening of the heart of the sinner; God does not deny his graces. If thou too couldst understand, above all in this day that is granted to thee, the ways that can bring thee peace! The thought is brought to the mind of Jesus because of the future war and destruction of the city, which he can see so clearly. Jerusalem means city of peace, but through its own fault it will become a city of horror. The peace of Jerusalem was the subject of the pilgrim's prayer as he came in sight of it.

Jesus sees into the future, to that day when the army of Titus will surround the city; when Jews will be crucified in batches of five hundred; when mothers will eat their own children. Further still into the future, in the days of another Emperor, he sees the temple of Venus erected on the site of the temple of God.

Our Lord never said that the Jews would not dwell again in Jerusalem, or that the city would not be re-built. Even if he had said such a thing, the fact of the city's reconstruction without the temple, sacrifices, and priesthood would be enough for us to say that this new Jerusalem will never be the centre of the Messianic ideal of the Jews as was the old one.

2. The sellers in the Temple:

St Luke continues with the story of the driving of the sellers out of the temple. However, it would appear from the other Evangelists that this scene took place, not on the same day as the triumphal entry into the city, but on the following Monday. On that day, after having cursed the fig tree, symbol of a people full of externals, hypocrites, without fruit, Christ goes into the temple and finds there, in the Court of the Gentiles, the usual crowd of vendors. Here the people could buy all that was necessary for the sacrifices, oil, wine, sheep, doves, salt; there were also the tables of the money changers, because it was forbidden to offer pagan coinage in the temple itself. The house of God had become a market!

What followed is well known, how our Lord drove out these merchants (the word 'buyers' is an addition in the Vulgate), and quoted in justification the words of the prophet Jeremias (7. 11), My house is a house of prayer; and you have made it into a den of thieves. From that moment the leaders of the priests seek to destroy him, while the scribes, custodians of the law as they considered themselves to be, were also offended at his acting like this on his own authority.

3. Applications:

Jerusalem, the spoilt darling of the Old Law, is a figure of the Church in the New Law.

(a) Why did Jesus weep?

Jesus shows us once again the truth of his human nature and its human sentiments; but we need not dwell on that now. Why did he weep?

He wept because we do not. Here are the motives for his weeping:

- i. the consideration of the sinner and the misfortunes which threaten him;
- ii. our insensibility;
- iii. his own love, which cannot be indifferent to the sufferings which threaten us.

(b) In greater detail we may say that Jesus wept:

- i. For the sin of the Jewish people. It is to be noticed that he did not weep so much because of the offence committed against himself, but because he is obliged to make use of his justice instead of his mercy and love.
 - ii. Because of the graces which are being wasted, not merely because they are not used, but mainly because they increase the guilt of those who despise them. An abundance of these graces under various forms is given to us.
 - iii. Because the opportune moment is allowed to pass unheeded.
- If you only knew, he says, the grace you have received today! Both nations and individuals go through periods of crisis in which

their condemnation or salvation is determined. If Jerusalem had seized the occasion of that day, to what heights of glory and honour would it not have risen! Every day is precious.

4. *The obstinacy of the sinner:*

The sinner's heart becomes hardened because God withdraws his special graces from him; but, as St Augustine says, God never abandons anyone unless he is first abandoned. It is the sinner, rejecting the graces offered to him, who obliges God to withhold his grace. Even in this case God never refuses those graces which are necessary for salvation.

5. *The substitution of graces:*

This is another terrible lesson, that of the substitution of graces. Those which God sees being despised or rejected he is liable to withdraw and give to others who know better how to use them, as happened in the case of the Jews.

6. *The punishment of public sins:*

By this we mean the sins of a whole people rather than of any particular individual. Fatima has brought this again before our eyes. We should also learn to weep for the sins of others as well as for our own, not only as offences against God, but also because of the evil they do to our neighbour. To rejoice in his condemnation would be a grave sin; not to weep for him in his sins is at least not Christian.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(Summary of *Hom.* 18, PG. 27, 185, on the subject of weeping for sinners.)

1. *The sufferings of the saints:*

What will you say to me, then: Did not the saints suffer? Yes; have you not heard Paul say: When I tell you of the great sorrow, the continual anguish I feel in my heart? (Rom. 9. 2). That is precisely the most wonderful thing, that he knew how to draw gain from his sadness and pleasure from his tears. Just as blows did not cause him sorrow, but joy, so also sadness won for him many great crowns. It is worthy of note that among worldly people even joy soon gives rise to sadness, while among those who are spiritual the opposite happens. With them, not merely joy but also sadness provides them with a great treasure of blessings. For example, frequently one of these worldlings will rejoice when he sees his enemy suffer, and this joy merits for him a great punishment. On the other hand, the spiritual man is saddened when he sees his brother fallen, and this sadness gains for him great mercy from God.

... So that you will see that what I am saying to you is true, even if it appears false at first sight, and so that you may know that tears usually console and heal a burdened conscience, let me remind you that on many occasions women who have lost their most dear sons grow sick and die if they are not permitted to weep, groan and complain. On the other hand, if they are allowed to manifest their sorrow in the usual way, they obtain great relief and consolation from it. Does this surprise us in women when we find it in a great prophet when he was sad? Leave me, he says, leave me alone to weep bitterly; never try to comfort me now that this people of mine is widowed (Isaias 22. 4). In this way sadness obtains some consolation. If this happens in the world, so much the more in spiritual things. For this reason Paul says: Supernatural remorse leads to an abiding and salutary change of heart (2 Cor. 7. 10).

2. *Sorrow for sins:*

I have also heard many who, after having gone through this experience, reproach themselves, saying: What have I obtained from so great a sorrow? I have not recovered my money and I have done harm to myself. If you had been saddened because of your sins you would have wiped them out and gained great pleasure in it. If you had been sorry for your brothers who have fallen, you would have encouraged yourself and gained them. Even had you obtained nothing you would still have a great reward. And so that you may learn how to be sorry for those who fall, even though it avail nothing for their conversion, listen to Ezechiel, or rather to God speaking through him. Having sent men to destroy the city and consume with fire all the buildings and inhabitants, he speaks thus: Make thy way all through the city, from end to end of Jerusalem; and where thou findest men who weep and wail over the foul deeds done in it, mark their brows with a cross (Ezech. 9. 4). Having told others to go through the city and destroy without pity old and young, men and women, he says: Save only where you see the cross marked on them. . . .

Even though they may be punished justly, God wishes that we should condole with them, not that we should rejoice and insult them. If God can say: What pleasure shall I find in the death of the sinner? it is obvious that you should imitate your Lord and that you should weep when the sinner gives occasion for punishment and just revenge. He who is sad in the Lord gains a great advantage from it.

II. ST AUGUSTINE

(Some extracts from his prayer for the gift of tears. PL. 40.)

1. O Lord Jesus Christ, Word of the Father, who came into this world to save sinners, I beseech thee, by the infinite depths of thy

mercy, cleanse my soul, perfect my actions, put in order my manner of life, take from me everything that is harmful to me and which displeases thee. Grant me what thou knowest to be pleasing to thee and profitable to me. Who but thou alone can make clean that which was conceived of unclean seed? Thou art the God of omnipotence, infinite in mercy, making sinners just and giving life to the dead. He who changes sinners, so that they are sinners no longer. . . .

2. In flame my soul with the fire which thou didst come on earth to kindle, so that with tears I may offer daily to thee the sacrifice of an afflicted spirit and of a contrite heart. O good Jesus, since I long for it and implore it of thee, grant me thy chaste and holy love, that it may fill me, hold me, possess me entirely. And grant me also that visible sign of thy love, a cleansing ever-flowing fountain of tears, that they also may bear witness to thy love in me, and may show how much I love thee, so much so that my soul, in the depths of its love, cannot withhold its tears. . . .

3. Look upon me and have pity on me, for the sorrows of my heart are great indeed. Grant me thy consolations and despise not this sinful soul for which also thou didst die. Grant me, I beg of thee, in thy love, the inward tears that can break the chain of my sins and fill my soul with thy heavenly delight for ever; so that I may merit to obtain some little place within thy kingdom. . . .

4. O sole refuge and hope of the unhappy, to whom we can never pray without hope of mercy, for thy name's sake grant me this grace, that as often as I think of thee, speak of thee, write of thee, read of thee, preach of thee, that as often as I stand before thee to offer thee sacrifice, prayers and praise, so often may I weep with abundant tears in thy sight, so that tears may be my bread day and night. For thou, teacher of all virtue and king of glory, hast taught us to weep and mourn, saying: Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Thou didst weep for thy dead friend and over the city that was to perish. O good Jesus, through these most blessed tears of thine and all thy tenderness by which thou didst wonderfully come to our aid when we were lost, grant me this grace of tears which my soul so longs for and now begs of thee. For without thy gift of it I can never possess it. . . .

5. Hear me, O my God; hear me, O light of my eyes, hear what I ask of thee; and grant that I may always ask of thee what thou wilt hear. Kind and gentle Lord, be not hard on me because of my sins, but through thy own goodness receive the prayers of thy servant, and grant me the answer to my prayer, the answer to my desires, through the prayers and merits of our Lady, the Virgin Mary and of all the saints. Amen.

III. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

(Summary of his Hom. 39, PL. 76, 1321, on weeping for human blindness. One of the greatest of all commentaries on this Gospel.)

Having explained why Christ wept over the coming destruction of the city of Jerusalem he continues:

1. Because we know now that Jerusalem was cast down and was better for its destruction, and because the thieves were thrown out of the temple and the very temple itself destroyed, we ought, from these outward happenings, to draw a certain similitude, and from these ruins of stone fear the destruction of our own inward life and conduct.

Seeing the city he wept over it. . . . He did this once; when he foretold that the city would perish. He does not cease to do this through his elect, when he sees that some have departed from a just way of life to evil living. He weeps for those who know not why he weeps; for those who, in the words of the Wise Man, are glad when they have done evil and rejoice in the most wicked things. For if they only knew the hour of their own condemnation, which is close at hand, they would weep for themselves with the very tears of the elect. Well do the words that follow apply to the soul that will perish: And that in this thy day the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes.

2. The perverse soul which takes its pleasure in the passing hour, has here its day. Here it finds the things that content it; for a while it takes its joys in earthly things, for a while it is puffed up with vanity, grows feeble through bodily pleasures, and then, when it has lost all its fears of the judgement to come, it has peace in its own day, only to find that a great stumbling block on the day of condemnation. Then it shall be afflicted, while the just rejoice; all the things that now go to make up its peace will then be changed into bitterness and strife; because it will then begin to rage within itself for having closed its eyes to the evils to come. For this reason he says to it: But now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the perverse soul that is given over to temporal things and weakened by bodily pleasures, blinds itself to the evils to come, which pursue it. It avoids looking ahead at the things to come lest they trouble its present delight. In abandoning itself to the allurements of this life, what is it doing except hurrying with closed eyes towards the everlasting fire?

3. . . . Should you rejoice in the things of this life, then do so with the thought of the judgement to come always never far from your mind. For in the measure that the anxious soul is penetrated with the fear of the last punishment, so much the more will it take its present enjoyment with moderation. Then the wrath to come will

be tempered. For the wrath of the judgement to come will be less easy to endure the less it is now feared, in the midst of evil here below.

4. Then we read: For the days shall come upon thee. . . . Who were ever greater enemies of the human soul than the spirits of evil, who load it down with delusive joys while it gives itself over to the lusts of the flesh, and then lay siege to it as it prepares to leave the body? They cast a trench about it when they bring to mind the memory of those sins it has committed; and they encompass it round by dragging it into the company of the damned, so that, held fast in this supreme hour of its life, it then sees by what enemies it is surrounded. Yet it cannot find a way of escape, because it can no longer do those good works which, when it could do them, it despised. . . . The spirits of evil press the soul hard on every side when they unroll before it its own sins, not only of deed, but of word, and even of thought, so that the very soul which formerly spread itself abroad in its wickedness, is now fenced in on all sides.

5. . . . and bring down to ruins thee and thy children. . . . Then the soul will be thrown to the ground through the knowledge of its own guilt, when the body, which it believed to be its life, is pressed hard to return to the dust. Then shall its children fall into death when the unlawful thoughts which now come forth from her are scattered in the final chastisement of life. . . . He adds the reason why these things are suffered: because thou didst not recognize the time of my visiting thee. The omnipotent God is accustomed to visit the soul in various ways. He visits it continually by his commandments, sometimes with the rod, sometimes with a miracle, so that it may pay attention to the truths it is ignoring. Should it still continue in pride and contempt, it is afflicted with sorrow, that it may return to him; or, overcome by his kindness, that it may be ashamed of the things it has done. But when it was far from knowing the time of its visitation, at the end of life it will be given over to those enemies, to whom it will be joined for ever in an eternal damnation. . . .

6. The soul and conscience of the faithful is also the temple and the house of God. Should these bring forth wicked thoughts, for the injuring of our neighbour, these will, as it were, settle there like thieves in a cave, slaying one by one those who pass by, thrusting the sword of their malice into those who are innocent. The faithful soul is now no longer a house of prayer, but a den of thieves, when, scorning the innocence and simplicity of holiness, it tries to do what it can to injure its neighbour. . . .

7. . . . But we should ponder deeply how fearful that hour will be of our final dissolution, what dread of soul will be within us, how long the memory of all our sins, what blotting out of all past joys,

what fear and apprehension of our Judge. Which of the things of this life will delight us when, although they will pass away all at the same time, those other things will remain for ever? When that passes away which we loved, and that begins wherein grief never ends? Then will the spirits of evil seek the fruits of their labour in the soul which is going forth. Then will they unfurl the record of wickedness to which they urged it, so that now it is their partner they may drag it down to torment. But why speak only of the perverse, since they also come to prey upon the elect, as they go forth, to see if they can find something in them which is theirs. . . . It is therefore very plain to us that in all who are conceived of the delights of the flesh the Prince of Darkness has some part, something of his own in their thoughts, their words or their actions. . . . We must, therefore, join good works to a life of faith. Let us repent daily of the evil we have done; and let the good we do for the love of God and our neighbour abound more than our past offences. Let us never refuse to do our brethren whatever good we can, for in no other way can we become members of our Redeemer, except by holding fast to God and having compassion on our neighbour.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIAN

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

(Taking advantage of the epistle we shall develop some points of St Thomas's doctrine with regard to lust, chastity and its goal, virginity.)

I. *Lust*:

(a) Even as temperance chiefly applies to pleasures of touch, yet consequently and by a kind of likeness is referred to other matters, so too, lust applies chiefly to venereal pleasures, which more than anything else work the greatest havoc in a man's mind; yet secondarily it applies to any other matters pertaining to excess (2. 2. q. 153. a. 1. *ad Ium*).

(b) The more necessary a thing is, the more it is important to observe the order of reason in its regard; wherefore the more sinful it becomes if the order of reason be forsaken. Now the use of venereal acts is most necessary for the common good, namely the preservation of the human race. Wherefore there is the greatest necessity to observe the order of reason in this matter; so that if anything be done in this connection against the dictates of reason's ordering, it will be a sin (*ibid.* a. 3. c).

(c) As the apostle says, in speaking against lust: You are bought with a great price; glorify and bear God in your bodies (1 Cor. 6. 20).

Wherefore, by inordinately using the body through lust, a man wrongs God, who is the supreme Lord of our bodies. Hence Augustine says: God who thus governs his servants for their good, not for his, made this order and commandment, lest unlawful pleasures should destroy his temple which thou hast begun to be.

(d) A capital vice is one that has a very desirable end, so that through desire for that end, a man proceeds to commit many sins, all of which are said to arise from that vice as from a principal vice. Now the end of lust is venereal pleasure which is very great. Wherefore this pleasure is very desirable as regards the sensitive appetite, both on account of the intensity of the pleasure and also because such concupiscence is connatural to man. Therefore it is evident that lust is a capital vice.

(e) **The daughters of lust:**

Disorder in the reason and the will. The reason has four acts in matters of understanding. First there is simple understanding, which apprehends some act as good, and this act is hindered by lust . . . The second act is counsel about what is to be done for the sake of the end; and this also is hindered by lust. . . . Terence says, speaking of lecherous love, This thing admits of no moderation; thou canst not control it by counselling. . . . The third act is judgement about the things to be done, and this again is hindered by lust. . . . The fourth act is the reason's command about the thing to be done, and this also is impeded by lust, in so far as, through being carried away by concupiscence, a man is hindered from doing what his reason ordered to be done. . . .

On the part of the will there results a twofold inordinate act. One is the desire for the end, to which we refer self-love, which regards the pleasure which a man desires inordinately; while on the other hand there is hatred of God, by reason of his forbidding the desired pleasure. The other act is the desire for the things directed to the end. With regard to this there is love of this world, whose pleasure a man desires to enjoy, while on the other hand there is despair of a future world, because through being held back by carnal pleasures, he cares not to obtain spiritual pleasures since they are distasteful to him.

2. **Chastity:**

Chastity takes its name from the fact that reason chastises concupiscence, which like a child, needs curbing. . . . Now the essence of human virtue consists in being something moderated by reason. . . .

The desire of that which gives pleasure is especially likened to a child, because the desire for pleasure is connatural to us, especially to the pleasures of touch which are designed to the maintenance of nature. Hence it is that, if the desire of such pleasures be fostered by

consenting to it, it will wax very strong, as in the case of a child left to his own will. Wherefore the desire of these pleasures stands in very great need of being chastised.

3. **Virginity . . .**

(a) . . . the essence of morality is perfected in that which concerns the reason. Since then virginity consists in freedom from the aforesaid corruption, it follows that the integrity of the bodily organ is accidental to virginity; while freedom from pleasure in resolution of the semen is related thereto materially; and the purpose of perpetually abstaining from this pleasure is the formal and complete element in virginity (q. 152. a. 1. c).

(b) A thing may excel all others in two ways. First, in some particular genus; and thus virginity is excellent, namely in the genus of chastity, since it surpasses the chastity both of widowhood and of marriage. And because comeliness is ascribed to chastity it follows that surpassing beauty is ascribed to chastity. . . . secondly a thing may be most excellent simply, and in this way virginity is not the most excellent of the virtues . . . the theological virtues as well as the virtue of religion, the acts of which consist in being occupied with divine things, are preferable to virginity (*ibid.* a. 5).

II. PALMIERI

(Extracts from *Tractatus de Gratia*, Th. 60.)

The obstinate sinner is never left without grace

1. **A description of this sinner:**

(a) **Double distinction of St Thomas:**

Obstinacy implies a certain firmness in sin, by which one cannot get out of that state. The inability to get out of the state of sin may be understood in two ways. One, in so far as a person's strength is not sufficient to free himself totally from it, and thus it can be said of all those who fall into sin that they cannot return to justice. But this firmness in sin cannot be called obstinacy. The second, in so far as a person is so firm in sin that he cannot even co-operate to free himself from it; and this can happen in two ways. One, when he cannot co-operate at all, as in the case of the perfect obstinacy of the demons. . . . The other, when he cannot co-operate easily to get out of sin, and this is an imperfect obstinacy which can be met with in this life, when someone has his will set on sin in such a way that there are no movements towards good in him, unless they are very weak ones. However, since some do rise up again, we must say that also to these a way is given by which they can prepare themselves for grace (*De Ver.* q. 24. a. 11).

- (b) Elements which make up this obstinacy:
- i. it implies a certain firmness in sin;
 - ii. in this life no other obstinacy is possible except that which is imperfect;
 - iii. which does not consist in an entire lack of strength to rise again;
 - iv. nor a lack of some movement of the free will by means of which a man can be prepared for grace;
 - v. it consists in the fact that a man's will is so fixed on evil that it is very difficult for him to co-operate with grace in order to get out of the state he is in.

(c) Its causes and effects:

Causes: on the part of the reason, a perversion of the judgement owing to the impulse of the passions; on the part of the will, the inclination which comes from bad habits. When the perversion of judgement and the inclination of evil habits is so great that it is very difficult to co-operate with grace, then we have reached the state of obstinacy in sin. Therefore the origin of the perversion of judgement in the intellect and of the evil inclinations is to be found in the actions which have gone before and little by little become the cause of the obstinacy. The state which follows from this, in which it is very difficult to co-operate with grace in order to rise from sin, is called obstinacy in the affective order, which if it refers to the present perversion in the judgement, has been given the name of blindness; whereas if it refers to the evil inclinations, is called hardness of heart.

2. *The obstinate sinner does not lack grace:*

- (a) The authority of St Thomas confirms this, who says that we can only find imperfect obstinacy in this life.
- (b) The authority of St Augustine, who says clearly that if a man does not do good it is because he does not wish to do it. This would be a false statement unless such a one had grace to help him.

(c) *Repentance is always possible:*

Both Aquinas and Augustine base their doctrine on the fact that this life is a time of trial which has been given us either so that we shall not sin, or else that we shall rise again after sin. The whole is a time of mercy. When the Church defined, against certain heretics, that there is no sin which cannot be forgiven, she was thinking of all sinners, including those who are obstinate, in whose case too, repentance is always possible. If it is possible then it can only be because they receive from God sufficient graces to make it possible.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

The death of the sinner

1. *The enemy's trap:*

(a) *Scripture and the saints:*

Sinners who find themselves in this lamentable condition make their confession, but as St Augustine says, a sick man's confession is also sick; while St Jerome says, of a hundred thousand sinners who go on living in their sin until the hour of death, hardly one will be saved, while St Vincent Ferrer adds, It is a greater miracle that one of these should be saved than to raise the dead to life again.

These unfortunate people will know the evil they have done; they will desire to hate their sins, but they will not be able to do so. Antiochus knew the malice of his sins when he said: Now I recall to mind the evils I caused in Jerusalem. Yes, then he remembered the sins, but he did not dare to repent for them and died in despair and oppressed with a great sadness, saying: Behold here I die in sadness. The same thing happened to Saul at the moment of his death, according to St Fulgentius: He admitted his sins, feared the punishment he had merited by them, but he did not detest them. The sins he had committed did not revolt him, but he was afraid all the same of the punishment which he did not wish to suffer.

(b) *A difficult hour:*

How difficult a thing it is for a sinner who has lived for such a long time in sin to be converted sincerely at the hour of death, when he has his mind obscured by darkness and his heart hardened by sin. His heart is like stone, says Job, and as an anvil. That is to say, the sinner, instead of being softened during his life by divine graces and inspirations, only becomes the more hardened, as the anvil becomes harder with the blows of the hammer. Because of this he will be harder still at the hour of death. We read in Ecclesiasticus that the hard heart will come to a bad end, and that he who loves the danger shall perish in it. It is true; having loved sin unto death, he also loved the danger of his damnation; therefore with justice God permits him to perish in that very danger in which he has chosen to live until the moment of death. . . .

It is certain that, no matter at what moment the sinner is converted, God has promised to pardon him; but he has not promised any sinner that he will be converted at the hour of death. . . .

2. *The fear of eternal death:*

The priest who assists the dying man reads the recommendation of the departing soul and pleads with the Lord saying: Recognize,

O Lord, this thy creature. . . . But God answers: I admit that he is a creature of mine, but he has not honoured me as his creator, rather he has treated me as an enemy. The priest continues: Do not remember his former sins. God answers: I pardoned him his former sins, committed in the years of his youth, but he has continued to despise me up to the very hour of his death. On me they turned their backs and gave me never a glance. And now in their distress, it is, Up, Lord, and bring us rescue! Where are those other gods thou madest for thyself? Bid them rise up and aid thee in the hour of peril. . . . (Jer. 2. 27-28). Let them call on those other gods, that is on their riches, those friends, those creatures whom they loved more than me. Let them ask them to come now and free them from hell which awaits them. The only thing that pertains to me now is to punish them for the crimes they committed. They despised my threats, made against obstinate sinners, and took no notice of them. My duty now, then, is to punish their crimes. The time of my revenge has arrived and it is just that I should execute it.

3. *Above all in this day that is granted thee . . .*

Is not he a fool who, having time to reconcile himself with God, continues in his sin or sins again, thus putting himself in danger of a sudden death? The Lord has told us that the Son of Man will come to judge us when we least expect it. A sudden death could be the lot of any one of us, as it has happened to so many men. It is worthy of note that the death of evil livers is always unexpected, even though illness may give them a certain length of time; because the time the illness lasts is a time of darkness, confusion, in which it is difficult, even we might say morally impossible, to clean up a conscience stained with a long series of vices and sins.

Tell me, brethren; if you were to find yourselves now in immediate danger of death, given up by the doctors and fighting against the agonies of death itself, with what anxiety would you not wish that you could be granted a month, a week even, to settle your accounts with God? God does give you that time; he calls you and lets you know the danger in which you are of being condemned. Occupy yourselves, therefore, with the work of your salvation. What are you waiting for? Perhaps that God should send you to hell? Walk in the light while it is yet day. Do good, while you still have time; while you are still on this earth, because if the darkness of death should surprise you then you can do nothing to assure your salvation. Tomorrow I will amend my ways, says the hardened sinner. . . . And who said that you would see tomorrow's light? Turn your back on sin now, O Christian, without waiting for tomorrow. Return to Christ who calls you to the fold with his gentle whispers and who will open his arms wide to receive you. Do it for the love of Christ, and I assure you in his name, that this loving Father of sinners will forgive you your sins and give you eternal life.

II. BOSSUET

The justice and the mercy of God

(Summary of a sermon which has as its main theme the exhortation not to receive the grace of God in vain.)

1. *Three motives for repentance:*

When a sinner wishes to be converted he finds three obstacles in his path. First, the horror of sin which he judges to be unpardonable. To help him over this obstacle we can point out that Christ has shed his own blood as a propitiatory sacrifice. When he begins to breathe in hope he discovers another obstacle in his path, the impossibility of changing his way of life and his inclinations; we can give him new confidence by pointing out the omnipotence of God, who has infallibly efficacious means ready for those who wish to take advantage of them and which are never denied to those who ask for them. The only thing wanting to the sinner now is time, and God gives him that by giving him the life which he now enjoys. He needs three things to be converted, the mercy of God, which pardons him; the patience of God which waits for him, and the power of God to help him. All three are freely given. We should never reject the great grace of time, of which each moment could be worth eternity.

2. *Mercy calls:*

(a) *The uncertainty of the sinner:*

Man passes easily from one extreme to another. Consumed by fever, he despairs of a cure; once healthy again, he thinks he is immortal. . . . The sinner passes easily from excessive confidence to despair and vice versa. First he sins with confidence, then he despairs of ever reaching salvation and thus, as Augustine says, he goes from sin to sin on his way to certain ruin, despairing of his hope. Look at a sinner. At first he deceives himself, imagining that it is impossible that a God who is so great would ever wish to tyrannize over a creature and exercise his supreme power on a vessel of clay. It is unworthy of God to feel offended by one who is nothing. Then, later, he is terrified at the thought that one who is nothing should have dared to rebel against God. . . . He who at first believed that he could never tap the full depths of mercy does not see now how he can placate divine justice.

(b) *Mercy and justice:*

The reason for this deception is this: the divine attributes, whether it be mercy or justice, are so infinite that our finite powers are so dazzled by the sight of one of them that they cannot take in the other. The idea of mercy makes the sinner forget justice and vice versa.

But we should destroy those idols of mercy and justice which the sinner adores in place of the true attributes. Friendly powers are not enemies. In the first place, God's goodness is not insensible, and a God who did not punish would be a God to be despised. He is not God 'under whom sinners live at ease and whom the devil can mock. He is not good except in so far as he hates evil and exercises the love which he has for good by means of the hatred he professes for evil' (Tertullian, *C. Marcion*. 1. 2. 20). Neither is his goodness incompatible with his justice, because if it robs him of justice's victims it offers him others, and instead of cutting them off in revenge, it brings them down with humility; instead of breaking them by punishment it does so through penance. If there is need to offer blood, then it offers the blood of God himself. There is never any need, then, for despair, because if it is certain that God does take vengeance, it is also certain—I dare to say, more certain—that he pardons.

(c) **The forgiveness of sins:**

The forgiveness of sin is the principal fruit of the blood of the New Testament and therefore the Holy Spirit has been careful to impress us with this idea. God, he says, forgets sins, dispels them, removes them far from us. Truly, in man sin is like a cancer which devours him and a stain which disfigures him; it must be extirpated and cast away. See how God casts it aside: Far as the east is from the west, he clears away our guilt from us (Ps. 102. 12). The cloud of thy guilt, the haze of thy sinfulness, I have swept away; come back to me, thy ransom (Isaias 44. 22).

If sin, in relation to man, is a cancer, in relation to God it is a terrible shout in his ears, a horrible spectacle for his eyes. As a spectacle it causes aversion; as a shout it demands revenge; but God, for our tranquillity, assures us that he covers over our crimes, that he may not see them and chokes that dreadful shout that he may not hear it, with the voice of Jesus Christ, the advocate for our sins.

Return to God, to your beloved Spouse, but in humble confession of your sins, saying: I have sinned. Do not dream of excusing yourselves, and do not accuse the stars or your character, nor even the devil himself, lest among those you accuse you may find one who denounces you. The devil is delighted when he is accused, and his most ardent desire is that you should accuse him and cast your sins on him, thus losing the fruit of a humble confession.

We must deal very differently with a judge and with a father, because one is seeking to punish while the other only looks for our conversion.

3. **The help of mercy:**

(a) Before the judge we have to say: I did not do it; or I did it without thinking—against my will. Before the father we must

confess our fault and throw ourselves on his goodness. Let us seek God; in that way we shall find another motive for encouragement.

What usually holds sinners back is the fear of changing their way of life; they consider it impossible for them. There is nothing over which we have less control than over ourselves, over our own will. There is nothing so difficult as to do what we want to do. The two obstacles which appear invincible are the inclination which makes vice so pleasant, and custom, which seems to make it even necessary. Man longs for someone to come along and change him, mould him all over again; which is just what grace does for us, it gives us a new birth.

(b) And if grace overcomes our inclinations, it is logical that it will also overcome habit, which is nothing but a strong inclination. Nothing can equal the power of the spirit to melt the ice. Is your heart cold? Here is your remedy. Is it hard? The grace of God can break it into little pieces. Although you may be swept along towards death more swiftly than the Jordan itself, grace can hold back its course; even if you are rotting in the grave, it knows how to raise Lazarus. Do not receive these graces then in vain.

(c) Let us confess, however, that rarely do we see these effects of grace, but it is because we are soft in our dealings with the grace of penance, which we water down in our weakness. A cowardly and lazy penance does not lend itself to any effort, while we should know by now that our very nature demands that what is good must cost us a great deal. Our daily bread must be earned by sweat; and penance must be violent. What is penance, says Augustine, except indignation against oneself?

4. **Time flies:**

(a) **Its value:**

To understand well the value of time we must know that it can be measured in two ways; in itself, dividing it up into its hours, days and years, or by comparing it with eternity, into which it flows. From the first point of view it is nothing, that is clear; and yet—what a paradox—it is everything, because if we lose it we lose everything. Why? Because time is like a great curtain spread out before eternity which it hides from us; and to enter into that eternity we have to pass through it. Time is the price of eternity, and I am not surprised, virgins of the Lord, that your rule is so rigid in administering it. It is of infinite weight and there is nothing so criminal as to waste such a grace.

(b) **Men allow it to escape them:**

I would like to explain to you the two reasons why men allow this most precious treasure to slip through their fingers. One reason depends on us, the other is an element of time itself.

Either because, when we consider time, we see it approach its end or else because in our laziness we do not know how to use it, we

insist on not testing how quickly it passes. It is like a weight on our shoulders and we do not allow ourselves to think about it so as not to feel its weight.

But time itself helps to deceive us, because, as Augustine says, time seeks to imitate eternity, and since eternity is all one and the same, so time offers us days, hours and years which are all alike so that we may not see how it passes. And if it is certainly true that our members grow weaker, our hair grey, yet at the same time, like a subtle imposter and still seeking to imitate eternity, time wounds us only little by little. Ezechiel, at forty, thought that he had just been born. That is the terrible truth, that we find ourselves, suddenly and without adverting to it, in the arms of death.

On the other hand, time makes us believe that we always have it before us. It is true that it exists, but it is not at all certain that we shall attain that future time.

(c) The dangerous illusion of the sinner:

Another illusion of the sinner is that at one time he judges his life to be long and at another short; short when it is a question of enjoying himself. Then he says, let us eat and drink, for our end is near (Isaias 22. 13). But how his language changes when it is a question of his conversion! How well we manage to change time, which is the door to health, into a fearful obstacle! We have time to be converted; let us go on sinning!

(d) The knowledge of time is one of the Father's secrets:

But notice how the Son of God tells us that the knowledge of time is one of the Father's secrets, and when he is asked when the end is going to come he says that he does not know. The last day is hidden from us so that we may obey on all of them, says Augustine. But why should I continue with this theme? Does not the Gospel tell you that the axe is already laid to the root of the tree? Why do you not begin your conversion today? Are you afraid that your penance will be greatly prolonged? You are not satisfied with being a sinner; you want to go on sinning a long time. Are you waiting for the doctor to give you up before you seek absolution from the priest? Do not wait until it is necessary to shout in your ear in order to wring from you a yes or no. Do not wait until the priest has to dispute his place at your side with heirs and lawyers. Make sure that the thought of conversion comes to you from God and not from your fever; from reason, not from necessity; from divine authority and not by force. Give God something with freedom of choice, and not from anguish of heart.

(e) Penance a joy:

If penance is a grace from God then use it in time of joy, not time of sadness. Since your conversion will bring joy to the angels it is a sad mistake to begin it when your family is weeping. If your body is

a sacrifice to be offered to God, at least let us make it a living sacrifice. If it is a precious talent, begin to trade with it at once and do not wait until the moment comes to bury it. If time has made a mockery of you, then be careful lest penance do the same.

SECTION VI.

LITERARY AND MISCELLANEOUS

JUDAS THE TRAITOR

(We include this as an example of an obstinate sinner who rejected grace.)

Judas, the traitor, was never out of our Lord's mind, especially as time drew near for the realization of his act of treachery. At last, during the ceremonial meal of the Pasch, Christ could contain himself no longer. And whilst they were eating he said: Amen I say to you, that one of you is about to betray me. One by one the apostles began to ask him: Is it I, Lord? To most of them he replied in vague terms, unwilling even at this stage to reveal the traitor's identity. He does, however, add that it were better for that man had he not been born. At last Judas himself boldly asks the question: Is it I, Lord? and then Jesus quietly answers, Thou hast said it.

There must have been some good in Judas, some personal attraction which drew him to the service of Christ. He was chosen by our Lord to be one of the twelve because he had within him the makings of a saint. He undoubtedly received all the interior graces necessary for his perfection and he enjoyed the intimate company of Christ during the public life, heard his teaching and witnessed his miracles. Yet gradually Judas became indifferent and then, at last, openly hostile. Something must have gone wrong; there must have been some sinful habit or disposition of soul which Judas refused to give up and which finally led to his downfall.

St John tells us two interesting things which may provide us with a clue to the mystery. Judas was chosen for a position of special trust within the little band of apostles, being given charge of the common purse. He became a petty thief—petty, because the poverty of Jesus and his apostles excludes the possibility of there being very much to steal. We get the first hint of the defection of the traitor in the sixth chapter of St John, when, after St Peter's admission that there is no one who can lead the apostles in the way of truth except our Lord, he replies, Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? Perhaps our Lord's open rejection of an earthly kingdom may have influenced Judas, who was ambitious for more wealth. Now, on that same occasion many of the disciples went away and left Jesus, because they found the idea of the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament hard to believe. Christ turns to

the twelve and says: Will you also go away? Judas could have gone away quietly then, and no one would have blamed him, but he chose to remain. What kept him we shall never know.

Judas's betrayal was not necessary to the plans of the high priests. Indeed, they had not expected it nor counted on it. However, his pride and avarice forced him to it after the public rebuke which he received in Bethany on the occasion of the anointing of Jesus by Mary. Our Lord made it quite plain that after a few days he would be put to death. Perhaps of all his hearers Judas alone believed him. In any case, he had to act quickly; yet even now Christ did not expose him. He still carried the common purse at the Last Supper, and Christ revealed his name only to John, who could be trusted. So Judas betrays his Master—and with a kiss; with the very symbol of love and affection. Remorse follows when he sees what he has done; but it is not the sorrow of repentance, but merely the darkness of despair. Having returned to the high priests the money he had received, he hangs himself, and the dreadful tragedy is complete.

We, too, can fall as Judas did. We are all called to be saints as he was; but we can reject God's graces, refuse to listen to his repeated warnings and at the end fall into the final sin of despair. Nearly always the journey on the downward path begins quite gently and then gradually gains momentum. There is a moment when recovery is easy, but if we let that opportunity slip it may be more difficult in the future. Peter betrayed his Master as Judas did—and in spite of repeated warnings. Yet Peter repented and became the head of the Church. If we should fail Christ, then, at any time, let us return at once in all humility, repent and plead for pardon. There is no sin too great to be forgiven and it is never too late to turn to Christ. We might ask him the question at this moment, the same question Judas asked: Is it I, Lord?—and if we find that we have betrayed him, then we know what we must do to regain his friendship; we must follow the example of Peter, not that of Judas.

(*With Christ to Calvary*, Burns Oates.)

SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

I. LITURGICAL

A: The work of our redemption

Introduction

1. *Every day the sacrifice of the Mass is offered on our altars:*
 - (a) Many thousands of Christians assist at it.
 - (b) Do they know how to hear Mass? or perhaps it would be better to ask if they know how to live the Mass and apply that sacrifice to life?

2. The liturgy of today's Mass gives us a good opportunity to preach on this subject because of the prayer: as often as this sacrifice is commemorated the work of our redemption is effected.

The Mass, reproduction of the sacrifice of Christ

1. *The passion and death of Christ were the cause of our redemption:*

St Thomas explains it thus:

(a) By sin man had been put under a double obligation:

i. The slavery of sin; because all those who are conquered are the slaves of their victors, and man had been overcome by the devil and by sin.

ii. In so far as the guilt and punishment due to sin are concerned, man is under an obligation to divine justice—which is also a slavery, because he must now suffer things he does not want to suffer.

(b) But since Christ's passion made superabundant satisfaction for sin and for the punishment due to sin, we can say that it was a ransom or price paid for man by which we have been freed from this double obligation.

(c) Christ satisfied for our sins not in terms of money, but in something much greater—by giving himself for us.

2. Since the Mass is the reproduction of the sacrifice of Christ, it is also the work of our redemption, not merely because it renews that redemption on our altars, but also because it applies it to the Church and to souls.

Our infidelity

1. The ruin of Jerusalem is God's punishment for the infidelity of the Jewish nation. We may see in it a symbol of what may happen to our souls if we are not faithful to God's graces.

2. Infidelity to or despising of God's graces, so often neglected or rejected, has a triple effect in our soul:

- (a) It makes us the devil's slaves, since we will not seek to follow the inspirations of God;
- (b) it weakens our will;
- (c) it deprives us of other graces, and therefore is a punishment in itself.

3. Therefore spiritual writers maintain that infidelity is a sure road to tepidity, since the latter is a special kind of weakness in the will.

4. Therefore we need to repair the damage done by our daily infidelities; otherwise they will lead us inevitably to tepidity and from thence to sin.

Through the Mass we can pay God back for our infidelities

1. For this it is necessary that we should approach this sacrifice in a spirit of living faith, take this treasure in our hands and offer it to God as Christ offers it himself. In this way each day our infidelities would be redeemed and their dangers avoided.
2. Since the Mass is also a meritorious work, in it the Christian finds grace and strength to continue on the path of perfection with constancy and fidelity.
3. Pius XII, in *Mediator Dei*, explains the necessity for the collaboration of the faithful in order that the full value of the Mass, both as a redemption and a purification, may be obtained. He points out that:
 - (a) The redemption did not take full and immediate effect; Christ must, after the redemption, enter into full possession of each individual soul;
 - (b) therefore it is absolutely necessary that all should make contact with that source of redemption, thus its merits will be transmitted to them as individuals;
 - (c) Christ on Calvary has built a deposit in which he enclosed all the merits of his precious Blood; but if men will not bathe in it, washing away by it their stains of sin, they cannot be purified or saved;
 - (d) so that all sinners may come to this source the collaboration of the faithful is necessary;
 - (e) all are led to the Cross—and this is the will of Christ—through the Mass and the sacraments, in order to apply to their souls the merits won on Calvary;
 - (f) through this sharing, actual and personal, in his sacrifice, the members become daily more like their head, and the salvation which comes from the head flows through the members.

Exhortation

1. In the formulas of today's Mass we are reminded of our Lord's threats to Jerusalem and through it his warnings to unfaithful souls. By contrast, we are shown how to avoid this punishment, by our share in the Mass and the Eucharist.
2. To make this possible the Christian must remind himself that the Mass is an instrument of personal sanctification.
 - (a) We should offer it in a state of grace, conscious all the time of our needs, our infidelity, weakness, both moral and spiritual;
 - (b) the weaker we are, the more we should use it;
 - (c) at the moment of the consecration we should offer ourselves together with Christ, our worries, troubles, joys, sufferings—all;

then our daily tasks will be consecrated and our daily infidelities remedied.

B: Detraction

Against justice and charity

1. Complaining against God:

St Paul, in the epistle of today, mentions some sins of the Jews for which they were punished; among them is that of complaining against God—a kind of calumny against their creator. We can use this to preach on detraction as well, the subject of this scheme.

2. The distinction between calumny and detraction is well known:

Calumny is saying something evil about our neighbour which is false (therefore it adds to detraction a malicious lie); while detraction is a taking away of the good name of another by secret gossip about him or by revealing hidden sins or faults which do in fact exist.

3. Both kinds of detraction are mortal sins:

(a) Both are against strict justice, because the neighbour has a strict right to his good name.

(b) They are sins against social justice too, because they do great harm to society as a whole and the public good demands that the secret faults of any individual should not be revealed without a good and sufficient reason, and even then, with certain precautions.

(c) Both are sins against charity. St Thomas says that he who takes away his brother's good name sins against the law in so far as he despises the precept of the love of our neighbour.

Different ways of committing this sin

1. Some direct and others indirect:

Direct, when we reveal clearly another's sin:

- (a) exaggerating the sin by our words;
- (b) revealing the hidden faults and sins;
- (c) when what in itself is good is said to have been done with evil intentions.

2. Indirect:

They do not refer to the sins of others directly, but by silence, by indirect remarks or damning with faint praise they insinuate that there is more to be revealed which is evil.

(a) Sometimes these indirect ways of sinning against our neighbour are more malicious than the direct ways; thus the following type of remark may be considered as detraction:

- i. I don't want to reveal all I know;
- ii. I know lots of other things, but it is better to be silent;
- iii. If I could only say all I know . . .;
- iv. Yes, he is a very good person . . . but; however, I would put you to shame if I said any more . . .;

- v. I have found out something which no one would ever dream could have been done by such a person . . . ;
- vi. There's no smoke without fire, they say. . . .
- (b) Frequently a smile, gesture, look can be interpreted as detraction.

The gravity of this sin

1. Generally speaking, the sin is mortal of itself. However, to discover when it is mortal in concrete circumstances we have to take several things into consideration.
 - (a) The fault which is revealed; if this is grave, the sin is generally mortal; if the fault is a light one then the sin is generally a venial one.
 - (b) However, sometimes even the revealing of a natural defect can be a grave sin if it does grave harm to the neighbour, e.g. revealing that a person is illegitimate.
 - (c) The dignity of the person injured by the revelation. One who, by reason of his position, office, etc., needs to have a very good reputation can suffer grave harm in the revelation of even small defects. To say that a layman is ambitious is not so grave as to say the same thing of a priest or religious.
 - (d) The efficacy of the detraction, which will depend both on the one who utters it and also the number and quality of the persons who hear it.
2. In practice the prudent director is the only one who can judge whether there has been grave sin or not, at least in cases of doubt. However, he should keep in mind the fact that in this matter it is easy to commit a mortal sin because of the harm which detraction can do to the neighbour.
3. The obligation of putting a stop to detraction in grave matter is a grave one.

Obligation to restore

- Since this is a sin against justice there is an obligation to restore the good name we have taken away by our detraction. This is why the sin is so difficult to forgive.
- (a) It is easy to take a good name away; but who will restore it afterwards?
 - (b) This is why Christians should avoid this sin like the plague.
 - (c) It is a sin easily committed by good people, i.e. people who have a reputation for being pious.

Is it ever permitted?

1. As a sin, never under any circumstances.
2. As a revealing of a secret fault, sometimes it is permitted, with due precautions; sometimes it is even necessary.

3. For this there must be a strong motive which justifies such an action; this can be:
 - (a) Religion: the obligation of revealing impediments to marriage or defects in persons to be ordained;
 - (b) Justice: if another is being blamed for a fault he did not commit;
 - (c) Charity: the sins of children should be told to their parents for their correction;
 - (d) For one's own good: when we need to unburden ourselves or seek advice.
4. *For this to be just we must take other precautions:*
 - (a) To cause the least possible harm to the person we talk about;
 - (b) that there should be no question of calumny—this is always wrong and never permitted under any circumstances;
 - (c) wise choice of the persons to whom we reveal the secret faults of others, and let them be as few in number as possible;
 - (d) if the manner in which we have come by our knowledge was unjust, e.g. reading another's mail, then we are never allowed to make use of such knowledge, no matter how grave it may be.

Conclusion

1. Avoid this sin whenever possible in ourselves and others; take care to speak well of others—there is always something good to be said for the worst of us. Say it, and keep quiet about the rest.
2. Remember this is a sin which can easily pass unnoticed by the majority of pious people.
3. Beware of vague examinations of conscience about it and vague confessions. How many times the phrase, I have been a little uncharitable does, literally, cover a multitude of sins.
4. Cultivate in all things a spirit of charity. Our tongue can be more cruel than the lance which pierced the side of Christ.

C: Temptation

The Epistle and temptation

1. *It contains three thoughts on this subject:*
 - (a) He who thinks he stands firmly should beware of a fall;
 - (b) not that God will play you false; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your powers;
 - (c) with the temptation itself, he will ordain the issue of it, and enable you to hold your own.

2. The first thought warns us against presumption; the second tells us that God will hold back the tempter or cause of temptation; the third promises us positive and effective aid.
3. The last two, although directly they comfort the soul, warn it indirectly not to rely on its own powers.

The tempters

1. *The flesh:*

- (a) When a man is tempted it is always because he is being drawn away by the lure of his own passions (James 1. 14).
- (b) These passions we call the flesh.

2. *The world:*

The whole atmosphere which surrounds and influences us—a multitude of things are comprised under this heading, but they all act on us by exciting our passions and senses.

3. *The devil:*

- (a) Our adversary, who seeks us for prey like a lion (1 Pet. 5. 8);
- (b) more dangerous than one would think; he loves us to disbelieve in him or in his power.

The difficulty of resisting

1. *We can resist temptation:*

- (a) In a purely natural way, without it being for our merit or glory;
- (b) through the help of grace, therefore in a supernatural way and meriting at the same time.

2. *The fight against our passions:*

In this single example we shall see the difficulties and our need for help:

- (a) It is a constant struggle, one we carry within us, the fight of the spirit against the flesh, and both are ours;
- (b) the weapons are not equal on both sides, because of the greater influence on us of the things of sense; without outside help we could not hope to keep up the struggle for very long;
- (c) the same argument applies to the fight against the devil, who, although fallen, is still an angel with angelic nature and powers—what an unequal struggle if we had to rely on ourselves alone!

The remedy

1. God could not create man in such a state that he is bound to sin; even after original sin he did not leave man without means to resist.

2. *Thus we have a double series of helps:*

(a) *External:*

The removal of occasions of sin, the holding back of the devil's natural powers, etc.

(b) *Internal:*

The graces God gives us in abundance, which make it possible to continue the struggle for a long time—as long as is necessary.

He who thinks he stands firmly should beware of a fall

1. The practical and ascetical consequences of all that has been said are the following: not to rely on our own strength in this matter; warn ourselves frequently of this and by means of the examples of others, stronger than we, who have nevertheless fallen.

2. Not to presume on God's help, and therefore not to put ourselves in danger of temptation without necessity, and even then with great precautions.

3. *To watch and pray, lest we fall into temptation:*

(a) The watching here mentioned means the same as the being on our guard of St Peter's warning (1 Pet. 5. 8).

(b) The best safeguard is the work of our own sanctification; to carry on with that task means vigilance.

(c) To have confidence in the Lord and in his power, armed with the weapons he has given us.

(d) Prayer is necessary; help is assured for those who ask it; the Our Father. . . .

God does not command impossibilities; at the same time as he commands he warns us, so that we may do what we can, and ask for that which we cannot do without help.

D: Chastity in young people

Introduction

1. Chastity is the virtue which moderates carnal pleasures.
2. We do not intend this to be a general scheme on this subject, although some parts of it may be useful for that purpose; our intention is to apply the theme to youth, to make them see the importance and effects of the beautiful virtue of chastity.

Youthful chastity

1. Chastity and purity are really not the same thing, the latter is a wider idea than the former.

(a) Purity is really the absence of all stain; and any sin can be said to be a sin against our purity in this sense. Chastity, on the other hand, is a concrete virtue.

(b) However, in common language today it is usual to speak of sins against purity, when what we really mean is sins against chastity—the phrase will stand.

2. Chastity moderates those carnal pleasures which God has allowed only inside marriage:

(a) It is regulated by the sixth and ninth commandments;

(b) it is the virtue which inclines us to regulate our carnal desires in this matter.

The harm done by sins against chastity

1. *Not the most grave of all sin:*

(a) Spiritual sins are by far the more grave in their guilt;

(b) the spiritual sins are directly against God or the neighbour; while carnal sins are directly against the good of our own body and soul;

(c) the sins against the theological virtues are in every case graver than those against the moral virtues.

2. *They are, however, very grave sins:*

Not merely in themselves, but because of their consequences. Let St Thomas speak on this subject:

(a) The devil is said to rejoice chiefly in the sin of lust, because it is of the greatest adhesion, and man can with difficulty be withdrawn from it. For the desire for pleasure is insatiable, as the Philosopher says.

(b) The reason why it is more shameful to be incontinent in lust than in anger is that lust partakes less of reason; and in the same sense he (Aristotle) says that sins of intemperance are most worthy of reproach because they are about those pleasures which are common to us and brute beasts; hence by these sins man is, so to speak, brutalized; for which same reason Gregory says they are more shameful (1-2. q. 73. a. 5. *ad zum et zium*).

3. *Consequences of these sins:*

(a) St Thomas indicates the following as consequences: blindness of mind, precipitation, lack of consideration, inconstancy, self-love and despair;

(b) the strong inclination these sins leave behind and which leads to other and perhaps graver sins;

(c) sadness and interior bitterness of soul;

(d) bad effects on children later—many illnesses in the child can be traced to these sins on the part of the father or mother, frequently in their youth;

(e) tepidity in religious duties due to shame or despair of ever winning the fight.

Difficulty in safeguarding chastity in youth

There are few ages of man in which it is so difficult to remain chaste as in youth:

(a) by reason of the psychological instability of this age, which is unstable and as yet unformed;

(b) the very strong temptations caused by the body itself and the curiosity to which this can give rise in youth;

(c) the external dangers to which youth is exposed on the part of companions, the world, books, etc.;

(d) the preservation of chastity at this age demands great manliness and a will to fight—this is no weak virtue, as anyone will know who has tried it. Paul Claudel is supposed to have said: I have heard people say that youth is the age of pleasure; I would say that it is the age of heroism.

The benefits of chastity

1. In general the Christian has to keep the commandments in order to love and serve God, not merely for selfish ends.

2. But at the same time God, as a loving Father, rewards us for our generosity and looks after us when we fight on his side. Therefore we shall obtain many benefits from doing our duty. This happens in the case of chastity. Here are some only of the benefits it brings us:

(a) strength of character and strength in all virtue. We cannot stress too much that this is no weak, easy, namby-pamby virtue. At this age it demands heroic sacrifice and fight. It is no struggle for weaklings;

(b) the keeping of chastity is a small martyrdom, says St Jerome;

(c) it demands a strength of will which gradually forms the whole character into that of a real man, virile, because he knows how to control himself. The one who constantly gives way reveals a weakness of character and spirit, not merely in the matter of chastity, but in other things as well. The chaste youth is a strong youth in every way;

(d) the basis of joy and happiness, now and in married life in the future. One of the effects of these sins against chastity is sadness; while one of the effects of chastity is happiness.

Aids to maintaining chastity in youth

These are of two kinds, natural and supernatural. We shall give brief lists only.

1. *Natural:*

(a) A right attitude towards sex and our own sexual powers—the nearest we shall come to creation, a God-given thing in every way, meant for a wonderful purpose, but for nothing else.

(b) The greatest gift we can give our wives and husbands in the future, on the day of our marriage, is this purity of mind and body.

(c) Exercise will help to reduce temptation to a minimum, so will promptness in rising once we wake up in the morning.

(d) Strengthen the will in other matters by learning moderation, obedience, etc.

(e) Avoid bad companions, filthy stories which excite curiosity, bad books, etc.

(f) Fresh air, instead of stuffy atmospheres; clean body, control of imagination.

(g) Do not worry about temptation as such—it is inevitable sometimes, but it will pass.

(h) The twenty-four hour promise to continue the fight, without looking back on yesterday's sins or tomorrow's difficulties. I can resist today, that is enough for me.

2. Supernatural:

(a) The sacraments, especially penance and the Eucharist.

(b) Prayer in general—young people do not usually pray as often or as much as they can and should. Meditation in a very simple form will help a lot if we are faithful to it.

(c) Get rid of the *first* movement of the temptation, don't wait until the thing has gained force.

(d) Ask God's help in general and confide in our Lady.

(e) Co-operate fully with the grace of God by personal mortification and austerity of life.

(f) A good spiritual director will help—be open and frank with him all the time and the victory is yours.

3. Conclusion:

The following thoughts from a letter of St Jerome should be useful to all youth, to let them see that they are not alone in the fight and that all have to give of their best.

(a) How many times, in the desert, in that vast solitude burned by the rays of the sun, savage retreat for monks, did I not imagine myself amid the pleasures of Rome.

(b) I would seek solitude, because I was full of bitterness. On my limbs, already deformed, I wore a rough hair-shirt, while my emaciated features were already as black as those of any Ethiopian. Day after day I wept and groaned ceaselessly, and when in spite of my resistance the power of sleep overcame me, I allowed my bones to fall to the hard ground.

(c) This nature of mine, which I had condemned to this prison, without any other companions than the scorpions and wild beasts for fear of going to hell, still imagined itself in the midst of the dances of the young Roman maidens. The face was thin through fasting and my soul, in its frozen body, burned with desires. Before the eyes of

a man already dead in his own body, there flamed only the fires of passions.

(d) I sought to subject my body by weeks and weeks of fasting. Wherever I saw a deep valley or rocky cliffs, that I chose for my place of prayer and for a prison for my miserable body.

(e) Thus, in despair of any help, I threw myself at the feet of Christ, washing them with my tears and drying them with my hair. I am not ashamed to confess my misfortune and misery.

E: Christ weeps

Who weeps?

1. *Tears come easily to women but with greater difficulty in men:*

(a) Tears in a man are often a sign of serenity and strength.

(b) When a man weeps he does so only for a very grave reason.

(c) Such must have been the causes for the tears of Christ.

2. *God weeps:*

This is the most surprising thing—God has come on earth and has wept.

When does he weep?

1. In the present circumstances tears are the last thing we would expect.

2. He did it before, when he went to the tomb of Lazarus. Then the most considerate and gentle of friends had a motive obvious to all.

3. He did it on the cross, according to Heb. 5. 7. Again these tears have their explanation.

4. Now he weeps at the sight of Jerusalem—and the reason is not obvious at first:

(a) because he is surrounded by a great multitude shouting in his favour and acclaiming him as their Messiah, the son of David;

(b) he does not weep for himself, but for others.

Why does he weep?

1. *Not for personal reasons:*

(a) These are not tears shed for personal sins;

(b) they are not tears of fear and dread of what awaits him in the city;

(c) he is forgetful of self and thinking of the evils of others.

2. *There are other causes:*

(a) He weeps over Jerusalem:

i. unfortunate city which was going to commit the greatest crime of all time;

ii. this city, up to now the chosen city of God, favoured above all others, would receive a terrible punishment. Of these walls and the temple there would not be left a stone on a stone.

(b) Tears for the world:

All were against God, all were sinners and blind at that.

(c) The holy city:

i. *of the individual souls within Jerusalem*, who were about to deny Christ again and crucify him;

ii. *the Church*, because of heresies, divisions, sins.

(d) Tears for priests:

Those who would be, like their counterparts in Jerusalem,

i. *bad administrators* of the word of God;

ii. *sinners*, sometimes the sin of sacrilege;

iii. *changing the temple of God into a place of business*, a den of thieves.

(e) He wept because Jerusalem did not weep:

In its blindness it hurried towards its own destruction laughing, and with joy and prosperity. If you knew your own state as I know it, you would weep as I am weeping and do penance, says Jesus by his tears.

Lessons of the tears of Christ

1. The malice of sin which can make God weep. Christ weeps more for the sins of the people of Israel which are going to be the causes of the destruction of the city than for the ruin itself.

2. It teaches us to weep for our own sins, since he wept for those of others. Chrysostom calls these tears of repentance the sponge for sin.

3. Apparent material prosperity and riches often contain reasons for many tears.

4. Weeping in his hour of triumph shows us the little he thought of such material things; so we should learn to despise human praise and honours, mortify our ambition and do all for the love of God.

5. A lesson that we should be both just and merciful at one and the same time.

(a) His tears are those of mercy.

(b) In spite of that, if the sinner does not do penance he will be punished as inevitably as was Jerusalem.

F: Rejected graces

Motives for the tears of Christ

1. *From the Gospel text we can deduce two motives for his tears:*

(a) One was the destruction of the city.

(b) The other the rejection of graces:

If thou, too, couldst understand, above all in this day that is granted to thee, the ways that can bring thee peace!

It is the same ideas as are expressed in the other words of Christ about the city and its people: How often have I been ready to gather thy children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and thou didst refuse it! Behold, your house is left to you, a house uninhabited. Believe me, you shall see nothing of me henceforward, until the time when you will be saying, Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord (Matt. 23. 37-39).

2. If rejected graces make the Lord weep, then it is a sure sign that this is a grave sin.

3. We see how, in both texts quoted, the destruction of the city goes hand in hand with the rejection of grace.

Just administration of the goods of God

1. The prudent man does not enjoy wasting his goods in vain.

2. God is necessarily more prudent than men. If he sees that his graces are despised he withdraws them. The parable of the talents.

3. This withdrawal of grace—even though it is only partial, since he never withdraws them altogether—constitutes the hardening of the sinner's heart of which the Scripture speaks and is a most terrible punishment. We have an example of what it means in the destruction of Jerusalem.

The goodness of God insulted

1. However, let us see how the insult to God which this rejection of grace supposes and causes has to suffer an even more terrible punishment, not in this life, but in the judgement and condemnation that follow.

2. Do not distress God's Holy Spirit, whose seal you bear . . . (Eph. 4. 30). This sadness is love despised.

3. Even among men, love turns to hate when it sees itself despised.

(a) What in us can have as excuse our passion of anger, in God is justice;

(b) he has a right to our love and anyone who violates his rights has earned his hatred.

4. There is nothing so terrible as the hatred of God, except it be that of a God whose love has been insulted.

(a) If he is terrible when he appears in the clouds, amid thunder and lightning, what will it be like when he appears on the throne of his love, with all those favours which he has given to us now accusing us of insulting that love?

(b) God's graces are not lost. He takes them to his heart again and turns them into arrows. We would not allow ourselves to be pierced by the arrows of his love. We shall be pierced by those of his anger.

(c) Once the fountain of love dries up that of anger is opened.

(d) In God his justice and his goodness are two virtues equally infinite and holy.

(e) We could have enjoyed an eternal love and we prefer to enjoy, or rather suffer, an anger which is also divine and eternal.

5. This is not preacher's oratory, because every word of it is confirmed by the Scriptures (cf. St John Baptist, Matt. 3. 10-11; Apoc. 6).

Ourselves and grace

1. *How many have we received?*

(a) redemption,

(b) sacraments,

(c) preaching,

(d) holy inspirations,

(e) habitual and actual grace.

2. *On us it depends:*

(a) either to guard jealously that fountain of water springing up into eternal life,

(b) or convert those wounds of Jesus into a cloud of anger which will spit forth its fires of lightning against us.

G: Motives for Christ's tears

Tears and passions

1. One of the most surprising things is this, to see God weeping.

(a) We must not forget that Christ was God made man and that he assumed, with our nature, all that is good in it;

(b) therefore he could weep and had reasons for doing so.

2. It would be a wrong idea of holiness to confuse it with apathy and to imagine that it is incompatible with the movements of sadness, tears, anger, etc. The passions in this sense are natural, and therefore good; it all depends on whether they are under the guidance of reason and to a good end or not:

i. *disordered*, they lead to our condemnation;

ii. *ordered*, they are a great source of energy and holiness.

3. Christ had these passions, but in him they were always under the guidance of reason:

(a) We see him angry when he drives the sellers out of the temple;

(b) we see him weep over Jerusalem because his love for men moved him to have pity on their misfortunes.

Weeping of Jesus at the misfortunes of his friends

1. Bethany gives us full proof of this tenderness and reveals to us the secret of his friendship. He wept at the tomb of Lazarus for the moments of sadness his friends had been forced to endure in order that God's will might be done and his power manifested.

2. Therefore to be moved at the distress of our friends is a good thing and holy, since our Lord gave full rein to this emotion.

Tears for the evils of the nation

1. He wept at the idea of the destruction of his city and nation.

(a) Useless to insist further in the love of Jesus for his people, the Jews.

(b) The Old Testament gives full proof of it.

2. Religion does not destroy patriotism—on the contrary, it elevates and fortifies it.

Tears for sin and its punishment

1. Undoubtedly the real motive for the tears of Jesus is the sin which Jerusalem committed in rejecting the grace of God and for which it was to be so terribly punished.

2. This is the strongest motive. The passions, if they are well directed, have to be actuated by the principal object of each of them, which should arouse them to the maximum degree of intensity, and always according to the dictates of reason.

(a) Sin contains motives more than sufficient: evil, gravity, ingratitude.

(b) In horror and dismay witness, you heavens, the sight; crumble in ruins! Two wrongs this people of mine committed; me they forsook, the fountain of living water, and thereupon they dug cisterns of their own, leaking cisterns, that water had none to give them (Jer. 2. 12-13).

Jesus weeping and overcome by sorrow

We may interpolate here three moments in which we find this.

1. In the Garden of Olives because of the sorrows of the passion, but he does not weep, he rises with courage to face his passion.

2. Before the tomb of Lazarus he is sad at the sorrows of others and weeps. But the remedy is in his hands and he raises Lazarus from the dead.

3. Before the thought of the hardened sinner he weeps again, but this time there is no remedy to hand and he cannot avoid the punishment which he will have to inflict.

Our tears

1. God does not wish us to live so occupied with thoughts of heaven that we are not saddened by the misfortunes of earth. This would be unnatural and therefore impossible.
2. He will reward our sadness at the misfortunes of our neighbours, because they cause us to make an act of love.
3. But our sadness should be directed by reason, and therefore it should attain its maximum at the thought of our sins and those of our neighbour. There is no earthly evil which can be compared to the evil of sin.
4. Let us examine our sins and those of the world and we shall find more than sufficient motives for tears.

H: Jerusalem and the soul

Jerusalem

1. *Jesus wept over the royal city of Jerusalem:*
 - (a) It has always been a symbol to represent the souls of men;
 - (b) the weeping of Jesus is merited also by those who live in sin.
2. *Mortal sin:*
We do not merely refer here to obstinate sinners who are hardened in their hearts, but to everyone who sins mortally.
3. *Deicide:*
We are accustomed to look with horror on this people who committed the crime of deicide. We should also learn to look on ourselves in the same way.

The sin of the Christian and that of Jerusalem

1. *A sin of perfidy:*
 - (a) *The Jews committed a great sin:*
Because being the chosen people, they did not take advantage of this situation so favourable to them to serve God, but to rebel against him:
 - i. *God* had made an alliance with them when he chose them from among all the other nations of the earth;
 - ii. *the prophets* love to speak of the Jews as the flock of the Lord;
 - iii. *their history* is a long story of rebellion and treason against him, of lip service and no more.
 - (b) *Christians too are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation . . . 1 Pet. 2. 9:*
 - i. *our alliance with God* is more perfect than that of the Jews, Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ;

ii. *rescued from the captivity of the devil*, we are fed with the body and blood of Christ and introduced into the kingdom here, the Church, and in eternity, in heaven.

2. *Sin of ingratitude:*

(a) *He went among the Jews doing good, and they preferred Barabbas:*

i. He said that he had been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and they handed him over to a Gentile to be tried and condemned. The parable of the renters of the vineyard fulfilled.

ii. The prophets and the Lord himself called them an adulterous generation, because they broke the alliance so many times, that marriage with God which should have been all-important to them.

(b) It is easy to think of the favours we have received from Christ, personal favours, without considering his passion and our redemption.

3. *The sin of cruelty:*

(a) *the Jews . . . unto death, and the death of the cross:*

(b) *our sin:*

i. We despise his passion and offend him after recognizing him as God and knowing that we have been redeemed by his sorrows.

ii. At least the Jews killed him because they did not know him for what he was (1 Cor. 2. 8).

iii. Had some enemy decried me, I could have borne it patiently; some open ill-wisher, I could have sheltered myself from his attack. But thou, my second self, my familiar friend! How pleasant was the companionship we shared, thou and I; how lovingly we walked as fellow pilgrims in the house of God! May death overtake them, may the abyss swallow them up alive, their homes, their hearts, so tainted with evil! (Ps. 54. 13-16).

The punishment of Jerusalem and that of the sinner

1. The greatest punishment God has in reserve for the obstinate sinner is that of permitting his obstinacy. We may compare the obstinacy of Jerusalem and that of the sinner.

(a) *That of the Jews:*

i. If thou couldst understand, above all in this day. . . .

ii. Blind to the doctrines and miracles of Christ.

iii. Even after the death of Christ, in spite of having the Sacred Books in their hands, their prophecies accomplished, they have now fallen into religious indifference and agnosticism—at least the majority.

- (b) The soul:
- i. Confesses, goes to Communion, hears sermons, and yet does not understand what it is doing nor the grace which is being wasted. If it would only understand its last end and the means given it to attain that end. . . .
 - ii. Incapable of seeing the open contradiction between its faith and life, it is a mere bearer of the Gospels as the Jews carried the old law to turn it into an accuser.

2. *Hardness or obstinacy:*

(a) Of the Jews:

- i. The parable of the renters of the vineyard who were also murderers.
- ii. God sent them his prophets and, last of all, his Son. Some they stoned, the latter they killed.

(b) Of the soul:

- i. Christ continually sends his ministers. How do we receive them?
- ii. We hear their preaching as if it referred to someone else, not to us; as if it were mere pulpit oratory, attentive only to the form of words used.
- iii. We kill them with the tongue, seeking in their lives something contrary to their preaching. Who knows if this is not done so as not to have to change our life?

3. *Final impenitence:*

(a) The ruin of Jerusalem.

(b) Death:

The soul surrounded by a wall of anxiety, the enemy army around it on all sides, pressing it until there is not a stone left on a stone. And let us never forget it, the thing to die is the body—the soul must live for ever.

I: The destruction of Jerusalem and the death of the sinner

The sinner and Jerusalem

1. *There is a clear likeness between them.*
2. *Both are threatened with the same end—terrible destruction:*

(a) Jerusalem:

- i. Apparently prosperous, at peace, with a magnificent temple.
- ii. Jesus however, who knows the depths of things and sees into the very secret places of the heart, weeps over it.
- iii. More still; he launches a threat against it, a prophecy announcing its ruin.

(b) The sinner:

- i. Often he lives in the midst of joys and mortal pastimes.
- ii. God knows perfectly the inner reality. In the sinner there is no supernatural life. The only thing there is sin, seed of eternal ruin.
- iii. The terrible characteristics of the death of the sinner are shown us in symbol in the destruction of Jerusalem.

Surrounded by enemies

1. So was Jerusalem when the armies of Titus and Vespasian arrived there in A.D. 68. They submitted it to one of the most terrible sieges known to history.
2. So too do the devils act with the dying sinner (St Gregory):
 - (a) They surround him with temptations, temporal cares and worries, so that he may be careless about his soul;
 - (b) they surround him with new temptations in an attempt to make his doom more certain still;
 - (c) especially they tempt him to despair, presenting to him with exaggerated ugliness the malice of his past sins. The devil acts in a very different way at the hour of death and during life. During life he presents any sin as small and insignificant; at the hour of death he magnifies them all, representing them as impossible of pardon.

Attacked on all sides

1. *Jerusalem:*

While the enemies waited without, the Jews within gave themselves up to pillage, seditions and all kinds of offences in their despair, urged on by hunger and sickness.

2. *This is a perfect image of the sinner:*

Completely surrounded by anguish at the moment of death; the peace which he seemed to enjoy is now gone altogether and is attacked on all sides.

- (a) **Above him**, an offended God, justly angry.
- (b) **Below him**, hell which awaits him and which is presented to him as imminent.
- (c) **Within him**, the gnawing worm of conscience which now anticipates one of the punishments shortly to be his.
- (d) **Around him**, the deceitful world, cause of all his troubles:
 - i. *worldly wealth*, once so dear, but now useless;
 - ii. *the attacks of the devils*;
 - iii. *relatives*, perhaps only apparently sad, but actually waiting to inherit his goods.

(e) before him: death and a tomb for his body and an immediate judgement for the soul (cf. St Alphonsus).

And bring down in ruin both thee and thy children . . .

1. *This happened literally in Jerusalem:*

The whole city was destroyed, the temple was burnt to the ground, the buildings destroyed and burnt, the inhabitants put to the sword or taken into captivity.

2. *It happens spiritually to the sinner:*

(a) He was excessively attached to the goods of this earth and to his sins.

(b) He will be torn violently from them and cast into the tomb.

(c) Death will take him by surprise, because he does not think about it. God punishes the sinner by allowing him to forget at the hour of death the God he has forgotten for so long during life, and also to forget himself and his last end.

(d) He will end in hell, as Satan fell like a ray of lightning.

Not leaving one stone of thee upon another . . .

1. *The picture of the death of the sinner once more:*

(a) He loses his material goods. He worried so much about them, now they cannot accompany him.

(b) Death will snatch from him all his titles, honours, position in which he trusted so much.

(c) He leaves behind him relatives and friends.

(d) Death deprives him of the fruits of any good works he may have done during life, because, since he dies in sin, those good works are useless.

(e) The small light of hope left to him now falls crashing to the ground as well.

i. Those proposals to amend his life sooner or later, etc.

ii. There is now no time, because death has taken him by surprise.

Conclusion

1. The Gospel ends by telling us that Jesus entered into the temple and cast out those who were selling things there. My house is a house of prayer; and you have made it into a den of thieves.

2. The sinner should take such measure as this in time, while he can.

(a) His soul is a house of prayer, a temple dedicated to God by sanctifying grace.

(b) Sins are like thieves in that temple.

(c) He should cast them out by a good confession, weeping for them with true sorrow and applying to himself the whip of penance.

J: I believe in the Holy Catholic Church

The importance of this dogmatic vision of the Church

1. We may presume the apologetic vision of the Church, such as we find in the texts of fundamental theology: all that the Gospels teach us about the foundation of that Church from the historical point of view, its constitution as an external and perfect society, etc.

2. The vision of the Church from the strictly dogmatic point of view is often lost sight of in this apologetic view. But it is coming ever more to the front in the study of the Mystical Body of Christ, especially since the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* of Pius XII.

The nature of the Church expressed in the names given to her

1. In the different names given to her by the sources of revelation and which have been confirmed by the ordinary magisterium of the Church we can discover the intimate nature of this society.

2. We shall choose some of the most significant.

3. *She is the Church:*

(a) **Reunion:**

Both in pagan and Christian literature the word means the reunion of the people.

(b) **An expression used by Christ:**

For example when he told St Peter that he was to be the rock on which his Church would be built (Matt. 16. 18).

(c) **A sense of community; a community of brothers:**

In this sense it is applied not merely to the Church on earth, but also to that of purgatory and heaven.

(d) **One community:**

All those who actually fight under the banner of Christ on earth, in purgatory and in heaven, form one sole community, joined by the most intimate ties of unity and of vital influence; there are the same interests, with the possibility of mutual help and mutual obligations. We ourselves are already in heaven in the persons of our brothers, and in purgatory.

4. *She is a city or house:*

It is impossible to penetrate to the full this beautiful sense of the Church, and the phrases used by the Scriptures to describe her in this way. We shall give some of them:

(a) **The city of God:**

i. As in former days Jerusalem was known by this name, the beloved and holy city.

ii. The new Jerusalem which has come down from heaven, rests on the mountain and whose inhabitants are companions of the saints (Eph. 2. 19).

iii. Christ will not weep over his new city, because she will remain until the end of the world, faithful to him, until she joins him in heaven.

(b) The house of God and of Christ:

i. The great house whose corner stone is Christ (Eph. 2. 20).

ii. A house made up of the faithful, the living stones which constitute it (1 Pet. 2. 5).

iii. From this idea comes the other of the living unity between the members, their dignity and the love in the heart of Christ for all those who are his members.

Conclusion

If to these names we add the others, that of temple of God, Spouse, Mystical Body of Christ, and the different metaphors with which the parables of the kingdom describe the Church, such as a net, a ship, leaven, a precious stone, grain of mustard seed, etc., we can attain a greater and more fruitful knowledge of what the Church means to us. We must not think of her simply as a hierarchical monarchy.

K: Vision of peace

1. If thou too couldst understand, above all in this day that is granted to thee, the ways that can bring thee peace (Luke 19. 42).

2. These are words of Christ as he contemplated the Holy City of Jerusalem.

3. He came to bring peace to the earth:

(a) To men of good will, peace on earth was the message of the angels at his birth.

(b) Peace is my bequest to you, and the peace which I give you is mine to give (John 14. 27).

(c) Peace to you, is the salutation of Jesus after his resurrection (John 20. 21).

Peace, a universal good

1. *The peace of the individual:*

(a) Peace in his body, the right order in all parts of it;

(b) peace of soul, especially the appetites and their relation with the reason;

(c) peace of body and soul—methodical life and health;

(d) peace between man and God, consists in the obedience which he gives to God in living faith, under the eternal law.

2. *Peace in society:*

(a) Between men in concord and harmony;

(b) peace in the home and family, the unanimity in obeying and commanding of those who live together;

(c) peace in the city, that of the citizens, again in obedience and concord.

3. *Peace among nations:*

The thing most desired and sought for in our time—the world is uneasy at the moment, and all efforts seem to be in vain which are directed towards a more peaceful existence.

4. *The reason for this:*

(a) Man has forgotten that, unless he is at peace with God, it is very difficult for him to have peace with others;

(b) the law of God is the only basis for true peace between nations;

(c) the fundamental rights of individuals and nations have been overlooked.

5. Pius XII pointed out these fundamentals, in his five points, which it is as well to quote frequently, because they are so easily forgotten.

(a) *The dignity and rights of the human person:*

The right to maintain and develop physical, intellectual and moral life, and in particular the right to a religious training and education; the right to worship God, both in private and in public, including the right to engage in religious works of charity; the right, in principle, to marriage and to the attainment of the purpose of marriage, the right to wedded society and home life; the right to work as an indispensable means for the maintenance of family life; the right to the free choice of a state of life; and therefore of the priestly and religious state; the right to a use of material goods, subject to its duties and social limitations.

(b) *The protection of social unity and especially of the family:*

This implies marriage as the Christian law knows it, indissoluble, with a family life in the proper conditions, the space, light and air it needs to fulfil its mission for Church and State.

(c) *The dignity and the prerogatives of labour:*

With this goes a measure of private property for all as an ideal.

(d) *The restoration of the juridical constitution:*

i. A tribunal and judge taking their directions from a law clearly defined;

ii. clear legal principles which cannot be upset by unwarranted appeals to a supposed popular sentiment or by mere humanitarian considerations;

iii. the recognition of the principle that the State also, and the officials and organizations dependent upon it, are under the obligation of revising and withdrawing such measures as are incompatible with the liberty, the property, the honour, the advancement or the welfare of individuals.

(e) **The Christian concept of the State:**

In its proper function of serving society and a full respect for the human person, and for his activity in pursuit of his eternal destiny (*The Rights of Man*, Encycl. Pius XII).

6. **The Pope goes on to warn the world, as Christ warned Jerusalem:**

If the evil spirit of materialism gains the mastery, if the rough hands of power and tyranny are suffered to guide events, you will then see daily signs of the disintegration of human fellowship, and love and justice will disappear—presaging the catastrophes which must come upon a society that has apostatized from God (*ibid.*).

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

THE PHARISEE AND THE
PUBLICAN

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12. 2-11

Gospel: Luke 18. 9-14

Texts concerning pride

1. *The punishment of pride:*

- (a) Tower of Babel. Gen. 11. 4-9.
- (b) Goliath. 1 Kings 17. 48-51.
- (c) Senacherib. 4 Kings 19. 35-37.
- (d) Holofernes. Judith 13. 6-11.
- (e) Nabuchodonosor. Dan. 4. 28-30.

2. *How God brings down pride to the dust:*

Pride will come low: honour awaits the humble. Prov. 29. 23.

He has put down the mighty from their seat, and exalted the lowly. Luke 1. 52.

And thou, Capharnaum, dost thou hope to be lifted up high as heaven? Thou shalt be brought low as hell. Luke 10. 15.

Everyone that exalts himself shall be humbled, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. Luke 14. 11.

Bow down, then, before the strong hand of God; he will raise you up, when his time comes to deliver you. 1 Pet. 5. 6.

God thwarts the proud, and keeps his grace for the humble. *Ibid.* 5. 5.

3. *God's hatred of pride:*

Six things I will tell thee, and name a seventh for good measure, the Lord hates and will never abide; the haughty look, the lying tongue, the hands that take innocent life. Prov. 6. 16-17.

A house where pride reigns the Lord will pull down at last. . . . *Ibid.* 15. 25.

A proud man the Lord holds in abhorrence; depend upon it, no acquittal shall he find. Prov. 16. 5.

4. *Counsels to humility and against pride:*

Pride is neighbour to disesteem; humility to wisdom. Prov. 11. 2. Cf. Tob. 4. 14.

Ever there is wrangling among the proud; wisdom's part is to be guided by other men's counsel. Prov. 13. 10.

Pride's beginning is man's revolt from God, when the heart forgets its Maker; and of all sin pride is the root. *Ecclus. 10. 14.* Cf. verses that follow.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

1. *The feast of St Lawrence:*

Celebrated in Rome with great solemnity, just as was the feast of St Peter and Paul. However, in the latter there are signs of the Feast in the liturgy of the Sunday; on this occasion there are none.

2. *Two types of Christian and two of piety:*

In this parable we see two types of Christian and two types of piety, the proud and the humble; the first is false, the second true. In this individual sense there is no difficulty in admitting a relation between the epistle and the gospel, since the former presents us with the foundation of that humility preached by the gospel. According to St Paul, everything in us is the work of the Holy Spirit, who pours out his gifts in different ways on different individuals, to such an extreme that we cannot even say the Lord Jesus, without the aid of the Spirit.

3. *The prayers:*

Full of humility, all of them, but of especial interest the collect, in which we take refuge in the mercy of God. When we remember that mercy is intimately linked with misery we can see that only the truly humble of heart can say this prayer. The rest of the Mass is a canticle of confidence in God which, even if distinct from humility, must go hand in hand with it all the same.

4. *The Jewish nation and the Gentiles:*

Dom Guéranger sees in this parable a comparison between the Jews and the Gentiles, the former being rejected for their pride, the latter far from God as yet, but weeping for their sins. This is based on a text of the Ven. Bede. Although this interpretation may be less practical, it serves for a sermon on the two peoples, as a commentary on the last words of the Gospel: Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12. 2-11

1. *Occasion and argument:*

Among the various questions put to St Paul by the Christians of Corinth was this one, which of the charismatic gifts was the most

important. It is obvious from Paul's writings that in Corinth these supernatural manifestations of the primitive Church abounded, but also that many of those who possessed them grew very proud of them, and looked down on others, who only had what they thought to be lesser gifts. Among all of these the early Christians seem to have attached most importance to the gift of tongues, which is really the least important.

It is very difficult to determine in what these gifts consisted, and all that has been written about them is merely hypothetical. Christ, when he ascended into heaven, promised that his followers would be able to cast out devils, speak with tongues and make poisons ineffective. No sooner had he ascended and the Holy Spirit come upon the Church than this did actually happen. Acts 2. 4 describes how their praises of God went up to him in various tongues; and the same type of thing happened in Samaria (8. 6) and in other places.

(a) Apparently there are twenty of these gifts, if we compare the various descriptions of some of them and exclude those which are repeated in the different lists (cf. 1 Cor. 12. 8-10; Eph. 4. 11; Rom. 12. 6-8). Of these ten appear to be destined for the instruction of the faithful, six to remedy bodily necessities and four for the ruling of the Church.

(b) *Their definition:*

Since St John Chrysostom, who was steeped in Pauline theology, confesses his ignorance about these gifts, we may well limit ourselves to a brief definition of them in general. They are free gifts of God, supernatural but passing, given for the common good and the edification of the Mystical Body. They do not necessarily imply personal sanctity, nor are they intended for personal sanctification. These elements serve to distinguish them from sanctifying and actual graces.

St Paul's purpose here is to prove to his readers just that point: that these gifts are inferior to charity, which is not one of them, but which is by far superior to them all. Therefore it is stupid to be so proud of them, because they are destined for the common good, not for the sanctity of the individual.

2. *Texts:*

(a) *While you were still heathens . . .*

He reminds them of this for two reasons; first because these phenomena took place at times, at least some of them, in the course of the pagan rites, when the congregation became hysterical. Secondly, he wishes to show them the difference between the Christian rites and those of paganism.

(b) *No one can be speaking through God's spirit . . .*

St Paul wishes to establish a criterion which will serve to distinguish the true from the false in this matter of the charismatic gifts.

It would appear that, in some cases, they were reproduced by the devil, either as ancient forms of paganism coming to the front, or even a devil's trick to disorientate the Christians of the time. It must be remembered that Paul is not giving us a general touchstone which will serve for all time and on all occasions, but only for this one. Later there will be others, the divinity and humanity in one person in the time of Arius, that of the merits of good works in the days of Luther and so on. We can see this clearly if we remember St John's criterion (cf. Prat, *Theology of St Paul*, 1. 2, chap. 1).

(c) **There are different kinds of gifts . . .**

Not in the sense of groups, but in that of distribution, cf. verse 11. The different words used in these verses from 4-6 do not seem to indicate classification; rather the different names seem to apply to one and the same gift as it is appropriated to each of the Three Persons of the Trinity.

(d) **It is the same Spirit who gives them . . .**

The main theme here is the free distribution and that they are given for the common good. That is why he repeats this in verse 11. It is one and the same Spirit who distributes his gifts as he wills to each severally. Therefore they are all equal in dignity. There is no room for pride and all should be employed for the edification of the Mystical Body of Christ, of which we are members. He goes on with this theme in the verses which follow, from 13 to 31, until he reaches the next chapter, in which he shows that none of them can be compared with charity, without which they are nothing.

3. **Applications:**

The central Pauline idea is that we must have a spirit of service and a lack of egoism if we are to be of any use in the Church of God.

The charismatic gifts have disappeared in our day, but not all of us have the same gifts in other ways, either in the form of natural graces or supernatural. We have one negative obligation—that of avoiding pride; and one positive—that of joining together, all of us, in the service of God and his Church.

We may note with certain confusion, and for our own lessons, that the early Christians, at the very dawn of the life of the Church, were not free from this spirit of pride and self-esteem. Times have changed, it is true, and the Church is no longer rich or powerful in the material sense. However, the spiritual authority vested in priests and bishops can still make them think themselves superior to others. Let us all take refuge in St Paul.

The layman also has his gifts and to him as well this Pauline formula should be applied. Those who take part in any form of Catholic Action should be most careful to read and study this doctrine.

B: The Gospel: Luke 18. 9-14

1. **Occasion and argument:**

On occasions the Gospel texts are difficult to interpret because of the depth of meaning they contain and also because of their obscurity. That does not happen here, because this parable is so clearly taught by our Lord that it hardly needs a commentary.

What was our Lord's real purpose in teaching this parable? Possibly the opening words give it to us. There were some who had confidence in themselves, thinking they had won acceptance from God, and despised the rest of the world; to them he addressed this other parable. It would seem, then, that Christ wished to teach the value of the opposite virtue to this vice of the offenders. However, the more common interpretation is that his object was to inculcate humility in prayer. St Luke joins this parable to that of the unjust judge, which appears to confirm this interpretation, but it is not sure that Christ taught them both on the same occasion. All the interpretations fit in one with another, however, so there is no need to take the matter further.

2. **The parable:**

(a) **The sin of the Pharisees:**

The main sin of the Pharisees was, as we have said before (seventh Sunday after Pentecost), an extreme of vanity and esteem of their own virtues, which they considered superior to those of others. There are pages of the Talmud which would surprise anyone in their vanity and exaggeration. This book puts in the mouth of one Simon, son of Jochai: I can pay for the sins of the whole world from the day I was born until now, and if my son, Eleazar, were to die he could free the world and all men who live in it from the moment it was created until now. . . . If those who were invited to the banquet of the Lord were a thousand, my son and I would be among them; if they were only two, the guests would be my son and I. It is to such as these that the Lord directs his warning, and this parable.

(b) **went up to the temple to pray . . .**

If we make an exception of the North side of the city of Jerusalem, it was necessary to go up quite literally to the temple.

(c) **One was a Pharisee, the other a publican . . .**

The publicans were Jews, with a bad reputation among their fellows, for two reasons; first of all, they were the tax gatherers for the Romans, and as such represented a foreign power. On the other hand, they had the bad system of farming out taxes and of exacting what they thought was just and due to their masters—and it was not always just by any means.

(d) The prayer of the Pharisee:

His method of prayer is typical, as we know from what our Lord said on other occasions. His bodily attitude is typical of the Pharisees of his time, arms stretched out, a loud voice—as of one who was accustomed to seek the first seats at the table when invited! I am not as the rest of men. What an insult to the rest! He did more than anyone else, if the Levite commanded fasts one a week, he fasted twice! He does not ask for anything (he knows nothing of the prayer of petition), because of the virtues with which he is clothed. He does not need to plead—he can demand!

(e) The prayer of the publican:

Typical of one who feels that he should not even be there at all! Bowed down, in humility, pleading for pardon for all he knows he has done wrong. Far from the altar, trembling and afraid of the justice of God. His face to the earth.

(f) The result:

Humility led a thief to paradise before the apostles. If humility alone can do that, what can it not do when united with justice? What will it not do if joined to sin? He went down to his house higher in God's favour than the other. . . .

3. Applications:

There is no need to do more than give the obvious ones, since the parable is so clear. We can leave it to the other sections of this Sunday to explain in detail what applications can be drawn from it.

(a) Humility:

This is based on one principle: all I have of good comes from God. From which it follows that:

- i. nothing is mine;
- ii. I am pleased that all is his and my mind rebels against any other idea;
- iii. if I receive all from him I must also ask him for all things;
- iv. to compare myself with others is stupidity, and can only annoy God, the free giver of all gifts.

(b) Humility in prayer:

We must ask God to preserve the gifts in us which he himself has given us. The supreme example of this type of prayer is that of the publican, humble both in his exterior attitude and his interior spirit, contrite and full of confidence. He would not be so humble were he not sure of pardon.

There have always been Pharisees; can we be quite sure that we are not among them?

4. Human judgements:

If we had to judge between these two men, on the data given in the Gospel, or if we had to choose the first Pope, it is possible that we

might have chosen Judas, the only apparently prudent man among the apostles and an administrator to boot! He only speaks twice, and one of his remarks seems very sensible, when he complains that Mary's ointment was wasted by being poured out on the feet of Christ, when it could have been sold and the money used more profitably. That is what the judgements of the world are like. But how different are those of God.

If we saw this Pharisee enter into the temple, a just man who was zealous for the law, and then we noticed the publican follow him, the shameful stain still on his hands through contact with the imperial coinage, which one of them would we have chosen as the more pleasing to God? We know now which one the Pharisee chose and which one God selected.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

On humility and charity

(Selections from his writings on these two subjects.)

1. On fasting, demonstrated by good works:

So that, in the midst of our fast, we may not lose the reward due to it, we must learn how to fast properly. Because the Pharisee also fasted, but after his fast he went away empty and without any fruit. The publican did not fast, yet he progressed further than the Pharisee, to show us that fasting is utterly useless if it is not accompanied by everything else.

The inhabitants of Nineve fasted and were saved, the Jews fasted and were condemned. I say all this, not that we may despise fasting, but that we may honour it, since its main glory is not abstaining from food, but from sins. Thus he who defines fasting by saying that it is abstaining merely from food is the one who insults it most.

Do you fast? Then show it by your works. With what works, you may ask? Well, if you see a poor man, have mercy on him; if an enemy, be reconciled to him; if a beautiful woman, then pass her by afar off. Do not let your stomach fast merely, but your eyes, your ears, your hands and all your senses. Let the hands fast by being free of all avarice and rapine; the feet, by keeping them from the steps which lead to evil spectacles; the eyes, learning to avoid lascivious looks and not to be led away by beauty; the look is the food of the eyes, and if it is illicit, forbidden, then it harms your fast and

destroys the health of the soul; if it be permitted it adds beauty to your fast.

2. *Charity:*

Let your lips fast too, depriving them of harmful words which are offensive. Of what use is it to us to starve ourselves of the flesh of birds or of fish if we then devour our brother? He who is uncharitable in speech eats the flesh of his brother. You have not sunken your teeth in his flesh, but you have sunk your evil in his soul. . . .

What is more, you have done harm to the Church, because those who hear you will not merely accuse the sinner but also think badly of all Christians. . . .

And do not tell me that detraction consists in saying something which is false and that it cannot exist if the things said are true, because to speak evil, even if what is said is true, is a sin, because the Pharisee cursed the publican and with reason. . . . Was not the publican a sinner? Certainly he was, but because he spoke evil of him, the Pharisee went away having lost all his merits.

Pour out your charity on the sinner, persuade him to seek his own good and that you will look after him; do not seek to put him to shame but to help him and warn him of his sin. Embrace his feet, kiss him, do not blush for shame if you wish to cure him. This is what doctors do until they have won the confidence of their patients and persuaded them to take the prescribed medicine. . . .

3. *Humble thanksgiving:*

Do not let us give way to pride. On the contrary, let us call ourselves useless in order to become useful. If you say that you are worthy of praise, you will only make yourself worthy of blame, even though you merit praises. If you call yourself useless you will be useful even though you merit censure. For that reason it is very necessary that we should forget our good works. But how can I forget what I know to be true? When you offend God you live quite tranquilly and you laugh, without thinking of your sin and forgetting everything; and cannot you forget your good works? Even when we should have been in a state of great fear because of our daily sins we forgot it; yet you give a small alms to a poor man and you are always thinking about it, which is a great stupidity and very bad for the person who indulges in it. The best way of keeping them quite safe is to forget our good works. When we walk through the streets showing off our clothes and jewels, we only awaken the interest of thieves; but they are quite safe if we guard them at home. . . .

Do not remember them very often (the good works), unless someone should rob you, as happened to the Pharisee, who had them always upon the tip of his tongue and for that reason the devil stole them from him. Even when you do remember them, give grateful thanks to God and offer them to him.

4. *Give thanks and confess your sins:*

If you thank God, that is enough; if you do not say anything to men and do not judge your neighbour, then that is good; because judging others is not giving thanks to God. . . . To confess one's own sins, that is giving thanks, and he who admits that he is full of sin and does not refuse to suffer the punishment due to him, he is the one who gives thanks best.

. . . Admit that you have attained salvation by means of his grace, so that thus he may confess himself to be your debtor not only because of your good works, but because of your thankful heart. God is our debtor through our good works, but when we do not think of them as good, when we think we have done nothing really good, then he is our debtor, not only through the works themselves, but also through our sentiments. . . . but if our sentiments are wanting then no good works appear really great. This happens in the case of our own servants, we appreciate them more when they serve us well and do not think that they have done anything out of the ordinary.

5. *Five ways of attaining to the forgiveness of our sins:*

(a) *confessing them:*

You are a sinner, but do not allow that to discourage you. You have sinned. Tell God so: I have sinned. Does it cost you so much effort? Does it suppose a tiring labour? Have you got to go to great lengths? Even when you do not confess that you are a sinner, will the devil cease from accusing you? Take it upon yourself to relieve him of his office, which is only that of accusing. Why don't you get in before him, confess your sins and cleanse yourself of them by penance? especially when you know that you are dealing with an enemy of this kind?

(b) *tears.*

(c) *humility:*

Be humble and you will break the chains of sin. The Scripture teaches you this in the lesson of the Pharisee and publican. Two men went up to the temple to pray, a Pharisee and a publican, and the Pharisee began to enumerate his virtues. I am not a sinner, he said, like this publican. O unfaithful and unfortunate soul! You have already condemned the whole world and now you wish to condemn this, your brother. . . .

What does the publican do? Hearing all that, he does not say: Who are you to throw my sins in my face? How do you know what my life has been? . . . Nothing like that did he say, but bowing down to the ground and adoring the Lord he says: Be merciful to me, a sinner, and just because he did pray thus, with humility, he was justified. The Pharisee left the temple, having lost his justice,

the publican after having acquired it; and thus words were for once more powerful than deeds, because one lost the justice of his works, and the other, by his words, attained it.

(d) prayer and humility:

In order to bring God to our help the following is enough: sadness, tears, groans, separation from evil and a fear of judgement. God hears us, first because we are worthy; secondly because we pray as he commanded; thirdly because we pray without ceasing; fourth because we do not ask things which pertain to this life; fifth because we ask for what is really useful. . . . See how many have been heard for these reasons; Cornelius, because of his good life (Acts 10. 4); the woman of Syro-Phenecia, because of her constancy (Matt. 15. 28); Solomon, because he asked neither for wealth nor for the lives of his enemies (3 Kings 3. 11); and the publican for his humility.

Just as many are heard for these reasons, so there are others, who are just, but do not receive what they plead for. Who was more just than Paul? Yet because he asked for what was not useful he was not heard. The grace of God was sufficient for him, as he was told.

II. ST AUGUSTINE

Faith the gift of the humble, not the proud:

But because faith is given to the humble, not to the proud, he said to some who trusted in themselves as just and who despised others, this parable. Two men went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The former said, O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men. He should at least have said: As are many other men. What does the phrase the rest of men mean, if not all men except myself. I, he says, am the just man, the rest are all sinners. . . . Do you not see how the presence near him of the publican is but an occasion of greater pride? . . . As also is this publican. I, he says, am unique; he belongs to the rest. I, he says, I am nothing like this man, because of my just works, by which I am superior to all.

But what did he ask of God? Nothing. Search his word and you will find nothing. He wished only to praise himself. As if it were not enough not to ask God for anything but only to praise himself, he also insults the other man present there.

The publican was standing afar off. Yet he was slowly drawing nearer to God. His conscience held him afar off; his piety brought him closer. The Lord bent down to him from near at hand. Learn further of the humility of the publican. It matters little that he stood afar off; nor that he would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven. He did not look up so that he might be looked at. He did not dare to look up. Conscience pressed him down; hope uplifted him.

And learn yet more about him. He struck his breast. He exacted punishment of himself; and for this the Lord spared the sinner, confessing his sin. Hear how he prays. What wonder that God forgives him, when he accuses himself in this manner.

You have heard the case of the Pharisee and the publican, now hear the sentence. . . . Amen I say to you, this man went back home higher in God's favour than the other. Tell us, Lord, the grounds for this sentence! I see the publican goes down from the temple justified, not the Pharisee. But I want to know why. You want to know why? Hear why. Because: everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted. You have heard the sentence, beware of the evil grounds for it. I shall put this in another way; you have heard the sentence; beware of pride.

III. ST BEDE

On the parable

(We shall give some extracts only from Book V of his *Exposition of Luke*, PL. 92, 551.)

The proud:

Though they are far from doing all things that are commanded them, and do only a little of what they are told, nevertheless, not only do they dare to pride themselves upon their justice, but they despise others; and so when they pray they are not heard, since their faith is without works.

The pride of arrogant men is shown to us in four ways; when they think the good within them comes from themselves, or if they believe that it is given to them from on high, they think they have received it because of their merits. Most certainly when they boast of having that which they do not in fact possess, and lastly, when they despise others and boast of having in a unique way the little they do possess. . . .

This man went back home higher in God's favour than the other. What a hope of pardon have we here for those who truly repent, when a publican weeps and repents for the guilty state of his soul, and though he comes to the temple a sinner, he goes down from the temple justified.

Mystically, however, the Pharisee stands for the Jewish people, who prided themselves on their merits which arose from the justification given by the Law. The publican stands for the Gentile, who, while far from God, confesses his sins. Of these, one, because of pride, goes away humbled; the other, because of humble repentance, merited to draw nearer to God. . . . We, having before our eyes our own laziness, but also keeping in mind the virtues of those

who are better than we are, shall be humbled unto glory in the measure in which each of us, bowed down and humble, prays thus within himself: O Almighty God, have mercy on me, thy suppliant; for I am not as they, thy innumerable servants, sublime in their contempt of the world, admirable in virtue, angelic in the glory of their chastity, as are many who, after public offences, came to know and love thee. And I, if I have done any good I know not in what measure I have done it; or what penalties may be weighed in the scale against it!

IV. ST BASIL

On humility and how to attain it

How are we to come to this saving humility and leave behind us the swollen pride which is so deadly? By exercising ourselves in it in all things and by keeping in mind that there is nothing which cannot be a danger to us. For the soul becomes like those things to which it gives itself and takes the character and appearance of the things it does. Let your behaviour, your dress, your gait, your manner, the nature of your food, the quality of your bed, your house and its contents, aim at simplicity. Let your speech, singing, manner with your neighbour, all be more in accord with humility than with vanity and pride. In your words, let there be no empty pretence, in your singing no excessive sweetness, in conversation not ponderous or overbearing. In all things refrain from trying to appear important. Be a help to your friends, kind to the ones you live with, gentle to servants, patient with those who are troublesome, loving towards the poor and lowly, a comfort to those in trouble, visiting those in affliction, never despising anyone, gracious in friendship, cheerful in your replies, courteous and approachable to all, never speaking your own praises nor getting others to speak them, never taking part in unbecoming conversations, concealing where you can whatever gifts you may have.

On the contrary, accuse yourself of your own faults and do not wait for others to discover them and find fault with you; that you may be like the just man who is his own accuser (Job 31. 18). Do not be heavy in rebuking nor reproach another quickly or in anger (for this is a kind of arrogance) and do not find fault over little things, as though you yourself were completely perfect. Give your help to those who have made a mistake, assisting them spiritually to recover themselves, as the apostle warns us (Gal. 6. 1).

Be as eager not to be glorified among men as others are to seek that glory; remembering the words of Christ, that he loses his reward before God who seeks to be honoured among men, doing good that he may be seen by them. They have received their reward, he says of such as these. So do not bring loss on yourself by seeking this

praise. Since God is a great watcher of men, seek glory before him alone, for he gives you a splendid reward. Have you attained to dignity, that men should stand around you and show you respect? Then become like those subject to you, not as having power, as the Scriptures say, and lording it over the clergy, nor after the manner of earthly rulers. For he who would be first is commanded by the Lord to be the servant of all.

In brief, follow after humility as a lover of it. Love it, and it will glorify you. If you wish to attain the true glory then this is the way, with the angels and with God. In the presence of the angels Christ will acknowledge you as his disciple. He will give you glory if you imitate his humility who said: Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.

SECTION IV. THEOLOGIAN

I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

Humility (2-2 q. 161 a. 1-6)

1. Definition:

As Isidore observes, a humble man is so called because he is, as it were *humo acclinis*, i.e. inclined to the lowest place . . . when a man, considering his own failings, assumes the lowest place. It restrains the appetite from aiming at great things against right reason (*a. 1*).

2. False and true humility:

Humility . . . conveys the notion of a praiseworthy self-abasement to the lowest place. Now this is sometimes done merely in outward signs and pretence, wherefore it is false humility, of which Augustine says that it is grievous pride, since it would seem to aim at excellence of glory. Sometimes, however, it is done by an inward movement of soul, and in this way, properly speaking, humility is considered a virtue, because virtue does not consist in externals, but chiefly in the inward choice of the mind.

3. Self-knowledge and humility:

It belongs properly to humility that a man restrain himself from being borne towards that which is above him. For this purpose he must know his disproportion to that which surpasses his capacity. Hence knowledge of one's own deficiency belongs to humility, as a rule guiding the appetite. Nevertheless humility is essentially in the appetite itself, and consequently it must be said that humility, properly speaking, moderates the movement of the appetite (*a. 2*).

It is possible, without falsehood, to deem and avow oneself the most despicable of men, as regards the hidden faults which we acknowledge in ourselves, and the hidden gifts of God which others

have. Hence Augustine says: Bethink you that some persons are in some hidden way better than you, although outwardly you are better than they. Again, without falsehood one may avow and believe oneself in all ways unprofitable and useless in respect of one's own capability, so as to refer all one's sufficiency to God, according to 2 Cor. 3. 5.

4. Excellence of humility:

The good of human virtue pertains to the order of reason; which order is considered chiefly according to the end; wherefore the theological virtues are the greatest, because they have the last end for their object. Secondly, however, it is considered in reference to the ordering of the means to the end. This ordinance, as to its essence, is the reason itself from which it issues, but by participation it is in the appetite ordered by reason; and this ordinance is the effect of justice, especially legal justice. Now humility makes a man a good subject to ordinance of all kinds and in all matters; while every other virtue has this effect in some special matter. Therefore after the theological virtues, after the intellectual virtues which regard the reason itself, and after justice, especially legal justice, humility stands before all others.

5. The foundation of holiness:

Just as the orderly assembly of virtues is, by reason of a certain likeness, compared to a building, so again, that which is the first step in the acquisition of virtue is likened to the foundation, which is first laid before the rest of the building. Now the virtues are in truth infused by God. Wherefore the first step in the acquisition of virtue may be understood in two ways. First by way of removing obstacles, and thus humility holds first place, in as much as it expels pride, which God resisteth, and makes man submissive and ever open to receive the influx of divine grace. . . .

The reason why Christ chiefly proposed humility to us was because it especially removes the obstacle to man's spiritual welfare, consisting in man's aiming at heavenly and spiritual things, in which he is hindered by striving to become great in earthly things. Hence our Lord, in order to remove an obstacle to our spiritual welfare, showed, by giving an example of humility, that outward exaltation is to be despised. Thus humility is, as it were, a disposition to man's untrammelled access to spiritual and divine goods.

6. Effects of humility:

(a) Subjection to God:

The philosopher intended to treat of virtues as directed to civic life, wherein the subjection of one man to another is defined according to the ordinance of the law, and consequently is a matter for legal justice. But humility, considered as a special virtue, regards

chiefly the subjection of man to God, for whose sake he humbles himself by submitting himself to others (*a. 1. 5*).

(b) Submission to the neighbour for God's sake:

We may consider two things in man, namely, that which is God's and that which is man's. Whatever pertains to defect is man's; but whatever pertains to man's welfare and perfection is God's. . . . Now humility properly regards the reverence whereby man is subject to God. Wherefore every man, in respect of that which is his own, ought to submit himself to every neighbour, in respect of that which the latter has from God; but humility does not require a man to subject what he has of God's to that which may seem to be God's in another. . . . In like manner humility does not require a man to subject that which he has of his own to that which his neighbour has of man's. . . . Nevertheless a man may esteem his neighbour to have some good which he lacks himself, or himself to have some evil which another has not; by reason of which he may subject himself to him with humility (*a. 3 c.*).

(c) This submission must be interior and sincere:

Humility, like other virtues, resides chiefly inwardly in the soul. Consequently a man, by an inward act of the soul, may subject himself to another without giving the other man an occasion of spiritual detriment (*ad 3ium*).

(d) Moderation in the outward acts:

On the other hand, due moderation must be observed in the outward acts of humility, as of other virtues, lest they conduce to the detriment of others. If however a man does as he ought, and others take therefrom an occasion of sin, this is not imputed to the man who acts with humility, since he does not give scandal, although others take it (*ibid.*).

II. ST BONAVENTURE

Knowledge of oneself

(A brief summary of his doctrine)

1. Indispensable for perfection:

The spouse of Christ who wishes to scale the heights must first of all fix her attention on herself, forgetting exterior things. Let her enter into the secret place of her own conscience and there with diligent care investigate and examine and see all her defects, habits, affections, works, sins, both past and present. To arrive at this knowledge properly let her know that these sins are due to one of three things; to neglect, through concupiscence or through malice.

2. *Know the sins of negligence:*

Know especially those due to not keeping a careful guard over our heart, in the employment of our time, and in giving a twisted end to our actions:

- (a) negligence in prayer, reading and good works;
- (b) in repenting for sin, in resistance to temptation and making full use of our opportunities and gifts.

3. We must also know the strength of concupiscence, examining with special care our love of pleasure, of curiosity and vanity.

4. We must also see if there prevails in us the spirit of anger, jealousy and sloth.

5. This self-knowledge is necessary, but we shall never attain it without the spirit of recollection. Right judgement is impossible until we do know ourselves, and we cannot enter heaven without it. As St Bernard says: God grant that I may not know anything else except myself.

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST FRANCIS DE SALES

True Humility

To receive the grace of God into our hearts they must be empty of our own glory. . . . Humility repels Satan and preserves in us the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and therefore all the saints, but particularly the King of saints and his Mother, have always honoured and cherished this virtue more than any other of the moral virtues.

We call that glory vain which we give to ourselves, either for that which is not in us, or for that which is in us but not ours, or for that which is in us and is ours, but does not deserve that we should glory in it. Nobility of race, the favour of the great, and popular esteem are things which are not in us, but either in our predecessors or in the esteem of other men. . . . Honours, high station and dignities are like the saffron, which prospers better and grows more abundantly when it is trodden under foot. . . . Honours are a source of sweet consolations to him who inhales their odour from afar and in a passing manner, without setting great store on them or being eager for them; but they are blameworthy and contemptible when a person sets his affection upon them and delights in them.

The pursuit and love of virtue begins to make us virtuous, but the pursuit and love of honours begins to make us contemptible and blameworthy. The well-born do not trouble themselves about these little trifles of rank, of honours and of salutations; they have other

things to do. It is a mark of degenerate spirits. . . . Many will not or dare not think of and consider the graces which God has bestowed upon them personally, for fear of vain-glory and self-complacency, in which they certainly deceive themselves; for since, as the Angelic Doctor says, the true means of attaining to the love of God is the consideration of his benefits, the more we know them, the more we shall love him. . . .

Certainly, nothing can so much humble us before the mercy of God as the multitude of his benefits, nor can anything so humble us before his justice as the multitude of our misdeeds. Let us consider what he has done for us, and what we have done against him; and as we consider our sins in detail, let us also consider his graces in detail. We need not fear that the knowledge of what he has placed in us will puff us up, provided that we are attentive to this truth, that what is good in us is not of ourselves. . . . But if, in considering the graces which God has given us, any sort of vanity should be stirred up, the infallible remedy will be to have recourse to the consideration of our ingratitude, of our imperfections and of our miseries; if we consider what we have done when God has not been with us, we shall realize clearly that what we do when he is with us is not of our own doing, nor of our own thinking. We shall indeed possess the good, and we shall rejoice because we possess it, but we shall give the glory to God alone, because he is the author of it. . . .

We say many a time that we are nothing, that we are misery itself and the very off-scouring of the world; but we should be very annoyed if we were taken at our word and proclaimed to be what we say. On the contrary, we make a pretence of running away and hiding ourselves, in order that men may run after us and seek us; we make a show of being the last and seated at the lower end of the table, but we only do so in order to pass more advantageously to the top. True humility makes no pretence of being humble, and scarcely ever utters words of humility, because it desires not only to hide the other virtues, but also and principally it seeks to hide itself. . . .

My advice, therefore, is this; either let us refrain from speaking words of humility, or let us say them with a true interior sentiment conformable to what we say outwardly. Let us never lower our eyes without humbling our hearts. Let us not make a show of willing to be last, unless in our hearts we wish to be such. Now I hold this rule to be so universal that I allow no exception to it. I would only add that civility requires that we should sometimes offer precedence to others who will certainly refuse it, and this is neither duplicity nor false humility. . . .

Many say that they leave mental prayer to the perfect, and that they are not worthy to practise it; others protest that they dare not communicate often, because they do not think themselves pure enough; others, that they fear to disgrace devotion if they meddle

with it, because of their great misery and weakness; and others refuse to employ their talents in the service of God and their neighbour because, so they say, they know their own feebleness and are afraid of becoming proud if they are the instruments of some good, and of being consumed themselves while they enlighten others. All this is but artifice, and a kind of humility which is not only false, but evil. . . .

To think that we know what we do not know is clear folly; to wish to appear learned when we are well aware that we are ignorant of the subject is intolerable vanity; for my part, even if I had a knowledge of a subject, I would not wish to appear learned; nor, on the other hand, would I wish to appear ignorant. . . .

I have no wish either to play the fool or the wise man; for if humility prevents me from playing the wise man, simplicity and sincerity will likewise prevent me from playing the fool; and if vanity is contrary to humility, artifice, affectation and dissimulation are contrary to sincerity and simplicity. . . .

But you wish to know which are the best objections; and I tell you plainly that the most profitable to the soul and the most pleasing in the eyes of God are those which come to us accidentally or by our condition of life, because we have not chosen them ourselves, but have received them as they are sent to us by God, whose choice is always better than ours. But if we are to choose, the greatest are the best; and those are esteemed the greatest which are most contrary to our inclinations, provided that they be conformable to our vocation, for, to say it once for all, our choice and election spoils and lessens almost all our virtues. Who will give us the grace to say, with the great king, I have chosen to be an abject in the house of God rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners. No one can do it but he who, to exalt us, so lived and died that he was the reproach of men and an abject among the people (Ps. 21. 7).

II. BOURDALOUE

(Under the title: 'Thoughts on different subjects, moral and religious,' he writes of pride and humility. The first part is a paraphrase of the parable. We shall give a summary of his doctrine.)

1. *Characteristics and effects of pride:*

(a) The Pharisee stood upright:

If there is one vice which should be carefully hidden because it makes us hated by all, both God and men, it is pride, a vice which is very difficult to pardon, both from God's point of view and from men's. Yet it is surprising that it is the vice which it is most difficult to hide, because a person's presence, mannerisms, looks, words and

even his silence itself all reveal it. Pride has only to appear in order to be known. In any reunion it occupies the first place. If it speaks, it is the director of the conversation, pronounces its opinions as if they were infallible oracles, closing the lips of all who would intervene in the discussion or propose something to the contrary. But if it should choose to remain silent, that very silence is even more proud. It is a silence made up of short replies given sometimes with a nod of the head merely, compassionate smiles, a sharp phrase from time to time as if it were the only one who really understood the matter under discussion. . . .

(b) Another and more subtle version:

There is also another form of pride which is more delicate and subtle, that of persons who affect a certain exterior humility, even when they do not go so far as to profess it clearly; but when the occasion presents itself pride appears, and they come up against a thousand occasions in daily life which mortify them and make them rebel. The reason is clear; pride is the most sensitive part of the human heart and it only needs the slightest touch to make us shout with pain. It is a sad thing that we find this type of pride in pious souls and even in persons consecrated to God. That indeed is the abomination of desolation—pride under the sackcloth and hairshirt, on the very sanctuary of Christ, on the altar itself. . . .

(c) Prayer in his heart . . .

This phrase can have many meanings, but let us concentrate on one—that pride can even enter into prayer. . . . There are different ways in prayer, but God usually calls first to the ascetical way; yet there are people who, from the very beginning, seem to think they have wings of angels and can reach the very heights. When the director points out the contrary they take him for a poorly instructed person who does not know what he is talking about. The simplicity of the prayer of the saints is the safest way to reach the heights of sanctity.

(d) I thank thee, God . . .

We must always give thanks to God, but it should consist in:

- i. giving to him, not to ourselves, all the glory for graces received;
- ii. not making use of them to prefer ourselves to others and despise our neighbour;
- iii. being ashamed of the poor use we make of them;
- iv. trembling at the thought of the account to be rendered;
- v. not being content with them, not thinking that now we need nothing more, but recognizing our necessity and begging for new and increased graces.

This is not the attitude of the Pharisee—and often it is not our attitude either. We keep up appearances, giving thanks to God

but the result is that we give the glory for what we have to ourselves instead of to God. It is lip service, merely.

We give thanks, yes; but for what do we give most thanks? For the exterior graces which can be seen and praised by the world, or for the interior graces, which are so much more valuable: the spirit of piety, humility, mortification?

(e) I am not like the rest of men . . .

Pride under full sail! The Pharisee does not consider himself to be like others, but a man apart, and if people will not admit it, then he will! On all sides we find people like this; they must be different, extraordinary.

And how does he begin? By accusing others of all kinds of sins. If he had only said, I am not like some . . . but no; it is all men. He wants to be unique.

It is certain that the world is a very corrupt place, but a little more charity and less pride would make for less need to censure and greater profit for all.

The publican was a sinner, but repentant; the Pharisee, incapable of seeing anything except his own excellence, insults the misfortunes of others—or like this publican here, he says. . . . How many unfortunate people have been put off by these high-handed methods, and how many good dispositions of soul have been drowned at birth by the pharisaical conduct of good people!

The fault is theirs, you may say. Yes, in one way it is; but that does not make it less culpable when we do not see in sinners the image of Christ and the blood of Christ, or that you should make his life a misery by hurling condemnation at him. Let him condemn himself, you may say, that is his affair. Yes, let him condemn himself; but you will not cease to be culpable if you could have avoided it by more friendly tactics.

Why are we so quick to compare our few virtues with the vices of others? What we should remember is:

- i. No one has a right to presume on virtue as if it were something we had attained through our own merits.
- ii. We also have occult vices and sins; and these can be even more hidden the more proud we are, because pride always serves as a cloak for sin, it does not let us see clearly, it blinds us to our faults, while showing us clearly the faults of others.
- iii. Look at the virtues of others and at our own sins. That is the safe path.
- iv. We must look at the interior spirit which animates our good works; if they come from grace, then they are good; if they come from secret pride, they are bad, in spite of appearances to the contrary. It is possible to do good works without being good, and carry out the obligations of Christians without having the Christian spirit.

2. Characteristics and effects of humility:

(a) The publican stood afar off . . .

John Chrysostom does not fear to say that a state of sin, with humility, is better than a state of justice with pride, for the latter destroys all the value of virtue, while humility prepares the way for conversion. . . . That is the real reason for the famous prayer of Augustine: Lord, let me know thee, because the more I know thee, the more I shall love thee. But at the same time let me know myself because the more I know myself, the more I shall despise myself. This is, in fact, one of the most important elements in the spiritual life, to know oneself intimately and without deception.

(b) he only beat his breast . . .

Publicly. He would like to have associated others with his penance and sorrow. This is one of the effects of humility; it will not leave us self-satisfied, but always drives us to greater sorrow and repentance for our sins. It is essential for the sacrament of penance.

(c) I am a sinner . . .

This is true sorrow, which recognizes its sin but also admits the mercy of God. That is the great instruction and lesson which the Gospel message has for sinners. They have departed from God, but God calls them; they turn to him and he holds out his arms to them. They have been hardened sinners for a long time, but God continues to wait for them. What must they do, then? Repeat with all humility the prayer of the publican. Lord, I have abandoned you; concupiscence has led me away and cast me into the depths, the weight of my sins chokes me. For that reason, Lord, I have turned to you; I am a sinner, but the greater my sins the more chance they give you to show the riches of your mercy; for that reason I will not despair, but hold out my hands to you.

This is a prayer which is proper, not merely to great sinners, but also to all souls, and the more saintly they are the more they have used it. . . .

(d) he went back home higher in God's favour . . .

The constant thought of Chrysostom—a humble sinner is in a better state than the just man who is full of pride, because humility attracts divine grace, which will eventually lead to repentance and justification; while pride only exposes us to God's punishments and to grave sin, even if we have not fallen into it already. Happy, indeed, are the humble of heart. Here we have the Lord, presenting himself to us as our model, not in his power, his miracles or more heroic virtues, but simply saying to us, Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart (Matt. 11. 29).

III. EUGENE BOYLAN

Union with Christ through humility

(Some extracts from the chapter on this subject in *This Tremendous Lover*, pp. 215 ff.)

1. If one asks: How am I to become humble, the immediate answer is: By the grace of God, and that is indeed the truth. Only the grace of God can give us that insight into our own condition and realization of his exaltation that make for humility. But even though it be a grace, it is a grace with which we must co-operate. The first thing to do is to ask in prayer for the grace of humility, and to ask sincerely. The second thing is to accept humiliations when they come our way; but let us never forget that there is an enormous difference between being humble and being humiliated. The next thing is to accept as lovingly as we can our own limitations, our own defects, our own lowliness; and even to be resigned—if we cannot be glad—when those shortcomings become known to others. Human nature being what it is, all this is not easy; in fact, without confidence in God, it is morally impossible.

Confidence and humility always go together. One of the reasons why men are so anxious to exalt themselves—to overestimate their own value and powers—to resent anything that would tend to lower themselves in their own esteem or in that of others—is because they see no hope for their happiness save in themselves. . . . They clutch at themselves as a drowning man clutches at a straw. . . .

2. Humility, in fact, is not so much self-depreciation as self-forgetfulness. It is a return to the simplicity of childhood based upon a realization of the Fatherhood of God. It is to realize that our sanctification is the work of God, and that we are rather an obstacle to his work than otherwise. It is a realization, and a glad acceptance, of the fact that we have nothing which we have not received. . . .

The wise man goes to God as to his saviour, closing his eyes to any good he may have done, relying on God's mercy and upon his own poverty. For that is the claim or title which our Lord recognizes to the kingdom of heaven: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .

3. There are, however, many ways in which pride can manifest itself which can be avoided even by the layman without any compromise to his status. In speech, pride leads a man to talk of himself and of his own affairs and to seek esteem in various ways. Sometimes it is by open boasting, at other times by a mock modesty that only succeeds in drawing more attention to oneself. Some men are quite adroit in turning the conversation to topics in which they can display their knowledge or ability. The patronizing person is generally a

proud person, as also are those given to airs of superiority, to studied phrase or a magisterial tone. There are those who insist upon maintaining their own opinion, those who cannot let any slip pass without correcting it, those who are only too glad to correct others. . . . All such are generally proud. Contemptuous sarcasm and mordant wit often come from pride. . . .

4. The avoidance of all those manifestations of pride which we mentioned above would be sound forms of practical humility. To speak as little of oneself or affairs as possible; to mind one's own business; to avoid curiosity; not to want to manage other people's affairs; to accept contradiction or correction; not to insist upon one's own opinion unless truth or justice require it, and then to do so moderately, but with courage; to pass over the mistakes of others, to cover them up, even, when prudent, to accept them (for example in pronunciation); to yield to the will of others, where neither duty nor charity nor genuine Christian principle is involved; to hide one's own ability or talents; to avoid ostentation; all such are works of humility that are within the powers of all. One can, however, go further. To accept blame when innocent, to accept insults or injuries, to accept being slighted or forgotten or disliked, not to seek to be especially loved or admired, not to be put out at one's own clumsiness or mistakes, to be kind and gentle even under provocation, never to stand on one's own dignity save where Christian prudence demands it, to accept correction gladly, to yield in discussion, even though one is right, not to be self-opinionated or self-assertive; all these are praiseworthy. But if we remember first that humility is reverence for God, and secondly that it is not only an imitation of Jesus, but a perfect way of giving oneself to him, one may be ready to go still further.

To be glad, for example, at being despised, to thank God when one is humiliated, to rejoice in one's lowliness, to be patient with one's own failings, to meet failure with a ready smile, to glory in one's infirmities; here love is becoming ardent, and union with Jesus is becoming more intimate. In so far as any of the practices mentioned above are only in the exterior, their value is not great; their true value comes from the humility of heart which leads to them. To develop this genuine humility, it is important always to practise humility and its associated virtues *in one's thoughts*. Reveries, day-dreaming and castles in the air, for example, designed to exalt oneself, will hardly ever lead to true humility. In fact, they could be dangerous. Broodings over humiliations, over failures, over one's shortcomings; trying to retrieve one's mistakes in one's imaginings, trying to excuse oneself, refusing to admit one's error, even being dishonest with oneself, putting the blame on somebody else; all these things are contrary to humility. . . .

Our humility and obedience are but the exercise of our love and desire for Jesus; they are but means of giving ourself completely to him, as he does to us in the Mass, and that is what, by our Communion and assistance at Mass, we signify our readiness to do. . . . But nothing less than our very self in its entirety will satisfy the heart of Jesus, and all he asks is that we give him our whole self in all poverty and nothingness. The great way to do that is the way shown by Jesus and Mary—by love through humility and abandonment.

. . . To sum up, let us repeat again with St Paul, Gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me, and let us be convinced that no matter what we have lost, what we have ruined, or how far we have wandered into the wilderness from the right path, God can give us back all we have lost or damaged. God can show us a road—or, if necessary, build a new road for us—that leads from our present position, whatever it may be, to the heights of sanctity; humility is the Philosopher's Stone which changes all our losses into the gold of God's favour. He does do *all* for us, and he will do all if we co-operate with his grace. What then does he ask of us? Nothing but blind faith, confident hope, ardent love, cheerful humility, and loving abandonment into the arms of our Tremendous Lover.

SECTION VI. SERMON SCHEMES

A: Those who come from the temple worse than when they entered

Two men

There are two men in the parable; both of them go to the temple.

1. *The Pharisee:*

(a) apparently entered the temple clothed with good works; but he came out worse than when he went in.

(b) Even though he might have done all the good works he mentions, he spoilt them all by committing a grave sin in the temple.

2. *The publican:*

(a) goes in stripped of all good works and covered with a cloak of which he is ashamed—his sins;

(b) but he also goes in a spirit of penance and sorrow, for which reason he comes out justified.

3. There are people who come out of the temple worse than when they went in.

Those who come out worse not through their own fault

1. *Those come out badly who:*

(a) hear the truth without understanding it and without its producing in them any effects of a true spiritual re-birth;

(b) who go out of routine, but do not discover in the Church a principle of life and movement which will make them draw nearer to God.

2. *A great responsibility for the pastor of souls:*

(a) when the preaching of the word of God is duly prepared;

(b) when he is careful to find means of giving the people an ever-growing formation and dogmatic instruction;

(c) when the people are induced to take an ever more active part in the liturgy, carried out with due decorum;

(d) when the pastoral activity of the priest reaches to all, including those not yet of the fold of Christ.

3. Then the parish lives, grows, and the souls who approach the church come out of it better and more perfect every day.

Those who come out worse through their own fault

1. *Those who go to church and shut their ears to divine truth:*

(a) Our Lord threatened such as these with dire punishments, saying that it would be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement than for these (Matt. 10. 14, 15);

(b) they are without excuse, because they have had the word preached to them, but have voluntarily shut their ears.

(c) Example—the Jews and St Stephen.

(d) Those come out worse who hear truths which wound them, because it exposes their faults, and then turn on the Gospel in hate and also at times against those who preach it.

2. *Others who come out worse than they went in:*

There are those who accommodate the word of God to their own desires and ideas. They do not go the way of God, but their own.

3. *Those who go to the temple, not to speak to God, but to be with men:*

They want to make a pretence of religion to gain the esteem of others.

Conclusion

1. All these come out of the temple worse than when they went in. Why?

(a) Because within they did not take any notice of their sins;

(b) they may even have sinned again within the church . . .

(c) at least the sin of omission, not having attained the positive fruit they should have attained.

2. We have to go to the temple as to a place of abundant pasture, where we can feed our souls.

B: The Parable

The point of it

1. The moral which Christ wants to draw from it is mentioned by him twice, when he says that he is addressing it to some who despised others while thinking themselves to be just, and when he says that those who exalt themselves shall be humbled, while the humble man shall be exalted (Luke 18. 9, 14).

2. The parable has a hard lesson for the presumptuous and proud, while it is a great comfort for the humble.

Faith and humility

1. St Augustine relates the whole parable to the words which Christ spoke just before it. When the Son of man comes, will he find faith left on earth? (Luke 18. 8). The act of faith is an act of humility.

2. This doctrine is confirmed by the interpretation which some authors give to the first piece of land in the parable of the sower.

The first piece of land, described in the Gospels as stony, is the heart of the proud man. The seed does not penetrate into it. Faith is necessary for the seed to penetrate, and for faith, humility. That is why the devil can act on these hearts and take away the seed, lest they should believe and be saved. It is the devil's territory, through their pride.

A twisted heart

1. St John of Avila speaks thus of the proud man, because his heart is turned in upon itself, egoistic.

2. Augustine says that the Pharisee applied everything to himself; even his speech is all in the first person.

3. The language of the humble is very different from this; he who is mighty has done great things to me; by the grace of God I am what I am . . . (cf. Luke 1. 49; 1 Cor. 15. 10).

4. The 'I thank thee, God . . .' in the mouth of the Pharisee is hypocritical and impious.

(a) He does not think of God at all; he does not turn to God. He is all the time thinking of himself and his own praises.

(b) His appearance in the temple in this way is not an act of reverence; it is an insult to God, an exhibition, seeking honour for himself and the esteem of men.

His prayer insults others, while praising himself

(a) He is not like the rest; they are sinners, he is just.

(b) By hiding his sins he cuts himself off from the divine mercy.

The prayer of the publican

1. Publicans had a bad reputation which was, in great measure, justified.

2. But in the case of this man, his humility and penance won him justification.

(a) He did not dare to look at God, says Augustine, so that God might look at him;

(b) he is weighed down by the weight on his conscience;

(c) but his soul flew on its way to God on the wings of hope.

(d) He attributes the sin to himself—as Augustine says again: I do not hide behind bad luck, nor do I attribute it to the stars, nor to the devils. I impute it to myself alone; the sin is mine, the guilt is mine.

3. The Pharisee who thought himself to be full, goes away empty. The publican, who presented the empty vessel of his absolute need, finds it filled with grace and mercy to the brim.

Are you surprised? God always forgives the one who sincerely repents and confesses his fault.

The publican stood afar off, but God was near to hear him; he was upheld by the thought of the divine goodness and mercy; he confesses his guilt and that sincerity won his pardon.

Two expressions of Chrysostom

1. *The door of pride:*

(a) The Pharisee, like a guardian of a city at night, goes round and finds all the doors securely fastened and everything safe—as he thinks; he fasts, he pays his dues, he prays.

(b) The poor unfortunate has left one door unlocked, that of pride, and through it the enemy enters.

2. *The two shafts:*

Two light chariots are racing along a road; one has a shaft made of sin and humility mixed; the other, of virtue and pride. Chrysostom says that he would prefer to wager that the first will win, because it will soon draw ahead and gain the prize.

- (a) It is more rapid; because the weight of sin will be overcome by the lightness of humility and its power.
- (b) The other, in spite of its virtue, will be held back, not by the weight of virtue, but by that of pride.

C: The man who humbles himself . . .

A theme often repeated

1. *We find it in many passages of the gospels:*
Cf. Luke 14. 11 and in the present passage.
2. *Humility, a Christian virtue:*
It demands and supposes the idea of God.
3. *Christ the model:*
Christ twice offers himself to us as a model of holiness and especially of humility.
 - (a) And learn from me; I am gentle and humble of heart (Matt. 11. 29);
 - (b) after washing his disciples' feet (John 13. 13-17);
 - (c) in both cases humility goes hand in hand with peace and happiness.

Definition

1. *The virtue which tempers and restrains the soul:*
It will therefore not seek immoderately high things, St Thomas says. It is, then, moderation which is sought after by humility.
2. *Humility is truth:*
 - (a) We could not avoid quoting this definition of St Teresa, because it contains a most profound theological thought;
 - (b) she does not refer to truth on the lips, or moral truth, which we may call sincerity;
 - (c) she means that true humility consists in seeing ourselves as we really are:
 - i. we should see clearly the truth about our being and our life;
 - ii. a perfect equation between my soul, its virtues and vices, and the image which I have of it in my mind;
 - iii. above all, that I should know from whence comes the good that is in me and also the evil. This is the essence of humility.
 - (d) *As a consequence of it:*
 - i. we shall esteem ourselves at our true worth;
 - ii. we shall not deny that the good is good; but shall admit the true origin of it—God;
 - iii. we shall observe that the origin of our evil is our own perverse will;
 - iv. we shall not deny the merit of our good works, but we shall admit that they all have to be referred to God, because without

his help and grace we would be incapable of doing or saying anything good;

v. we shall encourage ourselves to take on great things for God, since we know his goodness to us;

vi. we shall always have confidence that our efforts will be crowned with success, through and by his grace.

St Augustine relates humility with poverty of spirit, the first beatitude

1. It can be applied to riches first of all, in the sense that we do not allow ourselves to become attached to them, but are ready and willing to give them up, should that be the will of God.
2. But it has a deeper sense, in which it applies to the whole of the interior goods of the soul. We do not look on them as our own, but as God's. He has lent them to us for a time.
3. *As one spiritual writer has put it:*
 - i. Humility is founded on truth; pride on falsehood.
 - ii. Humility is correct self-depreciation; pride, improper self-exaltation.
 - iii. Humility recognizes our dependence on God; pride claims a spurious independence.
 - iv. Humility truthfully takes the lowest place; pride usurps the first place.
 - v. Humility puts a man right with God; pride radically falsifies him.
4. The Curé d'Ars used to say: Never shall we understand our poor misery. The mere thought of it makes us tremble! God gives us no more than a mere glimpse. If we really knew ourselves as he knows us we could not live; we would die of fright. The saints knew themselves better than others, and that is why they were humble.
5. Humility is like a balance; the more one scale is lowered, the more the other rises.

Humility and sanctity

Humility is not sanctity, but sanctity is impossible without it.

True and false humility

1. *False humility is a double lie:*
 - (a) We see in ourselves what is not there and attribute it to ourselves;
 - (b) we say what we do not mean.
2. *It is the curse of the Church:*
This is because we often find it in persons who, by their state of life, should be holy—they should be what they say and imply they are.

(a) The saints acted in a very different way; they speak with a charming sincerity and simplicity, even of themselves.

(b) St Augustine sent his Confessions to a friend of his saying: You will find many good things in it and many bad. The good things are from God, the bad from Augustine.

The triumphal canticle of humility—the Magnificat

1. Our Lady knows that great things have been done in her and through her, but she attributes them where they belong—to God.

2. In it she sings of her greatest triumph, her humility.

3. It announces beforehand the passage of today's Gospel and is a commentary on it.

D: Humility means to walk in truth

Excellence of humility

1. In speaking of humility we must be careful to avoid exaggeration. It is not the most excellent of all virtues, because the theological virtues are higher in the scale.

However, St Francis de Sales says that Christ, his Mother, and all the saints have always had a predilection for this virtue above all the other moral virtues, because it excludes Satan from our hearts and preserves in us, in a wonderful way, the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

2. The true excellence of humility consists in that it is, as it were, a perfume which has to accompany all the other virtues.

(a) Just as love is the life of the virtues, so humility is the prior condition and foundation of the authenticity, beauty and truth of all virtues. It is the mother and the head of all.

(b) St Thomas calls it the negative foundation of the whole edifice of the spiritual life.

(c) It is the virtue which most becomes a creature.

(d) St Augustine goes even further: Humility, he says, is almost the whole of a Christian life.

3. It is most excellent, then, because without it there can be no true sanctity, nor even a true Christian life.

Humility is truth

1. *What is humility?*

(a) Specifically, according to St Thomas, it is in interior inclination towards the lowest place; a virtue which regulates our immoderate tendencies towards greatness.

(b) This definition fits with that of St Teresa; humility means to walk in truth. The saint says: I was wondering once why our Lord so dearly loved this virtue of humility; and all of a sudden—without, I believe, my having previously thought of it—the following reason came into my mind: that it is because God is sovereign Truth and to be humble is to walk in truth, for it is absolutely true to say that we have no good things in ourselves, but only misery and nothingness; and anyone who fails to understand this is walking in falsehood. He who best understands it is most pleasing to the sovereign Truth because he is walking in truth. May it please God, sisters, to grant us never to fail to have this knowledge of ourselves (*Int. Castle*, VI, chap. 10. 7).

2. *Therefore humility implies a knowledge of oneself:*

But together with it, it implies the knowledge of all that we have received from God and of how much we depend on him.

(a) To be humble, then, is not merely to know our own limitations, impotence, defects.

(b) It means an affirmation, at one and the same time, that he is our Creator, and that in and with him we are something.

3. Therefore it also includes abjection and confidence in God.

Foundations of humility

From the definition we can say that the foundations of humility are:

1. *Recognition of what the glory of God means:*

(a) Of the infinite perfection of God in himself, that he is the supreme truth, beauty, goodness, etc.: *Tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus altissimus*. . . .

(b) This thought must be meditated on until it fills our minds.

2. *Us in comparison with God:*

Let me know thee and know myself.

(a) Our littleness and nothingness compared with God;

(b) this does not mean that the thought of God will weigh us down; on the contrary, it will give us confidence and lift us up;

(c) St Teresa says: As I see it, we shall never succeed in knowing ourselves unless we seek to know God; let us think of his greatness and then come back to our own baseness; by looking at his purity we shall see our foulness; by meditating on his humility, we shall see how far we are from being humble. There are two advantages in this. First, it is clear that anything white looks very much whiter against something black, just as the black looks blacker against the white. Secondly, if we turn from self towards God, our understanding and our will become nobler and more ready to embrace all that

is good: if we never rise above the slough of our own miseries we do ourselves a great harm (*Int. Castle*, I, ch. 2. 9).

3. *Our abandonment to God:*

(a) The third foundation is the consequence of the others. The humble man, faced with God's greatness, sees his own nothingness, considers his dependence on God and therefore abandons himself to God.

(b) He knows that he is happy and safe in God's hands, abandoned to his will in all things, both in triumph and failure; he feels himself led by God.

Three attitudes of the humble

1. *With regard to God:*

(a) To glorify him, give him thanks and do his will in all things;
(b) all goodness has been sent to him from God, therefore he does not rely on himself nor count on himself for anything.

2. *With regard to others:*

(a) He sees in others the perfection of God, that divine side of our neighbour, so often obscured.

(b) Thus is born in him charity and respect, he considers others superior to himself.

(c) It is easy for the humble man to consider others as his superiors, because in them he sees the works of God, while in himself he sees his own sins and imperfections. He thinks that in others there is much hidden good which puts them above him.

3. *With regard to himself:*

The humble man knows the good which is in himself, but he does not glory in it, except in so far as it comes from God. He knows the dangers of pride, therefore the higher he finds himself the more he cultivates this humility and abandonment to God who gave him all these things. His gifts are talents which he must use for God, to whom he must give a strict account of the use he has made of them. Even his progress in holiness seems relative to him, i.e. little in comparison with the favours received.

The practice of humility

1. *We can summarize this as follows:*

(a) The humble man sees God's interests before his own; the interests of the neighbour also; and his own are in God.

(b) Or in these words of St Teresa: Let us walk in truth before God and men . . . especially by not wishing that people take us for better than we are, and in all our works giving to God what is his and to ourselves what is ours (*Int. Castle*, VI, ch. 11. 6).

2. *The language of the humble will be that of the psalmist:*

(a) Not to us, Lord, not to us the glory; let thy name alone be honoured (Ps. 113. 9).

(b) Thinking of his own faults he will say: Lord, set a guard on my mouth, a barrier to fence in my lips. Do not turn my heart towards thought of evil, to cover sin with smooth names; not mine to take part with wrong-doers; not mine to mingle with the company they keep (Ps. 140. 3).

3. The humble man will say with St Catherine: May you exist, not I.

E: Pride and Humility

Face to face

1. Today's gospel puts them face to face in the persons of the Pharisee and publican.

2. The contrast is obvious.

Pride

1. *Classes or manifestations of it:*

(Cf. Boylan, pp. 586-8.)

(a) *Vain self-satisfaction with all that we are and do:*

The proud man considers himself to be the centre of creation; he sees his own supposed virtues and ignores those of others. On the contrary, he exaggerates their defects, even if he may have them himself.

(b) From this come all the manifestations of pride mentioned by Boylan.

2. *The children of pride:*

(a) *Hypocrisy:*

- i. *Pretended virtue*, which he does not wish to possess in reality.
- ii. *He will deny his vices*, especially those he cannot take the trouble to hide.

(b) *Pharisaical devotion:*

Pretends to be respectful to God and just before men, when in truth he only worships himself.

(c) *Disobedience:*

He wants to dominate authority, not obey it; when he cannot do this he shows himself highly critical and disobedient.

(d) *Envy:*

He who has made himself the centre of creation will not allow anyone else to usurp his place.

(e) **Fomenting of discord:**

This comes from envy, just as envy comes from pride.

(f) **Ingratitude:**

Everything is owed to him; he owes nothing to anyone. He will soon prove that any favours done to him were either not favours at all, or were due to him, or have been well paid, or were done for some ulterior motive.

(g) **Despising his neighbour:**

The Pharisee is typical of this.

(h) **Detraction arises from this:**

Heresies, dissensions, etc.—all come from pride.

3. **Its guilt:**(a) **Against God:**

- i. The proud man likes to make himself into a small god;
- ii. this offends God in a very special way; we might almost say that it is a denial of the true relationship between the Creator and the creature, and that it offends God so much for this very reason. That is why God cannot give his graces to the proud—he resists them.

(b) **Against one's neighbour:**

This is because the proud despise others and offend against charity.

4. **The evil effects of pride:**(a) **spiritually:**

The proud man seeks his glory where it is not to be found;

(b) **naturally:**

- i. *He lives in a sad state of intransquillity*, at times because his rights are not respected, at others through envy, etc.
- ii. *There is no vice so obvious*—even before it is obvious to the person concerned.
- iii. *Therefore it soon gives rise to ridicule on the part of others*; the proud man becomes a laughing stock.
- iv. *It is very difficult to correct*, because since the proud man thinks that he is good, how can he get out of his sad state? God must hurl him from his horse, as he did St Paul.

5. **Remedies:**

- (a) Know God and oneself;
- (b) meditate on the free gift which is grace and on one's own sins;
- (c) love of the neighbour, not merely almsdeeds;
- (d) compare ourselves with those who are obviously superior to us.

Humility1. **In what does it consist:**

- (a) Recognize that we are sinners, think about that and be ashamed;
- (b) all the good we have comes from God—recognize that too;
- (c) put all our confidence in Christ, not in ourselves.

2. **Motives for it:**

- (a) God commands it (Matt. 11. 29);
- (b) all that we have comes from God. What have you that you did not receive? (2 Cor. 4. 7);
- (c) we are unprofitable servants, all of us (Luke 17. 10):
 - i. we cannot even prepare the way for the supernatural life without grace;
 - ii. in the material order, death is our lot, in the spiritual concupiscence and sin.
- (d) Though capable of sinning, we are incapable of repairing the damage without God's help and mercy;
- (e) with regard to the rest of men; they are all God's sons and much better than we are. Even those who seem worse may have hidden depths which we have not, or they may not be so responsible as we are.

3. **Means to acquire it:**

Meditate on what has been said already; ask for the grace to be humble; think of the example of Christ and the saints. Practise it.

F: The need for humility**The parable**1. **Proves the excellence of humility and the evil of pride:**

- (a) The publican obtains pardon because he is humble; from afar he draws near to God.
- (b) The Pharisee, obstinate in his pride, could not obtain mercy. Materially near the altar, near to God in his own life according to himself, he is actually far away.

2. **The total sense of the parable appears in the final words of Christ:**

Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted.

3. **We may well study the need for humility in the Christian life.****A necessary condition for belonging to the school of Christ**1. **Christ says so:**

Learn of me; I am gentle and humble of heart (Matt. 11. 29).

2. *Thus did he himself practise it:*

(a) Subject to Mary and Joseph (Luke 2. 51); the thirty years of the hidden life have this as their greatest lesson for us.

(b) St Bernard says: If you are unable to rise to the heights of virginity, at least you can follow your God on the safe path of humility, from which, if the very virgins themselves depart from it, they are not following the Lamb on his paths.

3. *This is the doctrine of St Paul:*

The whole life of the Word of God made man is summed up in his absolute obedience, which led him even to the death on the cross. We should have in us the very same sentiments which animated Christ, i.e. humble obedience (Phil. 2).

4. *All the saints have walked this path:*

(a) Our Lady (Luke 1. 3; 1. 48).

(b) John the Baptist (John 5. 35; Matt. 11. 11; Luke 3. 16).

(c) Others in the gospels who won the heart of Jesus through their humility:

i. The publican in today's gospel.

ii. The centurion (Matt. 8. 8).

iii. St Peter (Luke 5. 8).

iv. Magdalen, at his feet.

The need for humility in the whole of the spiritual life

1. *St Augustine says:*

If you ask me what is the road which leads to a knowledge of the truth, what is most essential in the religion and discipline of Christ, I will answer you: the first thing is humility, the second is humility and the third is humility. And every time you ask me the same question I shall give you the same answer (*Ep.* 56).

2. *It is necessary for every act in the spiritual life:*

(a) Christ tells us that, if we want to enter the kingdom, we must become as little children (Matt. 18. 3).

(b) This affirmation comes to the same thing as the other: Without me you can do nothing.

(c) It is fundamental to recognize our impotence.

(d) St Peter sets us the same principle as a guide: God thwarts the proud, and keeps his grace for the humble (1 Pet. 5. 5).

(e) This virtue is opposed to the capital vice of pride, which is the root of all sin and all evil in the spiritual life. Therefore humility is at the root of and accompanies all the other virtues.

3. *It is necessary in the heights of the spiritual life:*

(a) If we wish to rise higher we must first sink lower;

(b) the more perfect we are the more we need a finer grade of humility to destroy all signs of self-love—the great enemy, according to St Thomas.

(c) As John of the Cross says: In order to become all things, do not seek to be anything.

G: Knowledge of self

Humility, foundation of the spiritual life

1. *To restrain pride:*

(a) It kills pride, the source of all sin;

(b) therefore it is the foundation, which must be dug deeper the higher we wish to construct the building;

(c) it must restrain pride in all forms, intellectual, and spiritual.

2. *But this is not its prime object.*3. *It is more positive than a simple repression of the movements of pride:*

(a) We must destroy at all costs this negative idea of humility, which weakens it and makes it appear a virtue of those who are timid, weak.

(b) It consists in bowing down before God.

4. *Bowing down before God:*

This must be:

(a) Speculative, by knowing God, admitting that he is the creator, etc.

(b) Practical:

i. Giving him his due.

ii. Expecting that our littleness and nothingness will be helped by God.

(c) Thus humility includes the virtue of religion and that of obedience.

5. For all this it is necessary to know God and ourselves.

A fundamental knowledge

1. Founded on truth, on the knowledge of the infinite distance between God and creatures.

2. Humility grows the more we recognize this distance. The greater the sanctity, the greater this realization, obviously.

The knowledge of two truths

1. *Creation from nothing:*

(a) From a realization of this comes the fact that we see our own weakness, our nothingness, our need of God, our absolute dependence on him;

(b) as a practical conclusion from this we put at his disposal all that we have, since all that we have is really his. This is the greatest act of the rational creature.

2. Sanctifying grace and actual grace:

(a) free gifts; we cannot merit our elevation to this supernatural order;

(b) we receive all these graces from Christ, who merited them for us;

(c) they must penetrate the whole of our lives, transforming them, incorporating them into Christ.

3. A knowledge of these two truths, and especially meditation on them, will give our spiritual lives a robust strength and a constructive spirit of humility.

H: The humble and the proud

Two captains

1. Christ and Satan face to face:

The former in humility (Phil. 2. 8), the latter in pride; his motto, I will not serve.

2. Behind them two armies, one made up of the humble, the other of the proud:

As St Gregory says: because our Redeemer governs the hearts of the humble, we can say with security that humility is a certain sign of predestination, of the elect. Since Satan is king of the proud, we can also say that pride is a sign of rejection.

3. We can study the two.

The proud

1. Absolute pride is the gesture of Satan in his fall; Adam sinned through pride:

This vice is one of the greatest enemies of man, the root of all his evils. The proud man is blind, and so falls easily into sin.

2. Here are the main characteristics of such a man:

(a) He seeks only his own glory; he wishes to dominate, rule, be everything;

(b) the world interests him only in so far as he can make use of it for his own ends;

(c) he refuses to admit any other values than himself:

i. he does not admit any superior to himself;

ii. the supreme grade of this is rejection of God's dominion; the proud makes himself into a god.

(d) He is a hard man, full of bitterness, harsh with others, etc.;

(e) he makes evil use of his liberty:

i. man's greatest gift, and at its most noble when it bows down freely before God, who made it;

ii. the proud man converts it into an instrument for his own glory.

(f) he makes much of his own good qualities, despises and belittles those of others, since he considers them a threat to his own position.

Pride destroys even the value of the good we have and do

1. We see the Pharisee praising his own good works:

He fasts, gives alms, prays. But he is not justified, and nothing of what he does has any value in God's eyes.

2. Pride takes away the value of all good works in God's sight:

(a) the greater the virtue, the more harm pride does to it and the greater the sin;

(b) therefore spiritual pride is the worst of all.

The humble

He is not preoccupied with himself and his own glory.

(a) He is concerned with what is good, virtuous, with God and the things of God;

(b) for that reason humility pays tribute to God, serves virtue and the will of God.

As little children

1. Christ taught humility in many ways:

(a) the most solemn, his own life;

(b) in his words:

i. If anyone has a mind to be the greatest, he must be the last of all, and the servant of all (Mark 9. 34).

ii. *Unless you become as little children . . .* Children are humble because they know their own limitations and incapacity, they take refuge in the power and protection of their father.

2. We have to be the same with regard to God:

Only when we desire and procure littleness shall we be really great.

3. One quotation may serve to end this sermon:

Why is it that strength does not come forth from us which, in its creative energy, changes the world? The world of the family, the office, the drill, the sewing machine; in the windows of banks, the studies of artists, the tables of administrators and the chairs of government? Because in all these places there are no real Christians,

but only prudent men, very capable, experienced, diligent, diplomatic. When in one of these positions we find a man who is another Christ, such as Francis, the Curé d'Ars, Don Bosco, then things are very different (Hans Wirtz, *El gran escandalo*, pp. 171 ff.).

I: Pride and avarice

The source of all evil

The Scriptures tell us that the root of all evil lies in avarice and pride:

- (a) the love of money is a root from which every kind of evil springs (1 Tim. 6. 10);
- (b) of all sin pride is the root (Ecclus. 10. 15).

Avarice, the root of sin

1. *It can be understood in many ways:*

- (a) as an inordinate desire for riches;
- (b) the desire for any material good;
- (c) in inordinate inclination of our corrupt nature to corruptible goods.

2. *The real meaning here is the inordinate love for riches:*

The reason why the apostle speaks about this as he does is that riches can provide means for committing many sins, which would have been avoided without them.

Pride, the root of all sin

Because in human acts, the end or purpose is the first thing in the mind, which leads us to do something, and the last thing to be attained by the action.

- (a) The reason why a man desires temporal goods is so that he can better his condition, acquire a certain perfection which he did not have without them, etc.
- (b) This inordinate love of his own excellence is pride, the root of all his desires.

Pride, the worst sin

1. Of the two, pride is worse than avarice.
2. Because it is not a sin of weakness or ignorance; it is a sin of malice. It is also directly against the Creature-Creator relationship. It does not wish to submit to God and to his will.
3. In this connection St Thomas quotes a phrase from Boetius which is worth noting: In other sins man flees from God; in this one he opposes himself against God.

4. *God acts in like manner with these sinners:*

- (a) His usual method is to follow the sinner, calling him, knocking at the door of his heart until he repents;
- (b) but he resists the proud (James 4. 6); just as the proud oppose God, so he rises up in opposition to them;
- (c) the proud man usurps God's position as creator and giver of gifts.

Personification of the two sins

They are both represented in the parable, the publican is a symbol of avarice, the Pharisee of pride.

- (a) This was the great sin of the publicans, who sold their souls for gain;
- (b) they robbed, stole even from their masters, the Romans, oppressed the people of God, etc.;
- (c) but this publican was humble, and through his humility gained justification from God;
- (d) the Pharisee was proud, and even though he did not fall into the sins of the publican, his pride kept him far from God and he went out of the temple condemned.

The hour of death

1. Confessors know that, at the hour of death, pride is the most difficult sin to overcome.

2. *Other sinners:*

Those who have sinned against other commandments can be brought to repentance more easily. Time, age, circumstances, disappointments, illness, anything can bring them to their knees.

- (a) Their faith, which was there all the time, becomes more alive;
- (b) they confess their sins easily, because they have always recognized that they were really sins. They confess with humility their need for mercy and grace.

3. *The proud man is more difficult:*

- (a) It costs him a great deal to return to the God against whom he has set himself up by his pride;
- (b) it is hard for him to humble himself before God, and also before men, whose esteem he has always sought.

J: Despair and presumption

Presumption

1. *The sin of the Pharisee:*

... some who had confidence in themselves, thinking they had won acceptance from God ... (Luke 18. 9).

2. *A sin against hope:*

(a) There are two kinds of presumption, that by which we rely too much on our own powers, and that by which we trust inordinately in God's mercy.

(b) By the first man esteems himself more than he is worth and promises himself more than he has power to give;

(c) by the second he sins against divine providence, in so far as such a one seeks something within the ambit of divine providence which is not really there, e.g. the forgiveness of sin without repentance.

The causes of presumption

1. *Vainglory:*

The cause of the first class of presumption is vainglory. Man aspires to do something by his own power, instead of relying on the help of God.

2. *Pride:*

The second comes from pride directly, as when a man thinks that he can win pardon without repentance or glory in heaven without merits.

The value of this doctrine

1. *Educational value:*

The matter dealt with in this scheme is of great educational value, especially for the development of character.

(a) It is especially necessary for the man of action, the lay apostle, for example;

(b) it illuminates and directs our relations with God, so that we shall be neither cowards or too daring in what we attempt;

(c) a doctrine which guides our active lives so that we shall not be presumptuous nor pusillanimous.

2. *Presumption and magnanimity:*

(a) Magnanimity, like all moral virtues, tends to act accordingly to a rule or mean. What is this middle way?

(b) Not in quantity, because the magnanimous tend to something very high;

(c) but in the measure of their own strength, i.e. not trying for something quite out of the reach of our natural powers.

(d) There must be a proportion between the end in view and the individual's powers.

(e) Presumption enters in the moment this proportion is not kept.

3. *Presumption and pusillanimity:*

Pusillanimity is a sin; it consists in refusing to do something well within our powers for fear of failing in the task.

Its gravity

1. It can be a very grave sin—the Fathers always give the example of the man who buried his talent in the earth instead of using it.

(a) Jesus was most severe with him; one of the few times in the Gospels.

(b) He calls him base and slothful, a false servant (Matt. 25. 26; Luke 19. 22).

(c) He ordered the one talent to be taken from him and the man himself to be cast into exterior darkness.

2. St Thomas says that the servant did not labour with his talent from pusillanimity.

The timid who is also proud

1. *Sometimes these two sins go together:*

(a) Just as magnanimity and humility should go together, there are men who, relying on their own judgement, refuse obedience when they are given some task.

(b) St Bernardine of Siena never thought of himself as a preacher, he had no voice or gifts of oratory; yet through obedience, he became one of the most famous preachers of his time.

2. *Through this sin:*

How many souls have deprived the world of great deeds which providence had assigned to them!

Despair

1. Through this sin a man loses hope of attaining eternal salvation.

2. *Two causes:*

(a) Lack of real thought about eternal happiness which is promised us as a good which is the greatest of all, difficult and arduous;

(b) the idea that one is incapable of attaining it, either through one's own powers or even with external help.

3. The first cause has its origin in excessive attachment to temporal goods and the love of worldly pleasures, especially those of sex. It is a daughter of lust.

4. The second comes from dejection and sadness, above all from laziness or spiritual sadness.

5. How important purity is for education and the formation of character! How important it is to maintain a sane optimism among youth.

A modern defect

Nowadays, among the youth, there is an increasing tendency to these two sins, and one which must be curbed by good education,

which must make hope a stimulant to intensify the development in them of good qualities and virtues of all kinds.

A confiding humility

1. To found a monastery, says St Francis de Sales, two qualities are necessary, humility and confidence in God. The lack of confidence in ourselves under such circumstances will be off-set by the confidence we have in God.
2. This is the most profound lesson we can teach youth; humility, confidence in God, magnanimity for great tasks.
3. And what prescription shall we give them in order to follow the right path without falling into despair on the one hand and presumption on the other?
 - (a) St Augustine sums it up in one phrase: The safe way, Christ.
 - (b) The teachings of Christ should encourage us, on the one hand, so that we may not despair; and they should make us afraid, on the other, so that we may not give way to vainglory and presumption.
 - (c) This would be difficult, perhaps, had not Christ said, I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14. 6).

K: The prayer of the Pharisee

He sins by reciting the list of his good works

1. *He does it for an evil end:*
 - (a) To justify himself before God and men.
 - (b) This is no sin when what is sought is the glory of God or advantage to the neighbour, as St Paul did on one occasion (2 Cor. 11).
2. *He attributes to himself the list of works:*
 - (a) Saying nothing about the help of the grace of God; St Paul, on the contrary, while admitting all the good which has come to him through his new life, says that it is all due to the grace of God.
 - (b) It is a sin of ingratitude not to give thanks for God's gifts and not to admit them as gifts.
3. *He cloaks all with religion:*

He presents himself as a religious man, for which reason he gives thanks. This is hypocrisy, opening the door to his vainglory and pride; it is paying God in false coinage.
4. *He exaggerates the value of those works:*

They are nearly all external works, and he does not bother about the interior.

He sins because he does not accuse himself of anything

1. He does not find anything reprehensible in his life; all is virtue. Needing nothing, then, he cannot beg. The main part of prayer, that of petition, is missing.
2. When the just man speaks of himself or prays, it is always first of all to accuse himself (Prov. 18. 17). He knows that it is God who gives him his pardon, and to anticipate that is to make God withdraw it from him.
3. This is the prayer of those who really seek pardon.
4. What is more, the saints ask pardon for those sins which they might have committed and do not remember. The secret sins, as the Psalmist calls them (18. 13).

He sins by comparing himself with the publican

1. *Rash judgement against him and other men:*

He pretends to have knowledge of the secrets of hearts—proper and exclusive to God. He deprives his neighbour of his good name, at least in thought. He accuses others of being thieves, when the thief is inside himself.
2. *He imitates the devil, who appears as our accuser before God.*
3. *The just man, in prayer, should he observe the sins of others:*
 - (a) prays for sinners;
 - (b) asks God to preserve him from similar sins;
 - (c) asks pardon for his own offences;
 - (d) humbles himself with the thought that he would have fallen even lower had God not preserved him. There is nothing in human nature of which I am not capable.

L: Salutary prayer and rejected prayer

The prayer of the Pharisee

1. *It has certain things about it which are good:*
 - (a) He goes to the temple to pray—the house of prayer;
 - (b) he gives thanks to God for benefits received; a salutary act and a necessary one;
 - (c) he is not a thief nor has he committed adultery, he is not unjust—all good things. Those who do the opposite are excluded from the kingdom (1 Cor. 4. 10);
 - (d) he fasts—a holy work of penance;
 - (e) he pays his dues.

2. *What spoils his prayer?*

(a) He keeps quiet about his sins:

- i. One would say he was the very personification of innocence.
- ii. Perhaps this is due to the fact that he considers only external and grave sins; but God looks deep into the heart.
- iii. St Paul, a holier man than the Pharisee, said that his conscience did not accuse him of anything, but not for that reason did he consider himself just (1 Cor. 4. 4).

(b) He praises his own good works—a bad sign.

(c) He separates himself from the rest of men and accuses the publican:

- i. *He says that he is not like the rest of men*; it is enough to think that and he is at once worse than they are. There are many who act in this way, covering their sin of pride by thinking in terms of their authority, talents, etc.
- ii. *With the publican he goes even further*; he accuses him personally, acting the part of the devil, the accuser of our brothers, usurping the rôle of God, the only judge of the living and dead.

(d) He covers his pride in the mantle of virtue:

He does it in the very temple of God, at the time of prayer, and giving thanks to God.

The result of this prayer

1. God resists the proud.
2. He who went into the temple apparently just, returns from it without having attained justice.

The prayer of the publican

1. *Nothing in it to be censured:*

It only merits the highest praise and our imitation.

2. *Humility:*

- (a) He does not dare approach the altar;
- (b) or to lift up his eyes;
- (c) he calls himself a sinner in all sincerity.

3. *Contrition:*

- (a) He makes no mention of the good he has done; yet there must have been something;
- (b) he strikes his breast;
- (c) he gives no excuse for his faults;
- (d) he asks pardon, simply and humbly.

4. *Confidence:*

- (a) He knows that God listens to the contrite and humble heart. He continues therefore to ask for pardon.
- (b) He is sure that he will obtain, from infinite and compassionate goodness itself, pardon and peace.

5. *The result:*

Complete justification.

M: The prayer of the sinners

The problem

1. *On the one hand we read in the Scriptures:*

When a just man prays fervently, there is great virtue in his prayer. Elias was only a mortal man like ourselves, and when he prayed and prayed that it might not rain on the land, there was no rain for three years and six months; then he prayed anew, and rain fell from heaven, and so the land yielded its harvest (James 5. 16-18).

2. *On the other hand:*

On the upright the Lord's eye ever looks favourably; his ears are open to their pleading. Perilous is his frown for the wrong-doers (1 Peter 3. 12).

3. *According to this, what are we to say?*

Does God or does he not hear the prayer of the sinner?

God hears the prayer of the sinner

1. We find the answer in today's parable.
2. But if that were not enough, we have other examples in the Gospels; thus the prodigal son, Magdalen and the paralytic give us the same answer—the prayer of the sinner is heard.

Dispositions required

1. *St Thomas tells us that there are three reasons why prayer is not heard:*

When he who prays, or the one for whom the prayer is offered, or the prayer itself, are unworthy, not pleasing to God.

2. *From this we can deduce the three conditions necessary that prayer may be heard:*

(a) He who prays must be pleasing to God:

- i. *The just is in this condition*; he is an adopted son of God.
- ii. *But what of the sinner?* If he no longer has any affection for his sin and sincerely desires to free himself of it, then his prayer is pleasing to God. If he is still attached to his sin, then he will not be pleasing to God.

iii. *But there is another way* in which the sinner's prayer is pleasing to God—when he prays in the name of the Church. Thus a priest who is a sinner, both through his Mass and his Office prayer, offers something to God which is to his liking (3. q. 82. a. 6. c. *et a. 7 ad 3ium*).

(b) He for whom the prayer is offered should be pleasing to God:

St Thomas again says that sometimes the sinner's prayers can be heard because of the devotion of those for whom it is offered (2-2. q. 83. a. 15. *ad 2um*).

(c) The petition itself should be to God's liking:

i. For which reason, when the sinner asks for spiritual things, gifts which can lead him to repentance, he is more liable to be heard.

ii. When he pleads for temporal things it may be different, because they might well lead to his ruin.

3. If these three conditions are all found in the sinner's prayer then it is certain that he will be heard. We cannot say the same if one of them is lacking.

The humility of the sinner

1. Prayer must be humble:

Over and above the conditions already mentioned, the prayer of the sinner must be humble; like that of the publican in today's parable.

2. It is easy for a sinner to adorn his prayer with this virtue:

(a) Sins humble a man before God. The one who sees how full of them he is will be inclined to humble himself, especially when he comes to pray.

(b) Perhaps this is the reason why such prayer is most pleasing in the sight of God. This humility can make a man pray with great fervour and perseverance, as great (if not greater) than that which the just man has.

I lift up my heart to thee, O Lord

Thus sings the Church in today's Mass. It should be the prayer of all, but especially of the sinner; the habitual sinner most of all, perhaps; he who has not yet managed to break with an occasion or habit of sin, he who thinks that he has been abandoned by God. All these should pray as did the publican: Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.

N: Humble prayer

Two types of prayer

1. *That of the Pharisee and that of the publican in the gospel of today:*

(a) The prayer of the Pharisee is boasting, presumptuous and insulting—it is the prayer of the proud.

(b) That of the publican is accompanied with beating of the breast, groans, manifestations of sinfulness. It is the prayer of humility.

2. *Both these men will have had their good points and their bad:*

(a) The publican will have some good about him, just as his action in going to the temple to pray was good.

(b) The Pharisee will have his defects and sins, as the tone of his prayer shows.

3. *But there is a big difference between them:*

(a) The Pharisee looks only at his own good qualities, thinks of them as his, and presents them to God in that way, despising all who have not got them.

(b) The publican, on the other hand, thinks that the good he has is not his. He hides it and does not wish to speak of it. He only sees imperfections, sins, faults. He knows that these are his own doing and so he strikes his breast and makes his prayer.

Humility, a condition of all prayer

1. St Thomas says that this is necessary so that a man may recognize his own need.

(a) The nature of prayer demands it; without it there can be no true prayer;

(b) all prayer is based on our dependence on God as Lord and Creator, from which comes our need to keep in touch with him;

(c) this dependence is recognized by humility, which subjects man to God.

2. The more humble a man is the more he will admit this dependence, his own incapacity and his nothingness. So much the better, then, will his prayer be.

The Scriptures affirm it

1. *The Old Testament:*

(a) Pierce those clouds if thou wouldst, thou must humble thyself, inconsolable until that prayer finds audience, unwearied till it wins redress (Ecclus. 35. 21).

(b) The psalms mention it frequently (cf. 17. 7; 33. 7; 49. 15).

(c) There are many examples of the humble prayer being heard. Thus: It was to his own God, the Lord, that he turned in this time of distress; before him, the God of his fathers, he made humble amends, and sought his favour with earnest prayer. That prayer the Lord answered, and restored him to his throne at Jerusalem. Such good proof had Manasses that the Lord only was God (2 Paral. 33. 12-13).

2. *The New Testament:*

(a) There are many who have their humble prayers answered; the centurion, the woman of Canaan, the leper.

(b) In the Sermon on the Mount Christ commands us to pray with humility (Matt. 6. 5-8).

(c) In today's parable we see how he rejects the prayer of the proud.

Humble yourselves

Humility is a fertile source of good things:

It supposes the recognition of the omnipotence of God. Humility in prayer makes it a success.

(a) Every time you pray, from the moment of rising in the morning until your evening prayers, do so with humility;

(b) renunciation of self, recognition of the greatness of God and his rights, that all things come from him—except sin, which is my own doing;

(c) abandon yourself into his hands who made you. You came out from those hands, you must return to them one day. Do so now.

O: Dispositions for justification

The Gospel story

1. The Pharisee comes away in sin; the publican in a state of grace.

2. The Lord has described the actions of the two men, and has told us that, due to those actions, one was justified and the other continues in sin.

3. Therefore, in spite of being a free gift of God, justification is influenced in some things by our own activity.

The value of justification

1. It must be a free gift of God, because it lifts us up to a super-natural level, to which we could not rise by our own efforts or merits. Christ is the only meritorious cause of our justification.

2. However, in spite of this, God demands that we should do something, at least to remove obstacles which may stand in the way of our justification.

The necessary dispositions

1. *The Council of Trent names them for us:*

- (a) The help of actual grace;
- (b) faith which comes through hearing the word of God;
- (c) a movement towards God by faith in his promises, especially because he justifies the sinner by his grace and redemption through Christ;
- (d) fear of divine justice, which moves us to consider his mercy;
- (e) hope and confidence in God;
- (f) the beginning of love which leads to repentance;
- (g) the proposal to lead a new life and keep the commandments in the future.

2. *All these acts have one common foundation—humility:*

(a) We see this clearly in the final act, which is one of penance; and penance rests on humility as on a sure foundation. If the goal is an act of humility, then so will the other acts be which lead up to it.

i. *Faith, submission of the intellect to the word of God, essentially based on humility.*

ii. *Man recognizes that he is a sinner—humility again.*

iii. *Fear of divine justice for sin committed; founded again on truth, which is the basis of humility and almost, as St Teresa would say, identified with it.*

iv. *Hope, in the help of God, his mercy, etc.—humility is necessary for this too.*

v. *Love of God, who gives us all things, and consequently, detestation of sin which separates us from him. Humility is the basis of this act too.*

(b) From this moment all is easy, because man has been changed into a publican, who strikes his breast and asks humbly for pardon for his sins.

Neither despair nor presumption

1. The road to justification is an encouragement for the publican and a terrible threat for the Pharisee.

2. Great though your sins may be, Christ says to one, pardon is easy, so too is your salvation.

(a) If you are on the point of losing heart because you see the malice of your sins, your salvation will consist in seeing that malice quite clearly and then turning your eyes towards Christ on the cross, who died to save you. Be thankful, grateful, and ask him for pardon. It is assured.

(b) If you think that you are good, then fear, be mortally afraid, because all the steps which lead to justification are humble ones. It is possible that you may not even have taken the first step towards pardon and forgiveness.

(c) Confess your sins, and they will be taken away; praise your own virtues, and even that which you seem to possess of good and virtue may be lost to you.

(d) Have confidence in yourself alone and you are deceived, lost, a sinner; have confidence in God and you are in the way of truth, saved, a just man, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

THE DEAF AND DUMB MAN

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15. 1-10

Gospel: Mark 7. 31-37

Texts on the use of the tongue

1. *Avoid evil speaking:*

Do not whisper calumnies in the public ear, and swear away thy neighbour's life; the Lord hears thee. Lev. 19. 16.

Thy tongue is skilled in mischief, thy wits razor-edged for treachery. Ps. 51. 4.

Tongues sharp as the tongues of serpents, lips that hide the poison of adders. Ps. 139. 4.

Glib tongues will not always have their way on earth; misfortune will overtake the oppressors and destroy them. *Ibid.* 12.

Far, very far from thy tongue be the cheating word, from thy lips the whisper of calumny. Prov. 4. 24.

False speech the hypocrite will use to ruin his neighbour; true knowledge is the saving of the just. Prov. 11. 9.

Lips that speak the truth shall fade never; a lie serves but the haste of the moment. Prov. 12. 19. Cf. *ibid.* 16. 28; 17. 20, 18. 6-8.

Brethren, do not disparage one another. In disparaging one of his brethren, in passing judgement on him, a man disparages the law, passes judgement on the law; and in passing judgement on the law thou art setting thyself up to be its censor, instead of obeying it. James 4. 11.

2. *Careful use of speech:*

And I say this, that in the day of judgement men will be brought to account for every thoughtless word they have spoken. Thy words will be matter to acquit or matter to condemn thee. Matt. 12. 36. Cf. Prov. 13. 2-3; *ibid.* 17. 27.

Yes, long life and prosperous days, who would have these for the asking? My counsel is, keep thy tongue clear of harm, and thy lips free from every treacherous word. 1 Pet. 3. 10. Cf. Eph. 4. 29; *ibid.* 5. 3-4.

3. *How we should speak:*

Tongue that speaks peaceably is a tree whose fruit gives life; tongue undisciplined can break hearts. Prov. 15. 4.

Well versed in doctrine, happiness thou shalt win; trust in the Lord, and find a blessing. Good judgement a wise heart can claim; winning words bring greater prizes yet. The prudent man drinks from a living fountain; fools only learn the lessons of their folly. Wisdom distils from heart to mouth, and lends the lips persuasion. Prov. 16. 20-23.

Your manner of speaking must always be gracious, with an edge of liveliness, ready to give each questioner the right answer. Col. 4.6.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

1. *The theme of confidence:*

Once more on this Sunday, as on so many others after Pentecost, the theme of confidence without limits in the power and mercy of God makes its appearance. God in his holy place; God who makes men of one mind to dwell in a house; he shall give power and strength to his people, says the Introit. The Gradual is the same as that for the third Sunday of Lent, taken from Psalm 27. In God hath my heart confided, and I have been helped; and my flesh hath flourished again; and with my will I will give praise to him. Unto thee will I cry, O Lord, my God, be not thou silent; depart not from me. The Collect says: Almighty, everlasting God, who out of thy bountiful loving-kindness art wont to give beyond the deserts and the prayers of those who humbly pray to thee; pour forth thy mercy upon us, so that thou mayest put away those things of which our conscience is afraid, and grant us blessings which our prayer does not venture to ask.

As Schuster says: This short petition from the Sunday Liturgy contains a complete treatise on prayer which, if it is to develop in due order, must be humble, and must begin with the practices of the purgative way, constantly asking of God the pardon of one's past sins. It is not fitting, in short, that a soul guilty of numberless disloyalties should ask of God those special favours which the spouse or the friend alone may hope to receive. . . .

Having faithfully carried out the cleansing practices of the purgative way, the soul is invited by God himself to rise higher, to the illuminative and finally even to the unitive way, to which is reserved the perfect union with God—that is, the gift of love, which is precisely that to which the Collect alludes in all humanity. . . . Truly, the prayer of the poor sinner cannot claim so great a favour, but it is permitted to us to hope for this from the infinite mercy of God through the merits of Jesus Christ; for though the grace of

perfect love is not due to us, yet it is certainly due to him, and is given for his sake (*Lib. Sacram.*, vol. 3, p. 125).

2. *Epistle and Gospel:*

These remind us of the day of our baptism, on which God opens our eyes and our lips and ears, to enable us to listen to and speak to God. In him and through him we were admitted into the number of his elect. It is easy to relate the Gospel to the Epistle. With St Paul everyone who has been baptized can say that the grace of God has not remained sterile in him. The Gospel reminds us of our baptism while the Epistle warns us that we must co-operate with the graces which we have received in such abundance.

II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

A: The Epistle: 1 Cor. 15. 1-10

1. *Occasion and argument:*

Among the doubts which arose in the church of Corinth, and which gave rise to St Paul's epistle to them, was this one of the resurrection of the body—a theme of great interest in the early Church, because so absurd from the pagan point of view. Even the Christians were inclined to be content with the immortality of the soul, without thinking too much of the resurrection of the body. We can detect the same preoccupation with this problem in all the early writers up to the time of Augustine and Chrysostom. We have a testimony of the difficulty the intellectuals had in accepting this doctrine in the Acts (17. 32), when St Paul tried to preach it in Athens. Some merely laughed at him while others said they would hear him on the subject on another occasion—a polite way of putting him off. When he said that he preached a doctrine which was folly to the Gentiles he was thinking principally of this one.

Therefore, in his letter to those at Corinth, he puts this argument before them. It is impossible for the dead to rise, some say. If that be true, then Christ has not risen from the dead and our faith is vain. You know perfectly well that he did rise again; therefore we can do so as well. What is more, he rose as the first-fruits of the dead; just as in Adam we all died, so in Christ we all rise again.

The first of these two arguments takes in verses 1-19, and among them we find the verses chosen for today's epistle. St Paul gives a list, which is not meant to be complete, of those who saw the fact for themselves and were still alive at the time when he wrote. The importance of this letter is that it contains the first written account of the resurrection, since it was composed at the very latest in the year 58. What is more, he testifies that he himself received this doctrine at the time of his conversion, about 35. Thus he says that

this was, at the time of his conversion, a doctrine admitted by the whole Church without question, and one on which other doctrines can be built up. He also cites the appearance to himself.

The important elements, put in almost as asides, are:

- i. the importance of faith for salvation;
- ii. the oral tradition of doctrine;
- iii. the humble description of himself.

2. Texts:

(a) Here, brethren, is an account . . .

He reminds them that he preached what he had received, faith in which will save them if they remain faithful. He means the whole of the Christian revelation, although he insists on the central point of it, without which their faith would be vain and his preaching also.

It is, therefore, firmly established that belief in the resurrection of Christ was a part of the Catholic faith at least in the year 50, and, to those who argue in complete good faith, as far back as the year 35.

(b) Through this . . . you are in the way of salvation . . .

Two ideas: salvation by faith in the Gospel, provided one does not believe in vain. Hear it, embrace it, remain in it. There is no need to insist that, for St Paul, to admit the Gospel is to accept it with all the practical consequences which follow from it. The opposite is to believe in vain.

The second idea is the intangible nature of the faith, which must be kept as it was delivered to them.

(c) I handed on to you, as it was handed to me . . .

He received it during the first period of his formation; orally and transmitted in the same way. Notice the great esteem for the Apostolic tradition. We notice it in Papias, who was always anxious to know what people had heard from St John.

(d) . . . that Christ died for our sins . . . that he was buried . . . rose again on the third day . . .

This, as he says, was the chief message of the Gospels. He has both received and passed on facts which have been testified to by witnesses and which are the fulfilling of the Scriptures. The death of Christ is mentioned in Isaias 53. 4-9; St Peter mentions Psalm 15. 10 (Acts 2. 31) and our Lord's reference to Jonas.

(e) That he was seen by . . . and afterwards . . .

The word afterwards does not necessarily imply that these are placed in chronological order here. It is probable that he chose these testimonies because of their importance. The apparition to the five hundred is usually identified with that mentioned by Matthew (28. 16).

(f) . . . like the last child that comes to birth unexpectedly . . .
The humility of Paul. He gives his own testimony to confirm that of the others.

(g) . . . only, by God's grace, I am what I am:

This might surprise us if we did not already know the argument of Paul to the Corinthians, with the elements of praise of himself and blame of himself at one and the same time. Discord among his converts forced him to defend his position as an apostle, so that, even when he humbles himself, he at once insists that he is an apostle like the rest. But the glory belongs to God, whose grace has made him what he is. Here, in one verse, we find concentrated the whole of the Christian doctrine on grace, to the confusion of both Pelagians and Protestants.

B: The Gospel: Mark 7. 31-37

1. The miracle:

On the 6th Sunday we have made mention of our Lord's journey through the pagan territory, so that he might escape for a while from the traps set for him by the Pharisees and from the jurisdiction of Herod. The miracle which occurs during this journey is mentioned only by St Mark, in whose care for details commentators see St Peter's style.

They brought a deaf and dumb man to him. The Greek text indicates that he stuttered, spoke with great difficulty, and verse 35 seems to bear this out. He was not therefore dumb from birth, nor deaf from birth, since he could say some things, even if badly. This would be caused by some illness, probably.

Jesus, desiring to cure the soul as well as the body, takes him apart a little, so that he will not be distracted by the crowd. It is always difficult to keep the attention of those who are deaf. They are constantly looking from one side to the other, especially in the case of children. The actions done by our Lord are to awaken confidence in the man. Those who are deaf have to be addressed in visible signs as often as possible. He touches the man's lips: This is the source of your evil. He puts saliva of his own on the tongue, communicating his own power, as it were, to the man himself.

He tells the crowd to keep quiet about the miracle, because he does not want his journey to be known; but the Jews, of whom there were many even in that part of Palestine, remembered the words of Isaias (35. 5-6) which Christ had used himself in his reply to John the Baptist (Matt. 11. 1-6).

2. Applications:

The first application, as in the case of any miracle, is the apologetic one. But there are others.

(a) **Spiritual deafness and incapacity as far as speech is concerned:**

Deaf to the word of God, dumb when it comes to praising God. Always open ears for scandal and gossip, but closed to counsels, advice and example, whether from pulpit, confessional or elsewhere. A tongue which we have received to praise God and speak the truth, used so often for sinful purposes, defamation of our neighbour, insults against God and the like. Lying tongues, against the Church and priests. In the ceremony of baptism there is a rite very similar to this one. Let us remember it and make it effective in our lives.

(b) **Retreat from the crowd:**

A solid interior life, a certain amount of solitude, retreats, time of meditation—it is then that Christ can speak to us and we can hear him.

(c) **Sacraments and sacramentals:**

Christ did not need to use any actions to effect this miracle. But he does make use of them and continues to do so in the sacraments and sacramentals, for our sakes. Man knows, not merely by his intellect, but also through his senses. What is more, everything which reaches the intellect does so through the senses. The use of such signs is, then, natural and spontaneous.

(d) **No praise allowed:**

It should be given to God, not to men.

SECTION III. THE FATHERS

I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Two lessons from the liturgy of today

(Commentary on Cor. hom. 38. 4-6; PG. 33, 327-330)

I. *The resurrection and humility:*

(a) **Why several apparitions?**

Why did he not appear to all of them at once? To sow the seed of faith first of all, because he who first saw him and was convinced of the truth of the resurrection, went his way to announce it to others, and through the hope of such a great miracle, the way of faith was opened to him before that of vision. That is why all did not see him at once, nor at first did many see him, but only one, the captain of them all and the chief man among them, the most faithful one; indeed there was need for a most faithful soul to receive this vision for the first time. . . . That is why he appeared to Peter first, because he who was the first to confess Christ merited in justice to be the first witness. This was not the only reason; there was

another; because he had denied his Lord, who wished to show him, by the abundance of his loving-kindness, that he had not been cast off.

(b) **St Paul's intention:**

And last of all, I too saw him, like the last child, that comes to birth unexpectedly. What is his purpose and on what occasion were these humble words spoken? It would appear that, if his intention was to be believed as one of the witnesses to the resurrection, he is not going to attain his purpose, quite the opposite. It would have been more useful to praise himself, make himself out to be great. . . . He will speak about that later. First of all he humbles himself, taking up all the accusations against him, so that later he can enlarge upon his merits. . . . He who intends to sing his own praises, above all when he wishes to present himself as a witness, blushes for shame; that is why the saint, on this occasion, presents himself in a humble guise and then states his reasons for greatness.

(c) **The humility of St Paul:**

Have you seen once again his great humility? He attributes the faults to himself, and the good things only to God. The grace which has been given to me has not been sterile, rather I have laboured more than others. He does not say: I have been honoured, but: I have laboured. When he could relate all the dangers and threats of death through which he had passed, he limits himself to calling them *work*, and once he has mentioned them they are forgotten, so far as he is concerned, because he says very simply, or rather, it was not I, but the grace of God working with me.

Can we find anything more to be admired than that soul? After having said so many things against himself, he hardly mentions a good thing when at once he affirms that it is not his, and as if he were sorry for having mentioned those things in his favour, he lowers them by all that he says both before and after. . . . Why, then, does he mention the things which are in his favour at all? Because it was necessary, since if he had not mentioned them, if he had limited himself to abuse of himself, how could he have quoted himself as a witness, counting himself among the others, and saying: That is our preaching, mine or theirs, as you will; that is the faith which has come to you.

Confronted with this example, let us confess our sins publicly and keep silent about our good works, and if at any time the occasion should demand that we speak of them, let us do so modestly, attributing it all to grace. That is what he does, speaking to us of the beginnings of his life and then, when he relates what he has managed to do, he imputes it all to grace, to show us, in both, the goodness and mercy of God, who first preserved him and then, having preserved him, raised him up to such heights.

Let no one despair then, who is living in vice; let no one trust in himself who lives a life of virtue; let the latter be afraid and the former encouraged. He who is a coward and lazy will not be enough of himself to remain virtuous; while he who makes an effort and is diligent will not be incapable of fleeing from sin. Holy David is an example to us in this; as soon as he slept a little he fell into the depths; and when he fought he rose again to his former heights.

To despair and to be lazy or negligent are evils which are much the same, because the former makes us fall from the heights of heaven, while the second does not permit us to rise again. . . .

2. *Sins of the tongue: their gravity and frequency:*

(a) A dangerous instrument:

The devil has the habit of wounding us everywhere, but first of all in the tongue and lips. There is no organ so apt for his purpose, for deceit and fraud, as an intemperate tongue and open lips.

From it come our frequent falls and the gravest of crimes. How easy it is to sin through the tongue: The sword hath killed many, the tongue more (Ecclus. 28. 22). The same sacred writer on another occasion, in order to show us how grave this fall is, uses these words: Slip of a liar's tongue is like slip from roof to ground (*ibid.* 20. 20). It were better for our body to fall to the ground and be crushed than to speak words which can lead to the loss of our soul. He also exhorts us to take great care lest we fall: Make fast thy mouth with bolt and bar (28. 28), that is, that we should not speak stupid or useless words.

(b) But useful:

You may say to me: But if this member is such a dangerous instrument, why did God give it to me at the beginning? Because at the same time it is extremely useful, and if we are careful, it will only be useful, not causing damage to anyone. Listen to what the Wise Man has to say: Of life and death, tongue holds the keys; use it lovingly and it will requite thee (Prov. 18. 21). . . . The tongue lies half-way between the two uses you make of it; you are the master. The sword is in the middle; if you use it against enemies, it will be an instrument of salvation; if you wound yourself, do not blame it for your death, but your own wickedness. We can say the same of the tongue. It is a sword; sharpen it against your vices instead of preparing it to wound your brother.

II. ST AUGUSTINE

(Extracts from his book on the *Usefulness of Belief*, addressed to Honoratus, PL. 42, 65-90.)

1. *Need for a divine authority to reach the truth:*

It remained to me, therefore, to find out what that authority must be, since so many, in the midst of dissensions, promised to

show it to me. I got lost in a thick wood, in which I was sorry to lose myself and in which I wandered without rest, anxious all the time to find the right path. Each time I grew more weary of those whom I had decided now to abandon. The only thing wanting to me in the midst of such dangers, was to pray to divine providence with groans and tears of compassion that he might help me. I did it earnestly, and the sermons of the Bishop of Milan had almost convinced me. . . . I had decided to put my name down as a catechumen in the Church to which my parents had handed me over, until I had convinced myself that I had found what I sought, or at least that there was no reason to look for it.

At that moment, had there been anyone capable of teaching me, I would have been found entirely docile. See that the same thing happens to you, and once you have decided that you have tired yourself out enough, then decide to put an end to your labours, follow the teachings of the Catholic Church, which have come down to us from Christ through the apostles and from us must go on reaching all posterity.

2. *Need for revelation:*

It is ridiculous for everyone to pretend to be in possession of the truth and to say that they all teach the doctrine of Christ. I cannot deny that all heretics say it, but they insist on explaining and giving reasons for the most obscure things to those they are trying to deceive. They also accuse the Catholic Church of demanding faith from all who approach her, while they do not impose the yoke of faith, on the contrary, they glory in the fact that they know how to open the fountains of knowledge. Is there anything which can redound more in their praise, you may ask? It is not so, because they do it without being really capable of it and only to attract the multitudes in the name of reason. . . .

3. *Faith necessary:*

Would it not be better, you may say, to explain things to me and thus allow me to follow the Church without fear of temerity. Perhaps it would, but it is such a deep and difficult thing to know God by reason that do you think all are capable of understanding the arguments by which the human mind can reach some knowledge of divine things? Do you think they will be many or few who attain it? Few, you must reply.

Then are we to deny religion to all those who are not gifted with sufficient and serene judgement? Do you not think it better to lead them along little by little so that they attain that immense truth? Is there anything more religious than this? It is impossible to reject or abandon any man who has a desire for truth, and do you not think that, if first they do not believe, then they cannot pray, and

if they do not pray they do not order their lives towards the obedience of one of the greatest precepts, and thus cannot attain that truth?

4. *The only safe road, that of faith:*

When it is a question of religion, that is, of how one should know and serve God, we should abandon those who forbid us to believe, promising to explain it all to us quickly; because there is no doubt that there are two kinds of men, wise and foolish. I call them wise, not because they have talent and intelligence, but in so far as they possess, inasmuch as a man can, the firm knowledge of men and of God and accommodate their habits to that knowledge. The rest, no matter how superior they may be in the arts and sciences, I put among the foolish. Who, however feeble his intelligence, does not see that the foolish should follow in the footsteps of the wise? The foolish would live much better if they would only become the servants of the wise. And if this happens in things of lesser importance, such as in the buying of and cultivation of lands, in marriage, in the education of children, and in administration of the household, is it not also bound to occur in the case of religion, and with much more reason?

5. *God the only authority in religious matters:*

But now arises another and an even more difficult problem. How are the foolish to find a wise man, since no one will publicly claim this name for himself, even when it is attributed to him by others? . . . God is the only one who can get us out of the difficulty when we are worried about religious matters, and if we do not believe that he exists and that he helps the human intellect, then we should not even seek for the true religion. To believe before understanding, when we are unable to see the truth; the cultivation of faith in our souls so as to receive the seed of truth, is not only most salutary, it is also the only way that the sick can be returned to health. . . . I confess that I have believed in Christ to such an extent that I am convinced of the truth of everything that he says to me, even if he gives no reasons for it.

Christ is the master of truth, as history teaches us. . . . What else do his many miracles demonstrate if it is not this? He taught the faith to the foolish; you try to guide them by reason. He told them that they must believe; you cry out against him. He praised those who believe; you cast it in their faces. If he had not changed the water into wine, if he had not done so many miracles, wonders which amply justify men in following him as their master, then there would be no need to heed his words when he says: If you believe in God, believe also in me. He brought us the medicine which was to heal our corrupt habits; he demonstrated his authority by miracles and merits faith by that authority. By faith he dragged the multitudes

after him; with the crowds he attained maturity, and with maturity he fortified our religion.

6. *The Incarnation in the economy of revealed religion:*

It is necessary then to imitate men, whom we see. What more, then, could God do, in his great liberality and wisdom, than that the eternal, unchanging wisdom of God should deign to be incarnate in man? In that way he not only did everything necessary to invite us to follow him; he also suffered all that might frighten us away from following him. Since there is no one who can attain that most pure and sublime truth unless he first of all loves perfectly—a thing which will never happen while we have the misfortunes and evils of our body upon us—he, by his birth and wonderful works, awoke our love, and by his death, and resurrection, calmed our fears. . . .

If anyone should suffer a grievous and hopeless illness, and suddenly he finds himself cured by the command of another person, it is quite certain that the charity of the one cured will be greater than his admiration at being cured. That is what happened at the time when God made man manifested himself to men. The sick were healed, the lepers cleansed, the lame walked again, the blind saw and the deaf heard. At that time water was turned into wine, fifteen thousand were fed with fifteen loaves, a man walked on the sea and the dead rose again. Some of these works were obviously benefits wrought on the body; others hidden signs given to the mind; but all of them sought the good of mankind by giving testimony to the divine majesty.

You may ask why the same things do not happen today. Because they would not produce any emotion in us unless they were causes of admiration, and if they were so common, they would not be wonderful in our eyes.

SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

ST THOMAS AQUINAS

The sacraments

1. *Their number:*

The sacraments of the Church were instituted for a twofold purpose; namely, to perfect man in things pertaining to the worship of God according to the religion of the Christian life, and to be a remedy against the defects caused by sin. And in either way it is becoming that there should be seven sacraments.

For spiritual life has a certain conformity with the life of the body. . . . Now a man attains perfection in the corporeal life in two ways; first in regard to his own person; secondly, in regard to the whole community of the society in which he lives, for man is by nature a

social animal. With regard to himself man is perfected in the life of the body, in two ways; first directly *per se*, i.e. by acquiring some vital perfections; secondly, indirectly *per accidens*, i.e. by the removal of hindrances to life, such as ailments and the like. Now, the life of the body is perfected directly in three ways. First by generation, whereby a man begins to be and to live; and corresponding to this in the spiritual life there is Baptism, which is a spiritual regeneration, according to Titus 3. 5. . . . Secondly, by growth, whereby a man is brought to perfect size and strength; and corresponding to this in the spiritual life there is Confirmation, in which the Holy Ghost is given to strengthen us. . . . Thirdly, by nourishment, whereby life and strength are preserved to man; and corresponding to this in the spiritual life there is the Eucharist (John 6. 54). . . .

And this would be enough for man if he had an impassible life, both corporally and spiritually; but since man is liable at times to both corporal and spiritual infirmity, i.e. sin, hence man needs a cure from his infirmity, which cure is twofold. One is the healing that restores health, and corresponding to this in the spiritual life there is Penance. . . . The other is the restoration of former vigour by means of suitable diet and exercise; and corresponding to this in the spiritual life there is Extreme Unction, which removes the remainders of sin and prepares man for final glory.

In regard to the whole community, man is perfected in two ways. First by receiving power to rule the community and to exercise public acts; and corresponding to this in the spiritual life there is the sacrament of Order, according to Hebrews 7. 27, that priests offer sacrifices not for themselves only, but also for the people. Secondly, in regard to natural propagation. This is accomplished by Matrimony both in the corporeal and in the spiritual life; since it is not only a sacrament but also a function of nature.

We may likewise gather the number of the sacraments from their being instituted as a remedy against the defect caused by sin. For Baptism is intended as a remedy against the absence of spiritual life; Confirmation against the infirmity of soul found in those of recent birth; the Eucharist against the soul's proneness to sin; Penance against actual sin committed after baptism; Extreme Unction, against the remainders of sins—of those sins, namely, which are not sufficiently removed by Penance, whether through negligence or through ignorance; Order against divisions in the community; Matrimony as a remedy against concupiscence in the individual and against the decrease in numbers that results from death.

2. Their necessity:

Sacraments are necessary for man's salvation for three reasons. The first is taken from the condition of human nature which is such

that it has to be led by things corporeal and sensible to things spiritual and intelligible. Now, it belongs to divine providence to provide for each one according as its condition requires. Divine wisdom therefore fittingly provides man with means of salvation, in the shape of corporeal and sensible signs that are called sacraments.

The second reason is taken from the state of man who in sinning subjected himself by this affection to corporeal things. Now the healing remedy should be given to a man so as to reach the part affected by disease. Consequently, it was fitting that God should provide man with a spiritual medicine by means of certain corporeal signs; for if man were offered spiritual things without a veil, his mind, being taken up with the material world, would be unable to apply itself to them. . . .

The third reason is taken from the fact that man is prone to direct his activity chiefly towards material things. Lest, therefore, it should be too hard for man to be drawn away entirely from bodily actions, bodily exercise was offered to him in the sacraments, by which he might be trained to avoid superstitious practices, consisting in the worship of demons and all manner of harmful action, consisting in sinful deeds.

It follows, then, that through the institution of the sacraments man, consistently with his nature, is instructed through sensible things; he is humbled, through confessing that it is subject to corporeal things, seeing that he received assistance through them; and he is even preserved from bodily hurt by the healthy exercise of the sacraments (3 P. q. 61. a. 1. c).

3. The effect of the sacraments:

(a) They apply the redemption:

Christ's Passion is a sufficient cause of man's salvation. But it does not follow that the sacraments are not also necessary for that purpose; because they obtain their effect through the power of Christ's Passion; and Christ's Passion is, so to say, applied to man through the sacraments, according to the apostle (Rom. 6. 3). All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized in his death.

(b) cause grace and contain it;

A thing is said to be in another in various ways; in two of which grace is said to be in the sacraments. First, as in its sign; for a sacrament is a sign of grace. Secondly, as its cause; for as stated above (a. 1) a sacrament of the New Law is an instrumental cause of grace. Wherefore grace is in a sacrament of the New Law, not as to its specific likeness, as an effect in its univocal cause; nor as to some proper and permanent form proportioned to such an effect, as effects in non-univocal causes, for instance . . . but as to a certain instrumental power, transient and incomplete in its natural being . . . (3 P. q. 62. a. 3. c).

(c) **Sacramental grace:**

The sacraments are ordained to certain effects which are necessary in the Christian life; thus baptism is ordained unto a certain spiritual regeneration by which man dies to vice and becomes a member of Christ; which effect is something special in addition to the action of the soul's powers; and the same holds good of all the other sacraments. Consequently, just as the virtues and gifts confer, in addition to grace, commonly so-called, a certain special perfection ordained to the powers' proper actions, so does sacramental grace confer, over and above grace commonly so called, and in addition to the virtues and the gifts, a certain Divine assistance in obtaining the end of the sacrament (Q. 62. a. 2. c).

4. *The character:*(a) **Existence:**

The sacraments of the New Law are ordained for a twofold purpose; namely, for a remedy against sins, and for the perfecting of the soul in things pertaining to the divine worship according to the rite of the Christian life. Now, whenever anyone is deputed to some definite purpose he is wont to receive some outward sign thereof; thus in olden times soldiers who enlisted in the ranks used to be marked with some characters on the body, through being deputed to a bodily service. Since, therefore, by the sacraments men are deputed to a spiritual service pertaining to the worship of God, it follows that by their means the faithful receive a certain spiritual character (Q. 63. a. 1. c).

Now the worship of God consists either in receiving divine gifts or in bestowing them on others. And for both these purposes some power is needed; for to bestow something on others active power is necessary; and in order to receive we need a passive power. Consequently, a character signifies a certain spiritual power ordained unto things pertaining to the divine worship (*ibid.* a. 2).

(b) **Its nature:**

A character is properly a kind of seal, whereby something is marked as being ordained to some particular end; thus a coin is marked for use in exchange of goods, and soldiers are marked with a character as being deputed to military service. Now the faithful are deputed to a twofold end. First and principally to the enjoyment of glory. And for this purpose they are marked with the seal of grace according to Ezech. 9. 4. . . .

Secondly, each of the faithful is deputed to receive, or to bestow on others, things pertaining to the worship of God. And this, properly speaking, is the purpose of the sacramental character. Now, the whole rite of the Christian religion is derived from Christ's priesthood. Consequently, it is clear that the sacramental character

is especially the character of Christ, to whose character the faithful are likened by reason of the sacramental characters, which are nothing else than certain participations of Christ's priesthood, flowing from Christ himself (a. 3. c), . . . and in this way those who are deputed to the Christian worship, of which Christ is the author, receive a character by which they are likened to Christ. Consequently, properly speaking, this is Christ's character (*ibid. ad 2um*).

(c) **It lasts for ever:**

Although external worship does not last after this life, yet its end remains. Consequently, after this life the character remains, both in the good as adding to their glory, and in the wicked as increasing their shame; just as the character of the military service remains in the soldiers after the victory, as the boast of the conquerors, and the disgrace of the conquered (a. 5. *ad 3ium*).

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

(Extracts from Sermon I on 11th Sunday after Pentecost.)

1. *No one so deaf as the sinner:*

St Gregory says that the whole of nature gives testimony to its author, all pay homage to the God of heaven and earth; sending him a star at his birth. The sea pays him homage, offering him a firm road for his feet; the earth acknowledges him, trembling at his death; the sun also, hiding its rays. The stones pay him their homage, bursting asunder at his last sigh; the tombs also, by giving back their dead. These dumb elements recognize him and proclaim him as God, while the hardened sinner refuses to acknowledge him. There is nothing so deaf as the sinner—not the stones, the dead or the vacuum from which creation came. God dies with a loud cry, and the Jews do not hear him. But the stones split asunder, doing what the hearts of men should have done. O heart of man, harder than the stones!

O Sinner! You are the only one who is deaf to all God's words! God hurls his warnings and words at you through his inspirations. And what loud cries come to us from the sun, the heavens and all things created! The sun says, God made me into a beautiful and brilliant creature, and I keep the laws which he imposed on me from the beginning and, obeying his mere look, I give life to all things. The heavens proclaim their keeping of his law in all their movements—you, O man, are the only one who despises my law; yet, frail creature that you are, what can you do without me?

David compares sinners to venomous serpents, who are like the asp, which turns a deaf ear to the music of the snake-charmer (Ps. 57. 5-6). . . . And what we say about deafness can also be applied to speech, because we are dumb in giving thanks to God for all his benefits. It is necessary for us to humble ourselves, lift up our eyes to heaven, groan and plead with God to open all our senses.

2. *He did all things well:*

The goodness of the universe:

God made all things, and he saw that they were good. St Ambrose, speaking of this, gives us what appears at first sight to be a strange thought. He says that man is the only creature of whom it is not said that God saw that he was good. Why this silence about one of the most beautiful of God's creatures? Simply because man's goodness comes from his good works, not from anything exterior; and God was waiting to see what those works would be before praising man.

But, since God did all things well, why did he not make man glorious and incapable of sin? If the judge could do it, would it not be better to prevent the existence of thieves, instead of preparing instruments of punishment for them? Here is St Thomas's reply to this difficulty: God has done all things well, but he has not made them excellent; he could have made better things, but not if we think of them within the harmony of the whole. Man, created and confirmed in grace, would have been more perfect, undoubtedly; but nevertheless, it was better to create him capable of sin, and that for four reasons:

i. *For man's own benefit*, so that he could co-operate in his own salvation and glory; so that he might attain to justice, not of necessity, but freely. A king can freely grant his sons the honours of a triumph, but were it not merited by victory it would not be pleasing or glorious. To merit honours it is first necessary to expose oneself to the dangers of war.

ii. *As an effect of divine wisdom*, which has put all things in order. . . . It is convenient that evil should exist in the world, so that, by its very opposition to good, it should make that good more glorious. Would virginity be praiseworthy unless corruption existed? . . . Good musicians often use discords to produce an excellent effect in the whole composition. . . . There is no evil which does not fit perfectly into the order established by God; the same can be said of punishment, whether it be in this world or the next.

iii. *To manifest divine justice and severity*, which are but facets of his goodness.

iv. *To manifest his mercy*, which is above all his attributes.

II. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

(Extracts from *The Sinner's Guide*, Book 2, P. 1, chap. 11, on the sins of the tongue.)

Although the eighth commandment is a negative precept, it also implies positive obligations. Thus, it obliges us to cultivate simplicity of heart and a mind free of all malice and human respect, because if these things are preserved, there will be little danger of false testimony. Simplicity of heart will prevent us from judging hastily or always interpreting things in the worst light. We must have the prudence of serpents in avoiding occasions of sin and keeping watch over ourselves, but the simplicity of doves in dealing with our neighbours, striving to appreciate their labours and to be so favourably inclined to them that we always speak well of them and overlook their faults wherever it is possible.

As a negative precept, the eighth commandment prohibits every word by which one's neighbour may be injured. It is, therefore, a brake applied to the tongue, and rightly so, for men are most quick to use the tongue, and frequently it is used thoughtlessly and to the detriment of one's neighbour. It is an instrument of anger, pride, flattery, lying, murmuring and vainglory. It is the weapon with which we most readily seek revenge, and while its effects are most harmful, few people realize the injustice or attempt to make amends. This is why God has given us this precept for the restraint of the tongue. . . .

One sin that needs to be specially avoided is that of murmuring or destructive criticism. It is so prevalent in the world today that no home, no religious congregation or group of persons is exempt from it. Although this vice is practised by all sorts of persons, since the world itself offers many occasions for the good to lament and the indifferent to complain, there are some people who seem to have a greater natural inclination to it than others. For just as some people have no taste for sweet things, but prefer bitter or spicy things, so some persons are so melancholy or dyspeptic that they find no delight in praising others, but do nothing but ridicule, criticize, detract, or treat others with disdain. On all other subjects of conversation they are silent, but when this chord is struck, they seem to come to life and to revive their spirits in order to contribute their share to the criticism of others.

If you want to cultivate a hatred for this horrible vice, consider the three evils that result from it. First of all, criticism is very close to being a mortal sin, because it is only a short step from criticism to detraction and it is easy to pass from one to the other. . . .

Once the tongue begins to wag it is as difficult to restrain it as it is to quench flames that are fanned by the wind, or to check a

runaway horse. The backbiter does not conceal anything from anybody and he does not stop until he has penetrated the most secret depths of another's character. . . . Consider the life and character of your neighbour as a forbidden tree which you must not touch. Moreover, be as careful not to say anything good of yourself as not to say anything evil of another, because the first is vanity and the second is detraction. Keep a constant watch on your tongue and always be ready to swallow any critical or injurious words that come to your lips. This is one of the best forms of prudence and discretion and one of the most salutary precepts you can impose on yourself.

And do not think that you can excuse yourself from this vice by first of all praising him whom you intend to criticize or condemn. People who do this are like the surgeon, who first deadens the nerves and then makes the incision with his knife. . . .

But of all kinds of backbiting and criticism, the most grievous is that which is levelled against those who are good and virtuous, because this results in the intimidation of those who are already weak in the life of virtue and closes the door to those who are scrupulous and fearful. . . . Therefore consider it a kind of sacrilege to speak against the servants of God, because even if they were what evil persons say they are, at least by reason of their title they deserve honour and respect. . . .

In addition to the sins already mentioned, we must speak of another that is closely connected with them: rash judgement. It frequently happens that backbiters and critics speak not only of things that are actually evil, but also of things that they merely suspect or judge to be so. If there is nothing for them to criticize they will make something by their rash judgements and suspicions or by giving an evil interpretation to things that could just as readily be interpreted well. Our Saviour has commanded us to refrain from rash judgements in the following words: Judge not, that you may not be judged. This sin may very easily become mortal if that which is rashly judged itself is without sufficient foundation. However, if it is a question of false suspicion and not an actual judgement, the sin is usually venial.

III. JOSEPH M. ESCRIVA

(Some extracts from *The Way*, by the founder of the *Opus Dei* movement. Mercier Press.)

1. Charity:

You are hurt by your neighbour's lack of charity for you. Think how God must be hurt by your lack of charity—of love—for him!

Never think badly of anyone, not even if the words or conduct of the person in question give you good grounds for doing so.

Don't make negative criticism: if you can't praise, say nothing.

Never speak badly of your brother, not even when you have abundant motives. Go first to the Tabernacle, and then go to the priest, your Father, and talk over your grievance with him also—and with no one else.

To speak badly of others is to create an infection that poisons and undermines the apostolate. It runs counter to charity, means a useless expenditure of strength, and brings about the destruction of interior peace and the loss of union with God.

After seeing how so many people spend their lives—every moment of them!—(tongues wagging, wagging, wagging, with all the inevitable consequences), silence seems preferable to me, and more necessary than ever. And I well understand, Lord, why you seek an account for all our idle words.

It's easier said than done. Have you . . . with that cutting, hatchet-like tongue of yours, ever tried, even by chance, to do *well* what, according to your considered opinion, others do less well?

Moreover, as happens with those modern painters, the outlook of certain people is so unhealthily subjective that they dash off a few random strokes and assure us that they represent our conduct, our portrait.

Don't judge without having heard both sides. Even people who think themselves virtuous very easily forget this rule of elementary prudence.

Do you know what damage you may cause by throwing stones with your eyes blindfold? No more do you know the harm you may do—and at times it is grave—by letting drop uncharitable remarks that to you seem trifling, because your eyes are blinded by thoughtlessness or passion.

Who are you to pass judgement on your superior's decision? Don't you see that he is better fitted to judge than you? He has more experience; he has more capable impartial and trustworthy advisers; and, above all, he has more grace, the grace of state—God's light and his powerful aid.

Charity does not consist so much in giving as in understanding. Therefore seek an excuse for your neighbour—there is always one to be found—if it is your duty to judge.

2. Presence of God:

Get used to lifting your heart to God in acts of thanksgiving many times a day. Because he gives you this and that; because you have been despised; because you have not what you need—or because you have. Because he made his Mother so beautiful—his Mother who is also your Mother. Because he created the sun and the moon,

and this animal and this plant. Because he made that man eloquent—and left you tongue-tied. Thank him for everything, because everything is good.

A saying of a soul of prayer: in intentions, may Jesus be our end; in affections, our love; in speech, our theme; in actions, our model.

IV. RONALD KNOX

(Some extracts from *A Retreat for Lay People*, inspired by the voice of Christ, giving back his speech to the deaf and dumb man.)

Each day, then, begins with a birth and ends in a death; each day is a life in miniature. And the very conditions of our existence take away from us that excuse which is man's favourite excuse when he wants to shirk action and to neglect his salvation—that we do not know when to start . . . 'Today', says the Holy Spirit, 'if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.' Yesterday and the day before you neglected it; but today is a fresh day, with a separate existence from the others; let it be the first of a fresh series of days, in which you will listen to the divine call. We may think of it as one day among others, with the same duties, cares, temptations as the others. 'Deign, O Lord, to keep us, just for this one day, without sin.' The day's evil is sufficient for it; if you will only preserve us from sin today, we can leave tomorrow to look after itself. Or we may think of it as the last of a series; one today will be the last of all our todays; and it may be this one. If today is to be the last, how are we to bear the thought of all our wasted yesterdays? Listen to our Lord speaking from his Cross! Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise. It is never too late, for the Penitent Thief or for you or for me (pp. 22-23).

SECTION VI. SERMON SCHEMES

I. THE EPISTLE

The Testimony of St Paul

Its double value

St Paul's testimony to the resurrection of Christ has a double value:

(a) Adversaries usually present the resurrection as a myth which arose through the imagination of the first-century Christians. St Paul shows that there was not time between the death of Christ and belief in his resurrection for such a myth to have arisen.

(b) Others have fallen back on the psychological state of those who claimed to be the first witnesses of the resurrection. St Paul's background, mind and training would have detected anything like this at once. Therefore he is a superb witness to the truth.

The antiquity of his testimony

'All critics', writes the Jewish scholar Montefiore, 'now believe that the first Epistle to the Corinthians was really written by St Paul and that chapter fifteen is, therefore, the oldest extant tradition about the Resurrection.'

1. St Paul was a master advocate, as is shown time and time again in his writings. For example, his way of handling Felix and Agrippa. When he entered the Jewish-Christian controversy he must inevitably have exploited this genius to the full in an attempt to find a satisfactory solution to the empty tomb.

2. If the vision on the road to Damascus, which brought about his complete conversion, was an hallucination, then it does not follow the usual pattern at all.

(a) There is no subsequent weakening of character or disintegration of mind;

(b) rather there is the coming to full life and maturity of a fine intellect, an intensely logical and orderly mind;

(c) it is just as if the great stone rolled away from the door of the tomb has now been rolled away from Paul's mind too;

(d) his conviction on this subject is one of the strong points of his preaching, the touchstone of faith, we might call it;

(e) he appeals to this fact as complete evidence of the truth of his preaching, without which that preaching and the faith of his hearers would both be in vain;

(f) he also points out that it is part of the tradition handed down from the beginning.

Conclusion

1. This doctrine of the resurrection constitutes the dogmatic centre of Christianity three years after the death of Christ.

(a) It was preached by the apostles;

(b) believed by the people, who professed their belief in it in almost the very words used today in the Apostles' Creed;

(c) it was the sole motive for the conversion of Paul, who from that day onwards never forgot the risen Christ, our identity with him and our life through his life.

2. From a persecutor he becomes an apostle. Why? Because he has seen the Risen Christ.

II. THE GOSPEL

A: Apart from the crowd

Parable in action

1. We can see in this miracle a parable in action, the representation of a series of ideas.
2. God shows special mercy to some souls, as he did today with the deaf man.
 - (a) He forces solitude on them;
 - (b) there he reveals his mind to them, opening their ears to listen to him;
 - (c) he loosens their tongues:
 - i. to confess their sins in the tribunal of penance;
 - ii. in praise and gratitude to him;
 - iii. in their preaching to others, with the true example of their lives;
 - iv. in the apostolate.

Three points of this homily

1. In order to heal some souls, God imposes solitude on them.
2. He speaks divine words to them in prayer, meditation, spiritual inspirations.
3. Once reconciled to God and instructed by him, they must return to the active life to spread among their brethren the treasures of divine wisdom.

Apart from the crowd

1. The soul which really seeks God, either to be restored to his grace or to grow in perfection, must go apart from the crowd.
 - (a) From disordered mixing in worldly things;
 - (b) from other men;
 - (c) but especially from the crowd of its own passions—from all uproar, in a word.
2. At times God brings this about—and then, what at first sight appears to be a cross and a punishment, is seen in its right light, as a great mercy of God.
 - (a) This he does at times by making bitter the pleasures of the world.
 - (b) At other times by sending us bitterness of soul, dryness, a feeling of abandonment, sadness, illness, etc.
 - (c) Such evils are really good, because they tend to lead the soul little by little to God, the only true Good.

3. *The prophecy of Osee:*

- (a) It would be difficult to find a more expressive text than this of Osee (chap. 2). It sums up the ideas already mentioned perfectly.
- (b) The sinful soul is represented by an unfaithful wife, symbol of Israel, but applied to the soul as well.
 - i. God covers her with shame and reproaches, afflicts her with trials, surrounds her with sadness;
 - ii. takes away her goods and riches, both interior and exterior. It could also represent the soul, which has voluntarily stripped itself of the riches of grace.
 - iii. God has no mercy on her children either.
 - iv. She did not want to recognize the fact that all she possessed came from God and was owed to him alone in return.
 - v. God says that he will hedge her way about with thorns, fence her in, till she can find no way out but him (v. 6 ff.).
 - vi. Thus he brings her to see herself as she is, alone but for God.

Solitude

1. It is but love's stratagem, thus to lead her out into the wilderness; once there, it shall be all words of comfort (v. 14).
2. Thus he brings about the reconciliation between himself and the soul, and as a consequence of it, the reconciliation with the whole of nature (v. 21).

Application

1. A special one in retreats and missions.
2. *Some points for consideration:*
 - (a) God loves me, with a special love,
 - (b) but I have been ungrateful to him, as was the woman depicted in the prophecy:
 - i. I have offended him in many ways.
 - ii. I have deliberately thrown away his grace—my greatest gift from God.
 - iii. I have also seen the bitterness of life and its pleasures, the fact that they are not lasting, do not satisfy the true desires of my heart, etc.
 - (c) But at last, like the prodigal son, I have entered into myself and have decided to return to God:
 - i. I have decided that I was better off with my first love;
 - ii. happier with him and have decided to return to him.
 - iii. I know that he has many things to say to my heart during this time of retreat or mission. He is going to offer me his love again, and with it peace of soul.

- (d) I shall make use of these days to purify and sanctify myself, above all I shall make my resolutions:
- i. to live well in the future, a true Christian life;
 - ii. to preach to others by my example, in the family, seminary, parish, etc.;
 - iii. in the apostolate;
 - iv. when I hear him say to me: Thou art my people, I will reply, And thou art my God.

B: Jesus, the people and the deaf man

Synthesis of the scene

Description:

We shall see what can be imitated in the actions of Jesus, the Crowd and the deaf man.

The conduct of Jesus

1. Learn to do all the good we can to those around us:

(a) Jesus leaves Jewish territory for a pagan land, there he preaches and heals. He does good:

- i. in every place;
- ii. to all kinds of people;
- iii. at all times, without thought of his own weariness, distances, etc.

(b) We must do the same, since he is our model:

- i. All that we have, our faculties, abilities, etc., we have received from him. We must use them all according to his will.
- ii. It is well known that his will is none other than that we should do good to all.

2. We must also learn to lift up our eyes to God and live in his presence.

3. Learn also to seek in all things God's glory.

(a) Jesus does not want the miracle he has worked to be talked about:

- i. He always despised human praise or blame;
- ii. if he asks for glory at the discourse before the Passion it is the glory which will be his after death;
- iii. even this he attributes to his Father (John 17. 1).

(b) As far as we are concerned, God's glory is our last end:

- i. If we do not give him that glory we are robbing him of his rights.
- ii. So far as our virtue is concerned, let us glory, but in the Lord (2 Cor. 10. 17).

- iii. So far as our good works are concerned, when they cannot be hid then they must so shine as to give glory to the Father.
- iv. Our whole lives, whatever we do, whether in word or in action, must be done for God, in thanks to the Father and through the grace of the Son (Col. 3. 17).

The people

1. Desire to help the neighbour in all his needs:

- (a) They take the man to Jesus (as they took other sick on many occasions);
- (b) in a genuine manifestation of love for the neighbour.
- (c) This is the great need of human society, in which the weak have been commended to the care of the strong.

2. Prayer for the neighbour:

- (a) They asked for his cure.
- (b) Prayer for all men is an obligation:
 - i. imposed by God, in the Our Father;
 - ii. imposed by our human solidarity;
 - iii. much more by our solidarity in and with Christ (1 Tim. 2. 1-4).

3. Thanks to God:

- (a) In their enthusiasm they even ignore his wishes that silence should be maintained about the miracle;
- (b) almost certainly the man who had been cured would be one of the first to burst forth in praise of God and Christ.
- (c) The giving of this thanks to God is also an obligation:
 - i. arising from that of giving glory to God;
 - ii. from the natural gratitude to God for all his benefits, natural and supernatural;
 - iii. from the divine command repeated so many times in the Scriptures, especially in the psalms;
 - iv. from the point of view of our own best interests, because giving thanks brings new benefits from God.

C: Deaf to God's word

Spiritual sense of the miracle of today's Gospel

1. All the miracles of Christ can be considered in two ways, in the literal and in their spiritual sense.
 - (a) Literally, as historic actions which are the very foundation of our faith because of their probative value;
 - (b) the spiritual—as a norm or rule of life.
2. The deafness and difficulty in speech mentioned in the Gospel have been interpreted by the Fathers of the Church:

(a) the difficulty in speech represents our lack of gratitude to God for all his benefits;

(b) deafness, slowness of soul, not listening to the voice of Christ.

3. Our Lord complained many times that the Jews, even though they did hear his voice from the physical point of view, did not hear it from the spiritual.

Spiritual deafness

1. The spiritual life turns on hearing the voice of Christ and answering its call as did Samuel: Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth (1 Kings 3. 9), or as Paul obeyed the call on the road to Damascus.

2. But the sinner, made stupid by the tumult of his senses, ends by being deaf to all that implies the word of God, which is nothing but a voice crying in the wilderness as far as he is concerned.

3. That is why he ends up far from God.

God's ways of speaking to us

1. Through creation, which sings in praise of his power, wisdom and knowledge (Wis. 12).

2. Through the visible effects of his providence:
(a) natural providence, by which he looks after our bodily needs;
(b) supernatural, of which we have a record in the whole of sacred history, the Old and New Laws.

3. But those who are spiritually deaf do not see any of this in nature; they find there nothing but a source of their pleasures and riches.

(a) They never bother to see God in it, even if they do not reach the point mentioned in Wisdom 12.

(b) They never even bother to read the history of God's supernatural providence and aid to men.

4. He speaks to us through the Church and her institutions.

(a) Christ ascended into heaven, but he left us the preaching and teaching authority to guide us, together with everything which is contained or implied in that, reading, good example from others, solidarity, etc.

(b) The spiritually deaf do not take any heed of these things, nor bother to make use of them.

5. As if all that were not enough, God also speaks to us through the gentle inspirations of his grace.

(a) No matter how hardened a sinner may be, it is part of Catholic doctrine that God does not leave such a one without his help, both in the form of calls to penance and also actual graces.

(b) God is constantly calling us by all the means at his disposal.

Causes of this deafness

1. It is more general than might be supposed at first sight.

(a) In so far as the world at large is concerned, we can deduce deafness of this kind from the very fact that most people are dumb, i.e. lacking in prayer.

(b) To hear God it is not enough that he should come to us; we must also rise to him through prayer.

(c) Yet how many there are who never pray, or ask God to allow them to hear him.

2. The general causes of this deafness are in the fact that our ears are all too keen and open to hear the calls of our senses, things which lead us away from the voice of God.

(a) It is impossible to hear two voices at the same time, at least properly;

(b) the shouts and clamour of the world drown the gentle voice of God.

The remedy

1. *God takes the sick man apart from the world:*

We should cultivate this same separation—moments at least of silence in the depths of our soul.

2. *He puts his fingers in his ears:*

(a) the finger of God is a symbol of his power;

(b) the greatest power of God is in his grace;

(c) to plead for this grace is the best method of overcoming spiritual deafness;

(d) God's intervention is necessary, but it is also always at our disposal if we ask him for it.

3. *He applies his saliva:*

(a) A symbol of wisdom in the Old Law.

(b) Wisdom implies knowing the truth of things and their first cause, God.

(c) The definitive remedy, then, is silence, recollection, with the aid of grace to convince ourselves of the vanity of the world and the truth of God.

(d) Thus we shall be disposed to hear his voice.

D: The spiritually deaf

Introduction

1. The man who is healed is a deaf mute—one who has not been able to use his voice properly because he has not been able to hear the sounds of the human voice.

2. In the spiritual order there are people who are deaf to the divine word, and who, as a consequence, produce no fruit.

Who are they?

Those who do not wish to hear the voice of God when he speaks to them in so many different ways, for example, one of the following:

(a) revelation through creation, of his power, majesty, glory, beauty, etc.;

(b) supernatural revelation, contained in the Scriptures, the teaching authority of the Church left behind him by Christ, preaching, the guiding magisterium of the Church, priests, bishops, Pope;

(c) the sinner who is spiritually deaf gradually cuts himself off from these sources of help and inspiration;

(d) this explains how it is that, in spite of so many clear precepts in the Scriptures, men still refuse to obey, or even ignore those precepts;

(e) the voice of conscience—so easily stifled. It is a simple thing, over a period of time, to convince ourselves that there is no other course of action open to us save this one which we wish to follow.

Impediments to the hearing of the word of God

1. *The lack of the love of God:*

(a) Christ says this clearly:

i. The man who has no love for me lets my sayings pass him by (John 14. 24).

ii. *What is more, he does not even hear them:* The man who belongs to God listens to God's words; it is because you do not belong to God that you will not listen to me (John 8. 47).

(b) God's words need preparation in the one who is to receive them if he is to hear them in the right sense of the words:

i. As the soul grows nearer to God so it becomes more appreciative of his words.

ii. For which reason simple souls, of little or no intellectual formation, usually have a finer penetration into and a greater appreciation for the word of God.

2. *Belonging to the flock of the devil:*

(a) Our Lord said: And still you will not believe me; that is because you are no sheep of mine. My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me (John 10. 26-27).

(b) Here is a good sign by which we can know who belong to the flock of Christ and who do not. Words are not enough, nor even the reception of the sacraments. We need to hear the word of God and obey it.

3. *Religious ignorance:*

This exists in a good number of the baptized; there are some who do not even know the fundamentals of their religion. Sometimes they are not too much to blame, but we should make an effort, this applies especially to parents, to provide good, solid religious instruction.

4. *Corruption of heart:*

Evil passions and bad habits. The children of Israel once asked the prophets not to talk to them about unpleasant things, but to speak of those things which would flatter them or incite their passions.

Conclusion

1. We can all have a share in this religious deafness.
2. We must examine the causes which give rise to it in each case.
3. Know that each day can bring us fresh knowledge or penetration into the word of God.

E: The spiritually dumb

Our lack of praise of God's glory

1. This silence, to St Augustine, came from the fact that we attribute to ourselves all our good works, instead of giving glory to God and that public honour which is his due.
2. Other authors and Fathers talk of the sins of omission which we commit when we do not give God public honour and glory.

Obligation

1. If we were but simple creatures we would not merely give him public honour, but also defend him on all occasions.
2. But we are also Christians and form part of the Mystical Body of Christ.

(a) By baptism and confirmation we have been made soldiers of Christ;

(b) this very mission has been entrusted to us by the Spirit of God which has been given to us. Through and with him we are expected to testify to God's claims to honour and glory.

The two impediments

1. The causes of all human disorders usually have their roots in a blindness of the mind and weakness of heart.

(a) When the mind is guilty of a culpable mistake its conduct with regard to God is frankly and positively evil. It tends always to justify its sins.

(b) When the heart fails through weakness and is frightened at the obstacles which lie before it, usually we fall into sins of omission. We deplore them, but we fall into them just the same.

2. With reference to God and his glory, our carelessness is sometimes disguised as prudence (which is false prudence, of course) and at other times a simple cowardice is the cause of the trouble.

False prudence

1. This consists in a false spirit of moderation which, so as not to offend another or provoke his laughter or derision, allows those moments to pass which demand our active defence of the glory of God.

2. *This prudence is:*

(a) Dishonourable to God:

i. It is one of the divine rights that men should profess that they belong to him and should glory in it. There is no possible prudence which can lessen this obligation, since it is at the very root and foundation of Christian prudence.

ii. The interests of God are so important that they cannot be out-weighed by any other, no matter what it may be.

iii. This obligation is so grave that should the occasion of martyrdom present itself, it is necessary to face death rather than deny God his glory.

iv. We can compare two sayings in the Scriptures: He who is not with me is against me (Luke 11. 23), and: Was it not jealousy for the honour of thy house that consumed me; was it not uttered against thee, the reproach I bore? (Ps. 68. 10).

(b) evil even by the world's standards:

i. A friend would count among traitors one who, when the occasion arises, did not stand by his side. A king would consider as a traitor one who, in time of war, did not fight under his banner.

ii. We profess the law of Christ and lament the scandals of the world in general, but when the occasion presents itself we are only too clever at finding motives which justify our approval (or at least our silence).

(c) is a cause of scandal:

i. Even atheism disguises itself as indifference—this is common to all evil.

ii. When cowardice makes us indifferent (at least outwardly) we contribute to the spread of evil, because the common people do not know how to distinguish between the two.

(d) a prudence which justifies evil:

i. Evil loves to hide itself and does not like to come face to face with good.

ii. If good rises up against evil then people know the choice which lies before them.

iii. Our cowardice stops us from opposing evil—there is no brave flag lifted up against it.

A shameful and dangerous cowardice

1. *In the first place, it deprives us of the greatest honour:*

(a) All that we do for ourselves carries with it the seal of our littleness; but when we occupy ourselves with God's interests, that infinite object makes our works share in its greatness.

(b) God says that he honours those who honour him and despises those who despise him (1 Kings 2. 10).

2. *It earns for us the scorn of men:*

(a) of good men, naturally;

(b) of evil men too, because they have no confidence in us, and unless we chance to be useful to them, they recognize our cowardice and baseness.

3. *It contradicts our very conduct:*

So decided and valiant in our own affairs, so cowardly in those of God.

4. *It deprives us of grace:*

Rightly so. Talents are given so that we shall trade with them in benefit of the Lord's interests.

True prudence

1. We should not allow ourselves to be deceived by our own cowardice, dressed up as prudence.

(a) It is one thing to have zeal for religion and another to convert religion into zeal.

(b) But discretion should not be carried too far.

2. The enemies of God become more annoyed? That does not excuse me or allow me to hide my beliefs. If because of my action evil men are angered, that is something which God has permitted.

3. We make too much fuss? What of it? Does not the subject merit that? Which is worse, the fuss which corrects a disorder or the silence which may easily cause it?

F: The need for silence

Introduction

The Fathers and commentators have treated of the theme of silence, basing their remarks on two circumstances of the miracle in today's Gospel.

1. *A deaf mute is cured:*

(a) The Fathers say that there is a deafness and a dumbness which are evil and which need a cure;

(b) but there is also a deafness which is good, when for example we shut our ears to the words and noises of the world; just as there is a dumbness which is praiseworthy, when we refuse to speak to men in order to talk with God.

2. *Christ separates the sick man from the crowd to heal him:*

In this circumstance we can see a spiritual sense, when, for example, we think of the need for silence in order to heal oneself and to progress in the spiritual life.

Silence is necessary so that God may act on the soul

1. Every action of ours which demands application also requires recollection and therefore silence.

(a) This is a common fact in all men of science, for instance;

(b) philosophers seek silence and solitude to study and think deeply. They need this in order to be able to concentrate their thoughts and attention on their subject.

2. How much more is silence necessary for the spiritual man who needs to apply himself to discover:

(a) the presence of God in the very centre of the soul;

(b) the riches which God has placed there.

(c) Reason may use creatures to discover these truths, but at the same time it will separate itself more and more from them as it makes progress.

Christ and silence

1. *Christ says:*

But when thou art praying, go into thy inner room and shut the door upon thyself, and so pray to thy Father in secret; and then thy Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward thee (Matt. 6. 6). God lives and communicates himself in secret.

2. *The example of Christ:*

(a) He knew the need for this silence to attain that intimacy with God, to whom he was already united by the closest union;

(b) in Nazareth he lived in silence for thirty years;

(c) in the quiet of the night, during the public life, he prays to his Father;

(d) in the desert, for forty days—a reserve of silence for the public life;

(e) he prepared for his death by three hours of prayer.

Conclusion

1. We live in the torment of perpetual motion and activity. We must learn to live in that atmosphere, but deliberately cultivating silence as far as we can.

2. Now—as always—the communication with God is established in the silence of the interior life of the soul.

G: Exterior silence

Introduction

1. *There is a double silence:*

(a) exterior, silence in speech and that of activity;

(b) interior—recollection and curbing of the interior powers of the soul.

2. We shall deal here with the first of these.

The tongue, source of good and evil

1. *With it we praise the Lord* (James 3. 9):

There are many other great benefits which can come from the right use of the tongue and of speech, but we are not concerned with those at the moment. We are more interested in studying the evils which it can cause.

2. *Source of evils:*

A man who is not betrayed into faults of the tongue must be a man perfect at every point, who knows how to curb his whole body. . . . Just so, the tongue is a tiny part of our body, and yet what power it can boast! How small a spark it takes to set fire to a vast forest! . . . no human being has ever found out how to tame the tongue; a pest that is never allayed, all deadly poison. We use it to bless God who is our Father; we use it to curse our fellow men, that were made in God's image (James 3. 2 ff.).

3. However, we are not talking about the gravity of the sins of speech; in this scheme we are more concerned with the need for exterior silence in order to develop the interior life. Therefore we shall insist on the importance and difficulty of mortification of the tongue.

Words break the interior secret

1. *They are a manifestation of our thoughts and sentiments:*

(a) These, on finding exterior expression, are thrown open to the whole world.

(b) The Word of God is the communication of the Father, but no secret is broken by this Word, because of the unity in nature. This does not happen in the case of man.

2. Benefits:

There are many benefits which come from this communication of thoughts to others:

- (a) For him who speaks—love communicated and shared is multiplied and rejoices in that fact.
- (b) For him who listens—he acquires light and strength from the one who speaks.
- (c) It is the foundation of social life, develops the faith and spreads it. Christ told the apostles to preach the word of God to all nations.

3. The dangers:

Excess is a disadvantage in this matter and there is always room here for mortification.

- (a) Speech betrays one's interior secrets and God, who loves to work in the interior of the soul, finds himself hindered by this factor.
- (b) Exterior impressions which enter into the soul through conversation are at times good, but at times they disturb the quiet of the soul, bring temptations, distractions.

Exterior activity

1. A more delicate problem:

This poses an even more delicate problem than speech, because activity is necessary, yet dangerous at the same time.

2. It can easily disrupt the interior silence of the soul:

- (a) because it directs our faculties to the external things of the world;
- (b) because of the fatigue it can produce;
- (c) lack of tranquillity often accompanies it;
- (d) disappointments are frequent and can discourage the soul;
- (e) source of many temptations, some of them difficult to see at first sight.

3. This is taught by experience:

- (a) Souls who have to dedicate themselves to exterior activities notice how difficult it is afterwards to be recollected and quiet interiorly.
- (b) Even prayer suffers from worries and distractions caused by it.

False activity

- 1. This false activity occurs when work occupies all our attention, leaving little or no time for interior activity and silence.

It is dangerous because it can disguise itself under the pretext of useful activity, necessary perhaps—and by all kinds of pretexts.

- (a) Duties of one's state of life;
- (b) social duties;
- (c) the joy which it produces;
- (d) zeal badly understood, which thinks that it is obliged to do this or that, even charitable works, etc.

- 2. The great danger is confidence in merely human activity (without the divine aid), to spread the Body of Christ.

Opposite error

1. There is another error which is completely opposed to this one; it is the position of certain souls given to contemplation, who despise activity of all kinds, saying that only contemplation can lead to sanctity.

2. This error is born of the fear of activity and from a type of spiritual pride which delights too much in union with God by contemplation.

3. We should follow the guide given us by God himself:

- (a) He is pure activity and pure contemplation at one and the same time.
- (b) His intimate life is no obstacle to outward actions.

4. The law of charity demands activity of some kind:

- (a) It is the very life of God in us;
- (b) it tends automatically to spread itself;
- (c) we shall be judged on love—but on love which has flowed over into good works.

5. St Thomas, in his theology, tells us that the perfect life is one in which there is a blending of contemplation and action.

(a) God has ordained that human activity shall be a means to the spread of his Church—his love. It is the apostolate which cannot be divorced from a spiritual life.

(b) But truly apostolic souls have always found their source of inspiration and strength in contemplation which flows into action later.

How to bring this about

1. It is necessary:

To dedicate with scrupulosity the necessary time to prayer and to preserve that prayer from the defects which can come to it through activity, such as distractions, etc.

- 2. To follow the advice of Christ: Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all the rest will, inevitably, follow (Matt. 6. 33).

3. To give to activity, duties of state, etc., the time which is absolutely necessary for their faithful fulfilment—nothing more.

(a) Our activity pleases God only in so far as it is in conformity with his will.

(b) It will increase our love and union with God in the measure in which it is in conformity with that divine will.

H: The interior life

Recollection in the spiritual life

1. *Retreat and solitude:*

These are advised by all the masters of the spiritual life.

(a) One might think that it is only meant for those who are in the higher flights, but this is not true—it is for all.

(b) Faithful and priests alike, according to Von Hildebrand, need this recollection if they are to live a truly interior spiritual life. It is a fundamental element in our transformation into Christ.

2. The gospel of today recommends it symbolically. (Cf. also Osee 2. 14.)

A double retreat

1. *There is a double retreat:*

(a) interior in the soul; separating our affection from the things of this world which surround us, so that even in the midst of work, we are still recollected;

(b) corporal or external. A mission or retreat.

2. *Both are important, one as a means and the other as an end:*

(a) The internal is the end. In the Christian's life the merely external activity is useless without this interior recollection.

(b) The exterior is useful, but not so necessary as the interior recollection.

(c) But the exterior is an excellent means to attain the interior.

Characteristics of interior recollection

1. Following the thought of the German professor already cited, we can say that the following are the main characteristics of interior recollection:

(a) *Silence in the mind:*

Wandering all over the place, in ideas, full of illusions or dreams, is one of the dangers we have to guard against;

(b) not to allow oneself to be absorbed in exterior activities to the detriment of interior recollection.

(c) *concentrate on God:*

i. In all that we do we must find God somewhere.

ii. Speak to God, ask his help in everything, judge everything by his standards.

2. Recollection means that we separate ourselves from the present situation, no matter how important it may seem, in order to seek God in and through it.

3. Our principal mission, as creatures, is to give glory to God in all things and advance his cause.

4. This is not an impossibility, even for those who live in the world:

(a) Because it does not mean separating oneself from all external activity, on the contrary, it implies sanctifying that activity in the right way.

(b) But it does mean not allowing oneself to be so dominated by externals that we have no time for interior recollection.

This can be attained

Retreats, missions, etc., once a year at least. One who is faithful to this ideal will advance in the spiritual life by leaps and bounds.

I: Ephpheta: Be opened

The ceremony of baptism

1. In ancient times, when the ceremony of baptism was performed at Easter time, in one of the previous scrutinies, a priest, with his finger dipped in saliva, touched the ears of the catechumens and said these words.

2. Nowadays this rite has been suppressed, but its symbolism still continues.

His ears were opened and his tongue loosed

1. Before baptism man, guilty of sin, is incapable of any supernatural activity.

2. In baptism grace is infused into the soul and its powers. There are also habits of virtue which transform the natural powers, making them capable of supernatural activity.

3. Everything in man becomes supernatural, sharing in the very life of God. We can see it all summed up in this miracle.

(a) The one who has been baptized can speak to God by means of the virtues, grace, prayers, etc.

(b) He can call God his Father and treat him as a Father.

(c) He can listen to God—this is the action of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Renunciation and belief

1. To complete the explanation we must describe what follows immediately after the *ephpheta*.
2. Now that his ears and eyes are opened he is able to renounce the devil, with all his works and pomps.
3. Then follows the profession of faith in God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Baptism up to date

1. Today is a day when we should remember with gratitude the great gifts we have been given in baptism and thank God for all his mercies.
2. *But we can also bring up to date what was then done in our souls:*
 - (a) Like deaf mutes we approach the Mass of today. The noise and tumult of the world have made us deaf to the voice of God.
 - (b) The graces of the Mass—more still if we receive Communion—restore our spiritual hearing and unite our tongues to praise God again, making us daily more fitted for the kingdom of heaven.
 - (c) Baptism gave us grace. This must not lie fallow in the soul. To help it to bring forth much fruit we must water it with the Eucharist.

J: The Sacraments

Signs which give life

1. He who is omnipotence itself and can cure at a distance presents himself to us today, healing a deaf mute by means of certain visible signs.
2. He who is life itself communicates that life to others by the divine sap of grace.
 - (a) He could have done it directly;
 - (b) but he chose to do it by certain external signs which would both signify and give the grace proper to each one. These are the sacraments.
 - (c) They are efficacious signs of grace, which produce what they signify.

God with us

1. Through them God is always with us, because they give him to us.
2. They are the ordinary means by which we receive the divine life.
 - (a) It is obvious that God could, at any moment he chooses, put himself into direct communication with man, illumine his mind and touch his heart, enriching his soul with grace;

(b) but he has not seen fit to do so. He wished to make use of visible creatures, inferior to man, to sanctify him. He makes them instruments of sanctification.

(c) This is in perfect accord with our human nature. As St John Chrysostom says: If we had been pure spirits then God would have given us an entirely spiritual nature; but since we are made up of this mixture of body and soul, he has used these material elements to lead us to him and to excite in us the desire for spiritual things.

3. *The excellence of the Sacraments:*

Theologians have sung their praises in many ways:

(a) Thus St Augustine says: From the wounded side of Christ, pierced by the lance on the wood of the Cross, came the sacraments of the Church.

(b) The sacraments, says Fray Luis of Granada, are the very fountains of living water of which Isaias spoke; they are seven, seven sources of different kinds of the waters of grace, fitted especially to remedy all kinds of weakness and spiritual ills which can attack souls.

(c) And again, in another place: The sacraments of the law of grace are channels through which the divine water of grace flows into the soul. This grace, apart from making the soul beautiful and pleasing in the sight of God, brings with it the virtues which fortify and sustain it, making it capable of keeping the divine commandments and of resisting all temptations of the adversary. At the same time it receives strength to resist all evil passions.

A triple effect

All the sacraments produce a double effect in the soul—some of them three.

(a) Sanctifying grace:

The effect of all the sacraments, with the special distinction between those of the dead and those of the living. The former produce it where it did not previously exist; the latter increase it.

(b) Sacramental grace:

Specific in each sacrament—it adds to the former grace a special orientation, which depends on the purpose for which each sacrament was instituted. We can picture it easily if we think of the light of the sun shining through stained-glass windows; the different colours represent the different sacraments—the light is the same.

Independent of the minister

1. The wonderful thing about the sacraments is that they produce their effects independent of the minister—he can be good or bad, it makes no difference.

2. They depend only on the sanctity of Christ and the effects of his passion and death.

Frequenting the sacraments

1. If Christians would only realize the great gift which is placed at their disposal! If they would only realize the grandeur of the seven sacraments!

(a) Some of them cannot be repeated—because there is no need; but there are at least two which can be received frequently—and how few they are who take full advantage of them!

(b) The modern legislation of the Church makes it easier to receive Communion frequently—we should take full advantage of that.

2. *There are two reasons why we should do this:*

(a) **To give thanks to Christ:**

He brought about our redemption so that we should have an easy road to heaven, he asks our co-operation in this, the application to our souls of the fruits of his redemption. We dare not deny him that satisfaction.

(b) **Our own Christian life and increase in perfection:**

If we truly desire to sanctify ourselves, we must soak ourselves in the waters which flow from these fountains of grace and holiness.

3. As often as we feel ourselves weak and hopeless we must draw near to Christ, and there is no better or more sure way than that of the sacraments. There he will draw near to heal us as he did in the case of the deaf mute in the Gospel.

K: He has done well (I)

Introduction

1. When the Jews saw the miracle Christ did, they exclaimed: He has done well in all his doings.

(a) True enough; but he also did all things well so far as his example was concerned, and his virtues.

(b) He did all things well in the hidden life as well as in the public life, because he always had before his mind the will of his Father.

2. The Jews only admired the wonders he worked. We must not fall into the same error with regard to Christ, but we can fall into this error in thinking of the lives of the saints and also in judging our own lives, despising small things and imagining that perfection consists in the extraordinary—not in the usual, day-to-day affairs of life.

Perfection in every-day life

1. *Perfection consists in the sanctification of the every-day actions:*

To submit our wills to God—which is the sum of perfection—means that we must fulfil perfectly those obligations which he has imposed on us by circumstances and by our state of life. This is the very ideal of sanctity.

2. *This life includes everything that could possibly make saints of us:*

(a) It is a life of mortification, of prayer, of union with the divine will in all things.

(b) It is a life of love, especially in its most important element, doing the will of the beloved.

A life without danger

1. One of the most dangerous things, so far as our sanctity is concerned, is to choose the wrong path.

(a) Our vanity and ambition makes us commit this error, convincing us that we could do such great things, given the chance—that we are wasting our time where we are, etc.

(b) The illusions find their corrective in the fulfilment of the duties of every day. If God wanted anything more from us he would see to it that, either through our superiors or by some other means, we would be led into another path.

(c) The devil, who is well able to disguise himself as an angel of light, tries to lead us away from this safe path, making us discontented with our lot, seeking change and variety, etc.

(d) There is no better way to overcome this temptation than by doing our ordinary daily duties, whatever they may be, as well as possible.

i. Even if we were to work miracles, without charity it would serve as nothing.

ii. Charity obliges us to do God's will (Heb. 10. 36).

2. There is nothing so useful for society as this doing of the will of God. The good of society is attained perfectly when each one does well the task assigned to him.

(a) We can say the same of family life. The family lives in peace when each one does his or her best in the position they hold; the children obedient, religious; the father working for the support of his family, ruling them with love, educating them in and for God; the mother administrating with diligence, with love for her family.

(b) There may be nothing extraordinary here, but it is perfection in the family circle.

L: He has done well (2)

He went about doing good

1. We can make our own these sentiments with regard to Christ, admiring and praising his mercy and his omnipotence—placed at our service.
2. After twenty centuries of redemption we have even more reason than the Jewish crowds for giving him this praise and adoration and for understanding how true it is that Christ did all things well. In the history of the Church we see how his omnipotence and mercy have worked things out for the good of his Church, disposing all things according to his loving mercy.

Application to God's works

1. But we should give all this a wider application—to the works of God's creation, of which he himself said that he saw they were good.
2. *They have a double goodness in them:*
 - (a) That by which they reflect the divine goodness, all of them shining with the perfection of God in some way or another;
 - (b) their theological goodness—and by this we mean the capacity they have, as reflections of God's perfection, of leading us to a greater and ever more perfect knowledge of their creator.
 - i. This, not merely in the sphere of knowledge, but also in so far as they can lead man, through the free actions of his intellect and will, to praise and glorify God by means of his creatures.
 - ii. We have the words of the apostle which can help us: We are assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God . . . (Rom. 8. 28). St Thomas adds: Even sin!
 - iii. All creatures have their divine angle, and man can—through his intellect and free will—detect that and unite himself to God through it.

Through creatures to God

1. *Man has the obligation of seeking God through creatures:*
 - (a) As St Thomas says: We have to use created things in the right way, because we must use them for the purpose for which they were made by God. They have been made for two reasons; to give him glory and for our use, that is, so that by our use of them we may not sin.
 - (b) All things are thine, and what we have received from thy hands, that we have given back to thee. Therefore, whatever you

have, be it prudence, wisdom, beauty—everything must be referred to and used for the glory of God.

2. *A perpetual hymn of praise:*

Creatures must sing a perpetual hymn of praise to the divine goodness and mercy. Man is the conductor of this heavenly orchestra, by using creatures in the right way, not abusing them.

Ways of going to God through creatures

1. Commentators on the Spiritual Exercises point out three ways in which we can go to God through creatures; contemplation, use and abstention.
2. Here we shall have something to say about the first way, as being the more universal.
 - (a) See how the skies proclaim God's glory, how the vault of heaven betrays his craftsmanship! (Ps. 18. 1).
 - (b) From the foundations of the world men have caught sight of his invisible nature, his eternal power and his divineness, as they are known through his creatures (Rom. 1. 20).
 - (c) Creation is one great book, in which each creature is a page which teaches us truth about God.
 - (d) It is easy to see God in what is pleasant for us, what is beautiful, good—but we must also learn from his saints to see him in bitterness, the cross, sorrow of all kinds, humiliations, failures.
3. One of the secrets of sanctity is this simple view of God; to see all things as coming from his hands and returning to those same divine hands from which they came. Then we shall be able to exclaim with the crowds, He has done all things well.

M: Solitude and the active life

Mutual relationship

1. There is a close relationship between these two elements of the spiritual life: solitude—interior life—not so much physical as moral and intellectual.
2. The interior life imposes order on the exterior life of activity.
 - (a) Solitude necessary to learn to speak and act rightly;
 - (b) in solitude the deaf mute learned to speak and listen.

Double meaning here

1. Solitude, meditation and contemplation have a double meaning, either the natural or the supernatural.
 - (a) The natural: a philosophical operation, useful to thinkers and scientists; the supernatural has for its purpose the lifting up of the mind to God and union with him.

(b) The natural, seeking to order our thoughts, speak to ourselves, think; the supernatural, to listen to God, learn from him, through the voice of his Spirit.

2. In this scheme we are more concerned with the second of these two, although both are useful—even we might say, necessary—to the man of action.

Contemplation

This follows on meditation, which is a means to it. It has for its object the contemplation of divine truth, a concentrated intuition into that truth. It is primarily concerned with divine truths in themselves, but secondarily with creatures as reflection of that truth.

Relation between the contemplative and the active life

1. The contemplative is, in itself, more meritorious, because it belongs directly to the love of God. But it can happen that, in the case of some individual, he will gain more merit from the active life than from the contemplative. He may even earn more merit than those who live the contemplative life.

2. This is a great consolation for those who, by temperament or through charity or obedience, have to give themselves up to an active apostolate.

(a) St Teresa explains it in the first chapters of her Foundations.
(b) St Thomas explains it in Q. 182, a. 3 of the 2-2.

3. *The substance of their doctrine can be reduced to this:*

(a) The active life can hinder, to a certain extent, the contemplative, but it also foments it, as a moderator of the interior passions.

(b) When anyone desires to protect the interior castle of contemplation, let such a one first of all occupy himself in the battlefield of good works, so that he may discover certain elementary truths:

- i. that he is doing no evil to his neighbour;
- ii. if he can suffer with equanimity the injuries done to him by others;
- iii. that he is not being led away by the joys of temporal things;
- iv. if their loss causes him sadness;
- v. if he is taking the thoughts of these temporal things with him into his life of solitude and contemplation.

(c) This explains what St Teresa means when she says that she knew many people who were occupied with the active life but who soon rose to the very heights of contemplation. They were obviously in the active life through obedience and charity.

Temperaments

1. It should not be forgotten that there are certain individuals who, through their temperaments, are more suited for the active life than for the contemplative—and vice versa.

2. Those who are inclined to the passions, especially to that of activity and impetuosity in action, are more apt for the active life because of the restlessness of their spirit (2-2. Q. 182. a. 4. c).

The touchstone

1. We know if our prayer and contemplation have been good and sent to us from God by their results, not by the sweetness we may experience.

(a) Consolation in prayer can be false;

(b) but the proof of effects is always a certain one if, that is to say, we see that all our activity after prayer is directed and inspired by charity.

(c) God may perhaps hide himself from us in prayer, but he will always show himself in its effects.

(d) On the contrary, external activity is good and comes to us through God's inspirations, when we are ready and willing to leave it to give ourselves up to prayer and contemplation.

i. Exterior activity is dangerous when we hate to leave it in order to pray, even though that activity may appear to produce much fruit.

ii. The two lives are in mutual relationship.

2. It has always been noted that the characteristic of the great mystics was the facility with which they went from contemplation to action.

This is summed up by St Teresa: That is what prayer is for, my daughters; that is the purpose of this spiritual marriage, that from it should come works, and more works (*Castle*, 7. 4).

Two examples from the Scriptures

1. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, both the priest and the Levite came from the temple, from prayer; but their prayer was not good, since they did not find sufficient inspiration in it to help their neighbour.

2. *The example of Mary, Mother of God:*

(a) The angel came to her while she was in contemplation; at once she offers her will to God.

(b) She conceived her divine Son—and at once goes off to see Elizabeth, who is about to have a child, so she is told.

3. Here is the perfect example of the two lives in one.

N: Master of the interior life

The perfection of a retreat or mission

1. *What it does not mean:*

(a) It is not necessary for all who make a retreat or mission to examine their consciences with great care and almost scrupulosity, stirring up all the mud of the past, doubting about past confessions, etc. That can be an evil which will lead to scruples and even to despair.

(b) Nor is it a mere philosophical solitude, leading to deeper thoughts or to more accurate theology.

2. *The perfection of a retreat or mission demands more:*

(a) The end in view is greater sanctification of the everyday life;

(b) greater love for God;

(c) a chance to hear the voice of God's Spirit, moving us by his inspirations and his graces.

(d) Our main prayer should be that of the blind man at the gates of Jericho: Lord, that I may see.

3. *This spiritual sight implies:*

(a) A knowledge of God's will for me, which is enclosed in the commandments first of all, then in the counsels, then in the duties of my state of life;

(b) these duties are nothing more than an individual explanation—application to my own life—of the commandments;

(c) I must learn to see God's will in them and do it.

The time of retreat or mission

1. This should be a time of thought, but one which is moved by God's inspirations. We should give God a chance to speak to our soul.

2. *A time for decision, led by the Spirit:*

(a) About my present life, my activities, my duties, my obedience to God's will;

(b) about the future, in the form of resolutions which I know that I am capable of keeping.

i. *These should be few in number*, essentially practical in their sphere and in their application.

ii. *They should tackle first things first*, i.e. the most important points where I am not as yet doing the will of God perfectly.

The miracle of today's Gospel

1. All this is summed up in the three 'moments' of this miracle. Christ desires to heal us as he did the deaf mute of the Gospel.

2. *The three moments:*

(a) First of all, he withdraws him from the crowd—the spiritual silence which is necessary for us to hear the word of God, which is a gentle thing, not in the whirlwind of the tumult of every day.

(b) Then only does the finger of God touch his ears, opening them to God's word.

(c) Lastly his tongue also is touched, so that the resolutions made may be effective, practical, doing most good to the soul. That the soul may pray well, and then carry that prayer into the active life as a source of its power and effectiveness.

The touchstone

1. The proof that we have made a good retreat or mission does not lie in any sensible devotion we may feel afterwards, but rather in the increase in the love of God.

2. This is a gentle thing, proved in action rather than in words—If you love me, keep my commandments, was then and is now the real touchstone of good prayer of all kinds.

3. This will naturally overflow into a real, practical love for our neighbour, which follows from the love of God naturally and spontaneously.

4. We shall hear the voice of the Shepherd provided we are careful to do all that lies in our power to make the retreat or mission as well as possible, in the way we have outlined.

5. Above all, we must meditate on God's love for us, on his great mercy, on his redemption and passion. All this will inspire us with a love for him which will show itself in works for him and his cause. We shall no longer be deaf to his voice or slow to speak up in his defence.

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