

THE
PULPIT ORATOR

CONTAINING SEVEN ELABORATE SKELETON SERMONS,

OR,

HOMILETIC, DOGMATICAL, LITURGICAL, SYMBOLICAL,
AND MORAL SKETCHES,

FOR EVERY SUNDAY OF THE YEAR.

ALSO ELABORATE SKELETON SERMONS

FOR THE CHIEF FESTIVALS AND OTHER OCCASIONS.

BY THE REV. JOHN EVANGELIST ZOLLNER.

*TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN, WITH PERMISSION OF
THE AUTHOR, AND ADAPTED BY*

THE REV. AUGUSTINE WIRTH, O. S. B.

WITH PREFACE BY THE REV. A. A. LAMBING.

FIFTEENTH REVISED EDITION

VOL. IV.

FROM THE FIFTH TO THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Frederick Bustet & Co.,

Printers to the Holy Apostolic See and the Sacred Congregation of Rites

RATISBON ROME NEW YORK CINCINNATI



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FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE. *I. Peter 3:8-15.* Dearly beloved: Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble: not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing: for unto this you are called, that you may inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him decline from evil, and do good: let him seek after peace, and pursue it: because the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears unto their prayers: but the countenance of the Lord upon them that do evil things. And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good? But if also you suffer anything for justice' sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their fear, and be not troubled; but sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

ST. PETER GIVES CHRISTIANS CERTAIN SALUTARY LESSONS.

St. Peter in the third chapter of his first epistle, from which the lesson of this Sunday is taken, first speaks of the particular duties of married people. He admonishes the women to be subject to their husbands, to let their light shine before them by modesty and the fear of God, and to try to please them more by a quiet and meek spirit than by outward ornaments. As models he places before them the holy women of the past, especially Sara, and exhorts them to follow their example. Then he turns to the men, and admonishes them to treat their wives rationally, to have patience with their frailties and infirmities, and to honor them because, like the men, they are also called to salvation. In the eight following verses he gives instructions to all Christians, and shows them—

- I. How they are to behave to one another;*
- II. How they can enjoy a happy life even here below.*

PART I.

1. *Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble.* The Apostle exhorts us to practise these six virtues, which are especially necessary in social life.

(a.) The first of these virtues is *concord*, which consists in this, that we have all one mind, aim at the same end, and live in peace and union with one another. This concord is one of the most indispensable virtues in social life. How happy are communities of people and families in which concord reigns! When all the members of a community live peaceably together and work together for the removal of scandals and vices, for the erection of useful institutions, for the relief of the poor, how much evil is averted, how much good done! How different in other communities in which the spirit of discord has a foothold! Nothing good is accomplished, because there is no cooperation; one makes life disagreeable to the other; there is nothing but hatred and enmity, quarrels, lawsuits, strife, discontent. The same may be said of families. When parents and children pray together and fulfil their religious duties, exhort one another to do good, work peaceably together, share joy and sorrow with one another, God and every well-minded man have pleasure in them, and blessing and prosperity find with them a lasting abode. But how is it in families in which the husband complains of the wife, and the wife of the husband, in which brothers and sisters quarrel with one another, and each one goes his own way? Ah, there is neither blessing nor prosperity; everything goes wrong; there they have already a foretaste of hell. What an important virtue is concord, and how much you should endeavor to preserve it among yourselves! Control your passions, especially pride, self-will, stubbornness, covetousness, and envy, for these are the sources of all discord and disunion. On the contrary, be humble, patient with the faults of others, yield to the will of others, and treat every one kindly; then you will be able to live in peace with all that are not of an entirely corrupt and perverse heart.

(b.) The second virtue is *compassion*. We must take a lively interest in the sufferings of our neighbor, have compassion on him, console and assist him to the best of our ability. This compassion is a very necessary virtue in social life, for even the most wretched man feels himself raised up and consoled by it, and carries his cross more easily. Nothing, on the contrary, is more painful to him than to find no sympathy; the coldness with which he is treated grieves him more, and gives him greater

pain, than his sufferings. Compassion is inborn in man. When we see a person in misery and wretchedness, the feeling of mercy is awakened. This natural feeling is a proof that God wills us to be merciful, and the Apostle expressly imposes it upon us as a duty, when he says: "Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep."—*Rom. 12:15.*

(c.) The third virtue is *fraternity*. We are all brothers and sisters; for we all have one God, one Creator and Father in heaven, wherefore God commands us to pray daily in these words: "Our Father, who art in heaven." Much more are all Catholics our brothers and sisters, because they have the same faith, the same sacraments, the same spiritual father, the Pope, the same mother, the Catholic Church, and because we and they belong to the communion of saints. As good brothers and sisters live together in harmony, so we must live together, must look upon every one, especially on every Catholic, as our brother or sister. It is certainly not becoming for brothers and sisters to live in discord, to quarrel and fight. Every one censures such conduct. But it is equally as unbecoming to live in strife with our neighbor, to wish him evil, and to be full of hatred and aversion towards him. This cannot be called acting as brothers and sisters, but as enemies; it is to be wicked, degenerate children of our heavenly Father, and grievously to offend him; it is to be in direct opposition to the commandment of Christ, for he says: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you."—*John 15:12.*

(d.) The fourth virtue is *mercy*. This virtue too is very necessary in human society, for everywhere and always there are poor, afflicted and unfortunate people who stand very much in need of the assistance and help of their more fortunate fellow-men. It would be a very sad spectacle if there were no mercy. Consider that Christ receives all the good you do to your fellow-men as done to himself, and that our salvation in a great measure depends on the exercise of mercy.—*Matt. 23.* Let us diligently practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy that we may find grace with him who has said: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."—*Matt. 5:7.*

(e.) The fifth virtue is *modesty*. Christians who possess this beautiful virtue are not presumptuous and arrogant; they do not intrude themselves; they do not exalt themselves above others; they are friendly and affable to every one; and in their whole behavior are retired and well-mannered. Modesty and humility are twin virtues and inseparable companions.

Humility, which is the sixth virtue consists in this, that we do not think ourselves better than others and do not despise any one; and that, mindful of our own frailty, we have patience with the faults of others; that we are disposed rather to give way than to contend, and even to concede rights, when unimportant, for the sake of peace, and rather to suffer an injury than to do one.

2. *Not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing; for unto this you are called, that you may inherit a blessing.*

(a.) St. Peter here cautions us against rendering evil for evil, because great evils arise from this to human society. What is done, O Christian, when you insult him who insults you, when you calumniate him who calumniates you, when you strike him who strikes you, in a word, when you render evil for evil? Ah, peace is disturbed, and the consequences are quarrels, contentions, enmities, which never have an end, lawsuits which cause much disquietude and swallow up much money, many other sins, and frequently eternal damnation. Who, considering these evils, would render evil for evil? Who would not subdue all anger, and study meekness, in order to show that he is the disciple of him "who, when he was reviled, did not revile, when he suffered, he threatened not, but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly."—*I. Peter. 2: 23.*

(b.) The Apostle assigns yet another reason why we should beware of invectives, when he says: *Bless one another, for unto this you are called, that you may inherit a blessing.* Far from reviling or doing an injury to him who offends us, we ought rather to bless him; that is, we ought to wish him all good and repay his offenses with benefits, that we may make ourselves worthy of receiving blessings, that is, all good here and hereafter, according to the promise of Jesus: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land."—*Matt. 5: 4.* If we are meek, patiently bearing injustice, and returning good for evil, God will console us, people will esteem and love us, and even our enemies will conceive better feelings towards us, and perhaps become our friends: and hereafter we shall receive eternal beatitude in heaven as the reward of our meekness. Consider this, and "lay you all away, anger, indignation, malice, blasphemy; put ye on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another, even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so you also" (*Col. 3: 8, 12, 13*), "and you shall find rest to your souls."—*Matt. 11: 20.*

PART II.

St. Peter now shows how even here below we can enjoy a happy life.

1. *He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.* If we wish to see good days, let us guard against the sins of the tongue. It is only too certain, and history and experience bear me out in this, that an unbridled tongue is the cause of a great deal of mischief in the world. I will mention only a few examples from the Bible. Achitophel, a servant of David, had gone over to Absalom's side and persuaded him to commit an abominable sin, at the same time advising him to rebel against his father. What was the consequence of this sin of the tongue? When he saw that his advice was not followed, such a weariness of life seized him that he hanged himself.—*II. Kings 17: 23.* The impious queen Jezebel showed her husband how to dispossess Naboth of his vineyard; she advised him to procure false witnesses to accuse Naboth of blasphemy and to take his life; the vineyard would then of itself fall to him. The reward for this sin of the tongue was, that Jehu ordered her to be thrown out of a window of the palace, and the dogs devoured her mutilated body.—*IV. Kings 9: 30-37.* The princes and governors of Persia craftily suggested to Darius the publication of the foolish edict that whosoever should make a request to any god or man for thirty days, but to the king, should be cast into the lions' den. With this law they intended the fall of Daniel, for they hated and envied him because the king honored and loved him more than them, and they rightly concluded that Daniel, in his piety, would not omit his prayers for thirty days. When they found him in the act of praying they reported it to the king, and importuned him till he ordered Daniel to be cast into the lions' den. God protected his servant and delivered him from the den, and so disposed it that the king ordered the wicked accusers to be cast into the den, where in an instant they were torn to pieces and devoured by the lions.—*Dan. 6.* Ananias and Saphira were guilty of a lie by falsely stating the price of a piece of land they had sold; and what was the consequence? Both fell dead at St. Peter's feet.—*Acts 5.*

These examples furnish clear proofs that those who do not bridle their tongue fare ill. Though God may not punish them so strikingly, yet they cause themselves many troubles and more or less destroy their happiness. They render themselves odious to their fellow-men, injure their business and trade, and become entangled in many difficulties and lawsuits, which cost much money and frequently end in imprisonment. How much would some give if they had not committed this or that sin of the

tongue? How necessary then it is if you wish to live quietly and peaceably to guard carefully against sins of the tongue, slander, detraction, calumny, whispering, tale-bearing! St. Ephrem so carefully guarded his tongue that on his deathbed he could say: "A foolish or bad word never crossed my lips. I never in all my life spoke ill of anybody or quarreled with any one." How full of comfort will the hour of our death be, if we can give the same testimony of ourselves!

2. *Let him decline from evil, and do good, let him seek after peace and pursue it.* Sin is the source of all evil, it robs man of his peace of mind, of his honor and good name, plunges him into poverty and misery, breaks down his constitution, and frequently opens to him a premature grave. Think of Cain, of the people at the time of the deluge, of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, of the Israelites in their captivity at Babylon, of the Jews at Jerusalem in the time of Jesus and of his Apostles. Did not sin plunge them into misery and perdition? If therefore you wish to see good days you must keep peace with God and men and walk in the path of virtue, for blessing and prosperity are promised only to the pious. Thus God promises to the Israelites, if they keep his commandments, rich harvests, peace and security in their own country, wonderful victories over their enemies, and abundance of all temporal goods.—*Lev. 26: 3-12.* "Justice exalteth a nation, but sin maketh nations miserable."—*Prov. 14: 34.*

3. Now the Apostle tells us that no one can hurt the just, and that they should deem themselves happy when they are obliged to suffer for justice' sake, and not allow themselves to be disquieted on account of the threats of their enemies, if they only sanctify the Lord Jesus Christ in their hearts, that is, cling to him and remain unalterably loyal to him. The pious Christian stands under the protection of heaven; the wicked may pursue him and endeavor to destroy him. God will bring all their designs to naught. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him; to all that call upon him in truth. He will do the will of them that fear him, and he will hear their prayer and save them."—*Ps 144: 18, 19.* Peter is in prison, chained and guarded by soldiers; on the following day he is to die. But, behold! the Lord sends an angel, who delivers him from prison, and frustrates all the projects of his enemies. "If God be for us, who shall be against us?"—*Rom. 8: 31.* And although pious and God-fearing Christians may be visited with suffering and tribulations, yet they are not, on that account, to be called unhappy, for the consciousness that they suffer innocently sweetens every tribulation, and enables them to say with St. Paul: "I am filled with comfort, I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation."—*II.*

Cor. 7: 4. A glance at the glorious fruits of suffering and the great reward hereafter, causes them to suffer not only with patience, but even with joy, and to deem themselves happy in being able to follow their Saviour on the way of the cross. Hence we read that the Apostles went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.—*Acts 5: 41.* Thus the just man always lives contentedly and happily, not only in the days of prosperity, but also in the time of adversity, for he knows "that to them that love God all things work together unto good."—*Rom. 8: 28.*

PERORATION.

If therefore you love life and wish to see good days, avoid evil and do good. Sin alone is the poisonous source of all evil; shun it. Guard particularly against the sins of the tongue, for it is they that cause many evils, rendering man miserable for time and eternity. Live in peace with all men, be charitable to God's poor, and assist them in word and deed; at the same time be modest and humble, despise no one, not even the least, for every human being is created by God, redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus, and called to eternal salvation. Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you, that you may inherit the blessing of heaven. Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL. *Matt. 5: 20-24.* At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. If therefore thou bring thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

FALSE AND TRUE JUSTICE.

The gospel frequently speaks of the Scribes and the Pharisees. Who were the Scribes and the Pharisees? The Scribes were learned men, versed in law, who interpreted and explained the Sacred Scriptures to the people. They were usually priests and Levites; they were often Pharisees also, or at least they embraced the maxims of the Pharisees. The Pharisees have their name from *Phares*, which signifies to separate, to distinguish, to differ; and they were called Pharisees, that is, the separated from the people, because they differed from the people in their way of living. As regards externals they led a good, mortified life, prayed and fasted much, gave alms abundantly, and tithes even of the fruits which they were not bound to give. They wore on their foreheads and the seam of their garments larger tablets than those of the other Jews, washed themselves frequently, and carried their zeal for purity so far that they would not converse or eat with any man who lived too freely. But, with all their apparent virtues, they had gross faults and sins, for which Christ frequently censured them, as he did in the gospel of this day.

- I. Christ rejects the justice of the Scribes and of the Pharisees;
- II. He explains the fifth commandment;
- III. He counsels reconciliation.

PART I.

Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and of the Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

1. What was wanting to the justice of the Scribes and Pharisees, that Christ declares it insufficient for heaven?

(a.) *It was not universal*, that is, it did not extend itself to all the commandments. The Scribes and Pharisees observed only those commandments which suited them, and transgressed those which interfered with their passions; or they sought by a false interpretation to explain away their obligation. Thus they taught that children who bequeathed to the treasury of the temple money which should be spent for the support of their poor parents, were doing right, and could with a good conscience leave their parents in want. Contrary to the fourth commandment,

they taught this from self-interest, because they derived an advantage from the bequests to the treasury of the temple.—*Matt. 15.* Again they taught that by the neighbor whom God commands us to love is to be understood only fellow-countrymen, and friends, and that strangers and enemies may be hated. And they did this also with the other commandments; they interpreted them in their own favor, in order not to be obliged to keep them, and, in the transgression of them to preserve nevertheless the appearance of justice.

(b.) *It was only outward.* If only the outward demeanor agreed with the divine law, it was in their eyes the necessary justice, valid before God; they did not trouble themselves about the interior disposition of the mind. When they hated and envied their neighbor, entertained in their hearts ambitious, avaricious, envious, impure and adulterous thoughts, they considered it no sin. For this reason our Saviour compares them to "whited sepulchres," which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness. So you also, he adds, outwardly indeed appear to men beautiful, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

(c.) *It was mostly directed to secondary things, outward signs and ceremonies.* They strictly observed the ceremony of washing the hands as often as they sat down to eat, and charged Christ with committing a sin because he allowed his disciples to eat with unwashed hands. Again, they carefully avoided all intercourse with Gentiles, and would not go into their houses, lest they might be defiled; for the same reason they filtered the wine; lest there might be an unclean animal, a fly, in it. But whilst they scrupulously adhered to these little and secondary things, they neglected the main point, *e. g.*, they violated in many ways the love of God and of their neighbor; nourished a deadly hatred against Christ, labored to ensnare him, and persecuted him without the least scruple of conscience.

(d.) *It was not grounded upon the glory of God.* Pride and ambition were the principal vices of the Scribes and the Pharisees. They did their good works not on account of God, to honor him, but for their own sake, in order to be seen and praised by men for their piety. When they prayed and fasted, they had not God, but themselves, in view; for the love of God they did not move a finger, but they underwent the greatest hardships for the praise and applause of men. That they might be praised and considered pious they did their good works, as far as possible, publicly; when they gave alms, they caused it to be published by trumpets; when they prayed, they placed themselves in a conspicuous

place in the synagogue, and at the corners of the streets, where they could be seen; when they fasted, they neither washed themselves nor combed their hair or beard, but walked about with the head bowed down, that every one might know that they fasted. Because with their good works they sought not the honor of God, but only their own honor, Christ says of them, that they have already received their reward.—*Matt. 6: 5*. These are the main defects of the justice of the Scribes and the Pharisees, and these are the reasons why Christ declared that with such a justice we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

2. Let us now look at and into ourselves, that we may see how it is with our justice.

(a.) If we wish to be saved, it is necessary that we keep *all the commandments*, for St. James says: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all."—*James 2: 10*. Herein many deceive themselves by imagining that God will forgive them a great sin, *e. g.*, impurity, enmity, drunkenness, and be a gracious judge to them, because in other respects they do what is right. Oh, that these persons would consider that *one mortal* sin is enough to damn a soul for ever!

(b.) At the same time, we must study not only outward but inward justice, for God looks more to the heart than to externals. Alas! there are many Catholics who are no better than the Scribes and the Pharisees. They sanctify Sundays and holidays, they endeavor to be present at every devotion that is going on in the church, they keep the fast-days, frequently go to confession and communion, and you would think from their outward behavior that they were good Catholics; but in their heart they are full of vanity and ambition, full of envy and desire of revenge, full of impurity and adultery, in a word, full of hypocrisy, sinful inclinations and desires. To such the words of the Lord are applicable: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."—*Matt. 15: 8*. Their whole justice is only hypocrisy, and worthless before God.

(c.) True justice requires that we do the good which is not commanded only when the good that is commanded suffers no detriment. Thus you may undertake extraordinary devotions, such as a pilgrimage to distant places, only when the duties of your station in life, *e. g.*, the superintendence of your household affairs, your business, obedience towards your superiors, are not interfered with; you must give alms only when and in so far as the duty of justice permits it, attend mass on week-days only when the duties of your state of life are not infringed. Many are

greatly mistaken on this point. They think that true piety consists in frequently visiting the church, in many and long prayers, and in the frequent reception of the sacraments; and they complain that their circumstances do not permit them to do all this. These devotions are all very good and salutary, but they do not constitute the essence of piety, but are only means to it, and those who for sufficient reasons cannot attend to them as they would wish need not trouble themselves on that account. Let every one serve God as best he can in his state of life, and take care that he conscientiously observes all the commandments of God and of the Church; then he has the true justice that leads to heaven.

(d.) An absolutely necessary requisite to true justice is, finally, *the good intention*. "The good intention," says St. Ambrose, "baptizes the work and gives it its name." What baptism is to man, the good intention is, in a certain sense, to our good works. Man is sanctified by baptism, becomes pleasing to God and an heir of heaven; in like manner the good intention causes our good works to become acceptable to God and meritorious for heaven. **Therefore never let the good intention be wanting to your good works.** If, in the performance of any good work, vanity or a desire to please men, or to be praised by them, arise in your heart, say within yourselves: My God, I do this, not for the sake of men, but for thy love, and to please and honor thee.

PART II.

Our divine Saviour also gives an explanation of the fifth commandment, when he says: *You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.*

1. The words of Christ: *You have heard that it was said to them of old*, have this meaning: God gave to your forefathers, the Israelites, the commandment upon Mount Sinai: "Thou shalt not kill." The addition, *Whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment*, is not from God, but from the Pharisees. God forbade in the fifth commandment not only the actual murder of man, but also murder in will or heart, and all that leads to murder, such as anger, hatred, and calumny. But in order to limit the fifth commandment to the wicked act alone, the Scribes and Pharisees added, *whosoever shall kill* — therefore, not he who is only angry with his neighbor and hates and calumniates him,

shall be in danger of the judgment. They not only did not consider inward sins against the fifth commandment, such as anger and hatred, to be forbidden, but even went so far as to hold that calumnies and slander were not violations of this commandment, and that, consequently, they were allowed! What a delusion! for conscience itself tells every one that he must not be angry with any one without cause; must not hate, much less revile or calumniate him. There are many Christians who herein resemble the Scribes and the Pharisees. As outwardly they do not commit gross sins, they consider themselves just. When they confess at Easter they say: "I do not remember having committed a mortal sin. I have killed no one, I have not stolen, I have not committed adultery." They do not consider that there are inward sins, sins of omission, sins against the duties of religion and state of life, which bring eternal damnation.

2. With the words, *but I say to you*, Christ indicates his dignity as law-giver. No patriarch, no prophet of the Old Law, could or dared speak in his own name, but only in the name of God. Now Christ speaks here in his own name, *But I say to you*, and thereby declares that he is the Son of God, and has power to make laws in his own name. And what does he say? He declares that the first commandment can be broken even by thoughts and words.

(a) *By thoughts.* "But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment." He teaches that those who are angry with their neighbors are as guilty of the judgment as those who, according to the doctrine of the Scribes and the Pharisees, actually commit murder. I must, however, remark here that anger is not always sinful and against the fifth commandment. There is a just anger; hence we read in the fourth Psalm: "Be angry, and sin not." If we are angry with somebody, not because we hate him or wish him ill, but because we love him and mean well by him, and punish him in anger, not from a desire of revenge, but for his correction and amendment, and therein do not transgress the limits of reason, the anger is just, and, in certain cases, even obligatory. St. Gregory says: "Because Heli had not this anger, he provoked irreconcilable anger against himself." Such a holy anger or zeal Christ had (*Mark 3:5; John 2:15-17*), and likewise St. Paul (*Acts 5:9; 13:18*). If we are angry with some one, but wish him no great evil, and have not the desire of revenge, but only a slight aversion to him, it is a fault against the fifth commandment, but is only a venial sin. Anger is a mortal sin when we wish that a great evil, even death may happen to him, or when we desire to kill him or to do him some great injury, so soon as an opportunity may present

itself. If we have such an anger the words of St. John apply to us: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." — *I. John 3:15*. It is evident that the actual murder is a more grievous sin than murder in the heart. Moreover, Christ has forbidden anger because murders often originate from it. Because Cain did not control the anger which he had conceived against his brother Abel, he became a murderer. Never let a sinful anger arise in your heart, bear no aversion to others, much less entertain hostile and revengeful thoughts; on the contrary, be benevolent towards all and wish them well, for it is an obligation for us Christians to love all, as brothers and sisters love one another.

(b) *By words.* "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire." The words, *Raca* and *fool* were opprobrious names among the Jews. The word *Raca* meant as much as good-for-nothing fellow, worthless man. By the word *fool* they designated a very wicked, impious man; it was the greatest ignominy. There were two kinds of tribunals in Judea: a *lesser*, which, in every town, consisted of priests and of heads of families, and took cognizance of lesser crimes, and a *higher*, which consisted of seventy-two persons, in which the highest causes only were tried and judged, and which was held at Jerusalem. The meaning of the passage is this: He who is angry with his neighbor in his heart is in danger of the judgment—he sins and is guilty of punishment before God if his anger is unjust; he who lets his anger break out into words, sins more grievously, and his sin is the greater and more culpable, the more violently he abuses his neighbor. That the anger which breaks out into coarse and bitter invectives is more culpable than that which remains shut up in the heart is evident, because by such invectives our neighbor is more mortified and offended, and because from it originate also greater evils than from interior anger, such as lasting enmities, quarrels, wounds, and homicides. Guard against invectives. If you have reason to be angry with any one, do not abuse him, do not call him bad names, for even the worst man will not stand that; they only provoke him and cause rage and bitterness. I exhort you, Christian parents, in particular, never to give nicknames to your children, and do not permit them to give nicknames to one another. Do not be like some senseless, unreasonable fathers and mothers, who when their children commit any fault, make a great noise in the house, curse and blaspheme and break out into all manner of invectives against them, but who, after they are calmed down, leave everything as before without employing the means of effecting a radical change in them. If you have reason to be angry with your children, let no wrong word proceed from your mouth; say what you have to say without pas-

sion, and convince your children by your whole conduct that your motive in correcting them is not anger but love for them, and solicitude for their welfare.

PART III.

Finally, our Saviour admonishes us to reconciliation, in these words: *If therefore thou bring thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.*

1. In these words Christ teaches us *that we must reconcile ourselves with our neighbor without delay.* We might think that if we were already at the altar and about to offer our gift, we might do so first, and then it would suffice to go to our neighbor and be reconciled; but no, Christ says just the contrary; *Leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.* And the Apostle admonishes us not to let the sun go down upon our anger. — *Eph. 4: 26.* How contrary to Christianity do those people act who, for weeks, months and years, bear aversion, hatred and enmity against their neighbors in their hearts, and will not hear of reconciliation! Should there be any among you who in this point have reason to reproach themselves, let them from this moment lay aside all rancor and enmity and embrace the first opportunity of reconciling themselves with their neighbor. The patriarch St. John the Almoner once had a dispute with his treasurer about the disposition of a considerable sum of money that had just been received. The treasurer wished to put it out to interest, but the patriarch insisted that the money could not be better employed than by giving it to the poor. Each one insisted upon his own opinion, and they parted in anger. When evening was setting in St. John sent a priest to the treasurer to say: "Sir, the sun is going down." He burst into tears and immediately went to the patriarch and asked his pardon.

2. Christ also teaches us that without reconciliation no good work is acceptable to God.

The highest and holiest work of the Old Law, and that which was most acceptable to God, was the sacrifices. The sacrifice of the mass is infinitely more precious, because the God-man, Jesus Christ, offers himself up to his heavenly Father by the hands of the priest. And behold, even this tremendous sacrifice God does not accept from us, if we assist at it with an implacable heart. The same is to be said of all other good works. Pray for

hours in the church, give alms, receive the sacraments, perform good works—God does not accept these good works, and you have no merit from them if you live in discord with your neighbor and will not hear of reconciliation. This is also the reason why the priest cannot give absolution to a penitent so long as he does not lay aside enmity. If he should pronounce the words of absolution a hundred times they would be null and void, for Christ expressly says: "If you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offenses."—*Matt. 6: 15.*

PERORATION.

Remember the important lessons which God gives you in the gospel of this day, and follow them. Be not satisfied with an apparent justice, but aspire to true justice, which alone has value before God. Do the will of God in all things, hate and detest all evil and do good, and in all your works seek, not vain human praise, but only the honor of God and your own salvation. Banish all ill-will and indignation, all anger and hatred from your heart; bridle your tongue and do not speak when excited. If peace is disturbed between you and any of your neighbors from whatever cause, do not live in discord, but be reconciled with them as soon as possible, that you may not tell a lie to God, but speak the truth when you say in the Lord's prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE.

Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.
—*Luke 22: 31.*

Our Lord declares in this day's gospel, that unless our justice abound more than that of the Scribes and of the Pharisees, we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Why does Jesus reject the justice of the Scribes and Pharisees? For several reasons, but especially for their want of faith. He had proved the divinity of his person and the truth of his doctrine by the

holiness of his life, and by numberless undeniable miracles; all who were of good will adhered to him with a believing heart, and even a pagan centurion cried out in amazement, when at the death of Jesus he saw the miracles: "Indeed this was the Son of God."—*Matt.* 27: 54. But the Scribes and the Pharisees remained incredulous. It was chiefly on account of this unbelief that all their justice availed them nothing and they perished, for Christ emphatically says: "He that believeth not, shall be condemned."—*Mark* 16: 16.

Alas! there are not a few Christians, and some of their names are to be found in Catholic baptismal registers, who are not more or less infected by the unbelief of the Scribes and of the Pharisees. They object in particular to the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope, which was declared by the Church in the Vatican Council to be an article of the faith. I spoke to you last Sunday about this and explained at great length in what it consists. To-day I shall show you that it can be proved—

I. From the Sacred Scriptures;

II. From the constant faith of the Church.

PART I

The Vatican Council declares it to be an article of the faith revealed by God that the pope is infallible in the way we explained a week ago. This is actually the case, for our Divine Saviour has repeatedly and most emphatically expressed this truth in the gospels.

1. *Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.*—*John* 21: 15-17. The risen Saviour here imparts to Peter the spiritual supremacy over the whole Church; over the lambs, that is, over the faithful, and over the sheep, that is, over the bishops and priests. St. Peter as the shepherd is to feed the whole flock, that is, to teach and to govern all. Now if Christ has, as no Catholic denies, committed to St. Peter the superintendence of all his sheep without exception, all Catholics evidently are obliged to acknowledge St. Peter as their shepherd and to subject themselves to his government. But if, according to the word of Christ, St. Peter, and like him every Pope, is the universal shepherd whom all must obey, what else follows from it than that he is infallible? If he were not infallible, he might prescribe something to the faithful which would not be for their salvation, but for their perdition. In this case the fault would be with Christ, because he appointed the Pope as the shepherd of the Church and laid upon the faithful the strict obligation of obedience to him. But who would be bold enough to lay the aberrations and the perdition of men to the charge of

Christ? Would it not be the greatest blasphemy? We must therefore say: Since Christ committed to St. Peter the spiritual supremacy over the whole Church, he has also imparted to him the gift of infallibility, because without it he could not exercise his office for the salvation of the faithful.

2. *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* According to this assurance of our Lord, the devil and his associates will never succeed in vanquishing or destroying the Church. But the Church would manifestly be vanquished and destroyed if hell should succeed in plunging it into error. St. Peter is for the Church what a strong foundation is for an edifice. A house built upon a solid rock is secure against all winds and storms, and cannot fall; so the Church, because her foundation is laid so deep and strong upon the rock of truth, St. Peter, is of invincible strength, and proof against error. But how can St. Peter give the Church this strength and stability? Manifestly, only because he is infallible. If St. Peter or the Pope could err in Christian doctrine he might prescribe something to the Church which would offend against faith and good morals, and the possibility would be that the gates of hell would prevail against it. But as this, according to the express promise of Christ, can never happen, it necessarily follows that the Pope is infallible. Therefore St. Gregory the Great says; "Who does not know that the Holy Church is grounded upon the firmness of the Prince of the Apostles, who bore the firmness of faith in name, when he was called Peter, from *petra*, that is, a rock. Thus it is the office of St. Peter, who still lives and sits in his chair, to give the truth of faith to all who inquire."

3. *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you (my Apostles), that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for THEE (Peter), that THY faith fail not, and thou being once converted, confirm THY brethren.*—*Luke* 22: 31, 32. In these words our Lord assures St. Peter that he has prayed only for him in particular that his faith might not fail, that he might never forsake the true faith; and that he was to confirm his brethren in the true faith. No one will deny that the prayer of Christ is always heard, therefore the faith of St. Peter will always be firm and he will be the oracle which all must consult. By virtue of the prayer of Christ St. Peter was infallible; he could neither err himself in faith nor propose any errors to others. The same is to be said of the successors of St. Peter; they too are infallible in virtue of the prayer of Christ; the strength given by Christ to St. Peter descended upon his successors.

St. Peter was also to confirm his brethren, that is, to strengthen them in the faith. This evidently presupposes that he can never err in faith, otherwise it would be possible for him, instead of confirming others in faith, to teach them errors. The words of Christ, "Confirm thy brethren," would have no sense at all if only the Church, not Peter, and like him every Pope, were infallible, for in this case Peter could not confirm the brethren, that is, the bishops, but, on the contrary, they would be obliged to confirm Peter in faith, that is, the Pope. Hence Leo the Great says: "Through Peter the strength of all is protected, and the aid of divine grace so ordered that the strength given by Christ to Peter should descend, through Peter, upon the Apostles."

PART II.

The infallibility of the Pope was always the belief of the Church.

1. *The Holy Fathers* bear testimony of this. *St. Irenæus*, in the second century, writes: "The Universal Church, that is, the believers in all places, must agree with the Roman Church on account of its great prerogative, in which the Apostolic tradition has always been preserved." As *Irenæus* teaches, all Christians must agree with the Roman Church, that is, with the Pope, in matters of faith, because in this Church the Apostolic tradition has always been preserved, that is, the true faith delivered by the Apostles. From this passage manifestly follows the infallibility of the Pope; for if the Pope always preserves the doctrine of the Apostles pure, he cannot err, and therefore he is infallible. *Origen*, in the third century, writes of the Pope: "Behold what power and strength this rock has, upon which the Church of Christ is built, that the decisions which proceed from it have the same power and validity as if God had spoken himself!" How could it be possible for the Pope not to be infallible when his decisions have the very same power and virtue as if they came from God himself? *St. Cyprian*, in the third century, says: Heresies and schisms arose only because the priest of the Most High God, was not obeyed, and because they paid no attention to the one priest who at the same time is judge in God's place." *St. Cyprian* here calls the Pope "the one priest" who is judge in God's place, and deduces all heresies from this, that people do not submit to this judge. Now, if the Pope gives his decisions in regard to faith as the representative of God, how could he err? And if a person falls into heresy as soon as he ceases to listen to the Pope, what else follows than that the Pope always announces the true doctrine, and that therefore he is infallible?

Well known is the pithy saying of *St. Augustine* (fourth century): "Rome has spoken, the cause is ended." *St. Augustine* means to say: There can be no longer any question as to what is truth and what is error, for the Pope, the infallible judge in matters of faith, has given his decision.

2. *The Councils*. When, in the General Council at Chalcedon, in the year 451, a letter of Pope Leo was read, all the assembled bishops exclaimed: "We all believe the same; anathema to him who does not so believe. Peter has spoken through Leo." In the third Council at Constantinople the bishops declared the same thing, and after the letter of Pope Agatho had been read, exclaimed: "Peter has spoken through Agatho." The bishops in the fourth Council at Constantinople call Pope Nicholas an instrument of the Holy Ghost, and say: "We do not pass a new sentence different from that of the Pope, but we repeat only the one pronounced by him, which we are absolutely unable to alter." The second Council of Lyons (1274) declares: "As the Roman See, above all others, is bound to defend the truth of faith, so also if any questions on faith arise, they ought to be defended by her judgment." Now, if these and other councils say that *St. Peter* speaks through the Pope, that the Pope is the instrument of the Holy Ghost, that his decisions and judgments are unalterable, that all must submit to his decisions, what is this but acknowledging him to be the supreme and infallible judge of faith?

3. *Church history*. History establishes the fact that the bishops, priests and lay people, in all controversies of faith, appealed to the Pope, to be instructed by him in what was to be held as truth and what to be rejected as error. Even at the time when *St. John* was still living, the Christians at Corinth appealed, not to him, but to Pope *St. Clement* in Rome, in order to obtain instruction and advice with regard to the schisms that had broken out among them. Thus also the Christians at Lyons sent *St. Irenæus* with a letter to Pope *Eleutherius*, in order to request his decision with regard to the controversies then prevalent. *St. Augustine* sent his book against the Pelagians to Pope *Boniface* for approbation, assuring him in advance that he would willingly submit to any corrections that might be made in it.

History also teaches that the Popes at all times have settled controversies and have demanded of the faithful sincere and perfect submission to their decisions. They did not ask the opinion of the bishops, nor wait till they would give their consent, but forbade, under the severest ecclesiastical penalties, all and every one to preach doctrines which they had rejected as erroneous and heretical. Now if on the one hand the faithful requested the decision of the Roman See in matters of faith and submitted to

it, and if on the other the Roman See unasked made such decisions and demanded submission to them, what follows but that the Pope was believed to be infallible?

Again, history testifies that often whole centuries elapsed before a council could be convened, and that the Popes, by virtue of their own power, settled by a final decision all controversies in matters pertaining to faith and morals. There was no General Council at all during the first three centuries. In the third century Pope St. Stephen reversed the decision of St. Cyprian of Carthage and of a council of African bishops regarding the question of baptism. During the first three centuries the Popes decided upon the large number of heresies which arose at that time, and declared what was to be believed by all Christendom. Over three hundred years intervened between the Council of Trent and the last General Council of the Vatican. How many errors were broached during that long interval! And yet the Roman See condemned them. The holding of councils has its difficulties, and centuries sometimes elapse without seeing one held. Now, if there were no judge in matters of faith and morals except a General Council, in what a condition would the faithful be! In controversies they would not know whom they should believe, and they would live in painful uncertainty as to whether they had the true faith or not. Our Lord could not possibly have willed such a state of affairs. Therefore there must be some other tribunal besides the General Council, some other judge, who possesses infallibility, and who else can it be but the Pope?

According to history the following practice has always prevailed in the Church of God from the beginning. Whenever National Councils promulgated doctrines or condemned errors, they always transmitted their decrees to Rome for confirmation, and they were not binding unless the Pope confirmed them. What would follow from this if the Pope could err? Evidently, that he could sanction erroneous decrees of a council, for councils which consist only of bishops can err, and have erred, as history proves. Now, if the Pope could confirm and sanction erroneous decrees of councils, the universal Church would be led into error, the Spirit of Truth would depart from her, and she would cease to be the Church of Christ. But since this is never possible, it is plain to every one that the Pope must be infallible.

PERORATION.

The truth of the infallibility of the Pope is as old as the Church, for Christ himself propounded it repeatedly and emphatically, and all Christians of all times have believed it, and holding the decisions of the Apostolic See as binding on their conscience have submitted to them. The Fathers of the Vatican Council in 1870,

in promulgating the infallibility of the Pope, did not create a new doctrine, but confirmed an old one that had always been believed. In proclaiming this dogma the Church enforces a principle as law which has always existed as a matter of fact. Cling to your spiritual father the Pope, to the bishops, and priests who are united with them, through whom your holy Mother the Church always announces to you the true, divine doctrine; believe and do what they tell you, that you as good and faithful Catholics may find grace before Jesus, the Founder of the Church. Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

Converse in fear during the time of your sojourning here; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled.—I. Pet. 1: 17-19.

On this day, the first Sunday of July, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. This feast, which had been celebrated in some dioceses since the fifteenth century, on the Monday after Trinity Sunday, was extended by Pope Pius IX. over the whole Christian world, and its celebration prescribed for the first Sunday of July. The time of persecution and suffering had already begun for the Sovereign Pontiff. Compelled by a revolution to leave Rome, he repaired to Gaeta, in the kingdom of Naples, where he lived in exile for seventeen months, till April, 1850. Here it was that on the tenth day of August, 1840, he instituted the Feast of the Precious Blood. That most sacred blood is the price of our Redemption, and is poured out daily in the holy sacrifice of the mass, whence it flows into the channels of the seven sacraments as an atonement for our sins and for our sanctification. For, as in Egypt, God was propitiated by the blood of the paschal lamb, the type and figure of the true Lamb of God so he is propitiated by the blood of his Son, the true Paschal Lamb, and his blood crieth louder than the voice of Abel's blood. Herein is the strongest evidence

of the infinite love of Jesus Christ, who *not only once*, but *seven times*, shed his precious blood amidst the most cruel sufferings for our salvation. Let this seven-fold shedding of the precious blood be the subject of our present meditation.

1. *The first shedding of blood was at his Circumcision.* According to the law of Moses, every Jewish male child was to be circumcised eight days after his birth. This circumcision was a sign of the covenant which God had made with the children of Israel. The circumcised belonged only to the people of Israel, and partook of the graces which God bestowed on this people; they were also obliged to observe the law of Moses. Out of obedience to the laws Jesus permitted himself to be presented in the temple, to be circumcised, but thereby he had a far higher purpose; he wished to indicate the mystery of our redemption by the shedding of his precious blood. When our Saviour was born in Bethlehem, the holy angels announced him as our Redeemer, without intimating, however, in what manner he was to redeem the world. Eight days later Jesus himself revealed this mystery of blood by his circumcision. As a rosy morn announces an evening rain, so this rosy morn of circumcision means that in the evening of his life his blood was to flow like rain from all the veins of his sacred body.

This first shedding of the precious blood is an exhortation to us to serve Jesus from our earliest childhood. Since he shed his blood as a mere infant, is it not becoming that we should devote to his service the years of our childhood? But, alas! how many of us have urgent reasons to exclaim with David: "The sins of my youth and my ignorances do not remember."—*Ps. 24:7*. Think of the years of your childhood; did you not pass them in levity? Did not some of you suffer shipwreck of your innocence and commit grievous sins in those years. Call to mind the years of your youth. Did you not commit sins then, which perhaps on your death-bed will lie on your conscience as a heavy load? Let us then repent of the many sins of our childhood and youth, and henceforth lead a penitent life. You, Christian parents, possess a special means of atoning for the sins of your youth by educating your children in the fear and love of God.

2. *The shedding of blood in the garden of Olives.* The Evangelist says: "And being in an agony, he prayed the longer. And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground."—*Luke 22: 43, 44*. The love of Jesus was so great that he would not wait for the scourges, thorns and nails, but, as the myrrh sends forth its precious oil through the foliage before its bark is cut, so his infinite love and his desire to redeem us urged him to shed for us his innocent blood in the garden of Olives

as a sacrifice of propitiation. This shedding of blood in the garden of Olives was the most painful of all his sufferings; for it was not caused by external, bodily wounds, but by internal sufferings, by the agony of his soul. Jesus anticipated in it his entire passion, which was vividly represented before his eyes. He trembled at the thought of the loss of so many souls for whom he foresaw he would die in vain; who might be saved, but will not. When the death agony is very severe, you notice with heartfelt compassion large drops of sweat on the brow and face of the dying. But no one ever heard of a dying man sweating drops of blood. Our Saviour alone exhibited this sign of mortal anguish at the moment when he commenced his sacred passion.

A legend says that on every place where a drop of Jesus' blood trickled down a flower sprang up. Spiritually explained, this legend is literally true. Meditation on our Saviour shedding blood in the garden is the fruitful seed of virtue. Can you be so cruel as to offend Jesus again by sins when you remember his sadness of spirit and his agony caused by your sins, which was so vehement that he sweat blood? Or can you be indifferent to your own salvation and persevere in a spirit of impenitence, when you reflect that the knowledge of his sacred passion being fruitless in regard to many sinners because of their obduracy made the Son of God sweat blood?

3. *Jesus is scourged.* The four Evangelists narrate that Jesus was scourged. Thus St. Matthew says that "Pilate having scourged Jesus, delivered him to the Jews to be crucified." The Jews were forbidden by law to inflict more than forty stripes. With the Romans the number of stripes was not fixed by law. That Jesus was scourged after the manner of the Romans is evident from the fact that it was a Roman judge who passed sentence upon him, as also from the words of Jesus: "They shall deliver him (the Son of Man) to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified."—*Matt. 20: 19*. This punishment, as inflicted by the Romans was one of excessive cruelty. Many expired before it was finished. As Pilate by the punishment of scourging intended to move the Jews to compassion, it is to be inferred that it was inflicted on Jesus with the utmost cruelty. The prophets who saw in spirit our scourged Saviour say of him that "from the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein; wounds and bruises and swelling sores."—*Is. 1: 6*. They say there was no beauty in him, nor comeliness; that they thought him, as it were, a leper, and as one struck by God.—*Is. 53: 2-5*. Our Saviour was so cruelly scourged that even Pilate, the heartless Gentile, cried out at the pitiable sight: "Behold the man."

St. Bridget, when a child of the age of ten, saw in a vision our Saviour in the act of being scourged. The good child, moved

to compassion, said: "Who has thus disfigured thee?" Jesus answered: "Not the Jews only have done it, but all those who despise my love." And who are these? Especially those Christians who do not endeavor to restrain their passions. If your conscience reproaches you with having scourged your Redeemer anew by committing such heinous sins, repair the outrage by a virtuous and penitential life. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body so as to obey the lusts thereof" (*Rom.* 6: 12); on the contrary, "mortify your members which are upon the earth" (*Col.* 3: 5); and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences.—*Rom.* 13: 14.

4. *Jesus shed his blood the fourth time when he was crowned with thorns.* The Evangelist, St. Matthew, describes this cruel crowning in the following words: "Then the soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band, and stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him. And plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews. And spitting upon him, they took the reed and struck his head."—*Matt.* 27: 27-30. The adorable head of Jesus had thus its own sufferings. The crowning was as ignominious as it was painful; ignominious, for in order to jeer at his pretensions they put a crown of thorns upon his head; painful, because of the many wounds the thorns made in his head.

The crowning is to us an earnest exhortation to banish all proud and ambitious thoughts from our minds. Jesus crowned with thorns says to us: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart."—*Matt.* 11: 29. "Far be it from me," said St. Elizabeth of Hungary, "that I, poor creature that I am, should appear with a bright crown upon my head before my God and Saviour, who, being king of heaven and earth, wore a crown of thorns."

5. *Jesus shed his blood the fifth time when carrying the cross.* We cannot doubt that Jesus shed blood when he carried the cross. When he took the cross upon his shoulders he was already bruised, and full of wounds, which, being fresh, bled continually; he also fell several times under the heavy weight of the cross, whereby he received fresh wounds, out of which blood flowed; he was also struck by the soldiers and executioners, and this could not be done without blood being shed.

The precious blood which Jesus shed when carrying the cross points out to us the way that leads to heaven. It is no other way than that which he trod before us; the way of the cross. Jesus

himself declares: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—*Matt.* 16: 24. Both the sinner and the just man must pursue this way; the sinner, because without mortification he is not able to overcome his passions and do penance; the just man, because without self-denial it is impossible to resist the many temptations with which all are assailed, to make progress in virtue, and to persevere in justice to the end. Let us follow Jesus on the way of the cross, let us suffer with him, that we may be glorified with him.—*Rom.* 8: 17.

6. *Jesus shed his blood the sixth time when he was crucified.* St. John (19: 17, 18) says: "Bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified him." Having arrived at the place of execution, the soldiers stripped off his clothes, and crucified him, by piercing his hands and feet with heavy nails, and fastening them to the wood of the cross. Who is able to describe the torments of our dear Lord when he was nailed to the cross and hung thereon, supported by his own wounds? How truly can he cry out with the Prophet: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow."—*Lam.* 1: 12.

Cast one glance at your crucified Redeemer and take to heart the words of St. Bernard: "I need no other evidence to convince me how grievous an evil sin must be. I know sufficiently from the nature of the medicine; the nature of my wound, and the remedy being so painful, I clearly see how dangerous my disease was. God himself, the holy and innocent God, would suffer in his human nature for the sins that we regard so little; for the guilty pleasures we enjoy so easily God himself would die the death, the most ignominious death, of the cross." Oh, let us make the resolution never again to offend God by a mortal sin.

1. *The seventh and last time Jesus shed his blood was when his side was opened.* "After they (the soldiers) were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side and immediately there came out blood and water."—*John* 19: 33, 34. Blood and water came out as an evidence that these were the last drops of the sacred blood. Thus it is literally true that our Redeemer shed the last drop of his blood for us. We are reminded of this infinite charity by the separate consecration of bread and wine in holy mass, for after the Elevation the Body and the Blood of Christ appear separated, the sacred species being separated on the altar.

By the shedding of the precious blood from the wound of his Sacred Heart our Saviour gave us the last proof of his infinite love. Let us return the love of Jesus by devoting to him all the

affections of our heart. Let us give him a proof of our love by fulfilling his divine will and fearing nothing so much as to offend him. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."—*John. 14: 21.*

PERORATION.

Thus Jesus shed his precious blood seven times, and the price of these seven sheddings of blood is found in the seven sacraments, by which we are cleansed from sin and sanctified. These seven sheddings of blood remind us also of the three theological and the four cardinal virtues; also of the seven virtues opposed to the seven deadly or capital sins, which are infused into us by baptism; likewise of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which we receive in confirmation, and finally of the seven days of the week, which we should dedicate to the service of God. The covenant between God and the Israelites was sealed with blood. The new covenant was sealed with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. The covenant between God and men is sealed again as often as the holy sacrifice of the mass is offered to God. Assist, whenever you can, at the tremendous sacrifice and frequently receive holy communion.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

ANGER, A BURNING FEVER.

But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.—Matt. 5: 22.

There is scarcely any sin so prevalent as anger. When we look at the lives of men we find many who do not set their hearts and affections upon the goods of the world, who do not appropriate to themselves the goods of others, who do not sin by pride, envy, impurity, and, in general, do nothing deserving of blame; but how small is the number of those who keep down every motion of anger, and are always meek! Almost all, even those who on account of their piety appear very praiseworthy, are more or less given to anger, and scarcely does a week or day pass that they do not offend God, either by inward or outward anger. In

truth, Seneca of old is right when he says: "Anger is a fire, which passes by no age, excepts none, and is predominant among civilized as well as savage nations." And yet anger is a sin, and those guilty of it will one day be called to a rigorous account; for Christ says in the gospel of this day: *But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment.*

I shall speak to-day of anger, explaining to you its heinousness, and the means of avoiding it. I say: Anger is a burning fever—

- I. In its symptoms;
- II. In its cure.

PART I.

1. It is characteristic of a burning fever *that it excites the patient.* His pulse beats quickly, his breath is short, his face flushed, and drops of perspiration stand on his forehead. In this excitement he is very sensitive. Things which the healthy do not notice, such as loud talk, heavy footsteps, or the noisy opening or closing of a door, the ticking or striking of a clock, annoy him and provoke his indignation. Anger, too, excites man. Just look at a man burning with anger; how does he appear, how does he act? His brow is wrinkled, his eye dark and staring, his face red or pale, he foams at the mouth, he gesticulates, he stamps on the ground, his whole body is in violent motion or perhaps trembling. Oh, what a heinous passion is anger, since it so totally disfigures man, the image of God, and imprints upon him the character of a savage beast! That such an unnatural excitement injures the health, I need hardly mention; for the blood being at boiling heat and the nerves shaken, blood vessels may burst and death ensue; or various sicknesses may arise, which embitter the life of a person and bring him to a premature grave. A young man, who was subject to anger, was often ailing. The physician, who knew the cause of his illness, advised him to avoid the passion of anger. But in vain; he soon fell into a dreadful rage. The physician, who happened to be present, held a looking glass before his eyes. When he saw the deadly pallor of his face and the ferocity in his eyes, he trembled, but the physician said: "Do you see yourself? Frequent storms like this uproot the tree of life." The young man amended his life and removed the cause of his illness. I wish all those who are subject to anger would look at themselves in a mirror. I do not doubt they would be frightened at themselves, be ashamed of their passion, and never allow it to break out again.

2. People with a burning fever *often lose their heads*, and do not know what they are saying or doing. They mix up everything, and make remarks that have no sense; they have to be closely watched. Anger is a burning fever; it darkens the understanding, so that a person does not know what he says or does. You see men get into a dreadful passion with an animal that will not do as they wish; with a stone against which they knock their foot; with a fire that does not burn quickly enough; with a thread which gets entangled. Is this not unreasonable? And what foolish, senseless things they do when in a rage! A heathen philosopher relates that when a boy he saw a man who wanted to open a door with a key, but could not. He bit the key, kicked at the door with his feet, foamed with rage and broke out into dreadful oaths. At this spectacle the philosopher conceived such a horror of anger that he never in his life gave way to it. Should you not detest and shun a vice which deprives man of reason, the noblest gift of heaven, and reduces him to the rank of a beast of the field?

3. He who has a burning fever *has no appetite*. Whatever food you may set before him, he does not relish it, and pushes it away in disgust. On the other hand, he is *very thirsty*; he drinks again and again, and seems never to get enough; it is as if you poured water upon a hot iron plate, when it immediately evaporates. It is so with anger, which robs man of the spiritual taste and infuses into him a disgust for all spiritual food. Give a man burning with anger the bread of the divine word, teach him the sinfulness of his passion, and make earnest protestations to him, he will scornfully reject you, nay, he will perhaps fall into a greater passion and insult you if you are not at once silent and go out of his way. It is therefore a general rule to have nothing to do with an angry person so long as he is at boiling heat, but to keep away from him and preserve silence, for well meant admonitions would only be adding fuel to the flame. Married women especially should pay attention to this, and when their husbands come home drunk, or in a passion, not give them occasion, by their ill-timed reproaches, to break out into curses and blasphemies; they should wait until their husbands have cooled down or become sober, and then perhaps they may listen to reason. As a man, sick of the fever, has a desire for cooling drinks to quench his thirst, so a man, burning with anger, desires to gratify his burning thirst of revenge on his real or imaginary enemy.

Duke Lewis the Severe was absent on the Rhine, when his consort wrote two letters, one of which was directed to him, the other to Captain Rucho. The letters were exchanged, and the Captain's fell into the Duke's hands. A few affectionate and complimentary expressions in it excited his jealousy and made him wild with rage. Without delay he mounted his steed and

rode day and night, until he reached Donauwörth, where his wife lived. He knocked down the gatekeeper, killed the maid of honor, cast the first waiting-woman from the pinnacles of the castle, and, in spite of her tears and protestations of innocence, caused his wife to be beheaded the next morning. When his anger had cooled down, his sorrow for having committed these horrible deeds was so great that he became gray in one night. Who would not detest and shun anger, which often rages like a savage beast?

4. *A burning fever often brings on other maladies, e. g.,* congestion of the brain or lungs, causing sudden death; dropsy and consumption, which by little and little bring man to the grave. The same is true of anger; it is a capital or deadly sin, from which proceed many other sins, namely:

(a) *Curses and blasphemies.* The officer, the soldier, the banker, the merchant, and even the maid servant, curse and blaspheme when they become angry. If anger had no other evil in its train than this cursing and blaspheming, it would for that reason alone be one of the most abominable and pernicious sins.

(b) *Abusive words and invectives.* Passionate men often pour out a whole flood of invectives upon him who has aroused their ire. Such abusive words and invectives are, as we see in the gospel of this day, very sinful in themselves, and are often the cause of lawsuits, which cost a great deal of money, and lasting enmities are the result.

(c) *Discord and disunion.* "A passionate man kindleth strife, and a sinful (angry) man will trouble his friends, and bring in debate in the midst of them that are at peace."—*Ecclus.* 28: 11. Where passionate men dwell, quietude, peace, and concord take wings; and in place thereof are endless contentions and disagreements.

(d) *Fights, assaults, and even homicides.* Passionate men are frequently not satisfied with using offensive language when someone irritates them, but they proceed to blows and kicks; serious injuries are inflicted and even murder is done. Thus anger is like a burning fever; it is a very dangerous disease and the fruitful mother of many evils and sins.

But anger must be treated as a burning fever as regards its cure.



PART II.

1. An old adage says: *Principiis obsta — resist the beginning*, for a medicine which is used too late never cures. This refers to all sicknesses, but particularly to a burning fever. If the right remedies are not employed at the proper time, the fever is generally incurable and ends in death.

The same is to be said of anger. In the beginning it is not difficult to control it; but if you listen to its suggestions, it grows more impetuous, darkens the understanding, deafens the conscience, and obtains full sway, till it is spent. Nothing therefore is more necessary than to fight against it and subdue it while it is still weak. In a burning fever it is first of all necessary to destroy the morbid matter and purify the body, so that the fever may subside altogether, or at least may not become violent.

2. Such remedies must also be applied to anger, to prevent the outbreak of passion. This is done by removing as far as possible everything that excites to anger. Anger usually has its rise in some inordinate inclination, *e. g.*, pride, ambition, intemperance. We know that Cain was so angry with his brother that he killed him. Whence this anger? From envy. He had noticed that God despised his sacrifice, but looked upon Abel's sacrifice with pleasure; this offended his pride, and roused in him a deadly hatred against his brother. When some men lose at gambling they fall into an ungovernable passion and begin to curse and blaspheme; sometimes they fall upon those who played with them, wound and kill them. Why do they do so? From covetousness. They wish to win, not to lose, and if the latter happens, they fall into a passion and commit the greatest excesses. Others again are good natured and quiet; they have no bad words for any one; they offend no one so long as they are sober; but when drunk, they are like savage beasts; they swear, and abuse every one, smash everything within their reach, and when they come home, their poor wife and children are obliged to hide themselves or run away to avoid being maltreated. Let every one who is subject to anger investigate the cause and remove it; this is the remedy that will cure his sickness.

3. A person who has a burning fever must be carefully dieted, for a mistake in eating or drinking may increase his illness and produce death.

We must carefully diet ourselves if we wish to prevent anger from breaking out. He who wishes to guard against it must mortify himself and adopt the rule of *neither speaking nor doing anything when he feels the emotion rising*, but he must keep silent and quiet until the anger has cooled down. Even the pagans

recommended and employed this rule against anger. Thus the philosopher Athenodor advised the Emperor Augustus, whenever he felt angry, to recite the twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet before saying or doing anything. When the philosopher Archites was once provoked to great anger, he said; "You may be thankful that I am angry, for otherwise I should punish you severely." A nobleman once broke out into most offensive invectives against St. Francis of Sales; the Saint looked at him quietly, and answered him not a word. The angry man considered this moderation as a sign of contempt, and redoubled his rage; but the Saint again kept silence; at length the man departed. Another nobleman asked the Saint how he managed to overcome himself so well. He replied: I and my tongue have made an inviolable covenant, and have agreed that whenever I am excited, my tongue must be quiet, and that I must not speak until the inward fever is cooled down." Take an example from this Saint, and treasure up the lesson he gives you. If anger arises in your heart, close your mouth and do not speak a word. Neither do what your anger suggests; it might be something unreasonable and wicked. Only when your anger is checked should you speak and act as circumstances demand.

4. Burning fevers, after being cured, always leave some weakness behind. Physicians therefore order good wine and other restoratives, that the patient may recover his former strength. People who are inclined to anger must also employ restoratives, if they wish to be cured of their spiritual weakness. Such restoratives are—

(a) *Contemplation of Jesus, our meek Redeemer.* The holy Count Eleazar, although overwhelmed with business, was never seen to be angry or impatient. When his wife asked him one day how this was possible, he said: "When I observe a motion of anger, I represent to myself the ignominy and injury which my Redeemer suffered from me and others, and say to myself: "If your dependants were to pull out your hair and beard, kick and beat you and inflict other injuries on you, it is right that you should endure all this, for it is nothing in comparison with what Jesus suffered for you. This is how I easily suppress my anger." Go and do likewise, and you will be able to keep your anger under control.

(b) *Prayer.* This is the principal means in all temptations, and therefore in temptations to anger. Our Lord says: "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation."—*Matt. 26: 41.* As often as an angry feeling arises in your heart, have recourse to prayer,

and say: Lord, permit me not to offend thee by anger. Give me the grace to learn of thee to be meek and humble of heart.

(c) *Daily renewed resolutions.* Persons who are much inclined to anger, or whose circumstances are such that they are exposed to the danger of giving way to anger must very often renew the resolution not to allow it to arise in them. Make a resolution in the morning to resist anger during the day and not to say or do anything when you are so unfortunate as to fall into a passion. If you are tempted to anger, think of your resolution and say within yourselves: I have promised God to-day not to offend him by anger; by his grace I will keep my promise. Examine yourselves in the evening and see whether you have been faithful to your promise during the day. If you have been, give thanks to God; but if you have sinned in this respect repent of it from your heart and impose a voluntary penance on yourselves, for instance, a prayer to be said on your knees.

PERORATION.

We have now considered how anger resembles a burning fever, in its symptoms and in its cure. You are afraid of fever, and when attacked by it you at once call in a physician, for you know it is a dangerous disease, and is frequently the forerunner of death. But a far worse sickness is anger, for it is accompanied with incomparably greater evils than any burning fever, and ends, unless it is controlled, in eternal death, as Christ says: *Whosoever shall be angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment.*

Shun anger and employ the means of guarding yourselves against it. As soon as you perceive a motion of anger, stifle it at once and make it your rule never to say or do anything in the heat of passion. Remove, as far as possible, all occasions of anger, and daily renew in the morning, and often during the day, the resolution of not offending God in this way.

Frequently look at your meek Saviour Jesus on the cross, and consider his words: "Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls."—*Matt. 11: 29.* Amen.



FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

WE MUST FORGIVE THOSE WHO OFFEND US.

Go first to be reconciled to thy brother.—Matt. 5: 24.

Our Lord, in the gospel of this day, forbids us to entertain anger against our neighbor, and tells us it is our duty to be reconciled to him without delay. In order to bring the importance of reconciliation vividly before our eyes, he says that when we are about to lay our gift on the altar we must go first to be reconciled to our neighbor, and then come and offer our gift. Alas! there are many Christians who disregard this command of Christ. They often go to church with hatred and enmity in their hearts, without even thinking of making peace with their neighbor. For months and years many nourish rancor and enmity in their hearts, and yet, according to the counsel of the Apostle, we should not let the sun go down upon our anger. It certainly will not be out of place if I speak to-day of the forgiveness of injuries and offenses, and place before you the three following truths for your consideration:

- I. *Forgiveness is possible;*
- II. *Forgiveness is necessary;*
- III. *Forgiveness is profitable.*

PART I.

Forgiveness is possible—

I. *Because God commands us to forgive.* "Seek not revenge," nor be mindful of the injury of thy citizens."—*Lev. 19: 18.* "Forgive thy neighbor if he hath hurt thee; and then shall thy sins be forgiven to thee when thou prayest."—*Ecclus. 28: 2.* Thus God strictly forbade the Israelites, whose law was yet very imperfect, to revenge themselves on those who offended them; they should rather, in order to obtain the forgiveness of their sins and to be able to stand before the tribunal of God, renounce all enmity, and forgive from their heart. Jesus teaches in the gospel of this day that anger nourished against another in one's heart is culpable before God, and that one must renounce it and be forgiving. Again he says: "Be at agreement with thy adversary

betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him: lest, perhaps, the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison."—*Matt.* 5: 25. Here our Lord requires us to reconcile ourselves to our neighbor without delay, otherwise severe judgment and punishment await us hereafter. St. Peter once asked our Lord how often he should forgive his brother who offended him; he thought seven times was sufficient. But Jesus replied: "I say not to thee, till seven times, but till seventy times seven times (*Matt.* 18: 21, 22), that is, four hundred and ninety times, or as often as he would be offended.

Now since God has commanded us both in the Old and New Testament to forgive our enemies, who would be bold enough to pretend that it is impossible to do so? Would it not be saying that God imposes burdens which we are unable to endure, and that he punishes us for the violation of a commandment which we cannot keep? Would not such an assertion be a horrible blasphemy? Does not Christ expressly say: "My yoke is sweet, and my burden light?"—*Matt.* 11: 30.

2. *Because pious Christians of all times have forgiven.* St. Stephen, wounded by stones and weltering in his blood, lies on the earth; there is only a little life left in him, and yet he gathers his remaining strength, falls on his knees and cries with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."—*Acts* 7: 59. St. Stephen not only forgives his enemies and murderers, but also prays to God that he would not impute it to them as a sin.

3. *Because pious persons before Christ forgave.* The pious sufferer, Job, says of himself: "If I have been glad at the downfall of him that hated me, and have rejoiced that evil had found him. For I have not given my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul."—*Job* 31: 29, 30. Joseph of Egypt forgave his brothers all the injury they had done him, and returned them good.—*Gen.* 45: 50. Saul persecuted David and wished to slay him. But when David had opportunities of slaying Saul he spared him and inflicted no injury whatever on him. In like manner he forgave Simei, who had greatly insulted and reviled him, and earnestly rebuked Abisai when he desired to go and cut off the head of the impudent calumniator.

4. *Because even among the Gentiles some of the better-minded forgave.* Phocion, a renowned statesman in Athens, was condemned to death, and when asked by the executioner who handed him the cup of poison whether he had any commands for his son, he replied: "I request my son not to take revenge on my enemies for the crime they have committed against me." A pagan philosopher was once struck on the head by a ruffian. Instead of a

bitter retort, he only said: "If I had known that this would happen to me, I would have put on my helmet." An Indian once lost himself while hunting. Hungry and thirsty he came to a backwoodsman and asked him for bread and water. The hard-hearted white man refused him; called him a dog that should not presume to trouble a white man. A few months afterwards the backwoodsman lost himself in the woods and was obliged to ask the help of an Indian whom he met. In the most friendly way the Indian conducted him to his hut, treated him to the best he had, and kept him for the night. At daybreak the Indian put him on the right road, and on taking leave, asked him whether he remembered having once seen him before. The backwoodsman then for the first time recognized him as the man whom a few months before he had so uncharitably turned from his door. Ashamed of himself, he acknowledged his uncharitable conduct and invited the Indian to come with him, that he might repair the wrong which he had done him. The Indian smilingly wished him a safe journey, and disappeared in the thicket.

When we contemplate the demeanor of the saints of the Old and the New Testament, and even of some of the Gentiles, and see how they magnanimously forgave their enemies and returned good for evil, how can we say that it is impossible to forgive! No, no; forgiveness is quite possible, if we only ask God for his grace, and earnestly fight against and subdue the motions of anger and hatred. The words which God spoke to Cain concern us all: "The lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it."—*Gen.* 4: 7.

PART II.

1. *Forgiveness is necessary;* for without forgiveness we can obtain no pardon of sin. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."—*I. John* 1: 8. "Who can say: My heart is clean, I am pure from sin?"—*Prov.* 20: 9.

Among the sins of which we are guilty there are not only venial, but also mortal sins, and there may be some among us who have grievously offended God a hundred or a thousand times. Now faith teaches us that nothing defiled can enter into heaven. If we were guilty of only one mortal sin and were to depart this life without having repented of it, we should be lost for ever. Even as regards venial sins we cannot be admitted into heaven until we have sufficiently atoned for them in purgatory.

Now it is certain that no man can obtain the forgiveness of his sins unless he forgives his enemies from his heart. As without true contrition there can be no forgiveness, so without sincere forgiveness there can be no pardon of sin. Christ himself

expressed this truth in the clearest words: "If you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offenses."—*Matt.* 6: 15.

You know the parable of the unmerciful servant. Although his master had forgiven him the immense debt of ten thousand talents, he treated most cruelly one of his fellow-servants, who owed him only a hundred pence; he laid hold of him, throttled him, and paying no attention to his entreaties, cast him into prison. When the master heard of the merciless action of his servant, he became very angry, called him a wicked servant and delivered him to the torturers. How does Jesus conclude this parable? He says: "So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."—*Matt.* 18: 35. God, then, will not forgive him who does not forgive his enemy. St. Augustine says: "God has entered into a contract with us sinners, in these words: "If you forgive those who have offended you, I will forgive you your sins with which you have offended me; but if you do not forgive, neither need you expect forgiveness from me." Suppose, therefore, some one makes a sincere confession and is earnestly resolved to amend his life, but cannot prevail upon himself to give up his enmity and heartily forgive, his confession is in vain. God does not forgive him a venial sin, much less a mortal one, and though he be absolved by the priest, the absolution is null and void before God, and he leaves the confessional a greater sinner than when he entered it. How necessary then it is to forgive our enemies and those who have offended us.

2. *We can do nothing meritorious before God.* Faith is something great, for it is the root of all justice, the beginning of salvation, without which we cannot please God and be saved. But if we bear ill-will and enmity towards our neighbor and will not hear of forgiveness, our faith is unprofitable and valueless before God, for the Apostle says: "If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 2. God is particularly pleased with works of mercy. Thus the Archangel Raphael says: "Alms delivereth from death; and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting."—*Tob.* 12: 9. And Christ himself says: "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, Amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."—*Matt.* 10: 42. As we perceive from the sentence on the last day, it is chiefly the works of mercy that will decide our fate hereafter, since Christians who practice them will be called to life everlasting; but those who neglect them will be condemned to everlasting torments. But even these works of mercy so acceptable to God and so profitable

to us are lost unless we forgive our enemies, for the Apostle again assures us: "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 3. Finally, what can there be more glorious and meritorious than to lay down one's life for Christ and the holy faith and to die a martyr. Jesus expressly declares: "He that shall lose his life for me shall find it."—*Matt.* 10: 39. Again he says: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly, for my sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 11, 12. But even martyrdom would have no value before God if we were to undergo it without forgiving our enemy. In the time of the Emperor Aurelian there lived at Antioch two Christians, named Saprificus and Nicephorus, who were great friends, but who afterwards became enemies and bitterly hated each other. Nicephorus soon after saw his mistake, and endeavored to be reconciled to Saprificus; he therefore frequently asked his pardon, but always in vain. In the meantime Saprificus was arrested on account of his religion, and professed himself a Christian. The Governor ordered him to be tortured; but remaining steadfast in his faith, he was condemned to be beheaded. Nicephorus hastened to him, weeping, and asked him to forgive him for Christ's sake. But Saprificus deigned not to look at him, and in spite of the continued and most urgent petitions of Nicephorus, remained implacable. What was the consequence? When the moment arrived for Saprificus to kneel and receive the death blow, he hesitated, denied Christ, and promised to sacrifice to the gods. This was the miserable result of being an unforgiving man. But let us suppose for a moment that Saprificus had remained firm and constant in his faith and died as a martyr, would his martyrdom have profited him? No; he would have been rejected on account of his refusal to be reconciled, and hell would have witnessed the spectacle of receiving a martyr of Christ into its fiery bosom. The Apostle expressly declares: "If I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 3.

PART III.

1. *Forgiveness is profitable to those who have offended us.* St. Paul writes: "If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him to drink; for doing this, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."—*Rom.* 12: 20. The Apostle means to say: if we forgive our enemy, and instead of taking revenge on him, return him good for evil, he will feel sorry for having offended us; our kindness will disarm his anger and be a real pain to him; he will enter into himself, discover the dangerous condition to which his salvation is exposed, and reconcile himself to us. Ex-

perience teaches this. If you return evil to him who has offended you what will be the consequence? It will only aggravate his anger. But if you are kind to him, he will cast off his hatred, and will regret having offended you. Inflamed by holy zeal for the honor of God, St. John of God reprimanded a young nobleman for uttering improper words in the presence of several persons of the opposite sex. The excited young man said, "Go to the devil, and do not meddle with things you do not understand." The Saint replied: "Not understand! Amend your life and fear God before whose revenge you are not secure for a moment." More enraged, the young man gave him a blow in the face, but the Saint far from avenging himself or complaining, fell on his knees and only said: "I request you to strike as long as you please, only do not offend God by wicked discourses." The Saint by his meekness won two souls for God at once; the nobleman was so struck with amazement that he became his greatest friend, and a noble lady who happened to be present, his most fervent disciple. So much does meekness effect; it breaks the anger of the fiercest man and softens the hardest hearts, so that they acknowledge their wrong and amend their lives.

2. *To ourselves who have been offended.* We do an act of mercy to our neighbor when we forgive him a debt which he justly owes us. It is the same with the forgiveness of injuries. When any one offends us, he offends against justice towards us, and he is bound to repair the evil which he has done us. But if we renounce our right and forgive him, we remit to him a debt and do a work of charity in his regard. Forgiving him who offends us is the more glorious, because in doing so we have to make a hard sacrifice. Our sensual nature will not hear of forgiveness; it is painful to flesh and blood. Now if we subdue these motions of our sensual nature and forgive our enemies from our heart, we practise an excellent work of mortification and achieve a glorious victory over ourselves. Since God promises an eternal reward for works of charity and for mortifications done for love of him, what may we not expect for an act which reveals the love of our neighbor and our self-denial in a special manner? We have the consoling hope of being forgiven by God, if we forgive. A forgiving heart can say before the throne of God: Lord, forgive, for I have forgiven. And Jesus himself says: "If you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offenses."—*Matt. 6: 14.* As we read so often in the Lives of the Saints, God is pleased to impart to those who magnanimously forgive their enemies particular and even extraordinary graces and to elevate them to a higher degree of virtue and sanctity. St. John Gualbert (12th July).

PERORATION.

In conclusion I exhort you in the words of the Apostle: "Bear with one another and forgive one another, if any have a complaint against another, even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also."—*Col. 3: 13.* As we have heard, to forgive is *possible, necessary* and *profitable*. *Possible*, for God commands no impossibility: if we only have a good will he will support us with his grace so that after the example of the saints we shall be able to forgive all, even the greatest offences, and to do good to our enemies. *Necessary*, for without forgiveness there is no pardon of sin, no work meritorious before God. *Profitable*, for if we are kind towards our enemies and forgive them, it will be for their and our good. Let us then put away all aversion and hostile sentiments; let us forgive from the bottom of our hearts all who have ever offended us, and let us from henceforth live in harmony and peace, that the words of Christ may be verified in us: "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."—*Matt. 5: 9.* Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

THE JUSTICE OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

*Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and of the Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.—
Matt. 5: 20.*

Were we not already well acquainted with the Scribes and Pharisees it might seem strange to us that Jesus rejects their justice or righteousness and declares that unless it abound more no one can enter into the kingdom of heaven. The Scribes and Pharisees were people whom one might consider zealous servants of God. They said a great many prayers at home, in the synagogues, and in the Temple, fasted twice a week, and gave alms abundantly; their whole demeanor was such that by the people they were viewed as saints. The question is: What was wanting to them? for our Lord condemns their justice and declares it insufficient for salvation. I shall answer this question to-day, point-

ing out to you the four great defects, on account of which their justice was condemned.

- I. *It was not grounded on faith;*
- II. *It was not established in the heart;*
- III. *It did not extend to all the commandments of God;*
- IV. *It had not the honor of God for its object.*

PART I.

It was not grounded on faith.

1. Our divine Saviour had frequently and in plain words told the Scribes and Pharisees that he was the Son of God and the promised Messiah; he had also proved the truth of this assertion by the eminent sanctity of his life and by many miracles; he had many times threatened them with everlasting woe if they would not believe in him. But all in vain; they stubbornly refused to believe in him and would not subject themselves to him; nay, in their blindness and obstinacy, they went so far as to declare him to be a blasphemer and a confederate of the devil, and finally they nailed him to the cross. Who could be astonished that Jesus rejected their justice? For faith is the beginning of salvation; "without faith it is impossible to please God."—*Heb.* 11: 6. Though the unbeliever may do good works, and practice virtues which attract the admiration of the world, he cannot stand before the tribunal of God. Official documents have no value without the public seal. So it is with good works without faith; they are worthless in the sight of God when they are destitute of the seal of faith. Therefore the Apostle says: "The just man liveth by faith" (*Rom.* 1: 17); thereby expressing the truth that the justice acceptable to God proceeds from faith, as the tree from the root.

2. There are not a few men, even such as call themselves Catholics, who assert that all creeds are equally acceptable to God, and that as honesty is the best policy, so it is also the best religion. If this be so, why does our Lord with so great severity insist upon the necessity of faith and declare that, "He that believeth not shall be condemned?"—*Mark* 16: 16. Why did he command his Apostles to preach the gospel to all men? Why did he declare those who would not hear his Church to be like unto heathens and publicans? Why have the Apostles and millions of Christians endured so many sufferings and persecutions and even martyrdom for their faith? He who separates justice from faith makes a great mistake; he declares all Christianity to be superfluous, and really says that neither Christ nor his Apostles, who

made eternal salvation depend on faith, taught the truth. Do not permit yourself to be seduced by men who say that faith is of no consequence, and may be rejected with impunity, but stand firmly by it, for it is the foundation and the first requisite of true justice.

PART II.

It was not established in the heart.

The Scribes and Pharisees were content with a merely external justice; they prayed, fasted, gave alms, and kept aloof from heathens and sinners, so as not to be defiled. They therefore blamed Jesus because he went with sinners, saying: "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."—*Luke* 15: 2. But with all their outward justice they had a corrupt heart—a heart full of ambition, adultery, hatred and envy. When they saw Jesus win the love and affection of the people more and more, full of anger, they said among themselves: "Do you see that we prevail nothing? Behold, the whole world is gone after him."—*John* 12: 19. Their whole justice was merely an outward justice, wherefore Jesus told them to their face, "Now you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inside is full of rapine and iniquity."—*Luke* 11: 39.

2. The justice of some Christians is not much better than that of the Scribes and Pharisees. How many are there who confine their piety to outward exercises! If they say their daily prayers, assist at mass on Sundays and holydays, and go to confession from time to time, they imagine that it is all right, that they are good and pious Christians, and will be sure to get to heaven when they depart this life. But they greatly deceive themselves if their devotions and exercises of piety are not united with interior sanctity. The Israelites were ordered first of all to gild the inside of the ark and afterwards the outside. We must do the same; we must first adorn our heart with the virtues of humility, meekness, purity, the love of God and of our neighbor, for only then will our external exercises of piety have value before God. Therefore the Psalmist says of a truly pious soul (44: 14), "All the glory of the king's daughter is within." In order to know for certain whether our justice is acceptable to God and leading us to salvation, we must, first of all, look to our heart. If we are sincere with God and man and do not suffer ourselves to be governed by a base passion we are on the right road, and may hope that our justice will stand the test.

PART III.

It did not extend to all the commandments of God.

1. The Scribes and Pharisees observed only those commandments which suited their inclinations, but they transgressed others which did not agree with their tastes and wishes. God had commanded through Moses: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart" (*Lev.* 19: 17); "Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself."—*Ibid.* 19: 18. In order to avoid keeping this commandment, the Scribes and Pharisees asserted that by the word *neighbor* friends and brethren in the faith were to be understood, that only these were to be loved, and that they owed no love to strangers or enemies. Hence they considered it no sin to hate, persecute and even nail Jesus to the cross; for, in their blindness, they considered him to be their enemy. In like manner they taught, in contradiction to the fourth commandment, that children who bequeathed their property to the temple, were not bound to assist and support their aged, indigent parents. They treated the other commandments in the same way; they kept them only so far as it suited them. We need not therefore wonder that Christ declared their one-sided and imperfect justice as insufficient for salvation. We owe to God, our Lord, a universal and unconditional obedience; if we transgress only one commandment we oppose our will to his, and no longer honor him as our Lord and Master. Therefore St. James says: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all."—*St. James* 2: 10.

2. Many Christians greatly deceive themselves herein. Because they keep most of the commandments, and transgress only one or the other, they think themselves just, and imagine that God will be satisfied with them. Here is a person who in all respects lives according to the rules and regulations of religion, but he is at enmity with some one and cannot resolve to be reconciled; there is another, to whom nothing can be imputed except that he gets drunk; there is a third, who guards his conscience from every sin, but ill-gotten goods he will not restore. How is it with such Christians? Will the divine Judge content himself with their piety? No: certainly not. If the one violation of the law of which we are guilty be a mortal sin, we cannot be saved. Do not believe that in hell only those sinners are burning who have violated all the commandments and done nothing but evil; many are burning there who have done good, and a great deal of good. To be damned for ever, it is sufficient to commit one mortal sin and to die in it.

PART IV.

It had not the honor of God for its object.

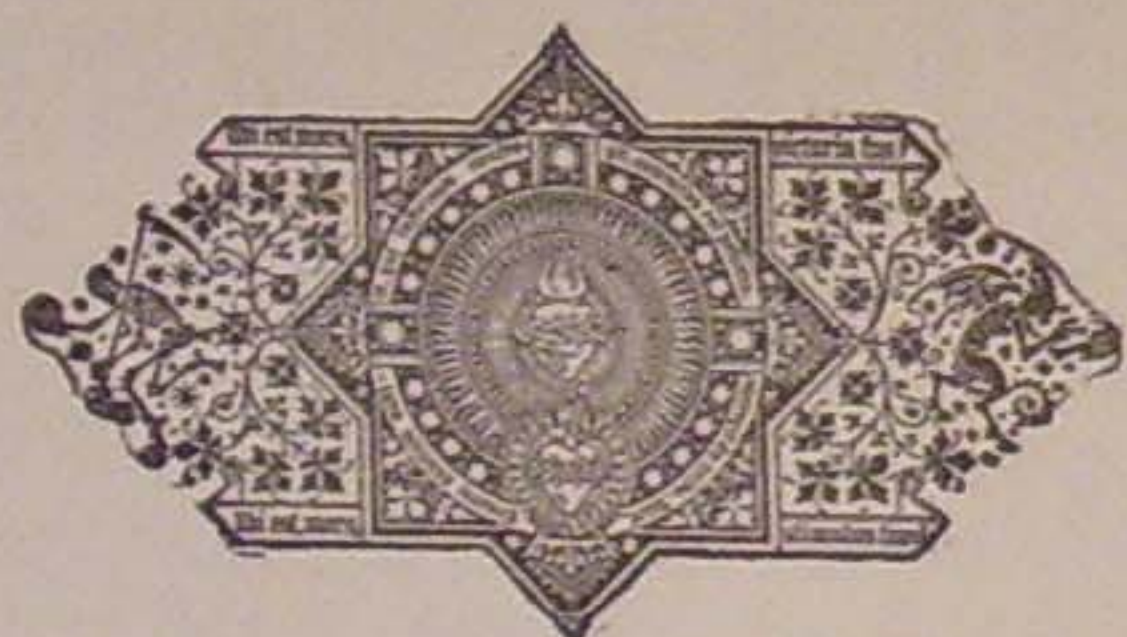
1. The Scribes and Pharisees, in their good works, sought only themselves and craved the applause of men. When they prayed they stood at the corners of the street and in public squares, where they could be seen by all, in order to be considered pious. When they fasted they put on penitential garments, walked about with a sad and dejected countenance, their eyes cast down to the ground, that every one might know they were fasting. When they gave alms they caused the fact to be announced by trumpet, that the people might say: Behold, how charitable the Scribes and Pharisees are! The Jews wore tablets on their forehead and on their left arm, to be always reminded of the law of God; the Scribes and Pharisees also excelled herein; they wore on their forehead a very broad tablet, to give themselves the appearance of observing the law of God more strictly than the rest of the Jews. Some of them wore thorns in the hem of their garments, in order to wound their feet in walking and thus to exhibit their zeal for penance to the public gaze. Their ambition was the principal cause why Jesus condemned their justice and declared that they had already received their reward.—*Matt.* 6: 5.

2. Our Lord will pass the same sentence upon all those who, in their exercises of devotion and in their good works, have not the honor of God for their object, but themselves. They may fast, pray, give alms and perform other good works. All is fruitless, unless they have the right intention. The five foolish virgins may serve us as a warning. They were all virgins practicing that great virtue which makes human beings even in this mortal life equal to the angels of heaven; but because they lacked the oil of pure intention, seeking the praise of the world on account of their virginity, the gate of heaven was closed against them by the divine Bridegroom. In your actions banish all ambition from your heart; do not desire the praise of men; do all for the love, honor and glory of God. Make a pure intention every morning and renew it during the day, especially when vanity or impatience assails you, and say: My Jesus, all for thy love!

PERORATION.

You know now the qualities of true, acceptable justice. The foundation upon which it must rest is faith; stand firm in the faith of the holy Catholic Church, which is the pillar and ground of truth. True justice has its germ in the heart; therefore, remove from it all that is wrong and sinful. Be sincere with God

and man. Keep all the commandments and beware of transgressing even one; your justice must be universal and extend to all that God requires of you. Finally, do all for God's sake, for his love and honor, according to the Apostle: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God."—*I. Cor.* 10: 31. This is the last quality of true justice, which is the crown of all the others. If your justice has these four attributes, you need not fear the fate of the Scribes and Pharisees, whose justice Jesus rejected; you are truly just, and will receive the reward of the just in heaven. Amen.



SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE. *Rom.* 6: 3-11 Brethren: All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized in his death. For we are buried together with him by baptism unto death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer. For he that is dead is justified from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ: knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. So do you also reckon that you are dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

ADMONITION TO PENANCE.

We are exhorted in the Sacred Scriptures to nothing so frequently as to penance. Already in the Old Law God calls upon the Israelites, in the most impressive words, to do penance, promising grace and the forgiveness of their sins if they repent, and threatening them with his anger and the loss of their souls if they persevere in their sinful life. Thus he cries out to them: "Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes, cease to do perversely. If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow, and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool."—*Is.* 1: 16-18. And again "Because I called, and you refused: I stretched out my hand and there was none that regarded; you have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruc-

tion, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared."—*Prov.* 1: 24-27. When our Saviour began his public ministry, his first words were an exhortation to do penance: "Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand."

St. Paul also speaks of penance in the epistle of this day, and exhorts us—

- I. *To die to sin;*
- II. *To walk in newness of life;*
- III. *To persevere in that new life.*

PART I.

1. *All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death. For we are buried together with him by baptism unto death.* These words of the Apostle have this meaning: baptism produces in men the same effect as the death of Christ; Jesus Christ has blotted out and totally destroyed sin by his death, as death destroys and annihilates life. In the same manner baptism is the death of sin, for it blots out original sin and all personal sin, as God has already foretold by the prophet Ezechiel: "I will pour upon you clean water, you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness."—(36: 25.) St. Anselm says: "Let us look upon baptism as nothing else than the realization of the death of Christ, and upon the death of the crucified Redeemer as nothing else than the realization of the forgiveness of sin; hence, as death really took place in him, so the remission of sin really takes place in us. In the primitive ages of the Church baptism was usually administered by immersion. By this immersion the spiritual death, the drowning of the old sinful man, was symbolized; thus baptism indicated symbolically what it really effected, the annihilation and destruction of sin."

As by baptism we have died to sin, it is our duty to remain dead to sin; henceforth we sin no more. Therefore before baptizing us the priest asked us: "Do you renounce Satan and all his works, and all his pomps?" and it was only after answering these questions in the affirmative, that he proceeded to administer to us the Sacrament of Baptism. How is it with us? Have we kept our baptismal vow? Have we renounced the devil? Do we listen to his suggestions? Do we shun the works of the devil? Do we consider sin the greatest and most abominable evil? Are we free from the pride of the devil? Do we give honor to God in all things? Do we seek our own honor or human praise? Do we not think ourselves better than others? Woe to us if we cannot answer these questions satisfactorily, for we should be guilty of treason to God and to his Church. Consider that you must one day give a very strict account of the covenant entered

into with God, and that according to your own promise you will be either justified or condemned as a perjurer.

2. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer.* St. Paul had spoken before, in general terms, of the death of Christ, designating it the death of our sins; that is, to say through the merits of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross our sins were blotted out; and he deduced therefrom the obligation upon us to remain dead to sin and never more to commit sin. He now speaks of the manner of the death of Christ, and says that Christ died the death of the cross, therefore a most painful death. But this painful death of Jesus on the cross is an exhortation to us to take upon ourselves that which is painful in the renunciation of sin. It is painful and costs much fighting and labor to subdue our evil inclinations and passions; to eradicate old habits, to sever sinful connections, to overcome vehement temptations, we must fight manfully, for the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away. Christ also wills that we pluck out an eye, that we cut off a hand or a foot, that scandalizes us, that is to say, we must shun and give up whatever leads us into sin, though it may be as painful as the plucking out of the eye or the amputation of the hand or the foot. Let us consider that the dying to sin is far easier than the dying of Christ on the cross, and that, as Jesus says, it is better with one hand, with one foot, with one eye, to enter into heaven, than having two eyes, two hands, or two feet, to be cast into hell-fire.

PART II.

Having died to sin, we must walk in newness of life.

1. *That as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life.* As in his death, so also in his new life, Christ is our pattern; we must walk in newness of life. Wherein does this new life consist? In this, that we diligently practice the virtues of Christ, especially those opposed to the sins we formerly committed. He who has sinned by pride and a vain desire to please men must practice interior and exterior humility, think little of himself, dress plainly, never seek honor, and bear humiliations patiently. He who has been avaricious, hard-hearted towards the poor, or who has taken other people's property, must do as Zacheus did, restore the ill-gotten goods and give alms. He who has lived unchastely, must not only abstain from all impurity, but must endeavour to persuade others, especially those under his charge, to live modestly and chastely. He who has been governed by anger, broken out into

curses and blasphemies, lived in strife and enmity, let him now be meek and peaceable, indulgent towards the frailties of his fellow-men, and be reconciled to them.

2. *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.* By baptism we were closely united with Christ, and have been grafted on him, as it were. As a branch receives from the tree in which it is inserted nourishment and sap, so we receive from Christ, on whom we are grafted as spiritual branches, power and grace to walk in the new life and to yield fruits of justice. Therefore Christ says: "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."—*John 15: 5.* The question is, what is required that we may remain united with Christ? I answer: *Faith and charity.* Faith, for the moment a man apostatizes from the faith he separates himself from Christ, and ceases to belong to him. The same is to be said of charity; if it is lost, all vital union with Christ ceases. But charity is, as we know, lost by every mortal sin. Branches which are cut off from the tree can bring forth no fruit; they wither. In like manner people who have lost faith and charity, can yield no fruit for eternal life. Though they may perform good works, fulfil the duties of their station, do acts of kindness to their fellow-men and bear the troubles and afflictions of this life patiently, yet all is vain and worthless before God, and they are not entitled to any reward hereafter. Take care, therefore, lest you suffer shipwreck of faith or commit a mortal sin, that you may not come into the sad condition of not being able to do anything meritorious for heaven.

3. *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ.* In order to live with Christ, we must die with Christ. The new life necessarily presupposes death: where this has not intervened there is no life. How do matters stand with you? Have you really died? or, in other words, have you really become converted? True conversion requires us in the first place to be interiorly changed and renewed. Therefore the Lord says through his prophet: "Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping, and in mourning, and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God."—*Joel 2: 12, 13.* The Jews, when doing penance, were accustomed to rend their garments, and this was all. God rejected and still rejects such repentance; he requires us not to rend our garments but our hearts, that is, to repent of our past sins, to be sorry for them, to hate and detest them. Therefore the Holy Ghost says: "Return to the Lord, and turn away from thy injustice and greatly hate abominations."—

Ecclus. 17: 23. He, therefore, who confesses without changing his perverse heart, that is, without hating and detesting his ambition, his vanity in dress, his impure desires, words and actions, his hatred and enmity, his sloth in doing good, makes a bad confession: he is not yet dead to sin, and by no means possesses the life of grace. Even the outside conversion, the giving up of the sin, and the practice of good works, without the interior change and renovation, would be only appearance and delusion. Examine then whether you have no longer any attachment to sin, whether sin displeases you, whether you have joy and pleasure in God and in doing good, and whether you are firmly resolved to walk in the path of virtue. Only when this is the case can you have good reason to hope that your penance and conversion are true, and that you walk in newness of life.

PART III.

If we walk in newness of life, our principal care must be to persevere in it. To this perseverance we are exhorted by St. Paul, in the epistle of this day: *We know that Christ, rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. So do you also reckon that you are dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Christ died for our sins, for the atonement of them, *only once*; after rising from the dead he dies *no more*; being risen with an incorruptible and glorified body *death has no more dominion over him*; he lives now for ever a heavenly life in the glory of his Father. We must do the same; we must, after having died to sin, persevere in the new life without ever relapsing into the death of sin. Let us reflect that a relapse into sin is the greatest ingratitude towards the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity.

1. (a.) *Towards the Father.* What should we say of the prodigal son, if after his father's affectionate reception, he had returned to his former riotous life? What an ungrateful wretch to treat his father thus, we should say, and we should turn from him in disgust. But when we offend God who has shown us so many mercies and graces, are we not far more base and ungrateful?

(b.) *Towards God the Son.* St. Vincent of Paul took the place of a galley-slave and set him free. If this delinquent had committed new crimes, perhaps abused and killed his benefactor and liberator, and if thereby he had again incurred the punishment of the galley, every one would say that the man had treated his benefactor most abominably. But does not the sinner act more abominably when, notwithstanding that Christ at the price of his

precious blood has redeemed him from the slavery of sin and Satan, he relapses and crucifies his Redeemer anew?

(c.) *Towards God the Holy Ghost.* He dwelt in the soul of the justified man, he enlightened, consoled, strengthened, sanctified him, filled him with sweet peace and loved him more affectionately than a mother ever loved her only child. Now when the justified man banishes the Holy Ghost out of his heart by relapsing into sin, and in his place admits the evil spirit, does he not make himself guilty of the greatest crime, the blackest ingratitude?

2. *It brings about the greatest misfortunes.* He who relapses into sin —

(a.) *Loses sanctifying grace*—a treasure unequalled by all the treasures of the world, a treasure which, in a certain sense, is as valuable as the blood of Jesus Christ, because Christ was obliged to shed his blood, in order to recover for him the grace which was lost. What a misfortune to lose this treasure!

(b.) *All acquired merits.* The moment a man commits a mortal sin, the merit of his good works is lost, as God himself assures us by the prophet: "If the just man shall turn away from his justice, and shall commit iniquity . . . his justices which he hath done shall not be remembered."—*Ezech. 3: 20.* It is as if he had never done any good in his life, and if he dies in sin he will not receive any reward for his good works. Is not this loss deplorable?

(c.) *Heaven.* One mortal sin shuts heaven and opens hell. When Esau had sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, such sorrow seized him that he wept bitterly and almost lost his senses. And you Christians can be indifferent when you consider that for a mere trifle and for such a worthless thing as sin you have lost heaven with its inexpressible joys, and rendered yourselves guilty of the eternal pains of hell!

3. *It is most dangerous to salvation.* He that does not walk in newness of life is guilty of the greatest ingratitude towards God, the consequence of which is that God bestows his grace upon him more sparingly; but then by his relapse he becomes more thoughtless, his conscience less tender, the fear of God decreases, and thus it may easily come to pass that he falls into sin, not once, but often—very often; he perseveres in sin and perishes as an impenitent sinner. Therefore "woe to them that have lost patience, and that have forsaken the right ways, and have gone aside into crooked ways."—*Ecclus. 2: 16.* And Christ himself assures us that the unclean spirit takes with him seven

other spirits more wicked than himself, and enters into the heart of the relapsing sinner, and that the last state of that man is made worse than the first.—*Luke 11: 26.*

PERORATION.

Take to heart the threefold admonition which St. Paul gives us in the epistle of to-day, and obey it. *Die to sin.* Detest all sin from the bottom of your heart, take a pleasure in doing what is right, and love God above all things. Frequently say with the Apostle: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.—*Gal. 6: 14.* *Walk in newness of life.* "Put off . . . the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth."—*Eph. 4: 22-24.* *Persevere constantly in the new life of grace,* and guard with the greatest solicitude against every relapse into sin, for we are taught by God's word that only those who persevere to the end shall be saved.—*Matt. 10: 22.*

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL. *Mark 8: 1-9.* At that time: When there was a great multitude with Jesus, and they had nothing to eat, calling his disciples together, he saith to them: I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat. And if I shall send them away fasting to their home they will faint in the way, for some of them came from afar off. And his disciples answered him: From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness? And he asked them: How many loaves have ye? Who said: Seven. And he commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground. And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he broke, and gave to his disciples to set before them, and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes, and he blessed them and commanded them to be set before them. And they did eat and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE MIRACULOUS MULTIPLICATION OF LOAVES AND FISHES.

You know that the miraculous feeding of the people is twice referred to in the Ecclesiastical year, on the fourth Sunday in Lent, and to-day, the sixth Sunday after Pentecost. These two instances of the multiplication of bread are two separate miracles of Jesus; in the first he fed with five loaves of bread and two fishes five thousand men, not counting the women and children, and twelve baskets of fragments remained; in the second he fed with seven loaves of bread and a few fishes four thousand men, and seven baskets of fragments were left. That these are two separate miracles is evident from the fact that they are related by the Evangelists with their particular circumstances, and that Christ refers to them expressly and says to his disciples: "When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took you up? They say to him: Twelve. When also the seven loaves among four thousand, how many baskets of fragments took you up? And they say to him: Seven."—*Mark* 8: 19, 20.

Not without good reason does the Church direct the account of these two miracles to be read on two Sundays. On the fourth Sunday in Lent she calls our attention to a still more miraculous food, i. e., Easter Communion; to-day, the sixth Sunday after Pentecost, she points to the coming harvest, in which the miracle of the multiplication of bread is annually renewed.

Let us consider the contents of this day's gospel:

- I. *The preparation for the miracle;*
- II. *The miracle itself.*

PART I.

Jesus went up into a mountain near the Sea of Galilee and sat there. And there came to him great multitudes, having with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, the maimed, and many others, and they laid them at his feet and he healed them; and the people wondered and glorified God. Here it was that he worked the miracle spoken of in the gospel of this day.

1. Before he worked this miracle, calling his disciples together, he said to them: *I have compassion on the multitude: for, behold, they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat. And*

if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way, for some of them came from afar off.

(a.) *Why does Jesus call his disciples and lay before them the distress of the people?* Undoubtedly he wished to try their faith and call their attention to the urgent need of the people, that they might the better appreciate the miracle which he was about to perform. He would also give an example to superiors that they should not disdain to ask the advice and counsel of their subjects in important affairs. Jesus, the Omniscient, did not need the advice of his disciples, but men frequently need counsel and information, because, though they may be exalted, yet in their short-sightedness they may easily make mistakes. Let us therefore follow the advice of the wise man: "My son, do thou nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done."—*Eccclus.* 32: 24.

(b.) *Jesus had compassion on the multitude.* Oh, how beautifully does the goodness and love of Jesus towards men again manifest itself! He sees that the people are hungry and have nothing to eat, he knows that if he sends them away fasting they will faint on the way, and on that account he feels compassion. Let us make a comparison between ourselves and Christ. He has compassion on the hungry people and many of us have no compassion on the unfortunate; we never dream of helping them; we even go so far as to take advantage of their poverty. Is this acting as Christians? Christ sees the distress of the people and at once prepares to help them without being asked; and yet so many of us refuse the poor and needy, although asked by them in the most direct terms. Our Lord performs even a miracle to feed the hungry, and some of us would have only to give a little of our abundance, and the need would be relieved, but like Dives, who refused poor Lazarus the crumbs that fell from his table, we will not do it. Jesus has compassion on the people, and some of us have no compassion on our children, servants and others, taking no pains to save them from temporal and eternal ruin! Is this the spirit of a true Christian? Oh, think of the compassion of Jesus and have compassion on others and on yourselves.

(c.) Jesus says: *They have now been with me three days.* God counts all the days and hours we devote to his service, whilst the world easily forgets and rewards with ingratitude the services rendered to it. Should not this encourage us to serve God more fervently than the world? Many of us have three great days in life: *youth, maturity, and old age.* Oh, that all of us who are old could say with truth, that we have been with Jesus these three great days, i. e., have served him with fervor and fidelity! Let

us not forget that Jesus also counts those hours and days which we do not devote to his service, but which we profane and desecrate with sins and vices.

(d.) *The people were three days with Christ*, by day and night, under the canopy of heaven, without any food. Oh, how much do these people abash many Christians who, when they must spend one hour in prayer or in hearing the word of God, experience weariness, and yet they devote whole days and nights to worldly amusements! Are we upon this earth merely to enjoy ourselves! Do we not know that it is only the way of mortification and self-denial that leads to heaven? If we wish to lead a truly Christian life, our chief solicitude must be the affair of our salvation, and even lawful pleasures must be indulged in only occasionally and sparingly, in order to gain new strength and courage for the service of God.

(e.) Jesus says: *If I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way.* How solicitous Christ is for the people! He knows that they need his assistance, therefore he helps them. Be convinced that God thinks of you with the same solicitude and love; put all your confidence in him, and in every situation of life he will bind up your wounds and heal all your infirmities. If your position in life exposes you to various dangers and difficulties, console yourselves with the thought that God, who has placed you in this position, will not forsake you but will assist you with his grace, so that you may do his holy will. If you are assailed by violent temptations, reflect that God is faithful, he will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength, but will also make with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it. —*I Cor. 10: 13.* If you suffer temporal want, say to yourselves: he who fed the hungry multitude in the desert will also take care of us. If you put your whole confidence in God and do what is right, you may always be of good cheer, for he who is power and goodness itself can and will help you in every situation of life.

2. His disciples answered him: *From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness? And he asked them: How many loaves have ye? who said: Seven.*

(a.) The answer which the Apostles here made is little to their credit. Christ not long before had fed five thousand men in a miraculous manner. They should have remembered that miracle and thought: Our Master is powerful enough to again feed by a miracle a hungry multitude. But they do not think so; they talk as if Christ never had performed a miracle; they think it absolutely impossible to procure bread enough for so many people.

Let us not, however, find fault with the Apostles, but let us think with shame of our own cowardliness and faint-heartedness, of which we have often been guilty towards God. Every beggar knocks with confidence at the door of him who has frequently received and assisted him. How different are we! How many benefits has God already bestowed on us! From how many dangers has he rescued us, how many accidents and evils has he averted from us! And yet in hard times, in sickness and distress, we become at once disheartened and discouraged, as if there were no God who could and would help us. St. James expressly says that a man who does not pray with faith, but wavers, must not believe that he will receive anything of the Lord. — 1: 6, 7. Let us therefore put all our confidence in God, for if we lead a good Christian life, and avail ourselves of the means for obtaining corporal and spiritual goods, he will always take us under his protection and give us what is good and wholesome. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will do the will of them that fear him, and he will hear their prayer and save them." — *Ps. 144: 18, 19.*

(b.) To the question of Christ how many loaves of bread they had, they answered: *Seven.* The disciples here deserve all praise. They are hungry themselves, and to appease their hunger they have only seven loaves, nevertheless they are prepared to give to the hungry people the little they have. They could have said: We have indeed seven loaves, but they are scarcely enough for ourselves, we can spare none of them. But no, they are prepared to give the last morsel to the people. Let us also be merciful and charitable; let us show mercy to the poor and needy and help them in their misery and distress, following the rule which Tobias gave to his son: "According to thy ability be merciful. If thou have much, give abundantly: if thou have little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little." — *Tob. 4: 8, 9.*

PART II.

Jesus being about to feed the people, commands them to sit down. They were to receive the miraculously multiplied bread and fishes in a sitting posture, that all disorder might be prevented. We are thereby taught not to be greedy.

I. *Jesus taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he broke, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes, and he blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them.*

(a.) *Jesus took the seven loaves.* Only after he had taken and blessed them, did they become abundant, so that more than four thousand men were filled. Everything depends on the blessing of God. In vain do men labor and fatigue themselves if God does not accompany their labors and pains with his blessing: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it."—*Ps.* 126: 1, 2. But that God may be with us and bless all our undertakings, we must pray devoutly and live piously. "The innocent in hands, and clean of heart, who hath not taken his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbor, he shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his Saviour."—*Ps.* 23: 4, 5.

(b.) *Jesus gave thanks.* Let us also be thankful to God for all good gifts which we receive from his merciful bounty, and let us manifest our gratitude by making a good use of all the gifts of nature and of grace. Let us always say a prayer before and after meals. We are all beggars before God, for of ourselves we have as little and even less than the poorest beggar. Now, if beggars ask charity and return thanks for it, we ought to do the same towards God, and this the more so because we receive from him so many and so great benefits, and Christ expressly puts the petition in our mouth: "Give us this day our daily bread." Should we not sink below the level of the beast that has no understanding and knows nothing of the giver of all good, if we neglected our grace at meals?

(c.) *Jesus broke the bread.* God is not accustomed to give us his benefits in heaps, as it were, but in small portions, because superfluity often causes man's ruin. At the same time he teaches us that we should have no inordinate desire for earthly goods, but that we should content ourselves with the little we possess, considering well the words of Jesus: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul."—*Matt.* 16: 26. Let us be satisfied with little, and not desire superfluity, and not envy those who possess more than we. "For we brought nothing into this world, and certainly we can carry nothing out; but having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content."—*I. Tim.* 6: 7, 8.

(d.) *Jesus gave the loaves to his disciples to set before them.* He hereby wished to indicate that he would impart the fruits of redemption to men through his Apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests. Through them he would at all times preach his doctrines to men and administer the holy sacraments. Therefore the Apostle says: "Let a man so account of us as the

ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."—*I. Cor.* 4: 1. As the people took the bread joyfully and thankfully from the hands of the disciples of Christ, so you must receive the graces which he bestows upon you through his priests with a grateful heart and the greatest readiness, and employ them for your salvation.

(e.) *The disciples set them before the people.* Thus we also must set before others some of the goods and gifts which we receive from God. Employ corporal and spiritual benefits for the welfare of your fellow-men, and be particularly zealous in the performance of the duties of your state of life.

2. *And they did eat, and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand.*

(a.) *And they did eat and were filled.* The people did not receive dainties and luxuries, but common, substantial food, bread and fish; still they were satisfied, and it was as pleasant to their taste as if they had been at a royal table. Let us also be satisfied with common food and not be governed by the palate. Christ and his Apostles, and most of the saints, lived in poverty; why should we want to feast sumptuously every day? The grand suppers and dinners were of no use to the rich man in the other world; he asked in vain for a drop of water. Poor Lazarus, on the contrary, who was not allowed to appease his hunger with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, because no one did give him, is resting now in Abraham's bosom, and is filled with heavenly delight.

(b.) The Evangelist remarks that the fragments were taken care of. This ought to be a lesson to us to esteem even a little thing as a gift of God and not to waste it, for what we do not need may be welcome to others; also to save when times are prosperous, that in the day of need we may not be in want or become a burden to others. Save in time, and you will have something when in need thereof.

Seven baskets were filled with the fragments that remained. More was left than there had been at the beginning. Here we plainly see how liberal God is in distributing the gifts of mercy and of love. St. Leo says: "Believe not that thy worldly substance will be diminished by alms; on the contrary, it is increased in the distribution, like the loaves of bread which Christ blessed and caused to be distributed, and after four thousand men were filled, seven baskets of fragments were left." St. Bonaventure says: "If you prune a tree, it will grow the more; in like manner the wealthy become wealthier if they prune their riches, *i. e.*,

give alms to the poor." If we wish God to bless us here and make us prosperous, we must be charitable to the poor and needy and love to give alms.

(c.) *And he sent them away.* The gospel does not mention that any of the assembled had left before he had finished his instruction. If they had done so they would have deprived themselves of the grace of being witnesses of the great miracle wrought by Christ and of being fed by him. Many Christians cannot wait for the end of mass, the priest has scarcely said, *Domine non sum dignus*, when they turn their backs to the altar and leave the church. Such Christians give us only too plainly to understand that they are lukewarm and not solicitous for the salvation of their soul; they also disturb others in their devotions and give scandal. Do not leave the church till the priest leaves the altar.

PERORATION.

In the gospel of this day we again see plainly how right St. Paul was when he said: "Godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."—*I Tim. 4: 8.* The people in the desert were pious and solicitous for the welfare of their souls, therefore Jesus, for the space of three days, announced to them his divine word, and performed a miracle in order to assist them in their distress and appease their hunger. If you serve God fervently and faithfully, he will always impart to you what you need for your temporal life, and, what is infinitely more, call you to the everlasting happiness of heaven. Amen.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

They did eat, and were filled.—*Mark 8: 8.*

We find our Lord to-day in the desert on the other side of the Sea of Galilee on a mountain; a great multitude of people have been with him three days and do not grow tired of listening to the holy doctrines which he preaches to them. Here it is that he

performs a great miracle. He multiplies seven loaves of bread and a few little fishes by his omnipotence so that they suffice not only for four thousand men, but seven baskets were filled with the fragments. In this miracle the goodness of God towards men reveals itself, which David had already described in these words: "The eyes of all hope in thee, O Lord, and thou givest them meat in due season. Thou openest thy hand, and fillest with blessing every living creature."—*Ps. 144: 15, 16.*

I shall speak to you to-day of the goodness of God and explain to you—

- I. *Wherein it consists;*
- II. *To what it obliges us.*

PART I.

The goodness of God consists in this —

1. *That he desires the welfare of all human beings.* This is evident —

(a.) *From the fact that he is our Father.* Jesus Christ himself has many times assured us that God is our Father, and has taught us expressly to say: "Our Father, who art in heaven." God is not like many earthly fathers, who care little for their children's welfare and do not sympathise in their sorrows; he is the best of fathers. Now it follows from this that he desires our welfare.

(b.) *From all his works.* Why has he made heaven and earth? For his own use and benefit? Certainly not; he is in himself perfect happiness, and nothing created can add anything to it. The reason why he created heaven and earth and all that is in them, is because he is a most loving Father, and it is his pleasure and delight to shower benefits on his creatures and to make them happy. He was not content, so to speak, to be happy alone; his love urged him to create angels and men, that they might be sharers in his happiness. Thus all creatures proclaim the infinite goodness of God and are proofs of his infinite goodness.

(c.) *From the work of Redemption.* Why did God send his only-begotten Son into the world to redeem us from sin and eternal damnation? Had he his own advantage in view? If all men had perished in sin, would his happiness in the least have been diminished? Who could believe it? God is, and ever will be, the most perfectly happy being, no matter whether one man or all men enter into heaven. The work of Redemption has its cause in the love of God. Therefore Christ says: "God so loved the

world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." — *John* 3: 16.

(d.) *From many other facts.* Why does God keep the earth and all the other planets, in their own orbits? Why does he people the earth with so many millions of men? Why does he commission even his angels to guard and protect us during life? Why does he earnestly command parents to provide for the temporal and eternal welfare of their children? Why does he appoint authorities and oblige them to promote the welfare of their subjects? Why does he protect his Church against all her enemies, and preserve her to the end of the world? He does all this for no other reason than because he desires the welfare of man, and that all men should be saved. Thus, all that God has done from the beginning, that he now does, and will do to the end of time, is the strongest proof that he loves us, that he wills only our happiness, and consequently that he is infinitely good.

2. *That he continually bestows numberless benefits on us.* From him we have —

(a.) *All temporal goods,* such as life, health, food and raiment. What a great blessing is *life!* Each moment is, in a certain sense, as valuable as eternity, for it enables us to work out our salvation and merit the everlasting joys of heaven. What a precious benefit is *our body, its senses and members!* What a treasure is *health!* Antiochus would have given the Jews their liberty and all the treasures stolen from them; he would himself have become a Jew and as a missionary have made known to men the law of God, if he could have recovered his health. And how great is the loving-kindness of God in giving *food* to us and to all creatures! There are countless cities, towns, villages; people live everywhere, and their number amounts to about a thousand million. The number of animals in the air, in the water, upon the earth, and in the earth, is greater still; upon the whole earth there is no place, even as large as a hand, where there is no animal life; in fact a single drop of water frequently contains thousands of living animalcules, as you can see by means of a good microscope. Thus, God provides daily for all living creatures and gives them what they need for their nourishment. Even to the plants he imparts what they need for their preservation and growth. "Consider," says Christ himself, "the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon, in all his glory, was arrayed as one of these." — *Matt.* 6: 28, 29.

(b.) *All spiritual goods.* We have *reason*, in order that we may know God and that which is good; *understanding*, to distinguish the true from the false, to discover useful things, to learn arts and sciences and to ameliorate our condition; we have a *memory*, to remember the past, and what we have heard or experienced; a *will*, to shun evil and to good; and finally, a *conscience*, which in every case tells us what is right or otherwise, urges us to do good and to avoid evil. These spiritual goods are far more valuable than the temporal ones, for they elevate us above all the creatures of the earth and even make us like to God.

(c.) *An immortal soul.* God not only desired for us a happy earthly life, as he did for the animals, but he gave us a higher destiny—he desired to make us happy for ever. For this reason he gave us an immortal soul. What a precious good is our soul! Her value in a certain sense is infinite, because her destiny is infinite, that is, eternal. She is more valuable than the whole world with all its goods and treasures, wherefore Christ says: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or, what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" — *Matt.* 16: 26

(d.) *All graces and means of salvation.* We need a supernatural light in order to know what is true and good; and God enlightens us by his holy doctrine, and in various other ways. We need supernatural inspiration and strength to do good, and God assists us with his grace to enable us to do what is required for our salvation. We need different means of grace in order to be cleansed from our sins, to be made children of God and to be sanctified. For this end we have the holy sacraments by which we receive the forgiveness of sins, and sanctifying grace. We need a means by which we are made partakers of all benefits and graces for this life and the life to come. And this means, as easy as it is effectual, is prayer: "Ask and it shall be given you." — *Luke* 11: 9.

(e.) *Our Redeemer Jesus Christ.* A greater proof of his love God could not give us, than by sending us his only-begotten Son as a Redeemer; here he exhausted, as it were, the richness of his goodness. Hence the Apostle says: "He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things?" — *Rom.* 8: 32. If we consider what Christ has done and suffered for us in his earthly life, and what he still does, in order to apply to us the fruits of his redemption, we shall be able to form some faint idea of the greatness of the gift which God made us in his Son, and of his infinite goodness towards us men.

PART II.

To what does the goodness of God oblige us?

1. *To return thanks to him for his gifts.* Moses of old commanded the children of Israel to be thankful to God for benefits received, saying: "When thou hast eaten, and art full, bless the Lord thy God for the excellent land (bread) which he hath given thee."—*Deut.* 8: 10. The Apostle also inculcates gratitude when he says: "Give thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father."—*Ephes.* 5: 20. Christ complained that of the ten lepers whom he had healed only one returned and thanked him. "Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God but this stranger."—*Luke* 17: 17, 18. We need not wonder that he complained; even man feels offended when thanks are not returned to him for his gifts, and should God be indifferent when we do not give him thanks for his numerous benefits! Hence he bitterly complains of the ingratitude of the Jewish people: "Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children, and exalted them, but they have despised me."—*Is.* 1: 2.

There are many Christians who grievously sin against God by ingratitude. God does them so much good; he gives them health, prosperity, worldly substance; but it never enters into their mind to give him thanks. They rise without prayer, lie down without prayer, and eat their meals without prayer. Is not this base ingratitude? Much less are they thankful for the graces which God bestows upon them for their salvation, viz., the Catholic faith, Christian instruction, the holy sacraments; how many are there who even despise these graces and benefits and will not hear of them! Guard against such ingratitude lest God withdraw his graces from you and severely punish you here and hereafter.

2. *Always to make good use of the gifts and graces of God.* When we give something to a poor man we wish him to make good use of it. If he misuses it, we are angry with him and refuse to assist him again. The same may be said of God; he wishes us to appreciate his gifts and to make good use of them. If we do not do so we offend him and must expect punishment. God himself says: "If you walk in my precepts, and keep my commandments, I will give you rain in due seasons, and the ground shall bring forth its increase, and the trees shall be filled with fruit . . . you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land without fear . . . But if you will not hear me, nor do all my commandments, if you despise my laws . . . I will do these things to you, I will quickly visit you with poverty, and burning heat, which shall waste your eyes, and consume your lives. You shall sow your seed in vain,

which shall be devoured by your enemies . . . I will make to you the heaven above as iron, and the earth as brass. Your labor shall be spent in vain, the ground shall not bring forth her increase, nor the trees yield their fruit. If you walk contrary to me . . . I will bring seven times more plagues upon you for your sins."—*Lev.* 26: 3, *et seq.* Not only the history of the Jews and of all nations prove the truth of these divine words, but also the present time which is so prolific in accidents and calamities, in misery and wretchedness, because the majority of the people without hesitation transgress the law of God and abuse his benefits to gratify their passions.

But worse things are in store for those who shut their hearts to the graces which God offers them for their salvation, and who persevere in sin. The terrible threat of the Lord will be verified in them: "Because I called, and you refused, I stretched out my hand and there was none that regarded. You have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared."—*Prov.* 1: 24-26.

3. *To be benevolent towards our fellow-men.* God is our Father; he takes the greatest interest in our welfare. How full of sympathy and mercy was not the Heart of Jesus! He was so sorrowful on account of the coming destruction of Jerusalem that he wept over it, saying: "If thou hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes."—*Luke* 19: 42. We also see him weep at the grave of Lazarus.—*John* 11: 35.

You must be benevolent towards your fellow-men and imitate the first Christians, who all "had but one heart and one soul" (*Acts* 4: 32); who loved one another as brothers and sisters and shared joy and sadness with one another, so that the Gentiles, full of astonishment, said of them: "Behold, how they love one another." Could the Gentiles give this beautiful character to the Christians of our time? No, certainly not; on the contrary, they would be obliged to say: "Behold, how selfish and self-interested the Christians are, how every one thinks only of himself, without any thought of the welfare of others, how they envy one another!" What shall I say of such Christians? I must say that they are destitute of the principal mark of a true Christian, according to the words of Christ: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."—*John* 13: 35. Oh, that all would follow the precept of the Apostle! "Love one another with the charity of brotherhood . . . Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep."—*Rom.* 12: 10, 15.

4. *Lastly, to manifest the love of our neighbor in deed.* We must give a practical answer to the question, Who is my neighbor?

not only in word, but in deed. We must assist our fellow-men in their misery and distress, according to St. John who writes: "My little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth."—*I. John* 3: 18. God also manifests his goodness in deed, not only *wishing* us good, but *doing* good. He does not even exclude the wicked from his benefits, for he "maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust."—*Matt.* 5: 45. Blessed are those Christians who take God's goodness as their model and are charitable and merciful towards their fellow-men! The charities they give to the poor are all grains of seed, which bring forth abundant blessings for time and eternity. With justice therefore St. Chrysostom says: "Do not look upon alms as an expense, but as an income, not as loss, but as gain, for you receive more than you have given." The words of Christ on the judgment-day apply to the merciful: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

PERORATION.

You know now *wherein the goodness of God consists and to what it obliges you*. God is good; out of love he wills us all good and bestows upon us his countless benefits. Be thankful to him for his gifts and graces and employ them to his honor and your own salvation. Be charitable towards your fellow-men, wish them well, rejoice with them when they rejoice, and weep with them when they weep. Show your benevolent sentiments by works of mercy to the poor, console the afflicted, succor the indigent and the wretched, assist all who need your help, to the best of your ability. If you do this, you are good children of your heavenly Father; and he will look down upon you with joy and pleasure, and reward you in time and in eternity. Amen.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

HOLY WATER.

They that had eaten were about four thousand.—*Mark* 8: 9.

The miraculous event mentioned in this day's gospel shows how much the blessing of God avails. We find four thousand

men in the desert; they are all hungry, but have nothing to eat, for there are only seven loaves of bread and a few little fishes, which are scarcely sufficient food for seven, much less for four thousand men. But, behold, Christ blesses these loaves of bread and the few fishes, and multiplies them so that all these people are filled, and seven baskets of fragments remain. This is a blessing which deserves our attention. Our Blessed Lord has left this power of blessing in his Church. Whatever the Church blesses and dedicates is withdrawn from the injurious influences of the devil, and receives a special virtue and power to obtain for us various corporal and spiritual benefits. I shall speak to-day of a blessed thing, which is as well known as it is important, namely, Holy Water, and explain to you —

- I. *The form of blessing it;*
- II. *Its effects.*

PART I

The use of Holy Water has existed in the Church from the beginning, dating back to the Apostolic age. The Apostolic Constitutions contain a proper formula for the blessing of water; and several of the holy Fathers, such as Theodoret, Jerome, Epiphanius, speak of it as a thing well known. Hence the employment of Holy Water for religious purposes is a custom venerable on account of its antiquity.

1. We will describe the form for blessing water.

(a.) The priest who blesses the water is vested in an alb or surplice and a violet stole. This signifies that the blessing of water is a priestly act, for only the priesthood possesses the power of blessing and dedicating. The violet color of the stole indicates the purification and sanctification which is effected in the water by the benediction, for the Church uses the violet stole in all those functions by which persons and things are to be withdrawn from the influence of Satan, and restored from the state of defilement to that of sanctity.

(b.) The priest first blesses salt, unless there is some salt previously blessed on hand. The blessing of the salt consists of an exorcism and a prayer. The salt is exorcised that it may be made beneficial to the faithful, and may become healthful both to body and soul of all those who make use of it; and that in what place soever it may be sprinkled all illusions as well as the wickedness and crafty wiles of Satan may be banished. The prayer that follows the exorcism has the same significance.

(c.) The blessing of the water which now follows also contains an exorcism and a prayer. The water is exorcised that it may have power to overcome all the attacks of the enemy; that by the virtue of Jesus Christ it may be enabled to cast out Satan and put him to flight with all his apostate angels. The prayer includes the petition that God will grant corporal and spiritual protection to all those who make a pious use of it.

(d.) The priest mingles the salt with the water in the form of a cross, saying: "May this salt and water be mixed together in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Lastly, he prays and beseeches God to regard with a favorable countenance this creature of salt and water, to sanctify it with the dew of his fatherly goodness, that wheresoever it shall be sprinkled all annoyances of the unclean spirit may be prevented, and all fear of the venomous serpent may be banished, through the invocation of the holy name, and that the presence of the Holy Ghost may be everywhere with us who seek his mercy.

2. Let us now consider the significance of the blessing of water.

(a.) Why is blessed salt mingled with the water? This is done that it may impart to the water a spiritual virtue for the salutary use of men, as the bad and unwholesome water at Jericho was miraculously made good and healthy by the mingling of salt.—*IV. Kings. 2: 19-22.* Salt has two effects in particular; it preserves from putrefaction, and gives a flavor to food. In so far as it preserves from corruption it calls to our mind the duty of preserving ourselves from the foulness of sin, and of leading a blameless life; in as far as it gives a flavor to food it teaches us that in all our actions we must have a good intention; for as the best food is insipid when not seasoned with salt, so the best works have no value or merit before God when they are performed without a good intention.

(b.) When in the prayer at the blessing of water it is said: "O God, who for the benefit of mankind hast made use of the element of water in the greatest sacraments," we are reminded of the great miracles which God has wrought in and with water for the benefit of men. Think of the Red Sea, which was divided to open a passage for the Israelites; of the water of the river Jordan, in which Naaman, the Syrian, was cleansed from leprosy; of the water that was changed into wine at the marriage at Cana in Galilee; and of baptism, which is administered with water.

(c.) The blessing of the water has also a symbolical significance. The principal effect of water is *purification*, hence Holy Water

reminds us of the penance we should do, in order to cleanse our souls from every stain of sin. Water has the virtue of restoring beauty and lustre to things as soon as they are washed. Holy Water, then, represents to us the consoling truth that our soul by the spiritual water of penance is not only cleansed from the filth of sin, but is also restored to her former beauty, the Holy Ghost sanctifying and transforming her into the likeness of God.

(d.) When the salt and water are blessed, *they are mixed together.* This also has its significance. "The water," says Hugo of St. Victor, "signifies penance for sins committed; the salt, prudence for the future; and both united change the bitterness of conscience into sweetness." If, like David, St. Peter and St. Mary Magdalen and other great penitents, we do penance for our sins for the rest of our life, and if we walk prudently and circumspectly that we may no more offend God by fresh sins, we shall enjoy a great peace of soul, according to the words of Jesus: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."—*Matt. 5: 5.* The blessing of water is therefore very instructive, for it represents to us *several mysteries of our holy religion*, and is suggestive of caution, since it brings *very important duties* before us. I shall now speak of the effects of Holy Water.

PART II.

As may be seen from the exorcisms and prayers used in blessing the water, the effects of Holy Water are manifold.

1. Holy Water effects, as St. Thomas of Aquin says, the *remission of sins.* The words which the priest uses when he sprinkles Holy Water express this. "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow."—*Ps. 50: 9.* As often therefore as we sprinkle ourselves with Holy Water in a penitential spirit we obtain the forgiveness of one or more venial sins.

2. By Holy Water we obtain *the grace to excite a supernatural contrition for our sins and to pray with true devotion.* For this reason Holy Water vessels are placed at the entrances of churches; for this reason also the priest, before the beginning of High Mass, gives the "Asperges" and sprinkles the assembled congregation with Holy Water, saying at the same time appropriate prayers. The Holy Water, with which we sprinkle ourselves, or with which the priest sprinkles us, enables us to say devout and penitential prayers in church, and thereby to obtain many graces from God.

3. Holy Water is a *powerful means of defence against the evil spirit and his pernicious influences*. In the history of the Church and in the Lives of the Saints we have many examples showing that by the use of Holy Water evil spirits have been expelled, and persons freed from their hostile attacks.

4. Again, Holy Water is a *remedy against all temptations*, especially against those which proceed from the devil. Well-known is the saying: "He hates it as the devil hates Holy Water." St. Teresa says that nothing more effectually banishes the evil spirits than Holy Water. Hence there must be great virtue in this blessed water. If in any temptation you take Holy Water with devotion and confidence, and bless yourselves with the sign of the cross, you may confidently hope that God will give you a special grace to enable you to overcome the temptation and to keep your conscience undefiled.

5. Holy Water may also be used for *the cure of diseases and for delivery from many other evils*. In the year 855 swarms of grasshoppers devastated the whole of the Roman territory. The Pope (Stephen VI.) repaired to St. Peter's Church and prayed there with tears for the cessation of this plague. Rising up, he blessed water and ordered the sexton to distribute it among the faithful and to direct them to go through the fields and sprinkle their crops and vineyards with it in the name of the Lord. After this had been done the plague immediately ceased, not a single grasshopper could be found in all those places which had been sprinkled with Holy Water. So effectual is Holy Water for averting great evils and plagues, if it is used with devotion and confidence.

6. Lastly, Holy Water *affords consolation and help to the departed souls in Purgatory*. It has this effect in virtue of the intercession of the Church, for as often as she sprinkles the bodies of the dead or their graves with Holy Water, she prays to God that he would refresh their souls in the place of purification with the heavenly dew of graces and by the mitigation of pain. It is therefore well for you to imitate the practice of the Church, and to sprinkle the graves of the dead with Holy Water; for as rain revives and refreshes the flowers that are parched up by the heat of the sun, so, in virtue of your prayer and that of the Church, Holy Water refreshes the souls in Purgatory.

PERORATION.

As you perceive, Holy Water is not only something that reminds us of wholesome truths, but also an efficacious means of expelling and averting many evils and obtaining many graces

and blessings. Deem yourselves happy in possessing Holy Water, and make good use of it. There should be no Catholic house in which there is not Holy Water. Sprinkle yourselves with it often during the day, especially in the morning and in the evening, when you go out of the house, and when you come in. Do so, not thoughtlessly and from mere habit, but with devotion, with a contrite heart, and with confidence. Think of the precious blood which Jesus shed for us; be sorry for your sins, and ask God to cleanse you more and more from them, and to give you the grace of bringing forth worthy fruits of penance. Amen.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE SEVEN LOAVES OF BREAD SYMBOLIZE THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he broke, and gave to his disciples to set before them.—Mark 8: 6.

It was indeed a great miracle to feed four thousand men with seven loaves of bread and a few little fishes, so that they were filled, and seven baskets of fragments remained, but there is a still greater miracle which Christ has continued to perform with seven loaves of bread for over eighteen hundred years, and will perform to the end of time. With these loaves of bread he feeds, not only a few thousands, but many millions of people; he feeds them not only once, as the people in the desert, but as often as they desire it; he feeds them, not for the preservation of their corporal, but of their spiritual life, that they may become able and worthy to attain everlasting life in heaven. What seven loaves of bread are they? They are, as I shall explain to you, the seven sacraments instituted by Christ, which are symbolized by the seven loaves of bread —

- I. With regard to their number;
- II. With regard to their efficacy.

PART I.

1. Our Lord, before he performed the miracle of the multiplication of the bread, asked his disciples: *How many loaves have ye?*

Who said, Seven. They were perfectly unanimous in the answer to this question. All gave the number of the loaves as seven. If Christ had called them individually and asked one after the other what number of loaves they had, each would have said, Seven. This would have been the answer because there were neither more nor less than seven.

In a spiritual sense the Catholic Church also possesses the seven loaves, *i. e.*, the seven sacraments. Travel all over the world and ask Catholics of all countries, in cities, towns and villages, in palaces and in huts: How many sacraments have you? they will answer, seven; and you will not find a Catholic in the whole world who would give the number of the sacraments otherwise than as seven. The answer will be different if we ask the communities separated from the Catholic Church, *viz.*, the Protestants. Some of them will say that there are three sacraments: Baptism, Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, others, that there are two, Baptism and the Blessed Eucharist, and others, again, that there is but one; and others that there are none; that what is held as a sacrament is only an empty ceremony. We need not be astonished at the difference of the answers, since the reformers of the sixteenth century were not of one mind with regard to the number of the sacraments. Some Protestants are, for instance, content with civil marriage, and think it unnecessary to have the ceremony performed by their pastor. Some no longer go to church to receive what they call the sacrament, which, however, is no sacrament, as their clergy do not possess the power of consecrating. They do not have their children baptized; hence they grow up, live and die as heathens. Here we see the abomination of desolation in the holy place, sheer Paganism in the midst of Christianity, complete unbelief, and that too in our enlightened twentieth century! But to that must people come when they separate themselves from the Catholic Church, the pillar and ground of truth, and get more and more ensnared in the labyrinth of errors, finally becoming a prey to infidelity.

2. It was not accidental but by the special ordinance of God that there were precisely seven loaves. Christ could have multiplied one loaf just as well as seven; he is powerful enough to make bread out of stones, and even out of nothing, in order to feed the people; nevertheless he used seven loaves for this purpose, to teach us that men need seven spiritual loaves, that is, seven holy sacraments for the preservation of their supernatural life.

St. Thomas of Aquin says on this subject very appropriately: "All our necessities in the order of grace, as well as in the order of nature, are *seven*, and therefore Jesus Christ instituted seven

sacraments, no more and no less, because that number is required for the necessities of the whole Church and her individual members." Let us consider this utterance of the great doctor a little more closely.

(a) *Man must be born corporally*, otherwise he cannot exist; natural life is wanting to him. In like manner he must be *born spiritually*, for being infected from his mother's womb with original sin, he lacks the supernatural life, the life of grace, and he receives this by the *Sacrament of Baptism*. Baptism is as necessary for the supernatural life as birth is for the natural life.

(b.) After his birth man must *grow and become strong*, that he may fulfil his vocation on earth. In like manner the Christian, who is still weak after baptism, needs special means whereby his spiritual growth can be promoted, and he receives this by the *Sacrament of Confirmation*, which imparts to him the grace as a soldier of Christ to overcome all the enemies of salvation.

(c) Man for his earthly life needs *food*; for the preservation of his spiritual life he also needs nourishment. He receives this nourishment in the *Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar*, according to the words of Christ: "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever."—*John 6: 52*.

(d.) Man by nature *has a frail body, subject to many diseases; he needs medicine to recover health and to prevent death*. But man is far more subject to spiritual diseases, *i. e.*, sin than to bodily diseases; he therefore needs a spiritual medicine to heal his spiritual wounds and deliver him from eternal death; and this medicine is the holy *Sacrament of Penance*, which pardons sins with their eternal punishment and recovers sanctifying grace.

(e.) Man in the state of convalescence *remains weak and needs something strengthening*. In like manner, after being freed from his sins by the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, some weakness remain for the removal of which proper means must be very desirable to him, especially in circumstances where he needs extraordinary strength. This means is the *Sacrament of Extreme Unction*, which raises us up, consoles and strengthens us in the hour of death, so that we become capable of performing our last and most important business well, and of dying a happy death.

(f.) The human race upon earth must be *governed*, that it may live quietly and peaceably. It needs authorities. In like manner the Church must have authorities to lead Christians and to provide for their spiritual necessities. These are the bishops and

priests. They need for their high vocation special power and grace. They receive both by the *Sacrament of Holy Orders*.

(g.) The human family must be *propagated* that it may not die out. The married state is necessary for this; but, that married people may live piously in that holy state, and educate their children for heaven, they need a special grace, which is given them in the *Sacrament of Matrimony*.

Thus there must be seven sacraments, that provision may be made for all the necessities of the spiritual life. If only one were wanting, we should miss a step in the ladder on which we ascend to heaven, and without which we could attain it either not at all, or only with the greatest difficulty. If we have not baptism, we should be cut off from all hope of salvation, because without it no one can be saved. If we had not the Sacrament of Penance, we could not be saved if we committed a grievous sin after baptism, for penance is the only plank of safety that remains after having lost baptismal grace and innocence. If we had not the Sacrament of Confirmation, of the Altar, and of Extreme Unction, we could only with extreme difficulty be saved, because the most effectual means would be wanting to us. If we had not the Sacrament of Holy Orders, we should have no priest who would instruct us in the doctrines of religion and administer to us the holy sacraments; it would consequently be impossible for us to work out our salvation. Considering this truth, you must perceive what a blessing it is for you to be children of the Catholic Church. If you had been born in infidelity or error, you would have no sacrament, or only the Sacrament of Baptism; it would therefore be very difficult, or perhaps absolutely impossible for you to work out your salvation. But as Catholic Christians you have the seven sacraments instituted by Christ, by which ample provision is made for all your spiritual necessities, so that without much difficulty you can obtain your eternal salvation. What gratitude do you not owe God for these graces! how zealously should you avail yourselves of these means of salvation for your purification and sanctification!

PART II.

The seven loaves are also a symbol of the seven Sacraments with regard to their efficacy.

1. The seven loaves had their efficacy from the blessing of Christ. It was only after Jesus had taken them in his hands and blessed them that they obtained the miraculous power of satiating the great multitude of people. If the disciples of themselves had distributed these seven loaves among the people without the

intervention of Christ they would have effected nothing; they would not have been sufficient for seven persons, much less for four thousand.

It is so with the sacraments. They owe their effects of grace to our Lord Jesus Christ; when he instituted them he intended that they should not only indicate and symbolize these effects, but really produce them. When, for instance, the baptismal water is poured on the head of the person to be baptized, and the words of the form of baptism are pronounced according to the direction of the Church, it does not merely indicate that the person is interiorly cleansed and sanctified, but really effects at the same time the interior purification and sanctification, just as the eating of the seven loaves had the effect of filling the hungry people. In the Old Law also there were seven sacraments, but they were empty, powerless signs which indicated the grace, but could by no means produce it. The priest and Levite who saw the wounded man, and leaving him in his misery passed by, symbolized the Old Law, which saw the wounds of mankind, pointed them out, but could not heal them. Hence Eugene IV., in a decree to the Armenians, says: "There are seven sacraments in the New Law, which greatly differ from the sacraments of the Old Law; for the latter did not effect grace, but only symbolized the gift thereof through the passion of Christ; but our sacraments contain grace and impart it to those who worthily receive them." (See Council of Trent, Sess. 7, Can. 8.)

2. Jesus distributed seven loaves among the people through his disciples, as the gospel expressly says: *Taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he broke, and gave to his disciples to set before them, and they set them before the people.* Herein too, the seven loaves resemble the seven sacraments. Jesus committed the administration of the sacraments to his disciples, when he said to them: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—*Matt.* 28: 19. And again: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."—*John* 20: 22, 23. As we read in the Acts of the Apostles, the Apostles exercised this power with which they were invested; they baptized, they imposed hands or confirmed (*Acts* 8: 14-17); they ordained deacons, priests and bishops (*Ibid.* 6: 1-6), and administered all the sacraments; wherefore St. Paul also says: "Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."—*I. Cor.* 4: 1. As Christ instituted the sacraments for the purification and sanctification of men at all times, the power of administering them did not cease with the death of the Apostles, but descended to their successors, the bishops and priests of the Catho-

lic Church. Here again you see how blessed you are in that you have bishops and priests, who, like the Apostles, have the power of administering to you the sacraments, and, through them, to impart to you all the graces which are necessary for your eternal salvation.

3. The Apostles, through whom Christ distributed the loaves, without doubt were not all equally good, were not all of the same degree of virtue and perfection. There was even one among them who was exceedingly wicked—Judas, the traitor. This disparity of the Apostles had not the least influence upon the distribution of the bread; the loaves, blessed by Christ, had the same power and effect, no matter by which of the Apostles they were distributed, and even those which Judas set before them were just as good and satiating as those which the other Apostles distributed. It is so with the holy sacraments. It matters not, so far as the validity of the sacraments is concerned, whether the priest who administers them is pious or not; if he who receives them is himself well prepared he receives the graces of the sacraments. The reason is because the sacraments have their power and efficacy, not from him who administers them, but from the merits of Jesus Christ, who instituted them. A precious, delicious wine is delicious whether you drink it out of a golden or an earthen vessel; in like manner you receive, if you are otherwise worthy, the graces of the sacraments, be the minister of them good or bad. St. Augustine says: "The sacraments are not on that account truer and holier because they are administered by a more pious man, for they are in themselves truly and holy on account of the true and holy God, whose property they are." Although, as far as concerns the grace of the sacraments, it is indifferent whether you receive them from a worthy or an unworthy priest, yet you should, if you have the choice, receive them from a worthy one. Particularly, choose enlightened, pious and zealous priests for your confessors, because these commonly fulfil their threefold office of physician, teacher and judge better than those who possess neither enlightened zeal nor piety.

4. The seven loaves which Christ blessed, were good and wholesome food, but they required, as all common bread does, a strong, healthy stomach. If these loaves had been eaten by people with bad digestions they would not have nourished them. Sick persons might have lost their lives.

The same is true of the sacraments. They effectually nourish the soul, for they cleanse and sanctify her, transform her into an image of God, and render her strong for the practice of all that is good and pleasing to God and conducive to eternal salvation. But in order to produce those salutary effects, they must

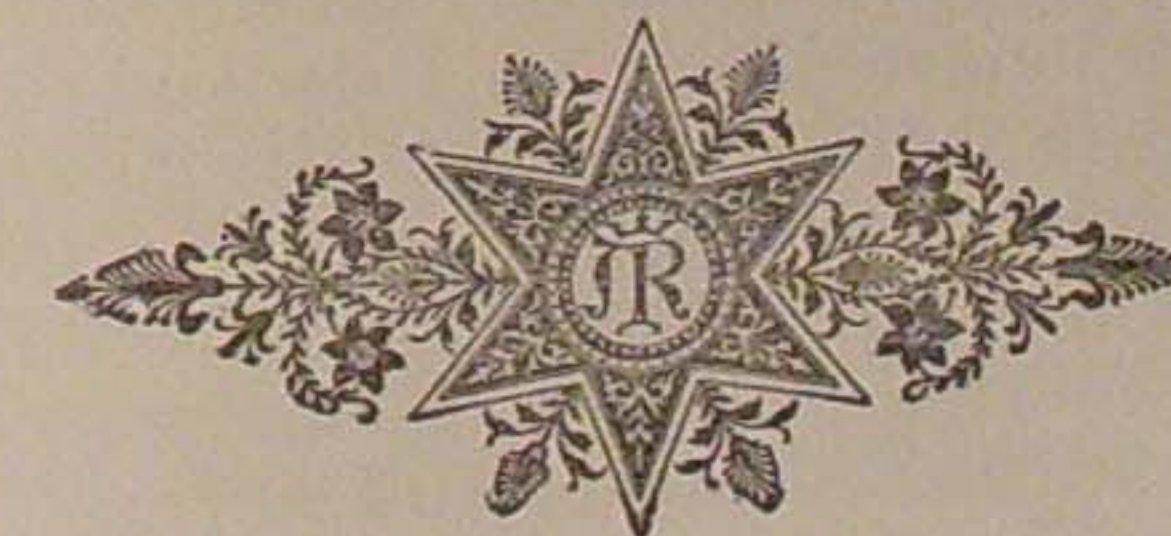
be received worthily. Therefore in the Sequence *Lauda Sion* we read this of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament:

Both the wicked and the good
Eat of this celestial food;
But with ends how opposite!
Here 'tis life, and there 'tis death.

What is said here of the Blessed Sacrament, must be said of all the other Sacraments; they bring grace and life, death and perdition, according as they are received worthily or unworthily. Who then would not earnestly endeavor to receive the sacraments worthily!

PERORATION.

The seven loaves which Christ miraculously multiplied are a symbol of the seven sacraments. There were seven loaves, no more and no less, and these he blessed and caused to be set before the people. And in like manner there are seven sacraments, no more and no less, which Christ instituted and whose administration he entrusted to his Apostles and their successors. The seven sacraments have their power and efficacy from the merits of Christ, and it matters not whether the dispensers of them are worthy or unworthy; they invariably effect grace and salvation, provided they are received with a well prepared heart. Christ showed the people in the desert a great grace by feeding them so miraculously with seven loaves, but he has shown us a greater grace by instituting the seven sacraments and providing for all our spiritual necessities. Let us be thankful to him for this inestimable grace, and endeavor always to receive them worthily, considering well the truth that all who receive them unworthily will be damned; but those who receive them worthily will be saved. Amen.



SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

INTEMPERANCE.

They did eat, and were filled.—Matt. 8: 8.

The gospel of this day speaks of one of the greatest banquets that was ever given; four thousand men sat down to it, women and children not included. But great as this banquet was, and numerous as the guests were, yet there was not the slightest fault against temperance. I conclude this from the simplicity of the food; for the assembled multitude received no dainties, but very common food—bread and fish. With such common food people usually do not transgress the limits of temperance; they cease eating within the limits of moderation. Of intemperance in drinking we need not speak at all, because neither wine nor any beverage was set before them; it was a very dry meal. Would to God that we all would take a pattern from these people and study temperance in eating and drinking! But this not being the case, and so many sins being committed against the virtue of temperance, I shall speak to-day of *intemperance*, and explain to you—

- I. *How we may sin by intemperance;*
- II. *What sins proceed from it;*
- III. *What we must do to guard against it.*

PART I.

We sin by intemperance *when we have an inordinate desire for food and drink*. The mere desire for food and drink is no sin, for it is natural for man to desire to eat or drink when he is hungry or thirsty. And even the pleasure which we experience when we eat or drink is not in itself sinful, because it, too, is natural; but if we eat or drink merely for the gratification of the palate, we should act like irrational creatures and sin.

1. *By eating or drinking before the time, i. e., at the wrong time.* The right time for eating and drinking is when one is hungry or thirsty. But because the majority of people are not so situated that they can eat and drink when they are hungry or

thirsty, certain meal times are established, breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper. He who eats at those times, eats and drinks at the right time and does not sin. But he who eats outside those meal times without sufficient reason, eats and drinks at the wrong time, and does wrong. Of this class are those who outside meal times eat merely for the gratification of their palate. They resemble a mill that never stops; their life is a continual round of eating. Others are always thirsty; they drink at all times; and as habitual drinkers do not get enough in the daytime, they take half the night for it. Every one must perceive that such continual eating or drinking is indecorous and sinful, especially for a Christian, who is to imitate the mortifications of his Lord and Master in all things.

2. *By using or desiring more costly food or drink than suits our state of life.* Many think everything of good eating and drinking; the days on which dainties are served up are among the happiest days of their lives and they will walk a long way to get, as they say, a drop of something to drink. In many a house from which necessity and need peer out through all the windows, the inmates must have grand dinners on Sundays and holidays, and many a man who is deeply in debt expends much money on liquor. Oh, that they would take to heart the words of the Apostle: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but justice and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."—*Rom. 14: 17.*

3. *By eating or drinking too much.* If a healthy man eats so much that it acts like an emetic, that he no longer feels well after eating, that he gets sick and does not feel disposed for prayer or any other mental occupation, he evidently eats too much, and sins against the virtue of temperance. And he who drinks so much liquor of any kind that he can no longer walk straight and does not know what he is saying or doing, evidently drinks too much, and sins against temperance. When the sack is full, it is tied up; in like manner a person ought to cease eating or drinking when he has reached the bounds of moderation.

4. *By eating or drinking too greedily.* Some think of nothing but of eating and drinking; they have a great desire for it. If the dinner be a little late, they become angry and make a great fuss and perhaps swear. When they see the food brought to the table, they are so greedy for it, that they hardly have time to say grace as it ought to be said. At table they display extraordinary activity; they eat hastily and are done before others have fairly begun. When they are thirsty, they take draughts like camels and do not cease drinking until they have almost lost their breath. Such Christians ought to study the words which God said to Cain:

"The lust there shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it."—*Gen.* 4: 7.

PART II.

Intemperance is the fruitful source of many sins, the first of which is —

1. *The neglect of religious duties.* This is particularly true of drunkards. They omit private and family devotions; they neglect to hear mass on Sundays and holidays. They are deadly enemies of the word of God; they scarcely ever listen to a sermon, but ridicule it and pass sneering remarks about those who listen to it. They neglect to go to confession during the year; and they let many an Easter pass without complying with their Easter duty. Is not the Apostle right when he says that their god is their belly?

2. *The neglect of the duties of one's state of life.* In their business or trade they are careless and negligent; the time which others employ in work is spent by them in saloons; and what they earn by labor is expended on drink. Many men by drinking squander all their worldly substance and reduce their wives and children to poverty and beggary. Woe to such drunken husbands and fathers! The words of the Apostle apply to them: "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—*I. Tim.* 5: 8. Many a laboring man spends so much on drink that he has not wherewithal to buy clothes to cover his nakedness. Thus is verified what the wise man says: "A workman that is a drunkard shall not be rich, and he that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little."—*Ecclus.* 19: 1.

3. *Sins of the tongue.* At dinners, etc., men by degrees become less reserved in their conversation and speak out what comes into their mind, especially when they are overpowered with drink. They reveal secrets; they spread the faults of their fellow-men; calumniate temporal and spiritual authorities; scoff at the doctrines and ceremonies of religion; utter impure words and say and do many foolish and sinful things.

4. *Quarrels, strife, contention and murder.* It often happens that drunken men quarrel and abuse one another, sometimes coming to blows, which often result in murder. We have an example in Alexander the Great, who, heated by wine, transfixed with a lance his friend Klitus, who had saved his life, and stretched him dead on the floor. And how do drunkards act

when they come home at night? Do they not, like wild beasts, turn everything upside down and rouse the whole neighborhood? Are there not husbands and fathers who, in their drunken madness, and without any provocation, curse and swear, and bellow like infuriated bulls? Who beats his innocent wife and children? The drunkard. Must not the wives and children of such brutal husbands and fathers, often in the middle of the night, fly from the house when such wretches come home, to avoid being injured or killed?

5. *Impurity.* If Christians who live soberly have trouble enough to preserve chastity, how can we believe that men, who by intemperance in eating or drinking continually administer new fuel to concupiscence, can preserve chastity undefiled? Therefore St. Paul admonishes us, saying: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury."—*Ephes.* 5: 18. And St. Jerome says: "Impurity is inseparable from intemperance." Lot, who had escaped the destruction of Sodom, fell into the most abominable crime of impurity through drunkenness.

6. *Final impenitence.* There is no vice which, when once grown into a habit, is so difficult to eradicate as drunkenness. The drunkard promises at every confession never to get drunk again but he never keeps his promise. You may see people give up enmities, cursing, blasphemy, and sinful company; you may see them tearing themselves away from sin and sinful habits and trying to lead a good life; but how seldom do you see the habitual drunkard reform; he does not change his way of living; he is not converted. One time of grace passes after another, but he still drinks; he becomes old and his hair grey, but he still drinks, and will drink till an unhappy death puts a stop to his miserable career. Oh, how true is the adage: "An impure man is sometimes converted, a drunkard never." Do you know a single drunkard who has been really converted? A renowned pastor of souls (Coutourier) says, "I have now exercised my office as a priest for forty years, and I have converted but one drunkard—and his conversion lasted only six months."

PART III.

In order to guard ourselves against intemperance, we must—

1. *Make salutary meditations and reflections.* Let us consider—

(a) *How deeply intemperance degrades man.* It reduces him to the level of beasts. What is the occupation of animals but eating and drinking? The words of the Psalmist apply to the intem-

perate: "Man when he was in honor did not understand, he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them."—*Ps.* 48: 13. The drunkard degrades himself even below the level of the beast, for the dumb animal never drinks more than its thirst requires, and though you may force it in every way it will not take a drop more than is required to quench its thirst. You may take a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink. In order to make a drunkard comprehend how abominable drunkenness is, you need not tell him that the saints never got drunk; no, you need only say: Look at the animals in the stable, they drink no more than they need, and you, a rational creature, a Christian, yield yourself to drunkenness; are you not worse than your ox or horse?

(b.) *How dangerous it is to both body and soul.* All physicians and experience teach that excess in eating or drinking weakens the stomach, deteriorates the gastric juices, unsteadies the nerves, fills the blood with poisons, whence originate various kinds of ills, which render life miserable and often draw death after them. "By surfeiting many have perished, but he that is temperate shall prolong his life."—*Ecclus.* 37: 34. Although a robust constitution may withstand these evils for some time, they will not be averted for good; sooner or later they manifest themselves and lead to a premature and miserable end. And how will drunkards fare hereafter? Job tells us: "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell."—*Job* 21: 13. St. Paul, who counts drunkenness among the greatest crimes, tells us that drunkards shall not possess the kingdom of God.—*I. Cor.* 6: 9, 10. Example: Dives, who burns in hell and in vain asks for a drop of water to cool his tongue.—*Luke* 16: 19-31. Who would not shun a vice which makes man miserable for time and eternity?

(c.) *How much the example of Jesus and of the Saints is opposed to intemperance.* "Consider," says St. Louis of Granada, "the rare and extraordinary abstemiousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who treated his sacred body with the utmost severity, and fasted a long time, not only in the desert, but also on many other occasions, for our salvation, and, to give us an example, endured great hunger. Now, since he fasted for you, how much more must you be prepared to suffer something for yourselves? How can you claim the name of a disciple of Christ when you spend your whole life in intemperance, whilst your Saviour endured hunger and thirst?" Again he says: "Remember the abstemiousness of all the holy Fathers in the desert, who, with Jesus Christ, crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences, by the grace of God sustained life for many years on roots and water, and

showed a wonderful abstemiousness. But if these saints imitated Christ in this way in order to merit heaven, how can you imagine that by intemperance and luxury you will obtain the kingdom of heaven?"

2. *Perform appropriate exercises.* Thus —

(a.) We should sometimes voluntarily deprive ourselves of a certain amount of food and drink, impose upon ourselves a voluntary fast, and undergo other mortifications, in order to obtain control over our appetite. Charles XII., king of Sweden, in his youth often got drunk with wine. Once in his drunkenness he was guilty of very harsh and offensive words towards his mother. When one of his friends remonstrated with him about his unbecoming conduct, he was deeply moved and said: "Bring me a bottle of the best wine, and a cup." It was done. He then went with the bottle and the cup to his mother, and said: "Mother, I offended and grieved you yesterday." Then filling the cup to the brim, he drank it in the presence of his frightened mother, and said: "That is my last cup of wine; no more wine for me for the rest of my life." And he kept his word.

(b.) *We should avoid the company of intemperate persons.* He who does not do this will relapse into the vice of drunkenness again and again, though he may frequently resolve not to get drunk any more. If anywhere, it is here that the proverb is true: "Opportunity makes the thief."

(c.) We should pray fervently, receive the sacraments frequently and at every relapse impose a voluntary penance upon ourselves.

PERORATION.

I conclude my discourse with the admonition of Christ: "Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that the day (of death) come upon you suddenly."—*Luke* 21: 34. Yes, beware of all intemperance in eating and drinking, for this vice disgraces man and a Christian, leads to many sins, and finally to temporal and eternal perdition. Imitate Jesus and the saints; be sober and temperate, and satisfied with plain food. Why should you pamper your body, which will soon go down into the grave and become the food of worms? Your food should be to do the will of God, that the words of Jesus may be verified in you: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall be filled."—*Matt.* 5: 6. Amen.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

PRUDENT ECONOMY.

*They took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets.—
Mark 8: 8.*

We read in the gospel of this day that after the miraculous feeding of four thousand men they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets. We might ask, why did Christ order the fragments that were left to be taken up and saved? Was not this taking up and saving the remnants of the loaves and fishes a useless work, since by repeating the miracle he could easily provide for the hunger of his disciples and of the people? He could do this, of course, but he wished to teach us that it would be presumption to expect a miracle of him when it is not necessary. We must be economical with the gifts of God, and let nothing be lost that may be useful for ourselves or others, for prudent economy establishes contentment and comfort; but where there is waste and mismanagement there will be misery and need. Economy, however, must not degenerate into niggardliness; virtue is the golden mean between these two extremes.

I shall show you to-day —

- I. *Who economizes too little, and*
- II. *Who too much.*

PART I.

1. *Those who learn nothing in their youth and do not provide for their future subsistence economize too little.* He who wishes to secure himself against want, and to live comfortably in the world, must learn something in his youth and accustom himself to an industrious, active life. It is God's will that we gain our livelihood by labor and industry. What God said to Adam refers to every man: "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread." — *Gen. 3: 19.* If a person is born into poverty it is evident that he must in his youth learn a trade, business or art, otherwise he will become a useless and unprofitable member of human society and a burden to others; or he will steal or cheat, and finally end his life in prison or on the gallows. But also those who are born

of wealthy parents ought to learn how to gain a living, otherwise they expose themselves to the danger of being reduced to poverty and need. I once knew a man whose parents left him a nice property and a very lucrative business, besides twelve thousand dollars in cash. His mother used to say: "Our son need not work, he has means enough to sit down and enjoy himself." What a delusion! In a few years he had wasted everything owing to idleness, gambling and drinking; the property was sold, and he died a beggar. The fountain most abounding in water will be pumped dry if you continually draw from it; so by degrees great wealth dwindles to nothing if some of it be continually taken away, especially when it falls into the hands of spendthrifts. It often happens that very wealthy men are reduced to poverty by accidents, revolutions, etc. Thus in the last century, in France, owing to the revolution, thousands of the nobility lost all their worldly substance, and by a speedy flight just managed to save their lives and that is all. How necessary then it is that even wealthy persons and those in a high position should learn something in their youth, and that all parents should make their children learn some trade or business and lead an active life.

2. *Parents who do not think of leaving, if possible, some worldly substance to their children and of providing for them.* There are parents who are bad managers, and who squander their property by their extravagance and wastefulness. The father is often seen in saloons; the mother is extravagant in dress and fond of pleasure; both spend their money foolishly; in a short time their home and business are ruined. Children who have such parents are to be pitied. They are neglected, and in their early youth are obliged to get their own living as best they can; they grow up in ignorance and vice. Such parents commit a double sin; they sin against God, who imposes upon every man the duty of labor, and forbids prodigality; they sin against their children for whose welfare they ought to provide, but whom they deliver to misery and wretchedness. Parents ought to reflect seriously on this, and the thought of their children should urge them to attend assiduously to their work or business and to avoid all unnecessary expenses.

3. *Those who do not think of the future and lay nothing by for old age, sickness, etc.* Even animals teach us to provide for the future. How industrious are the bees and the ants in summer, storing up the necessary food for their support during the winter. We read in the Book of Proverbs: "Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn wisdom; which, although she hath no guide, nor master, nor captain, provideth her meat for herself in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest."—

Prov. 6: 6-8. How much more should man think of the future and make provision for it, not knowing what circumstances may occur that may prevent his earning anything. We are not always strong and healthy and fit to work; we may be afflicted by sickness for weeks and months, when we can earn nothing, but must draw on our resources. How ill should we then fare if during the time of health we had not been active and saving, and laid by some money for the rainy day! There are also times when the necessities of life rise in price, when business and work cease, when one can find no employment though willing to work; into what straits can people come who live thoughtlessly and save nothing. When our divine Saviour says: "Be not solicitous, saying: what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed" (*Matt.* 6: 31), he means that we should not be inordinately solicitous; he does not, however, forbid prudent care and anxiety for the goods of this world. We are not forbidden to desire them, for Jesus taught us even to pray for them: "Give us this day our daily bread." We must think of the future and provide for it, that we may not suffer want and become a burden to others. Save in time, and you will have something in the hour of need to fall back upon.

4. *Those who squander everything they earn, or make bad use of it.* There is no doubt that even those who have low wages can save something every year; and these savings for ten or twenty years, put out to interest, will amount to a considerable sum wherewith they could help themselves in their old age, or in sickness, or when unable to work. But many seem to have a hole in their pockets when they have a few dollars; they cannot rest till all is gone. They spend it in luxuries and pleasures. Some girls squander everything on dress: there is no longer any difference between the lady of the house and the servant girl. If laborers, whilst they are strong and healthy and have good wages, live in poverty, how will it be when they grow old and unfit for labor? One need not be a prophet to be able to foretell that great misery and distress await them, and that they will bitterly regret the thoughtlessness of their youth. Ask yourselves if you are not of the number of those who economize too little, and if this should be the case correct your fault and practice economy, as Christians should.

PART II.

1. To be too saving is as bad as to be too wasteful. Those are too saving who exert themselves immoderately and pay no attention to their health. Even the strongest and healthiest man is not of

iron; if he works too hard and strains himself too much and does not take the necessary rest he weakens his body, contracts various infirmities and sicknesses, and shortens his life. It is not right for any man to over-exert himself for the purpose of amassing riches; he who does so commits a double fault, for he has an immoderate desire for the goods of this world, and jeopardizes what is of greater value, his life and health, for their sake. Those parents who out of an inordinate solicitude for their children wish to leave them a large property, taking no rest day or night and exerting themselves so immoderately that they become frail, weak, and broken down before their time, or sink into a premature grave, ought to consider this. Such parents injure their children more than they benefit them, for they render themselves unable to bring them up and assist them during the most important period of life. Christian parents, be saving and economical, in order to provide for your children as far as possible; but beware of overdoing it; work moderately that you may preserve your health and the strength of your body so long as it is God's will.

2. *Those parents who from a motive of avarice refuse their children that which they need for their necessities.* It is the duty of parents to give their children necessary food, to clothe them according to their state of life, to procure for them a good home, and to take care of their health. Now there are parents who love money more than they love their children, and who refuse them the necessities of life. They do not give them necessary food, but allow them to suffer hunger, and thereby give them occasion to beg or steal. They do not give them sufficient clothes, but allow them to go about half naked, or in rags. No better than the clothes is the dwelling, especially the bed. If one or the other of the children becomes ill, they procure no medicine because it costs money. Such parents are evidently too economical, they sin against the duties of their state of life, and are even below irrational beasts, which, as we know, nurse their offspring most affectionately and avert every danger from them to the best of their ability.

3. *Those who from avarice grudge themselves everything, who in sickness use no medicine, and who refuse to take proper care of themselves.* The body needs food, care, and rest, otherwise it will become debilitated and death will ensue. Christian self-love requires that we let the body have that which it needs for its welfare; we also owe it to God, the Master of life and death, to preserve our life as long as it is his will. He who declines to take proper care of himself, sins against himself and against God, his Creator and Master. The same is to be said of those who in

sickness from a motive of avarice will not send for a doctor or take medicine. Health is more valuable than money and property, and it is certainly detestable avarice on the part of anyone, owing to an inordinate love of money, to prefer to be ill and die, rather than call in a doctor.

4. *Those who give nothing to the poor, lest their hoarded wealth should be decreased.* These deprive themselves of the blessing of God and have reason to fear that their prosperity will not be of long duration, and that they themselves will fall into misery and distress. God expressly assures us of this: "He that giveth to the poor shall not want; he that despiseth his entreaty shall suffer indigence."—*Prov.* 28: 27. It is an imprudent economy when through fear of losing by our liberality, or of even becoming poor, we are hard hearted towards the poor and needy, since it is just this hard-heartedness that draws poverty and distress after it. How much better off are those Christians who are merciful, kind hearted and charitable to the poor! God is with them; everything succeeds with them; their prosperity is increased and confirmed and passes down to their children and children's children. Many passages of the Bible bear testimony to this truth: "He that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay him."—*Prov.* 19: 17. "He that is inclined to mercy shall be blessed, for of his bread he hath given to the poor."—*Prov.* 22: 9. "These were men of mercy, whose godly deeds have not failed. Good things continue with their seed."—*Ecclus.* 44: 10, 11. History and experience corroborate these divine utterances. Tobias practised charity with praiseworthy zeal; he assisted the poor, consoled the afflicted, and buried the dead. How liberally did God reward him for these works of mercy! He even sent him an angel who bestowed the greatest benefits upon him and his son; he gave him great riches and allowed him to see his children's children to the fifth generation.—*Tob.* 14: 15. In every community there are families and individuals who are very generous and charitable, who do much good to the poor and contribute towards all charitable purposes. How is it with their worldly substance? Do they become any poorer by giving alms? By no means; on the contrary, they become richer, their business flourishes, their undertakings prosper, and though perhaps they may not have great riches, yet they always have enough and more than enough for themselves and their children. Do not be afraid that you will become poor by giving alms or charitable contributions. What you give to the poor you lend to the Lord, and the Lord is a liberal rewarder.

5. *Finally those who, in order to increase their property, lay hands on the goods of others.* These act both sinfully and foolishly;

sinfully, because they violate the seventh commandment of God; *foolishly*, for whilst they wish to benefit themselves by their injustices they injure themselves. "Treasures of wickedness shall profit nothing."—*Prov.* 10: 2. "Woe to him that gathereth together an evil covetousness to his house, that his nest may be on high, and thinketh he may be delivered out of the hand of evil. Thou hast devised confusion to thy house."—*Hab.* 2: 9, 10. Examples: King Achab by violence appropriated to himself the vineyard of Naboth, because he could not get it otherwise. But this vineyard cost him dear. The punishments which Elias had announced to him by the command of God came upon him and upon his house. He was severely wounded in battle, died in the evening, and the dogs licked up his blood. His impious wife Jezebel, by whose advice he had committed the robbery, was cast out of a window of the palace, and dashed to pieces, whilst all the descendants of Achab, seventy-two in number, were beheaded in one day. So terribly did God avenge the robbery committed by Achab. Henry VIII., king of England, who had torn himself and his kingdom from the Catholic Church, confiscated all ecclesiastical property, robbed churches and monasteries of their treasures and income, appropriated to himself all the tithes, and by this means obtained an income, the tenth part of which would have been more than sufficient for all the expenses of the court. But unjust goods do not profit their possessor; after three or four years all his riches had vanished, and Henry became poorer than any of his predecessors. In order to provide for the pressing need, he imposed the heaviest burdens upon the people, coined base money and heaped one injustice upon the other. But all in vain; he was, and remained poor. When he was on his death-bed he summoned some of his friends to his side and exclaimed, full of bitterness and despair: "Friends, we have lost everything."

PERORATION.

I have now explained to you who economizes too little and who too much. As in everything else, so also in economy, both extremes are wrong. *In medio stat virtus.* If you are extravagant, you act against the will of God, who makes economy a duty, and you sin also against Christian self-love and the love of our neighbor, because you prepare for yourself misery and need and become a burden to your fellow-men. If you are too saving, it is a sign that you inordinately love money and property, and you may easily become hard-hearted towards the poor and needy, or appropriate to yourselves what does not belong to you. But ultimately the extreme one way or the other draws the same consequences after

it: poverty, misery, and perdition. In your economy adopt the middle course; keep what you honestly acquire by your labor and industry, and avoid unnecessary expenses; at the same time be charitable towards the poor and do not make yourselves guilty of the least injustice in your dealings with your fellow-men. In the solicitude for temporal goods do not neglect the business of your salvation, but so pass through this world that you may not lose that which is eternal. Amen.



SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE. *Rom. 6: 19-23.* Brethren: I speak a human thing, because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity; so now yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification. For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from justice. What fruit therefore had you then in those things, of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting. For the wages of sin is death: but the grace of God, life everlasting, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

SIN AND JUSTICE.

St. Paul begins the lesson of this day, which is an extract from his epistle to the Romans, in these words: *Brethren, I speak a human thing, because of the infirmity of your flesh.* What does the Apostle mean to say in these words? That it is no exaggerated demand when he requires Christians to rid themselves now and for evermore of the servitude of sin and serve God, because the service of God does not impose upon them a heavier burden than the service of sin. St. Paul encourages the Christians at Rome, who had only lately abandoned Paganism with its excesses and vices to stand firm in the service of God and not to be deterred from it by imaginary difficulties. We will consider a little more closely the points touched upon by St. Paul, viz.—

- I. *The service of justice and sin;*
- II. *The fruits of sin;*
- III. *The fruits of justice.*

PART I.

As you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification.

1. The Gentiles, especially in the time of Christ and his Apostles, were given to all vices. The Apostle describes them as men filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, covetousness, wickedness, full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malignity, and says of them that they were detractors hateful to God, contumelious, proud, haughty, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, foolish, dissolute, without affection, without fidelity, without mercy.—*Rom. 1: 24-31*. The Christians at Rome had once been such pagans, more or less sunk in vice. Having become Christians they indeed renounced the pagan abominations, and resolved to serve God in justice and holiness. But as from youth they had been accustomed to the vicious life of the Gentiles, and were only recently converted, it can easily be imagined that it gave them much trouble to eradicate their bad habits and vices and to lead a holy Christian life. Therefore the Apostle tells them in earnest but affectionate words, that now, having become Christians, they should yield no longer to the service of sin, but serve God in justice. Consider, he means to say, that as pagans you have defiled yourselves with many sins and vices, but you must now, being Christians, lead a blameless, pure and holy life, serving God at least with as much devotion and fervor as you formerly served your idols, endeavoring to repair your former viciousness by virtue and piety.

This admonition concerns us too. We have not grown up in Paganism, but in Christianity, we have obliged ourselves in the first hours of our life, when we received holy baptism, to renounce for ever the devil and all his works and pomps, and to dedicate ourselves to the service of God; but I do not hesitate to say there are very few among us who have been faithful to their duty; the majority will be obliged to confess, that from their childhood to this hour they have sinned often and grievously in thought, word and deed and by the omission of many good works. Probably there are many among us who have lived not only for weeks and months but for years in sin and vice. Yes, and many of us even now live in a state of sin and, if God should call us into eternity this moment, we should be condemned to hell. How necessary then is it for all who formerly were sinners, or are still sinners, to make a firm resolution from this very hour to serve God, and to bring forth fruits worthy of penance.

2. The Apostle speaks of a yielding to serve iniquity *unto iniquity*, and of a yielding to serve justice *unto sanctification*. What does yielding to serve iniquity unto iniquity mean? It means that the state of man becomes worse the oftener he sins and the longer he remains in the state of sin. The reason is because he becomes more thoughtless; the fear of God decreases in him more and more, sin is implanted more firmly in his heart and becomes a habit which is seldom or never forsaken, and, finally, because by the accumulation of sins and the delay of repentance he becomes more guilty before God and sinks deeper into vice, so that his conversion can hardly be hoped for. Should not a sinner seriously consider this, at once do penance and serve God with fidelity?

We may say the same of virtue; it is confirmed and brought to greater perfection by diligent and constant practice. If, for instance, we diligently practice the virtues of humility, meekness, purity, obedience, charity, we shall obtain greater facility in so doing, and they will to a certain extent become habits with us, so that we can more easily overcome the obstacles and difficulties connected with them. Therefore Christ says that his yoke is sweet and his burden light.—*Matt. 11: 30*. The more zealously we do good, the more perfect we shall become, and the greater will be our reward in heaven, for he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings.—*II. Cor. 9: 6*.

PART II.

St. Paul also speaks of the fruits of sin, when he writes: *For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from justice. What fruit therefore had you then in those things, of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death.* According to these words of the Apostle, the service of sin —

1. *Frees from justice.* What does this mean? Man who yields himself to sin disregards God and his holy law, he renounces God and his justice, and becomes the slave of sin and of the devil. Blessed are those Christians who remain united with God and walk in the way of justice. God loves them as his children and is pleased with them; they possess sanctifying grace, that treasure which is more valuable than the world with all its treasures, because it is the price of the precious blood of Christ; all their good works and even the indifferent actions which they perform with a good intention are meritorious before God and eternal beatitude awaits them in heaven. Those who renounce God and his justice and serve sin forfeit all these graces. They deprive themselves of the love and friendship of God, lose sanctifying grace, and with it all merits previously acquired by

good works, according to the prophet: "If the just man turn himself away from his justice, and do iniquity . . . all his justices which he had done shall not be remembered."—*Ezech.* 18; 24. Neither are they able to do anything meritorious for eternal life. They will perish eternally, unless they do penance and return to God.

2. *Brings shame and disgrace.*

(a.) Every man, even the most abandoned, feels that sin is something abominable; therefore, he takes good care not to do evil in public: he does it in secret and keeps it out of the sight of men as much as possible.

Sin is something so base that many Christians cannot even resolve sincerely to accuse themselves of it in the confessional. They know that no forgiveness of sins is possible if they conceal a mortal sin; they know that they commit a sacrilege and render themselves guilty of eternal damnation; they know that God according to his infinite mercy will forgive them all sins, even the greatest, if they confess them sincerely and with a contrite heart, and yet they remain silent and dumb—such a base thing is sin in their eyes. And have you never heard or read that people whose secret crimes and misdemeanors were brought to light, took away their own life in order, as they thought, to escape shame before the world?

(b.) Sin is also something disgraceful in the eyes of human society. When a wicked deed becomes known, even abandoned people confess that such an act is disgraceful. Thus, the thief, the cheat, the liar and slanderer, the drunkard, the fornicator and adulterer are everywhere in disgrace. And because worldlings and sinners know that sin is disgraceful they try to cover it, as it were, with a mantle, that its heinousness may not be seen. Thus they call pride self-respect; avarice, prudent economy; impurity, a necessity of human nature; injustices and frauds in business, good management. In such a way they seek to avert shame and disgrace from themselves and to appear as upright men before the world.

(c.) Zealous penitents particularly recognize and feel that sin is something disgraceful. They never think of their sins but with detestation and sorrow: they are ashamed of them, and say within themselves: Ah, my God, what a wicked sinner I was; how disgraceful was my conduct? Thinking of their vices and criminal excesses, they would like to hide themselves, so deep is the sense of shame with which they are penetrated. This sense of shame, however, is something very useful, for it makes

us humble, preserves us from relapse into sin, animates our zeal for penance, and urges us to repair to the best of our ability the evil we have done by exercises of penance. Therefore it is right and profitable to keep the detestation of our sins always alive.

3. *It draws death after it*, that is, eternal death. It is an article of the faith that all who die in mortal sin will be damned for ever, and that one mortal sin is enough to damn us for ever. Christ expressly assures us that the bad shall go into everlasting punishment, and in the Apocalypse we read: "the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone."—21: 8. The greatest punishment that the temporal authority can inflict upon man is death. This punishment infuses fear even into the greatest malefactors and deters him from crimes. But what is temporal death compared with eternal? This robs man not only of the temporal but also of the eternal life, the everlasting felicity of heaven; it prepares for him not only a transient terror and pain, but an eternal torment and despair in the abyss of hell. Oh, who could seriously think of this death and consent to any temptation to sin? Who could think of death and live in sin? "Let us therefore frequently descend in thought into hell whilst we live, that we may not be compelled to descend into it when we die."—*St. Bernard.*

PART III.

Finally, the Apostle comes to speak of *the fruits of justice*, when he says: *But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting.*

1. St. Paul calls *holiness* the first fruits of justice. This holiness consists—

(a.) *In freeing ourselves more and more from small faults.* The lowest degree of holiness excludes all mortal sins; it is consistent with venial sins. But he that makes progress in sanctity abstains as much as possible also from venial sins, and never commits one with premeditation. Herein all the saints go before us with their example. St. Anselm and St. Thomas of Aquin repeatedly stated that they would rather burn in hell innocently, than, defiled with a venial sin, triumph in heaven.

(b.) *In mortifying ourselves interiorly and exteriorly, not only in unlawful, but sometimes also in lawful things, for without such*

mortifications holiness can neither be preserved nor increased. Thus we read in the following of Christ: "You will advance in good in proportion as you do violence to yourself," that is, as you mortify yourself. St. Francis Borgia was accustomed to measure holiness by the degree of mortification. When he heard anyone praised for his piety, he used to say: "If he is a mortified man, he is a saint; if he is a very mortified man, he is a great saint."

(c.) *In availing ourselves of the opportunities of doing good.* Negligence in doing good is a sign that true holiness is either wanting altogether, or that it is very imperfect and in danger of being lost altogether. Truly pious, zealous Christians hunger and thirst after justice and embrace every opportunity that offers itself for exercises of virtue and good works. They love to pray; they go to mass as often as they can; they frequently receive the sacraments, and do their fellow-men acts of kindness with a cheerful heart.

(d.) *In doing all good works as perfectly as possible.* Zealous Christians who aspire to holiness do not pray in a lukewarm and distracted manner, but they endeavor to say their prayers with recollection and devotion; they listen to the word of God with attention, and resolve to regulate their life accordingly; they always prepare themselves well for the reception of the sacraments, sanctify all their actions by a good intention, and do everything quietly, patiently and for the love of God.

(e.) *Finally in dying to the world and living to God.* Pious Christians live indeed in the world, but they do not love the world; they are solicitous for earthly things, but set not their hearts and affections on them; they use the world as if they used it not; they seek the things that are above and say with the Apostle (*Gal. 6: 14*): "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." Behold herein consists holiness; this is the fruit of justice. What a precious fruit! How ardently should we wish for it, especially since it already renders us happy here below, for "much peace have they that love thy law."—*Ps. 118: 165.*

2. The last fruit of justice is *everlasting life*. God does not make us serve him for nothing. He rewards with everlasting life all who walk in the way of justice. Thus Christ himself declares: "He that doth the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt. 7: 21.* And again: "If any man minister to me, let him follow me, and where I am,

there also shall my minister be."—*John 12: 26.* In what does this everlasting life consist, which awaits the just? It consists—

(a.) *In freedom from all sufferings.* "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.*

(b.) *In an inexpressible joy and felicity.* This joy, this felicity is so great that nothing on earth can be compared with it: nay, in comparison with it all earthly joys dwindle to nothing. David says of the blessed: "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure."—*Ps. 35: 9.* And the Apostle says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him."—*I. Cor. 2: 9.* "The happiness of heaven," says St. Augustine, "can be acquired, but not estimated; it can be merited, but not described."

(c.) *In everlasting joy and happiness.* Thus we read in the Book of Wisdom (*5: 16*): "The just shall live for ever more, and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them with the Most High." And Christ himself says of the elect, that they shall enter "into life everlasting."—*Matt. 25: 46.* Thousands and millions of years may pass away, the happiness which the saints enjoy in heaven will never have an end; like the saints themselves it will be eternal. Oh, what joy, what delight for the saints in heaven when they can say to themselves: We are now in everlasting security; the happiness which we enjoy will last for ever and ever.

PERORATION.

At the conclusion of the lesson for this day the Apostle repeats what will be the fruit of sin and of justice, in these words: *The wages of sin is death, but the grace of God (that is, justice) life everlasting, in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Here the Apostle briefly utters the truth that sin leads to death, *i. e.*, to damnation, and justice is rewarded with everlasting happiness through the merits of Jesus Christ. Oh, let us frequently make this important truth the subject of our meditation, and serve the Lord with unchangeable fidelity in justice and holiness, that we may be found worthy to be admitted into everlasting life. Amen.



SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL, *Matt. 8: 15-21*. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not every one that saith to me: Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

WHAT WE MUST AVOID, AND WHAT WE MUST DO, IN ORDER TO ENTER INTO HEAVEN.

The gospel which I have just read for you is a small portion of Christ's sermon upon the Mount. Toward the end of this sermon our Lord admonishes his hearers to enter in at the narrow gate, "for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it."—*Matt. 7: 13, 14*. By these words we are taught that the way to heaven is a laborious one, and that the number of those who perish is far greater than that of those who are saved. Immediately after this our Lord gives the reason why so few are saved and so many damned, and shows at the same time what we must avoid, and what we must do, in order to enter into heaven. The gospel of this day treats—

- I. Of false prophets;
- II. Of good and bad trees;
- III. Of the kingdom of heaven.

PART I

Our Lord warns us, first, against false prophets, saying: *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

By false prophets we understand first of all *the Scribes and Pharisees*. Christ had good reason for warning his hearers against them, for they were very dangerous men. They appeared to be most zealous servants of God; it was understood that their endeavor was to lead men into the way of truth and virtue, but in reality they were hypocrites and seducers of the people; for they placed their own ordinances above the law of God, and interpreted it to suit their own passions; they were men full of pride and self-conceit, and fostered a deadly hatred against Christ, who unveiled their hypocrisy.

2. There have always been false prophets, and there are such now. These false prophets are—

(a.) *Within us*, namely, evil concupiscence, inordinate inclinations, passions, and self-love, which spare no pains to delude and seduce us.

(b.) *Without us*, men void of conscience and lost to virtue, who seek to spread unbelief, errors, sins and vices by word and example, as well as by their writings.

3. The false prophets come to us *in the clothing of sheep*. If they showed themselves in their true form, that is, if they would reveal their unbelief, their bad maxims, their base desires, passions and malice, and say what they really desire, they would gain no adherents, they would be rejected with contempt. Knowing this, they clothe themselves in the garb of sheep; they disguise themselves and seek to appear as if they were very honest and pious, and had the interests of all men at heart.

(a.) In the same way the *inordinate inclinations, passions and self-love*. They seem to be very harmless, but are full of cunning, endeavoring to represent as good and lawful that which is evil. Wherever it is possible they either totally set aside the commandments of God and of the Church, or they explain away all that restrains sensuality; they seek to weaken zeal for virtue, calling it exaggeration; they persuade us to leave off the exercises of mortification and self-denial, because it is eccentric, injures the health and embitters all the joys of life. Thus pretending to offer us sweet honey, they give us deadly poison. How much must we beware of these false prophets that they may not ensnare us in their meshes!

(b.) *Satan*. He feigned benevolence to Eve and showed her in a tempting way, that the eating of the forbidden fruit would draw no evil consequences after it; on the contrary, it would be to her greatest advantage and make Adam and herself equal to

God. Thus also he comes to us, in the form of an angel of light, in order to win our confidence; he makes us believe that this or that sin does not signify much; that we can go to confession again; that God is infinitely merciful and always ready to forgive; that there is still time to do penance; that even the thief on the cross obtained pardon. Oh, how often does this crafty enemy succeed in deluding men and plunging them into perdition!

(c.) *Bad men.* Among these are reckoned—

First, false teachers who seek to spread unbelief and irreligion. They pretend that they are friends of religion, that they fight only against superstition and abuses, and that they will help all to the truth, enlighten and make them happy.

Secondly, authors and sellers of bad books and writings. Now-a-days many books, pamphlets and especially newspapers are calculated to destroy faith and good morals in town and in country, and to spread irreligion and immorality. In these publications the mysteries and doctrines of religion are misrepresented, and the clergy and the institutions of the Church are calumniated, in order to render them ridiculous and odious. Unbelief, hatred of religion, and vices of all kinds, have their origin in bad books and papers. Woe to those who spread and recommend these fabrications of hell; they are responsible to God for the mischief which they cause!

Thirdly, seducers. Such are men who in every possible way flatter females, make them presents, promise to marry them and make a good living for them, merely with a view to carry out their vile purpose. Such are females who paint and adorn themselves in order to attract men, who do them favors on every occasion, who even pretend to modesty, bashfulness and innocence, in order the more easily to win the hearts of the thoughtless and unwary.

These in particular are the false prophets against whom Christ warns us when he says: *Beware of false prophets.* Yes, let us beware of these false prophets within us, and without us, lest they seduce us and render us miserable for time and eternity.

4. Christ says of the false prophets that *inwardly they are ravening wolves.* They are indeed. As wolves take advantage of a moment when shepherds and flocks are not watching, or when a sheep strays from the flock, so false prophets attack persons when they are off their guard and do not avoid occasions of sin. Again, as wolves are not deterred from their ravages by

unsuccessful attempts, in fact become more ferocious the more resistance they meet with, so false prophets do not desist from their wicked projects when they see them frustrated; on the contrary, they redouble their efforts, and furiously attack those who prevent them from carrying out their plans. Hence infidels and enemies of our holy religion turn their hatred particularly against the clergy, because they are well aware that these obstruct their efforts to overthrow Christianity. Lastly, as the wolves seize their victims by the throat so that they cannot cry for help, so the false prophets endeavor to induce those who fall into their hands to keep silence, carefully to conceal their aberrations from their parents and superiors, to say nothing about the sins of others, and even in the confessional to shut their mouth and there to find death and perdition, where they should receive life and salvation.

PART II.

Our Lord now speaks of good and evil trees, saying: *Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit.*

1. I need hardly remark that by good and evil trees we understand good and evil people; and by good and evil fruits, good and evil works. It is proper to a good tree to bring forth good fruit; but to an evil tree to bring forth evil fruit. So it is with man; his works are good or evil according as he himself is either good or evil. *A good man has good thoughts;* he takes pleasure in that which is good; hates and detests that which is evil; he is occupied interiorly with God and divine things; he humbles himself before God and thanks him for all graces and benefits; he recommends himself to his protection; repents of his faults, and when a bad thought or sinful desire arises in his heart he fights against it and suppresses it; he also means well by his fellow-men and loves and esteems all. *A good man speaks well;* he guards himself against all the sins of the tongue, against all vulgar and impure expressions, against slander, detraction, calumny, lies, cursing, swearing and blaspheming; what he says is necessary and useful, for the honor of God and the good of men. *A good man does well;* he guards against every false step, practises the Christian virtues and conscientiously fulfils the duties of his religion and state of life. These are the threefold fruits, the fruits of the *heart*, of the *mouth*, and of the *hand*, which a good man brings forth.

2. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit.* From this some heretics conclude that

the just man can do only what is good, and the sinner only what is bad; or, that whatever the just man does, is good, and whatever the sinner does, is bad. But this is entirely erroneous. Not all that the just man does is necessarily good, and not all that the sinner does is necessarily bad. A just man can get inordinately angry, or tell a lie, and that is bad; he may even commit mortal sins and cease to be just. On the contrary, a sinner can pray, give alms or bear crosses and afflictions patiently, and that is good. The words of Christ: *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit*, are thus to be understood: as long as a man is good he brings forth good works, but he may become bad, and then that which does is no longer good and meritorious; a bad man, so long as he is bad and has not the grace of God, can do no good, meritorious works, but he may become good, as St. Paul did, and, like him and all true penitents, may perform good and meritorious works. How badly off then are Christians who live in a state of sin! The good they do is not bad and punishable, but it is without any merit for heaven. If you should be so unfortunate as to fall into a grievous sin, make at once a good confession that by obtaining sanctifying grace you may become capable of acquiring merits for heaven by means of good works.

3. Lastly, our Lord says of the evil trees: *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire*. According to this divine utterance, not only those who do evil, but those also who do no good, shall be rejected. The Christian justice required for salvation comprises two things, the avoidance of evil and the practice of good. It would be a great error to believe that only those are excluded from heaven who do evil, *e. g.*, fornicators, adulterers, thieves, robbers, drunkards; no, heaven is likewise not for those who neglect the good which they could and should do. We are taught this in the parable of the unprofitable servant who did not waste his talent but only buried it (*Matt. 25: 30*); in the parable of the foolish virgins who were excluded from the nuptial feast only because they had no oil in their lamps (because they were destitute of good works); **and especially by the sentence of the divine Judge on the last day according to which those shall be condemned to everlasting fire who during their lifetime neglected the works of mercy.**—*Matt. 25: 41*, etc. Heaven is the reward of good works; he who neglects them does not obtain it. If, then, O Christian, you are lukewarm in doing good, if you will not hear of prayer, of the word of God, of the reception of the holy sacraments and of spiritual reading; if you do not perform the works of mercy and fulfil the duties of your state of life, you have reason to fear that you will share the fate of the trees that bring forth no good fruit; they

are cut down and cast into the fire. Therefore "labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election."—*II. Pet. 1: 10*.

PART II.

Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. In these words Christ plainly teaches that only a living faith, not a dead one, will save man.

1. The words: *Lord, Lord*, apply—

(a.) To those who believe all that the Catholic Church teaches, but do not live according to the rule of faith. The words of St. James refer to them: "What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath no works? Shall faith be able to save him?"—*St. James 2: 14*. If a Catholic does not live according to his faith, instead of saving him it will be the cause of his condemnation.

(b.) To those who know how to talk much and beautifully on religion and virtue, but trouble themselves little about the service of God and a truly Christian life, who profess one thing and practice another, for the Apostle says: "If I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."—*I. Cor. 3: 2*.

(c.) To those who perform various exercises of devotion, belong to many societies and confraternities, frequently go to confession and communion; who exert themselves in order to be present at every devotion that is going on in the church, who load themselves with scapulars, rosaries and indulgences, but do not labor to put off the old man, to extirpate their passions and to fulfil their duties. All these religious exercises are useful and even necessary, but of themselves alone are not sufficient for salvation. You must do the one and not neglect the other.

(d.) To those who frequently make good resolutions, and never carry them out, but always relapse into their former sins; who promise everything, and keep nothing. They who do this tell a lie in the face of God and mock him. How could he be pleased with them? St. Augustine says: "He is a scoffer and not a penitent who does again that of which he has repented."

(e.) Finally, to those who have zeal for good only at certain times, and then yield themselves again to spiritual sloth. Let them remember the words of Christ: "No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."—*Luke 9: 62.*

2. *Only he will be saved who does the will of God.* What is necessary for that? It is necessary—

(a.) That we keep the *commandments of God and of his Church*, for they contain the clearly expressed will of God: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."—*Matt. 19: 17.* "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."—*Matt. 18: 17.*

(b.) That we listen to the voice of conscience, for through the conscience God speaks to us and reveals his holy will. "In every word of thine regard thy soul in faith, for this is the keeping of the commandments."—*Ecclus. 32: 27.*

(c.) That we obey our superiors, especially our spiritual superiors and pastors of souls. To them refer the words of Christ: "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me."—*Luke 10: 16.*

(d.) That we conscientiously fulfil the duties of our state of life. "Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called."—*I. Cor. 7: 20.* He who neglects the duties of his state of life cannot be saved, though he may otherwise lead a pious life. Example: Heli.

PERORATION.

Examine yourselves closely and earnestly and see whether you have never played the part of a false prophet; whether you have given scandal to others and induced them to sin; whether heretofore you were evil or good trees, walking in the way of virtue or vice; lastly, whether and how you have done the will of God. If in this self-examination you find yourselves more or less guilty, humble yourselves before God, ask his pardon, and resolve from henceforth to amend your life and to repair by true penance all the injury you have caused by sin. Dedicate to God the remainder of your life, serve him with fervor and fidelity, and he will give you the crown of life. Amen.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

WE MUST AND CAN KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS.

Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. 7: 21.

The first requisite for salvation is faith; for "without faith," says the Apostle, "it is impossible to please God."—*Heb. 11: 6.* And Christ emphatically declares: "He that believeth not, shall be condemned."—*Mark 16: 16.* It is contradicting the Apostle and Christ himself to say that it matters not what a man believes, and that if he only acts rightly he can be saved. It is also certain that one cannot be saved by faith alone. Christ teaches this at the end of the gospel of this day, in these words: *Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Here Christ proclaims the truth that we must do the will of God, or, what amounts to the same, that *we must keep the commandments*, in order to be saved.

This shall be the subject of my discourse to-day. I will show you that it is not impossible to keep the commandments of God:

- I. *We MUST keep the commandments of God;*
- II. *We CAN keep the commandments of God.*

PART I.

I. *We must keep the commandments of God.*

(a.) Christ declares that we must. A young man one day came to him and said: Good master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting? And Jesus answered: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Here and in many other passages he expressly declares that in order to be saved we must keep the commandments.

(b.) The *Apostles* teach the same. Thus St. James says: "What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works. Shall faith be able to save him? As the body with-

out the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."—
2: 14, 26.

Protestants, in order to defend their doctrine that faith alone saves, appeal to St. Paul, who writes: "We account a man to be justified by faith without the works of the law."—*Rom.* 3: 28. But St. Paul does not speak here of the works that follow faith and proceed from it, but only of such as precede it, that is, such as are done by the law of nature, or that of Moses, antecedent to faith in Christ; he speaks of the Jews and Gentiles who had not as yet the Christian faith. If the Jews and Gentiles did not submit themselves to the faith of Jesus Christ, their works could avail them nothing, because faith is the first requisite for salvation. That this Apostle recognizes the observance of the commandments as necessary to salvation is evident from the fact that in all his epistles he insists on a holy life, and absolutely declares that "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor liars with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of God."—*I. Cor.* 6: 9, 10.

(c.) So do the Fathers. St. Augustine says: "Faith linked with love (observance of the commandments) is the faith of Christians; faith without love is the faith of the devil." St. Gregory the Great says: "It is true faith when that which is professed with words is not contradicted in works." St. Bernard says: "The separation of love is the death of faith; if you believe in Christ, do the works of Christ, that your faith may live."

2. *We must keep all the commandments.*

(a.) Moses required the people of Israel to keep all the commandments: "What I command thee, that only do thou to the Lord, neither add anything nor diminish."—*Deut.* 12: 32. Jesus Christ also imposes upon us the obligation of keeping the commandments in these words: Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them to *observe all things* whatsoever I have commanded you.—*Matt.* 28: 19. St. James writes: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all. For he that said: Thou shalt not commit adultery, said also, thou shalt not kill. Now, if thou do not commit adultery, but shalt kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (2: 10, 11); that is, he becomes a transgressor of the law in such a manner that the observance of all the other points will not avail him to salvation; for he despises the lawgiver, and breaks through the great and general commandment of charity even by one mortal sin. For all the precepts are to be considered as one entire law, and, as it were, a chain of precepts, by breaking one link of which the whole chain, or the integrity of the

law, consisting of a collection of precepts, is broken. A sinner therefore by a grievous offense against any one precept incurs eternal punishment; yet the punishments of hell will be greater for those who have been greater sinners, just as there will be a greater reward for those in heaven who have lived with greater sanctity and perfection.

(b.) Those Christians deceive themselves egregiously who imagine that God will be lenient with them because they do not break all the commandments, but only one or the other. Look down in spirit into hell, and tell me who are burning there. Perhaps such as have violated all the commandments? No; of these there are but few; most of them are damned because they have transgressed only this or that commandment. Why is Cain damned? Because he violated the fifth commandment. Why is Absalom damned? Because he broke the fourth commandment. Why are the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha damned? Because they transgressed the sixth commandment. Let each one examine himself and ask himself the question: How is it with me? Do I keep all the commandments? Do I transgress none, at least in an important matter?

3. *We must keep every commandment to its full extent.* Each commandment includes various things which we must do or avoid. Thus the first commandment of God, "Thou shalt believe in one God," commands us not only to believe in one God, but also to pay him homage interiorly and exteriorly; interiorly, by believing in him, hoping in him and loving him, by adoring him, thanking him for his benefits, being zealous for his honor, by obeying him, and by resignation to his holy will; exteriorly, by manifesting outwardly our interior homage, *e. g.*, by diligent participation in public worship; by modest behavior in church. The Scribes and Pharisees erred in observing only the letter of the law, without penetrating into its spirit, and therefore believed they were keeping the law perfectly because they did what the letter prescribed. They held that the fifth commandment forbids only wilful murder, but not contumelies, hatred and anger.

Many Christians, like the Scribes and Pharisees, do not observe the commandments of God entirely, but only partially. Many do not know what each commandment comprises, and therefore commit many sins through ignorance. It is the duty of these to procure for themselves a better insight into religion. They must hear sermons and read books on religion, especially the Catechism. If they do not do so they sin as often as they violate a commandment from ignorance, because their ignorance is preventable and therefore culpable. There are others who do not wholly keep some commandments, not so much from ignorance

as from malice. They view as obligatory only what suits them, but what is contrary to their passions, or not according to their wishes, they reject or explain away so that they may not be bound by something repugnant to them. Do you think that God will accommodate himself to our notions? Shall he abolish his commandments in regard to those things which are opposed to human passions? Let no one be deceived; what God has commanded remains in force whether it pleases man or not, and he that transgresses a commandment in one point will not escape punishment. When a commandment is to be explained, let not your passions speak, but your conscience and reveal your doubts to your pastor, in or out of the confessional; he will give you the necessary information.

PART II.

It is an article of the faith that of ourselves, with our own strength, without the help of the divine grace, we can do nothing towards our salvation. "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."—*II. Cor.* 3; 5. Christ says: "Without me (without my grace) you can do nothing."—*John* 15: 5. Depending on our own strength alone, we cannot keep the commandments. But assisted by grace, which God refuses to none, we can keep them.

1. *The Sacred Scripture* convinces us of this truth of the faith. "The commandment that I command thee this day, is not above thee, nor far off from thee."—*Deut.* 30: 11. Christ says: "My yoke is sweet, and my burden light."—*Matt.* 11: 30. And St. John writes; "This is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not heavy."—*I. John* 5: 3. These words of Christ and of his beloved disciple would have no meaning if it were impossible to keep the commandments of God.

Protestants appeal to some passages of the Sacred Scripture to prove that it is impossible to keep the commandments. "Why tempt you God, to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"—*Acts* 15: 10. Peter in this passage does not speak of the ten commandments, but only of the Jewish ceremonial law, which contained such a multitude of ordinances that with the greatest conscientiousness they could not be fulfilled, and these he declared were abrogated and not obligatory on Christians. "For I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good. For to will is present with me, but to accomplish that which is good, I find not. For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do."—*Rom.* 7: 18, 19. As remarked above, of ourselves, as of ourselves, we are not able

to keep the law; but God assists us with his grace, especially if we ask him, and the grace of God gives us strength to overcome concupiscence and to keep the law. Therefore the Apostle, after speaking of the power of concupiscence, says that we are delivered from this power by the grace of God.—*Ibid.* 25.

2. *The Holy Fathers.* St. Basil says: "It betrays malice to say that it is impossible to keep the commandments of God." St. Chrysostom: "By no means accuse the Lord; he commands no impossibility. Many do keep the commandments." St. Augustine enlarges on this subject. He does not deny, indeed, that the observance of the commandments has its difficulties, but he refers us to prayer, by which we obtain the grace that will enable us to do all things which God has commanded. "God," he says, "commands no impossibility when he commands anything; he exhorts you to do what you are able, and to ask for that which you are not able; whereupon he helps you, in order that you may become able."

3. *The lives of the Saints.* The Sacred Scriptures mention many who kept the law. Thus they testify of *Noe*, that he was a just and perfect man and walked with God (*Gen.* 6: 9); of *Job*, that he feared God and avoided evil (*Job* 1: 1); of *Josue* that he left not one thing undone of all the commandments of God (*Jos.* 11: 15); of *Samuel*, that he was faithful in his words, because he saw the God of light (*Ecclus.* 46: 18); of *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, that they were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord.—*Luke* 1: 6. And how many saints does the Catholic Church number who kept all the commandments of God with the most scrupulous fidelity, and led a life so morally pure that they seemed to be more like angels than men! I will mention only a St. Bernard, a St. Aloysius, a St. Teresa, a St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, of whom we know that during their whole life they hardly committed any venial, much less mortal, sins. These and all other saints prove that we can keep the law of God if we will. They had the same nature that we have, they had the same temptations, and perhaps far greater ones than we have, and most of them did not receive greater graces than we. If they could serve God and keep his law, why cannot we?

4. *Finally, reason.* A sin, as we know, is a *voluntary* transgression of the divine law. If it were not possible to keep the law of God, *neither could we sin*, because we should transgress the law, not voluntarily, but from necessity. Or we could say that God is the author of sin, because he gave commandments which with the best will cannot we kept. Who would dare to utter such a blasphemy?

(*b.*) If it were not possible to keep the law of God, *he would have no right to condemn any one.* Suppose a king gave his subjects a law compelling them to fly, under the penalty of death. Would not that king be the greatest tyrant if he punished his subjects with death because they did not fly? Certainly; for his subjects could not obey that law. What should we say of God if, on account of the transgression of commandments, the observance of which would be impossible, he should punish with eternal damnation! In that supposition, where would be his goodness and justice?

(*c.*) As history and experience prove, *men can do what God commands,* for we find numberless Christians who have followed the evangelical counsels, and have done many things which they were not obliged to do under pain of sin. They watched whole nights in prayer, lived for years on bread and water, practised many other austere mortifications, distributed their whole substance to the poor, nursed the sick, and labored indefatigably for the conversion of souls, and attained such perfection in the Christian virtues as to be the admiration of the world. Now if people can do more than is commanded, would it not be madness to assert that they cannot do what is commanded? Cannot he who is wealthy enough to pay a thousand dollars pay a hundred?

PERORATION.

We can keep the law of God, if we only have an earnest will to do so, and we must keep it because God commands it, and because our salvation depends on it. God does not lay too heavy a load upon us. With the assistance of his grace we can do what he requires, and that too without much difficulty. Resolve, then, to walk in the way of the commandments with persevering zeal. Let not your courage sink when you are obliged to fight hard and to overcome many difficulties. The life of man is a warfare. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."—*I. Cor.* 10: 13. Keep therefore, and do the things which the Lord God hath commanded you; go neither to the right hand, nor to the left, that you may live, and that it may be well with you; that your days may be long here (*Deut.* 5: 32, 33), and that hereafter you may enter into the joy, of the Lord. Amen.



SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

FEASTS OF THE B. VIRGIN, VIZ., OUR LADY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS;
THE VISITATION, AND OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL.

Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit.—Matt. 7: 17.

All the saints resemble such good trees; their humility, meekness, patience, purity, love of God and charity towards men, in short, all the virtues, which they practised with such praiseworthy fervor were the good fruits which they brought forth. But the Queen of all saints is Mary, the Blessed Virgin. She had never contaminated her soul with the least stain: being without spot or wrinkle, she practised all virtues and attained in each of them the highest and most eminent degree of perfection, and the world has never seen a being who served God with such fidelity; wherefore with justice we salute her in the Litany of Loretto as the Mirror of Justice. We will turn our eyes to Mary to-day, and consider at greater length the feasts which are celebrated in the first part of the Pentecost cycle.

These feasts are:

- I. *Our Lady, Help of Christians;*
- II. *The Visitation;*
- III. *Our Lady of Mount Carmel.*

PART I.

Our Lady, Help of Christians.

1. *Origin of the feast.* After the glorious victory which the Christians, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, had gained over the Turks at Lepanto in 1571, Pope Pius V. ordained that the Queen of Heaven should be invoked in the Litany of Loretto as *Help of Christians.* Pope Pius VII. was deprived of his see and held a captive in Savona for over five years, but on the 24th day of May, 1814, obtained his liberty, contrary to all expectation, and returned to Rome amidst the universal exultation of the people. A second time, in consequence of a sedition, he was again obliged to flee from Rome and to repair to Genoa. This storm also subsided and Pius again took possession of his see in Rome. In thanksgiving for the graces which he and all

Christendom had received through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, the Pope ordained that annually, on the 24th day of May, the day of his return to Rome, a feast should be celebrated by the name of *Our Lady, Help of Christians*. This feast has ever since been celebrated on May 24th throughout the whole Christian world.

2. We have every reason to celebrate this feast, for Mary is in truth the *Help of Christians*. We enjoy her help—

(a.) *In corporal necessities.* A proof of this solacing truth we have in the gospel. Mary had scarcely noticed at the marriage feast that the wine was failing when she induced her Son to work his first miracle. St. Bernard remarks: "If Mary was so compassionate towards those by whom she was invited, that they might not be put to shame, how much more sympathy will she have with us when we devoutly invoke her in our necessities? If Mary does so much unasked, what will she not do when asked?"

(b.) *In spiritual necessities.* First of all, she obtains for sinners the grace of conversion. A Theophilus, a Mary of Egypt, and numberless other sinners, have experienced that Mary is a mother of mercy and a refuge of sinners, for they have been rescued through her from perdition and saved.

She assists us *in temptations*. What power Mary possesses over Satan the first lines of the Sacred Scriptures prove, for there God says: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head."—*Gen. 3: 15*. If we invoke Mary in any temptation whatever she will preserve us from sin.

She strengthens us *in good*. We cannot prepare for her a greater joy than when we ask her to obtain of Jesus the grace to do good. The holy Fathers compare her to the sun. For, as the sun spreads light and warmth everywhere and causes everything to grow and ripen, so Mary obtains for us grace upon grace, that we may increase in good and persevere to the end.

She *protects us*, finally, in the *hour of death*, defends us against the attacks of Satan, and obtains for us a happy death. A very holy person relates that while assisting a dying man one day he heard him say these words: "Oh, how glad I now am that I served Mary so faithfully during life. Death has no terrors for me; I do not fear it, because the Queen of Heaven helps and assists me."

Put great confidence in Mary, invoke her aid and protection in all corporal and spiritual necessities and walk in the fear of God; then you will experience in life and death that she is the "Help of Christians."

PART II.

The Visitation.

1. *History of the feast.* This feast was celebrated as early as the thirteenth century by the Franciscans, and towards the end of the fourteenth century was extended to the whole Church by Popes Urban VI. and Boniface IX. It is, as it were, the feast of the peace of Mary, for its introduction had the object of restoring peace to the Church, which in a great measure had departed. Our holy Father, Pius IX., on May 31st, 1850, raised it to a higher rank, as he says, "for a perpetual memorial of gratitude towards the glorious Virgin, who so miraculously came to his and the Christian people's help, so that he could return to Rome, being freed from the yoke of his enemies." The Visitation of Mary is celebrated on July 2nd, probably because it stands in close relation with the feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, the celebration of which takes place on June 24th.

2. *Object of this feast.*

(a.) The Evangelist says: "Mary, rising up in those days, went into the mountainous country with haste, into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth."—*Luke 1: 39, 40*. The distance from Nazareth, where Mary lived, to Hebron, the domicile of St. Elizabeth, was about one hundred and twenty miles; the way thither was difficult, for it was over high mountains. Notwithstanding, Mary undertook this long and laborious journey, in order to do an act of kindness to her cousin Elizabeth. Herein she gives us a beautiful example, showing how we should do acts of kindness to our fellow-men, though there may be some difficulties in the way, for that which costs us nothing at all can scarcely be called a charitable act.

(b.) Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."—*Luke 1: 42*. In these words Elizabeth glorifies Mary as the happiest of her race, because she has been raised to the eminent dignity of Mother of God, our Lord and Redeemer. Mary is the *Mother of God*; this is a dignity and prerogative possessed by no other creature in heaven or on earth. St. Bonaventure says: "God could have created a greater heaven and a greater earth, but he could not create a greater mother than the *Mother of God*." Mary is *mother and virgin*; this again is a dignity and grace which Mary alone enjoys. Mary as Mother of God has brought salvation to the world. She is that woman promised to our first parents, who has crushed the serpent's head. Therefore the Fathers place Eve and Mary in juxtaposition and

designate Eve as the mother of death, and Mary as the mother of life. St. Augustine says: "One woman reached the poison, one woman the remedy. Man fell through a woman, and through a woman he was raised up again; through a woman came death, and through a woman life." "And blessed is the fruit of thy womb." Elizabeth gives here the reason why Mary is the happiest of her race; she is elevated so high above all angels and men because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the fruit of her womb; all the honor, therefore, which we show to Mary, ultimately refers to Jesus Christ, for through him only she is what she is, the Mother of God.

(c.) John felt in his mother's womb the proximity of Jesus whose precursor he was to become; for this reason he leaped for joy. It was at this solemn moment that John was cleansed from the stain of original sin and sanctified, as the angel had foretold Zachary in these words: "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb."—*Luke 1:15*. The grace which John received in his mother's womb is imparted to us in holy baptism. Oh, that we would preserve it as faithfully and safely as John!

(d.) Mary replies to the salutation of her cousin Elizabeth with the glorious hymn of praise, which we call the "Magnificat." In this hymn she praises God on account of the graces which she received from him, and expresses her joy that the Lord favored her so highly, and prophesies that all generations shall call her blessed. She attributes all that has been done to her to the grace of God, who has regarded the humility of his handmaid, and has done great things to her. The wonderful dignity to which God elevated her cannot make her vain in the least; the more she sees herself favored, the more she humbles herself. Let us often say, especially when vanity or the desire to please arises in us: Not to me, O Lord, not to me, but to thy name, give glory.—*Ps. 113: 1*.

PART III

Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

1. *Names of this feast.* It is called—

(a.) *Feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel.* It has this name from Mount Carmel, in Palestine, where some hermits lived, who afterwards formed themselves into an Order, and were called the brothers of Mount Carmel, or the Carmelites. As this feast was first celebrated by the Carmelites, and was afterwards spread

through them over the whole Church, it is called, "The Feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel."

(b.) *Feast of the Scapular.* It has this name from the Scapular which the Carmelites and the members of the Confraternity of the Scapular wear in honor of the blessed Virgin Mother of God. The feast was approved of in the year 1587 by Sixtus V., for the Carmelites, and extended in the year 1726, by Benedict XIII., to the universal Church.

2. *Origin of the Scapular.* At a time when the Carmelite Order was undergoing severe persecution at the hands of the Turks, there lived in England a pious man, of noble extraction, by the name of *Simon Stock*. When only twelve years of age, he retired into solitude, where a hollow tree served him for a dwelling; from this he was called *Simon Stock*. When the Carmelites came to England he entered their community, and in his old age became General of the Order. The Order at that time being apparently near its dissolution, he had recourse to prayer in order to save it. On the evening of the 16th day of July, 1251, the Blessed Virgin, whilst he was fervently praying, appeared to him, and in answer to his prayer to avert the tribulations of the Order, assured him of her protection, at the same time handing him a Scapular, with the words: "Receive, dear son, the scapular of thy Order, as a prerogative for thyself and for all the children of Carmel, as a particular sign of my confraternity, as a pledge of an eternal peace, which I contract with you. This is the sign of salvation, a protection and bulwark in dangers; he who, invested with this habit, piously dies, will not be cast into everlasting fire." Pope Honorius confirmed the Scapular and gave Simon a letter to all the bishops, in which he commanded them to protect and propagate the Order of the Carmelites and the Scapular. Immediately monasteries were built everywhere, and the confraternity of the Scapular was established. Those who did not join the Order of the Carmelites had their names enrolled in the confraternity of the Scapular. Numberless people wore the habit of Mary; popes, cardinals, emperors and kings lived and died in it.

3. *Power and efficacy of the Scapular.*

(a.) *In corporal necessities and dangers.* A certain man, named *Beauregard*, received at the siege of Montpellier two balls in his breast; he reeled, but did not fall. They hastened to undress him, in order to find the two balls, and, behold! they were found flattened on a Scapular. A person named *Montigny* was travelling by water to Toulouse; a violent storm arose, the ship sank, but he held himself above the water, for the Scapular which he

wore did not permit him to sink. It frequently happened that at conflagrations a Scapular was thrown into the fire, whereupon the flames were quenched. A miracle of this kind was officially confirmed by the bishop of Metz, January 12th, 1420. Many other miracles were wrought by the devout use of the Scapular.

(b.) *In spiritual necessities.* For the sake of brevity I shall mention only one example. Whilst Simon Stock was still living, a certain nobleman, named Walter, who had led a very dissolute life, was wounded in a duel and was about to die in despair. Hearing this, the zealous General of the Order hastened to him, and found him gnashing his teeth with rage, with despair in his heart, blasphemies in his mouth, and near death. He prayed for him and laid the Scapular upon him; the sick man immediately returned to his senses, bewailed his sins, and died in peace after having received the sacraments with great devotion.

PERORATION.

God gives many graces to those who put confidence in the Scapular and wear it with pious sentiments. But in order to prevent all misunderstanding I must observe that the efficacy of the Scapular and other blessed things depends on the will of God and the good use we make of these things. It would be an error to suppose that the Scapular protects from all corporal dangers: it is for God to decide whether he will allow the Scapular to be effectual in temporal evils and dangers or not. It would be a still greater error to expect from the Scapular that no one who wears it could die unhappily. Neither the Scapular nor any other sacred thing is a security against an unhappy death, but only a pious, penitential life. It is, however, certain that Christians who wear the Scapular in a devout frame of mind will be protected by the Blessed Virgin in a particular manner, and that they will receive through her intercession many graces in life and death. Keep therefore the Scapular and other holy things in honor, and endeavor to be devout children of Mary, that you may always enjoy her protection, and have the happiness hereafter of saluting her as your mother in heaven. Amen.



SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

MAN, A TREE.

Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit.—Matt. 7: 17.

In the gospel of this day Christ speaks of good and of evil trees, and says that the good tree brings forth good fruit, but the evil tree evil fruit, and that trees which bring forth no good fruit shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. By evil trees we must here understand false prophets, that is, men who, not content with being impious themselves, labor also for the destruction of their fellow-men, and endeavor to make them as wicked as they themselves are. The fate of the unfruitful trees finally awaits them; when their time is come God will call them into eternity and deliver them over to the fire of hell, in order to chastise them for their wickedness and all the mischief they have done in the world. But by the good and evil trees we may also understand all men, for a great similarity exists between a man and a tree. In the latter sense we will consider to-day the parable of the trees. I say therefore: *Man is a tree—*

- I. *In his birth;*
- II. *In his education;*
- III. *In his works.*

PART I.

When a fruit-tree comes forth from the earth it is of the ordinary wild kind, though the seed may have been of the best, from the most improved sort of fruit. If you let it alone it will grow up wild, and yield only poor fruit. It must be grafted to enable it to yield good fruit.

1. Like the tree, every human being comes into the world in a wild state, if I may be allowed thus to express myself, that is, *in a state of sin.* It is a doctrine of the faith, with which the Jews and even many Gentile nations agree, that every man is infected with original sin in the moment of his conception and is born therein; hence the Apostle writes: "As by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed

upon all men, in whom all have sinned."—*Rom.* 5: 12. David says: "Behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me."—*Ps.* 50: 7.

As already remarked, you may plant the kernels of improved or unimproved fruit-trees; only wild trees come forth. The same must be said of children. It matters not whether their parents are Christians or non-Christians, just or unjust, original sin adheres to them in every case; for the sanctification of the parents is, as St. Augustine observes, a personal grace and favor, which belongs only to them, and is not transferable to the children. Therefore, all men, whether they descend from Gentiles, Jews, or Christians, are conceived and born in original sin—with the exception of the Blessed Virgin, who by a special grace of God was excepted from the universal curse of mankind, and was conceived and born without the stain of original sin.

2. By inserting a shoot of an improved tree into the wild tree, the whole nature of the tree is changed; the wild tree becomes a good tree, which no longer yields bad and sour, but good and sweet, fruit. A similar improvement takes place in man when he receives holy baptism. He is spiritually regenerated, wherefore baptism is called the laver of regeneration, according to the words of Christ: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—*John* 3: 5. By virtue of this spiritual regeneration the baptized person is transformed and renewed; from a sinner he becomes just; from a slave of Satan, a child of God and heir of heaven. Leo the Great says: "Whilst the outward man is washed off, he is transformed interiorly, and the old creature is made new; the vessels of wrath become vessels of mercy, and the flesh of sin is changed into a body of Christ; the unjust become just, the captives free, and the children of men children of God."

As the tree by grafting is made to produce good fruit, so baptism enables man to bring forth good fruit. Since the unbaptized man still languishes in the slavery of sin and of Satan, and is destitute of the spiritual life, which is sanctifying grace, he can do nothing meritorious for eternity. Thus all good works which the Jews and Gentiles perform are without any merit before God, and have no claim to any reward. But it is quite different with the works of a Christian who is sanctified by baptism. The good he does is meritorious before God, and bears fruit for eternity. When he works, prays, performs a spiritual or corporal work of mercy, or practices a virtue, having at the same time a good intention, he will receive a reward for it hereafter.

PART II.

It is not enough to plant and graft the tree; it must also be trained, if it is to bear fruit. All know this and therefore books have been written on fruit culture as on the education of children.

1. First of all a stake is driven into the ground in order that the young tree, which has a weak stem, may be fastened to it, thus protecting it from the danger of being injured or broken off by the winds and storms, or of growing up crooked. Such a stake man also needs in his youth, and God provides all children with such stakes, and these are their parents. Oh, that all parents were to their children strong, protecting, and supporting stakes, for then children would be better off, and entitled to entertain the best hopes. The well known adage is perfectly true: "As the tree, so the fruit." If the children are so fortunate as to have God-fearing parents, it may be expected that they will become good, upright Christians: but if they have the misfortune of having a father and a mother who are irreligious and do not fear God, there is good reason to apprehend that they will turn out badly. The descendants of Seth, the third son of our first parents, remained faithful to God for centuries and walked in the way of his commandments: but the descendants of Cain were always wicked, and became guilty of the greatest crimes. Whence this great disparity between the descendants of Seth and Cain? Because the former had pious ancestors reaching back to Seth, and the latter had wicked ancestors reaching back to Cain, the fratricide, who was cursed by God. And do we not see with our own eyes that good parents almost always have good children, whilst parents who are bad Christians generally have children who lead a dissolute life? There are indeed exceptions, but not very many. You, Christian fathers and mothers, have a double reason for walking in the fear of God: for your own sake and for your children's sake. If you are good Christians you may hope that God will receive you and your children into heaven; but if you are bad Christians, you have reason to fear that you will be damned with your children. Christian parents, should not this thought be to you a powerful incentive to serve God with fervor all the days of your life?

2. If trees are to thrive and yield fruit, they need careful culture.

(a.) They must often be watered, especially when they are small and during a long drought, because otherwise they would stop growing and wither for the want of moisture. What water is to small trees, religious instruction is to children. Parents who let their children grow up without religious instruction and

prayer, grievously sin against their duty and expose their children to the danger of being demoralized, and of rendering fruitless all efforts to make good Christians of them. In their tender years children are most susceptible of good; the salutary lessons which they receive imprint themselves deeply on their memory and frequently are to them in after-life beacon lights on the journey through life. Again, the prayers which are learnt and recited at the parent's knee are generally said even in old age; all have a kind of predilection for them, because the sweet remembrance of childhood's happy days is connected with them. Follow, therefore, Christian parents, the admonition of the Holy Ghost: "Hast thou children? instruct them, and bow down their neck from their childhood."—*Ecclus. 7: 25.*

(b.) Everything injurious must be kept away from them. A great many things can injure trees and cause them to perish, e. g., severe frost, as long as they are young and tender; rabbits gnaw at them during the winter; and caterpillars in spring eat the leaves and destroy the blossoms. For children also there are many things which may cause injury and ruin, and these are *occasions of sin*. If people of mature age are in danger of forgetting God and sinning grievously on certain occasions, for instance, in the society of wicked people, or of persons of the opposite sex, how much more is this to be feared with children and young people, who, having no experience, are naturally thoughtless, and do not know the dangers that threaten them, and cannot estimate the consequences of sin! The principal reason why the young people of our days are so corrupt must be attributed to dangerous occasions. They associate with immoral, irreligious people; they visit houses in which no religion is followed, maintain a sinful familiarity with persons of the opposite sex, and participate in frivolous amusements; what wonder, then, that they lose all modesty and fear of God, and give themselves to excesses and dissipations. If you, Christian parents, care for the innocence and virtue of your children, keep them from the occasions of sin. Allow them no familiarity with persons of the opposite sex under any circumstances; such familiarity is most dangerous to chastity; never allow them to visit a house in which the inmates care nothing for religion, nor to participate in amusements where everything they see and hear allures to sin. It is said of the shepherd Argus that he had a hundred eyes, and when he slept he kept some of them open, wherewith to watch his flock. I wish you parents also had a hundred eyes, and would always keep some open, in order to watch over your children. Watch them in the house and out of the house, for their blood will be demanded at your hands, and their destruction will be at your door if any of them perish.

PART III.

1. Fruit-trees are intended to yield good fruit. With this intention they are planted, grafted and raised with great care.

Man also must bring forth good fruit. He must faithfully serve God all the days of his life, diligently practice the Christian virtues, and conscientiously fulfil the duties which appertain to his sphere of life. For this end he is sanctified in baptism and incorporated with Christ and the Church; for this end God has given him parents and teachers and obliged them to encourage him in the practice of all virtues.

2. Fruit-trees are not lost sight of even when full-grown and capable of yielding fruit, but everything is done to them that is considered necessary and useful.

(a.) The soil around them is loosened and a fertilizer is put round about the trunk, to convey nourishment to their roots so that they may be more productive.

Our good God does the same with us men; he bestows graces upon graces upon us, so that we may become fruitful in good works. Such graces in a wider sense are all the powers and faculties of soul and body, health, and other temporal benefits, which, from a sense of gratitude, we ought to employ for good purposes. Such graces in a narrower sense are all inspirations and impulses to do good and are all divine operations upon our soul, by which we are strengthened to overcome temptations, to fulfil the duties of our religion and state of life, and to persevere in holiness. These supernatural operations of God upon our soul are countless and are repeated as the pulsations of our heart. On the last day we shall see all that God has done for us, and exclaim with astonishment: Oh, how mercifully did God deal with me; how many graces has he given me for the salvation of my soul! And how numerous are the means of grace and salvation which we receive in the Catholic Church! We have the word of God, which teaches us everything, urges us on and exhorts us to do all that is right, so that we obtain salvation. We have the sacrifice of the mass by which the fruits of Redemption and graces of all kinds are continually conveyed to us. We have the seven sacraments, through which, as through so many channels, God's graces flow to us for our purification and sanctification. Consider what solace it is for us to have the Sacrament of Penance, and how miserable we should be if we had not this Sacrament; moreover, what a grace and blessing it is that in the Blessed Sacrament we have Jesus Christ always present, so that we can visit, adore and even receive him at all times. We have a most edifying and elevating public worship, full of beauty, and

sacramentals by which various corporal and spiritual benefits are communicated to us. Truly, we Catholics are trees which God has planted in the most beautiful and glorious garden, and which he nurses carefully so that they may yield fruit for eternal life.

(b.) Trees are often pruned, so that the superfluous branches may not deprive them of the sap or vital juice necessary for the fruit. Such prunings God also performs on men when he sees that their productiveness will be increased thereby. He cuts off from some their wealth, diminishes their temporal goods, reduces them to poverty, because they used money and goods to serve pride and other sins: he clips off the health and sends them sickness and other human frailties, to compel them, as it were, to discontinue their criminal excesses and to do penance; in short, he takes away from them what is obstructing their progress in virtue and holiness and visits them with crosses and afflictions, for he knows that it is necessary and expedient for their amendment, perfection and sanctification. If man takes this pruning, as a tree, and subjects himself in all patience and humility to the will of God, he will, like the pruned tree, become so much the more fruitful in virtues and good works.

3. There are trees which, in spite of culture and care, remain unproductive and resemble that fig-tree from which the owner expected fruit for three years, but in vain (*Luke 13: 6-10*). What is at length done with such an unproductive tree? Christ tells us in the gospel of this day: *It shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire.* That in the end will also be the fate of the Christian who remains unfruitful in good works. Think seriously about this, and remember, not only those who do evil, but those who neglect the good which they should do, will be condemned to hell-fire. There are sins of *commission* as well as of *omission*; both exclude from heaven and lead to hell, if they are mortal. Heli did nothing bad, but he omitted the good which he should have done, and therefore God punished him with sudden death and perhaps with eternal damnation. Therefore say not: I do not steal, I slander no one, I do nothing against chastity, I do nothing bad; for this is not sufficient to enable you to escape hell and to gain heaven. It is required for this that we diligently practice the Christian virtues and do good works; and it is especially necessary that we perform scrupulously the duties of our state of life.

PERORATION.

Endeavor to resemble the trees, of which the prophet says that they grow on the banks of the torrent, that no leaf falls off

and that their fruit fails not.—*Ezech. 47: 12.* God has done and continues to do everything that can be done for you so that you may bear fruit. He sanctified you in baptism; he gave you parents and teachers who were your guides in all that is good from your childhood; he planted you in the garden of his Church, where you receive graces upon graces for your sanctification. Show yourself thankful to God for all these graces and forget not that much will be asked of him to whom much has been given. Be fervent in the practice of virtue, and bring forth many fruits of justice, that the words of the Psalmist may be applicable to you: "They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of the house of our God."—*Ps. 91: 14.* Amen.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

WITHOUT PRAYER NO ONE CAN BE SAVED.

Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. 7: 21.

Our divine Saviour frequently designated prayer as a means by which we can obtain whatsoever we wish. Thus he says: "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."—*Matt. 21: 22.* And again: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you."—*Matt. 7: 7.* He even confirms these promises with a solemn oath: "Amen, Amen, I say to you, whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, he shall give it to you." The final sentence in the gospel of this day, however, seems to contradict the promises according to which we can obtain all things whatsoever we shall ask, for he says: *Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Here Christ emphatically declares that not all who say, *Lord, Lord,* that is, not all who pray will enter heaven. St. Chrysostom solves this apparent contradiction when he says that prayer is absolutely necessary for salvation, and that no one who wishes to be saved must neglect prayer; but that with prayer alone no one can enter into heaven, for we must also fulfil our duties. I say then —

- I. WITHOUT PRAYER *no one gains heaven;*
- II. WITH PRAYER ALONE *no one gains heaven.*

PART I.

Without prayer no one can gain heaven; for he who does not pray, neglects—

1. *His duties towards God. We are bound —*

(a.) *To adore, love and praise God.* He is our Lord, we are his servants: he is our Father, we his children. If it is the duty of a servant to honor his master, and the duty of a child to love his father, how can we refuse God our veneration and homage, when he is our supreme Lord and our most loving Father? We read in the Sacred Scriptures that the angels and saints adore God in heaven. "The four and twenty ancients fell down before him that sitteth on the throne, and adored him that liveth for ever and ever."—*Apoc.* 4: 10. Again: "I saw a great multitude . . . standing before the throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and they cried with a loud voice, saying: Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb."—*Apoc.* 7: 9. 10 What the angels and saints do in heaven, we must do on earth; like them we must adore God with the most profound veneration, we must love and praise him. Therefore he who does not pray refuses to render the homage due to God, and acts as shanefully as the wicked spirits who would not adore God, and on that account were cast out of heaven.

(b.) *To thank God.* Everything we have is a gift of God. We have from him our body, our life and all temporal goods; from him we have our immortal soul, endowed with free will, understanding and memory; from him we have the only saving faith and all the means of salvation. "Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the father of lights."—*James* 1: 17. Now, if we have everything from God, should we not be thankful to him for his benefits? God is offended by nothing so much as by ingratitude; therefore, Christ complained that of the ten lepers whom he had healed only one returned to him and thanked him for the benefit: "Were there not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God but this stranger."—*Luke* 17: 17, 18.

(c.) *To petition God.* Of ourselves we have nothing and are nothing. "What hast thou that thou hast not received; and if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" In our temporal and spiritual necessities we must rely on the grace of God; without him we can do nothing. Does not our impotence, insufficiency, and total dependence on him require

that we thank him for his gifts and benefits? Would it not betray intense pride to refuse to humble ourselves before God and confess our misery and poverty, and to ask him for his gifts? We feel offended when a man who cannot help himself, and who owes to us his means of subsistence, acts as if he did not need our assistance, and who never condescends to ask us for anything. And should not God be offended when we men, who cannot draw a breath without him, are too proud to ask him for his benefits and graces?

(d.) *To believe in God, hope in him, and love him.* We must believe in God, "for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and is a rewarder to them that seek him."—*Heb.* 11: 6. And Christ says: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned."—*Mark* 16: 16. We must hope in God, for our hope is based on faith, as the Apostle says: "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for."—*Heb.* 11: 1. He who hopes not in God lacks faith, rejects or doubts the omnipotence, goodness and fidelity of God, imagining that God would not, could not, give what he promised. We must love God, for Christ declares the love of God to be the first, the greatest and most necessary of all the commandments (*Matt.* 22: 36-38); and St. Paul assures us, that without charity the gift of tongues, all wisdom and knowledge, miraculous power, alms and martyrdom profit nothing.—*I. Cor.* 13: 1-3. Prayer, then, presupposes faith, hope and charity, for we pray only because we believe in God and his revelations; we pray because we hope in him and his promises; and we pray because we love him, or have at least the desire to love him. A person who does not pray does not believe in God, hope in him and love him, but is quite indifferent towards him, cares nothing about him, nourishes ill-will and hatred towards him; consequently, he who does not pray is a bad, wicked person, and cannot be saved.

2. *He neglects what is required for salvation. What must we do to be saved?*

(a.) *We must do penance when we have sinned.* We must truly repent of our sins and be firmly resolved never more to offend God. He who has not this will, has not true contrition, without which no forgiveness is possible. "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish."—*Luke* 13: 3. True repentance has its difficulties: you must be completely changed; you must hate what you formerly loved and love what you formerly hated; you must eradicate bad, deeply rooted habits, shun the occasions of sins to which you feel an attachment, break with the world and its vanities, and reveal every sin, no matter how abominable, in

confession. Many other difficult things connected with repentance far surpass our strength, and we need a special grace to assist us in our insufficiency and to render us capable of bringing forth fruits worthy of penance. This grace depends on prayer. Although God gives sinners the first grace for conversion without prayer, he will not give them the further graces for the accomplishment thereof unless they fervently pray for them. He who does not pray is certain to remain in sin. As long as the sinner does not pray he remains impenitent, and will be lost unless he begins again to pray.

(b.) *We must keep the commandments of God.* This is self-evident, for God has given us his commandments for no other reason than that we should keep them. Moreover, Christ expressly says: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."—*Matt.* 19: 17. The question is, can we of ourselves keep the commandments, as is required for salvation? We cannot, for we are not able of ourselves to do anything for our salvation. "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."—*II. Cor.* 3: 5. God must assist us with his grace, but in order to obtain it, we must ask him for it. "Ask, and you shall receive." He who does not pray has reason to fear that his measure of graces will be diminished and that he will transgress the commandments, especially in great temptations, and so lose his soul.

(c.) *We must persevere in good to the end, as Christ repeatedly says:* "He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved." *Matt.* 10: 22. To him who serves God only for a time and again forsakes him the words of Christ apply: "No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."—*Luke* 9: 62. But the grace of perseverance according to the doctrine of the Church is a gift which cannot be merited, but can be obtained only by continuous prayer. However, *prayer alone* is not sufficient.

PART II.

We must also do the will of God, as Christ says: *He that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* What is the will of the Father?

1. *That we fulfil the duties of our respective states of life.* Every one lives in a certain state of life, in certain circumstances, and therefore has certain duties corresponding to his state and circumstances. Thus married and single people, parents and children, masters and servants, rich and poor, the sick and the healthy—all

have particular duties. He who desires to gain heaven must fulfil the duties of his state. The Apostle sets a high value on prayer, and exhorts us to practice it on every occasion. He says: "I will that men pray in every place."—*I. Tim.* 2: 8. He even requires us to pray without ceasing (*I. Thess.* 5: 17); but he likewise insists upon every one doing his duty, saying: "As the Lord hath distributed to every one, as God hath called every one, so let him walk."—*I. Cor.* 7: 17. And again he says: "Walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called."—*Ephes.* 4: 1. In his epistles he enlarges on the duties of our state of life, and requires each one to fulfil them. Thus he commands *husbands* to love their wives, to support, to nourish and to cherish them (*Ephes.* 5: 26, *et seq.*); *women* to be subject to their husbands in all things (*Ephes.* 5: 22); to use no authority over the man and to be in silence (*I. Tim.* 2: 12); *parents*, not to provoke their children to anger, but to bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord (*Ephes.* 6: 4); *children*, to obey their parents in the Lord (*Ephes.* 6: 1); *masters*, to do to their servants that which is just and equal (*Col.* 4: 1), and not to treat them harshly (*Ephes.* 6: 9); *servants*, to "obey in all things their masters, not serving to the eye, as pleasing men, but in simplicity of heart, fearing God . . . knowing that they shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance."—*Col.* 3: 22-24.

From this and many similar admonitions of St. Paul, as from many other passages of the Sacred Scriptures which might be adduced, it is evident that the fulfilling of the duties of one's state of life is a very important affair, and that no one can be a good Christian who leaves them unfulfilled. How strictly St. Paul enjoins us to perform the duties of our state is evident from his well known utterance: "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—*I. Tim.* 5: 8. It is certainly a great sin to deny the faith and to become an infidel; but just as grievously and still more grievously do those fathers and mothers sin who neglect to take care of the temporal and spiritual welfare of their own, or, in other words, neglect the duties of their state of life. If you, Christian parents, go regularly to church, but neglect the discipline of your children; if you, sons and daughters, say your morning and evening prayers regularly, but treat your parents rudely and grieve them by your stubbornness, you will not please God with your prayers and devotions, and will not be saved. Do not forget this. There are those who grieve that they cannot go to church and devote as much time to prayer as they would like because their business or circumstances of life do not permit it. I can tell them for their consolation that they need not fear for their salvation on that account. If they fulfil the duties of their state of life patiently and for the

love of God, they acquire as great and probably greater merit than if they assisted daily at mass and performed long devotions. Serve God always in the way you can serve him, and pray as much as you can pray, then all things are in proper order and God will be satisfied with you.

2. *That we fulfil the duties of religion.* Among these duties I reckon the commandments of God and of his Church, the virtues and good works which Jesus has prescribed by his word and example. It has already been remarked that we must keep the commandments of God, and the precepts of the Church; he who does not keep them, or breaks only one in an important matter, sins grievously and renders himself worthy of eternal damnation. Therefore, it will profit you nothing to pray if you violate the commandments; your prayer cannot save you from perdition. There are millions in hell who have prayed more, visited the church more frequently, and participated in more devotions than you; but because they violated one or the other commandment—for instance, because they have cursed, blasphemed, committed sins against chastity, slandered their neighbor, they are rejected in spite of their prayers

The same must be said of the Christian virtues, such as humility, meekness, patience, temperance, fraternal charity. Every Christian must diligently practise these virtues whenever the opportunity presents itself. Not to practise them is to act against the will of Christ, who has frequently and expressly recommended them to us; it is to refuse to follow him who gave us an example; it is to shut heaven against ourselves, for we can enter it only by following Christ. Suppose a farmer were to sow the best wheat in his field, and at the same time as many weeds, could he expect a good crop of wheat? Certainly not. Thus the holy masses you hear, the rosaries you say, the devotions you practise, are excellent seed, which should bring forth fruit a hundred fold, but what can be expected of this seed when you sow cockle among it? What will it avail you if in the morning you assist at mass but in the afternoon give yourselves up to drinking, gambling and impurity? What will it avail you to hear two or more masses every day, if you get into a passion with your neighbor, curse, swear and blaspheme? What will it avail you to say a rosary every day if you slander and detract your neighbor? Truly, the sins which you *commit*, and never earnestly *endeavor to omit*, destroy all the good seed of your prayer, and make all your devotions worthless before God.

PERORATION.

Be not deceived, imagining that God, as it were, connives at Christians who pray much, and opens to them the gate of heaven in spite of their sins; for I repeat, with prayer alone you will never be admitted into heaven. Although prayer is absolutely necessary for your salvation, and although all who do not pray go straight to hell, it is just as necessary to do the will of God, that is, to fulfil the duties of our religion and state, if we wish to be saved. The two things go together, *diligent prayer*, and *diligent performance* of the will of God. Pray therefore and work. If in both these respects we do our duty, we are walking in the right way that leads to heaven. Amen.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

HYPOCRISY IS AN ABOMINABLE VICE.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly are ravening wolves.—Matt. 7: 15.

By false prophets, against whom our Saviour warns us in the gospel of this day, we are to understand, first of all, the Scribes and Pharisees. They gave themselves the appearance of being the most zealous servants of God and paragons of virtue and sanctity; they prayed much, were not content with the fasts commanded, but imposed voluntary ones on themselves; they gave alms liberally; in a word, they conducted themselves in such a manner that those who were not well acquainted with them would almost venerate them as saints; but in reality they were very corrupt men, full of cunning and malice, full of ambition and envy, and bore an irreconcilable hatred against Christ. All false prophets are seducers; they so conduct themselves externally that one is tempted to believe them good, upright and well-meaning people, whilst they have a very perverse heart, and bring upon all those who permit themselves to be deluded by them unspeakable mischief and ruin; they are, indeed, wolves in the clothing of sheep. The hypocrites who appear very pious and holy, but who in secret indulge their passions and commit the greatest sins, are also false prophets. I have selected hypocrisy as the subject of our meditation to-day

and I shall attempt to prove to you that hypocrisy is a very abominable vice —

- I. In itself;
- II. In its causes;
- III. In its consequences.

PART I.

Hypocrisy *in itself* is an abominable vice. This will become plain to us when we consider that hypocrisy is the mother of two very ugly and hateful daughters, *fraud and falsehood*.

1. *Fraud*. Who is a hypocrite? He who tries to hide his sins from the eyes of the world is not yet a hypocrite. Every man feels that sin is hateful and detestable; it is therefore very natural for man to hide his sins and vices. For this reason our divine Saviour says: "Every one that doth evil, hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reprov'd." — *John 3: 20*. It is better, too, generally speaking, that the sinner should endeavor to hide his bad actions; for if they remain secret there will be at least no scandal, with its evil consequences. Neither is he a hypocrite who does good in order to be praised by men; such a one sins only by ambition, and if he has not a good intention loses only the merit of his good works. *He only is a hypocrite who carefully conceals his bad disposition, his dissipations and vices, and always exhibits a pleasing exterior, in order to lead men into error and to make them believe that he is really what he seems to be, an honest and good Christian*. The hypocrite does not want to be good, but to appear so. His heart is corrupt, he is full of ambition, self-interest, cunning and fraud. He resembles, as Christ says, a whited sepulchre, which inwardly is full of dead men's bones and of all filthiness.—*Matt. 23: 27*. But as graves are covered and adorned to conceal their contents from the eyes of men, so the hypocrite veils and covers his sins and true intentions lest they should become known to any one. In secret he gives full scope to his passions, for there is no fear of God within him; but publicly he does nothing wrong; he avoids even the shadow of sin, if he has reason to fear that others might hear of it. Before men he shows himself pious, full of zeal for God, and of hatred against sin; he also does good, diligently assists at mass, frequently receives the sacraments, gives alms, but not because he finds pleasure in the exercises of religion and virtue, but only in order to be considered good and pious. Thus the hypocrite is in reality a cheat and an impostor. "There is something unnatural in hypocrisy, in having the outward appearance of a dove, and the heart of a dog; in being a sheep in

words and a wolf in purpose; in being a Nero inwardly, and a Cato outwardly. Thus it can be said of a hypocrite that he is a new monster composed of opposite and different natures."—*St. Augustine*.

2. *Falsehood*. The hypocrite is also a liar: for as he who tells an untruth, in order to deceive his neighbor, is a *liar in words*, so he who gives himself the appearance of being pious and virtuous without really being so, is a *liar in deed*. St. Thomas of Aquin says: "It is part of the virtue of truth that man should make known by outward signs what he is. These outward signs, however, are not only *words* but *actions*. At it is contrary to truth for one to signify by outward signs something different from that which one has in one's mind, so it is also against truth for one to express by outward actions something which contradicts one's thoughts." But there is scarcely a sin spoken of in the Sacred Scriptures so abominable and hateful as lying. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord."—*Prov. 12: 22*. "A lie is a foul blot in a man, and yet it will be continually in the mouth of men without discipline. A thief is better than a man that is always lying; but both of them shall inherit destruction. The manners of lying men are without honor, and their confusion is with them without ceasing."—*Ecclus. 20: 26-28*. What else, then, is hypocrisy but a very hateful, abominable vice, for according to its whole nature it is untruth and falsehood?

PART II.

Hypocrisy is very abominable *in its causes*, which are —

1. *Vanity and pride*. Virtue is honored everywhere; even the vicious man cannot refuse it his approbation. But to be truly virtuous is not so very easy a matter; it costs much labor and pain and numerous sacrifices. Now there are many who would obtain the applause and honor due to virtue in an easier way; they therefore have recourse to hypocrisy and pretend to be virtuous without really being so. Thus the Scribes and Pharisees, whose principal vices were ambition and pride. They distributed their alms at the corners of the streets, prayed in public places, and went about when they fasted, unwashed and with a sad countenance. Besides this they did many other strange and conspicuous things. Some of them walked as if they had no feet, so slightly did they lift them up, with a view to give themselves the appearance of being buried in deep meditation and wholly dead to all earthly things: they were called "the mutilated." Others went about with their eyes closed that they might not look upon a woman, and knocked themselves against

the corners of the streets and houses. Some exclaimed continually during the day: What shall I do? in order to manifest their zeal for virtue. Others again wore large hats, which obstructed the view, so that they could only look on the ground, and thus avoid distraction. To mortify themselves some loved to sleep on narrow boards and to fall from them, in order to make a noise, that others might be edified by their penitential fervor. Lastly, they wore little tablets on their body written all over with texts of Holy Scripture, to show that they were continually meditating on the word of God. But they did all these things, not for the love of God and their own salvation, but solely from ambition, to be looked upon by men as great servants of God. Ask yourselves whether you have not sometimes pretended to piety and rendered yourselves guilty of hypocrisy.

2. *Avarice.* Owing to this poor people often become hypocrites. They think perhaps with the Apostle that piety is profitable for all things and therefore also for making people well disposed towards them, and willing to give them alms; hence, they diligently go to church, pray devoutly, feign sickness sometimes, and send for the priest to give them the last sacraments. Even children and servants often play the hypocrite with a view to win the favor of parents and of masters and mistresses, and to obtain presents from them. Tradespeople and mechanics do the same. In the presence of priests and zealous Catholics they pretend to be very religious in order to gain their confidence, whilst in their hearts they are not so.

3. *Various vices,* as theft, fraud, usury, impurity. To hide these vices as much as possible, and to give themselves up to them with less restraint, some pretend to be pious and virtuous Christians; they are zealous for religion, have their names enrolled in pious associations and confraternities; they even go frequently to confession and communion. St. Clement of Alexandria compares such hypocrites to dunghills covered with snow; and Christ compares them to whited sepulchres, which are full of dead men's bones and of all filthiness.

4. *Finally, corruption.* The devil knows how to assume the appearance of an angel of light, when he goes about to ensnare men in his nets. Corrupters do the same. Knowing that every one would detest them if they showed themselves in their true colors, they surround themselves with the halo of a saint, in order to accomplish their satanic work. All heretics and founders of sects were hypocrites. They gave themselves the appearance of zealous servants of God and boasted even of extraordinary graces and revelations; they thus succeeded in deluding others and in-

fecting them with their errors. Corrupt men, whose aim is to seduce innocent females, also have no more appropriate means for the obtaining of their base purposes than hypocrisy. They know and understand how to captivate by acts of kindness those persons whom they have chosen as victims of their unchaste desires; at the beginning of their visits they hold conversations on quite harmless, and even on spiritual subjects, and pretend to such piety that they seem to be the best people in the world, almost saints; by little and little they gain confidence and attain their end. To this class belong also women who, by pretending to great innocence, bashfulness and modesty, attract many of the unwary and allure them into the trap.

PART III.

Hypocrisy is most detestable *in its consequences.*

1. *It deprives good works of all supernatural merit.* Remain for hours on your knees, and pray with extended arms, fast every Friday on bread and water, give large alms to the poor, practise the virtue of meekness, patience, obedience, and chastity; do this and a thousand other good works, all is in vain, and you will not be entitled to any reward if these things are done, not for the honor of God, but from hypocrisy. Our Lord assures us of this in plain words, when he says: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, that you may be seen by them, otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when thou dost an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth . . . And when ye pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites that love to pray standing in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward." —*Matt. 6: 1-5.* How deluded therefore is the hypocrite, who torments himself so much in doing good and all in vain. Does he not resemble a laborer who casts his hard-earned wages into the sea?

2. *It robs man of divine grace.* The hypocrite does not seek the honor of God, but himself, and this is just the reason why God deprives him of his grace, for "God resisteth the proud, and to the humble he giveth grace." —*I. Peter 5: 5.* The hypocrite is full of deceit and cunning, therefore God is displeased with him and closes the source of his graces against him. "A perverse heart is abominable to the Lord, and his will is in them that walk

sincerely."—*Prov. 11: 20.* Lastly, because the hypocrite is often a corrupter, and labors for the destruction of souls, he can not hope for mercy from God; that woe will come upon him which Christ has pronounced upon corrupters, and those who give scandal. Our Lord was full of compassion and love towards the greatest sinners; Mary Magdalen, the Samaritan woman, Zacheus, the thief on the cross, all found grace with him. But he dealt differently with the Scribes and the Pharisees; he frequently cried out woe to them and announced their eternal perdition. From this it is evident that hypocrisy earns for man the displeasure of God in a degree unequaled by any other vice.

3. *It makes man impenitent.* For conversion self-knowledge is necessary, because as long as man does not know his misery he will not amend his life. But the hypocrite is entirely blinded and does not see the abyss of his malice; therefore he rejects all attempts of amendment and remains in sin. For repentance humility is required: but the hypocrite shuns and detests no virtue so much as true humility; therefore he remains in sin. For repentance contrition is required; but the hypocrite knows no contrition; his heart is utterly perverse and corrupt; therefore he remains in sin. We need not wonder, then, that the Scribes and Pharisees always persevered in impenitence; they were hypocrites, and hypocrites remain hypocrites and do not wish to be converted. Christians who are hypocrites carry the brand of damnation on their forehead.

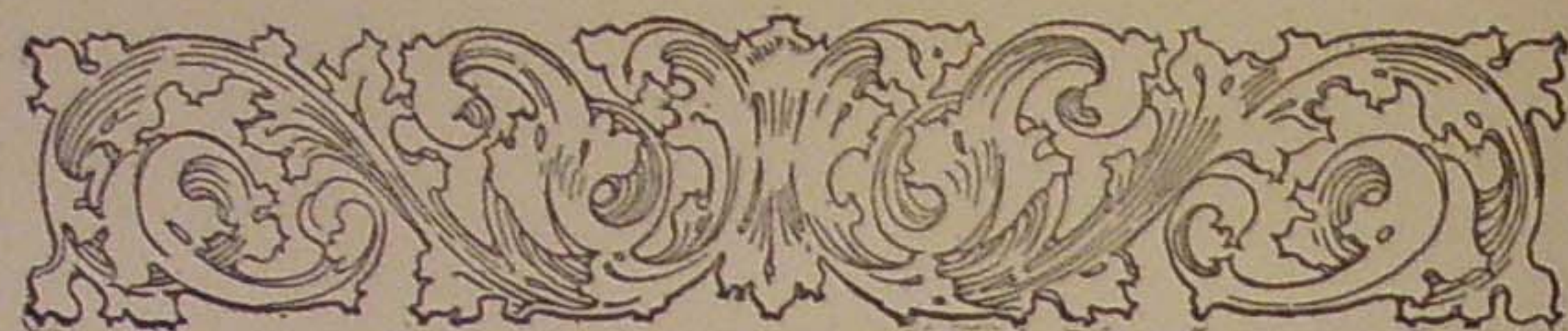
4. *They cause a great deal of mischief among men.* As remarked above, many become hypocrites for the purpose of leading others astray, and only too often they accomplish their satanic work. One seeks his victim in an honorable family; knowing that they value religion and piety he pretends to be religious, frequents the churches and conducts himself properly. Thus he gains confidence, which he rewards by getting the daughter of the house into trouble, or if he marries her, he destroys the happiness of her life. Another endeavors to spread false maxims. How does he do it? He gives himself the appearance of a warm friend of religion; only now and then does he let a word drop about superstition, human ordinances and the like. But by little and little, when he has gained confidence and a sure footing, he goes farther, he praises his pernicious doctrines as excellent truths, and finally causes many to assent to them and suffer shipwreck of faith and virtue. In still another way hypocrisy works perniciously and destructively. It is often found out, and the consequence is that the good cause often suffers the greatest injury, for people are only too apt to confound the cause with the person and to declare the former bad, because the latter is bad. If, for instance,

the hypocrite showed great fervor in prayer, or belonged to several confraternities and often received the sacraments, many are so foolish and malicious as to declaim against prayer, confession and communion and to decry them as useless, even declaring that persons who say their prayers and go to confession and communion are nothing but hypocrites. Through such conversation and criticisms many Christians are deterred from doing good so that they may not be considered hypocrites.

PERORATION.

Thus then hypocrisy is a most detestable vice *in itself, in its causes, and its consequences.* "Beware ye," therefore, as Christ exhorts, "of the leaven and of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."—*Luke 12: 1.* Be not content with the appearance of piety, but be truly pious. What does it profit you, if you gain the applause of the world, but displease God; if you deceive man, when you cannot deceive God? That you may not fall into the vice of hypocrisy, endeavor to be humble and to live in the fear of God, for these two virtues are incompatible with hypocrisy. Do good for the love of God and do nothing bad even in secret; mean well by all men and aspire to true justice, that you may be able to stand before the tribunal of God, who is the "searcher of hearts and reins."—*Ps. 7: 10.* Amen.





EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE. *Rom. 8: 12-17.* Brethren: We are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. For whosoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear: but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba (Father). For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

WHY WE MUST MORTIFY THE DEEDS OF THE FLESH.

St. Paul says in the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, from which the lesson for this day is taken, that all who do not belong to the Church of Christ, Jews and Gentiles, still languish in the fetters of sin, and in this miserable state cannot work out their salvation. He teaches that those who are incorporated with Christ and his Church by faith in baptism are delivered from sin and eternal damnation and have the consoling hope, after a glorious resurrection, of enjoying the everlasting happiness of heaven. In the Epistle of this day the Apostle exhorts us to live no longer according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, and he gives us two reasons why we must mortify all the deeds of the flesh, viz.:

- I. Because our eternal salvation depends thereon;
- II. Because we are children and heirs of God, and co-heirs of Christ.

PART I.

1. Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. By "flesh" we understand the inordinate and sinful

lusts of the body, the motions of our nature corrupted by original sin, the evil desires and passions. "To live according to the flesh" means to do whatsoever pleases the flesh and flatters sensuality, to obey the inordinate inclinations and passions, to prefer our will, our honor, our pleasures and lusts to God and his holy law, to seek only ourselves, not God; only what is temporal, not what is eternal. "We are debtors not to the flesh" means, we have no obligation to yield ourselves to the lusts of the flesh and to gratify our inordinate desires; on the contrary, we are strictly obliged to suppress and stifle sensual motions and lusts. Therefore the Apostle says: "They who are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences."—*Gal. 5: 24.* If we live according to the concupiscence of the flesh we shall have no part in Christ, and shall be lost.

We are debtors to the flesh in so far as we are obliged to provide our body with what is necessary for the preservation of life, health and strength. When therefore we supply the body with food, raiment and shelter, employ proper means for its recovery when overtaken by sickness, and do not expose it to danger without necessity, we pay it what we owe. But if we provide our body with too much nourishment or of too choice a description, dress and adorn it vainly, indulge it in idleness, and gratify its inordinate desires, we violate our duties towards it, and sin. St. Paul cautions us against this, saying: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences."—*Rom. 13: 14.*

2. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. In these words the Apostle points out the consequences when the flesh is mortified and when not.

(a.) If you live according to the flesh, you shall die. St. Paul here speaks not of the death of the body, for this comes to all men sooner or later, no matter whether they live according to the flesh or according to the spirit, and is the consequence of original sin in which they are conceived and born. History and experience indeed prove that people who live according to the flesh, e. g., drunkards and the unchaste, often destroy their health, contract various diseases and sink into an early grave; on the contrary, those who lead a mortified life are spared many sicknesses, and as a general rule reach a good old age. Thus we know of hermits in the desert who, in spite of their rigorous fasts and many mortifications, lived to be eighty, ninety, even a hundred years of age. St. Paul, however, does not speak of the temporal, but of the spiritual death. He who lives according to the flesh dies the death of the soul in this world and in the world to come:

in this world, because he loses sanctifying grace, in which the supernatural life of the soul consists; *in the next world*, because his soul is condemned to eternal death. He who lives according to the flesh dies also spiritually according to the body; he will come forth out of the grave on the last day with the hideous body of the damned, and together with this body will be delivered to the fire of hell, which is the other death. Oh, how blind are Christians who, by giving themselves to short, fleeting pleasures, purchase for themselves a miserable death and eternal damnation! What does it profit Dives now to have feasted sumptuously every day, and to have been clothed in the finest and softest clothes, and to have led a life of pleasure? He is burning in hell-fire without help or consolation, and has not a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. Think of the dreadful consequences which a life according to the flesh draws after it, and beware of indulging your sinful lusts and passions. If evil concupiscence entices you to pride, avarice, impurity, represent to yourselves at once the evil which the gratification of the sinful desire brings in its train and say to yourselves: "No, no, at such a price I will not sin." Let him who unfortunately has long been a victim to sin shake off his bonds and do penance so that he may escape eternal damnation.

(b.) The Apostle next speaks of the reward which is given us if we mortify the flesh. *If by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.* Works of the flesh are: "Fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wrath, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envy, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like."—*Gal. 5: 19 et seq.* Now he who detests and shuns these vices, and courageously mortifies all sinful lusts and desires, *shall live.* Such a Christian will have the supernatural life, that is, sanctifying grace, a treasure more valuable than all earthly goods; he will rise on the last day with a glorified body; he will receive with body and soul the eternal, inexpressibly happy life in heaven. Oh, what glorious fruits we shall obtain if we mortify the deeds of the flesh! St. Peter of Alcantara slept for forty years only an hour and a half every day, in a sitting posture, with his head resting on a piece of wood; he lived in a cell only four and a half feet long; he never covered his head, whether in sunshine, rain, or cold; winter and summer he went barefooted; he had a very poor habit, and over it a short mantle of coarse cloth. When it was very cold he opened the window and the door of his cell, in order to torture his body with frost; once every three days he ate bread and unboiled herbs. He so mortified his eyes that he knew his brethren only by their voice, and in speaking he was so sparing that no idle word ever passed his lips. After

his departure he appeared in great glory to St. Teresa, whose adviser he had been during life, saying: "O happy penance, which has merited me such happiness!" Did not this saint speak a very different language from that of Dives? Yes, but he led a different life. Whose lot do you wish to share? that of Dives, or of St. Peter of Alcantara? Certainly that of the latter. Well then, imitate him; and like him mortify the deeds of the flesh.

PART II.

I. St. Paul first speaks of *sons of God*, and tells us—

(a.) *Who the sons of God are*, in these words: *Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* To be led by the Spirit of God means to follow his inspirations. The Holy Ghost operates in men in divers ways, in order to keep them in the way of justice and to lead them to their final end, after having sanctified them in the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance. He enlightens them interiorly that they may know the will of God; he encourages them to good and strengthens them in the practice of it; he assists them in temptations that they may be able to resist them and persevere in grace. He also employs many exterior means and graces to preserve them in the love of God. Such means and graces are instruction in Christian doctrine, sermons, mass, etc., the holy seasons and feasts, various joyful and sorrowful occurrences in life, and especially the holy sacraments, for the reception of which there is always an opportunity. Now all who follow the interior inspirations and motions of the Holy Ghost and diligently avail themselves of the means and graces which he offers them for their salvation, are children of God.

Now examine yourselves and ask: How do matters stand with me? Do I allow myself to be led by the Holy Ghost? Do I listen to his inspirations and obey them? Do I shun the evil he warns me against? Do I accomplish the good to which he urges me? Do I make use of the means of grace which are given me for my salvation? Do I love to pray? Do I listen to the word of God with pleasure? Do I read spiritual books? Do I receive the sacraments often and am I well prepared? Blessed are you if you can answer these and similar questions in the affirmative; it is well with you and you are children of God. But if you are obliged to answer in the negative, matters would not be well with you; you would not be children of God, but children of the world, slaves of Satan, and you could expect nothing but eternal damnation, unless you change your lives.

(b.) *He tells us what grace our sonship contains*, saying: "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received

the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Under the Old Law, the work of Redemption not being yet accomplished, God did not manifest himself so much as a God of love as a God of power; he gave his law to the Israelites, amidst terrifying signs, amidst thunder and lightning, and imposed severe penalties on the violators thereof. The Jews therefore were accustomed to call God their Lord, not their Father; and themselves his servants. How much more intimate and gracious is the relation in which we stand to God! The goodness and kindness of God appeared to us personally in Jesus Christ (*Tit.* 3: 4); and gave us power to be made the sons of God (*John* 1: 12); and we are allowed to say, "Abba Father." What dignity to be sons of God! As a child of God the poorest beggar child stands higher than the son of the mightiest ruler, who is only a poor mortal man. And what consolation for us to be children of God! With what confidence can we approach God, who is our Father? What may we not expect from a Father, who is God! Therefore never forget "what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God" (*I. John* 3: 1); and fulfil your duties as children towards God your Father in heaven; honor and love him above all, and obey him willingly and cheerfully.

(c.) *He tells us how we know that we are children of God.* "The spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God." It is the Holy Ghost himself who makes known to us that we are children of God and possess his holy grace. As Denis the Carthusian remarks, he makes this known to us either by interior inspiration or by exterior revelation. The *revelation* is made either by himself or by an angel; and man to whom such a revelation is made knows with certainty that he is in a state of grace and a child of God. Only a few saints have been favored with such a revelation. The *interior inspiration* is made by the infusion of a consoling confidence, by virtue of which, man, solicitous for his salvation, is fortified and consoled, so that he can judge, although not with certainty, yet with good reason, that he is a child of God and in a state of grace. The Holy Ghost gives us this testimony in general if we have a tender conscience, hate and detest sin, and endeavor to do the will of God in great as well as in little things. Therefore St. John (*I.* 3: 21) says: "If our heart do not reprehend us, we have confidence towards God." But since without a special revelation of God we have no full certainty whether we are children of God and in a state of grace, and since so long as we are in our mortal flesh we are in danger of losing this relationship and grace, we must walk in humility and work out our salvation with fear and trembling.—*Phil.* 2: 12.

2. The Apostle infers from our sonship that we are also heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, for he says: *And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ.*

(a.) Children are the natural and lawful heirs of their parents. Whatever they possess of temporal goods, be it much or little, falls to the children as a lawful inheritance. God having vouchsafed to adopt us as children we are also his heirs; we participate in the felicity which he enjoys himself. The richer a father is, the greater is the inheritance of the children. Now we are not the heirs of a rich man, a millionaire, but the heirs of God, the Lord of heaven and earth. Who can estimate the greatness of our inheritance? How vain, how insignificant must every earthly inheritance appear, compared with this! When St. Francis of Assisi, on account of his liberality, was disinherited by his father, he joyfully exclaimed: Now I have more right to say daily: "Our Father, who art in heaven." What a consolation for Christians who have to spend all their life in lowliness and poverty if they can say to themselves: Though I am abandoned by men, poor and miserable, I am far from being unhappy, for God is my Father, and as his child I shall inherit all his goods, nay, himself, for the words which he spoke to Abraham apply also to me: "Fear not, I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great."—*Gen.* 15: 1.

(b.) As children of God we are brothers of Christ, and consequently joint heirs with him; we share in the goods which Jesus Christ has merited as man. He is risen with a glorified body; we shall also rise with one, wherefore the Apostle writes: "He will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory."—*Phil.* 3: 21; Jesus sits at the right hand of God, and as man participates in the power and glory of the divine majesty. In this also, if we are so fortunate as to get to heaven, we shall be made conformable to him, our brother; for in heaven the last or the least of the saints possesses greater power, glory and felicity than all the great ones in this world.

PERORATION.

Considering that we are children and heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, should we not feel ourselves bound to conduct ourselves in a manner suitable to our dignity and destiny? Shall we give ourselves up to the despicable enjoyments of the flesh, when, as heirs of God we have the joys of heaven in prospect? No; mindful of our dignity and destiny, we must not attach our heart to any temporal and perishable good, we must mortify the

deeds of the flesh, and always behave as becomes children of God, that we may have the happiness of being heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Amen.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL, *Luke 16: 1-9.* At that time: Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him: How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship: for now thou canst be steward no longer. And the steward said within himself: What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: A hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? Who said: A hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: Take thy bill and write eighty. And the lord commended the unjust steward, for as much as he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. And I say to you: Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD.

What I have just read for you in the gospel of this day is not a true history or a real occurrence, but only a parable, that is, a discourse in the form of a history, containing important lessons for our daily life. Our Lord teaches us in this parable that we must look upon temporal goods, not as our property which we may deal with as we please, but only as goods entrusted to us by God, to be employed according to his will. Now in order to make use of our temporal goods according to the will of God,

we must assist the poor and needy so far as our circumstances permit, for God is particularly pleased with works of mercy, and rewards them here and hereafter.

Let us make the contents of the gospel of this day the subject of our meditation, and consider the three following points:

- I. *A rich man calls his steward to account;*
- II. *The unjust steward knows how to act in his perplexity;*
- III. *The rich man praises the unjust steward for his prudence.*

PART I.

1. The gospel of this day begins with the words: *There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.*

(a.) *The rich man is God.* God is immensely rich in himself, for he possesses all perfections in an infinite degree—he is the sum of all that is good. All things outside of him are also his; heaven and earth and all that they contain are his property. "Thine are the heavens, and thine is the earth."—*Ps. 88: 12.* Every one likes to serve a rich master, especially if he is liberal, because he expects good wages. Now, should we not serve God with great joy because he is an infinitely rich and generous Master who rewards our service here and hereafter most munificently? And yet there are so many Christians who serve the enemies of God, the world, the flesh and the devil, from whom they receive temporal and eternal perdition as their reward. What a delusion!

(b.) *The steward of the rich man is man.* All men, whoever they may be, are stewards of God, because they are in his service, depend entirely upon him, and must make use of all that they possess according to his will. No man, however exalted, is his own master. None can say: "Nobody can command me, I can do what I will." Every one, the king and the beggar, must acknowledge God as his Lord, and obey him. Woe to those who will not submit to the authority of God; they will share the fate of Pharaoh in Egypt, who in his haughtiness said: "Who is the Lord, that I should hear his voice? . . . I know not the Lord."—*Exodus 5: 2.* The Red Sea swallowed up this blasphemer and scoffer with his whole army. Let us humbly subject ourselves to the dominion of the Lord, and say with the devout Samuel: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."—*I. Kings 3: 10.*

(c.) *By goods we understand all things whatsoever we have; the goods of the body, such as beauty, strength, health, the five senses; the goods of the world, such as honor, respect, property;*

the goods of the soul, such as understanding, memory, will; finally the supernatural gifts, such as the Catholic faith, the holy sacraments, and all the graces and means of salvation. We owe all these goods to God, and they are his gifts in the strictest sense of the word. "What hast thou, that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"—*I. Cor.* 4: 7. Far be it from you to be proud of what you are or have, on that account thinking yourselves better than others and even looking down upon them with contempt. This would be a very foolish and sinful pride, because whatever you possess is a gift of God. If you have any advantage over your fellow-men, it should be to you a motive to humble yourselves the more before God, and to be more grateful to him.

(d.) It is said of the steward that he *was accused unto his lord*. People of the house, or externs, who were aware of the steward's bad administration, accused him to his master and brought his wrong-doing to light. The sinner, that unfaithful steward of God, will also have his accusers; the *angels*, especially *his guardian angel*, of whom it is said: "He will not forgive when thou hast sinned."—*Exodus* 23: 21; the *devils*, who, as we read in the Apocalypse, accuse men before God day and night; *the people*, the poor, the widows and orphans, who are oppressed, the scandalized and seduced; *conscience*, which is our accuser as often as we offend God; and finally *sin itself*, which, on account of its magnitude, cries to heaven for vengeance. Let us always walk in the fear of God, and do penance for our sins, that we may not fear those accusers on the day of judgment.

(e.) The steward was accused to his master *that he had wasted his goods*. To waste the goods and gifts of God is to make a bad use of them. He who sacrifices money and goods, health and beauty, understanding and ability, to pride, impurity and other sins, has a great deal to account for. The same may be said of those who make a bad use of the supernatural goods, who despise interior inspirations, do not hear the word of God, do not assist at mass, etc., with devotion, who receive the sacraments either not at all, or unworthily. If we give a poor man an article of clothing and he sells it and gets drunk with the money he gets for it, we become angry and say: "Just let him come again!" And should not God be displeased with us when we devote his gifts to sin and consequently offend him! Let no one therefore say: This belongs to me; it is my property; I can do with it as I please; I am my own master; no one has a right to interfere with me; I am not accountable to anybody. Suppose that people have no right to interfere, God has, because you abuse his gifts. He will demand an account of you for everything he has given you, as the master did of his steward.

2. Of this master the gospel says: *He called him, and said to him: How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for now thou canst be steward no longer.* No doubt the steward was terrified when he heard his master speak thus. He was to give an account of his stewardship, and was conscious of many acts of injustice. It was also plain to him, that he could no longer conceal his unfaithfulness, and that he would lose his situation. Hence his perplexity. As the master called his steward, so God calls us and demands an account of our stewardship. He calls us even —

(a.) *In this life.* Through a mission, a jubilee, a sermon, a sickness, a death, and by many other events, which make a deep impression upon us and vividly bring the vanity of all earthly things before our eyes, he directs our thoughts to eternity and convinces us of the necessity of conversion. Blessed are they who listen to such a call of grace and employ it for their salvation; they will be saved. We have examples in the Ninevites, who after the sermon of Jonas did penance; in the palsied man, who made use of his sufferings for his spiritual advantage, and therefore obtained the forgiveness of his sins; and in Margaret of Cortona, who, at the horrible sight of the corpse of her murdered lover already in a state of putrefaction, was so seized with dread that she most bitterly bewailed her dissipation and did penance as long as she lived. (22 Feb.) Woe to those who reject the graces which God offers them for their salvation and continue their sinful life; they will share the lot of the obdurate Jews in Jerusalem and perish. "To-day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts."—*Ps.* 94: 8.

(b.) *After our death.* As soon as our soul is separated from the body, she must appear before the judgment-seat of God, and there the eternal Judge will say to her: "Give an account of thy stewardship." The account we shall be obliged to give will extend to all our thoughts, words, works, to the use of all graces and gifts of God, to every minute of our lifetime, to the performance of the duties of religion and of our state of life, to the intention which we had in our actions, to the manner in which we performed good works. If even in one point we cannot give an account, if we are defiled by only one mortal sin, we shall be cast away. And this judgment, as we know, is irrevocable and eternal in its consequences. He who is damned once is damned for evermore. And who should avoid thinking of judgment, more especially as we are never secure against it, and may die at any moment? Who would be so blind and so free from fear of this judgment as to live in forgetfulness of salvation? Who would not, if he has the misfortune to fall into mortal sin, do

penance without delay, in order to avert from himself the danger of appearing as a sinner before the tribunal of God?

PART II.

Let us now look at the steward:

1. Quite embarrassed, he says: *What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed.*

(a.) When God shall have taken away from us the stewardship, *i. e.*, summoned us by death before his tribunal, the *time for digging* will be over for us; we can do no more for our salvation. We can no longer confess our sins in order to obtain forgiveness, nor do good works in order to blot out temporal punishments. It will also be impossible by good works to gain merits for heaven. Here it the time of sowing, hereafter the time of reaping. Oh, how lamentable will be the lot of those who must appear before God as sinners! How much will they regret that they spent a long series of years so thoughtlessly, and did not employ the many opportunities they had of saving their souls! How they will wish to have only a few minutes, in order to blot out their sins by a sincere confession! How they will wish to be permitted to return to the world for a little while with a view to gain merits for heaven! But all their wishes will be vain; for them there will be no more time; they will be obliged for ever to say: "To dig I am not able." Oh, Christians, dig here, because you cannot dig there. If you are sinners, dig, and labor to be reconciled with God by true repentance; if you are in a state of grace, dig and labor to merit heaven by your good works.

(b.) Nor can we any longer beg after departure from this world. Here we may by fervent prayer obtain all blessings for time and eternity: "Ask, and it shall be given you."—*Luke 11:9*. Hereafter we cannot obtain the least grace by prayer. The five foolish virgins may serve as proof; they in vain cried out to the Lord, saying: "Lord, Lord, open to us." To their terror, they heard the words: "Amen I say to you, I know you not."—*Matt. 25: 11, 12*. Dives only begged that his tongue might be cooled by Lazarus, but his request was not granted.—*Luke 16: 24, 25*. Let us diligently make use of fervent prayer in this life and not cease to lay our necessities before God; let us particularly pray for those things which are necessary for our salvation; for the forgiveness of our sins, for grace to do good, and for the gift of final perseverance.

2. Let us now consider how the steward extricates himself out of his embarrassment. He says within himself: *I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.* He now calls together his lord's debtors and asks them how much they owe his lord; then he reduces each one's debt. As we perceive, this steward acted very prudently, for he chose a very appropriate means of helping himself out of his difficulty. There can be no doubt that the debtors whom he favored so much showed themselves grateful, and when he was turned out of office received him and provided for his support; for one favor deserves another. Let us gather from this the following lessons:

(a.) This steward thought at once of his safety, and employed the appropriate means. If we abstract from his injustice, he ought to serve us a pattern in the affair of our salvation. If you are in danger of suffering the loss of your souls, do without delay what is necessary for your salvation. You have perhaps fallen into a grievous sin, and therefore are in great danger of losing your soul. Make a good confession, with a view to restore yourselves to the state of grace. You are in the proximate occasion of sin, and have already sinned in consequence. Avoid the occasion, give up that person, that house, that company, for this is required for the salvation of your soul. You have the bad habit of swearing, blaspheming, committing impurities: try to get rid of these habits; employ conscientiously the means prescribed by your father confessor.

(b.) In the unjust steward we see how one sin begets another. The vice of prodigality caused the steward to defraud his lord and to induce others to defraud him. Envy caused Cain to commit fratricide; avarice caused Judas to betray his Master; ambition induced the high priests and Scribes to bring about the crucifixion of our Lord. Beware of the first sin, for it rarely remains alone, but draws others and greater ones after it, and ultimately impentence and eternal damnation.

(c.) The steward indeed sinned grievously because he induced the debtors of his lord to commit an injustice; but they were by no means free from sin, for it was their duty to reject the sinful offer with scorn and instead of listening to him, to report him to his master. Do not make yourself accessory to the sins of others; fear God and do not permit yourself to be enticed to sin by any one. Do what you can to keep others from sin, especially those under your charge.

PART III.

1. *And the lord commended the unjust steward, for as much as he had done wisely.* It may seem strange to some that the lord praised the unjust steward. For how can a man who commits such a wicked deed as this steward be praised? But you must know that the lord did not praise the steward because of his injustice, but because of his prudence; therefore, the gospel does not say: "The lord praised the unjust steward, because he had done unjustly," but *for as much as he had done wisely.* Injustice is and always will be injustice and sinful; but prudence deserves praise, for it is a virtue and most necessary for those who wish to lead a pious life and to please God. It is prudence that in every case makes us know what is pleasing to God, it preserves us from self-delusion, and prevents us from allowing ourselves to be led into evil. Therefore, Christ exhorts us to be wise as serpents (*Matt. 10: 16*), and to imitate the five virgins, who were admitted to the marriage feast on account of their prudence. — *Matt. 25.*

To obtain this necessary virtue of prudence, you must manfully control your inordinate inclinations and passions, and in important affairs ask the advice of conscientious and enlightened Christians, according to the words of the wise man: "My son, do thou nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done" (*Ecclus. 32: 24*), and finally, diligently pray for this virtue, as St. James admonishes (*1: 5*): "If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

2. Christ adds: *The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.*

(a.) *The children of this world* are those whose whole mind is set on earthly goods, and who do not trouble themselves about God and his holy law, or about their soul's salvation. *The children of light* are the true Christians, who aspire to eternal goods, and make themselves worthy of them by a pious life. Let each one of you ask himself whether he is a child of the world or a child of light. If you share the sentiments of worldly people, if you care nothing for the Catholic faith, if you indulge your passions and neglect the duties of religion, you are children of the world and walk in the broad road that leads to perdition; but if you value and love the Catholic faith above all things and regulate your life according to its precepts, you are children of light and walk in the road that leads to life.

(b.) Christ says that the children of the world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. That is, the

children of the world are more concerned about their advantages, make more sacrifices, and take more trouble about temporal things than the children of light, who are so zealous and solicitous for the eternal and heavenly goods. It is certain that if we did for God what the children of the world do for temporal things and for the gratification of their passions, we should attain a high degree of perfection, and be rewarded with a high place among the saints in heaven. What senselessness and infatuation it is to take so much trouble for things which are transitory and worthless, and to do absolutely nothing for heaven! What folly to make greater sacrifices for hell than for heaven!

PERORATION.

Christ concludes the parable in these words: *Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.* Our Lord calls riches *mammon* because they are not really ours, but the property of another which we have to administer, and because they are frequently acquired unjustly, and moreover, they frequently lead to injustice, sins and vices. We make *friends* of riches, if we assist the poor and contribute to charitable purposes out of the means we lawfully possess. In this way we acquire great merit before God, and the poor at our departure from this world will meet us, as it were, as friends, and receive us into everlasting dwellings. Be charitable, love to give alms, for works of mercy to the poor purge from sins, rejoice the heart of God, promote our temporal welfare, and procure for us a happy death and the eternal happiness of heaven. Amen.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

Give an account of thy stewardship.—Luke 16: 2.

These are the words which the divine Judge will address to each one of us: *Give an account of thy stewardship.* Sooner or

later the Lord of life and death will call us from the theatre of this world and summon us before his judgment seat, in order that we may give an account of our whole earthly life. He will do this immediately after our death, at the secret or particular judgment. It is called *secret*, because it is not held publicly, as the final judgment on the last day, but privately with the departed soul. It is called the *particular* judgment, because every man is judged in it particularly, separately, and individually, in contradistinction to the *general* judgment, in which all men will be judged together. I need scarcely remark that in both judgments the sentence upon each individual will be the same, and will be either heaven or hell. At the last judgment no one will be condemned to purgatory, because it will cease at the end of the world, and there will be but two everlasting abodes, heaven and hell.

I shall speak to-day of the particular judgment, and answer the three following questions:

- I. *When and where will the particular judgment be held?*
- II. *How will it be held?*
- III. *How are we to prepare ourselves for it?*

PART I.

The particular judgment will be held *immediately after the death of each person*. We find this doctrine of the faith in many passages of the Sacred Scriptures. "It is easy before God in the day of death to reward every one according to his ways."—*Eccles.* 11: 28. According to this passage, every one, as soon as he is dead, receives his reward or punishment. Reward and punishment necessarily presuppose a judgment; it therefore follows that every man will be judged immediately after death. The Apostle says: "I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ."—*Phil.* 1: 23. St. Paul could not reign with Christ in heaven before he was judged. Now having a desire to die in order to be with Christ, he thereby indicates that there will be a judgment after death. More emphatically still does the Apostle say: "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment."—*Heb.* 29: 7.

This has always been the doctrine of the Church. St. Gregory the Great says: "After death is the judgment." And St. Augustine: "It is rightly believed that the soul when separated from the body will be judged before she appears at the last judgment after reunion with the body." Even the Gentiles believed that each man will be judged immediately after death. According to them there were three judges in the other world, Rhadamanthus, Minos and Æacus, who summoned each man immediately after

death before their tribunal and either rewarded or punished him. As soon as the soul leaves the body she is judged and her fate decided for all eternity.

2. Regarding the place of the particular judgment, it is the opinion of theologians that it takes place where the person dies; for as God is everywhere, he has his tribunal everywhere. The soul need not make a long journey to arrive at the judgment seat. On the very spot whence she departs from the body she will be judged, be it in or out of bed, at home or abroad, on land or on water. It may happen then that a person is judged in the very place where he has done good or evil. Most people die in bed, and therefore the bed will be the place where most people will be judged. Think of this, all of you, whether single or married, and do not devote the bed to sin. It would be awful if you should be judged where you have offended God with abominable vices. The devil would take your soul from the bed and go down with her into hell. Because death may overtake you anywhere, do evil nowhere, but live in all places in such a manner that you need not fear the coming of the divine Judge.

PART II.

The particular judgment will be held in the following manner:

1. The soul must appear before the divine Judge *alone and unattended*. She is separated —

(a.) *From her body*. How terrible it must appear to her to see herself all at once without a body, the companion with which she was most intimately united for many years; what horror will seize her when she sees how this body rots and is to all an object of disgust!

(b.) *From all earthly goods*. She must leave behind all property, honors and dignities. Death falls upon her as a robber, strips her of all that she possesses, and leaves her nothing but her bare life.

(c.) *From all men upon earth*. She may have had many relations and friends, but not one goes with her before the judgment-seat of God. It was this abandonment that King Ezechias felt so much on his death-bed, and full of sadness he said: "I shall behold man no more."—*Is.* 38: 11.

How foolishly then does man act when he pampers his body, which will be dust before long, when he attaches his heart to things which at his death will vanish like smoke, and when he

offends God to please men who at the moment of his death will forsake him.

2. *The soul must appear before Jesus Christ.* Christ will be her judge, for to him the Father has committed the judgment. Christ had been to the soul until her departure a God of love and mercy, and had bestowed on her countless graces. But now he stands before her in another character, now he is her judge who regards not the person of man, who demands an account of every idle word, who has the power and the will to condemn the impenitent sinner. When Joseph in Egypt made himself known to his brothers and said: "I am Joseph, whom you sold," his brothers could not answer him, being struck with exceeding great fear.—*Gen.* 45: 3. I leave it to yourselves to judge what anguish and terror must seize the guilty soul when on a sudden she sees herself placed in the presence of an angry judge. "That moment," says St. Basil, "will be to her more painful than all the pains of hell"

3. As soon as the soul is separated from the body the *investigation* begins. This investigation will extend itself not only to thoughts, words, actions, and omissions, but also to the use of the proffered graces and means of salvation, to the duties of our religion and state of life, to the circumstances and intentions of our actions, and the manner in which we performed them. Christ will bring everything to light, and present it before the soul, even though she has forgotten it long ago, or not recognized it as sinful. "It shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with lamps."—*Soph.* 1: 12. Ah, how will the sinful soul tremble at the revelation of all her crimes; with what shame, confusion and anguish will she be overwhelmed! But how different it will be for the soul of the just man before the tribunal of Jesus! She did the will of God conscientiously, and if from human frailty she sometimes made a false step, she did penance for it immediately. Christ will manifest all her mortifications and exercises of penance; to her joyful astonishment she will see much good which she remembered no more, or to which she attributed no value. She will be greatly rejoiced over it, and a thousand times bless her life, which was always dedicated to the service of God.

4. *The judge pronounces the sentence.* This judgment can be threefold, according to the state in which the soul is found.

(a.) If she is in a state of grace, without stain or spot, she will be admitted immediately into *heaven*. The divine Judge will say to her: "Come, thou blessed of my father, possess thou the king-

dom prepared for thee from the foundation of the world."—*Matt.* 25: 34. Oh, how will the soul rejoice when she hears this sentence from the mouth of Jesus! Her day's work is done; all conflicts, dangers and sufferings are over; she can now for ever more be with her Jesus, the only object of her desire and love, for ever dwell in the house of God in the company of all the angels and saints. Oh, who does not wish from the bottom of his heart to share the lot of this supremely-happy soul?

(b.) If the soul departs this life in a state of grace, but defiled with venial sins, or if in this life she has not made all the satisfaction God's law requires, the judge will send her to *purgatory*, with the assurance that she shall not go out from thence till she has paid the last farthing.—*Matt.* 5: 26. Hearing this sentence, she will be overwhelmed with sadness, deeply regretting that she did not more carefully avoid venial sins, and that from want of zeal she did not perfectly satisfy for the temporal punishment.

(c.) If the soul departs this life in a state of mortal sin, she will go down to *hell*. Full of wrath, our Lord will say to her: "Depart from me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels."—*Matt.* 25: 41. Who shall describe the terror which will seize the soul when she hears that sentence? How will she now curse her criminal excesses and vices? How will she lament when she contemplates heaven, which she could easily have obtained, but which is now lost for ever! And how will she tremble and shudder when the pool of fire is opened, into which she will sink for ever! How shall we fare? Will God admit us into heaven, or condemn us to hell? This as yet depends on ourselves. Therefore no question is more important than this: How are we to prepare ourselves for the judgment?

PART III.

"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."—*I. Cor.* 11: 31. In these words the Apostle teaches us how we are to prepare ourselves for the judgment, so that it may be favorable for us. We must judge ourselves, that is, we must *examine, rectify and amend*—

1. *Our past life.* It is only too certain that we have not spent our past life as we ought; we have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and deed, and by the omission of many good works which we should have done. Perhaps we have not yet atoned for these sins: there are still items of our former sinful life which must be blotted out. It is also possible that some of our confessions are invalid, and that up to this hour we have sins on our conscience,

committed perhaps years ago. All this must be set in order. Therefore review your past life and ask yourself: How do matters stand with me? Am I free from all my sins and from the bad habits of my former life? Have I always made good confessions? Can I assure myself that in each of them I had true contrition and a firm purpose of amendment, and that I never concealed anything of which I should have accused myself? Have I repaired all injuries to the best of my ability? Have I restored ill-gotten goods, and indemnified others for the loss they suffered? If you do not find everything satisfactory, delay not to set your house in order, for you know not when our Lord will call you to judgment. If you have not yet made a general confession, do so as soon as possible. No one should die without making a general confession; for many Christians it is very necessary in order to ensure a happy death. Omit not to inflict voluntary penances upon yourselves for the sins of your past lives, that you may fully satisfy the justice of God and obtain more abundant graces for a truly penitent life and perseverance in virtue.

2. *Our present life.* We must see whether our present life is such that we can give a good account of ourselves. We must examine ourselves—

(a.) *With regard to the duties of religion.* Ask yourselves: Do I love God above all things, and do I show it by this, that I would rather suffer all evils, even death, than offend God by a mortal sin? Have I an inordinate affection for anything earthly? Do I raise my heart frequently to God? Do I love to pray? Do I sanctify Sundays and holidays? Do I frequently receive the sacraments? Do I read spiritual books? Do I love my mother, the Catholic Church; do I follow her ordinances, keep her precepts? How do I treat my neighbor? Do I mean well by every one? Do I rejoice at his success; have I patience with his failings; do I love to do him acts of kindness?

(b.) *With regard to the duties of our state of life.* If you are married, see whether in your married state nothing occurs that violates your conscience. If you are fathers and mothers, see whether you keep your children under good discipline and prevent everything wrong to the best of your ability. See whether you envy others, take advantage of them in business transactions, or oppress them. If you are wealthy, see whether you willingly give alms and make a good use of your temporal substance; if you are poor, whether you are content with your state of life, whether you envy the rich, and whether you work industriously, in order to make an honest living. If, after such an examination, you find some items that deserve censure, you must make resolutions of amendment.

PERORATION.

Thus, like David, think upon the days of old (*Ps. 76: 6*), examining your past life and rectifying all errors and mistakes without delay. Make a general confession, unless you have already made one. Let no day pass without heartily repenting of your faults and endeavor to expiate them by various works of penance. Avoid not only mortal, but also venial sins; practise the Christian virtues and spend every day as if it were the last of your life. If in such a way you judge yourselves, you will not be judged. Jesus will graciously receive you on the day of judgment and admit you with his elect into the mansions of bliss. Amen.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE FEASTS OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN, ST. JAMES THE GREATER, ST. ANNE.

The Lord commended the unjust steward, for as much as he had done wisely.—Luke 16: 8.

There is a twofold prudence, a false and a true. False prudence, which is possessed by the children of the world, consists in being bent upon temporal advantages, in the gratification of low passions, and in discovering means, good or bad, to attain the desired end. Such a worldly prudent man was the steward. When his lord called him to account because he had wasted his goods, and discharged him, he was at first in great perplexity, but being prudent he knew how to get out of the difficulty. He made the debtors of his lord reduce their bills, hoping that in gratitude for this favor they would receive him into their houses and support him for the rest of his life. The true prudence proper to the children of God consists in this, that we know what is pleasing to God, and that we make use of the means requisite for our salvation. All the saints possessed this prudence; they knew that all earthly things are vain, and therefore they aspired to the things above.

With a view to convince you of this prudence of the saints I will give you brief accounts of saints whose feasts occur about this time of the year, viz.: —

- I. *St. Mary Magdalen;*
- II. *St. James the Greater;*
- III. *St. Anne.*

PART I

1. *History of St. Mary Magdalen.* Mary Magdalen, whose feast the Church celebrates on July 22nd, was born in Galilee. Infatuated and ensnared by the vanities and lusts of the world, she strayed from the path of virtue and sank so deeply that she was known as a public sinner. But she did not always remain a sinner. Obedient to a powerful inspiration of grace, she went to Jesus, and full of contrition, bewailed her sins before him, and had the happiness to hear from him the consoling words: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Henceforth she was a most faithful adherent of Christ; her love rendered her so strong that she followed him on the way of the cross, and with Mary the Mother of Jesus, and St. John, she stood under the cross. She shed bitter tears when she did not find the body of Christ in the sepulchre; but he rewarded her love, appeared to her first of all, and commissioned her to announce his Resurrection to the Apostles. Of the rest of her life we have no authentic account. According to some she is said to have accompanied the Blessed Virgin and St. John to Ephesus after the Ascension, and to have died there. Others say that she came with her brother Lazarus and her sister Martha and other Christians to Marseilles, in France, where for thirty years, until her death, she lived in a cave, practicing the most severe penance.

2. *Lessons.*

(a.) *Mary did timely penance.* She had scarcely heard that Christ was in the house of Simon when she hastened to him in order to obtain of him the forgiveness of her sins. She did not say: This is not the proper time to go to him when so many guests are assembled around him; nor, I am young yet, I shall do penance after a while: on the contrary, she attends without delay to the business of her salvation and is converted. And she did well, for if she had not embraced this opportunity, perhaps she would never have been converted.

There are not many sinners who wish to live and die in sin; almost all intend some time or other to repent. But while they content themselves with this thought, one time of grace passes

after another without their doing penance, till finally death approaches and overtakes them in sin. Ah, hell is full of those who intended to do penance, but never did. Therefore, those who are in a state of sin should not delay; for we are all sinful, and may die at any moment. Consider again that the longer you delay your conversion the more difficult it will become, because remorse of conscience becomes weaker, sin casts deeper roots and becomes a habit, and God diminishes the measure of his graces. If you have the misfortune to sin grievously make a good confession on the first opportunity; only a speedy repentance secures your salvation.

(b.) *She did penance thoroughly.* Her mind and conduct were totally changed after her conversion. Her heart no longer belonged to the world and its lusts, but to God alone. Her interior transformation manifested itself also in her life. She no longer held intercourse with the world, but sought the society of Jesus and of his disciples; she no longer vainly adorned herself, but dressed plainly and decently and gave every one a most beautiful example of holy zeal and modesty, and renouncing all worldly amusements she occupied herself with God and with works of piety. Our repentance must have these qualities, if it is to be true. If you merely confess your sins and perform the penance imposed on you, yet do not change your perverse heart, you are sham penitents, and your confessions, far from being for your salvation, are for your damnation. Think well of this, and at each confession devote great diligence to making acts of contrition and a firm purpose of amendment, for contrition and good resolutions are most necessary for a good confession and the forgiveness of sins.

(c.) *She did penance perseveringly.* Having found grace with Jesus she returned no more to a life of sin, but persevered constantly in penance till she died. Your repentance must be such; your confessions must be followed by a lasting amendment. Nothing is more dangerous than to relapse into the old sins, for from this frequently originate blindness and obduracy, final impenitence and everlasting ruin. St. Peter therefore says: "If, flying from the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they be again entangled in them and are overcome, their latter state is become unto them worse than the former. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment, which was delivered to them."—II. *Peter* 2: 20, 21. Guard against nothing so carefully as a relapse. Renew daily, but particularly at the moment of temptation, your resolution rather to die than to sin again; shun

the proximate occasions of sin, and avail yourselves of the means of amendment—prayer and the sacraments.

PART II.

1. *History of St. James.* This Saint, called St. James the Greater, to distinguish him from St. James the Less, a near relation of our Lord, whose feast is celebrated on July 25th, was a son of the fisherman Zebedee, and a brother of the Apostle and Evangelist St. John. When Christ at the Lake of Genesareth said to them: "Follow me," they immediately left parents, house and business and walked with our Lord. Jesus particularly favored them and made them with St. Peter witnesses of his Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and of his agony in the garden of Olives. When the Apostles left Jerusalem to teach nations St. James is said to have preached to the scattered tribes of the Jews. A tradition of the Church in Spain, based upon the authority of SS. Theodore and Jerome, says that he preached the gospel in that country. In the year 41 he returned to Jerusalem where, three years later, Herod Agrippa caused him to be beheaded, for he had incurred the hatred of the Jews owing to his zeal in preaching the Christian faith. His body was interred at Jerusalem, but was afterwards translated to Spain, where at Compostella it is visited and venerated to this day, not only by the Spaniards, but by pilgrims from all countries.

2. *Lessons.* The gospel mentions two events in the life of SS. James and John, which are very instructive.

(a.) Our Lord intended on one occasion, on his journey to Jerusalem, to stop in a town of the Samaritans, but they received him not. SS. James and John were so incensed at this conduct, that they said to him: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them? And turning, he rebuked them, saying: You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save."—*Luke* 9: 51-56. You must take care that in your zeal you do not overstep the bounds of moderation and charity. When you perceive that so many people not only lead bad lives themselves, but also seek to corrupt their fellow-men, it is not against Christian charity to become angry; but permit no hatred or desire of revenge to arise in you, and do not wish that God would punish and destroy them, for that would be against Christian charity; on the contrary, wish that God would bring about their conversion. This is the way of the Church, for she prays for infidels, heretics and sinners.

(b.) One day SS. James and John, with their mother, came to Christ and asked him that he would place one on his right hand and the other on his left, in his kingdom. He said to them: "You know not what you ask. Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized? But they said to him: We can."—*Mark* 10; 35-40. By these words they declared themselves ready to follow their divine Master on the way of the cross.

From this we learn that we are not to seek honors, riches, pleasures; for nothing but humility, self-denial and patient endurance of sufferings and persecutions are imposed as a duty on the subjects of Christ. The disciple is to be treated no better than the master. When Christ entered into his glory by sufferings, nothing remains for us, if we wish to be his disciples, but to follow him on the way of the cross. Therefore he says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."—*Luke* 9: 23.

PART III.

1. *Traditions concerning St. Anne.* St. Anne always enjoyed in the Church the highest veneration. Justinian I. built a magnificent church at Constantinople in her honor in the year 550; and Justinian II. added another. The Christians, in very early times, celebrated her feast annually; Pope Gregory XIII. sanctioned it in the year 1584 and prescribed it for the whole Church.

Neither the Sacred Scriptures nor ancient Church historians mention St. Anne; we depend entirely on traditions referred to by several of the Fathers. According to these, Anne and her husband Joachim were descended from the royal house of David, and led a humble life at Nazareth. Their marriage was for many years childless, but at length God blessed them with a daughter, to whom they gave the name of Mary. When the child was three years old, they brought her to Jerusalem and presented her to the high priest, that she might be brought up in the temple for the service of God. How long they lived afterwards cannot be ascertained; it is, however, certain that they died before the Incarnation of Christ because the Evangelists make no mention of them. It is a venerable tradition that the Blessed Virgin was the only child of St. Anne, and when the Bible speaks of sisters of Mary, we are to understand near relations, for among the Jews cousins were frequently called brothers and sisters.

2. Lessons.

(a.) Pious parents have always venerated St. Anne, in order to obtain through her intercession with God grace for the

education of their children. You also must do this, Christian parents; recommend yourselves and your children to St. Anne that you may bring them up well, and derive consolation and joy from them.

(b.) St. Anne brought her child Mary in her tender years to Jerusalem that she might be educated in the temple in all virtue and piety. You may not be so situated and circumstanced as to be able to separate your children from the world and have them educated in boarding schools or convents; but it is in your power to keep them away from irreligious and immoral people, and to plant in their hearts from their childhood love of a retired life. This is absolutely necessary if they are to be preserved from danger. How many children have been led astray early in life because their parents did not keep a watchful eye over them, and allowed them to frequent bad company! Do not permit your children to keep company with people who have no religion, or to participate in amusements which may result in the loss of their innocence.

(c.) The Blessed Virgin was a child given to her parents in answer to prayer; for only after long and fervent prayers did God bless St. Anne with a child. There can be no doubt that she daily prayed to God to shield her child from all dangers of body and soul, and to preserve her in innocence and holiness. You also, Christian parents, must pray for your children, that God may bless your efforts for their proper education. You will not see your efforts crowned with success unless God assists you with his grace, for, "neither he that planted is anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."—*I. Cor. 3: 7.* But the means to obtain the grace of God for every good work is prayer. Therefore pray for your children, for the good and obedient ones, and for the bad and untractable ones; for the former that they may remain good and innocent: for the latter, that they may repent and become good.

(d.) St. Anne gave her child the best example. Mary had in her mother a most beautiful pattern of all virtues; what she saw in her breathed piety and childlike fear of God; no wonder that the child in her earliest years turned to God, and loved him with all her heart. Oh, how happy are children who have good parents who daily pray with fervent devotion, assist regularly on Sundays and holidays at mass, frequently go to confession and communion, always live in peace and harmony, and in their whole conduct manifest Christian sentiments. The conduct of children is a faithful copy of that of their parents. Virtue being deeply rooted in their heart gradually becomes to them a second

nature. If it should come to pass that they fall, they will soon rise again; the remembrance of the piety of their parents will be to them a powerful incentive to amend their lives. If the admonition of our Lord concerns any one, it surely concerns parents: "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven."—*Matt. 5: 16.*

PERORATION.

Take to heart what I have briefly told you of the three saints whose festivals we celebrate about this time. These saints acted according to the rules of Christian prudence, for they did not suffer themselves to be ensnared and deluded by the spirit of the times, but gave themselves to God with unwavering firmness and made provision for the salvation of their souls. Act prudently, too, and shun nothing so much as sin; for it is sin that renders man miserable for time and eternity. Detach yourselves from everything that hinders you in the business of your salvation, and serve God faithfully all the days of your life. This is the true prudence which entitles you to God's love and grace here, and to a blessed felicity hereafter. Amen.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE SINNER RESEMBLES THE UNJUST STEWARD.

There was a certain rich man, who had a steward.—Luke 16: 1.

The rich man is God. He who possesses much money and property is called rich. God certainly can be called rich, because heaven and earth and all that is in them, are his property. Compared with him, the millionaires of our day are mere beggars. The steward of the rich man is each individual. All men, of whatever state or condition they may be are, like the steward, in the service of God, and the goods which they possess, be they many or few, are not their property, but God's; they cannot do with them as they please, but must use them according to God's will. Woe to those who abuse God's gifts and benefits by sinning;

they will certainly share the fate of the unjust steward whom his lord called to an account, found guilty, and discharged. Finally, by the unjust steward we must understand the sinner, for whatever is said of the steward in the gospel is applicable to the sinner. On this we will meditate to-day. I say, *the sinner resembles the steward in the gospel of this day* —

- I. *In his iniquities;*
 II. *In the fate that awaits him.*

PART I.

The steward in the parable is represented to us —

1. *As a squanderer*, for it is said of him, that he was accused to his lord of having wasted his goods. There is no doubt that this evil repute was well grounded, and that the wastefulness could not be denied, otherwise the steward, who was so prudent, would certainly have found means to defend himself and to prove his innocence. At any rate he was a squanderer. The gospel does not say how he wasted the goods of his lord. Perhaps he acted as the prodigal son who in a short time wasted his patrimony in debauchery, or like Dives, whose sumptuous living and fine clothes would have made him a bankrupt if he had not been very rich.

The sinner is a squanderer, for he squanders —

(a.) *The goods of nature*, such as life, health, property, honor and good name, the faculties and senses of the body, and the powers of the soul. To abuse these goods in any way is what we call to squander or waste them. The man who commits any sin whatever does this. Consider the proud man; Does he not abuse money, beauty, knowledge, for the gratification of his vanity and ambition? Are there not persons who spend large sums on dress? Consider the avaricious man; instead of giving alms of his abundance, as is his strict duty, he hoards it up; he grudges everything for himself and others; instead of directing his thoughts to God and to eternal things, he is occupied with earthly things and neglects the salvation of his soul. Consider the licentious man; does he not resemble the prodigal son, who by his debaucheries lost his patrimony, honor and good name, and brought a great deal of sorrow on his father? Consider drunkards and gamblers; are there not many among them who have lost house and home, and reduced their wives and children to beggary? It is therefore only too certain that every sinner abuses the gifts of nature and appears as a squanderer before God.

(b.) *The goods of grace*, such as the interior illuminations and incentives to good, the voice of conscience, the word of God, the holy mass, the holy sacraments, the holy seasons and feasts. In every sinner, when he is about to do evil, conscience is aroused more or less, and places the wickedness of what he is about to do before his mind, and endeavors to keep him from it. There are graces by which God endeavours to prevent evil, but how often does man slight these graces, follow his inordinate desire, and commit sin? Every sinner, even the greatest, has intervals, in which he plainly sees his misery and the danger of losing his soul, and feels himself urged to begin a new life. But how many sinners reject the graces of God again and again, and remain impenitent! The word of God is often preached, but how many sinners either hear it not at all, or without a good will, so that it affords not the least advantage! Every Sunday and holiday opportunity is given for the reception of the sacraments, and they could reconcile themselves with God and recover his lost grace: but many sinners allow years to pass without confession and communion; or they receive them unworthily, and thus receive death and damnation from the fountain of grace. Each Ecclesiastical Year has so many holy seasons and feasts which should be an incentive and invitation to put our conscience in order and make provision for eternity, but how small is the number of sinners who avail themselves of these holy seasons and feasts! Thus again the sinner appears as a squanderer because he makes no good use of the graces bestowed on him for his salvation.

2. *As a defrauder*. When the steward had wasted the goods of his lord he had recourse to fraud, with a view to help himself out of his difficulty. He called the debtors of his lord together, inquired of them the amount of their debt, and made them take bills and write therein less than the real amounts. Thus, one who owed a hundred barrels of oil was told to write down only fifty; another, whose debt was a hundred quarters of wheat, was told to reduce his debt to eighty quarters. In like manner he dealt with the other debtors. To every one he granted a considerable abatement, and thus defrauded his lord of a large amount. The sinner too is a defrauder; for like the steward, he is the cause of others not giving to God what they owe him. He does this —

(a.) *By giving scandal*, of which he makes himself guilty when he gives others an occasion or inducement to sin. Who can count all the sins that are committed by scandal? How much scandal is given by sinful words, *e. g.*, by scoffing at faith, by calumnies against the Church, her institutions and her priests,

by immodest words and songs, and by cursing, swearing and blaspheming! How much scandal is given by sinful actions, by vain or improper dress, by encouraging objectionable dances, especially the so-called "round dances" and other amusements, or by participating in such amusements; for this is the cause of others participating in them who cannot be kept away from them by their parents and superiors. How much scandal is given by omissions! Whence does it come that so many Catholics do not hear the word of God on Sundays and holidays? From this, that others, perhaps even such as are looked upon as authorities, never go to hear a sermon. How does it happen that many go so seldom, perhaps scarcely once a year, to confession and communion, whilst formerly they went often? Because they see others neglect confession and communion. Whence does it come that so many sons and daughters are wicked, and contaminate the most beautiful years of their life with debaucheries? Because they are so unfortunate as to have parents who entirely neglect the duty of their state, the education of their children. Thus scandal-givers defraud God, because they rob him of many souls, which are his property.

(b) *By corrupting*, which means inducing others to sin. One would hardly believe it possible that there are people so bad as deliberately to make a practice of corrupting their fellow-men, and making them miserable here and hereafter. But there are such, and they are not a few. To this class belong, to mention only a few examples, those wicked men who write or circulate bad books and newspapers, with a view to undermine the faith and to spread irreligious maxims; those impudent women who adorn themselves in every possible way so as to ensnare unwary young men; those miscreants who bring all their artifices into play in order to poison innocence; those abominable people who on every occasion speak impure words with a view to inoculate others with the poison of lust—nay, who corrupt innocent persons and even children, in body and soul. Such corrupters are devils in human form, and a curse will come upon them. Thus you see that the sinner in his iniquities bears a true resemblance to the steward in the gospel; for like him, he is a squanderer and defrauder. But he is also like him in the fate that awaits him.

PART II.

What did the lord do with his steward?

1. He called him, and reproached him, saying: *How is it that I hear this of thee?* The lord upbraided him for his neglect of duty,

and rebuked him in good earnest for his mal-administration. In like manner God treats the sinner. He calls him and reproaches him —

(a.) *By the voice of conscience.* As soon as a man has sinned his conscience is aroused, and holds up to his view the evil done and its consequences, and tortures him with disquietude, sadness, anguish and terror. And he can never get rid of this torment so long as he remains in sin. Example: The thief mentioned in the Life of Medardus.

(b.) *By his holy word*, which is preached to him every Sunday and holiday. Thus he announced to the Ninevites the destruction of their city, whereupon they did penance in sackcloth and ashes and averted the destruction. Peter preached so forcibly to the assembled Jews that full of fear and contrition they said to him and to the other Apostles: "What shall we do, men and brethren?" and three thousand of them were converted to Christianity—*Acts 2: 37-41*. Our priests preach the word of God today; they frequently announce the terrifying truths of our holy religion, by hearing which many a sinner is seized with a wholesome dread and does penance.

(c.) *By various events in life*, such as escapes from great danger, sickness, accidents, the death of near and dear relations, etc. Such events very often make a strong impression even upon the most careless and thoughtless sinners, awaken in them wholesome thoughts, preach to them very forcibly the nothingness of all earthly things, and cause them to make resolutions of amendment. How often did the Israelites turn from God, and commit sin? But when God scourged them with war, famine and pestilence, they sought him and did penance.

2. He took from him the stewardship, saying to him; *Now thou canst be steward no longer.* God also acts in the same way with the sinner —

(a.) *Frequently, even in this life.* Examples: God deprived Heli and his sons of the priesthood, and caused them to die suddenly on account of their sins. He took the crown from Saul and also his life because of his disobedience. He drove the Jewish nation from their own country and scattered them all over the world on account of their unbelief, ingratitude and obduracy. He deals similarly with sinners now. He punishes spendthrifts with poverty; the impure with shame, reproach, sickness, and an early death; disobedient children with misery and various tribulations. Sins and vices are the cause of many families, cities, kingdoms and

empires decaying and perishing. Just think of the overthrow of Achab and of his whole family; of the ruin of the Jewish kingdom. God frequently withdraws his graces and means of grace from individuals and nations if they continue to abuse them. Thus he deprived King Saul, Judas, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem of his grace, and abandoned them to destruction. In like manner he took away from many nations of Asia, Africa and Europe, the Catholic faith, because they knew not how to appreciate it, and led a very unchristian life.

(b.) *But always after death.* There is then no more time for penance. The sinner who here had half a century or more to work out his salvation will not there have a minute to reconcile himself with God. Every grace even the least is denied him, therefore repentance is absolutely impossible. In eternity there are no longer any sacraments, in vain he will seek for a priest to hear his confession and absolve him from his sins. There the sinner may call upon God with copious tears for grace and mercy, but in vain; for God's mercy has ceased for him and he has fallen a victim to his justice; there will be no intercessor for him; Mary the Mother of Mercy, his guardian angel and his patron saint, will no longer interest themselves for him. The heavenly host is silent, and leaves the sinner in the hands of the divine Judge; in a word, hereafter there is no seed-time, but only harvest-time; "the sinner that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption."—*Gal. 6: 8.* Oh, how foolish and blind is the sinner, who in his earthly life rejects the graces offered him by God for the salvation of his soul, and perseveres in impenitence! What despair will seize him when he sees the fountain of grace closed against him for all eternity!

3. *He called him to an account, saying to him: Give an account of thy stewardship.* God will also call the sinner to an account. He must give an account—

(a.) *Of all the evil he has done, from the first moment of his awakened reason to the last breath of his life.* God will be very exact and rigorous in this account, as Jesus indicates in these words: "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment."—*Matt. 12: 36.* The divine Judge will examine the sinner, and go through all the commandments of God and of the Church, the duties of his religion and state of life, and all the different kinds of sin, the seven deadly sins, the six sins against the Holy Ghost, the four sins that cry to heaven for vengeance, the sins by which we become accessory to the sins of others and the sins committed in thought, word and deed. Ah, how many sins will

then come before the man who always lived in forgetfulness of salvation! And among these what a number of mortal sins, of which one alone would be sufficient for eternal damnation!

(b.) *Of all the good he could and should have done, but neglected* God is not content that we do no evil; we must also zealously do good. We know that the servant who, instead of making use of his talent, buried it, was rebuked by his master and rejected.—*Matt. 25.* We must zealously practise the Christian virtues, such as humility, meekness, patience, the love of our neighbor; also good works, especially prayer, fasting and alms-deeds, conscientiously performing the duties of our religion and state of life; otherwise we cannot be saved. What, then, will become of the sinner who never troubles himself about the Christian virtues and good works, and who ridicules those who practise them? And suppose that he does some good, what reward will he have when he always lives in a state of sin, in which no good work is meritorious for eternity? The sinner will no more be able to face the judgment than the unjust steward; the divine Judge will pronounce upon him the sentence of condemnation.

PERORATION.

Thus then the sinner bears a sad resemblance to the steward. As he wasted the goods of his lord, and even committed injustice and fraud against him, so the sinner wastes the gifts and benefits of God by making bad use of them; and he defrauds God by leading his fellow-men astray and thus preventing them from giving to God what is due to him. Therefore the same fate awaits him that befell the steward; God summons him before his judgment-seat, calls him to an account, and rejects him. Consider this miserable end of the sinner, and imitate the unjust steward in his prudence. Do as he did, make provision for your rescue; renounce sin, do penance, and endeavor by good works, especially by works of mercy to the poor, to make to yourselves friends who may receive you into everlasting dwellings. Amen.



EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

WEALTH NOT A GREAT ADVANTAGE, NOR POVERTY A GREAT MISFORTUNE.

*What shall I do? . . . To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed.—
Luke 16: 3.*

There is a great inequality among men: some live in affluence, others in poverty. Some have whatever their heart desires, others suffer the greatest privations; in view of such inequality one would be tempted to deny a just Providence, if one did not know that persons often bring about their misfortunes, like the steward who on account of his wastefulness was discharged, and if one were not to consider the matter from a higher point of view.

God is the Lord and Master of all that we possess. We are his stewards and agents and he distributes his property in various ways: to one he gives five talents, to another two, and to another but one, in order that they may make good use of them and thereby gain the eternal goods of heaven.

It would indeed be presumption on our part, being only stewards of temporal goods, to murmur against the Lord and desire him to make us equal to others. Cannot a proprietor do with his substance as he pleases? Does he wrong you when he gives you less than your neighbor? To whom will you appeal against him, the Supreme Lord, above whom there is no other? He has given us life without any merit of ours, and if he preserves this life in this or that way, in poverty or riches, what more can we ask? Besides, what great advantage is it to live in affluence? Is it a great disadvantage to live in poverty? It is true, only those who have plenty of money are esteemed happy by worldlings, poverty being looked upon as great misery. But as in many other things, so also in this, the judgments of men are wrong, for if we look upon riches and poverty in the light of the gospel we find that—

- I. *Wealth is not a great advantage;*
- II. *Nor poverty a great misfortune.*

PART I.

1. *Wealth is attended with many cares.* The opulent may appear to live free from all care as regards food and raiment, but experi-

ence teaches that such is not the case. Generally speaking the rich have more anxiety in regard to temporal goods than the poor; anxiety about investments; anxiety as to losing money, anxiety to gain more and so on. Do you not hear the rich complain more bitterly of hard times than the poor? How does this happen? If the heart be not carefully watched wealth begets covetousness, which is insatiable, and because it is insatiable, the rich are tossed to and fro by disquieting cares, wishes and desires. Seas have their coasts, rivers their banks, winds cease at times, the earth has its boundaries, but covetousness has no limits; it never rests. The more it has, the more it wants; and those who desire to become rich fall into the snares of the devil, who goes about seeking whom he may devour.

2. *It is attended with many dangers for the soul.* Wealth begets covetousness, and covetousness is the source of countless sins and of every kind of injustice. In proportion as riches increase the judgments of God, which await the rich in the other world, are multiplied. Burdened with injustices, possessing goods earned by the sweat of the laborer, the tear of the widow and the orphan, when he appears before the judgment-seat of God what can the rich man expect? The covetous will not restore ill-gotten goods; nothing is more common than fraud and theft, and nothing more rare than restitution. "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 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: 23, 24.*

3. *It leads to dissipation and sin.* Very few men behave well in prosperity; they easily become overbearing, forget God and their eternal destiny, grow dissipated, gratify the passions of the flesh, and thus riches cause the ruin both of their body and soul. What made the princes of Israel, in fact, I may say most nations, so overbearing that they cared neither for God or man? What blinded Solomon, the wisest of kings, but the glitter of good fortune?

4. *It increases our accountability before God.* The goods of this world must be made use of according to the will of God; we must one day give an account of our stewardship, and the more we have received, the more will be required of us. Woe to the rich on the last day if they have not profited by their temporal goods, that is to say, if they have not acquired the eternal goods of heaven. How many are there who cover the walls of their rooms with rich paper, pictures, etc., but neglect to cover the nakedness of their poor neighbor; how many who adorn their horses with silver and gold-mounted harness, but allow their poor neighbor

to go in rags; how many who feed their dogs with choice meat, while the poor are suffering hunger; how many who bury their money in the earth, but care nothing about the poor on the earth! Woe to such! Hear what St. James says: "Go to, now, ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days. Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth; and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have feasted upon earth, and in riotousness you have nourished your hearts, in the day of slaughter."—*James 5: 1-5.*

PART II.

1. *Wealth is not a great advantage, and consequently poverty cannot be a great misfortune.* At first sight the lot of the poor man is not enviable. Despised by the greater number, he seems destined to spend his life in obscurity. His food is coarse and poor, his raiment scanty, his house small and dilapidated, he groans continually under the yoke of severe labor, and after all his fatigues has but a hard bed on which to rest his wearied limbs. He is obliged to undergo many trials and fatigues, and most of the time must content himself with very meagre diet. Much worse is the lot of those who are without house or home; of those who are afflicted with various infirmities, and so are unable to earn their bread, but, like Lazarus, seek a few crumbs at the doors and windows of the rich. They see the affluence and the luxury in which the rich wallow, experience many a harsh word, many a bitter reproach. Moreover, they are continually in danger of murmuring against the dispensations of Providence and of supplying their wants by unjust or even criminal means, thus incurring the punishment of God and of man. Therefore pray with the wise man: "Give me neither beggary nor riches; give me only the necessaries of life; lest perhaps being filled, I should be tempted to deny, and say: Who is the Lord? or being compelled by poverty, I should steal, and forswear the name of my God."—*Prov. 30: 7-9.*

2. *It frees man from numerous cares.* The poor are happier than the rich and opulent. No worm gnaws, no rust consumes, their goods; no thief tries to break into their houses. Intrepidly and fearlessly the poor man wanders with empty pockets through unsafe regions and dark forests where highwaymen roam; he

sleeps quietly at night with open doors; he is unconcerned when away from home he remembers that he forgot to lock his door. St. Chrysostom said one day in a sermon: "A hundred men together, and one poor man alone, cannot be robbed; the former cannot, because they are too strong; nor can the latter, because he is protected by invincible armor—poverty." But everything can injure the rich, not only men, but also rust and worms.

3. *It makes him resemble Jesus.* The poor have great advantages over the rich: they closely resemble Jesus Christ, who says: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."—*Matt. 8: 20.* He was born in poverty—in a stable; his life was poor, and poorer still his death; stripped of all his garments, he was hung naked on the cross. He chose his Apostles and disciples, not from among the rich, but from the poor. He raised poor fishermen to the highest dignity in his kingdom, and commissioned them to preach the gospel.

4. *It preserves him from many sins.* Poverty precludes the possibility of indulging some of our passions. The poor have not the means and opportunities to sin that the rich have. Not possessing temporal goods on which to fix their hearts and affections they are, as it were, compelled to cling closer to God and to seek what is imperishable. And how much happier is the poor man who possesses God than the rich man who has lost God! What has the rich man, if he has not God: and what is wanting to the poor man, if he has God!

5. *It facilitates the attainment of life everlasting.* The poor are less impeded in seeking the things that are above than the rich: for riches and possessions are, as it were, heavy baggage, which encumbers man on his journey to heaven, and prevents him from entering in at the narrow gate that leads to life. As it is easier to travel without baggage, so it is easier to be virtuous when in a state of poverty. Hence at all times countless Christians have renounced their worldly substance and embraced voluntary poverty; partly to free themselves from the many and great dangers of riches, and partly to be in a position to serve God better, and to acquire the eternal goods of heaven more easily. Has not God chosen the poor of this world, the rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom of heaven which he has promised to them that love him? It is hard for the rich to die and to give up all their possessions, pleasures, honors and riches; but it is easy for the poor to die, for they have nothing to lose, nothing to fear, but everything to hope for; their poverty, if they have borne it with resignation to the will of God, and steadfastly walked in

faith and charity, will be changed into riches, for "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 3.

You, whom God has blessed with the temporal goods of this world, must not fix your hearts and affections upon them, but you must regard them as goods entrusted to your care, and make good use of them for the glory of God, your own salvation, and that of others. Whatever you give in charity is really your own that is, it is laid up for eternity, when our Lord will repay you with interest; but what you hoard up avariciously is not yours, for sooner or later you will be obliged to lose it for ever, and you yourselves will be lost with it. Hear the friendly admonitions of your Saviour: "Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. Make friends unto you of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings." And you poor, whom God seems to have forgotten in the distribution of worldly substance, be satisfied with your lot; God wills it thus. Jesus, your God, was poor; thank him for your poverty, which, if you bear it patiently, will bring you to heaven. Think and believe firmly: It is much better to acquire a piece of bread in the sweat of my brow here below, or even to beg it with Lazarus, and to rest hereafter with Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, than to wallow in affluence here below with Dives, and hereafter to ask with him in vain for a drop of cold water to quench an everlasting thirst in the flames of hell-fire.

PERORATION.

Hence *wealth* is not so great an advantage as it generally appears to be in the eyes of the world; for it does not free us from anxious cares, but increases them; it is attended with many dangers for the soul, since it begets covetousness and entices to all kinds of injustice, to dissipation and sin, and increases our accountability before the judgment-seat of God. *Poverty*, on the contrary, is not so great a misfortune as it is generally considered to be by worldlings, since it frees man from many cares, makes him resemble Jesus, preserves him from many sins, and facilitates the attainment of life everlasting. Amen.



EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

7. MORAL SKETCH.

RESTITUTION AND INDEMNIFICATION.

What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship?—Luke 16: 3.

When the unjust steward saw that he would be discharged on account of his wrong-doing, he asked himself the question: *What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship?* Why does he ask the question? Does he perhaps repent of his deeds and desire to undo them to the best of his ability? Ah, no; such a thought does not enter his mind; he thinks rather of some means of extricating himself from his predicament. Instead of making reparation for his injustices he commits new ones; he makes considerable abatements in the bills due from his lord's debtors, hoping that they will be grateful to him for so doing and provide for his support.

Many people act like this unjust steward; they take the property of others in various ways and cheat in business but hardly ever think of making restitution for loss or damage. Hence, it will not be superfluous for me to speak to you to-day of restitution and indemnification.

- I. *The necessity.*
- II. *The circumstances.*
- III. *The motives.*

PART I.

Restitution and indemnification are necessary—

1. *Because they rest on the natural law.* The natural law, which God has inscribed in the heart of every one, tells us: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." If some one has taken anything from us, or done us some damage, we certainly wish him to give back what was taken away and to indemnify us. According to this principle we must also deal with our neighbor; we must restore to him what we have taken away from him unjustly and indemnify him. He who does not do this sins against the natural law, which even the Gentiles observed, therefore

they held theft to be a dishonorable vice and obliged thieves to make restitution.

2. *Because God expressly commands it.* "If any man steal an ox or a sheep, and kill or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for one ox: and four sheep for one sheep."—*Exodus 22: 1.* As we see here, the law of Moses required not only a simple restitution, but according to circumstances a four and five-fold. In regard to indemnification we read in the law of Moses: "If any man hurt a field or a vineyard . . . he shall restore the best of whatsoever he hath in his own field, or in his vineyard, according to the estimation of the damage."—*Exodus 22: 5.*

3. *Because without it no forgiveness of sins is possible.* St. Antonius says: "He who is in possession of the property of another, and can restore it, but does not do so, can obtain no forgiveness, though he may perform all possible works of penance. Let him pray, fast, or give alms, it profits him nothing." No priest, no bishop, not even the Pope, has power to absolve him from his sins as long as he does not restore the property of another, or repair the damage, if otherwise he is able. The duty of restitution and indemnification never falls under the law of limitation. If it be twenty, thirty, forty years and longer since you have stolen, cheated or done damage, you are just as rigorously bound to restore and indemnify as if you had committed the injustice yesterday or to-day.

Only the *impossibility* frees from the obligation of restitution, which must not be a fancied, but a true and real impossibility, or *remission*, when the injured party voluntarily relinquishes his claim.

PART II.

We must here consider the circumstances:

1. *Who must restore or indemnify?*

(a.) In the first place *he who possesses the property of others, or has injured others.* He is the author of the injustice, therefore he is obliged to repair it. If he dies without having satisfied his obligation, it passes over to his heirs. Therefore if parents commit injustice, their children as heirs must repair these injustices. If they omit the duty of restitution, they are just as accountable before God as their parents are, and like them will perish if the damage to be repaired is of consequence. How foolish, then, are parents who for the love of their children commit injustices!

(b.) If he who has committed an injustice does not make restitution, *the duty passes over to those who have co-operated in the injustice or not hindered it, although they could and were obliged to hinder it.* Those who co-operate are the cause of the injustice done to the neighbor, and must make restitution themselves, if the principal author does not. The same is to be said of those who did not prevent an injustice, although they could, and by virtue of their office or state of life were obliged to, hinder it. Thus parents must repair the injustices of their children, if they know about them and did not prevent them.

2. *To whom must the property of others be restored or the damage be repaired?* The answer is: to the owner, or if he is no longer living, to his heirs, because they enter into the rights of the testator. Some imagine that they can rid themselves from the duty of restitution or indemnification by giving alms, making pious foundations, or having masses said. But this is a great error; you have not robbed or cheated the poor, but this or that man, and to him you are obliged to make restitution. St. Chrysostom says: "If you have stolen one penny and give a hundred pounds of gold in alms, by that means you have not yet restored the penny." Only in two cases can restitution be made to the poor, or for pious purposes; *first*, when there is a question only of a very insignificant amount, and restitution to the owner would be connected with great difficulties; and *secondly*, when the owner is unknown, or when it is impossible to restore to him.

3. *How much must be restored?* We must distinguish here whether somebody has appropriated to himself and possesses the property of another *willingly and knowingly, or unwillingly and unknowingly.*

(a.) He who, with knowledge and will, appropriates or possesses the property of another, must indemnify the owner; that is, he must place him in the same position in which he would be if no injustice had been done to him. He is obliged, therefore, first, to restore the goods of another, or if he no longer possesses them, their full value; secondly, to compensate the proprietor for all the gain of which he has deprived him, and thirdly, to repair all the damage which he has caused him. He is allowed to deduct only those expenses which the owner himself could not have possibly avoided if he had remained in the quiet possession of his property.

(b.) He who, without knowledge and will, therefore entirely guiltlessly appropriates or possesses the goods of another, is obliged as soon as he finds out that it belongs to another, to restore

what he still possesses of it, and as much as he has gained by it. Suppose a certain man had made you a present of fifty dollars, you would be obliged, as soon as you find out that the money was not his, to restore it to the right owner, and if you had lent it out and received interest, you would be bound to restore also the interest. But if by some calamity you should lose the money, *e. g.*, by fire, by theft, wholly or partially, you would be obliged to restore nothing, or only as much as you still possess of it.

4. When must we make restitution or indemnification? It must be done as soon as possible. He who does not restore ill-gotten goods when he can, has not an earnest will to make restitution, for what we will earnestly do as soon as we can. Moreover, restitution becomes more difficult by delay, because one becomes attached to the property, and the damage or loss which accrues to the neighbor becomes greater. Finally, no one should put off restitution and indemnification because he may be overtaken by death without having fulfilled his duty.

If we cannot make restitution at once, we must have the sincere will to do so as soon as possible; if we cannot restore it all at once, we must do so by little and little, and continue until we have restored the whole; if we cannot restore all, we must at least partially restore as far as possible.

We come now to the motives of restitution and indemnification.

PART III.

1. *Death will take the unjust goods from us.* When Saladin, the famous Sultan of Egypt, was lying on his death-bed, he ordered the sheet in which his body was to be wrapped up, to be hung upon a pole, and in the face of the whole army the following to be proclaimed: "Behold, this is all that Saladin, the conqueror of the East, takes with him." Every dying person must say the same as Saladin, for though he may possess all the riches of the whole world he cannot take a cent with him to the other world; "only the grave remaineth for him."—*Job 17: 1*. How infatuated, therefore, is the man who attaches his heart so much to money and property that he renders himself guilty of many injustices, and cannot resolve on restitution! He cannot keep his money long; death does not delay; unexpectedly we stand at the gate of eternity. How long will he live to enjoy his unjust riches? Perhaps ten, twenty years, perhaps only one year, one month. How quickly will the time pass? And on account of the property which we can possess only for so short a time, should we burden our conscience with sins and rush into everlasting perdition? And when death does come, into whose hands will the property fall? Perhaps into the hands of ungrateful heirs, who impatiently await

your death, who will dissipate and waste your painfully acquired property, and perhaps will not say an "Our Father" for the repose of your soul. And for the love of such people should you damn your immortal soul?

2. *Unjust goods bring no luck or blessing, but mischief and ruin.*

(a.) The Sacred Scriptures teach us this: "He that soweth iniquity shall reap evils."—*Prov. 22: 8*. This truth is corroborated by many examples from Bible history. King Achab, at the instance of his wife, had possessed himself by force of the vineyard of Naboth. He paid dearly for this injustice. He himself was wounded in battle and died, and the dogs licked up his blood. His impious wife Jezebel was cast out of a window of the palace, so that she was dashed to pieces, and all the descendants of Achab (seventy-two) were beheaded in one day. So awfully did God avenge the robbery; his curse penetrated into Achab's house and remained there till it was totally destroyed.

(b.) *Experience teaches it.* Many understood how to enrich themselves by unjust means; they built magnificent houses, bought large properties and established a lucrative business. It appeared as if they had founded their fortune for thousands of years. But it was not so. Their lucky star soon set. God withdrew his blessing from them because of their injustices and made different calamities come upon them, so that by degrees they lost their acquired property. And though it sometimes happens that the unjust possessor is spared the punishment of God, so much the surer will his children and descendants suffer for it: "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the teeth of the children are set on edge."—*Jer. 31: 29*. Unjustly acquired property hardly ever passes over to the third heir.

3. *Nothing is more absurd than for the sake of a perishable good to lose heaven and to plunge one's self into eternal damnation.* A certain rich man, who had acquired a great deal of his property unjustly, became dangerously ill. He knew that inflammation had already set in, and that he could not live, and yet he could not be prevailed upon to make restitution. His answer to all entreaties always was: "What will become of my children?" The priest, who had been called to administer to him the rites of the Church, devised a stratagem. He said to him: "There is one means of saving your life. All that is necessary is to rub your wounds with the fat of a sound man. If any one can be found who will let his hand burn a few minutes sufficient fat will be obtained." "Ah," said the sick man "no one can be found who will do that." "Do not despair," replied the priest, "you do not

know how devoted children are to a father who leaves them so much wealth. Call your three sons; at least one of them will make the desired sacrifice." The three sons were called but each one rejected the proposal. "Our father," they said, "ought not to think of such a thing," and they went away. The priest, turning to the sick man, said with earnestness: "I cannot imagine how you can be willing to lose body and soul and be tortured for ever in the fire of hell for the sake of children who, even to save your life, refuse to let their hand burn for a few minutes." These earnest words made the desired impression upon him; regardless of his children he made restitution, received the last sacraments, and soon after died a happy death.

PERORATION.

If your conscience upbraids you with any injustice, do speedily what this rich man did on his death-bed, restore what you unjustly possess, and repair any loss or damage. Either restore, or be damned for ever more; there is no alternative. But how could you be so senseless as to rob yourselves of heaven and plunge yourselves into the fire of hell for the sake of things which death will shortly take away from you, and which will not make you happy even on earth? Reflect seriously to-day whether you have done any injury to the property of others, and if you find yourselves guilty in any way, delay not to make restitution and indemnification. For the future do not cheat in business, but rather use the goods which God gives you for works of mercy, and make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings. Amen.



NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE. *I. Cor.* 10: 6-13. Brethren: Let us not covet evil things, as they also coveted. Neither become ye idolaters, as some of them: as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication, and there fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted, and perished by the serpents. Neither do you murmur, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them in figure; and they are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand let him take heed lest he fall. Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

ST. PAUL WARNS US AGAINST THE SINS OF THE ISRAELITES IN THE DESERT, AND INCULCATES CIRCUMSPECTION AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

God is charity.—I. John 4: 16.

This is a truth which must fill us weak, frail, sinful men with consolation and joy, but it is also a truth which many Christians abuse to their perdition. God is charity, says the sinner, therefore I need not have any fear on account of my sins, for where is there a father who would reject his beloved child on account of a few faults? God is charity; I may therefore continue to sin, for God is infinitely merciful and patient; he will receive me at all times, even on my death-bed. Thus many sinners speak, and lull their conscience to sleep with a false security and peace, and

will not awake till the flames of the divine judgments glare in their faces.

The epistle of this day is calculated to teach us a different lesson. St. Paul presents in it a series of examples which prove that God, although he is all love and freely forgives, inflicts heavy punishments on sinners, and that he rejects them when the measure of their sins is full. We will now consider this epistle a little more closely for our mutual instruction and edification. It contains—

- I. A warning against the sins of the Israelites in the desert;
- II. An exhortation to circumspection and confidence in God.

PART I.

The Israelites had often and grievously sinned in the desert, and each time had been punished with severity for their sins. The Apostle points to these sins of the Israelites, and warns the Christians at Corinth against them, that they may not fall victims to the judgments of God.

1. *Let us not covet evil things, as they also coveted.* The Apostle speaks here of the desire which the Israelites had for the flesh-pots of Egypt. They acted as spoiled children, who cry and weep when they do not get at once what they desire, and full of displeasure they said: "Who shall give us flesh to eat? Our soul is dry, our eyes behold nothing else but manna."—*Numb.* 11: 4-6. Now God did their will and gave them flesh to eat. Taking quails up beyond the sea he brought them and cast them into the camp for the space of one day's journey, and they flew in the air two cubits high above the ground. The people gathered the quails all that day and night and the next day. Now they had flesh for a whole month, they had their fill, but this flesh cost them dearly, for the intemperate use of it was the cause that thousands of them fell sick and died. The place where they were buried was called "The graves of lust."

Who does not here recall to his mind the words of the Apostle St. James (1: 15); "When concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; but sin, when it is completed, begetteth death." How many people, like the lustful Israelites, lose not only the spiritual, but also the temporal life by serving their lust, so that their graves would also deserve the name of graves of lust! To such belong those who by intemperance in eating and drinking, and by sexual excesses, become sickly and miserable, and in their best years sink into the grave. It is a truth, corroborated by history and experience, that sinful desires and passions, if they are not bridled, cause man a great deal of misery even in this

world, and frequently result in an early death. "Who is the man that desireth life; who loveth to see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Turn away from evil and do good."—*Ps.* 33: 13-15.

2. *Neither become ye idolaters, as some of them; as it is written: The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.* While Moses was with God upon Mount Sinai, the Israelites made to themselves a golden calf and said: These are thy gods, O Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Then they built an altar, offered holocausts and peace-victims to the calf, and sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play, that is, they had dances and plays after the fashion of the heathens and practised abominable idolatry. On account of this enormous sin God would have destroyed them, if Moses had not interceded and obtained pardon for them.—*Exodus* 32.

Not less sinfully and culpably do those Christians act who although they do not fall down before idols and adore them, nevertheless make honor, money, lust, and other sinful and earthly things their idols, and sacrifice to these idols their soul and salvation. And how great is the number of Christians who are guilty of this detestable idolatry. Reflect and see whether you love anything in this world more than God, or whether for the love of a certain person or other reason you do not offend God by grievous sins. If this be the case, you are truly idolaters and more guilty before God than the blind pagans who adore wood and stone. Take to heart the words of St. Augustine; "Not only does he who adores false gods do wrong, but he also who obeys his passions and inclinations more than God."

3. *Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication, and there fell in one day three and twenty thousand.* The Moabites had, by the advice of the wicked prophet Balaam, invited the Israelites to the sacrifices at which a great deal of impurity was committed. The Israelites accepted the invitation, took part in their sacrificial banquets, adored their gods and committed the most abominable impurities. For this crime the wrath of the Lord came upon them, and in one day twenty-three thousand Israelites died suddenly, and several thousand more were stoned to death and hung upon gibbets.—*Numb.* 25.

How often do the words of the Apostle resound from the pulpit: "Let us not commit fornication"; but alas! how often in vain. For instead of the vice of impurity (a vice that should not be named among Christians, as becometh saints) diminishing, it spreads in every direction, and is prevalent among the young and the old, the married and the unmarried, and even children are infected with it. Ah, what times we shall live to see, if this

vice is not prevented! Was it not impurity that brought the deluge upon mankind, and destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah with fire and brimstone? Does not the word of God assure us: "He that joineth himself to harlots will be wicked? Rottenness and worms shall inherit him and he shall be lifted up for a greater example, and his soul shall be taken away out of the number?"—*Ecclus.* 19: 3. Detest and shun impurity above all things, walk honestly and decently, as becomes Christians whom God "hath not called unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification," (*I Thess.* 4: 7): and do not forget that only "the clean of heart shall see God."—*Matt.* 5: 8.

4. *Neither let us tempt Christ; as some of them tempted, and perished by the serpents.* The Israelites began to be tired of the long and laborious journey in the desert. "Speaking against God and Moses, they said. Why didst thou bring us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread, nor have we any waters: our soul now loatheth this very light food." Thus they tempted God, or, as the Apostle says, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who protected the children of Israel in a particular manner and from whom he would descend as man, because they no longer put confidence in him and, as it were, tried him to see whether he could and would help them. In punishment God sent fiery serpents among them which bit them and killed many. Then they came to Moses and said: "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and thee; pray that he may take away these serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to him: Make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign; whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live. Moses therefore made a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign which, when they that were bitten looked upon, they were healed."—*Numb.* 21. This brazen serpent was a type of Jesus, our crucified Redeemer.—*John* 3: 14.

Beware of tempting God, and never without necessity expose yourselves to any danger of body or soul, hoping that God will preserve you from harm. Avoid especially the proximate occasions of sin, *e. g.*, intimate intercourse with irreligious, dissipated people, and with persons of the opposite sex, doubtful societies and amusements; for to expose yourselves to such occasions and not to be willing to sin, would be to tempt God. "He that loveth danger, shall perish in it."—*Ecclus.* 3: 27.

5. *Neither do you murmur, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer.* The Israelites frequently murmured against God, especially on the return of those whom Moses had sent to Chanaan to view the land, some of whom decried that country. "Would God," they said, "that we had died in Egypt,

and would God that we may die in this vast wilderness, and that the Lord may not bring us into this land, lest we fall by the sword, and our wives and children be led away captives. Is it not better to return into Egypt?" And they were already about to elect a captain and to return into Egypt; they would even have stoned Josue and Caleb, who remonstrated with them against their doings. They were punished severely for this murmuring. Many of them died suddenly, especially those whom Moses had sent to view the land, and who on their return had made the whole multitude murmur against him, speaking ill of the land. But all who numbered twenty years and upwards were excluded from the land of Chanaan, and died in the desert.—*Numb.* 14.

There are Christians who, like the Israelites, sin against God by murmuring. When they meet with something disagreeable they become impatient, break out into complaints, and almost call God to an account, and reproach him with treating them unjustly, with being too hard on them. Such Christians grievously sin against the duty of subjecting themselves entirely to God in every situation of life. Forget not that you daily pray: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," and always submit yourselves to the guidance of God; have a firm conviction that "to them that love God, all things work together unto good."—*Rom.* 8: 28.

The Apostle concludes his warnings with these words: *Now all these things happened to them in figure, and they are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world are come.* That is: God permitted these aberrations of his chosen people and punished them severely that we may see that we, who live under the New Law, must expect greater punishments if we become guilty of the same errors and sins. We being Christians must show greater fidelity lest something worse may befall us as a punishment for our sins.

The Apostle now gives an admonition to circumspection and confidence in God.

PART II.

1. *He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall.* These words, with which St. Paul exhorts us to caution, are very important —

(a.) *For those who are still in a state of innocence,* that is, for those who have never in their life committed a mortal sin, and consequently still possess their baptismal innocence. When you have lost an earthly benefit such as health, the favor of an exalted personage, honor and reputation, a house or a farm, it is possible

for you to repair the loss by renewed energy and industry and by correcting former errors and avoiding former mistakes; but if you have lost innocence, by no possibility can you recover it again. He who by a mortal sin has lost innocence may by true penance again recover sanctifying grace; he can save his soul from perdition, and go to heaven, but innocence remains lost for ever. Innocence once lost is lost for ever. Adam and Eve are in heaven, Peter and Paul are in heaven; Mary Magdalen and Mary of Egypt are in heaven; but they are not among the Innocents, but among the Penitents; how much penance soever they may have done for their sins, they could never recover innocence. Now if you take the greatest care of your eyes because you know that if you lose them you could never recover them, should you not pay even greater attention to your innocence so that you may not lose it? Should you not shun with the greatest care those places, amusements, and persons that are dangerous to your innocence? Parents, ought you not to use all possible diligence in order to preserve the innocence of your children? When innocence is lost by mortal sin, it is to be feared that the first sin will draw many other sins after it, and that the end of it all will be final impenitence and eternal perdition. Think of Judas the traitor. He was a thief, as the gospel says. Was he so before he became an Apostle? No, certainly not, but the donations of the pious which passed through his hands excited his avarice and made him a thief. And, behold! with the first theft his fate was decided; he stole as often as he could, and finally his avarice made him sell his Lord and Master for thirty pieces of silver; and then despairing, he hanged himself. If Judas had not committed the first sin he would have been saved: but having committed it, he fell deeper and deeper, and his end was eternal perdition. How wrong then are those frivolous people who say: "Once does not make a custom." What! once does not make a custom, though one mortal sin deprives man of his innocence for ever and is frequently the first link of an interminable chain of sins leading to eternal damnation!

(b.) *For penitents.* The penitent is exposed to still greater dangers to salvation than the innocent man. The devil pursues him with particular envy, and endeavors to bring him again into his power; hence we read in the gospel that he takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, in order to make the penitent who has become lukewarm relapse, and to take possession of his heart. The world allures him and uses stratagem, flattery, promises, ridicule and even violence, with a view to win him back, as, e. g., in the case of St. Paul, whom the Jews hated most bitterly, because he had left them and embraced the Christian religion, and therefore they calumniated and persecuted

him in every possible way. His own evil concupiscence prepares for the penitent many hard struggles, for it resembles a spoiled child that cries and makes a noise because it cannot get its own way, and can only with great difficulty be pacified.

(c.) *For those, finally, who have already served God a long time and have made great progress in virtue.* No man, though he may have attained the highest degree of sanctity is proof against a fall: he may sin, sin grievously and perish. Solomon was the wisest king, and not only served God faithfully himself, but his solicitude was such that his people adhered to God and walked in the way of his commandments. But, behold, this pious and enlightened king in his old age became faithless to God, and defiled himself with all the abominations of idolatry. James, surnamed the Penitent, who lived in the sixth century of the Christian era, had led so holy a life in the desert for forty years that God glorified him with miracles. But he came in contact with a woman, not with a bad intention, but to be a guide to her on the way of salvation. What happened? By little and little a sinful desire began to burn in him, and because he did not immediately avoid the occasion, he sinned grievously with her, and in order to conceal his crime he killed her. Despair took hold of him after the commission of these two crimes, and he was about to leave the desert, with a view to plunge himself into vice, to die and perish eternally. But he who wills not the death of the sinner but that he be converted and live, had compassion on him; he was met by a hermit who raised his fallen spirits and induced him to return to the desert. There he did penance for ten years, up to his death, and thus saved his soul from everlasting ruin. (28 Jan.)

Whoever you may be, innocent, penitent, or even great saints, be on your guard and remember the words of the Apostle: *He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall.*

2. *Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.* With the words: *Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human*, the Apostle means to say, that if we are tempted, we should not allow ourselves to be captivated by the temptation so as to sin, that the temptation may remain human, for says St. Anselm: "It is angelic to have no temptation at all; but human to have temptations and overcome them." The temptation is human if it is overcome. We can overcome every temptation, be it ever so lasting and vehement, for God is faithful, he will keep his word, and as he has promised, will assist us with his grace, so that if we have a good will and do what is

required on our part for the overcoming of the temptation, we can persevere in good.

(a.) That God gives to all men the grace necessary to overcome temptations is evident from this, that he wills all men to be saved. Now since no one of himself could overcome all temptations, especially the more vehement ones, and consequently could not work out his salvation, it is evident that God gives the grace necessary for overcoming temptations. St. Paul had violent temptations to encounter; he therefore asked the Lord to deliver him from them. But the Lord replied: "My grace is sufficient for thee."—*II. Cor.* 12: 7-9. The Apostle, full of courage and confidence, elsewhere says: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." He also exhorts us to this confidence, in these words: "Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid."—*Heb.* 4: 16. Hence it is blasphemy for any one to say: I could not help it; I could not resist the temptation. I was obliged to sin, for the necessary grace was wanting to me.

(b.) But that the grace of God may prove effectual we must make good use of it, and do what is required on our part for overcoming all temptations; we must especially *watch and pray*, according to the words of Jesus: "Watch ye and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."—*Matt.* 26: 41. We must watch; that is, we must pay attention to that which takes place in our heart, and fight against and suppress all sinful thoughts and desires at their first motion: we must watch over our senses, subdue and mortify them, especially our eyes; we must pay attention to what takes place about us, to the people with whom we have intercourse, to the places in which we are or into which we come, and to the pleasures we enjoy, and must carefully shun what is to us a proximate occasion of sin.

We must pray; for though God gives us the first grace without prayer, all subsequent graces necessary for salvation depend on prayer. Without fervent and persevering prayer we shall not be able to overcome all temptations. "Which of the just," says St. Chrysostom, "has ever fought without prayer? Moses prays, and overcomes; he ceases to pray and is overcome." Let a Christian learn that prayer is a duty, let him learn whence his victory and defeat come in the spiritual combat. Yes, let him know that he must pray more frequently than Moses, because the enemy with whom he must wrestle is far more dangerous, and because he fights for himself, and not for others.

PERORATION.

Follow the advice which the Apostle gives you in the epistle of this day. Take warning from the Israelites in the desert, whom God each time visited with punishments when they sinned against him, and guard against injustice and sin. Shun levity and haughty self-confidence, and work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for so long as you are in this mortal body you will be surrounded by various dangers to salvation; you may sin any moment and lose God's grace. Be always humble of heart, for humility alone gives security and if ever any man may hope with joyful confidence that God will protect him and guide him to salvation, it is the Christian who is profoundly humble. Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation, for watchfulness and prayer are the only weapons which will enable you to gain the victory over all the enemies of your salvation, and thus to take heaven by violence. Amen.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* 19: 41-47. At that time: When Jesus drew near Jerusalem, seeing the city, he wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And entering into the temple, he began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying to them: It is written: My house is the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves. And he was teaching daily in the temple.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM, FORETELLS ITS DESTRUCTION, AND PUNISHES THOSE WHO PROFANE THE TEMPLE.

Seeing the city, he wept over it.—Luke 19: 41.

Jesus is returning from Jericho to Jerusalem. It is to be his last visit to that unhappy city, for the day of his crucifixion is

now close at hand. He sends two of his disciples to make preparations for his solemn entry. Great crowds gather around him, and they seem to increase as he draws nearer to Jerusalem; they spread their garments and boughs of trees in the way, and begin with joy and in a loud voice to praise God on account of the miracles of which they have been witnesses, crying: "Blessed be the king who cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory on high."—*Luke 19: 38*. Having reached the summit of Mt. Olivet, Jerusalem comes in sight and, seeing it, Jesus weeps over it. Here he remains and, taking up his position like Jeremias of old, sings his lamentations over unhappy Jerusalem, and foretells the punishments of God which await her in the near future.

The event recorded in this day's gospel being very instructive and suggestive of caution to us, let us consider its three points:

- I. *Jesus weeps over Jerusalem;*
- II. *He foretells its destruction;*
- III. *He punishes those who profane the temple.*

PART I.

When Jesus drew near Jerusalem, seeing the city, he wept over it.

I. *Jesus wept.* How could Jesus weep? Is not weeping a sign of weakness unworthy of a man? Some philosophers among the ancient pagans, especially the Stoics, thought so, and taught that man should wholly control his feelings, and even in the worst circumstances show himself insensible. But such an insensibility contradicts human nature altogether, for it is natural to manifest feelings both of joy and sorrow, and as Jesus was man, not only in appearance but in reality, he had the feelings of a man, and well might he express feelings of sorrow by tears.

It is not therefore wrong for us to yield to nature and to be sorrowful and weep over what is painful. We must, however, moderate our sorrow, especially when it has its cause in temporal evils, and be solicitous not to lose confidence in God and resignation to his holy will. Many are sorrowful because they cannot gratify their passions, and because their sinful designs and projects do not succeed. Thus Aman was extremely sad because he was compelled to honor Mardochai and he wished to have him hanged upon a gibbet; thus Antiochus was grieved to death because he could not take revenge on his enemies. Thus women and children frequently weep because they cannot gratify their own will, and many young people almost die of grief because they are compelled to give up the persons with whom they are in love. Such sorrow and weeping is sinful, because evil causes

lie at the bottom of it, and the words of the Apostle are applicable thereto. "The sorrow of the world worketh death."—*II. Cor. 7: 10*.

2. *Jesus wept over Jerusalem.* Jesus had more reason to weep over himself than over Jerusalem; for being omniscient his bitter passion and death were before his mind. But for himself he had no tears; he had not come to shed tears, but to shed his precious blood; yet he wept over Jerusalem and its favored but ungrateful inhabitants. Therefore he said to the women of Jerusalem who followed him on his way to Calvary and wept over him: "Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."—*Luke 23: 28*. He wept over the insensibility, impenitence and ingratitude of Jerusalem, where he had been so constantly teaching and laboring, and where he found no faith; he wept over the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to come upon that city and its inhabitants, because they persevered in unbelief and sin; he wept over the perdition of so many Jews, who, because of their obstinacy, lost not only their own country, but also heaven, and perished eternally.

3. As regards ourselves we ought to be sorry and weep—

(a.) *Over our own sins, defects and imperfections.* We have good reason for so doing, because from our childhood we have so often and so grievously offended God, and because even now we offend in many things, and scarcely a day passes that we have not to accuse ourselves of a fault. Examples of such a salutary penitential sorrow we have in *David*, who, as he himself says, every night watered his couch with his tears" (*Ps. 6: 7*); in *Mary Magdalen*, who at the feet of Jesus shed a torrent of tears; in *Peter*, who went out and wept bitterly. The saints bewailed even their smallest faults and persevered in penitential sorrow as long as they lived. St. Jerome relates of St. Paula that she bewailed her venial sins so sorrowfully that one would have thought that she was guilty of the greatest crimes. How do matters stand with you? Do you bewail your sins, if not with external, at least with internal, tears?

(b.) *Over the sins of others, over the loss of many souls, over the unbelief and the scandals of the world, over the sufferings and persecutions of the Church and of the just.* Thus St. Paul wept over the obstinacy of the Jews, saying: "I have great sadness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren."—*Rom. 9: 2, 3*. St. Francis of Assisi bewailed the ingratitude of men for the infinite love of the crucified Redeemer with such continual and bitter tears that at

last he became almost blind. It is not well with him who can remain indifferent to the sins and the loss of so many souls, for the fundamental virtue of Christianity, *Charity*, the love of God and of our neighbor, is wanting to him. And yet there are Christians who rejoice and laugh when they see or hear that another commits a grievous sin and even when they themselves lead others into sin. Ah, what kind of Christians are they?

PART II.

Christ foretold the destruction of Jerusalem.

1. *If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes.* In these words our Lord designates the *causes of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.*

(a.) The first cause was that *she did not know the things that were to her peace, i. e.,* the things that would save her from temporal and eternal ruin. She did not recognize Christ as one divinely sent; she did not know that he was the Son of God, and the promised Messiah, and therefore believed not in him. But this refusal to recognize him, this ignorance, deserved no excuse, for Jesus had given the Jews in Jerusalem and in the neighboring towns and villages incontrovertible proofs of his divinity by his teaching, by his life, and especially by his miracles. This was the motive of them and it was of them that he said: "The works themselves, which I do, give testimony of me."—*John 5: 36.* The high-priests and the Pharisees were perfectly convinced of the miracles of Christ, for they said: "What do we? for this man doth many miracles."—*John 11: 47.* And whole crowds were influenced, at least for a time, by what they saw, since after one of his miracles they cried out with admiration: "A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited his people."—*Luke 7: 16.* And Nicodemus expressed what many a disciple must have felt, when he said: "We know that thou art come a teacher from God, for no man can do these signs which thou dost unless God be with him." But the nation remained impenitent. The priests and princes of the people, instead of believing in him, decreed his death. The Jews knew not Jesus because they would not know him; they were perverse, and malicious, and therefore did not believe in him.

How great in our days is the number of men who closely resemble these Jews! The Holy Catholic Church has so many and such clear marks of her divine origin and the truth of her doctrines that she can easily be recognized as the Church established by Christ. But many people lack good will; they do not

come to the knowledge of the truth, because they love darkness rather than light. They purposely misrepresent many Catholic doctrines, *e. g.,* the doctrine of the *veneration* of the saints and their images and pictures, calling it *adoration*; the doctrine of the *infallibility* of the Pope, which they explain in the sense of *impeccability*, or, as if we were bound to receive everything that the Pope says as a divine truth. They deny the miracles which occur in the Catholic Church in our time, *e. g.,* the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin in many places, and the miraculous cures of many sick persons: they invent various lies and calumnies in regard to the ordinances of the Church, monasteries, convents and priests; they insult all who adhere with zeal and fidelity to the Catholic Church and its head, calling them ultramontanes and enemies of their country. People of this description lack good will, and therefore they do not come to the knowledge of those things that are for their salvation. Faith is more the business of the heart than of the understanding; he who is of a perverse mind remains like the Jews in infidelity and error, and a thousand miracles could not induce him to give testimony to the truth and to submit to it.

(b.) Another reason why in her day Jerusalem did not know the things that were for her peace was, that she let the time of grace pass away unprofitably. Our divine Lord had given the Jews both time and grace for the knowledge of truth and for their salvation; *at his birth, through the angels,* who announced his arrival; *through the sages from the East,* who inquired after the new-born king of the Jews; *as a boy of twelve years in the temple,* where he manifested the first rays of divine wisdom and what we may call signs of his future vocation, having been found after those three anxious days in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions; *in his public life, by the holiness of his conduct and doctrine,* and *by numerous miracles,* of which Jerusalem was most frequently the scene. His solemn entry into Jerusalem, where the people received him with loud hosannas as the Messiah, was again a great grace by which they could and should have been awed into an acknowledgment of his Divinity. But all in vain, they obstinately rejected the proffered grace, persevered in unbelief and sin till the measure of their iniquity was full, and the wrath of God came upon them.

As with Jerusalem, so with every individual Christian soul, there are decisive moments and favorable circumstances when she can quit sin, strive after perfection and persevere therein. Each Christian soul closely resembles Jerusalem, and is visited by God. It has become what Jerusalem was, a privileged abode of God's power and grace and within each of them have been manifested signs of the most gracious love. But alas! the part

of Jerusalem is being acted over again, and love is responded to by disobedience and ingratitude. We have not appreciated what has been done for us. We have not known the manner of our visitation. We condemn Jerusalem and pretend to sympathize with our Lord and join in his tears, but do we not ourselves give Jesus cause to weep over us? What more could he do for us than he has done? Did he ever do more for a single soul in Jerusalem than he has done for us? Where is our obedience and gratitude? What a motive for us not to resist the grace of God any longer, but to avail ourselves of it for our correction and amendment.

2. *For the days shall come upon thee; and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.*

(a.) This prophecy was fulfilled to the very letter. The days of which our Lord speaks came upon Jerusalem thirty-seven years afterwards. The siege of the city under Titus began at Easter, A. D. 70, and lasted till September. The city at the time was full of pilgrims who had come in for the festival of the Pasch. Many of the Christians escaped by following the warning given by our Lord to flee to the mountains. The assailants literally verified the prophecy. In three days they cast a trench about the city, whereby they cut off all communication, and straitened her on every side. The number of inhabitants massacred seems to be exaggerated, although the truth is certified by the concurrent testimony of Jewish and pagan historians, who calculate the deaths as amounting to one million, one hundred thousand persons. The victors, in order to force the inhabitants to surrender, crucified five hundred prisoners every day, until no more wood could be found for making crosses. A terrible famine ensued so that the prophecy of Jeremias was literally fulfilled, and mothers ate their own offspring. Finally, the Romans took the city by storm; whoever fell into their hands was cut down; they spared neither women nor children, nor aged persons; the blood of the murdered flowed in torrents through the streets; all the palaces and houses, and even the magnificent temple, were utterly burnt down and the whole city was levelled to the ground. Thus again the words of Christ were fulfilled: *They shall beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.* The words of Jesus were also verified at a later period, when at the instance of Julian the Apostate the Jews coming together from all quarters of the globe undertook

to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. Red-hot balls issued from the foundations, rendering them inaccessible to the scorched workmen, and owing to repeated earthquakes, whatever was cleared away during the day was thrown back the next night into the trenches, so that they were reluctantly obliged to discontinue the work altogether.

(b.) The judgments of God, which were inflicted on the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the Jewish people, have come and will come upon all, nations as well as individuals that do not know the time of their visitation. Think of the great empires of the ancient world, of the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Greeks and Romans; they perished when they sank into sins and vices. Think of individuals who obstinately persevered in evil; think of Cain, Pharaoh, Ophni and Phinees, Saul, Absalom and Judas, what a miserable end they had! The words of the Lord ever remain true: "He shall destroy the wicked and the sinners together and they that have forsaken the Lord shall be consumed." —Is. 1: 28. Therefore, fear God and do not persevere in sin. The longanimity of God has its limits, and when the time which in his eternal wisdom he has appointed to man for his repentance and salvation is passed, without mercy he rejects the sinner. I therefore announce to you the serious warning of the Holy Ghost: "Add not sin upon sin, and say not: The mercy of the Lord is great, he will have mercy on the multitude of my sins. For mercy and wrath quickly come forth from him; and his wrath looketh upon sinners." —Ecclus. 5: 5-7.

PART III.

Jesus punishes those who profane the temple.

1. *And entering into the temple, he began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought.*

What the Evangelist here relates occurred in the atrium of the temple. There were people there who bought and sold animals, such as oxen, sheep and doves. There were also money-changers, who changed Roman money for Jewish, because the animals were to be paid for with Jewish money. This market was, indeed, necessary, but it should have been held at some other place, not in the temple. But what made our Lord so severe on this occasion was probably the fact that those who sold were making an unjust profit out of those who bought; for the things which they were selling were such as were to be offered by the people in the temple. As we may easily imagine, at these markets everything occurred as usual in markets; great noise, the lowing of

cattle, lies, cheating, and every kind of injustice. This certainly was a great profanation of the temple, and we need not wonder that on account of it Christ yielded to a holy anger, and cast out them that sold therein and them that bought.

2. *Saying to them: It is written: My house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.*

(a.) God has already said by the prophet Isaias: My house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations." Our Lord refers to this passage and teaches that the temple of Jerusalem, as every other house of God, is a place for prayer and exercises of devotion, and that on this account everything should be kept away that is contrary to this end. Christ in telling them that they made it a den of thieves, refers to the cheating and injustice practised by those who sold and changed money. It is remarkable that our Lord, who usually was so mild and gentle, became so incensed on this occasion as to use force, and to make the buyers and sellers leave the house of God. He was so mild towards Zacheus, so gentle towards the adulteress, and preserved the greatest tranquillity of mind when the greatest injuries and indignities were offered to his own person. This is evidently a proof that nothing displeases him as much as the profanation of holy places.

This is particularly true of our churches, which are holier than the temple of Jerusalem was; for whereas in the temple there was only a type of the divinity, the ark, Jesus Christ the true Son of God is in our churches present in the Blessed Sacrament. You ought to know what our churches are; they are a place for prayer. It is the place to think of God, and to speak to him. It is not the place for laughing and talking: it is not the place to gaze about or to see what is going on, except at the altar. Formerly in some places notices were put on the doors of churches to remind persons of the evil effects of talking in church. The wording of these notices was something like this:—

1. It robs God, the angels and saints of joy, the souls in purgatory of consolation.
2. It deprives the soul of devotion and of spiritual advantages, and prevents her prayer from being heard.
3. It is disedifying to our neighbor, and disturbs him in his devotions.
4. It is a venial sin which will be severely punished in purgatory. Let parents see that their children behave well in church.

PERORATION.

Our gospel concludes with these words, *And he was teaching daily in the temple.* Christ had only a few days more to live, for the event recorded in this day's gospel occurred on Palm-Sunday, and on the following Friday he died on the cross. One would have thought that he would have retired for those few remaining days and lived in perfect repose, and this all the more because he had labored three years for the salvation of men; but no, he was daily teaching in the temple; he taught till Holy Thursday evening and then went to Mount Olivet, where he was taken. So solicitous was he to do the will of his Father, who had sent him for the Redemption of mankind. Let us not seek rest upon earth, but let us be active in our vocation, for we are in this world, not to rest, but to labor. Let us do our duty, our whole duty, and labor with persevering zeal for our perfection and sanctification, and, as much as we can for the welfare of our fellow-men, that God as a reward of our labor may grant us eternal happiness in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE JUSTICE OF GOD.

They shall beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone; because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.—Luke 19: 44.

In the destruction of Jerusalem, which our Lord foretells in the gospel of this day, three attributes of God are very clearly exhibited; first, his *goodness*. Jesus wept over the city, and expressed his deep sorrow that she had not known the time of her visitation, and had obstinately, rejected the graces offered her for her salvation; secondly, his *omnipotence*, because neither the multitude of people, whose number at the time of the siege amounted to two millions, nor the fortifications of the city, which seemed to bid defiance to every enemy, nor the holiness of the temple, on account of which the Jews considered themselves invincible, could avert the calamity of her destruction; thirdly, his

justice, which overtook Jerusalem and the Jews when the measure of their sins was full and their time of grace had expired.

Of the last attribute of God, *his justice*, I shall speak to you to-day, and answer the two following questions:

- I. *In what does the justice of God consist?*
- II. *What does the justice of God teach us?*

PART I.

The justice of God consists in this:

1. *That he rewards good and punishes evil.* God voluntarily decreed the reward of whatever is good. No one can claim this reward as a right, for God is under no obligation to reward good works which we cannot do without his grace, and least of all was he obliged to give us heaven as our reward; but since he has decreed that he will reward every good action, he cannot and will not annul his decree; only in this sense does his justice require that he should reward us for every good action. Therefore the Apostle says: "Knowing that whatsoever good things any man shall do, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free."—*Eph.* 6: 8. In like manner God has decreed the punishment of evil. God cannot and will not act contrary to this decree. He therefore who sins incurs the punishment of God, and it is impossible for him to escape it unless he expiates his sin by true repentance. Hence St. Paul writes: "He that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption."—*Gal.* 6: 8.

2. *That he rewards what is good and punishes what is evil, be it ever so insignificant.* God is not like men who frequently do not notice little things, and therefore neither reward nor punish them. But God rewards us for the least good we do, as Christ expressly assures us: "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."—*Matt.* 10: 42. But if, on the contrary, we commit the least fault, we are punished for it, as Christ again assures us: "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment."—*Matt.* 12: 36.

3. *That he measures and apportions rewards and punishments,*

(a) *According to the degree or amount of good or evil that one has done.* If we do a great deal of good, we shall receive a large reward; if we do but a small amount of good, then our reward

will be small. "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings."—*II. Cor.* 9: 6. In like manner God punishes people more or less according as they have sinned more or less. Therefore Christ says that the Jews were more accountable than Pilate, since the latter delivered him to death out of weakness, but the former out of malice.

(b.) *According to the measure of graces received.* God punishes those who receive many graces, but make no use of them, more severely than those to whom he gives fewer graces. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required; and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more."—*Luke* 12: 48. Therefore if Catholics lead a bad life, God will judge and punish them more severely by far than pagans and heretics, because the latter have not so many graces as we have in the Church. To the bad Catholic the words of Christ apply: "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida, for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Trye and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you."—*Matt.* 11: 21, 22.

4. *That he acts with perfect impartiality,* and rewards or punishes every one as he deserves. He does not ask whether one is rich or poor, learned or unlearned, of high or low degree, but simply what he has done, good or bad. With him there is no respect of persons; he has one scale for all; he chastises the mightiest potentate who does wrong as severely as the poorest beggar. "God will not accept any man's person neither will he stand in awe of any man's greatness, for he made the little and the great."—*Wis.* 6: 8. This strict impartiality God has revealed from the beginning. He did not spare the great, and treated kings, such as Pharaoh, Saul and Antiochus, very severely, whilst he evinced his love of David, Mary, Joseph and the Apostles.

5. *That in rewarding and punishing he looks not to the exterior, the appearance, but to the interior, the heart.* Men usually judge from appearances, for they cannot look into the heart and investigate its thoughts and sentiments. And yet everything depends on the interior, the intention. One may do good works, one may pray, fast, give alms, as the Pharisees did, and yet be a great sinner, because one's heart may be full of pride, avarice, hatred and envy. On the other hand, one may appear to be worthless, and yet one may not be so in reality. We have examples in Joseph and Susanna, on whom every one was ready to pronounce

sentence of death owing to circumstantial evidence, and yet they were both innocent. God judges otherwise: he searches the heart, regards the intention of every action, investigates the secret motives, and is therefore able to pass an infallible and perfectly just sentence, and to render to every one according to his works.

6. *Finally, that here upon earth he rewards the good and punishes the wicked, not always exteriorly, but interiorly.*

(a.) Exteriorly the justice of God does not always appear in this life; it often happens that the wicked prosper, while the good eat the bread of affliction. John the Baptist, Jesus and the Apostles led a life of poverty, persecution and sufferings, while Herod, Pilate, the high-priests and the Scribes and Pharisees possessed everything that in the eyes of the world makes men happy. It is the same to-day. The pious Christian has frequently a hard lot; he is poor and must earn his bread painfully; severe sickness comes upon him, he fails in his undertakings, he dies in the prime of life, be he ever so necessary for his poor family. A man who cares nothing for God is perhaps in the happiest circumstances, he always enjoys good health, has plenty of money and reaches old age. Many Christians cannot understand this; they are scandalized and say: How can God permit this? But know that here below is not the place where his justice always manifests itself; he allows the wheat and the cockle to grow together; he even permits the bad to rule over the good, to torment and oppress them in every possible way: but, hereafter all will be changed, he will separate the wheat from the cockle, burn the cockle and gather the wheat into his barn. Example *Dives and Lazarus*.

(b.) But even in this world the wicked man is not truly happy. Suppose he has everything that his heart can desire, that he has all that is counted indispensable for a happy life on earth, money, honor and respect, social position, ability, pleasure—he lacks one thing—interior peace, a good conscience. He cannot kill the worm that gnaws in the midst of his luxurious life, fear and anguish torment him, and the thought of the last things embitters his happiness. The words of the Apostle are verified in sinners: "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil."—*Rom. 2: 9*. How different it is with the just man! If he is obliged to encounter hard trials and sufferings, he does not despond, his good conscience consoles him, and he hopes that whatever he suffers here will be made up to him a hundred-fold hereafter. To these are added the interior consolations which God sends to his faithful servants—consolations which so richly

recompense them for all privations and sufferings that they would not exchange them for all the pleasures of the world. Thus God manifests, even upon earth, his justice in the hearts of the sinner and of the just man, and every one must confess with the Psalmist: "Thou art just, O Lord; and thy judgment is right."—*Ps. 118: 137*.

PART II.

What does the justice of God teach us?

1. *It teaches us that we must not complain of God when we see that the sinner fares well and the just man ill.* The lot of the sinner is anything but enviable, though he may wear a crown and enjoy the pleasures and joys of this world abundantly. His happiness is mixed with much bitterness, and moreover, is very fleeting and perishable. He resembles cattle that are being fattened; they are well kept because they are soon to be slaughtered. God bears for a time with his enemies; as soon as the measure of their sins is full they become victims of his justice and exchange their transitory earthly pleasures for the everlasting torments of hell. Who would grudge sinners their good days? Who would envy their happiness? Who would not rather wish with Jesus and his saints to pursue the way of the cross, since it is not only short, but also full of divine consolation conducting us to the heavenly Jerusalem where we shall receive "above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."—*II. Cor. 4: 17*.

2. *That we ought carefully to shun every sin.* If the fear of human justice deters men from evil, how much more should the fear of Divine justice have this effect? The punishment which the earthly judge can inflict on man is only transitory, but the punishment with which God chastises his enemies is eternal. One may succeed in withdrawing one's self from the punishment of an earthly judge by concealing the wicked deed, by denial, by flight, but how is this possible with the divine Judge whose eye beholds and scrutinizes all the secrets of the heart, and whose arm reaches further than heaven? Oh, how blind is man who is bold enough to do evil in sight of God; how deluded when he does not "fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell" (*Matt. 10: 28*), rendering him miserable for a never-ending eternity! Frequently, especially in the moment of temptation, call to mind the justice of God, and vividly represent to yourselves the punishments which come upon the sinner, so that a holy fear may fill your heart and deter you from every evil. Should you be so unfortunate as to sin grievously, do not delay your con-

version. Consider that the sword of divine vengeance hangs threateningly over the head of the sinner and can destroy him at any moment. Employ the time of grace, for "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."—*Heb. 10: 31*. Do not commit even a venial sin with premeditation, because before God no sin is insignificant. How severely were Moses, Oza, and David punished on account of small faults? Guard as much as possible against venial sins, and endeavor to repair by penitential exercises and good works those into which you may fall owing to human weakness.

3. *That we ought to be zealous in doing good.* God is a faithful rewarder of all that is good; no practice of virtue, no corporal or spiritual work of mercy, no prayer, no mortification goes unrewarded. All the pains we take in his service, everything we do for his honor and glory, will be rewarded hereafter. The more good we do, the greater will be our reward. If the hope of a temporal reward which is perishable induces men to sacrifice their repose and convenience, and to take upon themselves hardships and inconveniences, how much more should the hope of the precious rewards which await us in heaven animate our zeal for virtue?

PERORATION.

Let the meditation on the justice of God be a powerful incentive to the fear of God, piety, and zeal in virtue. Shun nothing so much as injustice and sin; guard yourselves against the smallest faults, and ask God daily to keep you in his love and grace. Be zealous in doing good, and aspire to perfection and sanctification. What glorious prospects you have if in view of the justice of God you endeavor to lead a pious, godly life! Hereafter you will be numbered with those of whom we read in the Book of Wisdom (3: 7, 8): "The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds; they shall judge nations and rule over people, and their Lord shall reign forever." Amen.



NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

EXPLANATION OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

And entering into the temple, he began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought.—Luke 19: 45.

How zealous our Lord is for the honor of his house. Entering into the temple he finds money-changers stationed in the front court and persons selling animals to be immolated in the sacrifices. Thus did they desecrate the house of God by this worldly business, which was often connected with avarice and injustice. Full of holy indignation, he drives these profaners out of the temple, saying: *My house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.* From this you may infer that God strictly requires you to behave reverently and devoutly in his house. Our churches are far more holy and venerable than the temple of Jerusalem. Animals were offered there, but in our churches it is Jesus Christ who offers *himself* through his priest. What a holy and admirable sacrifice therefore is the holy mass, and how holy our churches in which this sacrifice is daily offered!

To-day, and on the three following Sundays, I shall speak of the holy sacrifice of the mass, and explain the prayers and ceremonies which are employed. I shall begin by describing the preparation, or catechumens' Mass, to which belong—

- I. *The prayers at the foot of the Altar;*
- II. *The Introit;*
- III. *The Epistle and Gospel.*

PART I.

The holy mass begins with prayers at the foot of the Altar and these may be divided into three parts—

1. The forty-second psalm, which is preceded by the sign of the cross and the *Antiphon*, and followed by *Glory be to the Father*, etc.

(a.) The priest, standing at the foot of the altar, and bowing down before it, signs himself with the sign of the cross, saying at the same time: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and*

of the Holy Ghost, because, as Tertullian says, according to apostolic tradition the Christians began all their works with this sign, and because the sign of the cross reminds us that the holy mass is the unbloody renewal of the bloody sacrifice of Jesus on the cross; and we are under the obligation, as Christians, of being crucified to the world, and of devoting ourselves to Jesus Christ with undivided love. The invocation of the Three Divine Persons indicates that the highest end of the holy mass is the glory of the Most Holy Trinity.

(b.) Immediately after the sign of the cross follows the *Antiphon*, which originally was alternately sung by two choirs. Now, the Antiphon is a verse of a psalm, which runs this: *I will go unto the altar of God; to God who giveth joy to my youth.* By altar we here understand, in the first place, the altar on which the sacrifice is offered; secondly, the altar in heaven on which Jesus offers himself continually to his eternal Father as a sacrifice, in order to obtain for us all graces. The words: *To God, who giveth joy to my youth*, signify the effect of the holy mass; that is to say, by this sacrifice the whole human race, as well as the individual—nay, the whole creation, is endowed with new life, and, as it were brought back to its youth and plenitude of strength.

(c.) The priest now says alternately with the people (the clerk or server represents the people) the 42d psalm. David composed this psalm when in great affliction; it pained him especially that, being absent from Jerusalem, he could not enter into the holy tabernacle and there adore God. But the thought that God was his protector from his youth and would again succour him, raised his drooping spirits and filled him with the hope of returning to Jerusalem, there to adore the Lord and offer sacrifice to him in the holy tabernacle. Similar feelings are experienced when the priest is about to celebrate the holy sacrifice. We love to participate in the holy sacrifice, but we know that we are defiled with many sins, assailed by different passions and sorely pressed by the enemies of our salvation. This knowledge makes us sad, but a glance at Jesus, who, full of love cries out to us: "Come to me all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (*Matt. 11: 28*), fills us with hope and joy, so that we venture to approach the altar.

(d.) After the psalm the priest says: *Glory be to the Father, etc.* With this doxology all psalms are concluded, because the glory of the Holy Trinity is the final end of all our devotions and especially of the holy mass. Whilst saying it the priest inclines his head and offers to the Father his thoughts, to the Son his words, and to the Holy Ghost his works. This triple offering you must also

make to the Triune God, especially at holy mass, in profound veneration and grateful love.

2. The *Confiteor* with the *Absolution*.

(a.) The *Confiteor*, or the confession of sins, is divided into two parts; in the first we confess to God, to all the saints and to the faithful present, that we have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and deed; in the second we ask their intercession with God. We plead guilty, not only before God, but also before the saints and all those that are present, because by sin we not only offend God but also grieve the saints in heaven and give scandal to the faithful upon earth. The priest and the people say the *Confiteor* and pray for mutual intercession, according to the admonition of St. James: "Confess your sins one to another, and pray for one another, that you may be saved."—5; 16. The inclining posture and the striking of the breast, by which the *Confiteor* is accompanied are signs of penance. Thus the publican in the temple dared not lift up his eyes towards heaven, but struck his breast. Of the striking of the breast Innocent III. very appropriately says: "Three things are united in the striking of the breast, the striking, the sound, and the touch. By this the three things necessary for penance are signified, contrition of the heart, confession by the mouth, and satisfaction by the deed."

(b.) The *Confiteor* is naturally followed by the *Absolution*. This absolution is not an absolution from sins, as in the Sacrament of Penance, but only a prayer which priests and people address to God for one another, that he may have mercy on them and forgive them their sins. The absolution which the priest says, runs thus: *May Almighty God be merciful unto you, and, forgiving you your sins, bring you to life everlasting. R. Amen. May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution, and remission of our sins. R. Amen.* In the last part the priest prays for the three-fold grace necessary to salvation, for *indulgence (indulgentiam)*, that is, time for penance, for *loosing (absolutionem)*, that is, detachment of the heart from sin, and lastly, for *remission (remissionem)*, that is, for the real forgiveness of sins. The words of the absolution, *the Almighty and merciful Lord*, signify the foundation on which the hope of our salvation rests.

3. *The prayer for mercy*, consisting of short versicles, which the priest standing at the foot of the altar, and in an inclined posture, says with the clerk.

Then the priest, going up to the altar, says: *Take away from us our iniquities, we beseech thee, O Lord, that we may be*

worthy to enter with pure minds into the Holy of Holies. By the Holy of Holies, we understand the altar, and the holy sacrifice of the mass, which is offered upon the altar. The altar, indeed, is the holiest thing, because Jesus, the Son of God, who is holiness itself, and the author of all holiness, reposes upon it; the same is to be said of the holy mass, because in the mass Jesus offers and is offered. What purity is necessary in order to approach the altar and to offer sacrifice worthily! Having ascended the altar, bowing down, the priest says: *We beseech thee, O Lord, by the merits of thy saints whose relics are here, and of all the saints, that thou wouldst vouchsafe to forgive me all my sins.* When the priest says, *whose relics are here*, he kisses the altar. The primitive Christians used to celebrate the mysteries on the tombs of the martyrs. In the course of time churches were erected over these tombs, or the relics of the saints were translated to churches built in other places, where they were deposited under the altar. Afterwards the Church ordained that every altar on which the sacrifice of the mass was to be offered must contain relics of saints. The kiss with which the altar is honored symbolizes the intimate communion of the Church militant with the Church triumphant, and in the prayer we beseech God, for the sake of the merits of the saints, to grant us that purity of soul which is required for the worthy celebration of the holy sacrifice of the mass.

PART II.

1. The *Introit*.

This is divided into four parts: the Antiphon, verse of a psalm, Doxology, and repetition of the Antiphon. Formerly it was a whole psalm, which clergy and people chanted when they conducted the bishop from his house to the church for the celebration of mass. The *Introit* adapts itself to the feasts that occur, or to the ecclesiastical season, and expresses either joy or sorrow, humble petition, hope or desire, and contains each time the principal thought of the festival celebrated, and is to it what a text is to a sermon. From the *Introit*, that is, from the first words of the Antiphon, some masses, and even some Sundays, have their names. Thus the masses offered for the repose of the dead are called *Requiem* Masses; during Advent, *Rorate* [locally] because the *Introits* of these Masses begin with the words *Requiem* and *Rorate* respectively. The first Sunday after Easter is called *Quasimodo* Sunday, the sixth Sunday after Easter is named *Exaudi* Sunday, because the first words of the *Introit* on these Sundays respectively are *Quasimodo* and *Exaudi*.

2. The *Kyrie* which the priest says at the middle of the altar, with hands joined, alternately with the clerk.

(a.) *Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.* Lord have mercy on us, Christ have mercy on us, Lord have mercy on us. These are Greek words. How does it come that the Church here uses Greek words whilst everything else is Latin? She signifies thereby that the Greek and Latin Church constitute only one Church. For a long time the Greek Church was united with the Latin; it was not till the ninth century that the Greek Church separated from us, and this separation or schism exists to this day.

(b.) The *Kyrie* is repeated nine times; three times in honor of the Father, three times in honor of the Son, and three times in honor of the Holy Ghost. Why three times in honor of each person? Because in each of the three persons the entire Trinity is contained, for though the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are distinct from one another as persons, they are one in their essence. The Father and the Holy Ghost are invoked by the same name, *Kyrie*, Lord, because they are of one nature; but the Son is invoked by the name *Christe*, because, although he is of the same nature with the Father and the Holy Ghost, he has another nature, namely, the human, having in time become man.

3. The *Gloria*, or the hymn of the angels, which is composed of the song of the angels at the birth of Christ, and some additions made to it by the Church.

(a.) The *Gloria* very significantly stands at the beginning of the mass; for by it we are taught why we offer this holy sacrifice. We offer the sacrifice of the mass to God as a sacrifice of praise, of thanksgiving, of propitiation, and of petition. This fourfold purpose of the sacrifice is presented before our mind's eye by the *Gloria*. The sacrifice of the mass appears to us in it as a sacrifice of *praise*, because we say: *Glory be to God on high, we praise thee, we bless thee, we adore thee*; as a sacrifice of *thanksgiving*, because we say: *We give thee thanks for thy great glory*; as a sacrifice of *propitiation and of petition*, because we say: *O Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayers.*

(b.) As the *Gloria* is a song of jubilee, an expression of the greatest joy and exultation, it is omitted on all penitential days, on the Sundays in Advent and Lent, and in *Requiem* masses.

(c.) When the priest begins the *Gloria* he raises both his hands, to express by this motion his own joy and that of the people for

the grace of Redemption which came from heaven, but continuing to say it, he keeps his hands joined, holding fast, as it were, his interior joy; at the end he signs himself with the sign of the cross, to manifest that the cross is the source of all consolation and joy.

4. The *Collect*. *Collect* is a Latin word, and signifies a collection, namely, a collection of prayers for the necessities of the people. The priest collects, at it were, the necessities of the faithful, in order to present them to God, like the angel in the Apocalypse (8: 3), who lays the prayers of all saints upon a golden altar, which is before the throne of God.

(a.) Before the priest reads the *Collect* he kisses the altar, to indicate that he is in communion with Christ, who is represented by the altar, and with the saints whose relics are in the altar, and that through the merits of Jesus and of the saints he hopes to obtain what he asks of God in the *Collect*. Then turning towards the people, he salutes them saying, *The Lord be with you*, so that you may pray well and in a salutary manner; the people respond to the salutation in the words, *And with thy spirit*, expressing the wish that God may also give him the grace to perform this holy service in a worthy and salutary manner.

(b.) The *Collect* always contains a petition which refers to the particular celebration; it varies according to the feasts, seasons and occasions. The ground upon which we base our petition is the mystery or feast which is celebrated. The *Collects*, as well as all the prayers of the Church, invariably conclude with these or similar words, *Through Jesus Christ*. The reason why we use this conclusion is because Jesus said: "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you."—*John 16: 23*.

PART III.

The *Collect* is followed by the *Epistle* and *Gospel*.

1. The *Epistle*, meaning a "letter," is a selection from the Old or the New Testament; it is also called a lesson, a reading.

(a.) It was a custom with the Jews at their assemblies for divine worship to read something from the writings of Moses or of the Prophets.—*Luke 4: 16*. It was also the custom in the first Christian congregations to read portions of the Old Testament, and in the course of time also of the New Testament; it had not, however, been definitely determined what or how much was to be read. This was left to the judgment of superiors. In order to obtain uniformity in this, Pope Damasus ordered St. Jerome to arrange

a book containing the gospels and epistles to be read during public worship. This book of epistles and gospels, as arranged by St. Jerome, was introduced into the whole Catholic Church and is still in use, with the exception of a few alterations.

(b.) The *Epistle* at holy mass always has reference to the ecclesiastical season or feast of the day, and its object is to put us into the frame of mind corresponding with the feast. It is read before the gospel, because it is to prepare the way for the understanding thereof. It therefore sometimes contains a prophecy of the event which is narrated in the gospel, sometimes a fact which explains the contents of the gospel, sometimes a moral which we must gather from the gospel.

(c.) The priest, reading the *Epistle*, lays his hands on the book partly to intimate that the Sacred Scriptures are the property of the Church and that God has committed their interpretation to her, partly to express his full consent to the doctrines and truths contained therein. The *Epistle* being read, the clerk says, *Thanks be to God*, that is, for having made known to us his will in writing and shown us the way of salvation. After the *Epistle* follow short prayers and ejaculations, for it is right that we should gratefully address God who has vouchsafed to come down on this earth and preach to us his holy word.

2. The Gospel.

(a.) Having read the *Epistle* and whatever belongs to it, he goes to the middle of the altar and prepares himself for reading the gospel by saying: *Cleanse my heart and my lips, O Almighty God, who didst cleanse the lips of the prophet Isaias with a burning coal, and vouchsafe, through thy gracious mercy, so to purify me that I may worthily proclaim thy holy gospel. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(b.) After this preparation the priest goes to the right side of the altar and reads or sings the *Gospel*. It is read at the right side of the altar, because Christ, the author of it, is more than the writers of the Old Testament and the Apostles, whose inspired words are read for us in the *Epistle*, also to intimate that the doctrine of the gospel, rejected by the Jews, passed over to the Gentiles. The custom of reading or singing the *Gospel* at the right side has also historical significance. In the early ages of the Church the faithful brought their offerings to mass and before the offertory laid them on the epistle side of the altar. To make room for them the Missal was removed to the right side. After Communion the offerings were no longer on the altar, hence the book was carried back to the left side.

(c.) The priest begins the *Gospel* after the usual salutation, *The Lord be with you*, with the words, *The continuation (or the beginning) of the gospel according to St. N.* The priest and people sign themselves with the sign of the cross on the *forehead*, to intimate that they are not ashamed of the gospel; on the *mouth*, as a sign of their readiness to confess the gospel before the whole world; on the *breast*, to express that they value and love the gospel above all things, and that they will live according to it. The priest makes upon the page that contains the gospel the sign of the cross, to indicate that the gospel is the Book of Jesus Christ crucified, and that from its words blessing and salvation flow.

(d.) The people rise up when the priest begins to read or sing the *Gospel*, and remain standing during the reading or singing of it. We thereby manifest the attention and respect due to it, and intimate that we are resolved to accept the truths and doctrines of the gospel with a believing heart and to live according to them.

(e.) At the end the clerk says, *Praise be to thee, O Christ.* Thereby the people express their thanks to Christ because he has vouchsafed to announce the gospel to us. The priest kisses the page on which the gospel is written, to express his reverence for it, and for the grace of reconciliation which it has brought us. To this also refer the words which he says, *May our sins be blotted out by the words of the gospel.*

PERORATION.

Retain in your mind what I have said to you to-day on the preparation for the sacrifice which was formerly called the *mass of the catechumens*, that is, of those who were still learning the first rudiments of Christianity, for they were permitted to assist at mass only thus far previous to their baptism. Think of what I have told you as often as you assist at mass. Go to mass every day if you can, and on Sundays to the last or High Mass, that you may hear the epistle and gospel read in English and their explanation. Love to hear the word of God, that you may hear mass with advantage and receive the fruits of this great sacrifice for time and eternity. Amen.



NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

JERUSALEM A FIGURE OF THE IMPENITENT SINNER.

When Jesus drew near Jerusalem, seeing the city, he wept over it.—Luke 19: 41.

When Jesus contemplated from Mount Olivet the magnificent, populous city of Jerusalem, and in spirit foresaw the calamities and destruction which were before her on account of her past ingratitude, her present insensibility, and her future infidelity, he was moved to tears. *Seeing the city, he wept over it.* Full of sorrow he said: *If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes.* He wished nothing more ardently than that Jerusalem might even yet, however late, end her career of iniquity and be converted to the Lord, that she might employ the time of the visitation of grace and work out her salvation; but all the efforts which he made for her rescue were fruitless; the favored but ungrateful city rejected all graces and persevered in unbelief and sin. Therefore our Lord in the gospel of this day announces her destruction, which actually occurred thirty-seven years afterwards.

As with Jerusalem, so does God deal with all impenitent sinners. When their time of grace is past, he snatches them away from the world, summons them before his judgment-seat and condemns them to everlasting fire. Let us consider this serious truth a little more closely today. Jerusalem is a figure of the impenitent sinner—

- I. On his death-bed;
- II. At the judgment;
- III. In hell.

PART I.

1. *For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side.* These days really came upon Jerusalem. Titus, the Roman general, marched with a numerous army against the city and besieged it. This was at Easter, A. D. 70. The Jews had come in from all parts for the festival of the Pasch. The city was over-

crowded. We may safely assume without exaggeration that there were then fully four millions of people in the city, for the number of Jews in good circumstances, who worshipped in the temple, amounted to two millions and a half. Titus surrounded the whole city with a wall so that no one could go in or out. All supply of provisions being thus cut off a famine set in so severely that mothers ate their own offspring. Many Jews who, driven by hunger, tried to flee from the city, fell into the hands of the Romans and were slaughtered.

2. Here we have in Jerusalem a true figure of the dying sinner. He also will see himself surrounded by a wall. Such a wall will be to him —

(a.) *His sins.* Wherever he turns his eyes he beholds sins: *Sins of his childhood*, when he did many evil things; *sins of his youth*, which he desecrated by criminal excesses and vices of various kinds; *sins of mature age*, which he spent in worldliness and forgetfulness of God; *sins on week-days*, *sins on Sundays and holidays*, *sins by day and night*, *sins in thought, word and deed, and by omission*; *sins against God*, *against his neighbor*, *against himself*. What will be his feelings when these countless sins in all their deformity array themselves before his eyes! Will he not be seized with the greatest anguish, like the Jews when they saw themselves all at once surrounded by an impenetrable wall and shut off from all sides? But you will say, perhaps: The sinner still lives, he may therefore obtain the forgiveness of his sins by a good confession, and thus deliver himself from his calamity. True, but for that he needs *not an ordinary, but an extraordinary grace*. Will God bestow upon him such a grace after he has rejected so many? This is very uncertain; secondly, he needs a *good will*, he must change all his ideas; he must hate and detest evil, and love what is good. Will he do this? This again is very improbable. "If the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots, you also may do well, when you have learned evil." — *Jer. 13: 23.*

(b.) *Satan.* We read in the Apocalypse (12, 12): "The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time." The devil is always at work, and is never idle; but his exertions are indefatigable at the approach of death, in order to accomplish the ruin of men; he knows that he has but a short time, perhaps only a few hours, in which to gain or to lose an immortal soul. Hence if a man who has spent his life in the forgetfulness of God attempts, in consequence of the salutary admonitions of the priest, to make a good confession on his death-bed, the devil uses all his endeavors to prevent it and to

keep the unfortunate sinner in the bonds of sin. He suggests to him various thoughts which are calculated to harass him and to drive him to despair. Fool, he says to him, you hope for forgiveness, when there are more sins upon your conscience than hairs upon your head! You expect God to be merciful to you, and yet you have despised him for a long series of years, and have abused his benefits by committing sins; will Jesus now receive you in mercy and love—he whom you have crucified by your sins, not only as the Jews, but a thousand times and oftener? This is what the devil will say; he surrounds the sinner as it were with a wall, and wherever he attempts to make a breach therein and thus escape and save his soul from perdition, the devil mounted upon the wall obstructs his egress, again and again suggesting to him: It is in vain, there is no grace, no pardon for you any more.

Thus the end of the sinner is frequently despair. St. Gregory the Great narrates the following incident: "A very rich man, by the name of Chrysantius who never had troubled himself much about God and his soul was lying on his death-bed. Full of anguish and terror, he cried out to the evil spirits who had come to take him: Give me time, let me have time only till morning. But they replied: Fool, you want time; you had a long time and made use of it to commit sin, and now you want time! There is no more time for you. The poor creature continued to scream and entreated his son Maximus, who was standing by his bedside, to help him. He struggled and tossed on his bed restlessly from side to side, and thus died full of anguish and despair." The same may happen to you when you come to die. The grace of God may depart from you, and abandon you to the power of the devil, and so you will die in horrible despair.

(c.) *The world.* Barlaam relates the following: "I have heard of a certain large city whose inhabitants always elect a stranger as their king, who knows nothing of their laws and customs. He is invested with supreme power over them, but only for a year. When he has lived in the greatest security and has devoted himself to the pleasures and amusements of life without restraint, thinking he will always remain king, the citizens rise up against him, strip him of his royal garments, lead him naked through the city and banish him to a far distant island, where he is without food or raiment, and where he languishes in the greatest poverty, finally perishing miserably."

Thus the world treats the sinner. So long as he is rich, healthy and happy, it treats him with all possible friendliness, laughs, jokes and plays with him, and provides him with honors, pleasures, and amusements. But how does it treat him when he becomes poor and miserable and especially when he comes to die?

Ah, then it turns its back upon him. The joys and amusements in which he wallowed flee from him; money and worldly substance have no more value for him, because he cannot take a cent with him to the other world: his good friends either abandon him, or come only to make his heart the heavier by their useless condolences. Thus he falls into a state of the deepest melancholy and spends the last days and hours of his life in bitterness, saying with Antiochus: "In what tribulation I now am, and what floods of sorrow overwhelm me—I, who was so happy and beloved when in power!" How foolish, then, is the sinner who throws himself into the arms of the world and seeks from it his happiness, which ultimately deserts him and fills his heart with bitterness in the hour of death!

PART II

1. *They shall beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee.*

It was four enemies that beat the Jews flat to the ground, *famine, pestilence, sedition* and the *sword of the enemy*. The famine was so terrible that it swept off countless people. Manacus, a Jew, to whom was entrusted one gate of the city, reported officially to Titus, that through the entrance, which it was his duty to guard, over one hundred and fifteen thousand corpses of people who had died of hunger were carried out between April 14th and July 1st. Other Jews who went over to the Romans, reported that six hundred thousand corpses of famished Jews were thrown over the walls of the city. Pestilence aided its ravages to famine and carried off as many lives. And, as if in Jerusalem the misery were not sufficiently great, furious factions arose among the Jews, and in the public squares and streets of the city, and even in the temple they fought sanguinary battles, in which thousands were killed. Who can count all who fell by the sword of the enemy? To mention only one thing, Titus caused five hundred Jews to be crucified daily, until no more wood could be found for making crosses. As Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian, relates, more than a million of Jews lost their lives during the siege of Jerusalem. The prophetic declaration of Jesus was literally verified: *They shall beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee.*

2. This prophecy can also be applied to the impenitent sinner when he stands before the judgment-seat of God.

(a.) *The sinner will fall to the ground.* When Joseph of Egypt made himself known to his brothers and said: "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt," his brethren could

not answer him, being struck with exceeding great fear.—*Gen* 45: 3, 4. No wonder that terror made them speechless, for they remembered the crime which they had committed against Joseph when they sold him as a slave to the Madianites. Think of the terror that will take hold of the sinner when he sees himself before the judgment-seat of God, and when Jesus his judge says to him: "I am Jesus, whom you have persecuted, whom you have crucified." The great doctor of the Church, St. Jerome, was a saint, and yet he said: "As often as I think of that day, I tremble;" and you, frivolous man, who heap sin upon sin, you do not think of that day, you do not tremble!

(b.) *And his children. His children are his works.*

First, his sins and evil works. He followed the maxims of the world that considers everything lawful that flatters the passions and brings some worldly advantage. He sinned in many ways; against humanity by pride in clothes, by ambition and vanity; against justice and the love of his neighbor by injustices, frauds and impositions, by his hard-heartedness towards the poor and afflicted; against chastity by his impure thoughts, desires, words and actions; against meekness by cursing, swearing and blaspheming; against temperance by his drunkenness; against the duties of his religion and state of life, by sloth in going to church, in prayer, in hearing the word of God, in the reception of the sacraments, in the education of his children, in looking after the temporal and eternal welfare of those under his charge. But he slighted all these duties; he calumniated the priests when they spoke an earnest word to him and when he felt himself hit in sermons, calling them blind zealots, who see sin everywhere, and grudge people the most innocent and harmless joys. When his conscience was sometimes roused, he quieted it with the thought: What I do others also do; it cannot be a great fault; besides, God is good and merciful; he has the heart of a father and knows how to have patience with his children. Thus the sinner continued to live in impenitence, his criminal excesses and sins gave him no great uneasiness. But the eternal Judge who demands an account of every idle word, and before whom everything must be accounted for, even to the last farthing, will undeceive him and bring to his knowledge how wickedly he has acted in living according to the maxims of the world and not according to the principles of the gospel. He will increase the number of the impious souls who full of despair cry out: "Therefore we have erred from the way of truth and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us. We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways; but the way of the Lord we have not known."—*Wisd.* 5: 6, 7.

Secondly, their good works. I do not deny that even the greatest sinner now and then does some good, and performs a praiseworthy action. Perhaps he is charitable and does his neighbor many a good turn, many an act of kindness; he is temperate, industrious, active in his calling; he is peaceable and lives in concord with all his neighbors. He perhaps trusts in these good works and hopes that God will reward him for them hereafter. But what a delusion, for the state of grace is above all things necessary in order that good works may be rewarded in the other world; whatever good works are done in a state of sin are without merit. "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 3. Thus God will also beat flat to the ground the children of the sinner, that is, his good and his bad works. How miserable then is the impenitent sinner, how deplorable his lot!

PART III.

They will not leave in thee a stone upon a stone. This prophecy was literally fulfilled. Titus frequently offered pardon to the Jews during the five months' siege if they would surrender, for he wished to spare the city and the magnificent temple; besides, the indescribable misery which reigned in the city affected him very much. But the Jews stubbornly rejected all his offers and would not surrender on any condition. The Romans then took the city by storm and advanced as far as the temple, where the Jews defended themselves most stubbornly. Here a terrible combat ensued. A Roman soldier, actuated by a sort of divine impulse, cast a firebrand through a window into the temple and at once it burned as if kindled by the wrath of God. Titus cried out: "Extinguish the flames, save the temple!" but in vain; the temple resembled a sea of fire; it could not be saved. When the Jews saw their temple in flames, despair seized them, all courage fled from their broken hearts, their heart-rending lamentations were heard beyond the neighboring mountains, and the dim eyes of the dying were anxiously directed to the ruins of the temple, in which the happiness of their people seemed buried for ever. The massacre was terrible, the blood flowed in torrents through the streets. Jerusalem was levelled to the ground, and the surviving Jews sold as slaves and scattered throughout the world.

2. In this total destruction of Jerusalem we have a picture of the sinner in hell if we consider —

(a.) *What he loses.* Deplorable, indeed, was the loss which the Jews suffered by the destruction of their city, for Jerusalem was one of the largest and most beautiful cities of the world, and no people had so renowned and holy a temple as that in Jerusalem. We need not therefore wonder that so great a sorrow at the loss of their city and temple seized the Jews that many of them became insane, and full of despair took their own lives. Sinner, infinitely greater and more deplorable is your loss when by your impenitence you compel your divine Judge to pronounce the sentence of condemnation upon you. What do you lose then? You lose heaven and with it God, of whom you will be deprived for ever. What a loss? It is so great, so painful, that spiritual writers do not hesitate to assert that all the other pains of hell are nothing compared with it. St. Chrysostom says; "If you mention a thousand pains of hell, you will name none that could equal these" (the loss of God and of heaven). St. Augustine says that the damned, if they could enjoy the sight of God, would suffer no pain in the infernal abyss, and that hell itself would be changed into a paradise. In order to give you some idea of this pain, let us suppose that a man has lost a jewel worth a hundred dollars; he is certainly sorry for this loss. But if he had lost a jewel worth a thousand or ten thousand dollars, he would be still more grieved, for the greater the value, the greater the sorrow. From this it follows that the pain of the damned soul owing to the loss of God and of heaven is in a certain measure infinite, because the lost good is infinite. Hence St. Thomas of Aquin says: "The pain of the damned is infinite, because it is the loss of an infinite good."

Oh, if the sinner would only consider this loss, it would be impossible for him to remain any longer in a state of sin; it would be impossible to sell heaven for the sake of a sinful lust, a temporary benefit, the gratification of a sinful passion. Where is there a rational man who would exchange his farm, his money, and all the valuable things he possesses, for a piece of stained glass?

(b.) *What he finds.* Very unfortunate was the fate of the Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem. Many thousands of them were sold into slavery by the Romans, all the rest were banished from their country and driven out into the world, where they wander about to this very day, without a king, without a temple, and without a country. But far more deplorable is the lot of the impenitent sinner in hell; for what are the sufferings which the Jews have endured for the last eighteen hundred years, and now and then are obliged to endure, compared with the pains of the damned. All the descriptions in the Sacred Scriptures of hell and its torments lead us to infer their incomprehensible great-

ness. It is called a place of *darkness and a prison*, where the prisoners are tied hand and foot.—*Matt. 22: 13*. What is more terrible than to be obliged to live in continual darkness and in a prison, with hands and feet tied? Again, it is called a place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.—*Matt. 8: 12*. How intolerable must not the state of the damned be, since they do not weep, complain and lament as men who are visited by great sufferings, but howl like beasts, and in inexpressible rage gnash their teeth! It is called a fire that shall never be extinguished, a worm that shall never die. Can there be a greater pain than that which fire causes? If only a spark fall on the hand, we extinguish it at once, for we cannot bear the pain. But the Fathers say that the fire here on earth cannot be compared with the fire of hell. St. Augustine says: "Compared with the fire of hell our fire is only a painted fire." Oh, how terrible must be the pains of hell! Who can think of them without trembling? How is it possible that so many people live so carelessly and heap sin upon sin when they know that hell awaits them!

PERORATION.

I conclude with the words of Jesus: "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell."—*Matt. 10: 28*. Yes, fear God, who has the power and the will to chastise the impenitent sinner with all severity, as he has chastised Jerusalem. Shun sin, for unless it is repented of, it draws after it a miserable death, judgment without mercy, and eternal damnation. If you have the misfortune to fall into a grievous sin, remain not as Jerusalem did, in impenitence, but do penance without delay, for only a speedy repentance can save you. If it should appear difficult to you to control your passions and to pursue the way of mortification, take to heart this truth: What delights is but of short duration, what burns is eternal. Employ this fleeting earthly life with persevering zeal in the service of God that you may prepare for yourselves a happy eternity and find admittance into the heavenly Jerusalem. Amen.



NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

THE SINNER'S DEATH.

The death of the wicked is very evil.—Psalm 33: 22.

Scarcely any city has met with so tragic an end as Jerusalem, the destruction of which Christ foretells in the gospel of this day in clear and striking words. It was about the time of Easter, A. D. 70, that Titus, the Roman general, appeared before the walls of the city and laid siege to it. During a five months' siege, more than a million of men lost their lives by hunger, pestilence, and the sword of the enemy. Finally, the Romans took the city by storm, and whoever fell into their hands was killed; they spared neither man, woman nor child; the corpses covered all the streets and public places of the city; blood flowed in torrents, all the houses and palaces, and even the temple, fell victims to the devouring flames. Jerusalem was levelled to the ground, and the soil turned with the ploughshare. The lamentation of the Jews pierced the clouds, but they found no mercy nor compassion; all that were not killed were sold into slavery.

The holy Fathers and spiritual writers see in this tragic end of Jerusalem a picture of the death of the impenitent sinner, for "the death of the wicked is very evil." Let us to-day make a meditation on the death of the sinner for our instruction and warning. I say the death of the sinner is very evil, for he dies either —

- I. Suddenly, or in such a state that he can no longer receive the means of grace, or
- II. In despair, or
- III. In obduracy, or
- IV. As a sham penitent.

PART I.

Some sinners die without being able to receive the sacraments. They die —

1. Either suddenly, as the Apostle says: "When they shall say, peace and security, then shall sudden destruction come upon

them, as the pains upon her that is with child: and they shall not escape."—*I. Thess.* 5: 3. How many examples have we not in history of people who had hardened their hearts in wickedness being suddenly snatched away by death! Think of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, who in the midst of their criminal career, when they thought of anything except death, were destroyed by a rain of fire and brimstone. Call to your mind Zambri. In the very moment in which he committed a wicked deed with a Madianite woman, he and the woman were overtaken by death.—*Numbers* 25: 6-8. Think of Ananias and Saphira; both fell dead at the feet of St. Peter.—*Acts* 5: 1-10. Similar examples of sudden deaths are known to every one of you from experience. You sinners who never cease to offend God, may you not also die suddenly? and if you die suddenly, what will become of you?

2. *Or in such a state that they cannot receive the Sacraments.* It frequently happens that the sickness at first does not appear dangerous; or that people do not have the courage to tell the sick person of the danger; all of a sudden he begins his agony and dies before a priest comes to him. Many lose their senses, in which state the reception of the sacraments, at least confession and communion, is utterly impossible. For if a sick man out of his senses received the sacraments, they would be of no benefit to him, since where there is no understanding there is no free will, and where this is wanting, neither good nor bad is possible. It is true, however, that sick persons who have lived piously, or who at least on their sick bed, whilst they are still in possession of their senses, repent of their sins and desire to receive the sacraments, can in a state of unconsciousness or suspension of their mental faculties receive the Sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction worthily and with spiritual advantage, because their good disposition, required for the worthy reception of the sacraments, virtually continues; but it is not so with impenitent sinners, when they fall into unconsciousness; they cannot receive the sacraments worthily and with benefit because they have not the necessary disposition. Therefore, remembering that a man may die suddenly, or may be in such a condition that he can do no more for his salvation, it must be evident to you how dangerous is the state of sinners who will not hear of penance and amendment, but live in impenitence from year to year. They have great reason to fear that they will die unhappily and perish eternally.

PART II.

Other sinners die *in despair*, into which they are driven by the sight —

1. *Of their sins.* There are not a few sinners who spend their life in carelessness and forgetfulness of God. They add sin to sin without being in the least concerned or disturbed on that account. Though because of their continued impenitence they already stand, as it were, with one foot in hell, they lie down and rise up as if nothing had happened. If their conscience reproaches them sometimes and tries to convince them of their miserable state, they quiet it by different specious arguments. Faults and sins, which according to the divine law are followed by eternal condemnation, such as transgressions of the sixth and ninth commandments, injustices and frauds in business, neglect of the duties of religion and state of life, scandals and other matters, they believe to be either no sins, or only insignificant faults, on account of which one need not be disturbed because they are so very common. If they become sick, dangerously sick, and feel that they have reached the end of their life, frequently a wonderful change takes place in them, and their judgment of the state of their souls is turned to the other extreme. The sins which they considered insignificant, now appear to them in so awful a form that they are seized with terror; the more they reflect on their vicious life of many years' standing, the more they are discouraged, and frequently they imagine that there is no more forgiveness for them, they lose all hope of salvation, and die in despair. We have an example in Cain, the fratricide, who full of despair cried out, "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon," (*Gen.* 4: 13); and in Judas, the traitor, who hanged himself.

2. *Of the judgment of God.* They know that they have to do with a judge with whom there is no regard of persons, who requires an account of every idle word, and before whom even the saints tremble. They know that their judge is Jesus Christ, whom they have not followed, whose graces they have despised, and whom they have crucified anew. They know that the sentence which will be pronounced over them will be decisive for all eternity, and irrevocable, and that this sentence will be no other than condemnation to hell-fire. Now that their moments of life are numbered, they are obliged to say: "To-day I am in my bed, to-morrow at this time I shall be already judged and shall be burning in the abyss of hell." What anguish, what terror and consternation, what despair must take hold of the sinner at such thoughts! But you may think that the sinner could go to confession and so need no longer despair. Yes, he could go to confession, but he will not do so because he no longer hopes to benefit by it. A young man who led a dissolute life was often entreated to amend, otherwise he would end badly. But all such admonitions he disregarded, saying: "I have a saint who is

almighty, and who will not allow me to die miserably." By this saint he understood the mercy of God. After having continued his vicious life for a long time, he was seized by a violent sickness. What did he do? He sent for a priest, in order to make his confession to him. But as he was examining his conscience, the sins of his past life presented themselves before his eyes in such numbers and abomination that he was discouraged, and cried out: "Oh, the endless number of my sins!" He did not confess, but died in despair.

Thus men who sin frequently die, presuming on God's mercy. Presumption is often the precursor of despair, and despair the harbinger of damnation.

PART III.

Other sinners again die in *obduracy*. To these belong —

1. *Those who reject all means of grace and die like heathens.* In Belgium and some other countries there has existed for many years a society of men who solemnly pledge themselves never to receive the sacraments, never to allow a priest to be admitted to their death-bed, nor to be buried in a Christian manner. Their infamous oath also makes the provision that if any one of their number should change his mind on his death-bed and ask for a priest, the others must prevent it in every possible way. These wicked men make it absolutely impossible to die as a Christian. Besides these there are many others in our days who, having become infidels, are firmly resolved to remain so in death as in life.

2. *Those who have not yet yielded themselves entirely to infidelity, and who on their death-bed do not absolutely refuse the reception of the sacraments, but who nevertheless remain hardened and impenitent to their end.* The priest may do with them what he pleases, he can infuse no life into them; they resemble a corpse, which can never be resuscitated. They listen to the instructions and admonitions of the priest without any interest, they repeat after him the acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition with icy indifference; they confess; that is, after numerous questions the priest can only get out of them yes or no, but there is no sign of contrition. They exhibit the same want of interest and the same torpidity at the administration of the Viaticum and Extreme Unction. What can be expected from such a reception of the sacraments? Ah, perhaps it would be better if such sick people died without the sacraments; we should at least not have to fear, and fear with good reason, that immediately before their death

they have contaminated their conscience with a threefold sacrilege.

There are many who thus receive the holy sacraments on their death-bed, and with only two evident marks of obduracy depart this life. Those have special reason to fear this who, continuing their sinful life for years, leave the means of salvation either entirely unemployed, or only make use of them to offend God still more by confessing and communicating sacrilegiously.

PART IV.

Finally, other sinners die as *sham penitents*. To this class belong probably the greater number of those who die a miserable death and perish eternally. Of this we are convinced by —

1. *Examples of sham penitents from Bible history.* Let us contemplate only one such sham penitent, King Antiochus Epiphanes. This wicked king committed the greatest crimes; he robbed the temple at Jerusalem, placed idols there, and caused many Jews who remained faithful to their laws to be most cruelly tortured and put to death. At last, the measure of his sin being full, he was struck with an incurable and invisible disease; the worms swarmed out of his body, and whilst he lived in sorrow and pain, his flesh fell away from the bone; and the man who thought a short time previously that he could reach to the stars of heaven, was unendurable owing to the intolerable stench. By this means his great pride being taken down, being admonished by the scourge of God and his pains increasing every moment he began to come to the knowledge of himself. And when he himself could not abide his own stench he spoke thus: "It is just to be subject to God, and that a mortal man should not make himself equal to God." His eyes were opened; he acknowledged his sickness as a scourge of God for his many crimes, and prepared to do penance. He humbled himself before God, and promised to repair the injury done to Jerusalem, and to become a Jew himself, to go through every place of the earth and to declare the power of God.—*II. Mach. 9*. Might it not be expected that God would graciously receive the repentance of Antiochus and forgive him his misdemeanors? But no, Antiochus found no mercy before God; he died and was condemned, for the Scripture says: "This wicked man prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not to obtain mercy" (*II. Mach. 9: 13*), because his repentance was not for the offence committed against God; but merely on account of his present sufferings. It was a sham repentance. He did not detest his sins, but their evil consequences, viz., sickness and death, and therefore he was rejected as a sham penitent.

How many sinners there are who on their death-bed only sham penance! When a sinner is dying he sometimes does not show that he is impenitent; he weeps, and confesses his sins with many sighs; he promises, if God restores him to health, to lead a pious life. Now, if he dies, will he find grace with God? Perhaps, but it is also possible that he will be lost; the expressions of repentance may have been insincere, merely shams. Many sick and dying persons repent of their sins and promise all sorts of good things, but only because they fear that they are dying. Their contrition for their sins is only natural, and therefore insufficient for a reconciliation with God.

2. *The sayings of the Fathers convince us of this truth.* St. Jerome says: "This I believe, and I have learned it by abundant experience, that he who leads a bad life does not make a good end." The same Father says: "Out of a hundred thousand who live in sin up to their death, scarcely one will be saved." St. Augustine, speaking of the penitent thief, says: "It is an example of one who obtained forgiveness in the last moment of his life; therefore, sinner, despair not; but it is only one example, therefore, sinner, guard against presumption, and do not sin against God's mercy." St. Vincent, the great spiritual teacher, says: "It is a greater miracle for people who lead a sinful life to die well, than for one to raise up the dead to life." But the raising of the dead to life being something very rare, it is evident that the number of sinners who on their death-bed truly repent and are saved is very small.

PERORATION.

Know, then, how true the words of the Psalmist are: "The death of the wicked is very evil." Many sinners die without the capability of receiving the holy sacraments, many also in despair, or in obduracy, or they sham repentance, which can save no man from perdition. All who live in sin and will not hear of penance and conversion have reason to fear such an evil death. "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." Therefore, shun sin. But if you have sinned, do not persevere in sin, but do penance without delay, in order to avoid the danger of eternal perdition. Fear God, and serve him with unchangeable fidelity, that you may avert from yourselves the greatest of all evils—an unhappy death—and that you may die a good, happy death. Amen.



NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

FRATERNAL CORRECTION.

It is written: My house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.—Luke 19: 46.

After his solemn entry into Jerusalem Jesus went into the temple to teach the people. Seeing the profanation of the temple by those that bought and sold, he was seized with a holy anger and cast them out, saying: *My house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.* Our Lord here gives us an example showing how we must correct our fellow-men when they have gone astray, and bring them back to the way of truth and virtue. He imposes this upon us as an obligation, in these words: "If thy brother shall offend against thee, go and reprove him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother."—*Matt. 18: 15.* Of fraternal correction I shall speak to you to-day by answering the two following questions:

- I. *When must we correct our neighbor?*
- II. *How must we correct him?*

PART I.

Fraternal correction is a strict duty of love towards our neighbor, which, however, becomes obligatory only under certain circumstances. To the question, therefore: *When are we bound to correct our neighbor?* I answer: We are bound,

1. *When the sin of our neighbor is certain.* So long as we do not know with certainty that our neighbor has committed this or that fault we have no obligation to correct him. Neither is it necessary; nay, we are not even permitted to search, like detectives, for the faults of our fellow-men. This is the duty of superiors and parents; these must see that their subjects or children, fulfil the duties of their state. But if the person is not under our control it would be presumption and impertinence for us to watch all his proceedings and never let him out of our sight. There are some who watch others more than they watch themselves, and who investigate everything that happens in the neighborhood, in order to find out the latest scandal. Such people are

a curse to any community and they ought to remember the adage: "Sweep before your own door," or, mind your own business. We must not trust every rumor, nor believe every evil report that we hear of others, because such rumors are often untrue, or at least very much exaggerated. Let us therefore defer the correction till we have full certainty of our neighbor's fault.

2. *When it is probable that no amendment will follow without our correction.* If the person has made a mistake or taken a wrong step, but has already made amends, as a matter of course he need not be corrected. Fraternal correction is a spiritual alms. As we need not assist a man who was once poor, but is now rich, so it is not necessary to correct a sinner who has already made amends. And even if our neighbor has not yet made amends himself, but gives a well-grounded hope that he will do so, the correction should be omitted. But if there is good reason to fear that of himself he will not change **his mind and amend**, charity obliges us to correct him.

3. *When there is hope that by means of our correction we shall accomplish some good.* If we do not expect that our neighbor will listen to us, or that instead of amending himself, he will become only more malicious, we must omit the correction as useless. For what physician would give medicine to a sick person when he knows that instead of helping him it will make him worse? Hence the wise man says: "He that teacheth a scorner, doth an injury to himself; and he that rebuketh a wicked man, getteth himself a blot."—*Prov. 9: 7.* This rule, however, holds good only when the person is not under our charge. Superiors, who by virtue of their office are obliged to correct, must not omit it on account of ill success, partly because they have the means of compelling the stubborn to fulfil their duties, partly because they are obliged to keep up discipline, which requires the punishment of the guilty for the common good. Therefore, parents, although you know beforehand that you will effect nothing with your children by correction, you must nevertheless not omit it, because you are the superiors of your children, and your state of life obliges you to correct them. "I have said it, and have saved my soul." Jesus Christ rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees and other obdurate sinners, although he knew that they would not be converted.

4. *When the correction is neglected by superiors, and there is no one else fit to do it.* The obligation of correction primarily is the duty of superiors; if they do their duty no one else has any obligation in the matter. But if superiors neglect their duty, and if

no one else is present who would be fit to do it, charity obliges us to administer the rebuke. If the superiors have no knowledge of the faults of their inferiors, and consequently cannot comply with their duty, we must report these faults to them if they are grievous and we cannot put a stop to them.

5. *Finally, when the correction can be made without serious loss or damage.* The reason is because charity does not oblige us to do that which causes us great damage. If you have reason to fear that on account of the correction you would lose your property or even your life, you could omit it without sin. But if the damage would be only insignificant, you would be obliged to correct your neighbor; provided you could reasonably hope that he would amend. But the case is different with superiors, parents, and pastors of souls; these must correct, reprove, rebuke by virtue of their office, even if it would greatly injure them.

If all these five conditions are found together, we are bound to correct the erring. By the omission of this duty we should commit a great sin in those cases involving a matter of importance. But as all the above mentioned conditions are only seldom found together, the correction is not so frequently commanded under a mortal sin as might appear at first sight.

We come now to the question, *How must we correct him?*

PART II.

We must correct him —

1. *With prudence.* St. Gregory the Great remarks: "One and the same medicine is not always suitable for all patients; to some it may be wholesome and cure them; with others it may aggravate the sickness and even cause their death." So it is with correction, which is a medicine for the cure of our neighbor who is sick in his soul. We must not treat high and low alike, but must, in the rebuke and correction we administer, pay attention to their state and disposition. We must never correct persons who are above us without showing our reverence for them, otherwise they would feel themselves offended and reject us with contempt. We may, indeed, use more liberty with people who are our equals; but even with them we must not transgress the limits of prudence and charity, if we wish the correction to be attended with success. With subjects we may speak in an earnest and serious tone, especially when they are thoughtless, stubborn, or unsusceptible of friendly admonitions.

2. *With love.* Every one will receive a friendly and charitable admonition, whilst bitter reproaches and contumelies repel and

do more harm than good. Hence St. Francis of Sales says: "You will catch more flies with a few drops of honey than with a barrel of vinegar." The saint says this from his own experience. He was one day preaching a sermon at Annecy, France, when two lawyers in the midst of his discourse handed him a paper containing very offensive remarks. The saint, thinking that it contained something urgent, perhaps some announcement that he should make to the people, took it, perused its contents, and then continued his instruction without exhibiting the least excitement or change of countenance. After the sermon he went to the two lawyers, and without mentioning the offensive remarks, asked them how it was he had deserved their displeasure. They told him. He then assured them that nothing was more foreign to his intention than to give them the least offence or hurt their feelings, and kneeling down before them asked their pardon. Their confusion was now as great as their anger had been, and they in their turn asked pardon themselves, and from that hour lived with the holy bishop in the greatest peace and harmony. Such is the effect of meekness and charity on the heart of the erring! Let us not forget the words of the Apostle: "Brethren, and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you who are spiritual instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness."—*Gal.* 6: 1.

3. *At the right time.* If the erring person is still in a passion a word of admonition or a rebuke is generally fruitless; he refuses and rejects every, even the best-meant, admonition with indignation and contempt, and listens to no reason. Physicians give no medicine to the sick in the height of their fever; they wait until the fever subsides and a more natural state ensues. You must do the same; put off the correction till the passion is cooled and quietude of the mind has been restored. A beautiful example is furnished by the prudent Abigail, who did not rebuke her husband on account of his fault till he had slept off his drunkenness. *I. Kings* 25. Women especially should mind this, and not lecture their husbands when they come home in a bad humor, or drunk, otherwise they pour oil on the fire and usually make matters worse. In general, make it your rule to await a favorable moment, for a good result mostly depends on this.

4. *In the right place.* Jesus emphatically commands us to correct our neighbor in the beginning, not publicly, but privately. "If thy brother shall offend against thee, go, and reprove him between thee and him alone."—*Matt.* 18: 15. No man wishes to appear as a sinner; everybody desires that his faults be withdrawn as much as possible from the eyes of the world, and that he be treated with respect. If his sin is publicly exposed he

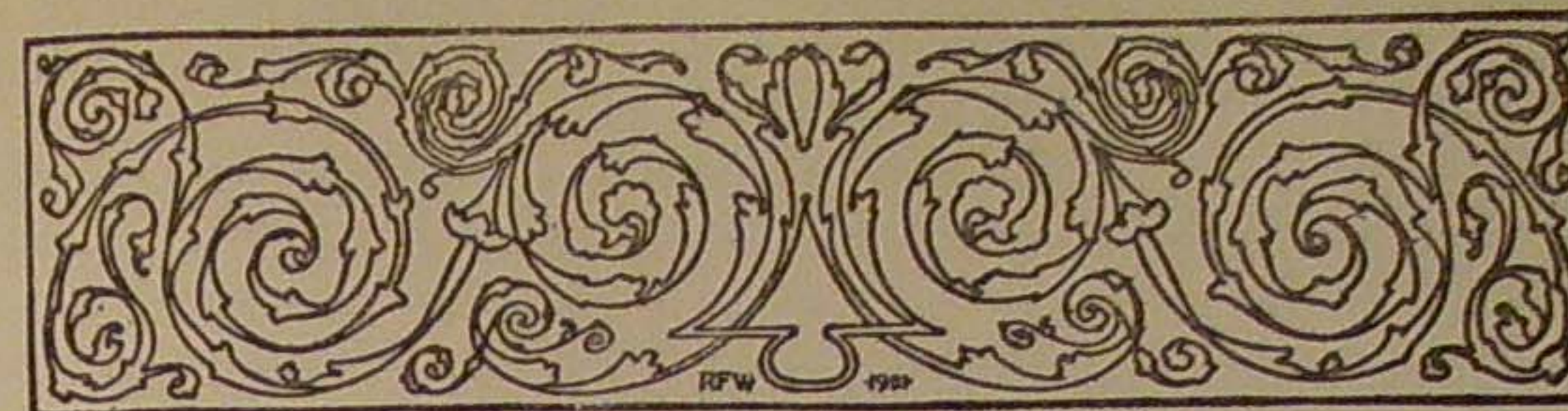
feels himself injured; he denies it, if he can, or becomes excited and frustrates the attempt to bring him into the right road. This is a fault very common among married people who rebuke each other in the presence of their children and servants; they thereby endanger their authority and run the risk of giving scandal. It is only when the crime is public and evil consequences might ensue therefrom, or when you know from experience that a private reprimand will do no good, that it must be made publicly. Thus Christ several times rebuked the Scribes and the Pharisees publicly and with all severity, in order to prevent the scandal which his disciples and the other Jews might otherwise have taken.

5. *Finally, by giving a good example ourselves.* Words alone avail nothing unless they are accompanied by a good example. St. Chrysostom says: "Nothing is less effectual than a teacher who is wise only in words, for this is not the business of a teacher, but of an actor." But if he who rebukes leads a good, pious life, his words make a salutary impression upon his neighbor; he no longer commits the fault but amends his life. St. Isidore says: "Words without deeds are heard only by the ears, but if accompanied by deeds they penetrate into the heart and move the will." How much good is effected by example an event in the life of the holy hermit Abraham teaches us. This zealous servant of God took great pains for a long time to induce the unbelievers to receive the gospel, but all his efforts proved abortive. But when he began to receive insults and blows, and endured them with all patience, they felt themselves drawn towards him with an irresistible love. "Behold," they said, "the patience of this man and his love for us! In spite of all indignities and sufferings he perseveres in preaching his doctrine. If his words were not inspired by God, he would surely not suffer for them. Come, let us believe in the God whom he preaches." And they became believers and led edifying lives.

PERORATION.

These are briefly the rules which you must observe when you correct your neighbor. Rebuke with prudence and shun all impulsive zeal, which does more harm than good. Show by your conduct that in rebuking others charity is your motive, not hatred or ill-will, and that you really have nothing else in view than the good of your neighbor. Pay attention to time and place, and administer the rebuke privately, unless particular circumstances require the contrary, in order to show to your neighbor that

your object in correcting him is not to make him ashamed, but to effect his amendment. Lastly, let your words be accompanied by a good example, and keep yourself free from those faults which you rebuke in your neighbor. According to these rules fulfil the Christian duty of fraternal correction with charity and zeal, and God will richly reward you for this Christian work of mercy, since "they that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity."—*Dan.* 12: 3. Amen.



TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*1. Cor.* 12: 2-11. Brethren: You know that when you were heathens, you went to dumb idols, according as you were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, saith Anathema to Jesus. And no man can say: The Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit: and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. To one, indeed by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom and to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another, faith in the same Spirit: to another, the grace of healing in one Spirit: to another the working of miracles: to another, prophecy: to another, the discerning of spirits: to another, divers kinds of tongues: to another, interpretation of speeches: but all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as he will.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

St. Paul had preached at Corinth, that great and opulent city, and established a Christian congregation of Jews and Pagans. In this congregation many were endowed with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, a thing that frequently occurred in the primitive ages of Christianity. But these gifts were the cause of dissensions among the Christians there. Some of them envied those who, as they thought, possessed more excellent gifts than they; others became proud and exalted themselves above those who did not enjoy these favors. St. Paul in the epistle of this day teaches the Corinthians what little cause they have to envy

others, or to exalt themselves above others, because all spiritual gifts are undeserved graces of God, do not make men holier, but are communicated for the general good.

Let us attentively study the contents of the epistle, and secure the benefit which the study of it is calculated to produce. St. Paul speaks —

- I. *Of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in general.*
- II. *Of nine of those gifts in particular.*

PART I.

1. St. Paul remarks that Paganism and the rejected Judaism are destitute of all spiritual gifts, and that these are to be found only in the Christian Church.

(a.) Regarding Paganism, St. Paul appeals to the experience of the converted Corinthians, saying: *You know that when you were heathens, you went to dumb idols, according as you were led.* Remember, he means to say, how blind you were when you were heathens; images of wood and stone were the gods which you adored; you served dumb, dead, impotent idols, and called upon them for help. You did this blindly, without consulting your reason, drawn by the blind fanaticism of idolatrous priests. You yielded to such folly, because in Paganism, to which you then belonged, the Holy Ghost did not dwell in you, but the spirit of error and darkness by which you were ruled.

(b.) Regarding Judaism, St. Paul says: *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, saith anathema to Jesus. And no man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost.* Justin the Martyr and Origen assert that in the early ages of the Church the Jews were accustomed to utter curses and maledictions three times a day against Christ and the Christians. Now the Apostle means to say: He that curses Christ, or speaks irreverently of him and his religion, has not the Holy Ghost. The Christian cannot curse Jesus, because he has the Spirit of God and is guided by him. No one can have the true saving faith, nor profess it, nor think, speak, or do anything salutary, unless the Holy Ghost operates in him.

The Apostle, therefore, warns the Corinthians against two dangers, *first*, against slighting those who do not possess any extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, or at least none that particularly fall under general observation; *secondly*, against the error that they possess these gifts of themselves, because without the grace of God they could not even believe in Jesus.

What the Apostle tells the Corinthians applies to us also. If we have gifts and advantages, natural or supernatural, they should not be a cause of pride, for all that we have we owe to God's unmerited grace. "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"—I. Cor. 4: 7. If, therefore, on account of some good quality that we have, a vain thought should assail us, let us say with David: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory."—Ps. 113: 9. Let us reflect that the more gifts and graces we have received from God, the greater will be the account we must give, for of him to whom much has been given, much will be required. Hence the saints humbled themselves the more, in proportion to the favors they received from God. Let us not envy any one for what he has and is, and let us be satisfied with what we have, being convinced that God distributes his graces and gifts with the greatest wisdom, and gives to every one as much as is expedient and beneficial to him.

2. The Apostle teaches us that the gifts of grace, however diverse they may be, all have the Holy Ghost for their author. *Now, there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit, and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all.* I must remark here:

(a.) That the appellations, *graces, ministries, and operations*, signify one and the same thing. They are called *graces*, because they are a free, undeserved gift of God, and are attributed to *the Holy Ghost*, because he is the author and dispenser of all graces. They are called *ministries*, because they serve for the preaching of the gospel, and the propagation of the Church, and are ascribed to *the Lord, i. e.*, to the God-Man, because he visibly walked upon earth, and established the Church. They are called *operations*, because they are the external works of God, and are attributed to *God the Father*, because to him specially as the first Person of the Godhead, from whom the other two Persons proceed, belongs all power, and consequently all external operations.

(b.) As you perceive, the Apostle speaks of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and enumerates the works which are attributed to each in particular. God the Father appears as the Creator of the world, and continues his work, preserving and governing all for the good of man. God the Son manifests himself as the Redeemer, who instituted the office of teachers, priests and pastors in his Church, in order to apply to men at all times the fruits of redemption. God the Holy Ghost manifests

himself as sanctifier, who imparts to the faithful, but especially to the bishops and clergy, extraordinary graces for the salvation of men. Let us thank the Most Holy Trinity for these operations of grace and employ them for the attainment of our eternal destiny.

3. The Apostle next tells us for what purpose the divers gifts of grace are given, saying: *And the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man unto profit.*

(a.) In these words St. Paul explains that those in whom the Holy Ghost manifests himself by the gifts of his grace, receive these gifts, not for their own use and benefit, but rather for the advantage of the Church. There are graces which God gives to men for the promotion of their own salvation, as the grace of assistance and the grace of sanctification; then there are other graces which theologians call *freely given* graces, which God imparts to some for the good of others, and to this class belong the gifts of grace of which the lesson of this day speaks. These gifts of grace do not make him who receives them holier and more acceptable to God. For example, he who receives the gift of working miracles, becomes not on that account more just and pleasing to God, neither do these gifts prove the holiness of him who possesses them; they are given only for the general good of the Church, viz., to instruct the faithful, to confirm them in the faith, to convert unbelievers and sinners, and to spread religion. The gifts become beneficial to those who possess them, if they employ them for the honor of God and according to his will, and at the same time preserve humility.

(b.) As regards yourselves, you must not desire such gifts of grace, nor ask them of God, because they are not necessary for salvation. Such extraordinary graces might do you more harm than good, for if you possessed them you might become proud and run the risk of losing your soul. Ask God for those graces only which are necessary and useful for salvation, *e. g.*, the grace to overcome temptations, faults and evil inclinations, and to persevere in the practice of every virtue to the end.

PART II.

St. Paul now enumerates nine gifts of the Holy Ghost in particular. I will briefly explain them:

1. *The word of wisdom.* By wisdom we here understand a clear knowledge of religion and a profound penetration into its mysteries. The *word of wisdom* comprises the ability of making

others understand the truths and mysteries of religion according to their capacity. This *word of wisdom* is a gift of the Holy Ghost, because no one can acquire it of himself by application and study.

2. *The word of knowledge.* The word of *knowledge* is the faculty of throwing light on the doctrines of religion from all sides, with a view to establish them, to refute the objections raised against them, and to prove convincingly their truth and divinity.

The Apostles possessed these gifts of wisdom and knowledge without having studied. By a special divine inspiration they were enabled to announce the gospel intelligibly and with conviction to Jews and Gentiles, to the learned and the unlearned. The holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church also possessed this gift. Their writings are mines of Christian truths; they illuminate and establish the doctrines and mysteries of our holy religion, and enable every one who is solicitous for the truth to distinguish it from error and to acquire a solid knowledge of religion.

3. *Faith.* By faith we here understand that virtue by which we believe without doubting what God has revealed and through his Church proposes to our faith; and faith in this sense is necessary to every man for salvation. The faith of which the Apostle here speaks is the faith in miracles, of which Christ says: "Amen, I say to you, if you shall have faith, and stagger not, not only this of the fig tree shall you do, but also, if you shall say to this mountain: Take up, and cast thyself into the sea, it shall be done."—*Matt. 21: 21.* This faith is not the common property of all Christians, but a gift, which the Holy Ghost imparts only to a few, and thereby gives them the power of working miracles. The Apostles and a great many of the faithful of both sexes in all ages of the Church possessed this faith in miracles. The Church canonizes none of whom it is not proved that he or she performed miracles.

4. *The grace of healing.* Physicians cure sickness and diseases of the body, but they do it by natural means; they cure no one suddenly, but gradually. The grace of healing, as far as it is a gift of the Holy Ghost, consists in this, that not only a few, but all sicknesses and infirmities, incurable in a natural way, are cured and removed suddenly without the application of natural means. This gift of healing the sick the Holy Ghost imparted to many of the faithful from the beginning. We know from the Acts of the Apostles that "they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that when Peter came his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them and

they might be delivered from their infirmities."—*Acts* 5: 15. Again we read in the Acts, that the people of the neighboring towns and villages brought "sick persons and such as were troubled with unclean spirits, who were all healed."—*v.* 16. Of St. Paul we read that handkerchiefs and aprons brought from his body were laid upon the sick, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them.—*Acts* 19: 12.

5. *The working of miracles.* By this we understand the raising of the dead to life, and other miracles. St. Gregory of Neo-Cæsarea, performed so many miracles that he received the surname "Thaumaturgus." Among other things it is related of him that he prevented a river from overflowing its banks, and removed a mountain. St. Francis Xavier worked many miracles, he spoke foreign languages, which he had never studied, correctly and fluently, controlled storms on the sea, healed diverse sicknesses, gave speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, and the use of their limbs to the lame. He had even the gift of bilocation, being present at one and the same time in two different places, though hundreds of miles distant from each other. These extraordinary miracles were investigated after his death, and their truth certified to, not only by Christians, but also by Mohammedans and Pagans.

6. *The gift of prophecy.* This gift consists in the prediction of future events. The prophets of the Old Testament possessed this gift in particular. They foretold various events, especially such as referred to Jesus Christ. With the gift of prophecy the Holy Ghost has also favored many saints of the New Testament, as St. John, the Apostle and Evangelist, whose Apocalypse contains a multitude of prophecies as to the fate of the Church. St. Gregory of Tours relates of St. Benedict that he foretold to King Totila the taking of Rome, the duration of the King's reign (nine years), and his death in the tenth year, and all came to pass.

7. *The discerning of spirits.* It is that gift by which one can judge whether certain things come from God, or are only the effects of a distorted imagination. Such a favored one discerns with certainty that which comes from the good spirit and that which comes from the evil spirit; he discerns what originates from self-love and the flesh, and what is of the spirit; he knows the angel of light and of darkness, the true and the false prophet, the truly pious man from the hypocrite. Many saints possessed this gift. St. Hilarion, as St. Jerome testifies, knew from the odor of the clothes to which vice one was addicted. St. Joseph of Cupertino knew the state of the soul of a man, not only by

the odor, but also by the face. Some persons appeared to him so odious that it was impossible for him to bear their presence or their speech.

8. *Divers kinds of tongues,* that is, such tongues as one has never learned nor understood. This gift of tongues was imparted to the Apostles on the feast of Pentecost. It is said of them: "They began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak."—*Acts* 2: 4. This gift of tongues we find in the Catholic Church at all times. St. Irenæus certifies that he himself heard many speak in divers tongues, which the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. St. Dominic at his earnest prayer obtained for himself and his companions the gift of the German language, in order to be able to preach the gospel to the Germans, in whose company they travelled for a few days. St. Vincent Ferrer, although he spoke only his native tongue, was understood on his journeys by Greeks, Germans, Hungarians, and by all nations to whom he preached.

9. Lastly, *the interpretation of speeches.* By this we understand the gift of propounding in one's own language what others have said in a foreign tongue, and of interpreting obscure and mysterious words and passages of the Sacred Scriptures. In the early ages of the Church there were many interpreters whose office it was to explain obscure passages of the Scripture, especially the epistles of St. Paul, or to translate what others spoke in foreign languages for the benefit of those who did not understand. St. Thomas of Aquin possessed this gift of the interpretation of speeches in an eminent degree. He frequently asked for it by fervent prayer. Before he commenced to study, read, write, or dictate, he prayed. His prayer was granted, and having knelt down uncertain, he used to rise up well instructed.

PERORATION.

But all these things one and the same spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as he will. That is to say, these extraordinary graces have one and the same author, the Holy Ghost, but he communicates them according to his pleasure; no one can dictate to him; neither must any one boast of them, nor envy others who have them. Now, if we do not possess these extraordinary graces we must not complain on that account. Let us employ the ordinary graces, which the Holy Ghost imparts to us, for our salvation; let us obey his inspirations, listen zealously to the word of God, which is preached to us, and receive frequently and worthily the Holy Sacraments. We shall then become holy and save our souls. Amen.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke 18: 9-14.* At that time: Jesus spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others. Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican, The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven, but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE PRAYER OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers.—Pharisee.—O God, be merciful to me a sinner.—Publican.—Luke 18: 11-13.

As at all times, so also in the days of Jesus, there were people, as we read in the gospel of this day, *who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others*—people who attributed the good qualities which they possessed, or thought that they possessed, to themselves, and not to God; who thought a great deal of their virtues and good works and looked with contempt upon others. To this class belonged the Pharisees in particular, who, on account of their outward justice and zealous observance of their self-made ordinances, imagined themselves to be models of holiness, and scarcely condescended to look at those who were not of their party. Our divine Saviour raises his voice against these proud and conceited men, and shows in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican that God resists the proud and gives his grace to the humble.

Let us attentively consider the contents of the gospel of this day, and particularly—

- I. *The prayer of the Pharisee, and*
- II. *The prayer of the Publican.*

PART I.

Of the Pharisee we read that he went up into the temple to pray and that he prayed thus with himself: *O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess.*

Let us consider what was—

I. *Good and praiseworthy in the prayer of the Pharisee. It was good and laudable—*

(a.) *That he went up into the temple.* The temple of Jerusalem was a very holy place, where alone upon earth God recognized a form of worship after his own heart, and where the Jews according to the ordinance of the divine law celebrated their feasts, offered sacrifices and prayed; and Christ himself frequently visited it, in order to teach and to pray there. Much more venerable and holy than the temple of Jerusalem are our churches; for in them Jesus offers himself up to his heavenly Father by the hands of the priest in the holy sacrifice of the mass; here he is really and substantially present in the adorable Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist, and gives himself to us in holy communion for the nourishment and salvation of our soul. Where is there a place upon earth that we should more love to visit than our churches? And yet there are Catholics who prefer to be anywhere rather than in the church, and who neglect to attend mass even on Sundays and holidays. Are not such Catholics worse than the Pharisee who went up into the temple?

(b.) *That he went up into the temple to pray.* Prayer is a good action, well-pleasing to God. The temple of Jerusalem was the principal place where the Jews were obliged to pray, for which reason God says: "My house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations."—*Is. 56: 7.* Our churches are also such houses of prayer. All that is there and is done there is an exhortation to us to pray. Or ought we not to pray in the churches in which Jesus Christ, the adorable Son of God, is present in the Blessed Eucharist and in which we see so many pictures of the saints which move us to devotion? Ought we not to pray in our churches when we see so many Catholics on bended knees praying with the greatest fervor? Ought we not to pray in our churches, where God is far more inclined to hear our prayers than in other places? How wrongly, then, do those Catholics act who, when in church, instead of praying fervently, give themselves up to worldly and even sinful thoughts, gazing around, sleeping, talking, or laughing!

(c.) *That he gave thanks.* We are frequently called upon in the Sacred Scripture to give thanks to God. Thus the Apostle says: "In all things give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you all."—*Thess.* 5: 18. But especially should we give thanks to God in the church for the innumerable graces and benefits which we receive there by prayer, Christian instruction, the sacrifice of the mass, and the sacraments. For this reason the priest in the preface of the mass exhorts you to thanksgiving in these words: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God." Examine yourselves and see whether in your visits to the church you have thought of the countless graces which God has bestowed on you, and have returned him thanks for the same.

(d.) *That he was not an extortioner, an unjust man, an adulterer;* for extortion, adultery, and every species of injustice are prohibited even by the natural law. And St. Paul expressly declares that "neither fornicators . . . nor adulterers . . . nor thieves . . . nor extortioners . . . shall possess the kingdom of God."—*I. Cor.* 6: 9, 10. Many cannot say: "O God, I give thee thanks that I am not an extortioner, adulterer, or unjust man", for their conscience tells them that they have committed adultery either in action or desire, and grievously sinned against chastity; that they have perpetrated various kinds of injustice and have injured their neighbor in his property. Whosoever knows himself guilty in these points, let him not delay to amend his life, to restore ill-gotten goods, and to repair the damage.

e) *That he fasted twice in the week.* Fasting is an exercise of mortification, and therefore salutary and well-pleasing to God. In the Old Law the greatest men, such as Moses and Elias, fasted. Jesus himself recommends fasting by his own example, and the Church prescribed fasting on certain days from the earliest ages of Christianity, and of the saints we read that they fasted rigorously. Those are not good Catholics who slight the precept of fasting and who eat meat on days of abstinence.

(f.) *Finally, that he gave tithes of all that he possessed.* God himself had ordained the tithes in the Old Law. "All tithes of the land, whether of corn, or of the fruits of trees, are the Lord's and are sanctified to him."—*Lev.* 27: 30. We read of Abraham (*Gen.* 14: 20), and of Tobias (1: 6), that they gave tithes.

2. What was unjust and blameworthy? It was unjust and blameworthy *that he was full of pride*, for he was one of those who trusted in themselves, and despised others. Pride, by which he allowed his heart to be captivated, so blinded him that he perceived in himself nothing bad, but only good, and his works

which were good in themselves, were thus rendered meritless and valueless. But it was especially wrong—

(a.) *That he did not accuse himself of any sin*, and, therefore, considered himself sinless. "There is no just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not."—*Eccles.* 7: 21. And St. John writes: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."—*I. John*, 1: 8. It was a great delusion and blindness for the Pharisee not to think himself guilty of any sin whatever. There are Catholics who say: Why should I confess frequently? I have committed no sins. Such Catholics must be holier than the saints of the Old Testament, than those of the New Testament who frequently, weekly, even daily, went to confession. What pride, what infatuation!

(b.) *That he thought himself better than all other men.* It is wrong to exalt one's self above any person and to despise him, for humility requires us to have a low and mean opinion of ourselves, and not to exalt ourselves inordinately above any one. What a reprehensible pride it was for the Pharisee to exalt himself above the rest of men and to despise them! Let us be on our guard, that we may not become guilty of such pride. Let us not think ourselves better than others. And though we may have great advantages over some, we must attribute these things to the unmerited grace of God; to him therefore be praise and glory for them. Let us not despise any one, not even the greatest sinner. If God deprived us of his grace, we should be in danger of rushing headlong into all kinds of disorders. Remember the important words: It is no harm to put yourself below all others; but it does great harm to prefer yourself to any one.

(c.) *That he considered himself just, because he was free from great vices.* It was probably true that he was not an extortioner, a thief, or an adulterer, but are there no other sins and vices? Are pride, avarice, envy, uncharitableness, slander, calumny, detraction, and contempt of others no sins? Or is it enough when one outwardly shows no culpable fault, but inwardly entertains base and despicable inclinations and passions? Let us consider that if we desire a favorable judgment hereafter we must be free from all sin, and be just, not only outwardly, but also inwardly.

(d.) *That he glories in his good works.* We must never boast of our good works, because we lose thereby all merit before God. No matter how much good we may do, after all, we do no more than our duty, because we are under the strict obligation to serve God all the days of our life. Hence Christ says to his Apostles: "When you shall have done all these things that are

commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which we ought to do."—*Luke 17: 10*. Moreover, we must consider that we can do nothing good without the grace of God, that for all our good works and exercises of virtue we must not give the glory to ourselves, but to God.

(e.) *That he allowed himself to be ruled by pride.* The whole conduct of the Pharisee bears the character of pride. It was pride to prefer himself before the rest of men, and to look down upon them, and particularly upon the publican, with contempt, and to declare them sinners, whilst he imagined himself alone just. It was pride for him to enumerate his good works and to glory in them; it was pride that he gave the honor to himself and not to God. Let us shun pride, for as the frost destroys the tender plants and blossoms, so pride destroys all good works, deprives us of the love and friendship of God, and brings misery and ruin upon us.

PART II.

The publican, praying in the temple, manifested two virtues in particular which found grace with God.

1. *Humility.* Standing afar off, he would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven.

(a.) *The publican standing afar off.* He chose a place far off, for he thought himself unworthy to approach the Sanctuary and to stand among the just and pious; penetrated by the consciousness of his guilt, he dared not appear in the presence of God; he shared the feelings of Peter, who cast himself at the feet of Jesus, saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."—*Luke 5: 8*.

Humble yourselves also as often as you come to church Remember on the one hand *your sins*, and on the other the *infinite holiness of God*, and consider yourselves unworthy to appear before him. Many Catholics, especially young men, stand or sit outside the church during the services, or they seek a place at the back of the church, in corners, although there is plenty of room in front where they might say their prayers with devotion. They do not do this from humility, as the publican did, but from levity and forgetfulness of salvation, for they are destitute of all Christian feeling, and loathe everything that is done in the church. Such persons would do better to stay away from church altogether; at least they would not profane holy things, nor make themselves guilty of a great scandal.

(b.) *He would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven.* If you meet one whom you have grievously offended you cannot look into his face, but you cast down your eyes. So the publican. His conscience told him that he had often and grievously offended God, therefore he dared not raise his eyes. We also have reason to cast down our eyes and most profoundly to humble ourselves before God, for perhaps we have sinned more grievously than the publican. When in church let us make it a rule to cast down our eyes or direct them to the altar, and avoid gazing about; those who give free scope to their eyes necessarily cause themselves many distractions, and if they do pray, it is all mechanical, and so God is dishonored; they also give occasion to various sinful thoughts and desires which, being voluntary, are highly sinful and culpable before God. Thus their visits to the church, instead of bringing them graces and blessings turn out to their disadvantage.

2. *Repentance*, striking his breast and saying: *O God, be merciful to me a sinner.*

(a.) The publican, striking his breast, intimated that the heart is the source of all evil, as Jesus himself says: From the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies."—*Matt. 15: 19*. Again, the striking of the breast was a confession that he himself and no other was the cause of his sins, that therefore he would accuse only himself and not others. Lastly, he struck his breast, thereby publicly acknowledging that, because of his sins, he was deserving of stripes—of punishment. Let us with the penitent sentiment of the publican strike our breast when we repeat the words: "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world," or, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed." Let us do this when we enter the church and when we leave it, and when the priest elevates the sacred species for our adoration at the consecration.

(b.) What the publican intimated by the striking of his breast he expressed with the words: *O God, be merciful to me a sinner.* We may well suppose that although he was a sinner he had done many good works, yet he does not mention them like the Pharisee, but thinks only of his sins; this thought urges and moves him to avow himself as a sinner before the whole world and to invoke God's grace and mercy. He does the very reverse of what the Pharisee did, for whilst the latter speaks only of his good works, the former accuses himself only of his sins. Thus he again manifests his spirit of penance; for his sins appear

to him so great and so deserving of punishment, that he can say nothing but: *O God, be merciful to me a sinner.* Such a spirit of penance we ought to have in our confessions. Far be it from us, at the examination of conscience, to set the good rather than the bad before our eyes, and in the confessional, instead of accusing ourselves of our sins, to enumerate our good works, or to try to excuse or to palliate our sins in various ways. He who in his confessions is humble and penitent, is certainly also sincere.

What was the result of the different conduct of the Pharisee and publican who both went up into the temple to pray? Our Lord declares it in these words: "*This man went down to his house justified rather than the other.*" The proud Pharisee found no grace with God; his pride was the reason why he left the temple not justified. But upon the humble publican God looked with pleasure and forgave him all his sins, so that he went home justified. "Behold, brethren," says St. Augustine, "humility accompanied by evil works pleased God more than pride attended by good works. So much does God hate the proud." What a motive for us to be truly humble!

PERORATION.

Jesus concludes the parable with the words: *Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* Here our Lord sums up the whole parable. Him who is proud like the Pharisee God will humble even here on earth. God will refuse to grant his petitions, and hereafter cast him like the rebellious angels into the abyss of hell. But God will exalt the humble, justifying them and making them his children and heirs of heaven. Behold, what a pernicious sin pride is, and what a salutary virtue is humility! Shun pride, foster humility, and strive to perfect yourself in this virtue more and more, that God may look upon you with pleasure and "exalt you in the time of visitation."—*I. Pet. 5: 6.* Amen.



TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER.

This man went down to his house justified.—Luke 18: 14.

We see to-day in the temple at Jerusalem two men, a Pharisee and a publican. Both are sinners, but with this great difference, that one acknowledges himself a sinner and the other does not. The Pharisee, full of pride and haughtiness, looks only upon the good he has done, but his sins he overlooks altogether. The publican is humble of heart, acknowledges his sinful state, and ardently desires to be freed from his sins. Full of contrition and sorrow he says: *O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.* God is pleased with his humility and contrition and forgives his sins, whilst he dismisses the proud Pharisee without pardon. *This man went down to his house justified rather than the other.* Which of us does not wish with the publican to find grace with God and to be justified? Justification is one of the greatest and most necessary graces; without it no one can please God and be saved. But it is also a grace which is imparted only to those who, like the publican in the gospel of this day, are truly humble and penitent. I intend to explain to you to-day the Catholic dogma of justification, and with this object I shall answer the two following questions:

- I. *What is done with the sinner when he is justified?*
- II. *What is required that he may be justified?*

PART I.

1. When the sinner is justified *he is cleansed at least from all grievous sins, and the eternal punishment is remitted to him.*

(a.) *He is cleansed from all sins, at least mortal ones.* The so-called Reformers of the sixteenth century and their adherents assert that sins are not truly remitted to the sinner when he is justified, but that they are only covered. They represent justification as an action by which the sinner is only declared just, so that sin remains in him even after his justification; but that God no longer imputes it to him, nor punishes him, and this only on account of the merits of Christ. The Church has rejected and

condemned this assertion as erroneous and heretical, and teaches that in the man who is justified, *sin is really and truly blotted out and destroyed, so that it no longer exists.* This doctrine of the Catholic faith is based on the clearest testimonies of the Sacred Scriptures. Thus the Lord says by the Prophet Jeremias: "I will *cleanse* them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will *forgive* all their iniquities."—33: 8. And again: "I have *blotted out* thy iniquities as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist."—Is. 44: 22. And Jesus said to the palsied man and to Mary Magdalen: "Thy sins are *forgiven* thee."—Matt. 9: 2; Luke 7: 48. St. Paul writes: "You are *washed*, you are sanctified, you are justified."—I. Cor. 6: 11. What else do the expressions, *to cleanse from iniquities, to forgive them, to blot them out, to make them vanish like a cloud and a mist, and to wash*, mean except that the sinner after justification is no longer a sinner but a just man, and that the sins are really remitted, blotted out and destroyed? The Fathers of the Church teach the same. I will quote only one, St. Gregory the Great: "At the baptismal font all sins disappear as a spark of fire in the water of the ocean would disappear. Nothing condemnable is or remains in those who by baptism are in Christ Jesus."

(b) The sinner is justified either in the *Sacrament of Baptism or of Penance*. If he is justified in baptism, besides *original* sin all his actual or personal sins are remitted to him, *both mortal and venial*, so that there is no longer anything sinful in him. But it is different with the Sacrament of Penance. Here all mortal sins are remitted to the sinner, but venial sins may remain in him, for with these the grace of justification may still subsist. Hence the Council of Trent teaches "that though in this mortal life the greatest saints and the just at least sometimes fall into venial and daily sin, they do not cease on that account to be just."—*Sess. 6, cap. 11.*

(c.) As regards the punishment, the *eternal* punishment is always forgiven, no matter whether the sinner is justified by baptism or penance; the *temporal punishment* is always forgiven in baptism, but not always in penance. If, therefore, a person dies without having committed a sin after his baptism, he can go to heaven immediately, because in baptism all punishments, both temporal and eternal, are forgiven him. But if a person dies after the reception of the Sacrament of Penance without having committed the slightest sin, it is possible that he may still be obliged to suffer in Purgatory, because in the Sacrament of Penance the eternal, but not always the temporal, punishment is remitted.

2. When the sinner is justified, *he is interiorly sanctified and renewed.*

(a.) If a room is to be prepared for the reception of, or as a permanent abode for, a great personage, the dust is removed and it is completely renovated; it is papered or frescoed; new and appropriate furniture is procured and the room is adorned so that it may present a pleasing appearance. The like is done when a sinner is justified. Now, Almighty God himself not only cleanses the soul from the filth of sin, but also adorns it magnificently, imparting to it justice and holiness. But do not mistake my comparison; you must not represent the thing to yourselves as if the soul of the justified is adorned only, as it were, on the surface, like the walls of the room; no, divine love and grace sink deeply into the very soul and permeate it entirely, just as red-hot iron is penetrated by fire. In consequence of this the soul of the justified man is entirely transformed, changed and renewed, so that now it is averted from sin and turned to God, whereas before it was averted from God and turned to sin. Thus the grace of justification causes the interior man to be totally renewed and sanctified, so that he can say with the Apostle: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."—Gal. 2: 20. For this reason justification is called in the Bible regeneration, a renovation of the Holy Ghost, a putting off of the old man and putting on of the new. Thus Christ says: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—John 3: 5. The Apostle writes: "But when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared, not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly."—Tit. 3: 4-6. And again he writes: "Put off, according to former conversation, the old man, who is corrupted according to the desires of error; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth."—Eph. 4: 22-24.

(b.) Concupiscence, or the inclination to evil, still remains in the justified man. But this concupiscence is not in itself a sin, but is only called so in Scripture, because it is of sin and inclines to sin, as soon as the will consents to it. Hence the Council of Trent says: "In those who are *born again*, there is nothing that God hates, because *there is no condemnation to those who are truly buried with Christ by baptism into death* (Rom. 8: 1; 6: 4); *who walk not according to the flesh*, but, *putting off the old man and putting on the new, who is created according to God* (Ephes. 4: 22-24), are made innocent, immaculate, pure, harmless, and beloved of God, *heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ*, so there is nothing whatever to retard their entrance into heaven. But this holy synod confesses and is sensible, that in the baptized there

remains concupiscence or an incentive (to sin), which, whereas it is left for our exercise (to be wrestled with), cannot injure those who consent not, but resist manfully by the grace of Jesus Christ. This concupiscence, which the Apostle sometimes calls sin (*II. Tim. 2: 5*), the holy synod declares that the Catholic Church has never understood to be called sin, as being truly and properly sin in those *born again*, but because it is of sin, and inclines to sin."—*Sess. 5, cap. 5.*

PART II.

That the sinner may be justified —

1. *Grace is necessary on the part of God.* The sinner is absolutely impotent of himself to repent: God must assist him with his grace. He must enlighten him, that he may come to the right knowledge; he must operate upon his will, that he may begin to do what is required for his justification. If God would not assist him with his grace, he would never be able even to begin the work of his salvation. Hence it is not man, but God, that begins the work of justification, according to the words of the Apostle: "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."—*II. Cor. 3. 5.* But even now, after the sinner with the help of prevenient grace has taken the first step to justification, God must support and help him, for as the sinner of himself could not have begun the work of his salvation, so he could not of himself *carry it on and bring it to a favorable issue.* He needs the continual help of divine grace that he may comply with the conditions necessary for his justification. Therefore the Apostle says: It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish."—*Phil. 2: 13.*

As the Council of Trent teaches: "They who by sins were alienated from God may be disposed, through his quickening and assisting grace, to *convert* themselves to their own justification, by freely assenting to and co-operating with that said grace."—*Sess. 6, cap. 5.* Divine grace is the work of God in the soul, and it is the duty of man to co-operate, that is, to work with it. The sinner must, with the aid of grace —

(a.) *Believe*, for "without faith it is impossible to please God." *Heb. 11: 6.*

The faith necessary for justification consists in this, that we believe those things to be true which God has revealed and promised, and this especially, that he justifies the impious by *his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*—*Sess. 6, cap. 6.* If the sinner wishes to be justified, he must, before all, believe that he will be justified through the merits of Christ,

according so the words of the Apostle: "We know that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; we also believe in Jesus Christ, that we may be justified by the faith of Christ."—*Gal. 2: 16.* But this particular faith, or confidence in the merits of Christ, is not sufficient for justification; faith in general is required, that is, the belief of all that God has revealed and proposes by his Church to be believed. Christ expressly demands this faith, saying: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be condemned."—*Mark. 16: 16.* For this reason the Church imposed upon the catechumens from the beginning the strict duty of accepting and believing all revealed truths of the Christian religion with a believing heart; wherefore immediately before baptism, as is still the case, they were called upon to recite the Apostles' Creed in a loud voice.

(b.) *He must hope.* He must hope that God will be gracious and merciful to him, and that he will obtain pardon on account of the merits of Christ, no matter how much or how grievously he may have sinned. This hope will make him raise up his heart, that he may not be overwhelmed by the load of his sins and driven to despair; it will give him courage and urge him to turn to God and to do what is required for his justification. Therefore our Divine Saviour tries to awaken hope in the sinner, saying "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt. 11: 28.*

(c.) *He must begin to love God.* So long as God is indifferent to the sinner, and he has no desire to please God and to belong to him, his mind is as yet wholly perverted, and there can be no question of justification. That the sinner may be justified and become a child and friend of God, he must change his ideas; he must forsake evil and turn to God; he must have a desire for the friendship of God, that is, he must begin to love God. The Sacred Scriptures teach that man is not justified by faith alone, as Luther asserts, but that the beginning of the love of God is at least also necessary: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, *but faith, that worketh by charity.*"—*Gal. 5: 6.* And again: "And if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."—*I. Cor. 13: 2.* And St. James assures us (*2: 17-20*), that faith without works is dead, and that the devils also believe, and tremble.

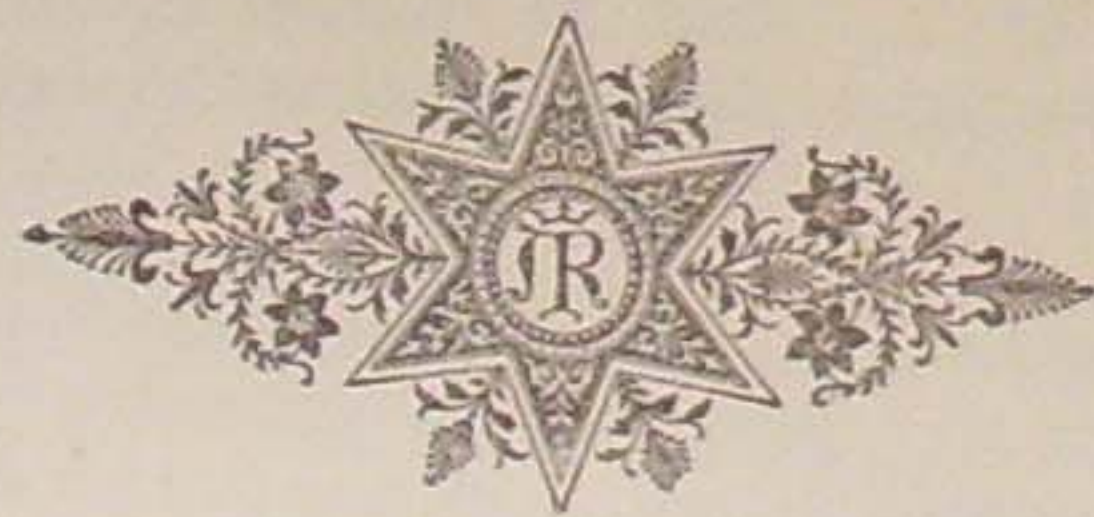
(d.) *He must repent of his sins.* Repentance is naturally united with love, for when the sinner once begins to love God sin displeases him, he hates and detest it, he is sorry for having offended

God, and he resolves not to offend him any more. Without contrition, no justification, no forgiveness, can be thought of, for how could God forgive a man who has not the will to offend him no more and to amend his life, and whose heart is yet perverse and wicked? Hence the Council of Trent teaches that contrition and a firm purpose of amendment are necessary at all times for the forgiveness of sin.—*Sess. 14, cap. 4.*

(e.) *He must receive the Sacraments instituted by Christ for justification.* These are the Sacraments of *Baptism* and *Penance*. If the sinner is not yet baptized, he must receive baptism; if he is already baptized, but has lost the grace of justification by a grievous sin, he must receive the Sacrament of Penance, by which he is justified anew.

PERORATION.

In conclusion, I must remark that without a special revelation from God no one knows with certainty that he is really justified, for the simple reason that no one is perfectly sure of having complied with all the conditions necessary for justification. "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred."—*Eccles. 9: 1.* The Apostle says of himself: I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord."—*I. Cor. 4: 4.* In like manner, without a special revelation from above, no one has a full certainty that he will persevere in the grace of justification to the end. Perseverance depends not only on the grace of God, but also on our co-operation. Being inclined to evil, and surrounded by many dangers, we may become faithless to God and fall into sin. Having no certainty that we are of the number of the elect and that we shall persevere in good to the end, let us work out our salvation with fear and trembling.—*Phil. 2: 12.* If we walk in humility, conscientiously fulfil the duties of our religion and state of life, and pray with fervor, we may confidently hope that we are truly justified, that we shall persevere in justice to the end, and be added to the elect in heaven. Amen.



TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS—EXPLANATION OF THE FIRST PRINCIPAL PART, THE OBLATION.

O God, be merciful to me a sinner.—Luke 18: 13.

We should value and love no prayer so much as the prayer of the publican, in the gospel of to-day: *O God, be merciful to me a sinner.* This prayer suits every one, for we are all sinners, and only speak the truth when we acknowledge that from our childhood, up to this hour, we have often and grievously sinned in thought, word, and deed, and by the omission of many good works. This prayer is also very efficacious, and obtains for us grace and mercy of God: for it is the expression of a humble and contrite heart, which God does not despise. A proof of this is the publican, who after saying this prayer went down to his house justified. *O God, be merciful to me a sinner;* this should be our favorite prayer, with which we should implore grace from God, especially when we assist at mass, that we may partake of the fruits of this great sacrifice.

I shall again speak of the sacrifice of the mass to-day, and explain to you its first principal part, the *Oblation*. I shall treat—

- I. *Of the preparation for the Oblation.*
- II. *Of the Oblation itself.*
- III. *Of the prayers and actions after the Oblation.*

PART I.

1. The *Credo*, Creed, or profession of faith, forms the preparation for the *Oblation*.

(a.) The Creed naturally follows after the Gospel, for the fruit of the Gospel must be that we accept its lessons with a believing heart and profess them in word and deed. But the Creed belongs also to the first principal part of the mass; for priest and people must be penetrated with a lively faith, that they may worthily celebrate the sacred mysteries.

(b.) Heresies, which even in the early ages of the Church grew up rankly, like weeds, were the occasion of the adoption of the

Creed in the mass. In order to keep heretics and unbelievers away from the sacrifice of the mass, the Church saw herself under the necessity of requiring a public profession of faith from all who wished to participate in the celebration of the sacrifice. In the East, where heresies had their origin, we find the Creed in the mass as early as the sixth century; in the West, in Rome, it was introduced in the eleventh century.

(c.) The Creed in the mass is the Nicene profession of faith, which is an enlargement of the Apostles' Creed, and contains the doctrine of the Divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost, which was denied by heretics.

(d.) The Creed is not said every day, but only on those days which remind us particularly of the gift of faith, and on the feasts of saints who have labored and struggled successfully for the purity and propagation of the faith.

(e.) The priest says the Creed at the middle of the altar, before the image of the Crucified, because faith comes from Christ, and because we must give an account of our faith to Christ, and we shall be rewarded by him, provided we have lived according to the faith. At the beginning the priest raises his hands, by which he signifies that faith comes from above; for no one comes to faith unless God enlightens and moves him; then he holds his hands joined before his breast whilst he recites the Creed, to indicate that the heart must believe what the eye does not see and the understanding does not comprehend, and that we must adhere to the faith, and love it with our whole heart. At the words, *and was incarnate*, the priest genuflects, in order to adore the God-Man most profoundly.

Whilst the priest says the Creed you must make an act of faith, and promise God to cling to it till you draw your last breath, and to live according to its precepts.

2. The Offertory.

(a.) It bears this name because in former times it was sung whilst the bishop or priest received the offerings of the clergy and laity. A psalm or hymn was sung. Pope Gregory the Great appointed an antiphon and a psalm-verse for each mass. The chant lasted till the offerings of the faithful had been deposited, therefore it was repeated several times. In our days the Offertory consists of an extract from the psalms or some other portion of Scripture and always expresses the principal thought connected with the feast or the ecclesiastical season.

(b.) The offerings of the faithful at the Offertory consisted of bread and wine and of various other articles of food, which were used for the *agapæ*, or love feasts. After the abolition of the *agapæ* only bread and wine were offered.

(c.) The offering of gifts was an exclusive right of the faithful. Jews, Gentiles, heretics, schismatics, catechumens, public sinners, and excommunicated persons were not allowed to make offerings. In the tenth century, when the Christians became more and more lukewarm and neglected frequent communion, this offering fell into disuse. The clergy were obliged to provide bread and wine in some other way, and the faithful, instead of bread and wine, offered money. From this dates the custom of giving stipends for masses to the priest, and of making a collection during mass.

(d.) Before the priest says the Offertory he turns towards the people with the salutation, *Dominus Vobiscum*, "The Lord be with you." By this salutation he wishes peace and concord to the faithful, that they may assist at mass with advantage, reminding them of the words of Jesus: "If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift."—*Matt. 5: 23, 24.*

PART II.

The sacred action by which the priest offers up bread and wine to God, is called the Oblation. This is as yet not a real sacrifice; the sacrifice of the mass is not bread and wine, but Christ himself who is present only from the moment of the consecration up to the moment when the priest consumes the sacred species. The Oblation consists only in this, that bread and wine are set apart and blessed for the sacrifice.

1. The Oblation of the host or bread.

(a.) The priest lays the host on the paten and holds it upwards. Holding upwards signifies that the priest offers up the sacrifice to God, who is infinitely above everything created. He holds up the host lying on the paten out of reverence towards God, for it is customary to offer what is given to princes and people of high rank, not with the bare hand, but upon a salver, or waiter. The priest lifts up his eyes toward heaven, but casts them down again and keeps them cast down during the prayers at the Offertory. He does this because he is conscious of his unworthiness to

appear before God, and because he offers the sacrifice principally for his own sins. He makes the sign of the cross with the paten upon which the host lies to signify that the cross was once the altar upon which Christ was immolated for us, and that the holy mass is nothing else than the continual unbloody renewal of the bloody sacrifice of the cross.

(b.) At the oblation of the host the priest says the following prayer: *Accept, O holy Father, Almighty, Eternal God, this unspotted Host, which I, thy unworthy servant, offer unto thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offenses and negligences, and for all here present; as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead, that it may avail both me and them unto life everlasting. Amen.*

In this prayer—

- (1) *Who offers? I, thy unworthy servant.*
- (2) *What is offered? This unspotted host.*
- (3) *To whom is it offered? Unto thee, my living and true God.*
- (4) *For what and for whom is it offered? For my innumerable sins, and negligences, and for all here present; as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead.*
- (5) *For what purpose is it offered? That it may avail both me and them unto life everlasting.*

2. *The Oblation of the chalice, or of the wine.*

(a.) The priest pours wine into the chalice, blesses the water in the other cruet, saying a prayer, and pours a little of the blessed water into the chalice. The priest mixes a little water with the wine *first*, because Jesus did so, and this is proved by the fact that the Jews did not bless the wine before they had mixed it with water; *secondly*, in remembrance of the mystery, that from the wound of his side blood and water came forth; *thirdly*, to symbolize the intimate union of Christ with man, the wine representing Christ, and the water man, and because Christ, by his incarnation, and especially in holy communion, united himself most intimately with man.

(b.) The prayer at the blessing of the water reads thus: *O God, who, in creating human nature, hast wonderfully dignified it, and still more wonderfully reformed it, grant that by the mystery of this water and wine we may be made partakers of his divinity, who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.*

(c.) The priest now offers the chalice, saying: *We offer unto thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching thy clemency, that it may ascend before thy divine Majesty as a sweet odor for our salvation, and for that of the whole world.*

As we perceive, the priest here speaks no longer in the singular number, as in the oblation of the host, but in the plural number: *We offer unto thee.* Why? Because in the early ages of the Church the chalices in which wine was consecrated for the faithful also, were large and heavy; the deacon assisted the priest in the elevation thereof, and said with him the prayer of the oblation. But a deeper reason is because the faithful in the New Testament are a priestly people, and therefore also in a certain sense participate in the oblation. It is true that it is the priest by whose ministry Christ offers himself up, and without whom the sacrifice cannot be offered; the faithful, however, are no idle spectators; the sacrifice that is offered is also their sacrifice and they offer it through the ministry of the priest. Therefore the priest, after the oblation, says: *Brethren, pray that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty.* Thus the priest at the altar acts as the representative of Christ and of the Church, and of each of the faithful. As a representative of Christ he alone offers the sacrifice, and, therefore, at the oblation of bread, speaks in the singular number; as the representative of the Church he offers it together with the faithful, and therefore at the oblation of the chalice speaks in the plural number.

PART III.

The prayers and actions after the Oblations are —

1. *The offering of ourselves, and the invocation of the Holy Ghost.*

(a.) The priest says: *In the spirit of humility, and with a contrite heart may we be received by thee, O Lord, and grant that the sacrifice we offer in thy sight this day may be pleasing to thee, O Lord God.* This is partly taken from the prayer of the three youths in the fiery furnace of Babylon. As these three youths offered themselves to the Lord as a sacrifice and were wonderfully delivered, so we may confidently hope that we shall be received graciously by God and be heard, provided we assist at mass with a humble and contrite heart.

(b.) Then the priest says: *Come, O sanctifier, almighty, eternal God, and bless this sacrifice, prepared for thy holy name.* The reason why the Holy Ghost is invoked is, *first*, because the dispensation of grace is especially the work of the Holy Ghost, and it is there-

fore necessary that he should give us his grace, that we may become partakers of the fruits of the sacrifice; *secondly*, because the conversion of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, in which the sacrifice properly consists, is attributed to the Holy Ghost.

2. The *lavabo*, or the washing of the fingers.

Having offered the gifts to God, he remembers his sinfulness, and thinking of the dignity and holiness of the sacrifice, he dares not proceed with the act of offering without first humbly asking of God the purification of all stains. He therefore washes his hands, reciting at the same time part of the 25th Psalm. This washing of the hands signifies that the holy sacrifice must be offered with a pure heart. If the high priest in the Old Law was obliged to be legally pure whenever he sacrificed to the Lord, how much more must the priests of the New Testament be pure, who offer Jesus, the unspotted Lamb of God, to the heavenly Father?

3. The offering of the Oblations repeated.

The priest says the following prayer: *Receive, O Holy Trinity, this oblation, which we make to thee, in memory of the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in honor of the blessed Mary ever Virgin, of blessed John the Baptist, of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, of these and of all the saints, that it may be available to their honor and our salvation; and may they vouchsafe to intercede for us in heaven, whose memory we celebrate on earth. Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

Priest and people offer their oblations to the three divine Persons together, because the glorification of the Most Holy Trinity is the principal object of the holy sacrifice of the mass. They offer in memory of the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ. These three mysteries belong to the sacrifice; by his passion and death Jesus completed the sacrifice which he commenced by his Incarnation; by his Resurrection he glorified it; and by his Ascension he presented himself to his Father as the victim and sacrifice. We also honor the memory of the Blessed Virgin and of the saints and hope that they will plead our cause and obtain for us graces from God.

4. The *Orate Fratres*, or the invitation to prayer.

The priest calls upon the faithful present to pray, in these words: *Brethren, pray that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Father Almighty.* At these words he extends his arms,

to signify the fervor with which he asks the faithful to support him with their prayers. They obey the invitation, saying: *May the Lord receive the sacrifice from thy hands, to the praise and glory of his name, for our benefit, and that of all his holy Church.* The priest answers in a low voice, *Amen*, "be it so," expressing thereby the wish that his prayer and that of the people may be graciously heard by God.

5. *The secret prayers.* They are so called from the secret, mysterious way in which they are said, the voice being suppressed. They have an historical significance. In the early ages of the Church the deacons and sub-deacons after the *Orate Fratres* chanted the fifteen gradual psalms, which the priest recited secretly for himself. The priest says these prayers in secret, to recollect himself in God, and go, as it were, with Moses into the cloud, there to lie prostrate before his Lord and God, conversing with him in his heart.

6. The Preface, with the *Sanctus*.

The Preface, or introduction, is very probably of Apostolic origin, and has its name from the fact that it is a preparation for the canon, which includes the consecration. It consists of three parts, the introduction, thanksgiving, and praise. The introduction reads: *World without end. Amen. The Lord be with you. And with thy spirit. Lift up your hearts. We have lifted them up unto the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. It is meet and just.* Now the second part begins, which contains a thanksgiving, and runs: *It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always and in all places give thanks to thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God.* Four reasons are here assigned why we must thank God. The *first two are found in God*, namely, in his dignity and justice (it is meet and just). The *last two reasons* in ourselves; enlightened by the light of faith we know that it is right and salutary to return thanks to God. The third part of the Preface consists in praise, which in the common Preface reads thus: *Through whom (Jesus Christ) the angels praise thy Majesty, the dominations adore, the powers tremble, the heavens and the virtues of the heavens, and the blessed seraphim, celebrate with united joy. In union with whom we beseech thee that thou wouldst command our voices also to be admitted, with suppliant confession saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of Sabaoth. The heavens and the earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*

As priest and people are about to celebrate the sacrifice of the new and everlasting covenant, they feel themselves lifted up to the society of the heavenly spirits and praise with them the holy

Triune God. Whilst the priest says the *Sanctus*, "holy," he inclines with profound reverence to the altar; at *Hosanna in the highest*, he raises himself again, as if he would go to meet our Lord with the exulting people of Jerusalem and salute him on his arrival. At the *Sanctus* a signal is given with a little bell, partly to call upon the people to join in the three times holy, partly to prepare them for the holy action which is now about to be performed.

PERORATION.

With this, the first part of the mass, the Oblation is concluded. As this is a principal part of the mass it is necessary for you to renew your devotion. Close your heart to the outside world and direct your attention to the holy mysteries which are now prepared. Unite yourselves with the priest, pray in his spirit, offer yourselves up to God, thank him for his benefits, praise and glorify him with the heavenly hosts, and make your whole life a glorification of the Triune God, that you may one day have the happiness of glorifying him in heaven with the angels and saints. Amen.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

ON PRAYING WELL.

Two men went up into the temple to pray.—*Luke* 18: 10.

Though we are impotent and frail we must in no situation of life lose courage, for we possess an easy and effectual means of obtaining all that is necessary for our present and future life. This means is prayer, of which Christ himself assures us: "You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done to you."—*John* 15:7. "Ask, and it shall be given you."—*Luke* 11: 9. He confirms this promise with a solemn oath, saying: "Amen, amen I say to you: If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you."—*John* 16: 23. St. Hilarion says: "Prayer has so great a power with God that it compels him, as it were, to impart to us all the graces we ask for." St. Thomas of Aquin

remarks: "Prayer opens heaven, disarms the wrath of God, moves his mercy, and draws his grace and blessing down upon us." Moses prayed, and the people of Israel conquered their enemies. Elias prayed, and a fructifying rain moistened the parched earth. King Ezechias prayed in his sickness, and he recovered his health. Solomon prayed, and he was replenished with wisdom. Susanna prayed, and her false accusers were confounded. The publican prayed in the temple, and he went down to his house justified.

But the question is, how must we pray that God may graciously hear our prayer? The gospel of this day gives the answer to the question, saying: *Two men went up into the temple to pray*. These words shall be the subject of our present meditation. I say, to pray well it is required —

- I. That two of us go to pray;
- II. That we go up to pray;
- III. That we go up into the temple to pray.

PART I.

We read in the gospel of this day that *two men went up into the temple to pray*. With us also there must be two to pray, that our prayer may be pleasing to God. But you may say, how is this possible for two persons always to pray together? We can not always find some one to pray with us. I will explain myself more fully. Each one of us consists of two things, the interior, and the exterior, or the spiritual and the corporal. These two must pray in us together if we wish our prayer to be pleasing to God.

1. *The interior man must pray*. This is done when we pray with interior recollection and devotion. Thus Abraham prayed on Mount Moria. His spirit was as it were transported from the earth and wrapt into heaven, for when the angel of the Lord came to him he was obliged twice to call his name, in order to rouse him out of his profound devotion. Thus the Prophet Elias prayed: "He covered his face with his mantle" when he noticed that the Lord wished to speak with him.—*III. Kings* 19: 13. He did this in order to shut himself out from the world, to retire into the innermost part of his heart and to direct his whole attention to God. Thus St. Aloysius prayed, who was so dead to the world and buried in God, that he could pray for hours without being distracted even for a few moments.

2. We must also pray in such a manner as far as possible. The nature of prayer, which is a conversation with God, requires this.

As in a conversation we turn towards him with whom we speak, so we must turn towards God and direct our attention to him when we speak with him in prayer. He who voluntarily suffers himself to be distracted during prayer, permitting his thoughts to roam unchecked upon almost every worldly subject, properly speaking does not pray at all, for he does not speak with God, but with that to which he directs his attention. To those who pray only with their mouth, but have not their thoughts turned towards God, these words are applicable: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."—*Matt.* 15: 8. Any man would feel offended if we spoke to him without directing our attention to him; how much more must this be the case with God, if at prayer we allow ourselves to be wilfully distracted and think of anything rather than of him? Is not this a gross violation of the adoration due to him? Do we not thereby give him to understand that we care little about prayer? And will God hear us when we do not pray with fervor? St. Bernard says: "You that pray, greatly insult God, if you ask him to hear your prayer to which you pay no attention while you perform it." Of course, we cannot expect that God will listen to our prayer when we pay no attention to it ourselves.

It may, and frequently does happen, that our thoughts during prayer wander away from God and turn to other objects. In order to remain free from such distractions as far as possible, we must prepare ourselves beforehand: "Before prayer prepare thy soul, and be not as a man that tempteth God."—*Eccles.* 18: 23. When you are about to pray, collect your thoughts, place yourself in the presence of God, and ask him to give you the grace necessary for devout prayer. The Abbot St. Stephen of Citeau gives us a beautiful example of this. When he went into a church he shut the door tightly after him, saying: "You cares and temporal thoughts, stay outside till I return to you. For I have now a serious and very important business. I must speak with my God, and for that I do not need you." If during prayer you are distracted, recollect yourselves, place yourselves again in the presence of God, recall your wandering thoughts, and continue your prayer, repeating this as often as the distraction returns. If you do this, your distractions will not be wilful, and therefore not sinful, nor will they lessen the merit of your prayer. After finishing your prayer, ask pardon of God for the faults you may have committed, and offer up to him the merits of Christ and of his saints as an atonement for your distractions.

2. *The outward man must pray.* This is done when we pray with the mouth and adore God outwardly by participating in public worship and by a reverential posture of the body.

(a.) *Our human nature requires this.* If we were purely spiritual beings, as the angels are, we could adore God only in spirit, or interiorly, but we consist of a body and soul, and therefore are bound to adore God, not only interiorly, but also exteriorly. The body is as much the work of the Creator as the soul, owes to God its preservation, and receives from him numerous benefits; it is therefore bound as much as the soul to adore God, to praise and thank him. The body, moreover, is intended as an instrument to serve the soul in all her actions. The soul needs the senses and members of the body in order to execute what she wishes. Now, if it is the first and principal duty of the soul to adore God, it follows that the body must assist as an instrument. Finally, the body after the resurrection is to be glorified together with the soul and to enjoy the everlasting happiness of heaven. But heaven being the reward of good works, the body must take part in the works of the soul, and especially in the adoration of God, that together with her it may merit eternal beatitude in heaven.

(b.) *The edification of our neighbor requires it.* There is no doubt that every one is bound to attract his fellow-men to the service of God by all the means in his power. The exterior adoration of God does this in a very special manner. When others see that we assist regularly at mass, etc., and pray devoutly, it makes a salutary impression upon them; they feel themselves powerfully attracted by our example to comply with their religious duties. This is particularly true of superiors. How edifying it is to subordinates and persons belonging to the lower classes, when they see how the higher classes honor God, profoundly humble themselves before him, and pray devoutly! Such examples are most effectual sermons for the faithful.

PART II.

Two men went *up* into the temple to pray. The temple in Jerusalem was built on an eminence, and the people of course were obliged to go up, if they wished to visit it. The same may be said of our churches, many of them are built on rising ground, on hills, and even on high mountains, and in almost all towns and cities they occupy the highest position. If we wish to pray in a church, we must go up to it. But we must not be content with going up bodily; we must go up spiritually whenever we pray in a church or elsewhere. I mean to say, we must be —

1. *Solicitous to pray for spiritual goods.* Our destiny does not end with this life; on the contrary, it is the will of God that we go to him in heaven. How happy we shall be if we attain this

end! What better thing can we think of or wish for than to be there for all eternity, "where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more" (*Apoc.* 21: 4); where, in the company of the angels and saints, we shall sit at the table of our heavenly Father and enjoy a felicity which surpasses all understanding, so that we shall exclaim with St. Peter, full of rapture: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." You must have this high destiny before your eyes whenever you pray; heaven must be the first and principal object of our prayer. The thoughts of the saints were directed towards heaven; they continually longed and prayed for it with the most ardent desire. Thus St. Macarius often and even shortly before his death said: "When shall I behold thee, my amiable Redeemer. When shall I experience the accomplishment of thy promises? When shall I be clothed with the nuptial garment, woven out of the rays of light which continually proceed from thy throne? When shall I sing in heaven with the blessed spirits the song of love in honor of the thrice holy God? Oh, how tardy is that day!"

2. *We must pray for what is necessary for the attainment of heaven.* Faith teaches us that nothing defiled can enter into heaven. But we stand daily and hourly in danger of defiling our consciences with sin, being, as we are, so much inclined to evil and exposed to numerous temptations. Shall we not, then, unceasingly pray to God to strengthen us and give us his grace, that we may overcome all temptations? In order to be saved, we must practice the Christian virtues and perform good works, for "every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire."—*Matt.* 7: 19. But we are not, as the Apostle says, "sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves" (*II. Cor.* 3: 5), much less can we do anything meritorious. And, as "our sufficiency is from God" (*Ibid.*), shall we not ask him to support us by his grace in the practice of all virtues and good works which are necessary for salvation? If we wish to arrive at the kingdom of heaven, we must persevere in the state of grace unto the end, for "he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."—*Matt.* 10: 22. But final perseverance, according to the doctrine of the Fathers and theologians, is a grace which is obtained only by continual prayer. For this reason we must daily ask for it.

3. *We are not forbidden, however, to pray for temporal goods.* Our Lord himself taught us to pray for them: "Give us this day our daily bread"; he even worked miracles to heal the sick, to feed the hungry, and to bestow temporal benefits. But even whilst praying for temporal goods, we must *go up*, that is, we must not pray for temporal goods for their own sake, but only in

so far as they may be subordinate to our eternal welfare. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all other things shall be added unto you." He who has solely temporal interests in view when praying, *i. e.*, conveniences of life, or the gratification of his sinful inclinations and desires, misunderstands his destiny, and acts contrary to the clearly expressed will of Jesus, according to which, we are to seek first the kingdom of God and his justice. To those who pray for temporal goods only from temporal views, the words of St. James apply (4: 3): "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss." Therefore, *go up* whenever you pray for temporal goods, and promise God that if he hears your prayer, and gives you this or that temporal good, you will employ it for his greater honor and glory and for the salvation of your own soul.

PART III.

The two men went up *into the temple* to pray. They were right, for God himself designated the temple in Jerusalem as a house of prayer (*Is.* 56: 7), and promised to hear those who would pray there with devotion and repentance (*Paralip.* 7: 13, etc.); and Jesus frequently visited the temple, prayed and taught in it. We must also go to church to pray. But there are two temples which are designed for prayer.

1. The temple in the proper sense, that is, *our churches, or houses of God.* Churches are pre-eminently places of prayer, because everything that is there and that is done there moves us to devotion. Here Jesus is truly present in the tabernacle; here we are shut out from the tumult of the world and a holy peacefulness reigns supreme; here our eyes meet the pictures of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and the saints, which awaken in us pious thoughts and draw our hearts heavenward; here we hear the word of God, and sacred music, and witness the celebration of the mysteries of religion with its expressive ceremonies, of which those outside of the Church have no idea. How many examples are recorded in history of unbelievers and heretics, freethinkers and obstinate sinners being overcome during the celebration of public worship, praying with an emotion which drew tears from their eyes. In the church there is not only one that prays, but many. There we can more easily obtain what we pray for, according to the words of Christ: "Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—*Matt.* 18: 20.

2. *The temple of nature.* A spiritual writer says beautifully: "The whole world is a house of God, and every pious heart is an

altar.' Wherever we are we can pray; for everywhere we are close to God, everywhere he hears the sighs of our heart and pays attention to our petitions. The patriarch Jacob prayed in the field; Manasses in a dismal dungeon; Jonas, in the whale's belly; Job, on a dunghill; the three youths, in the fiery furnace of Babylon. And the prayer which was performed in such divers places was graciously accepted by God and answered. You also can everywhere raise your mind and heart to God and make devout aspirations. A pious person daily finds many opportunities for this.

PERORATION.

You know now what is required to make prayer acceptable to God. Let two ways go to pray; honor God interiorly by praying with recollection and devotion, and exteriorly by assisting at mass, etc., and by conducting yourselves in a becoming and edifying manner. Go *up* to pray; pray first for the kingdom of heaven and spiritual goods, and for temporal goods only in so far as they are useful and necessary for your salvation. Go *up into the temple* to pray; love to go to church, especially on Sundays and holidays, but pray also at home and in other places, *e. g.*, when walking, when working in the fields, or in the shop, and recommend yourselves to God by making use of short, devout ejaculations. In such a way go up into the temple to pray, and God will be pleased with your prayer and will grant your petition. Amen.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

HUMILITY IS A VIRTUE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR SALVATION.

Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Luke 18: 14.

The parable in to-day's gospel shows us two men in the temple at Jerusalem who do one and the same thing; *both pray*. But how different is the conduct of God towards them! He rejects the prayer of the Pharisee, dismissing him without grace; but he

is pleased with the prayer of the publican, justifying him. How and why so? Christ, at the conclusion of the gospel, gives the answer to this question, saying: *Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* The Pharisee was proud and self-conceited, therefore he was rejected, "for God resisteth the proud;" but the publican was humble, therefore he was justified, "for God giveth his grace to the humble."

Learn from this how important and necessary it is to be truly humble. It is only when we sincerely humble ourselves before God, that he is pleased with us and gives us his graces. I intend to speak to you this morning on the virtue of humility and to show you that humility is absolutely necessary for salvation, for without it —

- I. *There is no forgiveness of sins;*
- II. *No meritorious work;*
- III. *No perseverance in good.*

PART I.

Without humility there is no forgiveness of sins.

I. Where humility is wanting the necessary conditions for the forgiveness of sins are not fulfilled. For the forgiveness of sins, the following conditions are necessary:

(a.) *True self-knowledge.* The proud man neither knows himself nor acknowledges his sinfulness. Like the Pharisee, he trusts in himself as just. If any one reminds him of his sins, he tries in every possible way to excuse himself: for he cannot humble himself so far as to acknowledge that he has sinned. He also avoids searching his conscience for fear of finding something that would be humiliating. Thus the proud man deludes himself: and being thus deluded, a good confession, and consequently the forgiveness of sins, is absolutely impossible.

(b.) *True contrition.* Pride and contrition are as incompatible as darkness and light. How could a man who has true contrition entertain proud thoughts, knowing as he does and feeling in the depth of his soul that he is a miserable sinner and deserving of punishment? There has never yet been a repentant sinner who was not humble of heart. Look at the publican in the gospel. The consciousness of his sinfulness worked so humiliatingly upon him that he dared not go up to the altar, nor so much as to raise his eyes towards heaven; full of shame and confusion he stood afar off and struck his breast, saying: "O God, be merciful to

me, a sinner." Therefore, where there is true contrition there is humility; and where there is no humility there can be no contrition.

(c.) *A sincere confession.* Pride prevents a man from humbling himself by a sincere confession. The proud man conceals those sins the confession of which would be humiliating to him, either altogether, or he diminishes or palliates them in such a way that they appear as insignificant faults. On the other hand he mentions all his good works, and whatever is honorable to him, like the Pharisee in the gospel. Indeed, there are Catholics who only reveal and manifest their virtues and good works, as if it were the office of the priest in the confessional to canonize people, instead of absolving them from their sins.

(d.) *Willingness to make satisfaction.* Need I tell you that the proud man is destitute of it? How could he consent to exercises of penance when he does not believe himself guilty before God and thinks himself a saint rather than a sinner? He does not recognize and acknowledge his sins, is not sorry for them, does not confess them, makes no satisfaction for them; hence it is evident that he cannot obtain forgiveness.

2. That the humble, not the proud, obtain the forgiveness of their sins we plainly see in Saul and David. *Both had grievously sinned.* Being reminded of their sins by the prophets Samuel and Nathan, both acknowledged themselves sinners. But while God pardoned David immediately, he turned away from Saul and did not pardon him. And why not? Because the one humbled himself, the other did not. As soon as David was told of his crime, he profoundly humbled himself, and full of contrition said, "I have sinned." This humble and penitent disposition pleased God, and therefore he pardoned him. Saul, indeed, also said, "I have sinned," yet he did not humble himself before God, but remained what he was before, a proud and ambitious man, adding to the words, "I have sinned", "yet honor me before the ancients of my people" (*I. Kings 15: 30*); therefore he remained in his sins and was rejected by God.

Consider how necessary the virtue of humility is for the remission of sin, for without it there is no forgiveness.

PART II.

Neither is any work meritorious before God without it.

1. *A parallel argument* teaches us this. A document or deed, to be legal and of value, must have the seal and signature affixed

to it. If you had a deed of a certain house or a piece of land, and the seal and signature of the conveying party were not appended thereto, it would be worthless. Now what the seal and signature are to a deed, humility is to good works. If this is wanting, even the best of human actions, the most shining virtues, are without merit and profit before God, and deserve no reward.

2. *The Sacred Scripture* teaches the same. We read of five virgins, who in vain knocked at the door of the bridegroom, and to their consternation heard the words: "I know you not."—*Matt. 25: 12.* Why so? Is not virginal chastity one of the most sublime and beautiful virtues, beloved by God and man? Certainly; nevertheless, these virgins were not permitted to partake of the nuptial banquet, because in their lamps the oil of humility was wanting. St. Gregory says: "Behold the ten virgins; all are virgins, but all are not admitted to the banquet, because some of them *seeking honor before the world on account of their virginity* had no oil in their lamps."

The Scribes and Pharisees did a great deal of good; they prayed with great fervor, fasted austere, gave large alms and observed all the ordinances and ceremonies of the Mosaic law with scrupulous care and exactness. Notwithstanding all this, Christ says: "Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt. 5: 20.* Why does our Lord declare the justice of the Scribes and Pharisees to be insufficient for heaven? Principally because they were destitute of humility. In whatever they did, they sought not the honor and glory of God, but the praise and applause of men, and for this reason they could not receive any reward from God, having already received their reward from the world.

3. *A legend* teaches the same. A certain saint had a vision. He was translated before the judgment-seat of God and saw how every moment souls, who had departed this life, arrived to be judged. Each had a sack over his shoulder; in the front part were his good works, and in the part hanging behind were his sins. Both the good works and the sins, after their kind, were put up in packages. The sack in each case was opened and the packages with their good works and sins were laid upon the scales. The packages of the sins of most people by far outweighed the packages of good works, whereupon the divine Judge pronounced sentence of condemnation. Finally a woman came with a sack, the front part of which was full of good works while the other part contained only a few faults. The saint thought: "Thanks be to God, this woman will certainly go to heaven." But when the good works were put in the scales they were as

light as a feather and were overbalanced by the sins. Full of astonishment the saint asked an angel who was standing by: "How comes it that this multitude of good works has so light a weight?" The angel replied: "Know, this woman has done a great deal of good, but she was full of vanity and pride, her good works are without weight in the eyes of the all-seeing Judge, and she is lost for ever."

Every one who is not humble of heart will share the fate of that woman; all the exercises of virtue and of good works without it are valueless before God. St. Gregory says: "He who gathers virtues without humility, throws sand against the wind." Learn from this again how necessary humility is, since without it all other virtues and good works are fruitless and profitless for eternity.

PART III.

Without humility there is no perseverance in virtue.

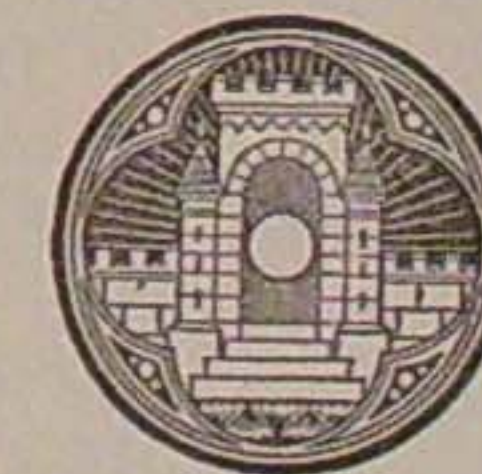
1. *Faith* convinces us of this truth. While we sojourn here upon earth in this mortal body we are exposed to many great and dangerous temptations. Now it is the devil that lays snares, now it is the world that employs every stratagem to decoy us into these snares, now it is the flesh that allures us to sin. The exertions of these our enemies are so indefatigable that we are not secure for one moment; and in order to overcome these temptations we need the grace of God, because of ourselves we are insufficient for anything in the affair of salvation. But when may we count upon the grace of God? Only when we are humble of heart; for while God resists the proud, he gives his grace to the humble. St. Anthony, seeing the whole world covered with snares which the devil had laid for men, full of anguish cried out: "O Lord, who can escape these snares? who can be saved?" And he heard the answer: "Only the humble." Yes, humility walks securely. As long as one is humble, one stands firmly in virtue, one is a pillar; but the moment one becomes proud one totters and falls.

2. *History* proves this. Consider the fallen angels. As soon as they listened to the suggestions of pride, God withdrew his grace from them, and they were obliged to exchange heaven for hell. It was pride that induced our first parents to eat of the forbidden fruit and to bring sin and misery upon themselves and their whole posterity. Tertullian and Origen were Fathers and Doctors of the Church and zealous defenders of the holy faith, but allowing themselves to be deluded by the incense of praise which was wafted before them, they yielded to pride, the grace of God

departed from them, and they went so far as to defile themselves with the stain of heresy. How low man can fall when he leaves the narrow path of humility, we see in a certain Justin, a Franciscan friar and companion of St. John Capistran. He had received extraordinary graces by means of prayer, vigilance, meditation, mortification and other pious practices, so that far and near he was venerated as a pattern of Christian perfection and as a man highly favored of God. Even Pope Eugene IV. having received very favorable accounts of him, and being anxious to become personally acquainted with him, invited him to come to Rome. When he was introduced the Pope rose from his seat, went to meet him, embraced him and made him sit beside him. On Justin's return, St. John Capistran looked at him sorrowfully, and said: "O brother Justin, you went away an angel; you come back a devil." The result confirmed only too plainly the truth of this seemingly harsh language. Justin seemed to grow prouder from day to day; for the most trivial reasons he loudly complained that he was not treated with becoming respect; finally he forgot himself so far as to thrust a knife into the breast of one of the brothers, by whom, as he thought, he had been treated with contempt. After this murder he fled, and wandered about committing crimes of every description. At last he was cast into prison at Naples, and hardened in unbelief and malice put an end to himself. If he had remained humble he would now be a saint in heaven.

PERORATION.

Learn from what you have heard, how necessary a virtue humility is for salvation. Without it, there is *no forgiveness of sin, no good work meritorious for heaven, and no final perseverance.* He who is not truly humble cannot work out his salvation. "Let us, then, ascend on high by humility, for this is the way and there is no other. He who goes another way descends rather than ascends. It is humility alone that exalts and leads to life. This is the eternal law: *Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*"—*St. Bernard.* Amen.



TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

HUMILITY IS A RARE VIRTUE.

Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Luke 18: 14.

There is no virtue more necessary for a devout life than humility. The Pharisee in the gospel of this day was not an extortioner, not an unjust man, not an adulterer; he fasted austere and conscientiously gave tithes, in a word, he scrupulously complied with all the requirements of the Law, carefully avoiding evil and diligently practicing good; and yet God was displeased with him and dismissed him without pardon for the simple reason that he was lacking in humility. Humility is the foundation of all justice; without it no one can please God, though he may possess and practice all other virtues. St. Gregory the Great says: "If you practice divine virtues, but do not possess humility, they are vain. You may pray, fast, give alms, live chastely, no matter what virtue you practice—all is in vain when it is not done in humility." How necessary, then, is humility to us, if we wish to be saved! But as necessary as this virtue is, it is just as rare. In order to convince ourselves of this truth, *we will consider the principal marks of humility, and then see whether or not we possess them ourselves.*

PART I.

He who is truly humble has a low, mean opinion of himself: he considers himself poor, miserable and sinful.

1. Nothing is more just than this. What can we be proud of? Of our body, which in many respects is a burden to us and finally becomes the food of worms? Or of our natural faculties and advantages, *e. g.*, bodily beauty, money, real estate, knowledge, talents? But all these gifts and goods we have from God, not from ourselves: "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"—*I. Cor. 4: 7.* On account of such natural advantages we should rather tremble than glory, for they only increase our responsibility. Since much will be required of him to whom much has been given, the more talents we have received, the more we

should tremble at the account we shall one day be obliged to give. Even as regards the virtues and good works which we perform, we have no reason for exalting ourselves, for they are more the gifts of God than our works, and every one must say with St. Paul: "By the grace of God I am what I am."—*I. Cor. 15: 10.* What we may call our own is nothing but misery and sin. The saints acknowledged this; therefore they were far from thinking anything of themselves. St. Francis of Assisi thought himself the greatest sinner. St. Thomas of Villanova lived in continual fear of the account which, as he thought, he would be obliged to give of his bad life. St. Gertrude considered it a miracle that the earth did not open under her feet and swallow her up on account of her sins.

2. This was the experimental knowledge of the saints of their own insignificance and unworthiness; is it also ours? Do we think meanly of ourselves? Do we think ourselves miserable and sinful? Ah, how few can answer these questions in the affirmative! Where are Catholics to be found who are penetrated by the conviction of their own nothingness, and who really believe that they are deserving of nothing but contempt? Many a one will say: "I am good for nothing, I am a great sinner." But if you said to him, "Yes, my friend, you are right, you are a worthless creature, a great sinner," he would receive your remarks very badly and be greatly offended. Ah, that is our misery; pride is concealed in our humility and while we speak ill of ourselves we think the reverse. We are the dupes of a refined pride which we artfully disguise under the cloak of apparent humility. We have the humility of the understanding, but not the humility of the will. It is not enough for us to know that we are poor miserable sinners and to despise ourselves, but we must also be willing to be despised by others, and that too from an intimate conviction that we are deserving of contempt.

PART II.

He who is truly penitent does not prefer himself before any one else, but considers himself below many, if not below all.

1. Above whom are we exalted? Above those who are higher than ourselves? This manifestly would be impudence. Above those who are our equals? This would be against equity, for equity requires that we do not exalt ourselves above our equals. Above those who are below us? No; for if they are below us, it is owing either to natural or to supernatural circumstances. If our neighbor does not possess the natural advantages which we possess, *e. g.*, wealth, beauty, talents, we certainly have no

reason for exalting ourselves above him, for these are gifts of God, which he could have kept from us, as he has kept them from many others. Neither do these goods increase in the least our moral worth. Even on account of supernatural advantages, *e. g.*, great piety and virtue, we must not think ourselves better than others. If God had given our neighbor as many graces as he has given us, perhaps he would be far better and more virtuous than we, who leave numberless graces and opportunities for doing good unemployed. Again, a man who is far below us, and is a great sinner, may yet do penance and be saved, whilst we do not know whether we shall persevere in good to the end. Witness Judas and the penitent thief. He who is truly penitent will not prefer himself before any one, but will rather consider himself below many, below all, even below the greatest sinner, as many saints did, *e. g.*, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Teresa. The further pious persons advance in humility, the more they are illuminated by the divine light, and the more they know their misery and insignificance. Hence it comes that they look upon themselves as the greatest sinners and the most ungrateful creatures, and humble themselves below all men. Although **humility in so high a degree is not necessary, we must at least possess it in such a degree as to prevent us from exalting ourselves inordinately above any one, or despising even the greatest sinner.**

But many Christians lack this humility. They have two kinds of weights and measures. They overestimate the good they have or imagine they have, but what others have, are, or do, is little or nothing in their eyes: thus they succeed in outstripping their neighbor. If their neighbor has faults and weaknesses they look down upon him like the Pharisee with a significant smile and make him feel their contempt. If in the course of conversation they come to speak of him, they express themselves about him with disdain, and it is not difficult to see that they think themselves far better. Thus do many persons think and act because they are not humble.

PART III.

He who is truly humble does not seek human praise or applause, his final and highest aim is the honor of God.

1. Solicitude for our honor and good name is compatible with humility, for honor and good name are more valuable than all other earthly things and with them we can do a great deal of good. But there is a great difference between caring for and seeking honor. He who cares for honor does so merely because he knows that honor and a good name are means for the promotion of the

glory of God and the good of his fellow-men. But he who seeks honor has only himself in view and considers the honor not as the means, but as the end, he desires honor only for himself, in order to acquire influence with men and to be praised. This is what we call ambition, and this is incompatible with humility. The ambitious man acts contrary to his destiny; for God has created us for his own honor and glory; he also commits robbery, because he usurps to himself the honor which belongs to God.

2. Ambition is a sin which is very prevalent, and of which even pious Catholics are not entirely innocent. With many ambition is an idol to which they sacrifice everything. They resemble the Pharisees, who in the eyes of the world led a blameless life, performed many good deeds, and surrounded themselves with a halo, so that everyone had a high opinion of them. Many others indeed are a little less ambitious, but they are not yet humble of heart as they should be. If they were free from ambition, they would not care what others think or say of them; they would not rejoice when they hear that people have a good opinion of them; nor would they become irritated when something injurious to their reputation is said. They pray daily: "My God, all for thy honor," but if they were candid and sincere, they would add: "My God, do not forget my honor, give me part of the praise which I deserve for my works."

PART IV.

He who is truly humble does not without necessity say anything that redounds to his honor, and takes little pleasure in the praise that is bestowed on him.

1. The humble keep the good that is in them, or the good they may do, very secret, according to the words of Christ, that the left hand shall not know what the right hand does.—*Matt.* 6: 5. If necessity compels them to say anything that redounds to their honor, they have not themselves but only God and higher interests in view. They do not love to speak of themselves; they do not even mention their faults, weaknesses and imperfections, because they are aware that pride frequently disguises itself under the mask of an apparent humility. Many speak ill of themselves for the purpose of being contradicted and praised. If humble people are praised, they feel embarrassed, for they carry within themselves the conviction that they have nothing worthy of praise and that all honor is due to God, and, therefore, they try to evade such praise as much as possible, and to turn the conversation in a prudent manner to another subject.

2. Where are the persons who manifest their humility in such a manner? Is there one among a hundred who never says anything redounding to his honor? Is it not a common thing for people on every occasion to display their advantages, to boast of their knowledge, possessions, state of life, and the great things they have done, concealing at the same time what they know to be dishonorable? Or where are those to be found who do not like to hear that they are praised? Indeed, true and genuine humility is a rare virtue, which blooms as seldom as the century plant. Nay, many aim at being praised and always try to direct the conversation to themselves, with a view to let their light shine before the whole company. If humility consists in the detestation and shunning of human praise, we find that few possess it.

PART V.

Finally, he who is truly humble *bears contumely, neglect and contempt, if not with joy, at least with patience.*

1. It is not necessary always to be silent when defamed and detracted, we are allowed to justify and defend ourselves, and even to take legal proceedings in order to recover our good name and fame. But this must be done without bitterness or hatred, and we must have before our eyes not so much our own person as the honor of God and the good of our fellow-men. But if by an attack on our honor neither the honor of God nor the welfare of our fellow-men is injured, it is conformable to humility to let the matter rest and to keep silence. We must do the same when we have no means of recovering our honor lost through no fault of ours. Thus St. Francis of Sales bore a base calumny for years with patience till it pleased God to manifest his innocence. Of many saints, as, *e. g.*, of the Apostles (*Acts* 5: 41), we know that they bore contumely and defamation not only with patience, but even with the greatest joy.

2. How is it with us? Do we not become indignant and angry when our honor and good name are assailed, when we are reviled and insulted? Nay, does not a little neglect, and frequently only an imaginary offence, fill our heart with rancor and bitterness? Do we not wish to be treated with every mark of respect, to be honored and preferred? Do we not take it ill when every attention is not paid to us? And why are we so? Ah, why else than because we have not yet learned to be humble of heart?

PERORATION.

We may well say, then, that humility is a rare virtue among Christians. Certain it is that among a thousand there is not one who is truly and perfectly humble. It is true, not every fault against humility is a mortal sin; but this much is certain, the least offence against this virtue displeases God, diminishes his graces, increases the difficulty of overcoming temptations, and jeopardizes our salvation more or less. It is also certain, beyond doubt, that from the want of humility many of our exercises of virtue and good works will profit us nothing for eternity. Let us then henceforth be solicitous for nothing so much as to be humble of heart. Let us acknowledge our insignificance and nothingness, and despise no one, not even the greatest sinner; let us not seek human praise, for what does it profit us when men speak well of us, if God is displeased with us? Let us not seek honor and distinction, let us rather be last than first and deem ourselves happy to suffer contumely and ignominy for the love of Jesus.

When we have once learned the art of being truly humble, we may rest assured that we are walking on the safe road, that our salvation is secured, and that the words of Christ will be verified in us: *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* Amen.





ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*I. Cor. 15: 1-10.* Brethren: I make known unto you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand: by which also you are saved, if you hold fast after what manner I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all, which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures: and that he was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then was he seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace in me hath not been void.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE APOSTLE PROVES THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND HIS APPARITIONS.

St. Paul, in the lesson of this day, reminds the Christians at Corinth of the gospel which he preached to them, and says that they will be saved by it, if they persevere. What gospel is it that St. Paul preached to the Corinthians? It is the doctrine preached by Jesus. All who adhere to this doctrine with a believing heart and live according to it, will be saved. But St. Paul in this lesson understands in particular the principal and fundamental truth of our holy religion, the Resurrection of Christ: for he refers to it at once, saying that Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, and on the third day rose again. There were false teachers at Corinth who denied the resurrection from the dead.

To refute this erroneous doctrine the Apostle speaks of the Resurrection of Christ and declares that as certain as it is that Christ rose again, so certain it is that we also shall rise again. But St. Paul proves the certainty of the Resurrection of Christ from his apparitions, saying that the risen Christ appeared —

- I. To the Apostles and to other believers;
- II. Lastly to himself.

PART I.

He was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then was he seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen by James, then by all the Apostles. Let us consider these apparitions.

The first whom the risen Saviour honoured with his apparition was Cephas or Peter. When the two disciples returned from Emmaus to Jerusalem "they found the eleven gathered together and those that were with them, saying, the Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon." Our Lord had made this Apostle his Vicar, the visible head of his Church on earth, and therefore, wishing to distinguish him above all the other Apostles, he appeared to him first. This is an exhortation to us to pray profound respect to our Holy Father the Pope, for he possesses the same dignity as Peter; and this the more so at the present time when so many enemies of the Church (among them even such as call themselves Catholics) revile and overwhelm him with insults. Any disrespect to bishops and priests, and especially to the Pope is the same as if it were to Jesus Christ himself, for his words are of universal truthfulness and application. "He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."—*Luke 10: 16.* History testifies that all who despised the Pope came to a bad end. Think of Napoleon I. and III.; both, as soon as they attacked the Pope, were overtaken by misfortune, lost their crown and empire, and died in exile.

One would think that the risen Saviour would not have favored Peter by appearing to him first, as he had thrice denied him. But Peter had most sincerely repented of his sins and bewailed them; for this reason Jesus was most gracious to him and appeared to him before all the other Apostles. What a consolation for true penitents! No matter how grievously they may have sinned, if they only repent, and truly and earnestly amend their lives, God will again be gracious to them, and on account of their greater fervor will bestow upon them greater graces than upon those Christians who have never grievously offended him. Therefore Jesus assures us that "there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner

that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance."—*Luke 15: 7.*

2. After that, the Apostle says, Christ appeared to *the eleven*. This occurred on Easter Monday in the evening, when Jesus appeared (*John 20*) to the Apostles in the absence of Thomas and stood in the midst of them, saying: "Peace be to you," and gave them power to forgive and to retain sins. After eight days he appeared to them again and invited Thomas, who was present this time, to touch the marks of his wounds. At these apparitions the word which Jesus spoke to them on Holy Thursday was fulfilled: "You now, indeed, have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you."—*John 16: 22.* The Apostles had sorrow when Jesus was taken from them, to whom they clung with all their heart, but when they saw him again after his Resurrection they had an exceeding great joy, and this joy no man could take from them; the reflection, Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, our protector and future rewarder, lives, caused them to bear with joy all persecutions and sufferings, martyrdom and death. Christians who fear God rejoice like the Apostles at the Resurrection of Christ, and this their joy has its cause in him, who by his Resurrection went into eternal glory; and in themselves, because Jesus by his Resurrection has accomplished the work of our Redemption.

3. The Apostle also says that Jesus appeared to five hundred brethren at once, and adds that many of them live to this very day, while some are fallen asleep. Our Lord had commanded his Apostles to go into Galilee, and had promised them that after his Resurrection he would there appear to them. Obedient to this command of the Lord, they went into Galilee, up to Mount Thabor. It was upon this mountain that the risen Saviour appeared to the Apostles and to many other believers, amounting in all to about five hundred persons. All saw him with their own eyes, and having been convinced of the truth of his Resurrection, they fell down before him and adored him.—*Matt. 28: 16, 17.* Who could ask for a stronger evidence of the truth of the Resurrection of Jesus than is here given? Who could reject evidence which rests upon the testimony of five hundred eye-witnesses who are perfectly worthy of belief?

Let us thank our divine Saviour for giving us so incontrovertible a proof of his Resurrection, which is the ground-work of our faith and hope; wherefore the Apostle writes: "If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins; then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep."—*I. Cor. 15: 17-20.*

4. Afterwards, the Apostle says, *Jesus was seen by James, then by all the Apostles*. By James, is meant the Apostle who was a relation of our Lord, and afterwards bishop of Jerusalem. We do not, however, read in the gospel that Jesus appeared to James. From this we see that the Evangelists did not write all that Jesus did and said, but only some things, as John says at the end of his gospel: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written."—*John 21: 25.* From this it follows that we must also receive and believe tradition, as St. Paul admonishes us: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned, either by word or by our epistle."—*II. Thess. 2: 14.*

By saying that Jesus appeared to all the Apostles he understands that apparition which took place at his Ascension into heaven, and which St. Luke (24: 50, 51) describes in these words: "He led them out as far as Bethania, and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. And it came to pass, whilst he blessed them, that he departed from them, and was carried up to heaven." The last apparition of Jesus was the most important, because it was united with another great mystery—the Ascension of Christ—and with it his visible life and work came to a close. But he will appear again, immediately after the resurrection of the dead, not as our Redeemer, but as our Judge. God grant that we also may rejoice at his second apparition, as the Apostles rejoiced at his first, and that after a glorious resurrection we may arrive at the place which he has prepared for us. But this will happen only on condition that we rise spiritually, and constantly persevere in the life of grace.

PART II.

St. Paul now comes to speak of the apparition with which he was favored himself by Jesus, saying:

1. *And last of all, he was seen also by me.* The Apostle here speaks of the apparition on the way to Damascus. As we read in the Acts of the Apostle (9: 1, *et seq.*), he went to Damascus from Jerusalem provided with letters from the High Council to the synagogues, with the intention of bringing, bound, to Jerusalem any Christians he could find. "And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew near to Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said: Who art thou, Lord? and he said: I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And he, trembling and astonished, said:

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said: Arise, and go into the city; and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." What here occurred to St. Paul on his way to Damascus, was not merely a vision, a spiritual intuition, as so many saints had, but a true and real apparition, such a one as that which the Apostles had of Christ after his Resurrection.

2. Thinking of this marvellous apparition, the Apostle humbles himself most profoundly, calling himself one born out of due time, and says: *For I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.* The Apostle, calling himself one born out of due time, does so from a spirit of humility, being vividly penetrated by the thought that he did not deserve the grace and dignity which God bestowed on him. And why does St. Paul humble himself so profoundly? why does he count himself the least of the Apostles, even unworthy to be called an Apostle? He answers this question himself, saying: *because I persecuted the Church of God.* This is true, as we know; when quite young, he had proved himself to be a bitter enemy of the Christians, rejoicing at the death of St. Stephen and holding the clothes of those that stoned him to death. His hatred against Christianity increased; he persecuted the Christians as much as he could, and, if it had been in his power, he would have destroyed the Christian religion from the face of the earth. But hostile as he was to the Christians, and much evil as he did them, yet he deserved excuse, for his error was an error of the understanding, not of the heart; he acted more from ignorance than malice. He had grown up in prejudice against the Christian religion; the hatred against it had been instilled into him from childhood; he was of the number of those who thought that they were doing a service to God by persecuting and killing the Christians. But however great his ignorance was, it was by no means guiltless; he should have investigated the Christian religion, especially as he was a very learned man; and he had so much the more reason for doing this, as the Apostles and the believers led a most holy life and wrought many miracles. His conscience also must have plainly told him that it could not possibly be right and just to persecute the Christians on account of their belief, for they did no harm to anybody.

If we cast a glance upon our past life we must confess that we have grievously offended God in thought, word, deed and omission. We deserve less excuse before God than St. Paul, because we have not sinned from ignorance, but from levity and forgetfulness of God. Let us, therefore, humble ourselves before him and our fellow-creatures so long as we live. If ever a vain thought arises in your heart, say to yourselves: "Ah, how could I yield to that vain imagination, I, who have so grievously offended

God!" If we experience any humiliation either in word or deed, let us endure it calmly and patiently, considering that we have deserved it a hundred times instead of once only. Think of the saints, *e. g.*, St. Francis of Assisi, or St. Teresa, who, although they spent their lives in perfect innocence and scarcely committed a venial sin, much less mortal sins, were so humble that they bore the greatest insults with the most perfect calmness—nay, even with joy; and be encouraged by their example to accept humiliations patiently and to offer them up to God in satisfaction for your sins.

3. St. Paul concludes the lesson of this day with the words: *But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace in me hath not been void.* Here St. Paul assures us that he owes the office of an Apostle not to his own merits, but to the grace of God. The meaning of his words is: I was a great sinner; I persecuted the Church of God: how can I attribute it to my merits that Christ has called me to be his Apostle? As the call of St. Paul to the apostolic dignity, so our vocation to the Catholic Church is a pure work of divine grace: "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; for it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man may glory."—*Ephes. 2: 8, 9.* There are millions of Gentiles, who live and die in unbelief and are deprived of eternal salvation. We should share the same fate if God had not by a special grace called us to his Church. How grateful should we be to God for this great boon! But how many Catholics, especially in our days, do not know how to appreciate the gift of the holy faith! They are on terms of friendship with the enemies of the Church, read irreligious papers and move with the spirit of the times, which attacks and rejects everything Catholic; they neglect their religious duties, such as prayer, public worship, and the reception of the sacraments; they slight the precepts of the Church and eat meat on Fridays and other days of abstinence; in short, they live according to the maxims of the world, disregarding God and his holy law. Woe to such Catholics! the words of Christ apply to them: "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida, for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment, than for you."—*Matt. 11: 21, 22.* Beware of abusing this grace, employ it rather for your salvation, and do not forget that much will be required of those to whom much has been given.

4. The Apostle says of himself: *The grace of God in me hath not been void.* He could justly say so, for he employed the grace

given him with the greatest fidelity both for his own sanctification and for the conversion of Jews and Gentiles. He considered himself a debtor to all men and his constant endeavor was to gain souls to Christ. As a river never stands still, but runs unceasingly, till it empties itself into the sea, so St. Paul knew no rest or peace; he journeyed from place to place, and everywhere preached Christ crucified. The love of God urged him when one work was done to begin another, till he finished his course and emptied himself into the ocean of eternity. And who can describe the tribulations and sufferings with which his apostolic life was accompanied? He says himself, that he suffered tribulations, prisons, hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness; that he was beaten with rods, stoned, and thrice suffered shipwreck.—*II. Cor.* 11: 23-8. And after all that he suffered and did for Christ he considered his salvation by no means secured; therefore he chastised his body and brought it into subjection, lest perhaps when he had preached to others, he himself might become a castaway.—*I. Cor.* 9: 27.

Take St. Paul for a pattern, and make a good use of the grace of God. Employ it first for your own salvation. Labor daily at the extirpation of your inordinate inclinations and besetting faults, and practice the Christian virtues of humility, meekness, chastity, patience. If you labor with all energy to ameliorate your temporal condition, should you not use still greater diligence in regard to your eternal condition? Labor also for the salvation of others. You fathers and mothers must take a great interest in your children and not allow them to do anything wrong; see that they lead a good life. Consider that solicitude for the salvation of those under your charge is the duty of your state of life, and that you must one day give a strict account thereof. "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—*I. Tim.* 5: 8. Consider that there is no work better, more noble, or more pleasing to God than to save immortal souls.

PERORATION.

Take to heart the words of the Apostle: "We are buried together with him (Christ) by baptism unto death, that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life."—*Rom.* 6: 4. When we received baptism we died to sin and rose to the life of grace; let us walk constantly in this life of grace and beware of dying again the death of sin, that thus we may become like unto Jesus, who, after being risen from the dead, dies now no more, but lives for ever. Let us with St. Paul fight the good fight, with courage and confidence in God, against the enemies of our salvation, that we may obtain with him the crown of everlasting glory. Amen

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Mark* 7: 31-37. At that time; Jesus going out of the coast of Tyre, came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coast of Decapolis. And they bring to him one deaf and dumb: and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him. And taking him from the multitude apart he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue: and looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him; Ephpheta, which is: Be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And he charged them that they should tell no man. But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it, and so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well: he hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

JESUS HEALS A MAN THAT WAS DEAF AND DUMB.

Our Lord had journeyed over all Galilee and preached the gospel in every town and village, and in confirmation of his doctrine wrought many miracles. He then came into the vicinity of the two Gentile cities, Tyre and Sidon, which were renowned for their commerce. He preached there and performed one miracle, driving a devil out of the daughter of a Gentile woman. Then he returned and came to the Galilean sea, through the midst of Decapolis, or the ten cities. He had scarcely arrived there when good-hearted people brought to him a man that was deaf and dumb and besought Christ to lay his hands upon him. He heard their prayer and healed him.

We will to-day meditate on this event, dividing it into three points:

- I. They bring to Jesus one deaf and dumb;
- II. Jesus heals him;
- III. The people take a lively interest in this miracle.

PART I.

They bring to him one deaf and dumb; and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him.

1. Here we have a beautiful example given by the people who brought the man that was deaf and dumb to Jesus.

(a.) *They had compassion on the deaf and dumb man*; his misery evoked their sympathy. Sympathy is a necessary consequence of the true love of our neighbor, which principally consists in this, that we mean well by our fellow-man, and have compassion on him when we see him in distress. He who does not sympathize with the unfortunate and distressed, and does not trouble himself about their afflictions, resembles the priest and Levite who passed by the half-dead man and had no mercy on him; he bears no likeness to Jesus who wept over Jerusalem, had compassion on the widow of Naim, and who, full of mercy, cried out: "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt. 11: 28*. How is it with you? Are you kind-hearted, or hard-hearted?

(b.) *They bring him to Jesus*. There was no doubt some difficulty and inconvenience connected with this, but in their charity they paid no attention to any inconvenience, for "charity beareth all things, endureth all things." Let us do good to the distressed, though it may be difficult. What sacrifices did not Christ make for us from his birth to his death on the cross? And should we be deterred from acts of kindness and charity by little difficulties?

(c.) *They besought him to lay his hand upon him*. If we ourselves are not able to help a person, let us procure help for him elsewhere, *e. g.*, by recommending him to some one who can help him, or by making a little collection for him. Love is inventive and knows how to procure help where help seems impossible. Let us manifest our love for the distressed by recommending them to God in fervent prayer.

2. *The gospel says that they brought to Jesus one who was deaf and dumb.*

(a.) This deaf and dumb man was certainly very miserable. He could not communicate with others, nor manifest his necessities and affairs, his joys and sufferings, otherwise than by imperfectly understood signs, for he was dumb. He knew nothing of the modulations of the human voice, he heard neither the singing of the birds nor the sweet melody of music, for he was deaf. And though he may have been of noble extraction, rich, honored and beloved, all this could not compensate for the inability to speak and hear, and he must have felt more miserable than the poorest beggar. What must have still further aggravated his misfortune was that he could never hope to be freed from it. A sick man

may console himself with the hope of recovery, but the deaf and dumb man could not; he carried within him the oppressive conviction that he was deaf and dumb, and would remain so through life.

(b.) Give thanks to God for the precious gifts of speech and hearing, and always make a good use of them. With regard to the *hearing*, use it for that which is necessary and salutary for you, hearing the word of God, and edifying discourses. Beware, on the other hand, of listening to sinful things, whisperings, detractions, calumnies, discourses against faith, and ridicule of religious things. If you do this, you sin as grievously as those who indulge in these unprofitable and wicked discourses. People who carry on conversations of this kind have the devil sitting on the tip of their tongue; but they who listen to such discourses with pleasure have him sitting in their ears. Shun, as much as possible, persons who are given to sinful conversation, and if sometimes you must hear them, show that you disapprove of them; contradict where it seems advisable, and prudently turn the conversation to other topics.

As regards the *tongue*, employ it for the honor of God and for that which is good and salutary for yourselves and your neighbor. Love to speak of God and heavenly things and of what is instructive and edifying to your neighbor; teach the ignorant, correct the erring, comfort the afflicted, counsel the doubtful. Carefully guard against the sins of the tongue, such as cursing, swearing, blasphemy, lies, perjury, whispering, detraction, calumny, slander, scoffing, raillery and impure words and songs. "The tongue, also, is indeed a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how small a fire what a great wood it kindleth; and the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity."—*James 3: 5-7*. "The half of all vices," says St. Gregory Nazianzen, may be charged to the account of the tongue." It would be better for many persons to have no tongue and to be dumb from their birth, for then they would be miserable only for this life, whereas owing to the sins of their tongue they plunge themselves into eternal damnation. Talk not inconsiderately, but bear in mind that you have to give an account of every idle word you speak.—*Matt. 12: 36*. "He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his soul; but he that hath no guard on his speech, shall meet with evils."—*Prov. 13: 3*.

PART II.

And taking him from the multitude apart, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened. Nobody doubts that Jesus could have healed the deaf

and dumb man by his mere word; but he wished to do so by various visible signs and actions, in order to give us salutary lessons.

1. *He took the deaf and dumb man apart from the multitude.* He thereby wished to teach us that all the good we do must be kept secret as far as possible. Hence he admonishes us when we give alms not to let the left hand know what the right does, that our alms may remain secret; and when we pray, we must go into our closet and shut the door, that we may pray in secret; and when we fast, we should wash and anoint ourselves, that is, conduct ourselves as people do who do not fast, that our fasting may not become public. In general he gives us the important lesson: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them, otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven."—*Matt. 6: 1*. But this much is necessary, that in all our exercises of virtue and in all our good works, no matter whether they be done in public or in private, we must not seek our own honor and the applause of men, but only the honor of God; that God is, as he ought to be, the first and principal cause of our works and actions. Many publish their good works before men, in order to receive honor and praise from them; consequently they lose the merit before God, and receive no reward from him, as they have already received it from the world. Bear in mind the three following rules:

(a.) Whatever good you do, do it as much as possible in secret.

(b.) Do not reveal the good you have done to any one without sufficient reason, but keep it secret and be satisfied that God knows it.

(c.) Do not do the good in public out of ambition and vanity, but on account of God, and for his honor.

2. *Jesus put his fingers into the ears of the deaf and dumb man.* This should be a lesson to us to shut our ears to the world. The maxims of the world are diametrically opposed to the doctrine of Jesus. He, for example, commands us to love poverty and calls the poor "blessed;" the world hunts after riches and calls the rich blessed. Christ requires us to be humble like little children; the world commends pride and haughtiness. Christ teaches us to forgive those who offend us and to love them; the world says: An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Christ preaches mortification, and self-denial; the world seeks pleasures and enjoyments and abhors every kind of mortification. Christ exhorts us to seek first the kingdom of God and his justice; the

world demands that we devote ourselves exclusively to temporal things. If, therefore, we wish to have part in Christ, in his grace and in his promises, we must follow him, and him alone, not the world. For this reason the Apostle says: "Be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God."—*Rom. 12: 2*.

3. *And spitting, he touched his tongue.* The spittle being a type of divine wisdom, we are taught by this act of Christ to aspire to heavenly wisdom. But true wisdom consists in this, that we acknowledge sin as the greatest, as the only evil, and that therefore we detest and shun it above all things; that we do not attach our heart to anything earthly, but that we look upon and use the goods of this world only as the means of obtaining our eternal end—that we feel as the Apostle, who says: "I count all things to be but loss, for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ."—*Phil. 3: 8*. The worldlings, indeed, hold this wisdom to be folly, and deride those who act according to it; but in the next world they will be convinced of their folly, and full of despair will exclaim: "These are they, whom we had sometime in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints."—*Wisd. 5: 3-5*. Do not imitate the children of the world, so that you may never be obliged to use this language of despair.

4. *And looking up to heaven, he groaned,* to teach us that every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of lights, and that we must pray with fervor, attention, devotion, perseverance and a contrite heart and mind, that God may receive our prayer and graciously answer it. Far be it from us to yield to proud thoughts on account of what we are or what we possess; on the contrary, let us give the glory to God and humble ourselves the more, in proportion as he has showered his benefits and graces upon us. When about to pray let us always recollect ourselves and direct our thoughts to God, so that we may pray devoutly.

5. *And he said to him: Ephpheta, which is: Be thou opened.* By these words Christ again manifests himself as the Almighty, as the Son of God, who, when he works miracles, does not, like the Prophets of the Old Testament, or like the Apostles, pray, but commands; who does not expel devils, heal sicknesses, and raise up the dead in the name of another, but in his own name. The

miracles of Jesus are an evident proof of his divinity, and consequently of the truth and divinity of his doctrine. If we should ever be assailed by doubts against faith, let us arm ourselves with the thought: Jesus has incontrovertibly proved by his miracles that he is truly God; but God is the eternal, infallible truth.

6. *And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.* The poor man was now delivered from his incurable evil; he was no longer deaf and dumb, but possessed the gift of hearing and of speech, wherefore the gospel also remarks, *and he spoke right.* In the natural sense we may say that the generality of us speak right, we do not stammer, we utter all the words completely; but the number of those is small who speak right in the spiritual sense, that is, who say only what is good, useful and pleasing to God. Among a thousand there is scarcely one who could say with truth that he has always spoken right. Endeavor at least henceforth to speak right and impose upon yourselves a voluntary penance as often as a wrong word escapes your lips.

7. By the actions which Christ united with the healing of the deaf and dumb man he wished to teach us that we should honor and reverence the ceremonies which the Church makes use of, especially at the sacrifice of the mass and in the administration of the sacraments. These ceremonies are venerable on account of their age, for many of them date back to the time of the Apostles; they are also venerable because they are ordained for the praise and honor of God, and at the same time serve as a means of representing to us the mysteries of our holy religion and its graces, of arresting our thoughts and of increasing the spirit of devotion.

PART III.

Let us now cast a glance at the people who were present at this miracle.

1. *Jesus charged them that they should tell no man.* He did this from humility, to teach us that we should not trumpet abroad our good works, but keep them secret. *But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it.* The people, indeed, did no wrong in acting contrary to the charge of Christ, because it cannot be considered as a strict command, but only as a wish which had its foundation in humility. To reveal the graces and benefits of God is always good and also corresponding to our destiny here below, because we must be always intent on the honor of

God and advance it on every occasion. Hence Raphael the archangel said to Tobias: "It is good to hide the secret of a king; but honorable to reveal and confess the works of God."—*Tob. 12: 7.* Gratitude even demands that we should reveal the corporal and spiritual benefits of God. He who keeps silent about the benefits of God and does not even consider it worth while to speak of them, is an ungrateful creature.

2. At the end of the gospel for this day we read that the people were astonished and said: *He hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.*

(a.) These words apply not only to this miracle but to everything else that Jesus has done; his whole life here on earth was spent in doing good, and therefore St. Peter says of him that he went about doing good.—*Acts 10: 38.* He still continues to do good, giving to all men the necessary graces for their salvation, *viz.*, his divine doctrine and his holy sacraments.

(b.) *He hath done all things well.* Whatever God does, is well done, and must necessarily be so because he is infinitely good—goodness itself. Hence we read in the history of the creation that everything that God created was good. Even things which appear to us as evils, such as epidemics, sicknesses, inundations, conflagrations, hail, and other accidents and misfortunes, are good, because he disposes of them for the good of men. How many sinners would never amend their lives, how many negligent persons would remain lukewarm, how many pious persons would become lukewarm and forget God, if they were never visited by tribulations and sufferings? How many virtues and good works would never be practised, if there were no crosses and afflictions? Let us then guard against impatience and despondency, and submit in every situation of life cheerfully and full of confidence to the guidance of God, endeavoring to lead a good, Christian life; then the tribulations which come upon us will become precious gems in our crown of glory hereafter.

(c.) The words: *He hath done all things well,* should remind us that we also should do all things well, do them in such a manner that they will please God and become meritorious to us for eternal life. If we look back upon our past life, we shall find many things of which we must say with shame that we did not do them well. Repent of what you have not done well and henceforth try to do better. That our exercises of virtue and our good works may be meritorious for heaven we must have God in our heart, in our mind, and before our eyes. We must have God in our heart, that is, we must live in a state of grace, for what-

ever is done in a state of sin has no value for eternity. We must have God in our mind, that is, we must do everything on account of God, because he wills it, for his honor, out of obedience and love of him, and for this end frequently make a good intention, especially in the morning. We must have God before our eyes, that is, we must whilst at work frequently raise our hearts to God and walk in his presence, for the thought, "God sees me," preserves us from levity and sin and urges us on to virtue. Hence God said to Abraham: "Walk before me, and be perfect."

PERORATION.

Study these lessons which the gospel of this day contains and make them the rule of your life. Be charitable towards the poor, needy and afflicted, like the people who brought the deaf and dumb man to Jesus, and help them as well as you can. Make a good use of your tongue, restrain it, and avoid all sinful words. Practice silence. If talking is silver, silence is gold. Do your good works in secret that God may reward you in public. Do not live according to the maxims of the world, but according to the principles of your holy faith, for he that serves the world cannot be a servant of God. Look upon everything you possess, natural and supernatural, as a gift of God and employ it for the glory of his name and for your own salvation. Do all your good works in a state of grace, with a pure intention and with zeal, that God may accept them and reward you with the everlasting happiness of heaven. Amen.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE EFFECTS OF SACRAMENTALS.

They bring to him one that was deaf and dumb; and they besought him to lay his hand upon him.—Mark 7: 32.

The principal object that Jesus Christ had in view when he came into the world was the Redemption of mankind from sin and eternal damnation, as he himself says: "The Son of Man is

come to seek and to save that which was lost."—*Luke 19: 10.* For this end he preached the gospel for three years, and after unspeakable sufferings died on the cross. But he was not indifferent to the temporal needs of men; he had a heart full of compassion for all the afflicted, and he even worked miracles for their sake. The gospel of this day again records that he cured by a manifest miracle a deaf and dumb man who was brought to him. Now what Jesus has done for the temporal and spiritual welfare of men, the holy Catholic Church continues to do in his name. She applies to men the fruits of Redemption by preaching to them his divine doctrine, by offering up for them the holy sacrifice and by administering to them the sacraments. But she is also solicitous for their temporal welfare, preserves and delivers them from many evils and obtains for them temporal goods of every sort. For this purpose she makes use of sacramentals, that is, of blessed things, as also of exorcisms and blessings. These sacramentals are by no means empty and meaningless rites, but they really produce the effects which the Church attaches to them, provided the conditions are fulfilled on which their efficacy depends. I will, then, speak to-day of the effects of the sacramentals, and answer the two following questions:

- I. *What do the sacramentals effect?*
- II. *On what conditions are they effectual?*

PART I.

1. By sacramentals we understand all those things which the Church blesses and consecrates for divine worship, and for our own pious use, such as holy water, oil, salt, bread, wine, palms, altars and chalices; also the exorcisms, blessings and consecrations and dedications used by the Church. They are called sacramentals because they resemble the sacraments, though they are essentially different from them. The difference between the sacraments and the sacramentals is very great, and is fourfold.

(a.) The sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ and operate by the efficacy which he gave them; the sacramentals, on the contrary, were instituted by the Church and produce their effects by the prayers and blessings of the Church.

(b.) The sacraments have an infallible effect, unless we put an obstacle in their way; but the effect of the sacramentals depends principally on the pious intention of the person who makes use of them.

(c.) The sacraments immediately effect inward sanctification, whereas the sacramentals, by imparting subordinate graces, only contribute towards it and protect us also from temporal evils.

(d.) The sacraments are, in general, necessary, and commanded by God; but the sacramentals are only recommended by the Church as useful and wholesome.

2. *The sacramentals deliver and protect our person and goods from the injurious influences of Satan.*

(a.) That the devil can injure men, and even take possession of them, the possessed prove, of whom the Sacred Scriptures frequently speak. Thus St. Mark (5: 1-13) speaks of a man who came out of the tombs with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling in the tombs, and no man could bind him, not even with chains. For having often been bound with fetters and chains, he had burst the chains, and broken the fetters in pieces, and no man could tame him. And he was always day and night in the tombs, and in the mountains, crying, and cutting himself with stones. In like manner the Evangelists Matthew (12) and Luke (9) speak of possessed persons, whom the devil had made deaf and dumb. The Fathers of the Church unanimously teach that the devil can take possession of the body of man, and they were wont to prove the divinity of the Christian religion, as contrasted with the worthlessness of Paganism, from the fact that the Christians, not the Gentiles, have power to expel devils. There are very few possessed by the devil among Christians, for in the Sacrament of Baptism they are withdrawn from his power, and they do not fall back into it again in such a manner that he can take personal possession of their body, unless God for special reasons permits it. Instances of possessed persons are far more frequent among pagan nations, and the missionary annals relate that the pagans frequently have recourse to the Catholic missionaries and seek help from them against the evil spirits. Christ gave his Church the power to expel evil spirits. "He gave them power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils."—*Mark 3: 15*. The Church has always made use of this power. The means she employs for the casting out of evil spirits are the sacramentals, such as the invocation of the name of Jesus, the sign of the cross, holy water, and in some cases exorcisms.

(b.) The devil can also take possession of the property of man and can injure it in many ways. Witness Job, who had been blessed by God with temporal goods, but whom the devil robbed of all his substance and reduced to the greatest po-

verty. Sometimes the devil employs bad people to injure us in our person or our goods, viz., when impious people enter into a compact with the devil by invoking him, or by employing various superstitious practices, the devil frequently gives them his power so that they may be able to inflict various evils on us. Against these evils, whether they proceed mediately or immediately from the evil spirit, there is no more powerful remedy than the sacramentals. Such evils are often removed by the application of holy water, or the sign of the cross, or by some other sacramental; in other cases, when these sacramentals prove insufficient, the exorcism pronounced by the priest often affords the desired relief, especially if it is frequently repeated in strict accordance with the forms of the Church.

(c.) The sacramentals protect us from diabolical attacks. Therefore the Church blesses newly-built houses, stables, barns, ships and other things, so that the devil may be kept away from these places and may not exercise an injurious influence upon them. For this same reason the Church wishes you to sprinkle yourselves often with holy water, especially in the morning and evening, and make the sign of the cross, for the holy water and the sign of the cross are sacramentals, and therefore remedies against all the injuries of the devil.

3. *They avert from us evils due to natural causes.*

(a.) They are remedies against all *sicknesses, weaknesses and frailties of the body*, and are sure to afford relief if it is beneficial for the soul. St. Ephrem says: "Why do you seek aid from physicians when you are sick, and not from Christ, as if he were not also the physician of your body?" Moreover, the sacramentals are powerful remedies against epidemics, storms, drouth and inundations, as also against various evils, but always on condition that the removal of such evils brings no injury to our salvation. History records a multitude of instances. St. Martin extinguished a terrible conflagration with the sign of the cross; St. Benedict blessed a chalice that contained poisoned wine with the sign of the cross, and it immediately fell to pieces; St. Nicetas, bishop of Treves, stilled a violent storm at sea by the sign of the cross.

(b.) The sacramentals remove spiritual evils; they banish inquietude of the mind, sadness, fear and anguish; they weaken the passions and prove themselves effectual in all temptations. They have great power, especially in temptations which overwhelm man against his will and vehemently allure and entice him to blasphemy, unbelief, despair, impurity, and other vices

which he most heartily detests. They assist us not only in overcoming these temptations more easily, but they also cause them sometimes to cease altogether.

3. *They procure for us various natural and supernatural goods.*

(a.) *Natural goods* are health, prosperity, success in business, favorable weather, plentiful harvest. There is no doubt that the sacramentals produce these salutary effects; for what the Church blesses or consecrates she delivers from the curse which in consequence of sin has come upon the whole creation, snatching it from the dominion of Satan and restoring it to the state of integrity and goodness in which it came forth from the hand of God. This is also the reason why the Church blesses not only various eatables, that they may become wholesome, but also pronounces blessings on meadows and fields, on gardens and vineyards, that rain and sunshine and the dew of heaven may impart fertility to them.

(b.) The sacramentals obtain for us also *supernatural goods*. It is true they do not give us supernatural grace, but they have the virtue of obtaining for the sinner the grace of repentance and conversion. If pious individuals and saints have obtained by their fervent prayer for great sinners the grace of repentance, why should not the sacramentals effect the same, since they owe their virtue to the prayer of the Church? Or has the prayer of the whole Church militant on earth and of the Church triumphant in heaven, which is found deposited in the sacramentals, less virtue than the prayer of individual saints? *Some sacramentals effect even the remission of venial sins and of their temporal punishments*, as St. Thomas of Aquin plainly teaches us in these words: "No sacrament of the New Testament is especially instituted against venial sin, which is taken away by some sacramentals, such as holy water and other things."

These are the principal effects of the sacramentals. Now we come to the question: *On what conditions may we expect these beneficial effects of the sacramentals?*

PART II.

It is certain that intercessory prayer is frequently of use to him who knows nothing about it and in no way co-operates with it. Now as the sacramentals have their virtue from the prayer of the Church, which is incomparably more effectual than the prayer of individuals, it is evident that they can be of service to those who do nothing on their part to entitle them to participate in their wholesome effects. Thus the annals of the Confraternity of

the Sacred Heart of Mary contain many examples of the most obdurate sinners who, by receiving a medal of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and being prayed for, obtained the grace of conversion. Such examples, however, are exceptions; the rule is that the sacramentals operate only in those who comply with certain conditions. He who wishes to partake of the salutary effects of the sacramentals must—

1. *Have a firm faith and great confidence.* Firm faith is necessary because the sacramentals produce an effect in the same manner as prayer. Now we know that God hears only the prayer that is said with faith and confidence. Thus Jesus said to his disciples: "Amen, I say to you, if you shall have faith, and stagger not, not only this of the fig-tree shall you do, but also, if you shall say to this mountain: Take up, and cast thyself into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."—*Matt. 21: 21, 22.* Our Lord required faith and confidence in all who asked his help. And whenever he bestowed a benefit upon any one, he as frequently said: "Thy faith hath made thee whole." When his disciples complained that they could not cast out devils, he insinuated to them that their unbelief was the cause. A firm faith is absolutely necessary for the effect of the sacramentals, for "he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."—*James 1: 6-8.* As often as in your necessities you have recourse to a sacramental, make an act of faith in the firm conviction that God most certainly will hear you, if otherwise the object of your prayer is good and wholesome for you.

2. *Make use of them with a good intention.* The sacramentals are designed principally to procure for us temporal goods. Now you must not desire these temporal goods on account of themselves, but only in so far as they are calculated to promote the honor of God. In the use of the sacramentals, therefore, you must always have the honor of God and your own salvation before your eyes as the first and principal end, for if you turn your eyes from this and solely desire temporal goods, it would be an abuse of holy things. St. Augustine remarks: "Although it is a great consolation to become well through the instrumentality of pious people and holy means, yet these benefits are not always imparted to those who pray for them, because temporal goods should be sought rather on account of life everlasting, where there are no evils."

3. *Be resigned to the will of God.* The sacramentals, as we have seen, have the virtue of removing temporal evils and of obtain

ing temporal benefits. But whether the removing of a temporal evil or the imparting of a temporal good in a given case is useful or not, is known only to God. God's thoughts are not always our thoughts; he often places us in a position which, because it is a difficult one, by no means pleases us. It often happens that a person uses a sacramental in order to be freed from a sickness or some other evil, but God knows that if he gave him health and took his cross from him, he would plunge into sin and finally be lost. Now, ought God to permit that sacramental to be effectual? Would it not be cruel to the person? And what means and opportunities would many have of atoning for the temporal punishment due to their sins and of acquiring merit for heaven, if God delivered them from all their difficulties and sufferings? Make use of the sacramentals, therefore, with confidence, but leave it to God whether he will make them effectual in your case or not, and say with Jesus: "Father, not my will, but thine be done."

4. *Make use of them with a pure or at least with a repentant heart.* The Israelites in the days of the high-priest Heli were defeated by the Philistines and lost four thousand men. They caused the Ark of the Covenant to be brought into the camp and then thought themselves invincible. But how they deceived themselves! In the second battle they suffered a greater defeat; thirty thousand covered the battle field, and the Ark itself fell into the hands of the Philistines.—*I. Kings 4.* Why were the Israelites so unfortunate, notwithstanding that they had the Ark in their midst? For no other reason than because they had sinned and impenitently persevered in sin. God showed them no favour till they were truly penitent. What the Ark was to the Israelites, the sacramentals are to you; they bring you no aid unless you free yourselves from your sins and amend your lives.

PERORATION.

I have now, I hope, satisfactorily answered the two questions: What do the sacramentals effect? and on what conditions do they produce these effects? The sacramentals are far inferior to the sacraments in dignity, but they are nevertheless a rich fountain of graces, for they protect us from the attacks and injuries of the evil spirit and deliver us from them, avert many evils and obtain for us many natural and supernatural graces. Respect and honor the sacramentals, make use of them with faith and confidence and with resignation to the will of God, and with a pure, or, at least, penitent heart. If you do this you may confidently hope to become partakers of all the graces and blessings with which their right use is associated. Amen.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.—EXPLANATION OF THE SECOND PRINCIPAL PART, THE CONSECRATION.

And taking him from the multitude apart he put his fingers into his ears; and spitting, he touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is: Be thou opened.—Mark 7: 33, 34.

Our divine Saviour cured, as the gospel of this day informs us, a deaf and dumb man, by the performance of various external actions: *taking him apart from the multitude he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting he touched his tongue, and looking up to heaven, he groaned and said to him: Ephpheta, which is: Be thou opened.*

After the example of Christ, the Church also makes use of various ceremonies, partly to represent to us the graces which are to be communicated to us, partly to awaken in us feelings of veneration and devotion, and to render our heart susceptible of the proffered graces. Such ceremonies are employed in all the functions of the church, especially at holy mass, as we have heard in the last two discourses on the celebration of that holy sacrifice. I will continue these discourses to-day, and explain to you the second principal part of the mass, viz., the Consecration.

- I. *The prayers before the Consecration,*
- II. *The Consecration itself,*
- III. *The prayers after the Consecration.*

PART I.

The prayers and ceremonies from the *Sanctus* to the *Pater noster* are called the canon, that is, standard, firmly established rule. They are called so because they serve as a rule firmly established, from which no priest is allowed to deviate. They are the same in all masses throughout the year, with slight exceptions, whilst the prayers and lessons which occur outside the canon are subject to many alterations according to the various seasons and feasts. The canon is of very ancient date, and Gregory I. (590-605) was the last Pope who enriched it with a

slight addition. It has, therefore, remained unchanged for more than twelve hundred years.

Let us now consider the *five prayers which precede the Consecration*.

1. The *first prayer* is a continuation of the Preface and the Sanctus, and the priest prays in it that by the holy sacrifice he may impart to us principally that which is necessary and expedient for the welfare of the whole Catholic Church—namely, peace, unity, holiness and truth, the preservation of the Pope as the centre of Catholic unity, the protection of the bishop, and lastly, protection and grace for all bishops and priests.

At the beginning of this prayer the priest lifts up his eyes and hands to heaven, in order to manifest the feelings of devotion and confidence which animate him, but he at once casts down his eyes, joins his hands, and inclines his head, to intimate that he humbles himself before God. Then he kisses the altar, by which Christ is represented, in order to indicate his reverence and love and to implore him to receive his and the people's prayer favorably. Then he stands erect and prays with extended arms, thereby imitating Moses on the mountain and Christ on the cross who prayed in this manner. The priest makes the sign of the cross three times over the bread and wine, to signify that the holy sacrifice is offered up in honor of the Most Blessed Trinity. During the prayer you must unite your intention with that of the priest and ask for what he asks.

2. In the *second prayer*, which now follows, the priest remembers particularly those for whom he offers the sacrifice, and all that assist at it. At the words: *Be mindful, O Lord, of thy servants, men and women, N. and N.*, he pauses a few moments and prays for those for whom he offers up the sacrifice, and asks God to grant their wishes and prayers; he also remembers all that are present and all those for whom he interests himself particularly, beseeching God to give them everything that is necessary and salutary to them. He likewise implores God's grace for himself, that he may faithfully fulfil the duties of his state, fight a good fight and obtain the crown of justice. Do what the priest does; offer up the mass for yourself and for those who are near and dear to you.

3. Now comes the *third prayer*, in which the priest addresses himself to the triumphant Church, the saints in heaven, honors their memory, and recommends himself and all orthodox Christians to their intercession, in order the more certainly to be heard before the throne of God. Among the saints who are called by name, Mary, the Queen of saints and the mother of him who

offers himself, occupies the first place. Then follow the twelve Apostles, because they were witnesses of the holy sacrifice, confirmed it by their preaching, and glorified it by their life and martyrdom. To these are added twelve martyrs, because they imitated the sacrifice of Christ by the effusion of their blood. Among millions of martyrs, only twelve were chosen, this number corresponding to that of the twelve Apostles. The twelve Apostles and twelve martyrs give a total of twenty-four. This number represents the complement of the saints, of whom St. John writes: "And round about the throne were four-and-twenty seats, and upon the seats four-and-twenty ancients sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads."

4. In the *fourth prayer*, in which the priest beseeches God graciously to accept the oblation of our service, to dispose our days in peace, to preserve us from eternal damnation and to rank us in the number of his elect, he spreads his hand over the oblation, to indicate that Christ is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.—Beseech the divine Saviour that he may take away your sins and give you temporal and eternal peace.

5. Now the priest says the *fifth and last prayer*, which unites all the preceding prayers, and is the proximate preparation for the mystery of the Consecration, which is now about to take place. During this prayer the priest makes the sign of the cross five times, three times over the bread and wine, conjointly, then once over the bread separately, and once over the wine separately. These five signs of the cross point to the graces which Christ has merited for us by his death on the cross and which he applies to us by the sacrifice of the mass. You may call to mind the five marks of his wounds, with which Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, in order to present them continually before the eyes of his heavenly Father, that on account of them he may be gracious and merciful to us.

PART II.

The Consecration now follows. In the Consecration the greatest of all miracles is accomplished. Jesus Christ descends from heaven and offers himself anew under the appearance of bread and wine in an unbloody manner, as he offered himself eighteen hundred years ago upon Mount Calvary in a bloody manner. The clerk calls attention to this most holy action by ringing a little bell. All present fall on their knees in expectation of the miracle that is to be accomplished.

1. The celebrating priest up to this time acted as the agent or representative of the congregation; in their name he prayed and performed the ceremonies; now he is the representative of Jesus Christ; in his person he speaks and acts; now is repeated what Jesus did at the last supper when he changed bread and wine into his sacred Body and Blood. The only difference is that Jesus Christ no longer performs it in his own person, but through the instrumentality of the priest. The priest only repeats in an historical form what Jesus did at the institution of the holy sacrifice, and says first over the bread, and then over the wine the words of Consecration.

(a.) He takes the host into his hands and says in connection with the preceding prayer: *Who, the day before he suffered, took bread into his holy and venerable hands, and with his eyes lifted up towards heaven to thee, O God, his almighty Father, giving thanks to thee, he blessed, broke and gave to his disciples, saying: Take, and eat you all of this, FOR THIS IS MY BODY.*

Now the wonderful mystery is accomplished. It is no longer bread that the priest holds in his hands, but the body of Christ, it is Jesus Christ himself, this most blessed, divine Victim, in whose name every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Therefore the priest genuflects, touching the floor with his knee, and then lifts up the sacred host for adoration, the whole congregation being on their knees adoring Jesus Christ, the divine Victim.

(b.) The priest now, after another genuflection, lays the body of our Lord upon the corporal, uncovers the chalice, makes the sign of the cross over it, and says over it: *In like manner, after he had supped, taking also this excellent chalice into his holy and venerable hands, and giving thee thanks, he blessed, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, and drink ye all of it.* Now he speaks the words of Consecration, which run: **FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT; THE MYSTERY OF FAITH; WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY UNTO THEIR EMISSION OF SINS. As often as you do these things, you shall do them in remembrance of me.**

Here the same miracle is repeated as at the Consecration of the bread; the wine in the chalice is changed into the precious blood of Christ. Therefore the priest again bends his knee and holds up the chalice for adoration, and all the faithful upon their knees adore their Saviour Jesus Christ really present, who in his infinite and ineffable love has immolated himself and shed his precious blood for us.

2. The elevation and the adoration of the sacred species did not always take place as now. Formerly the priest lifted up the

chalice, together with the host, before the *Pater noster*, and said: *All honor and glory for ever and ever.* The elevation, as it is now performed, dates back to the twelfth century. The heresy of Berengarius of Tours, who denied the Real Presence of Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine, gave occasion for this. In order to keep the belief in the Presence of Christ alive against this heresy, the Church ordained that the sacred species should be elevated for adoration immediately after the Consecration, and the faithful be notified of this adorable mystery by ringing a little bell.

Conduct yourselves at the Consecration as becomes Catholics. Above all excite a lively faith in the presence of Jesus, adore him with profound veneration, repent of your sins, ask him for mercy and pardon, and present to him with confidence all your necessities; he is ready to listen to your petitions and to grant you everything that is good and wholesome for you.

PART III.

The sacrifice is now accomplished; the fruits are now to be distributed. *Three prayers are to be said in which God receives the homage due to him; then three other prayers, by which the fruits of the holy sacrifice are applied to creatures.*

1. The first three prayers.

(a.) The *first prayer*, which follows the words: *As often as you do these things, you shall do them in commemoration of me*, has this meaning: Jesus commanded us at the celebration of this holy sacrifice to remember him, we now do so and call to mind his Passion and Death, his Resurrection and Ascension, and offer our heavenly Father homage worthy of his infinite majesty, viz., his beloved Son whom he has given us for our salvation. During this prayer the priest makes the sign of the cross five times over the body and blood of Christ. All these signs of the cross after the Consecration are designed to imprint the truth upon our minds, that the sacrifice on the altar is one and the same with the sacrifice on the cross.

(b.) In the *second prayer* the priest beseeches God graciously to look down upon the sacrifice and to accept it favorably, as he received the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech. The petition for a gracious acceptance of the holy sacrifice does not refer to Jesus Christ, the victim, for this is infinitely acceptable to God the Father as the sacrifice of his Son, but to us who offer the sacrifice and who are poor, sinful men. The priest mentions in the prayer the three sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, and Melchise-

dech, because they were special types of the sacrifice of Jesus. The sacrifice of Abel was a type of the sacrifice which Jesus began when he came into the world: the sacrifice of Abraham was a type of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, and the sacrifice of Melchisedech a type of the sacrifice of the mass. That God may accept favorably the sacrifice of the mass from us, we must assist at it with the simplicity and humility of Abel, with the faith and obedience of Abraham, and with the love and gratitude of Melchisedech.

(c.) The *third prayer* stands in intimate connection with the second. Convinced of our unworthiness, we fear that God may not favorably receive our offering and prayer; therefore we humble ourselves before him, the priest saying this prayer with a profound inclination, and beseeching him that he would vouchsafe to command our offering and prayer to be borne by his angels before his throne, that they may be acceptable to him and profitable to us. For the angels are perfectly pure and holy; if through their hands our sacrifice and prayer come before God, he will certainly be pleased with them.

2. The other three prayers.

(a.) In the *first prayer* the priest remembers all the faithful departed, and beseeches God out of regard to the sacrifice of his beloved Son to mitigate and shorten their sufferings in purgatory and to receive them into the mansions of everlasting peace. At this juncture the priest silently makes particular mention of such of the dead as are to be prayed for, and beseeches God to apply the fruits of the mass to them and to all the souls in purgatory.

(b.) In the *second prayer* the priest directs his thoughts to the living and offers for them also the holy sacrifice of the mass, beseeching God to have mercy on them and to admit them to the society of the blessed. The saints who are mentioned in this prayer are men and women, belonging to different states of life, living at different times and in different places. The Church thereby gives us to understand that we can work out our salvation, no matter what may be our state, age, sex, the time or place.

3. In the *third prayer* the priest pronounces the blessing of the Redemption upon the irrational creatures, for they also in consequence of sin are subject to its curse, and sigh for the day of their redemption.—*Rom. 8: 20, et seq.* At the end of this prayer the priest whilst holding the host over the chalice slightly elevates them. This reminds us of the early ages of the Church,

when the elevation, as already remarked, was not made immediately after the Consecration, but only before the *Pater noster*. With this prayer the second principal part, the Consecration, is completed.

PERORATION.

From the Consecration till the Communion Jesus Christ is really present and offers himself anew to his heavenly father, as he offered himself on the cross; hence you must conduct yourselves as if you stood on Calvary under the cross with the pious worshippers of Christ. Banish all earthly thoughts and think of nothing but of your Lord and Saviour, who is present on the altar as victim. Adore him with the most profound veneration, thank him for the unspeakable love with which he daily offers himself up for you, and beseech God for the sake of that sacrifice to be gracious and merciful to you, and after this life to admit you into the society of the elect in heaven. Amen.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE TONGUE ITSELF TEACHES US THAT WE SHOULD SPEAK RIGHT.

He spoke right.—Mark 7: 35.

The gospel of this day remarks of the deaf and dumb man, that after being healed by a miracle he spoke right. Oh, that this also might be said of us! that we also might speak right, that is, in such a manner as redounds to the honor of God, and to our own and our neighbor's good! But who can recount all the sins that are committed by the tongue! And how great will be the number of people who will be eternally lost on account of the sins of the tongue! St. Chrysostom says: "There is no member of the body by which the devil can deceive us so frequently and so easily as by an unbridled tongue and an unguarded mouth." How easily we can sin by the tongue is intimated in these words: "Many have fallen by the edge of the sword; but not so many as have perished by their own tongue."—*Eccclus. 28: 22.* If our conscience reproaches us with having frequently sinned by the tongue, let us now at least resolve most carefully to shun these sins henceforward and, like the deaf and dumb

man, strive to speak right. The tongue itself, as we shall consider to-day, teaches us this—

- I. *By its nature;*
- II. *By its position.*

PART I.

1. We have only *one* tongue. Man has two eyes, two ears, two hands, two feet, but only one tongue. Why? St. Basil replying to this question, says: "God would thereby teach us how sparingly we should use the tongue; we must speak no more than is necessary, for by seeing, hearing and touching, one cannot sin so easily as by speaking something scandalous and indecent." How truly he spoke.

(a.) The *Sacred Scriptures* teach us: "The tongue of a third person (the evil tongue that sows discord) hath disquieted many and scattered them from nation to nation. It hath destroyed the strong cities of the rich, and hath overthrown the houses of great men. It hath cut in pieces the forces of people, and undone strong nations. . . . The stroke of a whip maketh a blue mark, but the stroke of the tongue will break the bones."—*Ecclus.* 28: 16, *et seq.* In the Book of Proverbs we read (16: 27, 28): "The wicked man diggeth evil, and in his lips is a burning fire. A perverse man stirreth up quarrels; and one full of words separateth princes." And St. James says (3: 5, *et seq.*): "The tongue also is indeed a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how small a fire what a great wood it kindleth. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is placed among our members, which defileth the whole body . . . being set on fire by hell."

(b.) *History teaches us.* The devil tempted Eve to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, telling her that she and Adam would not die, but would become as gods. Eve believed the falsehood and ate. What dreadful consequences did this draw after it? Our progenitors and all their descendants lost the earthly paradise, the grace and friendship of God and the right and title to heaven; they became subject to countless tribulations, sufferings and afflictions, and finally to death, and the majority of people are lost forever. What mischief came from this one sin of the tongue, from *one lie!* Think of the heretics who attack the Catholic Church and teach various errors; how many millions of souls are seduced into irreligion and unbelief and plunged into eternal perdition! You know from history that at the end of the last century the Christian religion, and even the belief in the

existence of God, was abolished throughout France, and Paganism with its excesses and vices proclaimed; that the blood of the loyal, faithful Catholics flowed in streams, and that even the royal family ended their lives by the guillotine. Whence these and many other scenes of terror? From the lies and calumnies which Voltaire and his minions circulated against the Christian religion, by which they seduced the people to infidelity.

(c.) *Experience teaches the same.* Does not a single word often cause estrangements, bitter feelings, enmities, lawsuits, even riots and murders to arise among men? Does not a single word sometimes rob a man of his honor and good name and bring upon him persecution, injury and punishment? Is not a single scandalous, impious discourse the reason why many a one loses all faith and the fear of God and gives himself up to infidelity and vice? Certainly the wicked can do more mischief with their tongues than all the other evils of the world. And, moreover, what is more difficult than to repair the injury which one has caused with one's tongue? The thief, the cheat, can easily restore ill-gotten goods, but how can the malicious slanderer or detractor or whisperer repair the thousand evils and sins which he has caused by his tongue?

2. *The tongue has two principal veins, one of which goes to the head, the other to the heart.* What are we to learn from this?

(a.) The head is the seat of reason, at least it ought to be. On this account we say: "He has a clear head." The vein of the tongue which goes to the head is an exhortation to us to speak *rationally*. If the beasts possessed the gift of speech we could not blame them for speaking foolish and irrational things, for they have no reason; but men are to be blamed when, having reason, they talk *irrationally*. There are many, however, who talk without sense and reason. To this class belong the drunkards. What foolish things they say! Even children laugh at their nonsense. They do not reflect, but say everything that comes to their tongue; hence it happens that they utter a great many foolish and irrational things. All irrational discourses are unworthy of man, contrary to the will of God, and therefore sinful. Shun them, and put a stop to anything that causes them.

(b.) The vein which goes to the heart teaches us that we should never say anything we do not mean in our heart. In our speech we must detest nothing so much as falsehood, dissimulation and lies. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord."—*Prov.* 12: 22. And again: "The mouth that believeth killeth the soul."—*Wisd.* 1: 11. How much God hates and punishes falsehood and lies, we

see in Giezi (*IV. Kings* 5: 27); and in Ananias and Saphira.—*Acts* 5: 1-10.

3. *The tongue is warm.* Ice put upon the tongue will melt and soon become water; every cold object that is laid upon the tongue becomes warm, for heat produces heat. What does the warm tongue teach us? It teaches us that our discourses should be warmed by the love of God and our neighbor.

(a.) *By the love of God.* All our actions should tend to the love of God; that is, what we do must be done because God wills it, and in order to show him our reverence, love and gratitude. When we pray, let us not do so from mere habit and in obedience to our superiors, but for the love of God. When we give others good lessons or correct their faults, let us not do so from vanity or anger, but for the love of God. When we entertain ourselves in conversation with others, let us not do so for the sake of pleasure, but on account of God for the love of him. He who speaks out of love for God gains a threefold advantage; he preserves his tongue from evil talk, for how could he lie, slander, detract and have the thought: "O God, I do this for the love of thee." Again, all his words are meritorious and deserving of a reward hereafter, because God will reward us even if we give, for his sake, a little water to a thirsty man. Finally he warms the hearts of others and enkindles in them the love of God. Thus the risen Saviour on the way to Emmaus inflamed the hearts of the two disciples by his discourses, so that they said one to the other: "Was not our heart burning within us whilst he spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?"—*Luke* 24: 32.

(b.) *By the love of our neighbor.* Our fraternal love must manifest itself in our actions, and in our words. If our words come from a heart inflamed with the love of our neighbor, we shall never utter one that might grieve, offend or injure him. We should revile and slander no one; even the erring we should not chide or treat harshly, but leniently. If we truly love our neighbor, we should take care not to scandalize him, but to edify him by pious conversation.

4. Finally the tongue is *soft and flexible*, an exhortation to us that in all our discourses we should observe *meekness and a yielding temper*. We read in the Book of Proverbs: "A mild answer breaketh wrath; but a harsh word stirreth up fury."—15: 1. St. Macarius used to say: "An unkind word may make even good people angry, but a kind word corrects and amends even the ill-disposed." Be meek in your remarks to inferiors and others

when they make a mistake. By meek conduct you win the hearts of men and lead them into the right path.

PART II.

A few words on the position of the tongue.

1. The tongue is in the *upper part of the body*. This is an exhortation to us to speak more with God than with man, more of heavenly than of earthly things.

(a.) We being Christians must *love God above all things*, for the love of God is the greatest and the first commandment. We like to converse with friends and people that we love; we often make long journeys to meet them and entertain ourselves with them for a few hours or days. Why should we not like to speak with God whom we love? But prayer being nothing else than a conversation with God, it ought to be our favorite occupation. Pious people, and those who love God, are always fond of prayer. The Abbot John found an old man in the Thebais lost in contemplation and kneeling on a board. When he had risen, the Abbot saw that the board was hollowed out and covered with blood from his constant kneeling. St. Louis Bertrand, when a boy, found his greatest pleasure in prayer. His parents frequently knew not where he was; they found him praying in a corner of the house. When St. Martin, bishop of Tours, was in his death agony, it was noticed that he moved his lips in prayer. He did not cease to pray until death had closed his lips. When I see Catholics to whom prayer is a burden, who neglect family devotions, and neglect to go to church, who ridicule prayer and make merry over people who love to pray, am I wrong in thinking that they do not love God? Oh, that these persons would consider the words of the Apostle: "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha."—*I. Cor.* 16: 22.

(b.) *All our thoughts and desires should be directed to eternal things.* St. Paul exhorts us to this in these words: "Seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth."—*Col.* 3: 1, 2. Now every man likes to speak of what he loves and desires, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. As worldlings generally love to speak of money and property, enjoyments and pleasures, so pious people, solicitous for their spiritual welfare, find pleasure in speaking of God and divine things. St. Benedict once a year visited his sister, St. Scholastica, and both then conversed only on heavenly things. When they visited each other the last time,

they passed the whole night in sweet conversation about God and his holy service.

2. *The tongue being below the eyes is a lesson to us—*

(a.) *Not to speak about anything that we have not seen ourselves,* or, in other words, not to pass off for certain and firmly insist upon anything of which we have not full certainty. From hearsay to lying there is but one step. He who carelessly spreads evil, slanderous reports, exposes himself to the danger not only of offending against Christian charity, but also against truth. Bear in mind these two rules: Do not believe every rumor you hear, but suspend your judgment until you have found out the truth: secondly, speak of the faults of others only when they are beyond doubt and known, and when you can prevent evil or do some good.

(b.) *To be careful not to give scandal by our discourses.* Who can recount the scandals which are given by cursing and blaspheming, by immodest discourses and songs, by ridiculing religion and the Church. How often are jests, which you perhaps deem innocent, the occasion of great temptations and sins to others! What mischief one inconsiderate word may cause we see in Henry II., king of England. When wicked people in his presence calumniated the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas à Becket, and represented him as his enemy, he became excited and said: "Is there no one among those who eat my bread who will deliver me from this turbulent priest?" Thinking they would do a service to the king, four knights left the court and murdered the archbishop. The king heard of it with consternation, for he had not desired his death, but he could not undo what was done, no matter how much he grieved or how severe his penance. Guard against nothing so much as imprudence and levity in speaking, that you may utter nothing that would scandalize your fellowmen, and force you to take upon yourself a great responsibility.

(c.) *To look first to our own faults and amend them before we censure others,* as Christ says: "Cast first the beam out of thy own eye and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye."—*Luke 6: 42.* When a certain Abbot found out that his disciples spoke ill of him, he went away, but soon returned with a sack slung over his shoulder. The part hanging at the back contained a great deal of sand, but the part in front only a handful of it. Being asked the meaning, he said: "The sand in the part of the sack hanging behind me represents my sins which I carry on my back in order that I may not see them. The sand in front represents the faults of other people,

which I always see and trumpet forth everywhere. But it should not be so; I should turn the sack round and have my sins always before my eyes and bewail them before God, that I may obtain pardon." The disciples took the hint, and in future took care not to speak ill of others. Go and do likewise.

3. *The tongue is behind the lips and the teeth,* as a reminder that we should carefully guard it.

(a.) St. Basil says: "God has given no cover to our ears; to the eyes he has given only a light protection in the eyelids, but he has surrounded the tongue by a double entrenchment of the lips and of the teeth, that we may recognize our duty of carefully watching and guarding it." St. James says: "Every nature of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of the rest, is tamed, and hath been tamed by the nature of man, but the tongue no man can tame; an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison."—3: 7, 8. According to St. James the tongue is worse than the savage beast, for this can be tamed, but not the tongue, which allures all men more or less to sin.

(b.) In order to guard ourselves against the sins of the tongue, it is necessary to love silence and avoid all unnecessary words. St. Thomas of Aquin observed silence so strictly that by his schoolmates he was called the dumb ox. But his teacher knew how to appreciate this great faculty, when he said: "This ox will yet fill the whole world with his bellowing." St. Agatho kept a stone in his mouth for three years, in order to exercise himself in silence. St. Ephrem so carefully avoided all useless and unnecessary words that on his death-bed he could make the consoling confession: "A foolish or bad word never crossed my lips: I have never in all my life spoken ill of any one, and never have I quarrelled with any man."

PERORATION.

Let us imitate these saints and pay attention to the warning of St. James: "Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak."—1: 19. He who talks much and inconsiderately commits many, and, perhaps, great faults which will be a thorn in his pillow in his dying hour and will increase the terrors of his account before the judgment-seat of God. Much talking hinders progress in the way of virtue. Talkative people are not truly pious, and never will be. Virtue and piety blossom only in silence and solitude. We read in the Book of Proverbs (10: 19): "In the multitude of words there shall not want sin; but he that refraineth his lips is

most wise." Let us therefore be prudent, circumspect and sparing in our words, and never forget the words of our Lord: "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment."—*Matt. 12: 36.* Amen.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

THE PORTIUNCULA INDULGENCE.

He hath done all things well.—Mark 7: 37.

In the gospel of this day we see a very wretched man before Christ, one who is both deaf and dumb. Our Lord has compassion on him; opens his ears, and loosens the string of his tongue, so that he hears and speaks like any other man. Thereupon the people praise Jesus, saying: *He hath done all things well.* The people were right, Jesus did all things well; he went about doing good, he fed the hungry, healed the sick and raised the dead to life. But all these benefits cannot be compared with the graces which he conferred on men for the salvation of their souls. To save immortal souls and to gain them for heaven was the end that he ever pursued without ceasing, for this end he preached his gospel for three years, worked miracles without number, established his Church, deposited in her all the means of grace and offered himself up on the cross.

To purify and sanctify men is even now his work, sitting in heaven at the right hand of God, wherefore St. John calls him our advocate with the Father.—*I. John 2: 1.* This Sunday in particular is a day on which Jesus reveals his love and mercy towards us, for we are celebrating Portiuncula Sunday, on which we can gain a great indulgence and perfectly reconcile ourselves with God. I will therefore give you a short instruction—

- I. On the origin of this indulgence;
- II. On its advantages over other indulgences.

PART I.

1. The Portiuncula indulgence, which we can gain every year on the first Sunday of August, we owe to the prayer of St. Francis

of Assisi. In the year 513 four hermits who had visited the holy places in Palestine, came to Italy and settled down in Spoleto, in the vicinity of Assisium. There they built a little chapel, which afterwards came into the possession of the Benedictines, and had various names, of which the most common was *the Portiuncula church.* The Benedictines held possession of it up to the thirteenth century. About that time there lived in Assisi a very pious and holy man, named Francis. In the year 1210 he founded a new Order, the Order of the Friars Minor, at present known throughout the whole world under the name of the Franciscan Order. As this saint esteemed poverty and lowliness above all, he greatly loved the poor little Portiuncula church and besought the Benedictine Abbot to let him and the brothers of his order have the little church for their use, which request the Abbot cheerfully granted. From that date the little Portiuncula church, which in course of time was enlarged and beautified, has remained in the possession of the Franciscans.

It was in this little church that St. Francis implored of God the Portiuncula indulgence. One day (it was in October, 1221) while he was bitterly weeping in his cell over poor, unfortunate sinners, an angel suddenly appeared and told him that the Son of God in company with his Virgin Mother and a host of angels had visibly descended into the Portiuncula church and would permit him to appear before his throne of grace. Without delay the saint repaired to the little church and found there all as the angel had told him. Full of holy awe he threw himself upon his face and adored Jesus most profoundly. Jesus looked graciously upon him and permitted him to ask any favor, with the assurance of obtaining the object of his request. The saint took courage and begged that all sinners visiting the church and confessing their sins with a contrite heart might receive full pardon. Jesus replied to him: "Francis, you ask much, but I will favor you with greater things still; your prayer is granted, but go to my vicar, the Pope, and in my name ask for the indulgence which I have granted to you." The wonderful apparition disappeared; no one was more rejoiced than Francis. The next day in company with one of his brothers he hastened to Pope Honorius III. and, prostrate before him, besought him to proclaim that every one visiting the church and there confessing his sins with a contrite heart would be as pure from all sin and punishments as he was immediately after baptism. Honorius was astonished at this strange petition, and hesitated to grant it. But Francis said: "What I ask, I do not ask of myself; our Lord Jesus Christ sends me to you and commands me to make this request." The Pope having been convinced of the truth of his speech, granted his petition and ordered that the little church should be solemnly consecrated and the indulgence proclaimed for the second day of August. From

that time pilgrims from all parts of the world flocked to the Portiuncula church in order to gain the indulgence, and numberless were the conversions which occurred at that shrine of grace. In order to make this indulgence more accessible to the faithful, the Popes subsequently extended it to all the churches of the Franciscans. Afterwards it was extended to all parish churches, and the first Sunday of August was appointed as the day for gaining it.

2. The Portiuncula indulgence has a miraculous origin. History says that Jesus, Mary and many angels appeared to St. Francis, that Jesus granted his petition for the indulgence and ordered him to ask the Pope to sanction it. Is this credible? Certainly; and so credible that every reasonable doubt is excluded. The Sacred Scriptures mention many similar apparitions. They frequently speak of apparitions of the angels in the Old and the New Testament. We also read of Christ, that after his Resurrection he appeared to the Apostles and to many other persons, and, long after his Ascension, to St. Paul on his way to Damascus. In the lives of the saints apparitions are very common. Our age especially is rich in apparitions of the Blessed Virgin, which cannot be denied, because they have occurred in different places, and are still occurring, and are certified to by a multitude of perfectly credible persons and confirmed by manifest miracles. Who would reject the history of the Portiuncula indulgence because in it there is mention made of a miraculous apparition?

Moreover, let us consider that it is St. Francis that appeals to this apparition as a fact, and upon the strength of it asks of the Pope the confirmation of the indulgence. Who could believe that this saint would have made himself guilty of such a base misrepresentation, that he would allege an apparition with which he had not been favored? How could this be reconciled with the character of a man who was so sincere and humble and who scarcely knew dissimulation by name? Or how could God have favored this saint, if he had been an impostor, with so many miracles and even with the sacred marks of his wounds?

Finally, the disciples and contemporaries of St. Francis confirm these apparitions. The learned and pious Pope Benedict XIV. says: "This history (of the Portiuncula indulgence) is fully proved by the testimony of Peter Galvani, who heard St. Francis preach and announce the said indulgence, as also by the testimony of two members of the Order, who related that in the year 1277 they heard the whole history from Father Matthew, the companion of St. Francis." Besides, the Church herself vouches for the reality of these apparitions and of everything connected with them, since she has sanctioned the indulgence and even to this day exhorts the faithful to gain it.

PART II.

The Portiuncula indulgence is of course a plenary indulgence. He who gains it obtains the remission of all the temporal punishments that he would be obliged to atone for either here or in Purgatory, and can, if he sins no more, go immediately to heaven after his death. Certainly this is a great grace, which the Portiuncula indulgence has in common with all other plenary indulgences. But this indulgence has some prerogatives which other plenary indulgences have not, and we will now consider them.

1. The Portiuncula indulgence is *the first plenary indulgence* that was ever granted in the Church. There were indeed indulgences at all times, but they were only partial, and only a partial remission of the temporal punishments could be obtained by them. But, as already remarked, he who gains the Portiuncula indulgence is freed from all temporal punishments and becomes as pure as after holy baptism. This was also the reason why Pope Honorius was astonished when St. Francis petitioned for the confirmation of this indulgence, for such an indulgence, up to that time, had been entirely unknown. It was only after he had come to the conviction that Jesus Christ himself wished it, that he granted the petition of the saint and confirmed the indulgence.

2. This indulgence comes immediately from Christ and was granted by him in person. It is true, all indulgences have their origin from Christ; for it is to his merits we owe not only the remission of sin and of eternal punishment, but also the remission of temporal punishment, therefore indulgences have their origin in him. Again, it is he who gave to St. Peter and his successors the plenary power of binding and loosing, therefore also the power of granting indulgences, in these words: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." —Matt. 16: 19. Every indulgence, therefore, that the Pope grants, comes from Christ, not immediately, however, as is the case with the Portiuncula indulgence, which St. Francis obtained from Christ himself, the Pope only confirming it. On account of its origin the Portiuncula indulgence is more venerable than other indulgences.

3. This indulgence is granted for all time to come, *i. e.*, until the consummation of the world. In the primitive ages of Christianity it was not customary to grant indulgences for ever, they could be gained only during a certain period. It was with them as it is with our Jubilee indulgences, which are limited to a certain time, and which, after the lapse of that space of time, cannot

be gained. When St. Francis preached in the Portiuncula church in the presence of several bishops, and solemnly announced to the assembled people the indulgence granted by Christ and confirmed by his vicar on earth, the Pope, and added that this indulgence could be gained on the second day of August *for all time to come*, the bishops were shocked at this addition and would have it only for ten years. They therefore raised their voice and were going to say, *only for ten years*, but miraculously guided by God, they unanimously cried out, *for all time to come!* The Portiuncula indulgence, which has already continued for more than six hundred years, will continue till the end of the world, and even shortly before the coming of Christ to judgment this indulgence could still be gained.

4. The Portiuncula indulgence is comparatively easy to be gained. In all other indulgences several conditions are to be complied with, if we wish to gain them. He who wishes to gain a Jubilee indulgence must visit either several churches, or one church several times, fast a certain number of days, and give alms. He who wishes to gain a confraternity indulgence must belong to the confraternity and diligently keep its rules. Thus, for instance, the members of the Rosary confraternity must say the whole Rosary of fifteen decades, in order to gain the indulgences of the confraternity. All these more or less difficult conditions are not necessary for the Portiuncula indulgence; all that is required to gain it is worthily to receive the Sacraments of Penance and of the Blessed Eucharist and to say in a church of the Franciscans or in the parish church the customary prayers for an indulgence. What could be easier than the gaining of this indulgence? How would it be possible for our divine Saviour to require less of us in order to remit to us not only sin and eternal punishment, but even all temporal punishments?

5. Finally, what distinguishes the Portiuncula indulgence especially from all others is, that on the day on which it is granted, it can be gained not only once, but oftener. You can gain other indulgences only once on the same day, but the Portiuncula indulgence you can gain on the first Sunday of August, and that, too, as often as on that day you visit a church of the Franciscans, or the parish church, and there pray for some time according to the intention of the Holy Father. The Congregation of the Council has twice so decided, on the 17th of July, 1700, and again on the 4th of December, 1723. In fact, when doubts were submitted to the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences as to whether the faithful who visit a church of the Franciscans on the second Sunday of August can obtain the indulgence as often as the visit is repeated, the answer was in the

affirmative, February 22nd, 1847, and it was declared at the same time that it is not necessary to receive communion in any of the churches of the Franciscans. Pope Pius IX. confirmed these decisions by a decree of the same Congregation, dated July 12th, 1849. It is indeed true that on one day we can gain a plenary indulgence for ourselves only once, but this does not interfere with the doctrine that the Portiuncula indulgence can be gained more than once on the *same* day, for we may apply it to the souls in purgatory, if we gain it the second and the third time, etc.

PERORATION.

The Portiuncula indulgence then is a great grace of which we should avail ourselves every year. Try to gain it. See above all, that you make a humble, contrite and sincere confession, for a good confession is the first and most necessary requisite for the forgiveness of sins and the gaining of the indulgence. Receive holy communion with the most profound humility and adoration. Say the prayers for an indulgence with devotion and sentiments of repentance, according to the intention of the Holy Father, and relying on the merits of Jesus Christ, on the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Francis, and the other saints, beseech God with confidence to impart to you the indulgence and to deliver you from all temporal punishments. Promise to be thankful to him for this grace all the days of your life by carefully keeping your conscience free from even small faults. Visit the church several times and after repeating the prayers for an indulgence apply it to the poor souls that they may partake of the grace thereof. Thus the Portiuncula indulgence will be to you a key with which you will open heaven, both for yourselves and for many poor souls. Amen.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

SINFUL DISCOURSES.

He spoke right.—Mark 7: 35.

"I wish," says St. Francis of Sales, "I had buttons on both lips, which I should be obliged to unfasten when I had an occasion to speak, for I should then gain more time to reflect, and to consider

my speech." This bishop and doctor of the Church, so mortified in all things, especially in his speech, did not need buttons, but we need them in order that what is said of the deaf and dumb man in the gospel of this day may be applied to us: *He spoke right*. It is true, many sins are committed with the eyes, ears, feet and hands, and with the other senses and members of the body in general; but most sins are committed with the tongue. "Many have fallen by the edge of the sword; but not so many as have perished by their own tongue."—*Ecclus.* 28: 22. On the day of judgment we shall see how great is the number of people who on account of the sins of the tongue will be cast into hell. That we may not share in this miserable fate, I warn you to-day against sinful words, viz.—

- I. *Vain words;*
- II. *Uncharitable words;*
- III. *Immodest words.*

PART I

Among *vain* words I reckon—

1. *Useless words.* These are, St. Chrysostom remarks, such as are of no benefit to him who utters them, nor to him who hears them. Therefore, when we say anything that does not redound to the honor of God, and is of no benefit to ourselves or others, it is a useless word. Useless words in themselves are not sinful, but only indifferent, but they become sinful when they are destitute of a good intention, that is, when in uttering them we have nothing salutary in view. Hence Christ says: "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment."—*Matt.* 12: 36. Such words are very common. People talk from mere loquaciousness, without a reasonable cause, simply because they find pleasure in hearing themselves talk. To this class belong married women especially, who, when they meet, it does not matter where, have so many things to tell one another that they can hardly leave off. The one has this news, the other that; and when one finishes talking, the other begins; and when one seems to lose the thread, the other takes it up and spins it out, as expressed tersely but truly in the following lines:

"Quando conveniunt Maria, Camilla, Sybilla,
Sermonem faciunt et ab hoc, et ab hac, at ab illa."

But you may say, are we not at all allowed to speak of indifferent things? Yes; but you should have some good reason for doing

so, *e. g.*, to entertain yourself and others in a proper manner, so that you may be better able to discharge the more serious duties of life. In order to guard yourselves against useless words, make a good intention in the morning and especially when you come into the company of others, and say; Lord, whatever I say, even indifferent things, I will say for thy honor, for my own and my neighbor's good.

2. *Jocose expressions.* These again are very common. To amuse one's self and others, witty remarks are often made in company and on other occasions. If they are altogether innocent and harmless, do not offend our neighbor, and contain nothing contrary to religion and good morals, and a good intention is at the bottom of them, they are not sinful and may be permitted. But very often this is not the case. Such words are frequently indulged in from vanity, in order to be considered witty and to gain applause, and for this reason they are wrong, because they offend against humility. Neither are such jocose words always innocent and pure; frequently they contain, openly or veiled, something that violates modesty, or offends our neighbor, and therefore they are sinful. Moreover, it makes a great difference who makes the jokes. If made by persons in a certain position, and especially by the clergy, they may easily give scandal and therefore are sinful. The words of St. Bernard apply here: "Among lay people they are jokes, but in the mouth of the priest blasphemies."

How very displeasing such words are to God in spiritual persons, is proved by the following history, which Surius relates in the Life of the holy Abbot Hugo of Cluny. An archbishop of Toulouse, named Durandus, had a habit of listening with pleasure to jocose and scurrilous discourses and of carrying them on himself. St. Hugo frequently rebuked him for it, telling him that he would suffer severely in purgatory. Soon afterwards the archbishop died. He appeared to a monk named Sanguinus, with a swollen mouth, and besought him with tears to request Abbot Hugo to pray for him, because on account of the scurrilous and idle words in which he had indulged during his life-time, he was now suffering great torments. The holy Fathers and spiritual writers in general are very strict with regard to jokes, and disapprove of them. Thus St. Basil says: "Guard against jocose or scurrilous words, and do not waste time on pranks and the like, for these are pastimes for children, but a Christian must cease to be a child and have the seriousness of a man." The saint adds, that such jokes and amusements make man negligent in the service of God, and stifle the devotion of the heart.

3. *Boasting.* Many Catholics closely resemble the Scribes, who from a motive of ambition boasted everywhere of the good they

did. Whenever an opportunity presents itself, such Catholics seek to direct the conversation to themselves; they speak of their knowledge and cleverness, and of their merits, and when they have done anything good they cannot rest until they have published it everywhere. Such discourses are objectionable for two reasons: first, they are sinful in themselves, for they offend against humility; secondly, they are very dangerous, for they deprive our good works of all merit before God. Let us guard carefully against revealing to men the good we do, thus becoming our own panegyrists. "Let another praise thee, and not thy own mouth; a stranger, and not thy own lips."—*Prov. 27: 2.*

PART II.

Among *uncharitable* words I reckon—

1. *Detraction*, of which one renders one's self guilty by revealing without necessity the faults of one's neighbor. Some imagine that speaking ill of others is no sin if they only say nothing untrue. But this opinion is entirely erroneous. He who reveals the faults of others without necessity always sins against charity, for charity requires that we should do unto others as we wish them to do unto us. Suppose that our neighbor has stolen, or committed some other sin, he certainly would not be pleased to have these sins revealed; would it not then be uncharitable to reveal them, especially as evil reports excite indignation against him who spreads them, though they may be based on truth? It is therefore evident that we sin against the love of our neighbor as often as we disclose or reveal secret faults. Hence the wise man says: "Hast thou heard a word against thy neighbor? let it die within thee, trusting that it will not burst thee."—*Ecclus. 19: 10.* We are allowed to speak of the real faults of others when they are already sufficiently known and public. In this case charity is not violated, because only well-known things are said and the honor of our neighbor is not injured. However, it is better and more in accordance with fraternal charity not to speak even of the public faults of others when we have no good reason for doing so. It is to be remarked that by detraction, which is so common among men, even grievous sins may be committed. This is the case if serious damage is done to our neighbor. For instance: You make known the former frailty of a young person though long ago she repented of it and has been forgiven, and you drive her to despair in consequence of your untimely disclosures. By your cruel indiscretion you sow the seeds of discord between a heretofore happy husband and his affectionate wife. Your slanderous tongue destroys the confidence that heretofore existed between the priest and his congregation. Guard against detrac-

tion, and if you have sinned thereby, rectify it by excusing your neighbor and repairing the damage you have caused.

2. *Calumny*, which is committed when we falsely impute to another something wrong though he is not guilty of it; or when we magnify his real faults and represent them as more hateful and culpable than they really are, or when we report doubtful faults as true and certain, or misinterpret the good actions of others, as the Pharisees did when they said that Christ was casting out devils by Beelzebub; finally when we try to deny the good qualities and deeds of others, or diminish them, or in any possible way weaken them.

Calumny is naturally a more grievous sin than detraction, because it violates not only charity but also justice and truth. Moreover, there is particular malice in calumny, for it is the sign of a very bad, corrupt heart, to invent faults and to impute them to others and to represent them as evil before the world. The calumniator sins more grievously than the thief, for honor and a good name are more valuable than money and worldly goods. "A good name is better than great riches, and good favor is above silver and gold."—*Prov. 22: 1.* If you steal a considerable amount of money from a man, he will not feel the loss of it so sensibly as when you rob him of his honor and good name. No one wishes to be deprived of honor, and even the worst man endeavors to cover his wicked deeds and to save his good name.

3. *Whispering and tale-bearing*, which consists in telling a person what evil things another has said about him, and thus sowing the seeds of disunion and discord. He who is given to this vice is commonly called a tale-bearer, because he bears to others what this or that one has said of them, or has done to them out of spite. He frequently causes those who loved one another and lived in peace to fall out and become bitter enemies; and he does it so dexterously that they are frequently at a loss to know why and how they came to be at variance. There are generally several vices resulting from this whispering, as falsehood, dissimulation, hypocrisy, flattery, self-interest, envy, hatred and a desire of revenge. The tale-bearer usually seems well-disposed towards his fellow-men; he does not let it appear that he means any harm; by a friendly manner he endeavors to gain their confidence; in the meantime he lies in wait, like the sneak he is, watching all their movements, and then reports whatever he finds reprehensible in them to the persons whom he wishes to prejudice against them; in fact he frequently adds things himself; his self-interest, his envy and desire of revenge do not deter him even from the worst calumny, if it appears to him to be a suitable way of attaining his criminal end.

It is not surprising, then, that whispering or tale-bearing is an abominable vice in the eyes of God; therefore the Sacred Scripture says: "Six things there are, which the Lord hateth and the seventh his soul detesteth; *haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked plots, feet that are swift to run into mischief, a deceitful witness that uttereth lies,* and HIM THAT SOWETH DISCORD AMONG BRETHREN."—*Prov.* 6: 16-19. Guard against this vice, and be faithful to secrets entrusted to you.

4. *Insults, i. e.,* taunting others with something which is to their shame. Thus it is an insult to cast up to another his low extraction, his illegitimate birth, the crimes of his relations, his bodily deformity, his corporal and spiritual defects. In like manner it is an insult to taunt another with the evil he has done, or is said to have done, *e. g.,* to call him a liar, a cheat, a thief, an adulterer, or to give nicknames. The calling of opprobrious names is very common. Some get angry on the slightest provocation, begin at once to abuse others and insult them in every possible way. From such insults, quarrels and even murder frequently originate. The result is prolonged enmities and expensive lawsuits which swallow up large sums of money and frequently reduce families to beggary. Make it your rule to keep silence when you are excited, and wait till you are cooled down.

PART III.

I will make a few remarks on immodest words. These, of all the sins of the tongue, are the most common. Tell me yourselves, what is the subject about which young people usually speak? It is the vice of impurity. They make the most shameful jokes and spin out their conversations for hours; whatever occurs gives them an occasion for improper witticisms; in their moral degradation they can speak of nothing but impure things, and resemble swine that are happy only when they wallow in the mire. Even married men and women, who from age or infirmity are hastening to the grave, find pleasure in such filthiness, and frequently defile their tongue with it. Such discourses are very sinful —

1. *In themselves,* because they proceed from an impure heart, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."—*Luke* 6: 45. They reveal the corruption of their heart. Even people who are slaves to the vice of impurity often abhor such talk and guard against it. It may therefore happen that people who on every occasion utter impure words, will be more tormented in hell than those who commit impurity in actions, be-

cause the latter frequently sin from weakness, whereas the former always sin from malice.

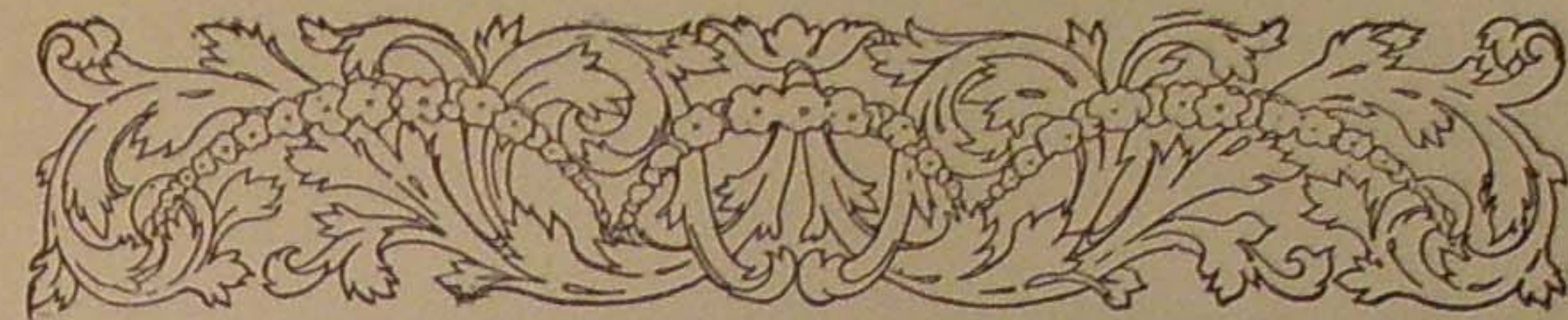
2. *On account of the scandal connected with them.* St. Chrysostom says: "The mouth of man that utters impure words, resembles an open grave that contains rottenness and dead men's bones. The stench which proceeds from a grave full of corpses causes deadly diseases to those who are exposed to it. Filthy discourses cause the death of the soul." St. Bernard says: "If you speak only one impure word, you may perhaps cause all who hear it to fall into the sin of impurity in thought or act. That is a greater crime than to kill several men at once with an arrow; for you would kill only their bodies, whereas by your shameful discourses you kill their souls." "Such men," says St. Alphonsus, "cause great destruction in the world, for one does more harm than a hundred devils, because he effects the ruin of so many souls." Oh, how many would yet possess the purity of their heart if they had protected their ears from impure discourses? In cases where the devil often works in vain for years with all his suggestions and temptations, a foul mouth obtains its end in a short time. If we could go through hell and ask the damned, one after another, the cause of their ruin, how many should we find who would be obliged to acknowledge that impure discourses were the cause of it!

What a fearful responsibility does that man entail upon himself who carries on impure discourses! All those souls to whom he has given scandal will accuse him as the author of their reprobation. God himself will demand of him the souls of which he has robbed him by his filthy discourses and delivered to the devil. The words of Holy Writ will be fulfilled in him: "I will require his blood at thy hand."—*Ezech.* 3: 18.

PERORATION.

These are the sinful words and discourses which, as you know yourselves, are the most common. Ah, how much mischief do they cause in the world, and how great will be the number of those who will be damned on account of them! Guard yourselves against these and all other sins of the tongue. Be prudent in your speech and always reflect, before you open your mouth, whether what you are going to say is right and according to the will of God. If you observe *this one rule,* you will not contaminate your consciences with any sinful word. Be moderate in speaking; the less you speak, the less you sin, and the more easily you can give an account of your words. Blessed is the man who knows how to remain silent. It is an art, but many

people live sixty years without learning it. Indeed, the older they grow, the wider their mouth opens. A man or a woman who is a gabbler at forty-five, is a dreadful affliction to a house, or a congregation, or a community. There are two things which we all must learn—*when to say nothing*, and when we say anything, to say it well. “If any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (*James 1: 26*); but “he that keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from distress.”—*Prov. 21: 23*. Amen.



TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*II. Cor. 3: 4-9*. Brethren: Such confidence we have through Christ towards God. Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God. Who also hath made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit. For the letter killeth: but the spirit giveth life. Now if the ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which is made void, how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather in glory? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

WHY THE APOSTLE DEMANDS THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS MINISTRY.

False teachers had insinuated themselves into the Christian congregation at Corinth, endeavoring to disparage St. Paul, the founder of the congregation, and to disseminate various errors. To gain credit, they appealed to letters of recommendation which, as they pretended, they had received from believers of good repute. Now against these false teachers, St. Paul defends himself, and appeals to his laborers at Corinth for a proof of the manner in which he preached the gospel to them first, and formed them into good Christians, showing that this was the best recommendation for him, and of far greater value than all the commendatory letters that those false teachers pretended to possess. St. Paul, however, does not base his claims upon his own activity and merit, but upon the ministry with which God commissioned him, though quite undeserving, and demands that **this ministry be recognized and appreciated for two reasons—**

- I. Because it comes from God;
 II. Because it greatly surpasses the ministry of the Jewish priesthood.

PART I.

The first reason why the Apostle demands the recognition of the high dignity of his ministry is, that it comes not from himself, but from God; that it is an office given by God. He teaches this in these words: *Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; who also hath made us fit ministers of the new testament.*

1. As an Apostle of Christ he had a threefold ministry; he was a *teacher*, a *priest* and a *shepherd* or *pastor*. This threefold ministry he had not from himself, but from God, who had conferred it upon him though unworthy, and fitted him for the profitable administration thereof.

(a.) Christ had called him to the *ministry of teaching*; "This man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."—*Acts* 9: 15. And he himself says: "To me, the least of all the saints, is given this grace, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."—*Ephes.* 3: 8. The doctrine also which he preached was not invented by him, as is the case with false teachers, but inspired immediately by God, wherefore he says: "For I give you to understand, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor did I learn it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."—*Gal.* 1: 11, 12. Finally, he understood rightly the revealed truth, but to preach it convincingly was not his work, but the grace of God.

(b.) He was also made a *priest* by Christ Jesus. For he writes: "Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."—*I. Cor.* 4: 1. Now when he offered up the holy sacrifice, baptized, ordained, or consecrated bishops and priests, or administered any other sacrament, he did it not in his own name, but in the name of Christ, who had given him power and authority for the performance of all these priestly functions.

(c.) He had also been made a *shepherd* by Christ. For this reason he styles himself (*Gal.* 1: 1) an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and testifies that he received from Christ apostolic authority to rule the faithful. When he

founded Christian congregations, set the concerns of the faithful in order, made various ordinances and rules, and inflicted punishments, he acted not on his own authority, but as a minister of Christ, by virtue of his divine mission and authority.

2. Like St. Paul and the other Apostles, their successors, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church, have this threefold ministry, not from themselves, but from Jesus Christ, and they act in the name of Christ.

(a.) What they preach is not their word, but the word of God; they announce only the doctrine of the Catholic Church, the pillar and ground of truth; and every Catholic priest can say with Christ: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."—*John* 7: 16.

Thus it is your duty to honor bishops and priests as teachers commissioned and authorized by God, and to look upon what they teach as the word of God, and accept it with a believing heart. It matters little whether he who preaches to you the word of God is more or less learned or pious, just as it is indifferent whether one drinks good wine out of a gold or a glass vessel. St. Augustine very appropriately remarks: "What am I but a sack or a basket which the divine sower makes use of in sowing his heavenly seed? He has favored me by depositing in me what I strew among you; do not consider the quality of the basket, but only the excellence of the seed, and the power and dignity of the sower." For this reason zealous Christians of all times have listened to the religious instructions of their bishops and priests with the greatest reverence. Constantine the Great frequently listened for hours to the word of God, standing, to express his respect for it. And being on one occasion asked to sit down, he gave this answer: "I consider it a sin to listen to the word of God in a comfortable posture, and with inattentive ears." How wrongly then do those act who disdain sermons and instructions, and therefore do not listen to them, but criticise and ridicule them! The words of Christ apply to them: "He that despiseth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."—*John* 12: 48.

(b.) When priests offer up the holy sacrifice of the mass, and administer the sacraments, they do so as the representatives of Christ. In the holy mass Christ is both the priest and the victim; the officiating priest is, as it were, the instrument which Christ uses for offering himself. "What is more venerable," says St. Augustine, "than to rest under that altar upon which the sacrifice is offered, where our Lord is the priest, as it is written:

"Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech." The same is to be said of the sacraments. Priests administer them, not in their own name, but in the name of Christ, and as his ministers. If then a priest in the confessional absolves the sinner, it is the same as if Christ himself absolved him; what the priest looses upon earth is loosed also in heaven. How thankful should you be to God for the means of grace which he imparts to you through the ministry of his priests, and how zealously should you avail yourselves of them for your salvation! Assist then, if possible, at mass on week days, "for in every holy mass," says St. Thomas of Aquin, "one can apply the benefits which Jesus bestowed on us on Good Friday by his death on the cross." Deem yourselves happy in having priests who can forgive all your sins, even the most grievous, in the Sacrament of Penance, and who can give you in holy communion Jesus Christ himself, the Author of all graces, for the food and nourishment of your souls. Go as often as possible to confession and communion, that you may receive the graces of these sacraments.

(c.) When priests, by the authority of their spiritual superiors, make various regulations for the good of the faithful, they again act as the representatives of Christ; and it is the same as if Christ himself made them. Therefore he says: "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me. And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."—*Luke 10: 16.*

Take to heart these words; honor your bishops and priests and obey them conscientiously. To this the Apostle admonishes you, saying: "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls, that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this is not expedient for you."—*Heb. 13: 17.*

PART II.

St. Paul also demands the acknowledgment of the dignity of the ministry, for the reason *that it is more exalted than the ministry of the Jewish priesthood.* He writes: *If the ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which is made void, how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather in glory.*

1. The Apostle here speaks of the ministry which the priests of the Old and the New Testament exercised, or of the Jewish and the Christian religions. He calls the Jewish religion a letter which killeth, not only because it caused the death of him who transgressed its ordinances, but also because it could not save

the transgressor from death, that is, from temporal and eternal death; it merely stated what sin was, but it had no means in itself for the forgiveness and avoidance of sin, and therefore it was unable to save the sinner from perdition. Jesus represents to us this truth symbolically, through the priest and levite who passed by without helping the man who had fallen among robbers. Again, he calls the Jewish religion a letter engraven upon stones, because the principal part of it consisted in the ten commandments which God had given to Moses upon two stone tables. He also calls the Jewish religion a religion of the letter, because it consisted principally in outward ceremonies, and because the commandments which it contained were understood and considered as obligatory in the literal sense by the Jews and especially by the Scribes and Pharisees. Thus, they taught, adhering to the letter, that the commandment "thou shalt not kill" forbade actual murder only, but not hatred and enmity. Again, he says that the ministration of the letter that killeth was so glorious that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses. These words refer to a miraculous event which is recorded of Moses in the Sacred Scripture. When, with the tables of the law in his hands, he descended from Mount Sinai, his face, in consequence of his conversation with God, was so radiant that the Israelites were afraid to look at him.—*Ex. 34: 30.* This splendor of the face of Moses was, however, as St. Paul remarks, made void, i. e., transitory, for it did not last always, but only for a short time. This indicates that the Jewish religion would not last for ever, but would cease and be superseded by the Christian religion.

2. Let us now consider more closely the advantages of the Christian religion over those of the Jewish.

(a.) The old Jewish religion adheres to the letter, but the Christian religion penetrates into the spirit and teaches us how the holy law of God can and must be perfectly observed. It tells us, e. g., that by the fifth commandment not only murder is forbidden, but also hatred and enmity. "I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment."—*Matt. 5: 22.* Again, in the sixth commandment it forbids adultery not only in act, but also in desire: "But I say to you, that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart."—*Matt. 5: 28.* The Christian religion with its holy law holds a higher rank than the Jewish, consequently the ministry of the Christian priests is more excellent than that of the Jewish priests.

(b.) The Jewish religion had a death-bringing law, for it merely showed what sin was, but had no means of avoiding it, much less

of blotting out and reconciling man with God, and thus in a certain sense it brought death. How different is the Christian religion! It also has laws, according to which all that is bad is prohibited, but it has also the means of grace—namely, the sacraments—by which we are cleansed from all sins, sanctified and enabled to serve God, to please him, and to be saved.

(c.) The Jewish religion had a law engraved upon stone; it only commanded to do or omit something, but gave neither the will nor the grace to do so. The law of the Christian religion, on the contrary, is written in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; it points to the infinite love of Jesus Christ, which he showed us in the work of Redemption; to his holy example in all virtues, and to the great rewards which are in prospect for his faithful servants—and all this urges us to love God and to keep his commandments.

The Apostle, in the conclusion of the lesson for this day, says:

For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory.

1. By the *ministration of condemnation* we must understand the ministry of the Jewish priests. But how can this ministry be called the ministration of condemnation? Was not the religion of the Old Law, of which the Jewish priests were the ministers, from God, and therefore good? Certainly; but it brought man only to the consciousness of his sinfulness without giving him the power of avoiding sin. It told him that he had offended God, and incurred his displeasure, without offering him the means of making satisfaction to God and of being reconciled with him; it made it plain to him that by his sins he rendered himself guilty of eternal damnation, but gave him no help to escape it. All that the Jewish religion contained—prayer, sacrifices, ceremonies, holy days and seasons, was impotent to blot out the sins of men, to justify them before God and to sanctify them.

2. By the *ministration of justice* we understand the ministry of the Christian priests. All the treasures of heaven are placed in the hands of the Christian priests; they offer the sacrifice of the mass, by which the merits of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross are applied to men; they administer the sacraments, in which we receive forgiveness of sins, remission of punishments and particular graces, overcome all temptation, and persevere in good to the end. St. Prosper says: "Priests are the gates of the eternal city, through whom all who believe in Christ come to Christ; they are the porters to whom the keys of heaven are entrusted; they are the housekeepers of the royal castle."

PERORATION.

How much more fortunate are we than the Jews in the Old Law! Their religion was but a shadow and a type of the more perfect church which was to come and do away with the shadows; it was of itself not able to purify and sanctify men. When God was pleased to be gracious to sinners and to forgive them their sins, it was only on account of the infinite merits of Christ, in whose redemption they hoped, full of faith and confidence. Return thanks to God that you live under the new dispensation, and are members of the Church established by Jesus Christ, in which you have abundant graces and means to enable you to work out your salvation. Avail yourselves of these means and graces; and lead a holy life, so that as good Catholics you may please God and obtain eternal salvation. Amen.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke 10: 23-37.* At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them: and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said to him: Thou hast answered rightly: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey came near him; and seeing him was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and

said: Take care of him: and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbor to him that fell among robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go and do thou in like manner.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN TEACHES WHAT QUALITIES THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR MUST HAVE.

Our Lord in the gospel of this day calls his disciples blessed because it was given to them to see him, to hear the word of God from him, and to walk with him. Many prophets and kings longed for this happiness, but it was not their lot to realise it, for they died before he came into the world. We, the disciples of Jesus, have nothing to regret, for he announces to us the truths of revelation through his Church with the same certainty as if we had heard them from his own lips: we receive the same graces that he imparted to them; he even remains with us in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Whilst Jesus was speaking to his disciples a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: *Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?* Our Lord made him give the answer himself to this question, and he gave it correctly, saying that one must love God above all things, and one's neighbor as one's self. Then he said, *who is my neighbor?* Jesus replied to him by the parable of the good Samaritan. As this parable is the principal subject in the gospel of to-day, I will give you a short instruction thereon. The Samaritan teaches us what qualities our love must have; it must be —

- I. Universal;
- II. Active;
- III. Disinterested.

PART I.

The love which the Samaritan showed to the wounded man was indeed *universal*, that is, such as extends to all men without exception.

1. We read in the gospel that the Jews held no communication with the Samaritans.—*John 4: 9*. It was a law among the Jews not to associate in any way with the Samaritans. He who ate

with them was as culpable as if he had eaten pork; the Jews were not even allowed to take a little water from them to drink. The Samaritans were anathematized; after they had built a temple on Mount Gerazim their oblations which they brought to Jerusalem were not accepted; they were not admitted as witnesses to an inheritance, much less to an honor. The great council did not condemn as a murderer him who killed a Samaritan; and to have compassion on a helpless Samaritan, or to save his life, was declared to be wrong. So great was the hatred of the Jews against the Samaritans. We can easily imagine that the Samaritans were not friendly to the Jews; they frequently had altercations with them, resulting sometimes in bloodshed, and returned evil for evil.

Therefore no one could have blamed the Samaritan if he had passed by without helping the wounded, half-dead man by the road-side, when he recognized him as a Jew; he would have acted merely according to the principles of his own people and of the Jews. But he did not do so. He saw in him a fellow-man, and that was reason enough for him to pity and to help him. As wax melts at the fire, so his heart melted at the sight of the poor man lying in his blood, and he went to his assistance.

2. Our love must also be universal. We must love all men, whoever they may be: Catholics, Protestants, infidels, Jews, friends and enemies, relations or strangers, and do good to them so far as they need it, and so far as we can. The reason why our love must extend itself to all men without exception is because all are children and images of God, redeemed by Christ's blood, and called to eternal salvation. Our divine Saviour inculcates this universal love, saying: "If you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens this? Be you, therefore, perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."—*Matt. 5: 46-48*. Jesus himself teaches us this by his own example, for he excluded no one from his love. He was beneficent towards all, and helped every one who in faith and confidence had recourse to him. He had compassion on the blind man by the road-side, as well as on the daughter of Jairus, who was a man in a high position. He even extended his love to his mortal enemies, prayed for them and did good to them. Finally he died for all, Jews and Gentiles, friends and enemies. Hence St. Paul says: "Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for those of the whole world."—*I. John 2: 2*.

PART II.

The love of the Samaritan was *active*, for he succored the unhappy man as well as he could.

1. It is possible, and even probable, that the Levite and the priest felt some compassion when they saw the poor man lying by the road-side in the greatest misery. Compassion and mercy are attributes of human nature; we should cease to be men, if we could be utterly indifferent towards the afflicted and suffering. But the Levite and priest paid no further attention to this feeling of commiseration within them; they saw him and passed by, and abandoned him to his misery without moving hand or foot to help him.

Not so the Samaritan; the compassion he felt at the sight of the unfortunate man found expression in a work of mercy. *Going up to him, he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him; and the next day he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said: take care of him, and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee.* Oh, how beautiful and praiseworthy is the love of the Samaritan! The place where the wounded man lay was insecure on account of the robbers who infested that part of the country. He had every reason to pass it as quickly as possible, so as not to fall a victim to the robbers himself. But the love of his neighbor overcame his fear and made him disregard all danger; he staid with him till he had done all he could for him. This act of charity was connected with some inconvenience and some effort on the part of the Samaritan. For, all alone as he was, to take care of a man wounded and half dead, to cleanse and bind up his wounds, to take him upon his own beast, and to bring him to the inn—this certainly was no easy matter. Nor did he dread the cost which the nursing of the wounded man caused him. Truly, if this Samaritan had been a Christian he could not have exhibited a more active love.

2. Our love must also be active. The mere feeling of compassion which we experience or even express in words when some evil befalls our neighbor is not true Christian charity until our condolence becomes active and manifests itself in deed. True love requires us to assist him in deed as well as we can, as the Apostle St. John says: "My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth."—*I. John 3: 18.* We must manifest our religion, which is the law of love, not by our *creed* only, but by *deed*. Thus Jesus loved us. The gospel is full of proofs of his active love, for it records that he fed the hungry,

healed the sick, raised the dead to life, pardoned sinners, and at last shed his precious blood for all men on the cross. He demands of us this active love, and he demands it so rigorously that he makes eternal salvation depend upon it; for he emphatically declares that on the day of judgment he will say to those who have not practised works of mercy to their neighbor: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels."—*Matt. 25: 41.*

The duty of loving our neighbor actively is also evident from the words of Christ: "All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them."—*Matt. 7: 12.* We wish in sickness to be visited and comforted by others. Go to the sick, or at least compassionate them in their sickness; every sick person is your neighbor. In short, we wish to be succored by others when we need their help; well then, aid them when they need your aid. Such should be our conduct towards our neighbor. We must place ourselves in the position of our neighbor, and ask ourselves: "If I were now in his position, what should I wish him to do for me?" And what we should wish in this case that others should do to us, let us also do to them.

PART III.

The love of the Samaritan was *disinterested*.

1. When he came to the place where the man had fallen among robbers, no one else was present, therefore he could not count upon the praise of men for the noble deed which he performed. He sought neither human praise nor applause; he had only God before his eyes, and for love of him he compassionated the poor wounded man. I say *poor*, for he was really poor, the robbers having stripped him of everything, even of his clothes. The Samaritan could not hope ever to be repaid for his act of kindness. But he had no earthly reward in view; he did good to that poor man because his conscience told him that it was good, and pleasing to God, and that hereafter he would be rewarded for it.

2. Our love must also be disinterested. We must do good to our neighbor for God's sake, not in order to be praised or rewarded by men. Many treat their neighbors gently, offer them their services and really show them many favors, but in doing so they have not God but themselves before their eyes; they think, I must make this man my friend, for he can be of some advantage to me, and in various ways repay me my acts of charity; or, if I give alms or contribute towards charitable purposes, I gain honor and respect and render myself generally beloved. Christians, who in their acts of charity have such sentiments, resemble the Pharisees, who in all the good they did were governed by

vanity and selfishness, and therefore our Lord said: "They have received their reward."—*Matt.* 6: 2. What is said of all good works, must also be said of the works of mercy and the service of our neighbor; they must be done for God's sake, if they are to be meritorious before him. Therefore Christ tells us that when we give alms, the left hand is not to know what the right does (*Matt.* 6: 3); and that we must do good to our neighbor, hoping for nothing in return.—*Luke* 6: 35.

3. What Jesus taught in words, he confirmed by his example. What made him become man, why did he suffer and die on the cross? Out of love for us, in order to redeem us, wherefore the Apostle says: "Christ hath loveth us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God."—*Ephes.* 5: 2. How unselfish and disinterested his love was we plainly see in his conduct towards men. It was among the poor, the afflicted, the despised, that he spent most of his time, to them he was ever wont to preach, and for them he worked nearly all his miracles. From them he could expect little honor; we know that he was even upbraided by the Pharisees because he associated with publicans and sinners and ate with them. According to the example of Jesus, many Christians devote their love principally to works of mercy to the poor and afflicted. Thus St. Francis Regis was nowhere found more frequently than with the poor. He considered that he was born for the poor, and under an obligation to live for them. In Montpellier, where he stayed for some time, there was no poor man that he did not visit, and for whom he did not perform some act of charity. On every Saturday he went from house to house, to urge the rich to give alms, and to collect their charitable contributions. He was seen to go through the streets with bundles of straw which he had begged in order to make a bed for some poor man. Being ridiculed and laughed at on that account, he said: "Well, one gains doubly by comforting one's brother, and by earning at the same time ridicule and reproach."

PERORATION.

Take the good Samaritan as your model in your love for your neighbor, and do as he did. Love not only your relations, friends and benefactors, and those for whom you have a natural inclination, but love all men without exception, whoever they may be, and in whatever relation they may stand to you. Show your love by actions, assist your neighbor in his necessities by word and deed, and do good to him whenever and wherever you can. Never look entirely to your own interest; love your neighbor for God's sake, and treat him gently and kindly for no other reason than to fulfil your duty as a Christian, and to be rewarded

for it in heaven. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the Law."—*Rom.* 13: 8. Amen.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO HELL.

I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them.—*Luke* 10: 24.

The prophets under the Old Law, King David, Isaias, Jeremias, Daniel, foretold the coming of the Redeemer of the world and anxiously awaited it, but they had not the happiness of seeing him in their mortal life or of hearing him, for they died centuries before he appeared upon earth. But this grace was imparted to them in Limbo, where, after their departure from this world, they were obliged to remain till Jesus Christ had accomplished the work of Redemption. In this place, called hell in the Apostles' Creed, and in the Sacred Scripture (*Gen.* 17: 35), or Abraham's bosom (*Luke* 16: 22), or Limbo, were all the just of the Old Law; for they could not enter into heaven, because after the fall of man it was closed against all mankind. It is a dogma of the Catholic Church that the soul of Christ after his death on the cross descended into Limbo, and remained there till his Resurrection. We give expression to this truth in the Apostles' Creed, in the words: "He descended into hell."

Let us to-day inquire —

- I. Whether Christ really descended into Limbo;
- II. Why he descended into that place.

PART I.

When Jesus died on the cross his soul was separated from the body, as takes place at the death of every man, but his Divinity remained both with his body, which was laid in the sepulchre, and with his soul, which descended into hell. Jesus Christ there-

fore descended into hell as God, united with his soul, which was separated from the body. In this sense is to be understood the article of the faith: "He descended into hell." That Jesus Christ really descended into hell we can satisfactorily prove—

1. *From the Sacred Scripture.*

(a.) In the Book of Psalms we read: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." These words which, according to St. Peter (*Acts* 2: 27), refer to Jesus Christ, are evidently to be understood of Limbo, and not of the sepulchre, because only the body of Christ, not the soul, lay in the grave. It is said then here that the soul of Christ will not remain in Limbo, but will reunite itself with the body, and that Christ will come forth from the grave with life renewed.

(b.) St. Peter says: "Christ was put to death, indeed, in the flesh, but enlivened in the spirit. In which also coming he preached to those spirits that were in prison; which had been some time incredulous, when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe, when the ark was a building, wherein a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water."—*I. Pet.* 3: 18-20. The meaning of this passage is: The disembodied soul of Jesus Christ descended into Limbo, not only visiting the Patriarchs but also those who during the time that Noe built the ark and preached penance, did not as yet believe but persevered in wickedness, and who finally, when they saw the judgment of God really coming upon them, were converted and did penance, and therefore escaped eternal perdition, although not the temporal punishment due to their sin. To these, who like the other just of the Old Law were in Limbo, Jesus went and preached; that is, he announced to them that he had accomplished the work of Redemption and opened heaven to them. That by the incredulous the Apostle did not mean the damned in hell, scarcely needs mention; for why should Christ go to preach to the damned, since they cannot and will not be converted, and since out of hell there is no redemption?

(c.) St. Paul says: "Ascending on high, he led captivity captive; he gave gifts to men. Now that he ascended, what is it, but because he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended above all the heavens, that he might fill all things."—*Ephes* 4: 8-10. St. Paul says that Christ descended *into the lower parts of the earth* and took thence the captives with him. These lower parts of the earth cannot possibly be the graves, for to say nothing of the fact that the graves cannot be called the lower parts of the earth, only

the bodies, not the souls, are in them, and these Christ should have carried with him. But how could he carry dead bodies fallen into dust and ashes? Nor can the lower parts of the earth be the hell of the damned, because out of hell there is no redemption. Consequently, by the captives who were in the lower regions of the earth must be understood the souls of the just only. Christ delivered these from their captivity and led them into heaven.

2. *From the Holy Fathers.*

(a.) St. Irenæus, who lived shortly after the time of the Apostles, says: "The Lord remained three days where the dead were, as the prophet says of him: The Lord remembered his departed saints who died in the land of promise. He descended to them to draw them out and to free them."

(b.) Origen says: "When the appointed time was at an end, the only-begotten Son, for the benefit of the world, descended even down to hell (Limbo) and brought back the progenitor. For what he said to the murderer: 'This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise', is not to be understood of him alone, but also of all saints, on whose account he descended into hell."

(c.) St. Athanasius says: "Jesus died for us and descended into hell, into the midst of the dead, and not only walked free among the dead, but he was also the liberator of the dead."

(d.) St. Augustine says: "He who said to the crucified thief: 'This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise', was to be understood as referring, in so far as he was man, to Limbo according to his soul, to the grave according to his body, but everywhere, in Limbo, in the grave, and in Paradise, according to his Divinity."

PART II.

1. Jesus Christ descended into hell, *to comfort the souls of the just and to liberate them.*

(a.) In Limbo there were no punishments and pains properly so called, as in hell and purgatory, nor was it a place of pleasure and happiness; the souls were only deprived of that wherein the essential happiness of the elect consists, the sight and enjoyment of God. We read of pious and holy souls that whilst in this world they had the greatest desire to be freed from the fetters of the body and to be with God. With what ardent desire did

the Apostle say: "I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ."—*Phil.* 1: 23. St. Macarius said on his death-bed: "When shall I behold thee, O my most loving Redeemer? When shall I experience the realization of thy promises? When shall I be clothed with the nuptial garment woven from the rays of light which unceasingly radiate from thy throne? When shall I sing the song of love with the blessed spirits in honor of the thrice holy God? Oh, how tardy is that day!" Now if souls who sincerely love God even in their flesh long so much for the vision of God, how great must have been the desire of the just in Limbo, where, free from the fetters of the body and from all temporal distractions, they had for thousands of years directed their mind and thoughts unceasingly to God, the last end of all their wishes and desires.

What rendered their situation still more sad was the uncertainty of the time of Redemption. When the return of young Tobias, who had gone to Media, was delayed contrary to expectation, his good parents were very much troubled and full of anguish. His mother went out daily and watched every road to see if her beloved son was in sight; and the oftener she had been deceived in her hope and expectation, the more her desire increased and the heavier grew her heart. How often may the souls in Limbo have said to one another: The Redeemer will certainly soon come and liberate us. But behold, years upon years, centuries upon centuries, and even thousands of years went by and the ardently expected Redeemer came not.

(b.) We may easily imagine into what joyful feelings, exultations and jublations these souls, almost devoured by desire, broke out when suddenly Jesus in his heavenly splendor appeared in their midst and proclaimed himself as their Redeemer. What joy and exultation reigned among the Jews in Babylon when, after a captivity of seventy years, they were allowed to return into their own country and to rebuild Jerusalem and their temple! "When the Lord brought back the captivity of Sion, we became like men comforted. Then was our mouth filled with gladness, and our tongue with joy. Then shall they say among the Gentiles: The Lord hath done great things for them, the Lord hath done great things for us; we are become joyful."—*Ps.* 125: 1-3. Who can describe the joy of the just in Limbo when the Redeemer said to them: I am your Redeemer: the time of your captivity is at an end; heaven is open to you; you may enter into rest and enjoy the beatific vision of God for ever. From that moment Limbo ceased to be a place of longing and sadness; the presence of Jesus changed it into a paradise of pleasure and joy.

2. *In order to manifest in the lower parts of the earth his power and glory.*

(a.) Up to this time only the earth had witnessed the power of Jesus Christ. He had revealed himself as the Lord of men, compelling them to give testimony to his divine mission against their will; he had revealed himself as the Lord of nature, commanding the winds and the waves and working numerous other miracles; he had manifested himself as the Lord of the spirit-world by casting out devils and having angels to minister unto him. His death especially was accompanied by so many and great miracles that even the heathen centurion, and all who were on Mount Calvary, full of astonishment, exclaimed: "Indeed, this was the Son of God."—*Matt.* 27: 54. But all the proofs which Jesus had given of his divine power and glory upon earth were not yet known to the souls in Limbo, many of whom did not perhaps even know that he was the Son of God. The evil spirits also that guarded the gates of Limbo had not yet experienced the power of Jesus; they were still in the undisputed possession of their dominion.

(b.) The Redeemer therefore descended into Limbo in order to pursue the evil spirits (whom he defeated so often upon earth) even in the lower parts of the earth, to destroy their power, and to compel them to pay him homage and adore him. "Christ," says St. Ambrose, "having descended into hell, broke its doors and bolts, reversed the sentence of death, freed the souls bound by sin from the jaws of Satan and restored them to life; and thus his triumph has been marked by the finger of God with indelible characters." O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? At the same time our Lord revealed himself to the Patriarchs and to the other souls as the Son of God, and disclosed to them all that he had done and suffered in order to wipe out the guilt of mankind and to accomplish the work of Redemption. When the Archangel Raphael made himself-known to Tobias and his son, saying: "I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord" (*Tob.* 12: 15, *et seq.*), they were terrified and fell upon their face, and remained, after the disappearance of Raphael, prostrate for three hours upon their face, praising God.

What astonishment, what veneration, and what holy awe must have seized the just in Limbo when Jesus said to them: I am Christ, the Son of God, your Lord and Redeemer! There can be no doubt that they immediately fell down before him, adoring and thanking him, saying: The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction . . . for ever and ever."—*Apoc.* 5: 12, 13.

PERORATION.

These are the reasons why Jesus Christ, after his death on the cross, descended into hell; he wished to comfort the languishing souls, to liberate them, and also to manifest his power and glory. Learn of Jesus who descended into hell to console and liberate the just, that you also may console the afflicted and the sorrowful and succor the needy according to your ability. The Apostle exhorts us to do this, saying: "Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men."—*I. Thess. 5: 14*. Learn of the souls in Limbo, who for so long a series of years waited in all patience for the day of their deliverance, always to be resigned to the holy will of God, and not to waver in your confidence when for years you must carry the cross. He that trusts in God shall not be confounded. Always preserve a pure conscience, serve God with fidelity in joy and sadness, and then you may confidently hope that after this fleeting life has passed away you will enter into the mansions of eternal peace. Amen.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS—EXPLANATION OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL PART—THE COMMUNION.

The grace on account of which Jesus Christ calls his disciples blessed is also given to us, for we also see him and can visit him as often as we please, and lay before him our necessities. For, as faith teaches us, he is really and substantially present in the Blessed Eucharist, and exclaims to us, as formerly to those who were with him, full of love and mercy; "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt. 11: 28*. And as in the days of his earthly life he offered himself up on Mount Calvary in a bloody manner for the Redemption of mankind, so he still offers himself daily in an unbloody manner by the hands of the priest in holy mass, in order to apply to us continually the fruits of his sacrifice on the cross.

I shall speak again to-day of the holy sacrifice of the mass and give you the necessary instruction on the third principal part

thereof, the Communion. Like the Consecration, we may divide it into three parts—

- I. *The preparation for Communion;*
- II. *The Communion itself;*
- III. *The prayers after Communion.*

PART I.

1. The preparation for communion begins with the *Pater noster*, or *Our Father*. This stands very appropriately after the Consecration; Jesus Christ having offered himself up for us we may invoke God as our Father, and present to him all our petitions with confidence, for through Jesus Christ we have become his children. But it stands also very appropriately before communion, for being about to partake of the heavenly banquet, what is more becoming than that we consider ourselves as one family in God, and in the joy of our heart call God our Father? The words in the *Our Father: Give us this day our daily bread*, remind us particularly of the bread of angels which we receive in holy communion.

The priest recites the *Our Father* with a loud voice, that all present may unite themselves in prayer with him and remember the inexpressible happiness of being children of God and of obtaining through Jesus Christ, who as victim rests upon the altar, all that we need for time and eternity.

The last petition in the *Our Father: Deliver us from evil*, the priest enlarges on, and beseeches God to deliver us from all evil, and through the intercession of Mary, of the Apostles, and of all the saints, to give us peace and graciously protect us from all sin and from every calamity.

During this prayer the priest holds the paten in his hand, makes with it the sign of the cross, and kisses it. In the cross of Christ there is heavenly power, by which we are strengthened and protected against all visible and invisible enemies, and against every evil. The kissing of the paten is a symbol of peace, the result of a victorious combat, and it is also a sign of our love for Christ crucified.

2. *The breaking of the species of bread.* This is done in remembrance of Jesus Christ, who at the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament also broke the bread; for this reason the celebration of the holy sacrifice of the mass was called in apostolic times the *breaking of bread*. This breaking of the species of bread has yet another reason. In early times the host was much larger than now. After being consecrated it was broken into three parts; the priest put one part into the chalice; another served for com-

munion; and the remaining part was for the faithful who were absent, and for other Christian congregations to which the Most Holy Sacrament was sent as a sign of their orthodoxy. Finally, the breaking of the species of bread has a spiritual significance, for it represents the violent death of our Lord, to which the words of the institution, as St. Paul quotes them, point: "This is my body, which shall be delivered for you."—*I. Cor. 11: 24.*

The priest puts the smaller part of the sacred Host into the chalice, saying: *May this mingling and consecration of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be to us that receive it effectual to eternal life. Amen.* This mingling is meant to express that the Most Holy Sacrament, though it is on the altar under both appearances, is only one; and at the same time a clear idea is given of the relation of the sacrifice and sacrament, or communion. At the Consecration the bread and the wine have been consecrated separately, and the body of our Lord in a mysterious manner separated from his blood, that the holy sacrifice of the mass may be a true representation of the sacrifice of the cross, in which the body and the blood of Christ were really separated from each other. But now, when the sacrifice passes over into a banquet and is communicated as a sacrament, the fact is expressed that both species are only one sacrament, and that Jesus Christ is whole, entire, and living, under each form; and for this reason the priest puts the small particle of the sacred Host into the chalice and unites the two species with each other.

3. *The "Agnus Dei" and prayer for peace.* The priest says three times: *Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us*, and strikes his breast in token of repentance and in acknowledgment of his unworthiness to receive the Son of God; but he takes courage in consideration that Jesus is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.

The *Agnus Dei* in the holy mass was introduced by Pope Sergius, who died in the year 701. He ordained that the words, *Lamb of God*, etc., should be repeated three times, and that each time the words, *have mercy on us*, should be added. Later, in the eleventh century, as Pope Innocent III. remarks, at the third repetition, instead of *have mercy on us*, the words, *give us peace*, were added, on account of the many persecutions which the Church had to endure.

After the words: *Give us peace*, the priest says a prayer in which he implores Jesus Christ to preserve his Church in peace and unity. Peace is an inestimable good for the Church, for when she is free from internal disquietude and schisms, and from external calamities and persecutions, she can labour more successfully for the salvation of men and diffuse her blessings everywhere.

As the Church at present is everywhere persecuted, you must pray to God that he will frustrate the designs of her enemies and give us peace.

4. The priest says two prayers for the worthy reception of communion. In the first he prays for deliverance from that which prevents a worthy communion, and for the granting of that which makes communion wholesome and fruitful, that is, he prays for deliverance from sin and its evil consequences, and for the grace of perseverance in well-doing. In the second he prays that the curse, which an unworthy communion involves, may be averted from him, and that the communion may not turn to his condemnation. Then he prays that the partaking of the Most Holy Sacrament may protect him against all internal and external enemies, and deliver him from all present evil.

After these prayers he takes the sacred Host into his hands, saying: *I will take the bread of heaven, and I will call upon the name of the Lord.* But when about to communicate he remembers his unworthiness, therefore he humbles himself, like the centurion in the gospel, and striking his breast, says three times: *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but say only the word, and my soul shall be healed.* Now follows the communion itself.

PART II.

The celebrating priest must necessarily communicate. If before communicating he should suddenly become ill, or die, so that he could not communicate, another priest, although not fasting, would be obliged to communicate and thus complete the holy sacrifice. The reason is because communion is essentially required for the completion of the sacrifice.

The priest receives communion in the following manner—

1. He lays the two particles of the broken Host over each other, makes the sign of the cross with them, intimating that it is the body of our Lord offered on the cross, which he is about to partake of, saying: *May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen.* This prayer indicates that the body of Christ is given as a pledge of heavenly glory, as a guarantee of everlasting life, and as a viaticum, in order to nourish and to strengthen us on our pilgrimage here below. Then the priest consumes the sacred Host, praying for a few moments in silent devotion, adoring Jesus, thanking him, and offering himself up to him.

After this he uncovers the chalice, makes a genuflexion in adoration of the most holy Blood, and says in the words of the Psalmist: *What shall I render to the Lord for all that he hath rendered to me? I will take the chalice of salvation; and I will call upon the name of the Lord. Praising I will call upon the Lord; and I shall be saved from my enemies—Ps. 115: 3, 4, and 17: 4.* Then he drinks the sacred Blood, saying: *The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen.* Again he pauses a little.

Now the acolyte pours wine into the chalice, whilst the priest says: *Grant, O Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth, we may receive with a pure mind and that of a temporal gift it may become to us an eternal remedy.* The communion is here called a temporal gift, because we receive it in this temporal life. After the first ablution the acolyte pours wine and water over the fingers, of the priest who then takes the second ablution, saying: *May thy body, O Lord, which I have received, and thy blood which I have drunk, cleave to my bowels; and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, who have been refreshed with pure and holy sacraments.* This double ablution of the chalice with wine and water is made out of reverence for the sacred Blood of Jesus Christ, of which not the smallest particle must remain in the chalice.

After communion follows the conclusion.

PART III.

The object of this conclusion is to return thanks to God for the holy sacrifice of the mass and for communion, as St. Augustine remarks: "Having participated in this great mystery, everything is concluded with thanksgiving." At present the conclusion contains—

1. *The Communion.* In the primitive times of the Church a psalm was chanted by the choir during the distribution of holy communion. In the thirteenth century it was chanted after the communion; later, the psalm was omitted altogether, and the priest said only an antiphon, a custom which has remained in force to the present time. It is this antiphon that we call the *communio*. It is generally taken from the Sacred Scripture; it sometimes contains an historical fact, sometimes a prophecy, sometimes a thanksgiving, sometimes an expression of joy, a wish, or a petition, and always has reference to the holy season, or the feast of the day.

2. *The Post-communion.* After the *communio* the priest goes to the middle of the altar, kisses it, and after the salutation, *The Lord be with you*, says the *Post-communion*. This prayer is called

Post-communion or *After-communion*, because it is recited or sung after holy communion. It is a prayer of petition in which we ask of God various graces, especially the grace of preserving in us the fruit of the holy mass and communion. It repeats once more the principal thought of the feast of the day. The first person, plural number is used in it, as in the collects and secret prayers, because in former times, not only the priest, but all the faithful present, or at least, most of them, communicated, and because even now they should communicate, if not really, at least spiritually. (Wherein does spiritual communion consist, and how is it made?)

3. *Ite missa est.* The priest now announces the end of the mass. After the customary salutation: *The Lord be with you*, he says: *Go, you are dismissed.* *Missa* means here the same as *missio*, *demissio*, in English, *dismission*. From the *Ite missa est* the holy sacrifice of the mass has its name. When the priest says or sings *Ite missa est*, he cries out to us as it were: The great work of salvation is accomplished, therefore you may leave the church with a joyful heart and go to your respective homes.

The *Ite missa est* was said formerly when after mass there was no other service and the faithful could leave the church. But if there were special devotions after mass, the priest said: *Benedicamus Domino*—"Let us praise the Lord," instead of *Ite missa est*. This was an invitation to the faithful to remain in church and assist at the devotion which took place after mass. At present the *Ite missa est* is said whenever the *Gloria* is said; if this is omitted, which is the case in all masses for which vestments of a violet color are used, *Benedicamus Domino* is said. In Requiem masses the priest says: *Requiescant in pace*—"May they rest in peace."

4. *The Placeat, the Blessing, and the Gospel of St. John.* With the *Ite missa est* the mass was formerly concluded. But when in the course of time the faithful no longer communicated with the priest, it was not appropriate to conclude the mass with the prayers immediately after the communion. A concise conclusion was needed, suitable for the whole mass. Thus in the tenth century it received a triple addition: The Placeat, the Blessing, and St. John's Gospel.

(a.) The *Placeat* is a prayer which reads: *Let the performance of my homage be pleasing to thee, O holy Trinity, and grant that the sacrifice which I, though unworthy, have offered up in the sight of thy Majesty, may be acceptable to thee, and through thy mercy be a propitiation for me and for all those for whom it has been offered.*

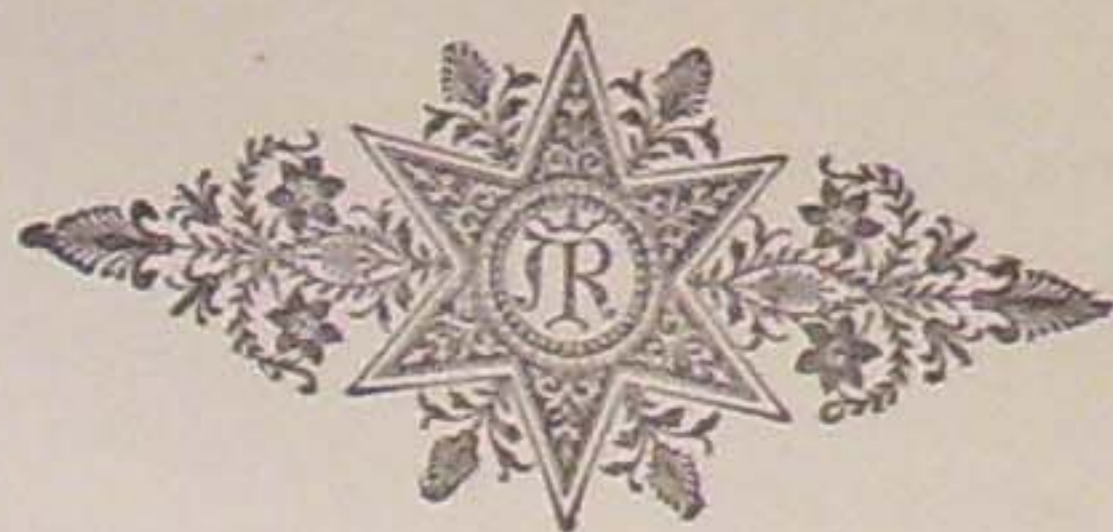
(b.) Now comes the *Blessing*. The priest, turning towards the people, gives them his blessing, saying: *May Almighty God,*

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless you. R. Amen. At this blessing the priest mentions the three divine Persons, because it is to the holy Trinity that the mass has been offered and from whom we expect every blessing. The sign of the cross which the priest makes signifies that blessings and salvation proceed from the cross; and the complete circle which he describes in turning round indicates that the blessing is intended for all the faithful.

(c.) After this comes *St. John's Gospel*, that is, the beginning of this gospel, from the first to the fourteenth verse. The primitive Christians had a great veneration for the sublime words of this gospel. St. Augustine approved of the custom which existed in his times of laying *St. John's Gospel* on the head, in order to be delivered from any evil; and Paul I. ordained the reading of that gospel over sick persons and the imposition of hands upon them. The faithful greatly desired that this gospel should be read at the end of mass, a wish which was complied with. Pope Pius II. made it a law.

PERORATION.

I have explained to you the whole mass, with its prayers and ceremonies, in order thus to obey the ordinance of the Church imposing this explanation as a duty upon all pastors of souls. Endeavor always to assist at mass with true devotion. Unite yourselves in spirit with the priest, and full of fervor and confidence, beseech God to impart to you the immense treasures of grace contained in holy mass, as much as is necessary and wholesome for you in the present and future life. At every mass make good resolutions to avoid a certain fault, to eradicate a bad inclination, to practice a particular virtue. Pray as pious Catholics, and preserve a good conscience, that hereafter it may be granted to you to behold Jesus Christ, who daily offers himself for you, and to praise him for ever. Amen.



TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE MAN FALLEN AMONG ROBBERS A FIGURE OF THE SINNER.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers.—Luke 10: 30.

In the gospel of this day we read of a man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho. Robbers suddenly fall upon him on the way, strip him of his clothes and take all that he has, and having wounded him, leave him half-dead. Two Jews, a priest and a Levite, come the same way, see him and pass by. But a Samaritan, who afterwards comes near him, acts differently. As soon as he sees the poor man he is moved to compassion; he goes up to him, binds up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and setting him upon his own beast, brings him to an inn, gives two pence to the host, tells him to take care of him, and promises to repay him at his return whatsoever he should spend over and above that amount.

Some interpreters of the Sacred Scriptures do not consider what our Lord here relates as a mere parable, but a real occurrence, because the way from Jerusalem to Jericho, which led through a desolate region, was noted from time immemorial as the lurking place of robbers, and to this day is called "the valley of murder." But whether it be a real fact or only a parable it is assuredly very instructive. We shall consider it in the spiritual sense and show that the man who fell among robbers is a figure of the sinner —

- I. *In his misery;*
- II. *In his rescue.*

PART I.

The man who fell among robbers gives us a clear idea of the misery into which sin brings us.

I. *A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.*

(a.) Jerusalem lies higher than Jericho, therefore the man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho *went down*. Every man who sins also goes down, every sin according to its nature being base,

and therefore lowering him who yields to it. Is it not degrading for man to exchange his filial relationship to God for the service of the devil, to become the slave of base passions and, like an irrational animal, to permit himself to be governed by carnal desires? Does not every sinner resemble the prodigal son who at last was in such straits, that he was obliged to herd swine? How much do avarice, impurity, and drunkenness lower man! Out of self-respect alone no one should commit sin.

(b.) Jerusalem, whence the man who fell among robbers started on his journey, is called the *city of peace*. It is the character of sin to rob man of peace. "There is no peace to the wicked."—*Is.* 48: 22. Examples: Cain, who never had any peace or rest from the moment he slew his brother to his death; Judas, who felt such remorse of conscience owing to his treason that full of despair he hanged himself. Tell me, sinner, do you now feel as happy as you did when you lived in innocence? Does not your conscience often rise against you and reproach you? Do you not tremble when you think of death, judgment, and hell?

(c.) Jericho, whither that man went, was a town which had turned away from God, had lost all appreciation of higher things, and luxury and vices of every description prevailed. The sinner, too, little by little, loses all his love of religion and virtue, detesting pious exercises, such as prayer, spiritual reading, and the receiving of the sacraments. He finds more pleasure in earthly and sensual things. The impure, the drunkards and gamblers stand at the head of the list in the catalogue of vice.

2. *Fell among robbers.* We need not wonder that he fell among robbers, for the region through which his way lay, as already remarked, was unsafe, and infested by numerous bands of robbers. The robbers into whose hands the sinner falls are —

(a.) The *devil*, for "he that committeth sin is of the devil."—*I. John* 3: 8. For this reason our Lord says to the Pharisees: "You are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father you will do."—*John* 8: 44. But what is more terrible than to fall into the hands of the devil? Is not the sinner more to be pitied than the man who falls into the hands of robbers? These can rob him only of his goods, or, at most, take away his temporal life, but the devil deprives his slave of his immortal soul and of heaven, and plunges him into eternal perdition.

(b.) *Vicious men who forget God.* With such he keeps company, and in his conversation with them he loses the fear of God, the love of what is good, and frequently faith itself. Oh, how many

young people have lost their virtue and innocence by intercourse with the world, and defiled their conscience with many and grievous sins! Examples: Dina, Jacob's daughter.—*Gen.* 34. The prodigal son.—*Luke* 15.

(c.) *The passions.* "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth."—*Gen.* 8: 21. When these bad inclinations are not subdued from the beginning, they develop into passions, which are very difficult to overcome, and are generally never overcome at all. Sin is a hard taskmaster. Christians who are under the dominion of evil passions know very well that what they do is sinful; they hate and detest vice and sometimes make attempts to abstain from it; but they are too weak to make a determined resistance, and suffer themselves again and again to be drawn away by their passions into their former sins, cursing, blaspheming, drinking, gambling, and impurity. What a miserable slavery!

3. *They stripped him.* The robbers were not satisfied with his money; they stripped him even of his clothes, so that he had nothing to cover his nakedness. He could truly say: "I have lost everything." But with greater truth can the sinner say this, for sin deprives him —

(a.) *Of sanctifying grace.* He who possesses sanctifying grace is a child of God. God loves him more than a father loves his only child, and takes up his abode with him, as Christ says: "If any man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him."—*John* 14: 23. Sanctifying grace is an inestimable treasure, in a certain sense of as high a value as the precious blood of Jesus, at the price of which it has been purchased. How miserable then is the man who loses sanctifying grace, for then God withdraws his love from him, and departs out of his heart, and the devil enters in and takes possession.

(b.) *Of all the merits* that he acquired in the state of grace, according to the word of the prophet: "If the just man turn himself away from his justice, and do iniquity . . . all his justices which he hath done shall not be remembered."—*Ezech.* 18: 24. When a thief steals money from you, of course you are grieved; but how could you be indifferent to the loss of all the merits that you have acquired by the practice of virtues and good works? Is not the least merit that we acquire for heaven worth more than all the silver and gold in the world, wherewith we can neither increase sanctifying grace nor purchase heaven?

(c.) *Of the right to the inheritance of heaven.* Heaven is a reward which is promised only to the just, and to the friends of God, a kingdom which is assured only to the co-heirs of Christ, only to those who are called children of God, and are such in reality. By mortal sin the Christian forfeits these titles and claims; from being a friend of God he becomes an enemy; from being a child of God and an heir of the kingdom of heaven, he becomes a slave of Satan and a reprobate of hell. If a man laments and complains when he loses his house by fire, ought not you to sigh and lament, O sinner, when you are compelled to say to yourself, "I have lost heaven!"

4. *They wounded him.* Not content with having taken from the traveller everything, even his clothes, the robbers fell upon him, beat him, abused and wounded him in so cruel a manner that he lay half-dead. The sinner also receives wounds upon wounds —

(a.) *In his understanding.* The more the sinner yields to sin, the more his passions grow, and the stronger they become; and it is they that darken his understanding, so that he neglects the duties of his religion and state of life without being the least disquieted in his conscience. He considers the greatest sins and vices no longer exceptional, or at least as excusable, so that he embraces various errors against faith, and finally apostatizes. How many Christians are there in our days who in consequence of their sinful lives are so blinded and deluded that they see nothing sinful in impurity, injustice, theft, revenge and suicide; they call prayer, and the reception of the sacraments, and all religious exercises, superstitions and fooleries!

(b.) *In his will.* Sin also weakens the will, and the more so the oftener it is repeated. Continuous temptations are not necessary to make him fall who by frequent relapses into sin has contracted bad habits. How easy is it for him who has frequently sinned against chastity to fall again into the same sin; for the irascible, to break out again into curses and blasphemies; for the habitual drunkard, to get drunk again!

(c.) *In the senses of the body,* as the eyes and ears, by forwardness; the touch, taste, and smell, by effeminacy. Who can count the sins which are committed in various ways with the five senses? I will mention here only unchaste looks, discourses, etc. How great will be the number of people who are lost on account of the sins committed by their five senses!

5. *They left him half-dead.* The wretched man was so dreadfully wounded that there was little life in him; if he had been

left to himself he would certainly have died. The sinner resembles this half dead man.

(a.) *Like him, he can no longer help himself, but must remain in his misery.* Though he bewails his iniquities with tears of blood, though he undergoes the most austere exercises of penance, though all the angels and saints pray for him, he remains in sin, unless Jesus Christ, the good Samaritan, helps him. Sin is an infinite guilt, because it is an offense against God, the highest, infinite good; therefore no finite being, be he man or angel, can take away its guilt or fully satisfy the justice of God. The words of the Psalmist apply here: "No brother can redeem, nor shall man redeem: he shall not give to God his ransom, nor the price of the redemption of his soul; and shall labor for ever."—*Ps.* 48: 8, 9. When the sinner obtains forgiveness and is saved from eternal perdition he owes it to the divine Saviour who has redeemed us and atoned for our sins.

(b.) *As the wounded man could move neither hand nor foot, nor make the least effort for his safety, so the sinner can no longer do anything meritorious for heaven.* He is deprived of spiritual life, of sanctifying grace, of the love of God, and where this is wanting, all the labor of man is without merit before God. The Apostle teaches us this plainly in these words: "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 3. How wretched then is a man who for years lives in a state of sin! As all his good works and practices of virtue are lost for heaven, is he not like a man who gathers precious treasures, but puts them into a sack full of holes?

Here then in the wounded man we have a figure of the sinner languishing in extreme wretchedness!

PART II.

The wounded man is also a figure of the sinner rescued.

1. *A certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion.*

The wounded man owed his rescue to the Samaritan, for if he had not gone to him, or like the Jewish priest and Levite had passed by without compassion, he certainly would have succumbed to his wounds and died. To whom is the sinner indebted for his deliverance? To whom else than to the divine Redeemer? If Jesus Christ had not had mercy on us, and come into the world, the whole human race would still languish in sin, and

incur temporal and eternal death. Only in Christ Jesus have we, as the Apostle says, "Redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace, which hath superabounded in us in all wisdom and prudence."—*Ephes.* 1: 7, 8.

2. *And going up to him, he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.* The good Samaritan did all he could to save the life of the poor man. He alighted from his beast, went up to him, poured oil and wine into his wounds, bound them up to prevent the loss of blood, and to render his recovery possible placed him with much labor upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care that he was nursed and received everything that was wholesome and conducive to his recovery.

Such a good Samaritan is Jesus.

(a.) *He goes to the sinner*, that is, he assists him with his grace that he may amend his life. Just as it was impossible for the wounded man to rise up or to do anything for his recovery, so is it impossible for the sinner to do the least thing of himself for his conversion or reconciliation with God. "We are not," says the Apostle, "sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."—*II. Cor.* 3: 5. When the sinner begins to be sorry for his sins and resolves to confess them and to lead a penitential life, it is not his doing but an effect of the grace which God gives him on account of the merits of Jesus, with a view to rescue him from perdition, for God will not that any man should perish; he gives every one, even the greatest sinner, the necessary grace to repent; but that it may be efficacious the sinner must accept it, and pray, for the subsequent and greater graces by which his conversion is accomplished depend principally on prayer. If prayer be necessary for any man, it is especially so for the sinner, in order that he may be saved. So long as he does not pray, repentance and conversion are impossible.

(b.) *He pours oil and wine into his wounds.* By oil we may here understand consoling words; and by wine, serious truths which Jesus Christ announces to sinners through his priests and other persons so that they may enter into themselves and be converted. Some sinners are easily moved; friendly instructions and kind admonitions make a deep impression upon them, and they repent of their faults and amend their lives. We have an example of this in St. Peter; a gentle and sorrowful look from Jesus was sufficient; he went out and wept bitterly. Thus some sinners when they hear a sermon on the infinite mercy of God, or on the

passion and death of Christ, are moved to repentance and renounce their worldly and sinful life. Other sinners, however, are not so easily moved; they are thoughtless and have a heart as hard as adamant; a salutary impression can be made upon them only by reprimands and threats. Thus the Lord found it necessary to cry out to Saul: "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?" and to dash him to the ground in order to change him into a St. Paul. Therefore it is the will of God that the clergy in preaching should speak of the small number of the elect, the awful pains of hell, and the terrible end of the impenitent, with a view to make sinners tremble and move them to repentance. But woe to the sinner upon whom neither the consoling nor the serious truths of our holy religion make any impression; he is obdurate and bears the mark of damnation on his forehead.

(c.) *He binds them up.* How does God bind up the wounds of the soul? He deprives the sinner of the opportunity of sin, and puts various obstacles in his way, which impede the continuance of his sinful life and even render it impossible. He sends vain persons an illness, which destroys their beauty, so that they can no longer be vain. He reduces a drunkard to misery and poverty, thus compelling him to lead a sober life. He snatches away by death the person with whom the sinner had criminal intercourse for a long time, in order to put an end to his sins. Thus God acts like a prudent physician, who puts a strong bandage over the wounds of his patient that they may cease bleeding and gradually heal up. Recognize it, sinner, as a great grace when God visits you with crosses and afflictions; he means well by you and intends to save your soul.

(d.) *He set him upon his own beast.* This beast, according to some interpreters of the Bible is the *humanity* of Christ. Upon this, Christ took sinners with all their crimes, and offered himself up for them on the cross. Hence St. Peter writes of him that he "his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree; that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice."—*I. Peter* 2: 24. And John the Baptist calls him the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. Historians praise Æneas who took his aged father Anchises upon his shoulders and hastened away with him, in order to save his life at the burning of Troy. Was not Jesus infinitely praiseworthy when he had mercy on you a sinner, and took you upon his shoulders to rescue you from the flames of hell? Will not this love of Jesus move you to repentance, or will you be cruel enough to continue to offend a God who has died for you on the cross?

(e.) *He brought him to an inn and took care of him.* This inn, in which Jesus Christ takes care of the sinner, is the Catholic

Church, the only institution established by him for the salvation of sinful man. In this Church he has deposited all the means of grace which are necessary for the purification and sanctification of men; he also preserves her throughout all ages to the end of the world, and spreads her empire over the whole earth, that the people of all times and nations may be saved in her and through her. How ungratefully and culpably then does the sinner act when he despises these graces and the means of salvation in the Church!

3. *The next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee.* Not content with having brought him to the inn, he pays the expenses for him in advance, and instructs the host to take good care of him; he even obliges himself at his return to repay all subsequent expense.

Such a charitable, merciful Samaritan is Christ towards the sinner.

(a.) *He gives him two pence.* These two pence are his holy doctrine and sacraments; and the host, to whom he gives the two pence, represents the bishops and priests. They are commissioned by him to preach his gospel, and to administer his sacraments. "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—*Matt. 28:19, 20.* According to his commission, the pastors of souls continue to preach the word of God, and to administer the holy sacraments, especially the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist. If the sinner makes good use of these means of grace he is justified, for the word of God causes him to come to the knowledge of the state of his soul, to repent of his sins, and to make resolutions of amendment; the holy Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist which he receives with due preparation deliver him from sin and procure for him sanctifying grace.

(b.) *He promises the host to pay whatsoever he should spend over and above the two pence.* There are sinners upon whom ordinary remedies have no effect. They resist all salutary admonitions of conscience, of pastors, and of other well-meaning persons; they neglect the sacraments or receive them unworthily and sacrilegiously, and persevere in sin. What does God do with such sinners? Does he abandon them? No; he has special graces for them, extraordinary means in readiness, in order, if possible, to snatch them from perdition. Such extraordinary means are missions, jubilees, supernatural apparitions, miracles, and sudden deaths.

PERORATION.

Thus Jesus Christ is, in truth, a good Samaritan to the sinner; he does everything to heal the wounds of his soul, and to rescue him from eternal death. Avail yourselves of the love and mercy of the divine Saviour in order to secure your salvation. Think of the great misery into which sin plunges man, and shun it more than death. Your maxim should be: "No mortal sin. Let all evils come upon me, only suffer me not to fall into a mortal sin." This ought to be your daily prayer. If you have the misfortune to fall into mortal sin, do not remain in that miserable state; take hold of the hand that seeks to save you, make an act of contrition, ask of God grace and pardon, and go with a heart well prepared to confession and communion, in order to be reinstated in the grace of God. Work out your salvation with zeal and perseverance, that you may preserve the life of grace here, and obtain the life of glory hereafter. Amen.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

WHY WE MUST LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—Luke 10: 27,

The Jews considered it a law of God to love our neighbor. But there was a dispute among them as to who was to be considered a neighbor. Most of the Scribes asserted that only Jews should be considered as neighbors, and consequently that only they must be loved; but that the Gentiles, and all who did not belong to Judaism need not be loved. Our Lord refutes this error in the parable of the good Samaritan, and teaches that every man, be he Jew or Gentile, friend or enemy, is our neighbor, and that we are obliged to love and succor him in his need, so far as we are able. "Your neighbor" says St. Augustine, "is he who, like you, descends from Adam and Eve." We are all neighbors on account of our origin, but much more so on account of our common hope in the heavenly inheritance. You must consider every one as your neighbor, whether he be a Christian or not.

Why must we love our neighbor? I shall answer this question to-day by saying that we must love him—

- I. *Because Christ our Lord commands it;*
- II. *Because he teaches this by his example;*
- III. *Because our neighbor has a claim to our love.*

PART I.

1. There is nothing that our Lord inculcates so frequently and emphatically as the commandment to love our neighbor. To convince us of the importance of this commandment, he places it next to the commandment to love God, saying: The second (commandment) is: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The commandment to love our neighbor is like the commandment to love God, because the love of our neighbor is based on the love of God. "On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets."—*Matt. 22: 40.* He who keeps these two commandments does everything that God requires, and walks in the way that leads to life everlasting. St. Augustine says very appropriately: "For walking you must have two feet, and if you desire to go to heaven, and come to God, you again need two feet. And what are they? *The two feet of the love of God and of your neighbor.* If one of these feet is wanting, you will limp and not arrive at the end of your journey."

2. Christ calls the commandment of the love of our neighbor *his* commandment. "This is *my* commandment, that you love one another." Why does he call it *his* commandment? Because he has this commandment particularly at heart, and because he strictly requires us to fulfil it. A spiritual writer says: "This mode of expression of Jesus resembles that of a prince who says: It is my glory to bestow graces and benefits; it is my joy to forgive injuries." He certainly does not mean to be understood as not professing the other virtues of a prince, but only that to do good and to forgive injuries are his favorite virtues. In like manner our Lord with those words gives us to understand that of all the commandments he values the love of our neighbor most, and insists particularly upon its observance.

3. Again he says: "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another."—*John 13: 34.* God has written the commandment to love our neighbor in the heart of every man, and he gave it expressly to the Israelites. This commandment therefore is not new, but as old as the human race. Nevertheless, Jesus calls it a new commandment, because we have new motives for it, and must observe it in an entirely new and perfect manner.

In the Old Testament the people loved one another as creatures of God, or descendants of Adam; their love was limited, circumscribed, and imperfect, but we Christians must love our neighbor as a child of God, as our brother in Christ, as our associate in future glory; we must love him according to the pattern of Jesus, who offered himself up for him as a victim. In this sense, therefore, the commandment of Jesus to love our neighbor is a new commandment, and, therefore, also a commandment, to the observance of which we are invited by new motives.

4. Again, Jesus declares the love of our neighbor to be a mark of his disciples, saying: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."—*John 13: 35.* Here our Lord has done something similar to what princes and noblemen do. They give their servants a livery that they may be known by all as their servants. Thus Jesus wished the love of our neighbor to be the badge by which we should be distinguished and known as his disciples by Jews and Gentiles. It was this love that the Gentiles admired so much in the Christians. Behold, they said, how they love one another! During the time of persecution the Christians frequently betrayed themselves to their enemies owing to their charity. When the Gentiles noticed that some one distinguished himself by works of charity they said: He must be a Christian, for people of our religion do not have this charity. With justice, therefore, St. Chrysostom says: "There are many marks of Christianity, but the principal and first one is mutual love."

5. Our Lord assures us *that he will consider all acts of kindness and charity done to our neighbors as done to himself.* "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."—*Matt. 25: 40.* Commenting on this passage, St. Augustine beautifully says: "Let none of you say: Blessed are those who were deemed worthy to receive Jesus in their homes. Complain not that you are born at a time when you can no longer behold the Lord in the flesh. He has not taken this grace away from you. Whatever you do to one of these my least brethren, you do it to me." Example: St. Martin, who gave a beggar the half of his mantle, whereupon Christ appeared to him in sleep and, showing him the half of the mantle, said: "With this mantle Martin has clothed me."

6. The time in which Jesus particularly inculcated this commandment must also be taken into consideration. It was at the Last Supper, shortly before his death. He recommended to his disciples, repeatedly and most urgently, that they should love one another. Love is also, as it were, his last commandment, his last

petition, his testament. Oh, who would not cheerfully comply with the last will of Jesus? "Consider," says St. Augustine, "if the words of a father hastening to his grave are so sweet, pleasant and important, what impression must the words of Christ have upon his heirs!"

PART II.

Christ teaches us the commandment in regard to the love of our neighbor *by his example.*

1. St. Peter says: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps."—*I. Peter 2: 21.*

In what virtue has Jesus left us a more excellent example than in his love of our neighbor? Every page in the gospel contains proof of his love for men. How he loved the poor! He fed the hungry, healed the sick, and cried out to all the wretched and afflicted, "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt. 11: 28.* He loved the ignorant, whom he instructed; the weak, whom he raised and strengthened, the sinners, whose sins he sought to forgive. He loved even his enemies, whom he endeavored to save, and for whom he prayed on the cross. He loved all men, shedding his precious blood for the redemption of all. In truth, if Jesus had never commanded us by word to love our neighbor, his example alone would be more than sufficient to urge us to observe this commandment.

2. Jesus appeals to his example in order to urge us to love our neighbor: "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, *as I have loved you.*"—*John 13: 34.* You must take me for your pattern, "as I have loved you, so you also love one another."

3. The Apostle also points to Christ as our example of the love of our neighbor, in these words: "Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as most dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."—*Ephes. 5: 1, 2.* Pious Christians of all times have always looked upon the example of Jesus as the strongest motive of the love of our neighbor. Example: St. John Gualbert.

PART III.

Our neighbor has a claim to our love. Why?

1. *Because he is a child of God.* God has created us; he is therefore our Father, and we are his children. Moses said to the people of Israel: "Is not he (God) thy father, that hath possessed thee,

and made thee, and created thee?—*Deut. 32: 6.* Through Jesus Christ we have become children of God, for he reconciled us with him, and recovered for us his love and grace which we had forfeited by sin. Therefore, the Apostle says: "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba (Father)."—*Rom. 8: 15.* And Jesus teaches us to pray: "Our Father, who art in heaven." Should not this high dignity to which God has raised us be a motive to love our neighbor? Could we treat a man uncharitably whom God has adopted as his child? Moreover, being children of God, and God being our Father, we are all brothers and sisters. And what is more becoming in brothers and sisters than to love one another?

2. *Because he is in the image of God.* Every man has understanding, free will, and an immortal spirit; he can become good and holy and after this life a saint in heaven. In all this he resembles God—is the image of God. Now if we love God because he is the most perfect good, we must also love our neighbor, because he has in himself, at least in some measure, the perfection of God. If a child loves his parents tenderly, he loves their portrait and carefully keeps it. If he thought it worthless, only fit to be torn up or trampled under foot, it would be a sure sign that he does not love his parents. The same holds good of the love of God, and of our neighbor; if therefore we love God, we must also love his image which is our neighbor.

3. *Because he is redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and called to eternal felicity.* Jesus Christ died for all men and redeemed them; not with corruptible gold or silver, but with his precious blood.—*I. Peter 1: 18, 19.* What a great value must not even the poorest man have in the eyes of God, since Jesus paid such a high price for him! And should we not love him? Because Christ has redeemed us, we are all called to eternal happiness. "God will have all men to be saved."—*I. Tim. 2: 4.* Though many, on account of their forgetfulness of God, give us reason to fear that they will not be saved, yet they may sooner or later change their sinful life, end by true repentance save their souls. Examples of this kind we have in Mary Magdalen, the penitent thief, St. Paul, and numerous other sinners who were converted. S. Augustine says: "You do not know what your neighbor is in the sight of God, and what God intends in regard to him. He who to-day stands among idolaters and adores a stone, may yet be converted and adore the true God. Being all called to happiness, and wishing nothing more ardently than to be saved, how can we live in discord and enmity upon earth, knowing that in heaven we shall love one another with our whole hearts? In truth, he who loves

not his neighbor is not fit for heaven, for in heaven the most perfect love reigns supreme."

PERORATION.

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto charity, and to good works.—*Heb.* 10: 24. We are Christians and have the commandment from our Lord and Redeemer to love one another; we are Christians, and, as such, must follow the steps of Jesus, who out of love for us became man, suffered and died; we are children and images of God, and called to eternal happiness. What motives to love our neighbor! Far be it from us to nourish aversions, anger and hatred against our fellow-men; to offend them in word or deed; to treat them harshly or uncharitably. On the contrary, let us sincerely wish them all good, be patient with their faults, and according to our ability assist them in their necessities that we may fulfil the great commandment, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* Amen.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

THE LOVE OF OUR ENEMIES.

Go, and do thou in like manner.—*Luke* 10: 37.

None were more hostile to one another than the Jews and the Samaritans. The Jews avoided all intercourse with the Samaritans and refused them every act of charity: they even went so far as to think that a good act done to a Samaritan was displeasing to God. This uncharitableness of the Jews exasperated the Samaritans, as well it might, and they in their turn refused them their love and returned evil for evil. Hence we read in the gospel that when our Lord was on his way to Jerusalem the Samaritans refused to receive him in their city because they recognized him as a Jew; whereupon his disciples James and John became so angry that they desired him to command fire to come down from heaven to consume them.—*Luke* 9: 52, 53. By placing before us a Samaritan who treated the poor wounded Jew charit-

ably, and in conclusion saying: *Go, and do thou, in like manner*, Jesus in the gospel of this day teaches us that we also must love our enemies. I shall speak to you to-day of the love of our enemies, and for this purpose shall answer the two following questions:

- I. *Why must we love our enemies?*
- II. *How must we love our enemies?*

PART I.

We must love our enemies—

1. *Because God strictly commands it,*

(a.) *In the Old Law.* Thus he spoke to the people of Israel: "Thou shalt not stand against the blood of thy neighbor; thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart. Seek not revenge, nor be mindful of the injury of thy citizens."—*Levit.* 19: 16-18. Everything contrary to charity is forbidden in these words, that is, to take revenge on him who offends us, to hate him, or to kill him. Again he says: "if through hatred any one push a man, or fling anything at him with ill design; or being his enemy, strike him with his hand, and he die, the striker shall be guilty of murder."—*Num.* 35: 20, 21. Again we read: "Remember thy last things, and let enmity cease."—*Ecclus.* 28: 6. "He that seeketh to revenge himself, shall find vengeance from the Lord; and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance. Forgive thy neighbor if he hath hurt thee, and then shall thy sins be forgiven to thee when thou prayest."—*Ecclus.* 28: 1, 2. In Proverbs we read: "If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap hot coals on his head; and the Lord will reward thee."—*Prov.* 25: 21, 22. The pious persons under the Old Law fulfilled this commandment to love their enemies. Thus Joseph loved his brothers; David, Saul and Semei.

(b.) *In the New Law* in particular. Christ says: "You have heard that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy; but I say to you: Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you."—*Matt.* 5: 43, 44. Christ makes the forgiveness of our sins depend on the fulfilling of this commandment: "If you will forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences; but if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your sins."—*Matt.* 6: 14, 15. Again, Christ declares that unless we love our enemies, no prayer, no sacrifice, no good work, pleases God: "If therefore

thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift."—*Matt.* 5: 23, 24. Finally, as may be seen from the parable of the unmerciful servant, those who refuse to be reconciled with their neighbors and show themselves inimical to them, must expect a severe judgment and eternal damnation.

2. *Because Jesus teaches us to love our enemies, giving us a most splendid example—*

(a.) *Even in his childhood.* Herod seeks his life, and Jesus goes out of his way; this cruel wretch murders all the children of Bethlehem and the neighborhood. Jesus permits it to be done without taking revenge on the murderer.

(b.) *In his public life.* He is surrounded on all sides by enemies who envy, hate and persecute him. They call his miracles the works of the devil, they misrepresent his doctrine, and say that he seduces the people; they pursue him with stones and strive to take his life. How does he conduct himself towards them? Does he return evil for evil? No; he suffers and forgives.

(c.) *In his Passion and Death.* He is apprehended and bound as a malefactor deserving death; he is dragged with contumely and abuse from judge to judge; he is scourged; the soldiers put a crown of thorns on his head, and spit in his face; he is crucified between two thieves and is mocked and blasphemed even in the agony of death. He silently and patiently endures it all, and when dying opens his mouth, not to complain, but to pray for his enemies and murderers, saying; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."—*Luke* 23: 34. Contemplating the example of Jesus, could we still entertain hatred and enmity towards our neighbors? Could we refuse to forgive from our heart those who offend us?

3. *Because we are admonished to love our enemies by the example of all good Christians.*

(a.) St. Paul writes of the first Christians: "We are reviled, and we bless; we are persecuted, and we suffer it; we are blasphemed, and we entreat."—*I. Cor.* 4: 12, 13. St. Stephen, who was stoned to death, fell upon his knees and prayed: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."—*Acts* 7: 59. St. James the Apostle

did the same. When he was cast down from the pinnacle of the temple, the last effort of his remaining strength was a prayer imploring pardon for his murderers. During the bloody persecution which Maximilian inflicted on the Christians, St. Sabinus, bishop of Aris, was tortured by the governor Venustianus. His two hands had already been cut off, when his tormentor was seized with an awful pain in his eyes, and suffered terribly. The holy martyr went to him and began to pray over him. He had scarcely finished his prayer when the governor was relieved of his pains. Count Francis of Guise, who waged war against the Protestants, was told that one of them was in the camp seeking to kill him. He had him arrested. The Protestant avowed his purpose. The Count asked him: "Have I done you any harm?" "No," he replied, "but I intended to kill you because you are the greatest enemy of my faith." The Count said: "If you wish to kill me on account of your faith I will forgive you on account of mine," and he dismissed him without punishment, permitting him to pass unmolested out of the camp. A certain holy martyr said to his executioners, who, like Herod, asked a sign of him: "I love you, my murderers, as my brothers; do you ask for a greater sign?" St. Francis of Sales used to say: "I do not know how God formed my heart. If he were to command me to hate an enemy, I should not be able to do so, and if an enemy were to pluck out one of my eyes, I should look at him kindly with the other."

(b.) *Of many just heathens.* A certain heathen philosopher received a heavy blow upon his head inflicted by a rough man; far from getting into a passion he merely said: "Had I known that this would happen I would have put on a helmet." When Phocian, a renowned statesman at Athens, was condemned to death owing to party hatred, and the executioner being about to hand him the poisoned cup asked him if he had any commands for his son, he replied: "I request my son never to take vengeance on my enemies on account of the crime they have committed against me." Among the Turks, those who will not give up enmities, and forgive offences are severely punished; they dare not appear in their mosques for prayer at a certain season until they are reconciled with their enemies. You see that the well-disposed among heathens and non-Christians suppressed all desire of revenge; what a disgrace then it is to us Christians to allow ourselves to be excelled by them!

4. *Because the love of enemies is a most noble virtue and deserves a great reward.*

(a.) To love one's friends is something neither great nor especially meritorious; our natural feelings impel us to do this.

Hence we see that all nations, be they ever so savage, uncivilized, or destitute of the knowledge of religion, have practiced the love of friends. But Christ wished that we should be more perfect than the heathens and unbelievers, therefore he was not content that we should love our friends only, but he also commanded us to love our enemies, adding: "If you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens this?"—*Matt.* 5: 46, 47. Hence Tertullian says: "We are commanded to love our enemies, and this is a prerogative peculiar to us, for to love friends is common to all, but to love enemies is proper to Christians."

(b.) It is a universally acknowledged truth: The more difficult the work, the greater the reward. The love of friends causes no inconvenience; it is in our nature; but to love an enemy we must do violence to ourselves and overcome ourselves; it demands some effort on our part. But does not heaven demand efforts? and does it not deserve every effort in order to gain it? Now because the love of enemies demands great efforts, hard struggles, and great self-denial, it has a claim to a great reward, whilst that which costs us nothing at all, as the love of friends, can scarcely be worthy of a reward.

PART II.

1. We must love our enemies *from the heart*, that is, we must be well disposed towards them, sincerely wishing them everything good, and have compassion on them when evil befalls them. Jesus requires this disposition, saying: "Love your enemies," for love necessarily includes kindness and benevolence; it is so inculcated in the commandment of Jesus: "If thou remember that thy brother hath anything against the . . . go first to be reconciled to thy brother."—*Matt.* 5: 23, 24. To reconcile one's self to another is nothing else than to lay aside all hatred, malice, and uncharitableness.

It is not enough then that we do no evil to our enemies, that we take no revenge on them and that we leave them to themselves, or that we treat them with merely external friendliness, salute them, speak to them and even do good to them; we must also be kind to them interiorly, in the heart, and have a benevolent feeling towards them. It is true, we do not sin against the precept of the love of enemies when anger and hatred sometimes arise in our hearts, but we must fight against and suppress these motions with all our might. It is not the feeling of anger and hatred but

the consent to it that is sinful. A beautiful example of generous love and benevolence towards enemies is given to us by the chancellor of England, Blessed Sir Thomas More, who on account of his fidelity to the faith was arrested, condemned to the horrors of prison, sentenced to death and executed. When the judges came into the prison and communicated to him that the moment had now arrived when he was to be beheaded, and then asked him if he had any further wish, the noble martyr said: "Honorable judges, I have no further wish to express beyond this, that, as St. Paul who, though he had consented to the murder of St. Stephen, is now for ever united with him in heaven, I also may find you in heaven though you have condemned me to death." This was the revenge of that noble man; he wished to see with him in heaven the unjust judges who had condemned him to so cruel and ignominious a death. Thus acts the true Christian; he thinks as his divine Saviour, whose heart was full of benevolence and love towards his persecutors and murderers.

2. *In word.* This is done when you salute your enemies and offenders, speak to them pleasantly in the same way as you are in the habit of doing with regard to persons who have never offended you. You therefore sin when you pass by without saluting or addressing him who has offended you; or when meeting him you look the other way, fix your eyes on the ground, or pretend not to see him; or when you purposely shun him and avoid places where you might meet him. These are evident signs that you still entertain enmity; for if it were not the case you would speak to your neighbor, or at least salute him, and manifest a friendly feeling towards him. But you will say: "If he speaks to me, I will speak to him." That is just what your adversary thinks, and thus the one waits for the other to make the first advance, and your reconciliation will never be accomplished. Overcome yourself and take the initiative in speaking first, and saluting, and there will be peace. Others say: "I am the offended party, it is the duty of him who has offended me to make the first step towards reconciliation and to speak to *me*." This is true, but when he who offends you does not do his duty, you must do what the love of enemies requires; you must speak to him and salute him. Some say: "If I *do* speak to him, he will either give me no answer, or only an insulting one." I say: Fulfil your duty, and speak to him whether he gives you no answer or an insulting one; that is his business. This speaking and saluting, you must repeat as often as you meet him, and you may omit it for a time only if he insults you or forbids you to speak to him; but you must then declare to him, that in order to avoid unpleasant scenes, you will not salute him or speak to him for some time, but that at heart you feel kindly disposed towards him. Make it

your rule to reconcile yourself without delay, interiorly and exteriorly, with anyone who has offended you, according to the admonition of St. Paul: "Let not the sun go down upon your anger."—*Ephes. 4: 26.*

3. *In deed.* This is done —

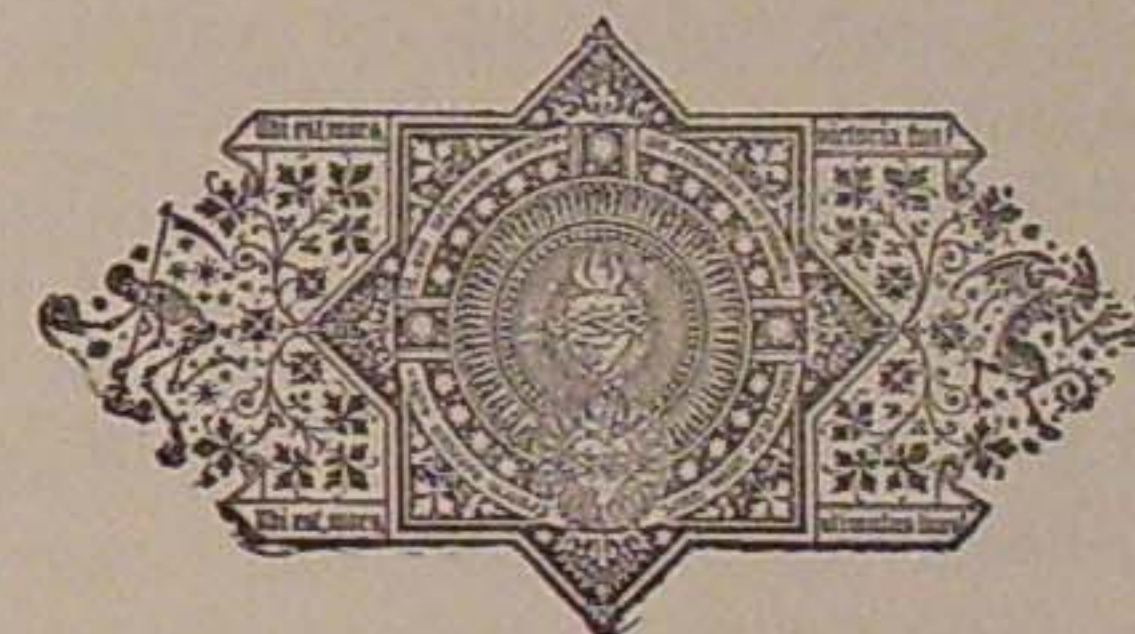
(a.) *By praying for them.* It is an express commandment of Christ to pray for enemies: "Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you."—*Matt. 5: 44.* He prayed himself for his enemies: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."—*Luke 23: 34.* We know that St. Stephen and many other saints prayed for their enemies. There is no commandment to pray for enemies in particular: in general it suffices that we pray for our fellow-men, no matter whether they are our friends or enemies. But it is strictly forbidden purposely to exclude our enemies from our prayer, for this would be directly against Christian charity, and would be a manifest sign that we still nourished hatred and enmity towards our neighbor. Temptations frequently arise from the injuries we have suffered and these disturb us and stimulate us to hatred; for this reason it is expedient expressly to pray for our enemies and to recommend them to the grace of God, because this is the best means of overcoming temptations.

(b.) *By doing good to them.* "Do good to them that hate you." St. Alphonsus says: "If thy brother does thee an injury purposely, revenge thyself, but revenge thyself as the saints revenge themselves." And wherein does the revenge of the saints consist? In this, that they returned good for evil. Think again of Jesus, who gave countless proofs of his love for his enemies, and shed his precious blood for them on the cross. It is a duty to exclude no one from our benefits because he is our enemy; so that if we have done good to some one before he offended us, we must also do good to him after the offense; we must assist our enemies when they need our assistance, if it can be done without great inconvenience, and finally we must give them special proofs of our love when that is the means of restoring peace. Those who say, "I do my enemies neither good nor evil," by no means comply with the precept of the love of enemies; such a mode of speaking indicates only too plainly that enmity is still lurking in their hearts.

PERORATION.

Make the resolution to fulfil this important law of the love of enemies. Reflect that without it there is no forgiveness of sin,

no grace, no salvation. If you live in enmity with any of your fellow-men, give it up this very moment, forgive your enemy from your heart, and at the first opportunity extend to him the hand of reconciliation. Be at peace with every one. Even though you may be sometimes offended, and wrong may be done you, give no place to anger on that account; suppress all hatred and rancor, and act as Christians whose revenge is to suffer, to forgive, and to return good for evil. Forgive one another, that God may forgive you your sins and receive you as his children into the mansions of everlasting peace. Amen.





THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*Gal. 3: 16-22.* Brethren: To Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed. He saith not: And to his seeds, as of many, but as of one: And to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say, that the testament which was confirmed by God, the law which was made after four hundred and thirty years, doth not annul so as to make void the promise. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. But God gave it to Abraham by promise. Why then was the law? It was set because of transgressions, until the seed should come, to whom he made the promise, being ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now, a mediator is not of one: but God is one. Was the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could give life, verily justice should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

EXPLANATION OF THE EPISTLE, TOGETHER WITH WHOLESOME LESSONS.

In Galatia where St. Paul had preached the gospel with success, and where he had established a Christian congregation, false teachers, formerly Jews, had arisen, who asserted that the Mosaic Law, especially circumcision, was obligatory on Christians, and that without observing this law, no Christian could be justified and saved. These false teachers caused a great deal of disturbance and confusion in the Christian congregation, and the Galatians were in danger of becoming half Jews; that is, besides the ordinances of the Christian religion, they were inclined to observe the Mosaic ceremonies as well. St. Paul, therefore, found himself obliged to proceed against this error with deter-

mination and decision, and to teach the Galatians that the Mosaic Law had been abolished, and that even the people under the old Law could not be justified and saved through it, but only by a living faith in the Saviour to come.

The Apostle brings this important truth before us in the epistle of this day. Since this lesson is very hard to be understood I shall —

- I. Explain the meaning of it as clearly as possible, and
- II. Add a few salutary lessons.

PART I.

1. Our lesson begins with these words: *To Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed. He saith not: And to his seeds, as of many, but as of one; And to thy seed, which is Christ.*

God made a covenant with Abraham, the progenitor of the Israelites, and promised him, that in one of his descendants all nations of the earth should be blessed. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."—*Gen. 22: 18.* By this blessing we must not understand temporal goods, but the grace of Redemption—a grace of which not only the natural descendants of Abraham, the Jews, but the whole human race, were to become partakers. St. Paul lays a particular stress upon this, that God said not to Abraham: "to thy seeds," but "to thy seed," and consequently that he spoke not of many, but only of one offspring of Abraham, in order to point out definitely that this one seed, this one descendant of Abraham, is Jesus Christ, who according to his human nature descends from Abraham. Thus then, the blessing of nations comes from Jesus Christ; to him alone the whole human race owes redemption from sin and hell, and all graces for the attainment of salvation.

2. The Apostle continues: *Now this I say, that the testament which was confirmed by God, the law which was made after four hundred and thirty years, doth not annul, so as to make void the promise.* As already observed, God had made a covenant with Abraham, and promised him that in his seed, *i. e.*, in Jesus Christ, all generations should be blessed. That covenant, with the promise connected with it, was far more ancient than the Law, for this was given four hundred and thirty years afterwards. The Apostle concludes that, because God promised the blessing of nations when he made the covenant with Abraham, and not when he gave the Law, it follows that this blessing comes from the promise made to Abraham, and not from the Law; or, in other words, that one cannot be justified through the mere observance of the Mosaic Law, but through a living faith in Jesus

Christ. The Law given at a later period could in no wise limit nor abolish the promise made to Abraham, for what God has once established and promised he will infallibly carry out.

3. For, the Apostle goes on to say, *if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. But God gave it to Abraham by promise.* Here St. Paul gives another reason why salvation does not come from the Mosaic Law, but from the promise made to Abraham. He means to say: If men could be justified and saved by the observance of the Law of Moses, the blessing of nations would not be an inheritance, *i. e.*, a gift of God, but rather a merit of men, because it would have to be acquired or merited by the observance of the Law, but this blessing comes not from the merits of men, since God expressly promised it as a gift, or a grace. In these words, the Apostle has uttered the truth of the faith that the Redemption of man is an undeserved grace, to which neither the Jews by the observance of the Law of Moses, nor the Gentiles by the fulfilment of the natural law, had any claim or title.

4. The Apostle further says: *Why then was the law? It was set because of transgressions, until the seed should come, to whom he made the promise, being ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not of one; but God is one.* Here St. Paul asks; If the blessing of nations comes from the promise, *i. e.*, from the belief in Jesus Christ, why then was the Law established? The Apostle replies to this and says that the Law was given because of transgressions—namely, to make the Jews understand what sin was, and to bring them to the consciousness of their sinfulness; then through the threat of great punishments to deter them from evil, to subdue their senses, and finally to keep them in subjection and discipline through the hard service of the ceremonial law. If the children of Israel had always been tractable and obedient, as in the time of the Patriarchs, such a severe law as the Mosaic would not have been necessary; but as in the course of time they grew more unmanageable and through their long sojourn in Egypt were very much inclined to idolatry, they needed, like a stubborn son, a hard taskmaster, in order to be preserved from total degeneracy. This taskmaster was the Mosaic Law, which was therefore by no means superfluous, but necessary. This law was not to be in force for ever, but only *until the seed should come, to whom he made the promise, i. e.*, up to the time of Jesus Christ, when it would come to an end, in order to give place to the New Law, to the Christian religion.

The apostle calls attention to a prerogative, which the promise of the blessing of nations has, over the Mosaic Law. God gave **this law not directly, but indirectly; for he employed angels,**

and caused it to be given to the people through Moses; but the promise that in Christ, the descendant of Abraham, all nations should be blessed, he gave directly. As Moses was the mediator only between God and the children of Israel, and not between God and the pagan nations, it follows that the Mosaic Law did not concern the Gentiles, and was not obligatory on them. And this again is a reason why the salvation of mankind could not come from the Law, because it had not been given to the whole world. This salvation could come only from the promise made to Abraham, because it referred to all the nations of the earth: "In thy seed all nations of the earth shall be blessed."

5. The Apostle asks: *Was the law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given, which could give life, verily justice should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* The Apostle means to say: The Law of Moses is not against the promise made by God to Abraham; it cannot annul this promise, and represent the belief in it as useless. This would be the case if the law had the virtue of making man, dead through sin, live, *i. e.*, of imparting to men who have lost grace by the commission of sin the strength for spiritual regeneration, for justification and sanctification. This, however, the Law can by no means do; it can cause and confer no justice, and therefore according to its nature it is incapable of procuring the promised blessing of nations. The end and virtue of the Sacred Scripture of the Old Testament (*the Scripture hath included all under sin*), whose chief contents the Law constitutes, consist only in teaching men that they are under the thralldom of sin, and that of their own power they cannot free themselves from this servitude; as also in this, that it would infuse into them a desire for the promised blessing of nations, and for appropriating that blessing (justification and sanctification) to themselves by a living faith.

This is the meaning of this day's epistle. Let us now consider a few salutary lessons which are contained therein.

PART II.

1. God made the promise to Abraham that in one of his posterity all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The fulfilment of this promise was delayed a long time, for about two thousand years elapsed before the Redeemer came. But with God "omission is not acquittance;" he is infinitely faithful, and keeps his promises. Therefore David says: "The word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done with faithfulness."—*Ps. 32: 4.* From this it follows —

(a.) *That we must never waver in our confidence in the promises of God.* Oftentimes heavy trials come upon us, and it seems as if God did not care for us, and had abandoned us. But that is only appearance, not reality. God never abandons us if we do not abandon him, he sends us consolation and help at the right time, and ordains everything for our good. He himself assures us: "Fear not, for I am with thee, I have strengthened thee, and have helped thee."—*Is.* 41: 10. We must not mistrust his word, for he is faithful to keep his promises. We are exposed to many dangers to salvation; the world, the flesh and the devil endeavor to bring us to ruin; but we must be full of courage and confidence; "for God," says the Apostle, "is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it."—*I. Cor.* 10: 13. He who created us in order that we may be saved, will himself enable us to attain that salvation. In all troubles and difficulties cling to God, whose faithfulness lasts for ever. He who trusts in God shall never be confounded.

(b) *That we must also keep the promise which we have made to our fellow-men.* Nothing is more disgraceful than without a just cause to take back our word and deceive our neighbor who depends on our promise. Such unreliable, faithless persons meet with universal contempt; but they also do wrong before God, for "lying lips are an abomination to the Lord."—*Prov.* 12: 22. Since God always fulfils what he promises, he wills that we also should conscientiously fulfil our promises to our neighbor.

2. The Mosaic Law contained not only the ten commandments, but also many other ordinances, which referred to the religious and civil life, and which were so much interwoven in all the circumstances of life that it was hardly possible to keep them all. Therefore St. Peter calls the Mosaic Law a yoke which the Jews were not able to bear.

How much better off are we Christians! Our Blessed Saviour has freed us from the Mosaic ordinances and ceremonies, and has given us a law which with his grace we can easily fulfil. This will become quite evident by making a brief comparison between ourselves and the Jews. The Jews had circumcision, which was very painful; we Christians have baptism in its stead, which is easy to receive and confers so many graces. The Jews had only one temple in all their country, the temple at Jerusalem, and many of them were obliged to travel several days in order to visit it according to the law; we have churches everywhere, and many have only a few steps to go in order to perform their devotional exercises. The Jews were not allowed to eat the flesh of unclean animals, to which class belonged all those quadrupeds

which had not cloven feet, and did not chew the cud; the use of blood was also prohibited. We Christians have permission to eat of all animals. The Jews could in many cases become unclean, for instance, by touching an unclean animal, or a corpse, by eating forbidden food, by going to a place which according to the law was considered unclean; and they were obliged to observe various ceremonies in order to be cleansed again. We Christians have nothing that contaminates us but sin. From this you see how many advantages we have over the Jews and how much more easily we can serve God. For this reason Jesus calls his holy law a sweet yoke and a light burden.—*Matt.* 11: 30. How guilty we render ourselves before God, when we do not fulfil the easy ordinances of our holy religion! Truly, the Jews may rise up against us on the day of judgment and condemn us.

3. *However hard the Mosaic Law was, it did not lead to sanctity and salvation.* Though the Jews observed all the ordinances most scrupulously and minutely they were not on that account justified and sanctified. If they committed a sin they had no remedy in their law by which they could be freed from it, and reconciled again with God. And when they obtained the forgiveness of sin it was not through the fulfilment of the law, but through faith in the promised Redeemer. He who did not believe in him and expect salvation from him was lost. Even to the people under the Old Law the utterance of the Prince of the Apostles applied: "Neither is there salvation in any other (than in Jesus Christ). For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."—*Acts* 4: 12. How fortunate are we Christians! We have the holy sacraments by which we obtain the remission of all sins and punishments; sanctifying grace, filial relationship with God, and the inheritance of heaven. No matter how much and how grievously we may have sinned we need but make a good confession, and we are reconciled with God. If, then, we keep God's commandments, and practise virtues and good works, not only a temporal reward as with the Jews, but an eternal reward is insured to us. This must be said even of the most insignificant good works, according to the promise of Christ: "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."—*Matt.* 10: 42. Should not this animate our zeal for virtue, and urge us to avail ourselves of opportunities of doing good works?

4. St. Paul says of the Law, that it was ordained *by angels*; for God made use of the angels to make known the Law to the Israelites and to inculcate its observance. God employs even nowadays his holy angels to minister to men, wherefore St. Paul

calls them ministering spirits sent to minister to those who shall receive the inheritance of salvation.—*Heb. 1: 14*. The angels do the will of God with the greatest promptness, and execute all his orders with the utmost fidelity. "A number of heavenly spirits daily hasten over the whole globe to offer us a helping hand in the struggle with our enemies. For how could weak man resist the cunning of such artful and practised enemies if the power of the angels did not keep the temptation away from us?"—*St. Peter Damian*. Venerate the angels, listen to their suggestions and recommend yourselves daily to their protection. Ask them particularly to assist you in your dying hour, and to help you to obtain a happy death. At the same time be good angels to your fellow-men, and promote as far as in you lies their temporal and eternal welfare.

5. The Israelites received the Law, as the Apostle remarks through a mediator. This mediator was Moses, as he himself says: "I was the mediator and stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you his words."—*Deut. 5: 5*. Moses on account of his great virtue and holiness enjoyed the special love and friendship of God; through him God worked great miracles and bestowed many benefits on the Israelites; at his intercession he was often gracious to them, and withdrew from them his punishing hand.

We Christians have a Mediator, who infinitely surpasses Moses, the mediator of the Jews, in power, dignity, and holiness. Our Mediator is Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. As Christ labored during his earthly life, so he now labors unceasingly for our salvation. He offers himself up for us daily in the holy mass, in order to apply to us the fruits of the bloody sacrifice of the cross; he constantly pleads our cause with God, his heavenly Father, as our advocate, wherefore St. John says: "My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."—*I. John 2: 1, 2*. Moreover, Christ has appointed mediators, who, in his name, and commissioned and authorized by him, procure for us all graces of heaven. And these are the priests of the Catholic Church who preach to us the word of God, offer for us the holy sacrifice of the mass, and administer to us the sacraments; in short, who do all that is necessary for our sanctification. Catholic priests as mediators occupy a higher position than Moses, for he was called merely to deliver the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt and by means of his Law to prepare them for the graces of the New Testament; but Catholic priests free men from the slavery of the devil, make them partake of all the graces of the

New Law, and open to them the gate of heaven. Oh, how can we ever sufficiently thank God for having given us in the priests of the Church such powerful mediators. How zealously must we employ the graces which flow from their hands!

PERORATION.

These are some of the lessons which I would warmly recommend to your consideration. Obey them. Stand firm in the confidence of God's promises and live in a manner worthy of your inheritance. Serve God with zeal and fidelity, since he is so good and merciful a Lord, who requires far less of you than the world demands of its votaries, and moreover assists you with his grace, that you may be able in all things to do his holy will. Recommend yourselves daily to the protection of the angels, and diligently employ for your salvation the means which are given you, namely, the word of God, prayer, and the sacraments, that you may persevere to the end and be saved. Amen.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke 17: 11-19*. At that time: As Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off, and lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us. Whom when he saw, he said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass that, as they went, they were made clean. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell on his face, before his feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said: Were not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger. And he said to him: Arise, go thy way, for thy faith hath made thee whole.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE HEALING OF THE TEN LEPERS.

When we are told at the beginning of this day's gospel that Christ was going to Jerusalem, we must understand it to refer to

the third and last journey which he undertook during his public life. This time he went to Jerusalem to suffer and die there, and to accomplish the work of our Redemption. What must our Blessed Lord have thought and felt on that journey, knowing as he did that he was about to undergo unspeakable sufferings and to die a most painful and ignominious death! In that journey he passed through the midst of Samaria in Galilee, probably to intimate that in Jerusalem he would offer himself up as a sacrifice not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles, having come down from heaven to redeem the whole human race. As he entered into a certain town there met him ten men that were lepers, who fervently besought him to have mercy on them and to cleanse them from their leprosy. And their prayer was generously granted.

Let us consider —

- I. *How Christ healed the lepers;*
- II. *How the healed lepers behaved towards Christ.*

PART I.

1. *As Jesus entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off.*

(a.) Leprosy, with which these ten men were infected, was a very loathsome and painful disease, and generally incurable. The body of the leper became gradually covered with ulcers which festered and ate into the flesh, causing it to fall away from the bone. As leprosy was very contagious, those who were afflicted with it were obliged, according to the law of Moses, to separate themselves from the healthy and live in distant places. — *Levit. 13: 46.* Several of these unfortunate persons generally associated together, and lived a sort of community life in huts erected especially for them, in order to assist one another, as they could not be nursed by the healthy. Hence we need not wonder that the gospel speaks of ten lepers together. It is more remarkable that with the nine leprous Jews, there was a leprous Samaritan, since the Jews and Samaritans bitterly hated each other and avoided all intercourse. But their common misery caused these lepers to be oblivious to all hatred, and to live peaceably together. *They stood afar off.* This was owing to the Mosaic Law which forbade lepers to approach the healthy; when they met any one on the road, they were obliged to stop, cover their mouths with a cloth, and cry out from a distance: "I am unclean, I am unclean." It was not merely by accident that the ten lepers met Christ, but rather a disposition of divine Providence. The lepers were to be healed and come to the

knowledge of the Messiah; for this reason Jesus entered into that particular town just at the time when they were coming that way. God also draws near to us with his grace, and affords us, like the lepers, an opportunity to meet him. He approaches us by interior inspirations, through the words of priests and friends, through holy seasons and feasts, through pleasant and unpleasant events. Blessed are they who profit by the approach of our Lord, and zealously labor for their salvation: they will be healed from the sickness of their soul and be saved. But woe to those who turn their backs upon our Lord when he draws near them with his grace. They remain in their misery, and incur the penalty of eternal death.

(b.) Seeing ten lepers together we are reminded of the sayings: "Like loves like; birds of a feather flock together." The good like to converse with the good, and associate together. The wicked with the wicked. The good associate together in order mutually to encourage each other to practise virtue, and to attain useful ends by co-operation. The wicked unite together in order to be able to gratify their passions, the better to carry out their wicked designs, and to gain the upper hand over the good. We can easily judge what is the moral standing of a man by seeing the company he keeps. If he loves to converse with pious, virtuous persons it is a sure sign that he is good; but if he is found only in the society of the wicked, we certainly do not go far astray when we judge ill of him; hence the proverb: "Tell me with whom you associate and I will tell you what you are." If you are solicitous for faith and virtue and the salvation of your soul, keep away from the wicked as much as possible; at all events avoid intimate association with them. And you, parents, be watchful over your children, and do not allow them to associate with immoral people, or to visit houses or take part in entertainments, if their innocence be thereby endangered.

(c.) The lepers are said to have stood afar off. They did this in compliance with the law, in order not to infect others, or make them unhappy. This should be a lesson to you not to infect others with the leprosy of sin by corrupting or scandalising them, thus rendering them miserable for time and eternity. Beware of all scandalous words and actions, especially obscene words and jests, scoffing at religion and religious practices, cursing, swearing, and blaspheming, pride in dress, the neglect of the duties of your religion and state of life, and desecrating Sundays and holidays; for by all these sins many scandals are given, and many immortal souls are plunged into perdition. Do not forget the terrible woe which Jesus pronounces upon those who give scandal (*Matth. 18: 6, et seq.*); and shun nothing so much as this and the corrupting of others; on the contrary, "be

thou an example of the faithful, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity."—*I. Tim.* 4: 12.

2. *And they lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us.*

(a.) Necessity teaches us to pray. If these ten men had been well, they would not have had recourse to Christ and implored his compassion. Their miserable state and their despair because they could obtain no help from men drove them to him, and compelled them to seek relief from him. Thus there are many Christians who in the days of prosperity neglect prayer very much, or when they do pray they are lukewarm and distracted. But when God visits them with crosses and afflictions, they exhibit great fervor; they multiply their prayers, visit churches, make pilgrimages, and pray with fervor and devotion. To prayer they unite good resolutions to forsake their faults and sins, to make a good confession, and to become more fervent in the pursuit of perfection. Thus crosses and afflictions are useful.

(b.) The lepers also teach us how to pray, for their prayer was —

Humble. They stood afar off, as the law prescribed, deeming themselves unworthy to approach Christ. Humility is an essential quality of prayer, and without it true prayer is impossible; for in reality, prayer is nothing else than the avowal of our impotence, our sinfulness and nothingness before God, to give testimony of his greatness, power and goodness, and therefore to praise and glorify him, to thank him for his benefits, and to implore him for all good. We can hope that God will graciously receive our prayer if we are humble of heart. Examples: The Pharisee and the publican.—*Luke* 18: 9-14.

Secondly, *full of confidence*, when they said: *Jesus, master.* By saying *Jesus*, they proclaimed that Jesus as the Redeemer would help them; and by saying *master*, they gave it to be understood that Jesus as the omnipotent Lord of heaven and earth could help them. Their prayer was based upon the infinite *goodness* and *power* of Jesus, and therefore full of confidence. Such confidence ought to animate us whenever we present our petitions to God. By confidence we honor God, because we confess that he is infinitely powerful, good and merciful, and so we incline him to hear our prayer. Wherefore the Apostle admonishes us in these words: "Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid."—*Heb.* 4: 16. On the contrary, we offend God when we mistrust him, and we cannot expect to be heard: "He that

wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."—*James* 1: 6, 7.

Thirdly, *in common*, for they all prayed together, and each for the others as well as for himself, saying: "Have mercy on us." Prayer in common is more powerful than the prayer of one individual, because it is based on charity, which causes each to pray for all, and all for each, an act which pleases God and moves him to mercy; again, because among the many who pray, there will certainly be one or more good, pious souls with whom God is particularly pleased, and for whose sake he hears the prayer of the others; and lastly, because prayers said in common edify and increase fervor and devotion. Wherefore Christ himself says: "If two of you shall consent upon earth concerning anything, whatsoever they shall ask it shall be done to them by my Father who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 18: 19. This should be a motive for you to value prayer in common and diligently to assist at it. You in particular, fathers and mothers, must say your morning and evening prayers with those of your household in common, and see that all attend the family devotions and behave reverently and devoutly.

3. *Whom when he saw, he said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass that, as they went, they were made clean.*

(a.) The moment the lepers asked mercy of our Lord, it was generously granted by him. Let us learn from him to be compassionate and merciful towards the needy and afflicted, and to help them without delay as well as we can. He who helps quickly where he can help shows that he loves to do good; but he who only slowly and after many repeated requests performs an act of charity, proves that he helps with reluctance, and more from compulsion than free will, hence God is not well pleased with such a man's charity; for God loves a cheerful giver. Even man shows but little gratitude to those from whom he cannot get anything except after considerable importunity.

(b.) Jesus commanded the lepers to *go and show themselves to the priests*. This was as if he should say: "Your petition is granted; you shall be clean, but do what lepers after having become clean must do according to the Law of Moses. Show yourselves to the priests that they may be convinced that you are clean, and may declare you clean." Thus Jesus observed the Law of Moses although he was not bound by it. Let us learn from him to observe conscientiously all the laws and ordinances of the holy Catholic Church. So many lukewarm, so-called enlightened Catholics, slight the precepts of the Church, and say:

That is only a precept of the Church, the transgression of it is of no consequence. Oh, that such would reflect that to violate the precepts of the Church, strictly speaking, is nothing else than to transgress the commandments of God, since the Church does not give her precepts of herself, but by the commission and power of Christ! How much depends upon our keeping the precepts of the Church Jesus expresses plainly enough when he says: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."—*Matt. 18: 17.*

(c.) *And it came to pass that, as they went, they were made clean.* When they came to the priests and presented themselves they were already cleansed. This miraculous cure was especially due to their ready obedience. They might have thought: What is the meaning of this? Jesus does not say a word about healing us, but sends us to the priests who have no power to cleanse lepers, but only to declare them clean when already healed! How can we be helped by going to the priests? Thus they might have thought. But they did not think thus; they humbly submitted without doubt to the direction of Jesus, and firmly believed that he would heal them. Let us also submit with confidence to the dispositions of God's providence, which ordains everything for our good; and let us be obedient to our temporal and spiritual authorities in all things which are not sinful, for obedience is better than sacrifice, and is the surest way to salvation.

PART II.

How did the lepers behave towards Jesus after being healed?

1. *One of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks; and this was a Samaritan.*

(a.) *When he saw that he was made clean, he went back.* The Samaritan had scarcely noticed that he was cleansed when he felt himself urged to give thanks to God. Gratitude, first of all, requires us to acknowledge the good which we have received as a grace and a benefit. The Venerable Bede says: "He who humbly acknowledges his weakness and impotence, and attributes nothing to his own power, but joyfully acknowledges that all the good which he does or possesses he owes to God's mercy, returns thanks to God." How much reason have we for continual gratitude!

Who can count all the natural and supernatural gifts and goods that God confers upon us? Let us think of our creation,

redemption and sanctification, all of which is the work of the Most Holy Trinity. Who can recount the graces which are imparted to us through the protection and intercession of the Blessed Virgin, of the angels and saints? who can count all the graces which we receive from the hands of our holy mother the Church? Indeed we should be very ungrateful if we did not show ourselves thankful for so many favors!

(b.) *He glorified God,* acknowledging that his cure came from God. We must show ourselves thankful to those who confer benefits upon us; but we must not stop there; we must also give thanks to God, because "every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."—*James 1: 17.* The people who do us a favor are only the instruments of God's goodness, and channels through which God's graces and favors are conveyed to us. It is God that gives to men the good will and the power of bestowing benefits; to him therefore our gratitude must be directed in the first place.

(c.) *With a loud voice.* He thanked him *publicly.* When the water is boiling hot, it bubbles up and runs over. So also feelings of gratitude, when they reach a high degree, cannot be locked up in the heart; they will gush forth and manifest themselves by loud praises of God. Let us show our gratitude for God's benefits externally, in word and deed; let us speak of them as often as an opportunity presents itself, and make good use of them. Let us also acknowledge the benefits which we receive from our fellow-men, for although those who do good must keep it secret, gratitude demands that those who receive benefits from them should manifest it.

(d.) *He fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks.* By so doing he gave an example of two principal virtues with which gratitude must be associated, namely, *humility and truthfulness.* The grateful man is penetrated by the conviction that he does not deserve the benefit which some one bestows on him, and that it is imparted to him only through kindness; he therefore humbles himself. The grateful man also values the benefit received, and for this reason his gratitude is cordial. As there are but few humble people who know how to appreciate benefits received, there are but few truly grateful people. Let us therefore often and earnestly meditate on our total impotence in all natural, and especially supernatural things, on our sinfulness, and unworthiness to receive benefits from God, and on the multitude and greatness of graces and benefits received from God, in order to **awaken** and keep alive in our hearts the feelings of gratitude.

2. *Jesus, answering, said: Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger.*

(a.) Our Blessed Lord complains of the ingratitude of the nine that were healed. He had reason to complain. The wretched men labored under an evil which among all temporal evils was one of the greatest, for leprosy was a loathsome and painful disease, and almost incurable. Jesus had freed them from this evil with the greatest readiness, and their cure cost them nothing. And yet they did not think it worth their while to return to their benefactor and express their thanks in words. Was not this disgraceful ingratitude?

But are not many Christians guilty of greater ingratitude towards Christ than those Jews who were cured of leprosy? When Jesus, in the Sacrament of Penance, forgives the sinner all, even the greatest sins, together with the eternal punishment due to them, is it not a greater favor than the cleansing from leprosy? Who can doubt it? Now, if such a favored sinner begins anew his sinful life, and, as St. Paul says, again crucifies the Lord, is not his ingratitude greater and more deserving of condemnation than that of the ungrateful lepers? And yet, how great is the number of Christians who are guilty of this ingratitude! Out of ten who confess and communicate at Easter do not about nine relapse into their former sins? With what eyes will Jesus look upon us on the day of judgment if we appear before him laden with such ingratitude?

(b.) We must remark here that Christ did not complain that the nine did not give HIM thanks, but that they did not give glory to GOD. He inculcates here a very important lesson. As it is the duty of him who receives a benefit to show his gratitude, so it is again the duty of the bestower of the benefit not to be charitable in hope of thanks. "If you do good to them who do good to you, what thanks are to you? for sinners also do this. Do good . . . hoping for nothing thereby; and your reward shall be great."—*Luke 6: 33, 35.* Our charity must have higher motives than worldly esteem. God, who prescribes it and promises to reward it must urge us on to its performance. If we are afflicted at the ingratitude of men to whom we have shown favors, it must be felt not for our own sake but for God's sake, who is offended by ingratitude; and for the sake of the ungrateful themselves, who by their ingratitude incur the displeasure of God and draw down punishments upon their guilty heads. Let us bear this in mind, and not be deterred from bestowing benefits owing to the ingratitude of men.

(c.) Our Blessed Lord directs our attention to the fact that the leper who showed his gratitude was a stranger, a Samaritan. The nine lepers who did not return thanks to our Saviour were Jews; they were much more under an obligation to evince their gratitude than the Samaritan, because the Jews had a better knowledge of God and had received greater graces and benefits from him. Only too many Christians resemble these ungrateful lepers. The more benefits God bestows on them the less grateful they become to him for them, and the worse use they make of them. Many pagan nations show themselves more grateful towards God for the graces of faith and employ them more diligently for their salvation than some Christians. Let us beware of ingratitude and the abuse of the means of grace, lest the words of Jesus be verified in us: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof."—*Matt. 21: 43.*

3. *And he said to him: Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole.*

(a.) The other nine had also believed, otherwise they would not have invoked his help, and Jesus would not have cleansed them of their leprosy. But why does he say only to the Samaritan: *Thy faith hath made thee whole?* Because his faith was such that he was healed not only in his body, but also in his soul. The faith of the Jews was not fruitful in good works; for this reason Jesus healed them only in the body but not in the soul. The faith of the Samaritan was enlivened by filial gratitude and love towards Jesus, and this was the reason why he united with the corporeal healing another far greater grace, purifying and sanctifying him interiorly.

(b.) Let us not be content, like the nine Jews, with a dead faith which consists in believing all that God has revealed, and all that he proposes to our faith by the Catholic Church; for such a faith is only the beginning of salvation. It is not sufficient for our justification; a living faith only can effect this, and we have it only when we keep the commandments, faithfully perform our duties, and lead a good Christian life.

PERORATION.

In conclusion, I exhort you, like the ten lepers in the gospel of this day, to have recourse to Jesus in all your necessities; he will certainly have mercy on you, and with a liberal hand impart to you everything that is necessary and salutary, if you come with faith and confidence. But detest the ingratitude of the nine

Jews who were healed; take the grateful Samaritan for your pattern, and never omit daily to give thanks to God for all the graces and benefits which, in answer to your prayers, continually flow to you. Show your gratitude towards God by making good use of them, and endeavor by continual efforts to serve him zealously and faithfully all the days of your life. This is the gratitude which pleases him most, and which will lead you to eternal salvation. Amen.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

CONFESSION NOT INVENTED BY MAN, BUT INSTITUTED BY GOD HIMSELF.

Go, show yourselves to the priests.—Luke 17: 14.

Our Divine Saviour healed persons afflicted with various diseases and infirmities; but, with the exception of the lepers, he never commanded any one to go and show himself to the priests. Why was it that he sent the lepers to the priests? Because he wished to observe the law of Moses, which prescribed that lepers could only be considered clean and allowed to return into society after they had been examined and pronounced clean by the priests. The priests of the Catholic Church have a far greater power than the Jewish priests, for, as St. Chrysostom says: "Power is given them to judge not of the leprosy of the body, but of the leprosy of the soul; and not only to judge whether one is cleansed, but really and truly to cleanse one." But that priests may be able to cleanse the sinner from the leprosy of the soul, he must show himself to them, *i. e.*, he must confess his sins. Confession is absolutely necessary for the forgiveness of sin, because it is a divine ordinance. On this subject I shall give you to-day a somewhat detailed instruction. Hence I say, *Confession was not invented by man, but was instituted by God himself; and I prove this—*

- I. By the Sacred Scriptures;
- II. By tradition;
- III. By reason.

PART I.

That confession is not a human but a divine ordinance is evident from the sacred Scriptures—

1. *Of the Old Testament.* Among the Jews a kind of confession of sin was customary, and in many cases prescribed by the law. Thus the Lord said to Moses: "Say to the children of Israel: when a man or woman shall have committed any of all the sins that men are wont to commit, and by negligence shall have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and offended, *they shall confess their sin*, and restore the principal itself, and the fifth part over and above, to him against whom they have sinned."—*Numb. 5: 6, 7.* This confession and satisfaction, ordained in the Old Law, was a figure of the Sacrament of Penance. The Jewish people had various offerings for sin. Every one, be he priest or layman, superior or inferior, was obliged to make an offering after every sin. With this offering was enjoined the commandment to do penance and to confess his sins. "Let him do penance for his sin."—*Levit. 5: 5.* The priest was directed to pray for the sinner that his sin might be forgiven him. That it was nothing uncommon among the Jews to confess sins, the passage in the gospel of St. Matthew (3: 5, 6) proves: "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the country about Jordan. And were baptized by him in the Jordan, *confessing their sins.*" The Jews would certainly not have confessed their sins if it had not been a custom with them.

Thus we see that in the Old Testament there was a kind of confession and forgiveness of sin, and that this confession was ordained by God himself.

2. *Of the new Testament.* Christ said to his Apostles: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."—*John 20: 22, 23.* Behold here the commission, stamped by the broad seal of heaven, by virtue of which the pastors of Christ's Church absolve repentant sinners after their confession! In these words Christ constituted his Apostles and their successors spiritual judges; they were either to forgive sinners their sins, or to retain them. Now a judge, in order to be able to pronounce sentence, must know the facts pertaining to the case; without this knowledge he can neither acquit nor condemn. For this reason also every judge examines as minutely and carefully as possible a matter on which he is to pronounce judgment, and only after having done so does he pronounce sentence. In like manner priests must know the state of the soul of the sinner, if they are to pronounce judgment upon it. But as sins, especially the

sins of the heart are hidden, a priest can come to a knowledge of them only through the sinner himself in auricular confession, or in other words, the sinner must confess his sins to the priest. Suppose some one should come to a priest and say: "I have sinned, give me absolution." What could the priest do in such a case? He could make no possible use of his power either to absolve or not to absolve; and even if he should make use of it, he would do so at random and expose himself to the danger of pronouncing an unjust sentence contrary to the express will of God. Moreover, it is the priest's duty to impose a penance on the sinner. This penance must be at least somewhat in proportion to the sins, and is to protect the sinner against a relapse and to serve for his amendment and improvement. How would the priest be able to impose upon the sinner a corresponding penance if he had no knowledge of his sins? how could he prescribe a remedy? Thus the power to forgive or retain sins, which Christ gave to his Apostles and their successors, necessarily imposes upon the sinner the obligation of confessing his sins in detail. If Jesus were still sojourning on earth and we were to go to him to confession it would certainly not be necessary for us to tell him our sins, for he, the Omniscient, would see our interior better than we ourselves; nothing would be required for the forgiveness of sins but a humble and contrite heart. But when we come to a priest to confess we must lay open our conscience, for though Christ has given him his power to forgive or to retain sins, he has not given him his omniscience.

PART II.

Tradition also proves that confession is a divine institution.

First of all we must remark that in the first ages of the Church besides secret confession there was also a public one. This consisted not only in acknowledging one's self a sinner in general terms, but also in revealing the sins according to their kind, number, and circumstances. The case was this: The sinner went to a bishop or priest and first confessed in secret all his sins in the same way as we do in our days. If the confessor judged it advisable for the salvation of the penitent and for the edification of the congregation, he enjoined upon him the obligation of confessing before the assembled congregation certain sins which were already public and had given scandal. The penitents obeyed, and confessed those sins publicly, before all the people, in the presence of the bishop or priest. This public confession therefore was generally preceded by a secret confession. Hence Origen says: "If the confessor sees that your sickness is such that it should be disclosed publicly for the edi-

fication of the Church and for your own salvation, obey the advice of that experienced and prudent physician." It sometimes occurred that sinners, moved by heartfelt contrition at the greatness of their crimes, of their own accord, and without a previous secret confession, confessed their sins publicly and asked for a penance to be imposed upon them. But because these public confessions became the occasion of various disorders and scandals, the Church abolished the practice, but retained and declared secret confession necessary for the forgiveness of sins. It was especially Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople in the fourth century, who abolished public confession on account of a great scandal which a woman had given. That secret or auricular confession has always existed in the Church, and was considered a divine ordinance, is proved by the holy Fathers and the Councils of the Church.

1. *The Fathers*, of whom I shall mention only a few.

(a.) *St. Ambrose* says: "The poison is sin; the remedy, the accusation of the sin; the poison is iniquity; confession is the remedy against relapse. And therefore it is truly a remedy against poison when you declare your iniquities, that you may be justified. Are you ashamed? This shame will avail you little at the judgment-seat of God."

(b.) *St. Augustine* writes: "Our merciful God wills that we confess in this world that we may not be confounded in the next." And again: "Let no one say to himself, I do penance in private; I do it before God. Is it then in vain that Christ hath said; Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shalt be loosed in heaven? Is it in vain that the keys have been given to the Church? Do we make void the gospel, void the words of Christ?"

(c.) *St. Chrysostom* in his thirtieth homily, says; "Lo! we have now at length reached the close of holy Lent, now especially we must press forward in the career of fasting . . . and make a full and accurate confession of our sins, that with these good works, having come to the day of Easter, we may enjoy the bounty of our Lord. For as the enemy knows that having confessed our sins and shown our wounds to the physician we attain to an abundant cure, he in an especial manner opposes us." And again he says: "Do not confess to me fornication only nor those things that are manifest among all men: but reveal also your secret calumnies and obscenities, and all such things."

The same Father uses the following words: "To the priests is given a power which God would not grant either to angels or archangels, insomuch that what priests do below, God ratifies

above, and the Master confirms the sentence of his servants. For he says: 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven.' What power, I ask, can be greater than this? The Father has given all power to the Son, and I see all this same power delivered to them by God the Son. To cleanse the leprosy of the body, or rather to pronounce it cleansed, was given to the Jewish priests alone. But to our priests is granted the power, not of declaring healed the leprosy of the body, but of absolutely cleansing the defilements of the soul."

2. The Councils.

The Council of Laodicea ordains that the time of penance for all is to be regulated according to the greatness of the sins; it also makes a distinction between penance and confession, and decrees that confession must precede penance, that priests may be able to enjoin a suitable penance.

The Council of Angers (453) decrees that penance be granted to all who desire to repent and to confess their sins.

The Council of Nantes (658) decrees that as soon as the priest learns that one of his flock is sick he shall go at once to him, and when all that are present have gone out of the room, he shall exhort the sick man to confess his sins.

The Council of Liege (710) insists that the parish priest shall hear the confession of his parishioners at least once a year.

The first German Council, at which St. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, presided, decreed that every general in the army should have a chaplain with him, who should hear the soldiers' confessions and impose penance on them.

The second Council of Chalons (813) says. "Some who confess to the priests do it only superficially and imperfectly; they must be carefully questioned that their confession may be entire."

The fourth Council of Lateran (1215) passed a decree obliging all the faithful to confess their sins at least once a year. Now all these decrees naturally suppose auricular confession to be an established fact.

3. The most ancient religious communions separated from the Catholic Church.

Among these I mention only the Jacobites, the Copts and the Armenians, who fell away from the Catholic Church in the first centuries, but who retained confession and declared it necessary for the remission of sins. Thus the Armenian bishops replied to a letter of Pope Benedict XII., in the year 1342, that the Armenian people up to this time have confessed, and still confess, their individual sins to a priest according to the usage of the

Armenian Church. Without a previous, accurate confession, no one was allowed to go to Communion. Also the Greek Church, to which the Greeks and the Russians belong. When towards the middle of the sixteenth century the Protestants sent their profession of faith to the Greeks, the latter protested against it. Jeremias, the patriarch of Constantinople, said with regard to confession: "The sinner must confess with a humble and contrite heart all the sins he remembers, one after the other." The Greeks are therefore as tenaciously attached to private confession as is the Catholic Church, from which they separated in the ninth century. If confession had not always existed but had been introduced by the Popes, the Greeks certainly would not have it; for the precept of confessing must have come into existence either before or after the defection. If this precept had been given by the Pope before their separation, they would have rejected it as a papal innovation and would certainly have abolished it, because they rejected everything that had been ordained by the Pope. But if confession had been introduced after their separation, they would certainly not have adopted it, for they were always most bitter enemies of the Pope and the Catholic Church.

Luther himself says: "Auricular confession, as now in vogue, is useful—nay, necessary; nor would I have it abolished, since it is a solace to an afflicted conscience."

PART III.

It is evident from *reason* that God instituted confession.

1. According to St. Augustine, whatever we find of unknown origin in the Church, must be looked upon as coming from the Apostles. This holds good with regard to confession; it is found in all centuries up to the Apostolic times. We know the date of every new doctrine that was broached, as well as the place where it was first introduced, but no one can name either the date when persons first confessed or the place where it occurred. Now, if confession has always been found in the Church, even in the time of the Apostles, it evidently follows that it was instituted by Christ himself.

2. If confession were not a divine institution, its introduction would have met with the most vehement opposition, since it contains so much that is painful to flesh and blood. For if it were a purely human institution, who could think it even possible that all the members of the Catholic Church, bishops, priests and laity, high and low, learned and unlearned, would have quietly submitted to confession, which our adversaries call an intolerable

yoke and torture to the soul? Protestants have often tried to re-institute confession, which they abolished, but all their attempts have failed. Man has certain sins which he strives to conceal even from himself, and the very memory of which makes him blush; with how much more reason then does he desire to keep them secret from every one? Therefore only the authority, the express command of God, can move him to confess them sincerely. Priests could never have succeeded in making men believe that Christ ordained confession and made it a condition for the forgiveness of sin, if he had not really done so.

3. Confession has much that is disagreeable and painful. But it is just this that proves that it was not invented and introduced by men. If you look into Church history you will find that many austere ordinances painful to human nature have been mitigated from time to time, and finally abrogated altogether. But you do not read the contrary, viz., that difficult things were at first introduced gradually and always more and more inculcated. The old, severe penances, for instance, were not increased as years rolled on, but were mitigated, and finally ceased altogether. It was so with fasting, which in the first centuries was observed with extraordinary severity, but which in our days is very much mitigated. Now, if confession was only an ordinance of the Church like penitential works and fasting, it would have been mitigated or done away with long ago. But this is not the case; the precept to confess exists in all its primitive rigor and admits of no mitigation because it is a divine law.

4. No reason can be assigned why priests should have invented and introduced confession. They are not only compelled themselves to keep this commandment, being obliged to confess still more frequently than the faithful, but they have, moreover, to hear the confessions of others, a duty which is associated with great difficulties and responsibilities. The priests would have laid a great burden upon their own shoulders without cause if they had invented confession. Nobody, I think, will imagine that the priests were such fools.

5. But apart from all this, should not the consideration that confession is natural to man and most salutary make us conclude that it is of divine institution? Does not man feel moved to confess what is wrong when once he is sorry for it? Criminals sometimes, when driven by remorse, give themselves up to public justice, or after being condemned seek to unburden their conscience by a public confession. So long as the sinner locks up his sins within himself, a heavy load lies on his conscience, but that load is removed by a sincere confession. Confession is also

salutary. First of all, it leads to self-knowledge, for he who confesses, and especially if he often confesses, must examine his conscience; the confessor also has an opportunity of instructing him and of directing his attention to the state of his soul. Confession leads to humility and awakens the spirit of penance; for he who knows himself and is convinced of his sinfulness, has every reason, like the publican in the gospel, to humble himself. Confession prevents many sins, or heals and amends them. If it were good for nothing else it is a curb to sin. How many are deterred from sin by the thought: "If I do this I must confess it." Confession enables the priest to speak to the conscience of the sinner, to remove his doubts, to offer remedies and motives for amendment, and to prevail on him to renounce his enmity, to restore ill-gotten goods, to repair injuries, and to give up his injustices. The advantage and utility of confession are so evident that many Protestants regret the absence of such an institution in their communities.

PERORATION.

Confession is not an invention of man but an institution of God. We are taught this by the sacred Scriptures, tradition, and even by reason. The Catholic Church has taught from the beginning, and teaches now, that Jesus instituted sacramental confession when he gave to his Apostles and their successors the power to forgive and retain sin, whereby he also imposed upon the faithful the corresponding duty of confessing their sins in detail, because it is in this way alone that the priest can come to the knowledge of what sins are to be forgiven, and what retained. Let us give thanks to our Blessed Saviour for placing at our disposal and within our reach so easy and sure a means of salvation. Let us go to confession frequently, but always with sincerity and contrition, that we may be more and more cleansed from our sins and justified; and let us persevere in penance unto the end, and save our immortal souls. Amen.



THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

MARY'S HEART ALL LOVE TOWARDS GOD AND MAN.

His mother kept all these words in her heart.—Luke 2: 51.

We celebrate to-day the feast of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary. After the development of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus it was becoming that the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Mary should be introduced. Pope Benedict XIV. was the first who in Rome, in the year 1753, established a confraternity under the title of the "Sacred Heart of Mary." Pius VII. promoted this devotion still more, not only by sanctioning it expressly, but also by instituting a feast with a proper Office and Mass. A new impulse was given to this devotion through the "Archconfraternity of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary," which was established in the Church of *Notre Dame des Victoires*, Paris, in the year 1836, and which from thence in a few years spread over the whole world. Since that period few parishes or congregations are to be found in which special veneration is not paid to the Sacred Heart of Mary, and the number of the members of the confraternity in a short time increased to millions.

In order to comprehend this feast in the spirit of the Church, we will contemplate the Sacred Heart of Mary as a heart —

- I. All love towards God;
- II. All love towards man.

PART I.

Albert the Great says that Mary alone perfectly fulfilled the commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." There was nothing in her heart that was not love of God; it resembled red-hot iron. That the heart of Mary was all love towards God we may infer—

1. *From the fact that she feared nothing so much as to give the least offense to her Lord.* All the saints have had a great detestation and hatred of sin. Thus St. Catherine of Genoa says: "O my God, if I should see myself sunk in a pool of molten lead and could be delivered from it on condition of committing a venial sin, I would rather remain in it for all eternity." Now when the

saints hated and detested sin so much, how much more must Mary, the Queen of Saints, have detested it!

(a.) Remarkable is her love of *solitude*. As a child she renounced all intercourse with the world, and dedicated the years of her childhood and youth to the Lord among the virgins of Jerusalem. And where did the Angel find her when he brought the message that God had chosen her for the mother of his Son? Not in the street, not in the company of young people, not at an entertainment or play, but in her chamber at prayer. As the gospel relates, she visited her cousin Elizabeth *with haste*, no doubt to avoid coming in contact with people. After her return from Egypt she lived at Nazareth in the greatest seclusion; and after the Ascension of Jesus she was scarcely ever seen among the people; she lived a most secluded life. Why was this? Because she feared that she might contaminate the purity of her conscience and offend God in her intercourse with the world.

(b.) Remarkable was her conduct *at the apparition of the Angel*. When the Angel came in and said to her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women," she was troubled. Why? Perhaps on account of the apparition of the Angel? No; but, as the Evangelist emphatically remarks, she "was troubled *at his saying*."—*Luke 1: 28, 29*. In her humility she could not believe that the words of the Angel, which contained such praise, concerned her; she was afraid of being deceived, and, therefore, she was troubled. The thought of sharing the fate of Eve who was tempted to sin by the serpent filled her with fear and anxiety. Thus Mary feared sin, and feared it even when it was not to be feared.

(c.) Lastly, remarkable was her conduct *at the loss of Jesus*. What sorrow she felt at this loss she expresses in these words: "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."—*Luke 2: 48*. The holy Fathers and spiritual writers say that this was the greatest sorrow of Mary, far greater than that which she felt when she saw him die. And why was this sorrow so great? Because she feared she had committed a fault and that it had caused Jesus to leave her.

Thus Mary feared to offend God even with the least sin. But she had this fear because she loved God above all things: nothing pains a loving heart more than to grieve the object of its love, or to incur his displeasure. Do you also manifest your love to God by carefully guarding yourselves against every sin? Shun every mortal sin, for with this the love of God is as incompatible as darkness is with light; it is the death of love. Avoid venial sins as much as possible, for they also offend God and weaken

love. Make it a rule never to commit a venial sin heedlessly, much less with deliberation.

2. *Because she had not the least inordinate love for anything in the world.* She could say with far more justice than the Apostle: "I count all things to be but loss, for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things."—*Phil. 3: 8.* Her heart was filled with the love of God, and nothing had room in it that was not of God and led not to God; her thoughts were directed towards heavenly things; she despised riches, and loved poverty above all; she craved no honor or distinction; she wished and loved to be unknown in the world and to be thought little of; wherefore she concealed her dignity of Mother of God and all graces received from him. She renounced all joys and pleasures of life. She was aware that in becoming the Mother of God she was to tread a path of thorns, nevertheless she took upon herself the burden of the divine Maternity because her heart belonged to God, not to the world. How often may she have prayed with David: "What have I in heaven? And besides thee, what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever."—*Ps. 72: 25, 26.*

If you wish to pray with truth: "O my God, I love thee above all things," no inordinate inclination to anything earthly must reign in you; you must be like St. Francis of Sales, who said of himself: "If I knew that there was a fibre in my heart that was not for God I would tear it out at once." Examine yourselves often, and see whether you do not entertain an inordinate inclination to something temporal, *e. g.*, money and possessions, certain pleasures, a certain person. And if you discover such an inclination, let it be your most important business to suppress and extirpate it. Love temporal goods only in so far as they are a means to obtain eternal salvation.

3. *Because she was always solicitous in all things to do the will of God.*

(a.) The will to do good was everything to her, and she fulfilled it with the most conscientious fidelity in all the circumstances of life. Evidence of this is found particularly in her assumption of the divine Maternity. This Maternity was indeed an honor and a distinction which raised her above all angels and saints; but it was also a burden which must have appeared heavy even to angels. Mary knew that in becoming the Mother of God she must face tribulations of all kinds; that days would come upon her when she would find herself plunged in a sea of bitterness; that her whole life would be nothing but an uninterrupted

chain of humiliations, persecutions and sufferings. Nevertheless she consented to the proposal of the Angel, and replied with humility and promptness: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word."—*Luke 1: 38.* And why? because she knew it to be the will of God that she should become the Mother of his Son.

(b.) And what is more, Mary did all that was pleasing to God, even doing things she was not strictly bound to do; I mean works of supererogation. Thus we read, to mention only one thing, that she observed everything that the Law of Moses prescribed with regard to the purification.—*Luke 1: 38.* This law was obligatory on all mothers, but not on Mary, the Mother of God, because her virginal purity had not been defiled by the conception and birth of the Son of God, but sanctified thereby. She might therefore have disregarded this law without any sin, yet she fulfilled it, because she knew it to be pleasing to God. By the zeal with which she fulfilled the will of God in all things, she gave the most eloquent proof of her love for him, as Christ himself assures us: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them; he it is that loveth me."—*John 14: 21.* Manifest your love of God by a conscientious fulfilment of his holy will. When once you know what God wills, do it, disregarding your inclinations, the judgment and censures of men, or your advantage or disadvantage, and say with all determination: **God wills it, and therefore I will it.** Though great temptations assail you, though many obstacles be placed in your way, let not your zeal grow cold; fulfil the will of God always with equal fidelity in good as well as in evil days.

PART II.

St. John writes: "This commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his brother."—*I. John 4: 21.* Because Mary loved God above all things, she is also a loving mother to us. *Her heart is all love—*

1. *Towards all men.*

(a.) The love of God is the measure of the love of our neighbor. "As there has never lived, and never will live, a creature who loved God as much as Mary, so there has never been any one who loved his neighbor as much as Mary."—*St. Alphonsus.* Again, there is no creature who is so like our Blessed Saviour as his Mother Mary; she is among all angels and saints his truest likeness. Now we know that the love Jesus bears us is immense. And as Mary most closely resembles Jesus, it follows from this

that she also loves us greatly. Finally, Mary is the holiest of all creatures; she is the Queen of all angels and saints. But wherein does true holiness consist? In charity, for without charity there is no sanctity. The greater the sanctity, the greater the charity. Now, Mary being the holiest creature, it is obvious that neither angel nor saint bears so great a love towards us as Mary, the Mother of God.

(b.) That Mary's heart is all love towards us, her title, "Mother of God," tells us. Why did she become the Mother of God? Out of love for men. She knew that according to the decree of God the sinful human race could only be redeemed by the incarnation of Jesus Christ; again, she knew that God had chosen her for the Mother of his Son and had made his Incarnation dependent on her consent, and therefore she gave her consent, and became the Mother of God, that we might be redeemed from sin and eternal damnation. Do you want further proofs of the love of Mary towards us? Look at her on Calvary at the foot of the cross. How does she conduct herself? Does she manifest her unspeakable sorrow by loud cries and lamentations? Does she break down and faint away? No; she is silent, stands erect; she struggles, as no other, against her unutterable maternal sorrow; she totally resigns herself to the will of God and gives him thanks that the hour has come which Jesus had appointed for the accomplishment of his work of Redemption. And because she loves us so much she is all mercy towards us, and is always ready to do us good. Her desire to distribute graces is greater than our desire to receive them.

2. *Especially towards the needy and afflicted.* How charitable she was to the newly-married couple at the marriage feast at Cana! Scarcely does she notice their need, when she turns to her Son and requests his assistance.—*John 2: 3, et seq.* Unasked, she has compassion upon the afflicted and procures them help. She does the same to-day in heaven, for love is eternal and never perishes. St. Bonaventure does not hesitate to assert that Mary in heaven loves us more than when on earth. "Great," he says, "was the mercy of Mary towards the miserable when she lived in exile upon earth, but it is still greater now that she reigns in heaven, for she sees our misery more clearly, and therefore has greater compassion for us." St. Bernard, in contemplating the love of Mary towards the needy and afflicted, exclaims, full of ecstasy: "Who, O blessed Virgin, can measure thy goodness according to the greatness of its length, breadth, depth, and height? Yet I dare to measure it. The height extends from the earth to heaven, where thou art solicitous for our salvation. The depth reaches from heaven to earth—nay, into the lowest abyss

of hell, because thou dost stem the power of hell and dost snatch from it those souls which it already claims. The length and the breadth extend from one end of the globe to the other, because thou art charitable and merciful in all the ends of the earth." In order to convince ourselves of Mary's love and goodness towards the needy and afflicted, let us only call to mind her apparitions which have lately taken place in various localities according to most credible accounts, and the wonderful and miraculous help which has been afforded to persons afflicted with various diseases.

3. *Towards sinners.* She could not be the mother of Jesus, the good Samaritan, if she had no compassion for sinners and did not exert all her power to rescue them. In the Old Law there were free cities in which criminals could not be captured and in whose shelter they remained free from the punishment they deserved. Such a free city we have in Mary, to whom the words of the Prophet apply: "Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God."—*Ps. 86: 3.* The difference between these free cities consists in this, that all criminals did not find protection in the former, whilst all find protection under the mantle of Mary: whatever crimes they may have committed, it suffices to have recourse to her to be in security. How true this is the wonderful effects of the graces bestowed on the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Mary prove. Numerous are the conversions which are effected by the prayers of its members, and by the use of the medal of the Confraternity—conversions which often resulted so suddenly and under such circumstances that they appear as miracles of grace, and give the clearest evidence of the consoling fact that there is no sinner who cannot be saved through Mary, Mother of Divine Grace.

PERORATION.

You see how right the Church is to celebrate annually the feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary, and to admonish the faithful to venerate this heart with great devotion and confidence. Mary's Heart is the most worthy object of our veneration, *because it is all love towards God and Man.* Endeavor to honor it as you should. Love God with your whole heart and fear nothing so much as sin. Bear no inordinate love to anything earthly; deny and mortify yourselves, and be intent upon performing the will of God in great as well as in small things. Love your fellow men, have pity and compassion upon the needy and afflicted, and assist them according to your ability; especially take an interest in sinners and try to save their souls. If you do all this, your

heart will be united to the Sacred Heart of Mary; it will be inflamed with a holy love and this love has the promise of life everlasting. Amen.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE TEN LEPERS—AN INSTRUCTIVE EXAMPLE FOR US, BEFORE, AT, AND AFTER CONFESSION.

As Jesus entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers.—Luke 17: 12.

The ten lepers in the gospel of to-day are a figure of sinful man. Leprosy is one of the greatest evils that can come upon man; for it makes the body loathsome, eats away the flesh to the very bone, causes great pain, and if not cured ends in death. But a far greater evil is sin, for it defiles and disfigures the soul, destroys in her the image of God, robs her of peace and sanctifying grace, and causes her temporal and eternal death. The ten lepers sought and found help from Jesus, for he healed them by a miracle. If we are attacked with spiritual leprosy, which is sin, we must have recourse to Jesus, for he is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. But as the lepers, in order to be healed, were obliged to go and show themselves to the priests, so we also must go to the priests, since to them Christ has given the power to forgive us our sins. That we may obtain the forgiveness of sin we must take the ten lepers for our model, for they are, as we shall see to-day, an instructive example —

- I. Before confession;
- II. At confession;
- III. After confession.

PART I.

The ten lepers are an instructive example for us before confession. They teach us —

- i. To acknowledge ourselves sinners.

(a.) They were well aware of their leprosy; they did not conceal it, nor did they wish to be looked upon by the people as clean. Obedient to the law of Moses they lived entirely apart from others, in order not to infect any one with their leprosy; they stood afar off when they met Jesus, and dared not come near or mingle with the crowd that accompanied him; in a word, they knew that they were lepers, and had no desire of appearing anything else. Let us suppose that these lepers had not known that they were leprous; would they have gone to Christ and implored his help? Certainly not. The result would have been that they would not have been cleansed from their leprosy, and that they would have died of this terrible evil.

(b.) The same is to be said of spiritual leprosy, sin. He who wishes to be cleansed from this leprosy must know that he is infected with it. So long as a sinner does not know and acknowledge himself to be a sinner he has no desire of being freed from sin, and, of course, does not employ the necessary means to rid himself of it; he is not sorry for his sins and makes no purpose of amendment. Examples: The Scribes and the Pharisees. The greatest sinners, Mary Magdalen and the thief on the cross, were converted, but the Scribes and the Pharisees remained impenitent because they did not acknowledge themselves to be sinners, but thought themselves righteous. Now, in order to come to the knowledge of sin it is necessary —

First, to invoke the Holy Ghost. St. Basil says: "There is nothing more difficult than to know one's self; for even the eye, whilst seeing what occurs outwardly, cannot see within itself; in like manner, our spirit, which is keen enough to see the sins of others, is dull and slow to discover our own faults and sins." The Holy Ghost must enlighten us with the light of his grace, so that we may come to the true knowledge of our sins; for God, our heavenly Father, as Christ himself assures us, gives the good Spirit only to those that ask him.—*Luke 11: 13.* We must often, especially before every confession, invoke the Holy Ghost, and ask him to enlighten us that we may know our sins.

Secondly, to examine our conscience. It is our duty in confession to accuse ourselves of all, even the most secret, sins. This presupposes an accurate self-knowledge that goes into details; it is obtained only by examining our conscience diligently, and considering carefully what sins we have committed in thought, word, and deed, and by omission. Without earnest consideration and a minute scrutiny of all the secrets of our heart, we shall not recognize many sins at all, or, at least, not rightly, and therefore we shall not be able to make a good confession. For this

reason the Council of Trent makes the examination of conscience an obligatory preparation for confession, declaring that we must confess all mortal sins we remember, after a due and diligent examination of conscience.—*Sess. 14, Can. 7.*

Examine your conscience diligently when you prepare for confession. Go through the commandments of God and of his Church, the various kinds of sins, especially the seven capital sins, and see whether you have sinned either in thought, word or deed. Examine yourselves with regard to the duties of your state of life, and ask yourselves whether you have not transgressed them. Examine yourselves with regard to the sins of omission, of which you are guilty owing to your neglect of something which your religion or state of life obliged you to do, *e. g.*, hearing mass and the word of God, assisting the needy, the education of your children. Lastly, with regard to your good works, ask yourselves whether you have done them carelessly or with a wrong intention. Devote the necessary zeal and diligence to the examination of conscience; it is a most important business, for on it depends the validity of confession, and, consequently, the salvation of your soul. Guard especially against self-love, which frequently blinds man, so that he does not believe that to be a sin which is a sin, or looks upon mortal sins as venial ones. If you make a daily examination of conscience, and do not put off your confession too long, and lead a good Christian life, you will experience no difficulty in properly examining your conscience when you go to confession.

2. To be sorry for our sins, and earnestly resolved to amend our life.

(a.) There is no doubt that the lepers often desired that Jesus, the bestower of graces and the worker of miracles, would come into their neighborhood that they might be healed by him. What a consolation it must have been to them to hear that our divine Saviour on his journey to Jerusalem would come through the village in the vicinity of which they lived! Immediately they rise and go to meet him, and as soon as he comes in sight, they cry out with a loud voice: "Jesus, master, have mercy on us." Whence this desire for Jesus? Whence this crying aloud for mercy? Whence, but because they deeply felt their misery, and had the greatest desire to be freed from it? If they had not been aware of their leprosy, or not considered it to be a great evil, they would not have come to our divine Saviour, nor implored his mercy and help.

(b) Sin is a far greater evil than leprosy, for it makes man miserable, not only for time but also for eternity. We have far

more reason to ask Jesus for mercy, to free us from sin, the leprosy of the soul. But when once we know sin to be the greatest evil and have an earnest desire to be freed from it, we shall hate and detest it above all things, and resolve to guard carefully against it. Therefore, after having carefully examined your conscience, and having come to the knowledge of your sins, make an act of contrition with a firm purpose of amendment; consider that contrition, together with the purpose of amendment, is the most necessary requisite for the forgiveness of sin and that without it no confession can be valid. How those persons are deceived who flatter themselves with the thought that they have always confessed their sins sincerely, and never knowingly concealed a sin! Ye blind people, what good will a candid and sincere confession do you, if you are not really sorry for your sins and determined to amend your life? Though at your confessions you may have been absolved, yet it profits you nothing; God has not forgiven you because contrition and a firm purpose of amendment were wanting. We need not wonder, therefore, that pious persons at their confession take the greatest pains to make good acts of contrition and firm purposes of amendment. St. Charles Borromeo went every year into retreat for eight days in order to prepare himself for his annual confession. On the day on which he made it he spent several hours on his knees to ask God for the grace of true contrition, and yet he had nothing to confess but small matters. Supernatural contrition is a grace of God; no one can acquire it of himself, therefore you must not omit constantly and fervently to entreat God to give you a contrite heart and the true spirit of penance, that you may be really sorry for your sins, and earnestly resolve to amend your life. It will also be profitable for you to reflect on the malice, perniciousness, and danger of sin, and to consider in particular what sacrifices Christ made in order to atone for your sins, and to merit for you the forgiveness of them.

PART II.

The ten lepers are also an instructive example to us at confession. They teach us to submit humbly to the will of God, and to confess our sins to a priest approved by the bishop.

1. When Jesus saw the lepers, he said to them: *Go, show yourselves to the priests.* An unexpected command. The poor lepers had hoped that Christ would, as he had often done before to other poor afflicted persons, heal them himself of their leprosy; but now they hear that they must show themselves to the Jewish priests. They had calculated that there and then they would

recover their health, and now they must go to Jerusalem or elsewhere and show themselves to the priests. And what could they expect from the Jewish priests? They had only the duty of examining whether a leper was clean or not; they by no means possessed the power of cleansing any one from leprosy. The lepers, therefore, would have had a reason for not obeying Christ's command, and might have said: "What is the use of going to the priests who cannot help us? But they did not say so; they humbled themselves before Jesus, obeyed his command, and went with faith and confidence to show themselves to the priests. And behold! this humility, this obedience, this confidence, brought them the desired relief. The gospel tells us: *It came to pass that, as they went, they were made clean.*"

2. As certain as it is that our divine Saviour commanded the lepers to show themselves to the priests, so certain is it that he imposes upon us the duty to go and show ourselves to the priests, *i. e.*, to confess our sins, if we wish to obtain the forgiveness of them. By the words: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained," Christ appointed his Apostles and their successors judges in his place; but they were to exercise their judicial office according to right and justice, and forgive or retain sins, according as they judged a person to be worthy of absolution or not. Now, as the Apostles and their successors are not omniscient, it necessarily follows that in order that they may be able to judge whether they are to forgive or to retain sins, the sinner must disclose to them the state of his conscience, *i. e.*, confess.

3. It was necessary for the lepers to go and show themselves to the priests, for if they had not done so, they would not have been cleansed from their leprosy. It is also necessary for us to confess to the priests, for he who does not confess will not obtain the forgiveness of his sins. For those who have sinned after baptism confession is as necessary for salvation as baptism is for non-Christians. "Choose what you please," says St. Augustine, "if you will not confess, and therefore conceal your sins, you will be condemned without confession." Only in case confession is impossible can the forgiveness of sins be obtained by an act of perfect contrition and the desire to confess.

4. The lepers could be freed from their leprosy in an easy manner; they were obliged merely to go and show themselves to the priests. Christ has also placed an easy means at our disposal for freeing ourselves from the leprosy of sin, for he requires us only to show ourselves to the priests, *i. e.*, to make sincere confession of our sins to them. To convince yourselves in a pal-

pable manner of this easy condition for obtaining the forgiveness of sin, imagine a man who is condemned to death for high treason and already on the way to the place of execution. All at once a voice is heard crying: A pardon! A messenger appears before the culprit, and says: Our King is good, and will pardon you on condition that you avow your crime to one of his officials. How will the poor man rejoice that he can obtain pardon on such easy terms and escape death! A second messenger from his Majesty arrives and says: The King has given you a still further proof of his clemency by allowing you to choose from among all his officials one to whom you may wish to avow your crime, and in whom you may have the greatest confidence. Oh! how kind is this King towards that culprit! But, behold! A third messenger arrives and says: His Majesty enjoins absolute secrecy and silence upon the official to whom you are about to confess your crime, and that, too, under the penalty that he will be executed instead of you, if he should ever reveal the least portion of what you may confess to him. If you comply with this easy condition, the King will fully pardon you; he will take you into his favor again, and reinstate you in your office. Judge of the joy of this man who in so easy a way finds pardon and grace! But have you not confession in this picture? Does not God forgive you your sins, with their eternal punishment, and receive you again as his children and heirs when you confess your sins to his officials, the priests, and to one whom you yourselves may choose? And does he not impose upon every priest, to whom you give your confidence and confess, eternal silence which he can never violate without rendering himself guilty of death before God and man? Oh! what an easy means to obtain pardon is placed within our reach! And should we hesitate to comply with such an easy condition, and sincerely to confess our sins?

PART III.

The ten lepers, finally, are an instructive example for us *after confession*. They teach us —

1. *After confession, to return thanks to God for the grace of confession.* "And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God, and he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks; and this was a Samaritan." This Samaritan showed himself grateful to Jesus; as soon as he saw that he was cleansed, he returned to his benefactor, and with a grateful heart and loud voice gave him thanks.

You must imitate this grateful Samaritan after confession, and more so because the grace which you have received is far greater

than that which was imparted to him. God has forgiven you your sins together with their eternal punishment; he has given you his love and grace; he has again received you as his child and heir; is not this grace far greater than the healing of the leprosy? Should you not after confession return far more fervent thanks to your divine Saviour than the Samaritan? After confession perform not only the penance imposed upon you, but remain if possible some time in the church and occupy yourselves with exercises of devotion. Consider what an inexpressible grace God has imparted to you in confession; praise and glorify his mercy, and promise never more to offend him. After confession endeavor to lead a penitential life. Gratitude requires you to avoid carefully all the sins confessed, as well as all other sins; to forsake your bad habits, restrain your inordinate inclinations, shun dangerous occasions, diligently fulfil the duties of your religion and state of life, and manifest a great zeal in the practice of the Christian virtues and good works.

2. *To beware of ingratitude after confession.* Ten lepers had been healed, but nine of them considered it not worth while to return and give thanks to Jesus. Was not this gross ingratitude? Need we be astonished that he rebuked such conduct and said: *Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger.* Many Catholics behave no better after their confessions than these nine Jews who were cleansed from their leprosy. After performing in a lukewarm and thoughtless manner the penance imposed upon them, they go away forgetful of the great grace they have received in confession. They do not think of giving thanks to God for this grace. They give themselves up to the distractions of life as before; they have no intention of amendment. Hence it comes to pass that they continue their sinful life, yield to drunkenness, gambling and impurity, and, in short, one perceives no change in them after confession. Frequently they offend God again on the very day of their confession and communion. In the morning they receive Jesus into their heart, and in the afternoon they drive him out and compel him to give place to the devil! Is not this abominable ingratitude, far more reprehensible and culpable than that of the nine ungrateful Jews?

PERORATION.

Beware of such ingratitude, which necessarily draws down upon you the greatest displeasure of God, and eternal damnation. On the contrary, behave at your confessions in such a manner as to gain his favor and protection. Prepare yourselves for your

confessions by invoking the Holy Ghost, and by a diligent examination of your conscience, in order to ascertain your sins; employ all possible care in making an act of perfect contrition, and a firm purpose not to offend God any more. Be as candid and sincere with the priest in the confessional, as if it were Christ himself, whose place the priest holds, and confess all your sins with their number and the necessary circumstances as well as you can. After confession devoutly perform the penance enjoined on you and renew your resolution henceforth to lead a good life. Make it a rule to confess every time as if it were your last; then you will always make a good confession.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

FREQUENT CONFESSION.

Go, show yourselves to the priests.—Luke 17: 14.

Our Blessed Lord commanded the ten lepers who implored him for mercy to go and show themselves to the priests. He did this according to the ordinance of the Law of Moses, for the lepers were not permitted to return to the society of others until they had been examined by the priests and pronounced clean. The ten lepers became clean on their way to the priests, who therefore without delay declared them cured.

Leprosy is a symbol of sin, for as this defiles the body, disfigures it and causes its death, so sin contaminates the soul, deprives it of the life of grace, and plunges it into eternal death. If we wish to be freed from this leprosy of the soul, we must show ourselves to the priests, *i. e.*, we must sincerely confess our sins to them, for they have the power, not only of pronouncing us clean, but of really cleansing us from sins, *i. e.*, of forgiving them, according to the words of Christ: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."—*John 20: 23.*

There are many Catholics in our days to whom nothing is more disagreeable than confession. They defer it as long as they can, and, as a rule, confess only once a year, more from com-

pulsion than free will. I think, therefore, that it will be proper for me to exhort you to frequent confession. I say —

- I. *Every one should confess frequently.*
- II. *No one should defer confession.*

PART I.

Every one should confess frequently.

1. *Because we often sin.* If there were a man who never in his life committed even a venial sin, he could not and should not confess, for confession is ordained only for sinners. But there is no man or woman who does not some time or other commit sin during the course of life; even the greatest saints were not without some sin; and although they did not sin grievously, yet they were not free from lesser faults. Hence Ecclesiastes says: "There is no just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not."—7: 21. And in the Book of Proverbs (24: 16) we read that the just man falls seven times, *i. e.*, often commits lesser faults. And St. John says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."—I. *John* 1: 8. As every man is a sinner, every man must confess, because according to the ordinance of Christ this is necessary for the remission of sins. Whether we commit mortal or venial sins, we should frequently go to confession.

(a.) *Those who commit mortal sins* should frequently go to confession. Those who are defiled with a mortal sin can do nothing meritorious for heaven. They are separated from Jesus, the vine, like pruned branches, which for the want of vitality, can yield no fruit. Hence the Apostle says that the practice of the most exalted virtues, such as the distribution of all our substance to the poor, and even martyrdom, without charity, *i. e.*, without sanctifying grace, will profit us nothing.—I. *Cor.* 13: 3. Though he who lives in a state of sin may perform all kinds of good works, pray, fast, and give alms, yet he cannot expect the least reward for it hereafter. What an injury do sinners inflict upon themselves who for a long time, often for years, neglect to confess. Add to this, that the sinner who will not hear of frequent confession exposes himself to the danger of being lost for ever. The reason is because death may snatch him away suddenly in the midst of his sinful life. Thus Christ says: "Be you also ready; for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come."—*Luke* 12: 40. Sinners especially should fear an unexpected death, for, as Job says: "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell."—21: 13.

How great then is the danger of the sinner who confesses but seldom! Oh, that every sinner would take to heart these words of Holy Writ: "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day. For his wrath shall come on a sudden; and in the time of vengeance he will destroy thee."—*Ecclus.* 5: 8, 9.

(b.) *Those who commit only venial sins should frequently go to confession.* Even venial sins are a great evil; and if we view them as an offense against God we must look upon them as the greatest of all temporal evils. Now since every rational man employs the means to remove an evil, *e. g.*, a painful sickness, must we not go to confession in order to free ourselves from venial sins, those terrible evils? And should we not frequently confess since we often, perhaps daily, commit such sins? Nothing defiled can enter into heaven; venial sins prevent our entrance into heaven, and must be atoned for in purgatory. The greater the number of venial sins, the longer will be the punishment in purgatory. Should we not then confess frequently in order to free ourselves more and more from venial sins, and not be compelled to suffer long in purgatory? It is, moreover, only too certain that venial sins often lead to mortal ones. This is especially the case with those who disregard venial sins and commit them without fear and scruple. He who does not confess often, easily falls into a state of lukewarmness, and runs the risk of finally falling into mortal sins, and of ultimately being rejected. Every one should consider this, and therefore confess frequently.

2. *Every one should frequently go to confession that he may not sin again.*

(a.) *Frequent confession nourishes a zeal for penance, and therefore prevents a relapse into sin.* Many, in fact most persons, immediately after confession have an earnest desire to sin no more, to avoid all evil occasions, and to lead a new life. For some time everything goes well; they carefully avoid everything that might cause them to fall, and diligently employ the means prescribed by the confessor for their amendment. But their fervor gradually lessens; they cease to pray fervently, do not renew their resolutions so frequently; they incline again more to the world; they may, however, shun sin for a few days. Thus it goes on for some time. Gradually the impressions of grace become more and more effaced from their hearts, the fear of God grows weaker, thoughtlessness increases; a violent temptation suddenly attacks them, and they make one more effort to resist it, but soon yield to the repeated attacks of the enemies of their souls and commit the old sins again. Whence this deplorable relapse?

Because they deferred confession too long; they became weak; temptation got the upper hand of them, and they fell into the snares of the devil. From this you see how necessary it is for you to go frequently to confession, if you wish to preserve zeal for penance and not to fall back into your former sins.

(b.) *Imparts special graces to enable us to be constant.* As in every other sacrament, so in confession we receive special graces if we make a good one. These graces chiefly consist in being enlightened to know the dangers which surround us on all sides, and to escape them unhurt; we receive the will, courage and strength to combat our evil inclinations and passions and to extirpate them, to give up our sinful habits, to break asunder the fetters that bind us to the world and its vanities, and to preserve us from a relapse. God generally visits with great consolation those who confess with particular contrition, imparts to them heavenly peace, and so replenishes them with his love that they joyfully do penance and edify others by the fervor of their virtue. Therefore the oftener we confess, the more God assists us with his grace, and the more secure we are against relapse.

3. *And we free ourselves more and more from the temporal punishment.* As often as we make a valid confession, not only are the sins remitted with the eternal punishment due to them, but also the temporal punishment, at least partially, which would have to be expiated in purgatory. The penance which the confessor enjoins is principally intended for the cancelling of the temporal punishment still due. Though the penance may not be hard, it has the particular virtue of remitting the temporal punishment, because it receives its efficacy from the sacrament. The confessor also admonishes us to impose voluntary penances upon ourselves in order to atone more completely for our temporal punishment. If we frequently confess and communicate, we can also gain many indulgences and through them be freed from the temporal punishment, either wholly or partially. Is not this a sufficient motive for us to confess as often as possible?

PART II.

No one should defer confession, for whatever is alleged against frequent confession is groundless.

1. Some say: *I confess once a year; I am not obliged to go oftener.* I answer: You do not, indeed, sin against the precept of the Church if you confess once a year; but why does the Church command you to confess *at least* once a year? Because of luke-

warm, careless Catholics. For in the thirteenth century, when this command was first given, and in the sixteenth, when it was inculcated and enforced anew, Christian fervor had grown so cold that many persons would not have confessed for years if the obligation had not been imposed upon them by a strict precept. The Church, knowing only too well the lukewarmness of many of her children, would not command confession oftener, in order not to make bad worse and to give occasion for many sins; she therefore restricted herself to a minimum requirement, and ordained that Catholics should confess *at least* once a year. The precept of annual confession, properly speaking, exists only for lukewarm Christians. When a high degree of fervor prevailed among Catholics, there was no precept with regard to confession; all confessed of their own accord frequently during the year, at least on great festivals. Moreover, the addition *at least once a year*, sufficiently indicates that the Church urgently desires frequent confession. She imposes it as a duty on all pastors of souls to give the faithful an opportunity for confession on Sundays and holidays, and all the holy Fathers and spiritual writers without exception admonish us to frequent confession. St. Chrysostom tells his hearers in one of his sermons: "I am prepared day and night to hear your confessions. If it should occur that a person sins at night, let him come and rouse me out of sleep and I will hear his confession."

2. Others say: *I have no time for frequent confession.* How groundless is this excuse! If others, who have as much and more to do than you, have time, why have not you? Indeed your infrequent confession has its origin not in the want of time, but in the want of fervor and good will.

3. Again they say: *I should not know what to say to my confessor if I went to confession so often.* How holy you are! One is inclined to believe that one is listening to the Pharisee who gave thanks to God that he was not like the rest of men. All, even the most pious priests are obliged by an ordinance of some dioceses to confess at least once a month, and lay persons can scarcely live such a holy life in the world, that after the lapse of a month they can find nothing at all to confess. Many saints, such as St. Francis Xavier, St. Teresa, etc., confessed daily when they had the opportunity; and every time they found something to accuse themselves of. Are you perhaps holier than they, that you know not what to confess? Our blessed Lord taught us to say daily: "Forgive us our trespasses;" what need should we have for this petition, if we passed not only a day, but a whole month, without any trespass, without any sin? Hence it is only a snare and a delusion when we think we have nothing

to confess; and this delusion and blindness comes from those infrequent confessions. If you would confess more frequently after carefully examining your conscience, the confessor would have an opportunity of directing your attention to many things that have been overlooked, and thus you would have no reason to excuse your neglect of confession owing to the lack of sins to confess. If, however, since your last confession you do not find yourselves guilty of any sins, confess a sin of your former life, and be truly sorry for it; for sins which have already been confessed can again be repented of and confessed.

4. They say: *To live virtuously is better than to confess frequently. And those who confess frequently are not saints.* I answer; To live virtuously is indeed better than to confess frequently, but frequent confession is the means best calculated to enable us to lead a pious, virtuous life. He who confesses often learns to know himself better and better; he is sorry for his sins, and makes good resolutions; he receives from the confessor rules of conduct and aids to virtue; through confession and communion he receives special grace for overcoming all temptations, and leading a more perfect life. Hence we see that Catholics who confess frequently are, as a rule, more pious and virtuous than those who confess only once a year. If there be an exception here and there, it is only a proof that even the best and holiest things are abused. We may say without exaggeration that out of ten of those who confess only once a year, there are nine who lead a life unbecoming a Catholic; that, on the contrary, out of ten of those who confess frequently, there are scarcely two whose conduct, though not free from all faults, is not good and praiseworthy. So long as we go to confession frequently, we are in the right way, but when we begin to defer our confession from time to time, we gradually become more lukewarm, and soon fall into the snares of Satan. This is a truth which no one has the hardihood to deny. He who wishes to live piously must go to confession frequently.

5. It is said: *He who often confesses often lies.* This is true with all those who confess without contrition and a purpose of amendment. The promises which they make to the confessor that they will shun dangerous occasions, give up enmity, restore ill-gotten goods, commit no sins of impurity, nor get drunk, in short, that they will amend their lives, are lies just because they have not the intention of doing what they promise. So long as they persevere in their impenitent disposition, I should be the last man to encourage them to confess often, even to confess once a year, for they confess and communicate sacrilegiously. But how unfortunate are such sinners! Instead of changing their perverse,

impenitent disposition, they boldly persevere in it; they sin therefore against the Holy Ghost, and carry on their forehead the plain brand of their future reprobation.

6. They say; *It is difficult to confess; I am in continual fear of not being absolved, therefore I defer confession as long as I can.* It is indeed unpleasant to be refused absolution. But whose fault is it? It is not the confessor's fault, for it certainly gives him no pleasure to be obliged to dismiss you without absolution. He has his rules and directions which God, the Church, and his reason give him; if he does not follow them he sins and must expect a severe judgment from God. But the absolution of the priest which God does not ratify profits you nothing; no sin is forgiven you; on the contrary, the sin of sacrilege is added to the catalogue of your other crimes; moreover, you become more hardened in your thoughtlessness, in your blindness and in your impenitence. You cannot easily find a greater enemy of your soul than a confessor who absolves you every time if you are absolutely unworthy of absolution. Instead of sending you to heaven he sends you to hell. Consider it therefore a great grace when you find a confessor who opens your eyes so that you may see the wretched state of your soul, and who defers absolution till you have complied with the necessary conditions. If you submit to his judgment you will be saved. I know, however, a very easy means, a means which is within your reach, by which you need not fear to be dismissed without absolution, *i. e.*, renounce the proximate occasion of sin, give up your evil habits, and I assure you that you will always be absolved. But that this may be done you must confess frequently, for it is precisely on account of your long delay in coming to confession that the priest cannot absolve you when you do come.

PERORATION.

As you see, no one has any reason to defer confession; for all excuses against frequent confession are vain and groundless. If you wish to be good Catholics, and are solicitous for your salvation, you must confess not only once a year, but often. But in particular those must often confess who by frequent relapses have contracted any bad habit; also those who are in the proximate occasion of sin, which they cannot easily avoid; young people, and all those who are exposed to great temptations. In general, I advise young people to go to confession once a month, but married people and Catholics of a more advanced age, every three months. This counsel certainly is not too exacting, for all can easily comply with it. I am convinced that if you confess and communicate often you will preserve yourselves from sin, make progress in virtue, and attain salvation. Amen.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

GENERAL CONFESSION.

Go, show yourselves to the priests.—Luke 17: 14.

Under the Old Law all lepers who had been cleansed from leprosy, either in a natural way or by a miracle, were to be examined by the priests, whose duty it was to declare them clean. Before this declaration had been made they were considered unclean, and were obliged to abstain from all intercourse with the healthy. Under the New Law all Christians who are contaminated with the spiritual leprosy of sin must show themselves to the priests, that is, they must confess to them their sins so that they may not only be declared clean, but that they may be really cleansed; for sacramental confession is the means ordained by Christ for the remission of sins. We may distinguish confession as ordinary and extraordinary. Ordinary confession consists in accusing ourselves of the sins committed since our last confession; the extraordinary confession is that which extends itself over the sins of the whole life, or of a great part of it. As this extraordinary or general confession is very important, eternal salvation even sometimes depending upon it, I shall speak of it to-day, and answer the three following questions:—

- I. *For whom is a general confession necessary?*
- II. *For whom is it useful?*
- III. *When is a general confession necessary?*

PART I.

A general confession is necessary whenever the previous confessions were invalid; for invalid confessions cannot be rectified and amended in any other way than by a repetition of them, *i. e.*, by a fresh confession of the sins already confessed. There are six classes to whom a general confession is necessary for salvation.

1. The *first* class comprises those who through shame or fear conceal a sin which they know to be mortal, or in regard to the mortal character of which they entertain at least grave doubts. Every confession in which a mortal sin is knowingly and wilfully concealed

is invalid. The same holds good of confessions in which the number of mortal sins is not truthfully given, or purposely diminished, or in which essential circumstances, changing the nature of the sin are omitted. He who, for instance, says that he committed a sin of impurity three times, knowing that he committed it oftener, confesses invalidly. If a married person has sinned carnally with a single person, and does not add that he or she is married, his or her confession is also invalid, provided he or she purposely conceals this circumstance. All those who have concealed anything that should have been confessed have confessed invalidly; and if they wish to save their souls, nothing remains for them but to repeat their confessions, *i. e.*, they must make a general confession.

2. The *second* class comprises those who omit mortal sins or aggravating circumstances connected with them, or such as change the nature of the sins, because they either do not examine their conscience at all, or examine it only superficially. Every penitent must diligently examine his conscience and spend as much time in the examination as is required for the knowledge of the sins committed, together with their number and circumstances. He who on account of a totally neglected or very careless examination of conscience does not perceive what he is bound to confess, and therefore does not confess it, receives the Sacrament of Penance sacrilegiously, and his confession is as invalid as if he had knowingly concealed some sin. For this reason all those who confess only once a year are in danger of making sacrilegious confessions. As they mostly live in thoughtlessness and forgetfulness of salvation, they ought, in order to overlook nothing, to examine their conscience very carefully; but this they frequently neglect; they think only superficially and hastily of their sins, and the whole business of the examination of conscience is done in a few minutes. How is it possible in such a way to come to a clear knowledge of all the sins which a person has committed in the space of a year? Hence it is that many confessions are invalid from the want of a proper examination of conscience. Now all these invalid confessions must be repeated and rectified by a general confession.

3. The *third* class comprises those who at confession have not true contrition for their sins. Most of the invalid confessions are due perhaps to the want of contrition. How many are there who are not sorry at all for having offended God! They confess from habit; they do not detest their sins in the least, nor do they change the disposition of their mind. How many are there whose contrition is not universal! They are infected with certain favorite sins to which they persistently cling, and from which

they will not detach themselves. How many are there whose contrition is not *supernatural*! They are not grieved on account of their sins, but on account of temporal loss, temporal shame and punishment. All these confess invalidly, because they lack true contrition; and they must repair these bad confessions by a general confession.

4. The *fourth* class comprises *those who do not make a firm resolution of amendment*. This resolution is a necessary consequence of contrition, and is therefore absolutely necessary for the forgiveness of sin. He who is not resolved not to offend God, at least by mortal sin, confesses invalidly. And from the want of this firm resolution many invalid confessions are made. If you never show an amendment of your life; if shortly after confession you fall back into your former sinful habits such as unchaste conversation, fornication, drunkenness, cursing and swearing, it is most assuredly a sign that a firm purpose of amendment is wanting.

5. The *fifth* class comprises *those who after confession are not willing to avoid the proximate occasions of sin, though they could avoid them, and who do not employ the necessary means of amendment*. Contrition and an earnest resolution are most assuredly wanting to such penitents; for if they really hate and detest their sins and are willing to amend their lives, they will gladly make use of the means which are required for that amendment, and which are a preventive against relapse. Those who by experience know that whenever they enter a saloon they become intoxicated, and who still continue to frequent them; also those who fall repeatedly into sin with a person of the opposite sex, and still continue to live under the same roof; those who make no use of the remedies prescribed by their confessor as absolutely necessary for an amendment of life, confess invalidly, and can find grace with God only by a general confession and amendment of life.

6. The *sixth* class comprises *those who do not restore ill-gotten goods, or repair damage inflicted on others, who practice injustices and impositions in business transactions, and continue them after confession; and lastly, all those who, living in enmity, refuse to be reconciled with their neighbor*.

Now examine your conscience and see if you do not find sufficient reason to doubt the validity of some of your former confessions, from failure to comply with the conditions necessary for the forgiveness of sin. If you do, "go, show yourselves to the priests," and make a general confession.

PART II.

A general confession is useful and advisable for all those who have never made one.

This is a rule admitting of few exceptions.

1. A general confession is one of the principal means of *obtaining a true knowledge of the state of your soul*. "If you set a forest on fire on all sides," says St. Leonard of Port Maurice, "you will be surprised at seeing how great a multitude of wild beasts, wolves, bears and foxes were hidden in its coverts." You witness a similar effect when you make a general confession, by which you set your conscience on fire on all sides. How great may appear the multitude of sins which were concealed from you heretofore! Many Catholics who resolved to make a general confession only as an act of devotion, declare after its performance that they discovered sins and causes of uneasiness of which they had never thought before.

2. By a general confession our heart becomes more contrite. In an ordinary confession our contrition is seldom very profound, because we do not know ourselves to be guilty of many and grievous sins. But it is different in a general confession. We see all the wild beasts of our sins, the monsters of our own soul, on the path of our past life, from our childhood to this day. This bewildering sight urges us to sigh with King Esdras: "My God, I am confounded and ashamed to lift up my face to thee; for our iniquities are multiplied over our heads, and our sins are grown up even unto heaven."—*I. Esdras* 9: 6. But the greater our contrition, the greater is our certainty of a worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance and the more abundant the sacramental graces, so that we can even obtain the remittance of all or nearly all the temporal punishment due to our past sins.

3. Another result of a general confession is *that we make firmer purposes of amendment* than is the case in ordinary confessions. He who once resolves to make a general confession has also the earnest will to amend his life and from henceforth to be solicitous for the salvation of his soul. This resolution is still more increased when in the course of the general confession we come to a clear knowledge of our sins and see how often and how grievously we have offended God; how ungrateful we have been to him for all his graces and benefits; and in what peril our salvation has been. And if we then receive the priest's absolution of all the sins of our past life, will not this be a motive for us to remain faithful to our promises?

History and experience prove that a general confession is one of the most effectual means for a through and permanent change of life. How many sinners who confessed for years and always relapsed into their former sins have amended their life after a general confession! And how many of them have by their penitential fervor attained a high degree of holiness! Even some of them, who after a general confession relapsed, rose again after their fall, for their conscience gave them no peace till they resolved by a sincere confession to be reconciled again with God. Hence it is that most penitents date their conversion from the time of their general confession.

4. From this it follows that a general confession is the *source of great inward peace*. William, Duke of Aquitaine, after he had made his general confession to St. Bernard, felt a sweet peace and heavenly joy, such as he had never before experienced in the midst of all the joys and pleasures of the world. In like manner every sinner after a sincere general confession experiences the delight of heart which King David felt when he exclaimed: "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. Better is one day in thy courts above thousands (in the pleasures of the world)."—*Ps. 83: 2-11*.

5. Finally, by a general confession the *salvation of our soul is made more secure*. Suppose that you have not been careless in your former confessions, as many lukewarm Catholics are, you do not know whether you have every time complied with the conditions which are required for a valid confession. At all events, it might be possible that in some of your former confessions you may not have sufficiently examined your conscience, may not have had true contrition with a firm purpose of amendment, or may have concealed something which you were bound to confess. In such a case you have confessed invalidly, and therefore all your subsequent confessions have been invalid. Do you not then act prudently when you make a general confession? Would it not be criminal negligence for you to neglect the many opportunities which are afforded you of making a general confession, and without such a confession to pass into eternity? Anxiety to secure their salvation as far as possible and to die in peace is one of the principal motives why all good Catholics make a general confession. A general confession, therefore, is necessary and advisable for all Catholics who have never made one.

PART III.

When is a general confession necessary?

1. *It is necessary for every one who earnestly resolves to amend his life*. Without such a resolution no confession is valid, whether it be an ordinary or a general confession. He who makes a general confession must be determined at any cost to shun evil inclinations, to put off sinful habits, and to lead a penitential life, because otherwise his general confession would be invalid. Every sinner has days and hours in which he deeply feels the misery of his sins and is urged to put an end to this misery. These are days and hours of grace which God gives to man to save his soul. The sinner must make good use of these seasons of grace; for if he permits them to pass by without a thorough confession he runs the risk of dying impenitently and of being delivered to eternal perdition.

2. *When persons change their state of life; especially when they enter into matrimony*. Most young people do not perform the duties of life as they ought; they live heedlessly, yield to many excesses, and often confess invalidly for the want of sincere contrition or of good resolutions. How badly it would fare with them should they enter into matrimony without a general confession! They would begin that state of life with a triple sacrilege, therefore not with God but with the devil. What can be expected from such a marriage? How can such married people expect to live contentedly and happily together, fulfil their duties and endeavor with their children to increase the number of the elect? It is therefore necessary for all those who enter into the nuptial state to make a general confession before they receive the Sacrament of Matrimony.

3. *When one retires from business*. Many persons during their business life think little of God and the salvation of their souls; they accommodate themselves to the principles of the world, and burden their conscience with many sins; what can be more advisable on retiring from active business life than to make a general confession, in order to set the affairs of their conscience in order, and to devote the time of rest to making atonement for their sins and preparing for a good death?

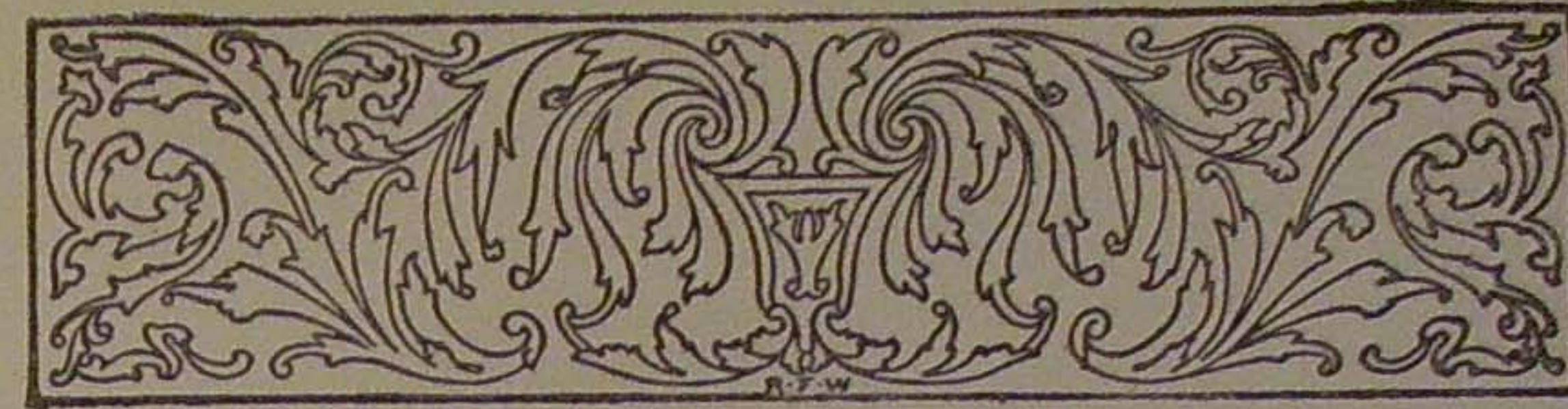
4. *At the time of a mission or a jubilee*. At such a time many spiritual exercises are performed; the word of God is preached frequently and forcibly and the faithful are earnestly exhorted to renew themselves in spirit and to bring forth fruits worthy of penance. The confessors have at the time of a jubilee or mission

more extensive faculties than at other times; they can absolve from all cases reserved to the Pope, with only a few exceptions. Moreover, God imparts at such times greater graces to sinners, often even extraordinary graces, which he is not wont to give at other times. What important reasons then have all who never made a general confession to make it and to set the business of their salvation in order. He who suffers such times of grace to pass without profiting by them exposes himself to the danger of persevering in sin and of dying a miserable death. This is corroborated by history and experience.

5. *Finally, at the hour of death.* It is assuredly not wise to defer the general confession to one's last illness, for no one knows whether he will then be able to confess. Death may overtake him suddenly, or he may lose his senses and speech, when confession becomes impossible. Catholics who are solicitous for the salvation of their soul do not defer their general confession to their death-bed. If it should, however, be the case that a person had never made a general confession in his life, he should at least do so on his death-bed, for, as already remarked, no one should go out of this world without having made a general confession.

PERORATION.

After having explained to you why a general confession is necessary, useful and advisable, and when such a confession should be made, I conclude my instruction with a history of a certain nobleman who, in his youth lived a careless life, but having entered into himself, made a spiritual retreat followed by a good general confession. Thereupon he experienced sweet peace and heavenly joy, and as often as he thought of his confession tears of joy trickled down his cheeks. On his death-bed a few years subsequently he said to those who stood around him: "I should have perished eternally if I had not made a general confession. When I think of that confession, it appears to me to be a letter of introduction into heaven." A quarter of an hour before he died he requested one of the attendants to read for him the good resolutions which he had made at his general confession and which he had written down. At the reading of each of these resolutions his countenance beamed with joy, for he had faithfully kept them, and thus he died with all the signs of a good death. Go and do likewise; make a good general confession, keep the promises and resolutions which you make, serve God with fidelity, and you will die happily and be saved. Amen.



FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*Gal. 5: 16-24.* Brethren: Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another, so that you do not the things that you would. But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wrath, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH AND THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.

In the epistle of last Sunday St. Paul brought before us the important truth that men are not justified by the observance of the Mosaic Law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. But the faith which justifies us and leads to salvation is not inactive and dead, but a living faith, which consists in this, that we not only believe all that God has revealed and proposes to our belief by the Catholic Church, but that we also live according to the precepts of our faith; therefore we keep the commandments, mortify all inordinate desires and passions, shun sin and vice and diligently

practice the Christian virtues. St. Paul speaks in the epistle of to-day of this living, active faith. He treats —

- I. *Of the struggle between the flesh and the spirit;*
- II. *Of the works of the flesh;*
- III. *Of the fruits of the spirit.*

PART I.

1. At the very beginning of the epistle he tells us what we must do so that we may not succumb in the struggle with the flesh; he says: *Walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.* To walk in the spirit means to live according to the will of God, according to the doctrine of Jesus and the maxims of the gospel, to obey the inspirations and impulses of the Holy Ghost. He who lives thus *shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*, that is, he will not permit himself to be led into evil by concupiscence and the motions of corrupt nature, therefore he will not sin. By baptism we have been made members of the Church of Christ, and the Holy Ghost has taken up his abode within our hearts; we are, therefore, in the happy condition of walking always in the spirit; for the Church teaches us what we must do and what avoid, and the indwelling Holy Ghost gives us his grace to overcome the lusts of the flesh and to live piously. We have therefore no excuse when we allow ourselves to be governed by the lusts of the flesh and thereby fall into sin. "The lust (of sin) shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it."—*Gen. 4: 7.* These words, which God spoke to Cain, apply to us.

2. The Apostle now describes the struggle between the flesh and the spirit in these words: *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another, so that you do not the things that you would.*

(a.) By *flesh* we understand that inclination to evil, which is a consequence of original sin, and is therefore found in all men. Of it God says in the Old Testament: "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth."—*Gen. 8: 21.* And St. James writes: "Every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured."—*1: 14.* By *spirit* we understand the better disposition in man, which has its origin in God, who operates upon us through our conscience and his Church, and in many other ways, so that we may know what is right and good, and endeavour to practise it.

(b.) The most perfect harmony existed between the spirit and the flesh in that state of innocence in which man came forth from the hand of God; man indeed had concupiscence, not however of an evil nature but a concupiscence which was perfectly subject to the spirit, and desired only what was right and conformable to the will of God. In consequence of original sin a great change took place in our concupiscence; it often resists the spirit and refuses to obey, desiring to rule; it always desires what *seems* agreeable, without caring whether it be good or evil, it sets everything in motion in order to obtain the object of its desires. It allures man to impurity, revenge, envy, avarice and injustice, in short, to all sins and vices. It operates upon the senses of the body, upon the eyes and ears, and upon the faculties of the soul, upon the understanding, will and memory, and seeks to make them subservient to sin. Now when the spirit resists and rejects its demands, a struggle ensues, for concupiscence is not easily silenced, but insists upon its demand and makes vehement attacks to obtain its own way. If the spirit were dependent on its natural powers, it would often yield in the combat with concupiscence; but, assisted by God's grace, it is able to come forth victorious even from the most desperate struggle. Hence the Apostle says: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me."—*Phil. 4: 13.*

(c.) This struggle between the spirit and the flesh lasts to the end of our lives. The concupiscence which dwells in us is never entirely subdued; it causes countless temptations, and renders all good actions difficult. For instance, you are patiently to bear a humiliation, to forgive an enemy, to suppress an unchaste desire, to renounce something agreeable. Concupiscence at once arises and tries to prevent these good actions. Thus our life upon earth is "a warfare."—*Job 7: 1.* The concupiscence within us will die only with our last breath.

(d.) Because concupiscence operates upon our will and seeks to lead it into evil, the Apostle says that *we must not do all things that we would.* We must not yield to the allurements of concupiscence. If it entices to any sin and with vehemence demands its own way, we must say with courage and determination: I must not, and I will not do it. A king once asked two priests at his court, highly esteemed for their modesty, whether it was true that they carried with them a certain herb which had the virtue of driving away bad thoughts and desires. When they answered in the affirmative, he asked what kind of herb it was. They replied that the herb was the *fear of God*, and that this banishes all sinful thoughts and desires. Thus the fear of God will be to us a shield from which all the arrows of concupiscence rebound.

3. But the Apostle shows us a still more effectual means to gain the victory over concupiscence, when he writes: *But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law.* He intends to say: Christians who have reached a higher degree of perfection and are filled altogether with the love of God, avoid evil and do good without being compelled to it by the law and its threats. Christians who love God do not ask whether something is commanded or forbidden under pain of sin; on the contrary, it is a pleasure to them to do whatever they know is pleasing to God. They stand, therefore, above and outside the law; it is as if they had no law at all, for it is love that urges them everywhere and always to do the will of God. Therefore St. Augustine says: "Love, and do what you please." He who loves God above all things will not succumb in the combat with concupiscence, but will courageously fight against it, overcome it and serve God with fidelity all the days of his life. "Love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench charity."—*Canticle 8: 6, 7.*

PART II.

The Apostle now enumerates the works of the flesh: *Now the works of the flesh are manifest; which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wrath, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Of which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God.*

1. First in order appears the vice of *voluptuousness in all its kinds.* This vice is disgraceful for every man, because it degrades him to the low level of irrational animals, but it is especially so for the Christian, whose body is a temple of the Holy Ghost (*I. Cor. 6: 18-20*), which becomes most intimately united with Jesus in holy communion. Hence the Apostle elsewhere says: "Fornication and all uncleanness . . . let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints."—*Eph. 5: 3.* The vice of voluptuousness robs man of innocence, that precious jewel which makes him even in this life equal to the angels of heaven, but which once lost can never be recovered. The vice of voluptuousness defiles man and degrades all his senses, powers and faculties; the eyes by unchaste looks, the ears by the wanton hearing of immodest words, the tongue by immodest conversation, the imagination by thousands of shameful representations, the will by complacency in abominable things. This vice leads to all other sins and vices, especially to unbelief, despair, and suicide. How much God hates this vice history shows us in

terrible examples. It caused the deluge which drowned the whole human race, with the exception of Noe and his family (*Gen. 6: 12*); four and twenty thousand Israelites perished in the desert (*Numb. 25: 9*); the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha with all their inhabitants were destroyed from the face of the earth.—*Gen. 19.* The lot of the voluptuous in the next world is eternal damnation. "They shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone."—*Apoc. 21: 8.* Ah! shun the vice of impurity, which in our time is so prevalent in the world, and owing to which countless men will be damned for ever. Be modest and reserved and take no indecent liberties with yourselves or others. Take an example from the Emperor Maximilian I., who was so exceedingly modest, that going to bed or getting up from bed he would not allow anyone to assist him either to take off or to put on his clothes. Even in death, he gave a proof of this beautiful virtue. When he felt his end approaching he asked for a shirt and other garments, put them on himself, and gave directions that he should be buried in them.

2. The second class comprises the sins *against the love of our neighbor*—enmities, contentions, emulations, wrath, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders. These sins also deserve our hatred because they break the bond of peace and concord, and cause great mischief. Was it not hatred that made Cain a fratricide? Was it not envy that made Jacob's sons persecutors of their innocent brother Joseph? Was it not anger that made King Asa the tyrant of his subjects?—*II. Paralip. 16: 14.* These sins are especially reprehensible among us Catholics, for they are directly opposed to our principal law, the love of God, which Christ has given us. "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you."—*John 15: 12.* "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you."—*Matt. 5: 44.* Shun all sins against the love of your neighbor, especially hatred, envy, contentions and quarrels. Do not forget that you are all brothers in Christ Jesus, and are called to be admitted into heaven, where only heart-felt love and friendship reign among the elect.

3. The third class comprises sins against temperance, *viz., drunkenness and gluttony.* Those who use intoxicating drink to excess and no longer know what they are saying or doing, are guilty of drunkenness. We see drunken men reel and stagger, fall down, roll in the mire, and do things of which they are ashamed when they become sober. Those sin by gluttony who eat too much, who find their happiness in the gratification of the palate, and make their belly their god. Drunkenness and gluttony are vices which disgrace man and degrade him below the level

of the brute, for the dumb animal ceases to eat and drink when it has enough. These vices are particularly dangerous for Catholics, who ought to lead a sober, mortified life. Having enumerated these works of the flesh, the Apostle says: *They who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God.* Therefore, the unchaste, the uncharitable, and the intemperate will be excluded from the kingdom of God and will be condemned to everlasting fire. Who should not carefully guard against these vices? If a person be contaminated with one or the other of them, should he not tear himself from it at once and do penance? Reflect on the words of St. Augustine: "That which pleases lasts a short time; that which burns lasts for an eternity."

PART III.

The Apostle contrasts the fruits of the spirit with the works of the flesh, in these words: *The fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity.* St. Paul does not say the fruits, but the fruit of the Spirit, because these virtues have their origin in charity; all come forth from it, like branches from the trunk, and are in reality the effects of charity. He calls them the fruit of the Spirit, that is, of the Christian enlightened and governed by the Holy Ghost; for as a good tree yields good fruit, so also Christians in whom the Holy Ghost abides bring forth virtues and good works. The fruits of the Spirit then are:

1. *Charity*; that is, the love of God and of our neighbor; *the love of God*, which manifests itself especially by a conscientious fulfilment of his commandments; *the love of our neighbor*, which requires that we wish well to our fellow-men, and help them in their necessities according to our ability. Where charity is, there God is; and he that remains in charity remains in God, and God in him. *Joy*; this is a pure pleasure in God's grace, in his wise and merciful providence, in purity of conscience, and in all that is truly good and pleasing to God. This joy is a hidden manna, of which worldlings have no idea, and in comparison with which all earthly and sensual joys are a mere nothing. He who has this joy in his heart is rich even in poverty, and rejoices in persecutions and sufferings. *Peace*; peace with God, with our neighbor and with ourselves. A result of this peace is tranquillity of conscience and the sweet conviction that we possess the grace and friendship of God. He who possesses this fruit of the Spirit possesses the most desirable thing in life, *contentedness*; he lives peacefully, dies peacefully, and enters into the mansion of eternal rest.

2. Other fruits of the Spirit are: *Patience*, which renders everything easy. He who possesses this virtue, remains composed under the severest hardships and trials; he murmurs not, complains not, but is perfectly resigned to the will of God, and says: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so is it done; blessed be the name of the Lord." — *Job 1: 21.* *Benignity*, a beautiful virtue, which causes us to treat all men, even the lowliest, affably and kindly, carefully avoiding in our conduct anything that might irritate or repulse any one. *Goodness*; those who possess this virtue do good to their fellow-men according to their ability. They are not satisfied with doing only what duty compels them to do, but they are at all times ready to help for charity's sake only, not expecting any reward in this world.

3. Other fruits of the Spirit are: *Longanimity*, which enables us to bear the weaknesses and frailties of our fellow-men with patience, which defers reprimand and chastisement as long as possible, and never despairs of the amendment of the erring. It is a particularly necessary virtue for parents, teachers, and all spiritual and temporal superiors. *Mildness*; he who possesses this virtue is always tranquil; his speech is mild; his admonitions affectionate; even when reproving he is gentle and sparing. He bears everything patiently, is not irritated by anything; keeps silence when wrong is done him, and defends himself calmly; he smothered every motion of indignation in his heart, forgives those who offend him, and does them good when he can. Oh, that we all would learn of our divine Saviour to be meek and humble of heart! *Faith*, which has reference to God and man. We are faithful to God when we conscientiously keep our promises and resolutions and cling to him in good and in evil days. We are faithful to our neighbor when we keep our word in all our dealings with him, and do not allow ourselves to be induced by any temptation of ambition, avarice or self-interest to commit an act of injustice.

4. Lastly, the Apostle designates *moderation* as a fruit of the Spirit. He who is moderate eats and drinks only as much as is necessary for the preservation of his life, health and strength; he is content with clothes corresponding with his position in life and makes use of innocent pleasures only for the purpose of recreation, therefore sparingly and at the right time. *Continency*; those practice this virtue who manfully deny themselves everything that is against the will of God, no matter how agreeable it may be to sensuality, and who lead a mortified life. *Chastity*; those possess this virtue who detest every unchaste thought and every impure desire, who shun even the shadow of impurity and keep body and soul undefiled.

PERORATION.

These are the fruits of the Spirit; these are the virtues and marks of a true Christian; *for they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences*: they mortify their evil inclinations and passions, deny themselves and follow Jesus. Let us take to heart the words of our divine Saviour: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire."—*Matt. 7: 19*. Let us therefore shun all works of the flesh, and consider it the most important task of our life to yield good fruit, *i. e.*, to practice virtues and good works, that we may be able to stand before the judgment-seat of God and be called to eternal beatitude. Amen.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt. 6: 24-33*. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. Now if God so clothe the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

ON SERVING TWO MASTERS; ON SOLICITUDE FOR TEMPORAL GOODS; ON STRIVING FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The gospel of this day is a small portion of the marvellous sermon which Jesus Christ at the commencement of his public life preached in the presence of his disciples and a great multitude of people upon a mountain, and which on that account is called the Sermon on the Mount. He had admonished his hearers to guard against vanity and ambition in their good works and not to seek the praise and applause of men, that they might not lose their merit before God. In like manner he warned them against all inordinate desires after temporal goods, because they are not durable; they should, on the contrary, gather treasures for heaven by virtues and good works. Then our Blessed Lord passes over to that which constitutes the contents of the gospel of this day. We shall make a short meditation thereon for our mutual instruction and edification. He speaks—

- I. *Of the impossibility of serving two masters;*
- II. *Of anxious solicitude for temporal goods;*
- III. *Of the striving for the kingdom of God.*

PART I.

No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will sustain the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

By the two masters which no one can serve at the same time our Blessed Lord refers to God and mammon, for he adds: "You cannot serve God and mammon." The word *mammon* is of Syriac origin and means riches, worldly interest.

Christ here makes a contrast between God and mammon, because riches are to many people a master or idol which they serve. The declaration of Christ: "No man can serve two masters," has this meaning: He that attaches his heart to money and worldly goods, and allows himself to be governed by the desire for them cannot serve God. Let us consider why such a man cannot serve God.

1. It is evident that no man can serve two masters if each of them requires *that he should be served alone*. Thus it is impossible for a servant to serve two employers, because each of them claims the servant and does not permit him to work for one

master to-day and for the other to-morrow. The case is parallel between God and the idol of riches, or avarice. God demands that we serve him alone. "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve."—*Matt.* 4: 10. He requires us to love him with our whole heart, and does not permit us to divide our heart with another, as the Samaritans did, who beside the true God also adored idols. The idol of riches demands the same undivided service. He who permits himself to be ruled by avarice, values money and goods above all other things; on account thereof he neglects the duties of religion and does not hesitate to commit great injustices, sins and vices. Examples: Achab, who through false witnesses had Naboth accused of blasphemy, and stoned, and then by robbery took his vineyard.—*III. Kings* 21. Dalila, who for money betrayed Sampson.—*Judg.* 16: 5, *et seq.* Judas, who from avarice sold and delivered his master to his enemies.—*Matt.* 26. Who can count all the injustices, false oaths, enmities, and murders that have had their cause in avarice? How justly the Apostle says: "They that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition. For the desire of money is the root of all evils."—*I. Tim.* 6: 9, 10.

2. No man can serve two masters if they *command contrary things*. If two masters were in one house and opposed to each other, and one should say to the servant, "You must do this," and the other, "You must not do it," it would evidently be impossible for him to obey both. In like manner it is impossible to serve God and mammon, because they are contrary to each other and demand of us contrary things. God demands that in our intercourse with men and in business transactions we should be honest and conscientious and not appropriate to ourselves unjustly one single cent; covetousness, on the contrary, has a wide conscience and thinks that the greatest injustices and impositions are permissible. God wills that we give alms; avarice is frightened when it sees an afflicted person approach, and sends him harshly and rudely from the door. God wills that first of all we should be solicitous for our eternal salvation; but avarice causes man to forget his salvation entirely, and to absorb himself in temporal things.

3. Lastly, no man can serve two contrary masters, because *it is impossible to love both*; we must necessarily, as Jesus says, hate the one and love the other, sustain the one and despise the other. From this it follows that between two masters we can serve only him whom we honor and love, but cannot serve him whom we hate and despise. Now, as God and mammon are con-

trary to each other, man evidently can love and serve only one of them. What does the covetous man do? Does he love God, or temporal goods? Ah, he is indifferent to God, does not serve him, and violates his holy commandments in many ways; he thinks everything of money and goods, to them his heart belongs; to acquire and increase them he fears no trouble, but also no sin; in short, money and goods are his god; this is why St. Paul calls avarice idolatry.—*Ephes.* 5: 5. St. Prosper relates the following: A certain man who was very avaricious died suddenly. In order to find out the cause of his sudden death his friends ordered a post-mortem examination. To their astonishment they discovered that he had no heart; it was afterwards found in his money-box. This story, for the truth of which I do not vouch, plainly illustrates to us that covetousness is idolatry, because the avaricious man does not give his heart to God, but to the money-fiend.

In order to guard yourselves against the vice of covetousness, consider often the words of our Blessed Lord: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?"—*Matt.* 16: 26. How is a man profited by many earthly goods, which even in this life cause him many cares and anxieties, which he leaves behind him on his death, and which, after having loved them inordinately and having made a bad use of them, bring about his everlasting perdition? Do not set your hearts upon these vain, fleeting and dangerous goods; be solicitous for them only so far as they are necessary to you and your own family, and a means of doing good and of meriting heaven.

PART II.

The reason why so many people are often ruled by avarice is because they allow themselves to be absorbed in earthly things. Jesus cautions us against this anxious solicitude, and gives us very convincing reasons why we should not yield to it.

1. *Therefore I say to you: Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for our body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment?*

(a.) When our Lord says: *Be not solicitous*, it is not meant that all solicitude for earthly goods is forbidden. On the contrary, it is the will of God that every man should work in order to support himself and get on in the world.

He gave us the body with its members and senses, and the soul with its powers and faculties, not for idleness, but that we might make use of them in the affairs of life. Therefore God

said to Adam: "With labor and toil . . . in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."—*Gen.* 3: 17-19. And St. Paul writes: "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—*I. Tim.* 5: 8. Hence it is not ordinary care, but only unreasonable solicitude for earthly goods that is forbidden. When is this solicitude unreasonable? St. Thomas of Aquin answers the question when he says: "This solicitude is unreasonable and forbidden by our Lord when temporal goods are sought as the chief object, when in the acquisition of them inordinate pains are taken, and when one is full of fear that in time of need they may be wanting."

(b.) Jesus gives as a second reason why we should not yield to unreasonable solicitude for temporal goods, that God who has given us greater and more perfect things will certainly not keep from us what is less. Is not your life worth more than the meat, and your body worth more than the raiment? Now as God has given you the greater, *i. e.*, life, he will certainly give the lesser, *i. e.*, meat and drink, in order to preserve your life. And since God has given you the body, the greater good, he will certainly also give you the lesser good, clothes, that you may cover and protect yourselves against the inclemency of the weather.

2. *Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?* Here we have another reason why we should avoid fretting and worrying. If God cares for the birds so lovingly, and gives them what they need for existence, why should he care less for us who are created according to his likeness and endowed with reason and an immortal soul? When an earthly father has both birds and children, does he feed the birds and let his children starve?

3. *Which of you, by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?* Here Christ shows us the uselessness of worrying and fretting, of unreasonable solicitude, because with all our worrying and fretting we cannot accomplish the least thing. Therefore it is foolish to do so. Do we not act unreasonably when we worry and fret about temporal things, knowing well that all our solicitude, all our fretting and worrying, does not change our condition, that in consequence we render our life bitter, and moreover act contrary to the will of God, who imposes it upon us as a duty to trust in him and submit ourselves to his guidance.

4. *And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labor not, neither do they spin. But*

I say to you, that not even Solomon, in all his glory, was arrayed as one of these. Now, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which is to-day and to-morrow is cast into the oven: how much more you, O ye of little faith? In these words Christ shows still more plainly why we should put away all undue solicitude. If God, he says, takes care of even inanimate things, which we do not value, such as the flowers of the field, and clothes them more gorgeously than a king, how much more will he care for men, those glorious creatures, and give them everything that they need for their temporal life? A glance at the grass and the flowers must convince us how wrongly and foolishly we act when we fret and worry about earthly things.

5. *Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.* Here we have two further motives for the putting away of all anxious cares. We can understand the heathens giving themselves up to immoderate cares. They did not consider their gods omnipotent, but thought that men were under the all-ruling power of fate, against which they could not prevail. They could never enjoy life, for they were always in fear that they might be so placed that the gods themselves would not be able to help them. Neither could the heathens in their tribulations console themselves with the prospect of a better hereafter, because they were in great ignorance with regard to the immortality of the soul and their lot in eternity. How different it is with us Christians! We are taught by faith that whatever happens to us is either willed or permitted by God, that all things turn out well with them that love God. Even the hardships and trials of this life, be they ever so hard, cannot discourage us or make us faint-hearted, for we know that the sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory that awaits us hereafter. We should cease to be Christians and become heathens, if we fretted and worried about earthly things. Lastly, Christ directs our thoughts to God our Father in heaven, in order to inspire us with confidence. He reminds us of the *omniscience* of God, who knows our wants; of the *goodness* of God, who being our Father will help us in all our necessities, and lastly, of the *omnipotence* of God, who can help us. It is therefore certain that we shall obtain from God everything that is necessary and useful for our earthly life. Put off then all anxious care, preserve always tranquillity of heart, and whenever you wish for anything reflect within yourselves: This is either expedient for me or not; if it is not expedient for me, I shall not have it, and I hope God's providence will not give it to me; but if it is expedient, I am confident and certain that I shall obtain

it. Whatever may be the issue of your wish, you can and must be satisfied and perfectly submissive to the will of God.

PART III.

At the conclusion of the gospel of this day, our divine Lord admonishes us to *seek the kingdom of God* in these words: *Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and his justice; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

1. Christ admonishes us to seek the *kingdom of God and his justice.*

By the kingdom of God we here understand *heaven*, or eternal beatitude. Heaven is justly called the kingdom of God, because God there displays his whole power and glory, reigns for ever over angels and men and unceasingly receives their homage. We must seek this kingdom, *i. e.*, we must have an earnest desire for it and spare neither labor nor pains to acquire it. Heaven is our final destiny; God has created us for it; in order to open it, closed as it was against us by sin, Jesus Christ became man, and after a life of pain and suffering died on the cross. The Holy Ghost is constantly laboring in the Church and in the souls of men to purify and sanctify them—and yet, there are many who seek everything except the kingdom of God. Their desire is unceasingly after money and temporal goods, joys, pleasures, honor and reputation. All their thoughts are bent on these things; to obtain them they make the greatest sacrifices, but they are careless and indifferent about God and their soul. They would cheerfully give up heaven if they could always remain upon earth. What folly!

2. *By justice* we understand that which is required for the attainment of the kingdom of God or eternal salvation. The first requisite is *faith*, according to the words of Christ: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned."—*Mark 16: 16.* But the faith that leads to salvation is no other than the Catholic faith, for Christ taught this only; the Apostles taught only this, and their successors at all times have preached only this. He who through his own fault has not this faith, hopes in vain for heaven. The second requisite is the *observance of the commandments of God and of his Church*, or in other words, a truly Christian, virtuous life, as Christ again says: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."—*Matt. 19: 17.* It is not enough to believe well, we must also live

well. The third requisite is that we diligently avail ourselves of the means of salvation, which are *prayer and the sacraments*. The sacraments, especially penance and the Blessed Eucharist, are necessary for us that being freed from our sins, sanctified, and fortified, we may persevere in the service of God and make progress in virtue. For this end we must also fervently practise prayer, for it is the principal means of overcoming all temptations and persevering in good.

3. Our blessed Lord wills that we seek first the kingdom of God and his justice. The reason is evident. What is earthly cannot be compared with what is heavenly; heaven is worth all; for this reason we must first seek heaven and everything that is required for it. But when do we seek first the kingdom of God and his justice?

(a.) When we take a greater interest in the cause of God, in our sanctification, and in the attainment of eternal life, than in all else.

(b.) When in all our thoughts and actions we have the salvation of our soul before our eyes, and live in a manner calculated to enable us to attain our final object.

(c.) When we devote particular attention to that which brings us no earthly gain, but which is for the honor of God, for our own and our neighbor's salvation.

(d.) When we are firmly resolved to suffer the greatest loss, even to make a sacrifice of life, rather than offend God and lose heaven. Reflect a moment and see whether you seek the kingdom of God in such a manner.

4. Our Lord promises that if we seek first the kingdom of God, and his justice, *all other things* necessary for our temporal life *shall be added unto us*. God, as it were, has heaven for sale, and wills that we buy it. If we make the bargain with him, that is, if in order to gain heaven we serve him faithfully, he will give us everything we need for our temporal life, because it is nothing in his eyes. If we lead a pious life and seek heaven, we may be without solicitude as regards our subsistence in this world; God will reward our zeal for virtue, not only in heaven, but also on earth, and will give us what we need for our support. The service of God then is the surest way to prosperity and happiness.

PERORATION.

Never lose sight of the end for which God created you; and consider that your salvation is your most important business so long as you live. Heaven is certainly worthy of all your solicitude, for a perfect and eternal felicity there awaits you. When the worldling labors so hard to procure temporal joys and goods, which can never satisfy his heart, and at last disappear like bubbles, should you not with ceaseless fervor press forward to the reward and joys which are prepared for you in heaven? And if you serve God faithfully and walk in the way of his commandments, you may be quite unconcerned about temporal things; God will give all that you need for yourselves and your families with a liberal hand. *Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice and all these things shall be added unto you.* Amen.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed.—Matt. 6: 31.

Our Blessed Lord warns us in the gospel of this day against undue solicitude, and gives several reasons why we should avoid it. He tells us that if God takes care of the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, and gives them what they need for their life and existence, he will certainly not forget us, his more excellent creatures. The heathens may be excused for being solicitous about temporal things, for they have an imperfect knowledge of God, and know not that he is their Father; that he loves them as his children and gives them all they need. But you know all this; it would therefore be wrong for you to let your hearts be filled with solicitude for earthly things. We must, therefore, in all the vicissitudes of life place our trust in God and in his powerful and good providence, and expect with confidence all that is good and salutary for us. In order to encourage

you in this confidence, I shall speak to-day of the providence of God, and show you that —

- I. *God cares for us in the best way;*
- II. *That he directs everything to our advantage.*

PART I.

1. *Reason teaches us that God cares for us in the best way.*

(a.) There are those who say that God, after having created the world, no longer cares about it; that he does not trouble himself about any of the works of his creation including man; for it is not becoming to his infinite majesty to be occupied with anything lower than himself and his felicity. This is very foolish language. Every one grants that we can help ourselves as little as we could create ourselves. If God were to withdraw his care from us, we should be obliged to say that he ought not to have created us. If it was no dishonor for him to create us it is certainly no dishonor to care for us and to give us what we need.

(b.) Let us suppose that God does not care for us, but leaves us to our fate, as the potter, who sells his ware and no longer cares about it. What should we conclude from this? Evidently, either that he will not or cannot care for us. To assert the one or the other would be as much as to deny God entirely. If God could not care for us he would not be omnipotent; if he would not care for us he would not be good and consequently he would not be the most perfect being, he would not be God, because omnipotence and goodness would be wanting to him. If we believe in God, we must also believe in his providence, and especially in the truth that he interests himself about us and cares for us.

(c.) God has so created men that they have a great love for their children and provide for all their necessities as well as they can. He has given the irrational animals the instinct to take care of their young, to protect them, and to procure them food. Should God, our Creator, the perfection of goodness, be below men and beasts and not care for us; should he refuse us what we need for our life and subsistence? Who could believe it? Reason therefore teaches that God provides for us.

2. *The Sacred Scripture teaches it.*

(a.) Jesus Christ has often and plainly taught that his heavenly Father is also the Father of all men, and that he provides for all

with the affection of a father. He called upon us to pray when he said: "Ask, and it shall be given you."—*Matt. 7: 7*. Why such an invitation, if God cared nothing about us and was not inclined to hear our petitions? He refers us to the birds of the air, which his heavenly Father feeds so lovingly, and to the flowers of the field, which he clothes so splendidly, and says we are of little faith if we do not with all confidence hope for food and raiment from God. He also says: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."—*Matt. 10: 29, 30*. Who would dare to say that God, who cares for such lowly creatures as the sparrows and the flowers of the field, and even for the hairs of our head, does not think of us whom he has created in his likeness, redeemed by the blood of his Son, and sanctified through the grace of the Holy Ghost; that he is unconcerned about our weal or woe? Truly we should give up faith altogether, if we doubt that God cares for us.

(b.) How many examples do we not find in the Sacred Scriptures, giving the clearest testimony of the solicitude of God for men. If we peruse the history of our first parents, of Abraham, of Joseph, of Moses, of the children of Israel, of Job, Ruth, David, Tobias, Esther and Judith, what plain traces of the fatherly providence of God do we not meet with? Who can read the history of the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and the Apostles, without being convinced that God cares tenderly for his own and forsakes no one who puts his confidence in him?

3. Experience.

What is the solicitude of a mother for her child in comparison with that love with which God studies the good of men? He has given you parents who fed and reared you. In your youth he surrounded you as by a protecting wall and rescued you from countless dangers. Afterwards he placed you in a position to earn your own living. If you have him always before your eyes and do what is right you will also receive from him all that you need. If you fall sick, there are physicians and remedies by which, if it be his will, you will recover your health; in necessities you find a friend who assists you; in persecutions a defender who protects you against injustice; in other difficulties there are not wanting those who assist you with counsel and aid. Even for your death God lovingly provides; he not only obliges your pastors and friends to assist you on your death-bed, but raises your body again and reunites it with the soul, that you may rejoice with him for ever in heaven. You need not therefore be

solicitous how you live in this world, nor how you die, nor what will be your lot in the next world; God provides for all this, and makes all come right if you always walk in the way of his commandments. "Cast all your care upon God; for he hath care of you."—*I. Pet. 5: 7*.

PART II.

God directs everything to our advantage. All men are subject to his dominion. Therefore Daniel says: "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing before him; for he doth according to his will, as well with the powers of heaven, as among the inhabitants of the earth; and there is none that can resist his hand, and say to him: Why hast thou done it?"—*Dan. 4: 32*. God, indeed, does no violence to our will; we can do as we please. But this much is certain, that he interferes in our actions and so directs them that what he intends must result from them. "The heart of man disposeth his ways, but the Lord must direct his steps."—*Prov. 16: 9*. This holds good —

1. Of all our actions.

(a.) *Of quite insignificant and indifferent ones.* We often do something which we think is a matter of no moment; we sit down to eat, we take a walk, we visit a friend, we participate in an entertainment. God so directs all these, in themselves quite indifferent, things, that they frequently have very important consequences. The Samaritan woman going to draw water about the sixth hour was apparently a matter of little importance; she never thought that the drawing of water about this hour would have important results. And yet it was the case, for it afforded herself and her countrymen an opportunity of coming to the knowledge of the true God and to belief in Jesus.—*John 4*. If the Samaritan woman had not gone at all, or earlier, or later, to draw water, she and her countrymen would probably have been deprived of all these blessings. This is often the case with apparently insignificant acts; they form a link and a chain in the divine government of the world, and are therefore very important, though we seldom perceive this.

(b.) *Of good actions.* God directs these also and causes a blessing to flow from them for us and for others. The exercises of devotion which we practise, the mortifications which we impose upon ourselves, the acts of charity which we perform, the virtues of humility, meekness, chastity, patience, and obedience, which we exercise, are in the hands of God's providence the means which we make use of for carrying out his intentions. When

St. Stephen was stoned and lay on the ground in his blood, he gathered together his remaining strength, raised himself on his knees and said with a loud voice: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."—*Acts 7: 59*. What were the blessed effects of this prayer? It not only rendered the crown of this holy martyr most glorious, but was also the cause of the conversion of St. Paul, who as a most zealous Apostle brought many thousands of the Jews and Gentiles into the Church and thus saved their souls.

(c.) *Even of bad actions, for God causes good to come from them.* This is not to be understood in the sense that the sin is of any advantage to him who commits it; it brings him death and damnation if he remains impenitent. But just as the potter knows how to shape his vessels with symmetry out of inferior clay, so divine Providence knows how to produce good from evil actions. Let us by way of illustration consider this truth by giving an example. Judas was addicted to the vice of avarice; he had very probably become a disciple of Jesus from avarice; owing to this he carried the common purse, betrayed his Lord and delivered him to the Jews. How terribly had this man sinned through his avarice! But God turned these terrible sins into great blessings for mankind. The death of Jesus, which was caused through the avarice of Judas, brought the grace of salvation to sinful man. So good is our God that even the greatest evil, sin, must serve as a means for carrying out his beneficent purposes. A spiritual writer very appropriately says: "Man knows how to utilize everything connected with a sheep; the wool provides him with clothing; its flesh is a delicious food; and even the bones, when pulverized, make a rich and well-known fertilizer." So divine Providence also knows how to make good use of whatever man does, whether his acts are good, bad or indifferent; he performs his acts, as it were, over again, and prepares from them something good and salutary for mankind. The wisdom of God "reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly."—*Wisd. 8: 1*.

2. It holds good of *sufferings*.

(a.) *As regards sinners.* He sends them crosses and afflictions, in order to banish from their hearts all inordinate attachments to the perishable things of the earth; he sends humiliations upon them, that they may renounce their vanity and pride; he strikes them with sickness and infirmities, in order to weaken their propensity to sensual joys; he visits them with poverty and need, in order to withdraw from them the means for the gratification of their passions. Numerous examples from history show how

effectual are sufferings to lead men to the knowledge of their guilt and to amendment. The seemingly hard treatment which Joseph's brothers experienced in Egypt brought them to the knowledge of their sin. "We deserve," they said, "to suffer these things, because we have sinned against our brother."—*Gen. 42: 21*. Manasses deprived of his throne, loaded with chains and carried into Egypt, acknowledged his sin and did penance. *II. Paralip. 33*. Hunger and misery moved the prodigal son to enter into himself and to throw himself penitently into the arms of his merciful father. Sufferings and tribulations are among the most effectual means of making the sinner return to God. Therefore David prayed to God: "Fill their faces with shame, and they shall seek thy name, O Lord."—*Ps. 82: 17*.

(b.) *As regards the just.* The greater the virtue, the greater the merit, and the greater and more glorious the reward in heaven. Nothing is more calculated to purify and to perfect virtue in the just man than trials, crosses and sufferings. Therefore St. James says: "My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience, and patience hath a perfect work; that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing."—*James 1: 2-4*. The just man can never better manifest his love and fidelity to God than in time of tribulation. Is it a great thing to serve God when everything goes according to our wish, when God seems to serve us, instead of his creatures serving him? But, to endure sufferings for the honor of God, and to bear hard trials patiently, to rejoice with the Apostles in suffering reproach and contumely for the name of Jesus, this is the test of solid virtue, and worthy of all glory. The higher the degree of virtue and perfection to which we ascend, the greater is our merit before God, and the greater the reward we may expect in heaven. Therefore Jesus calls those blessed who follow him on the way of the cross: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for my sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."—*Matt. 5: 11, 12*.

PERORATION.

Place your whole confidence in God, and submit willingly to his loving guidance. He is your most powerful protector, your most kind Father. He cares for you *in the best manner*, and daily and hourly opens his hand to impart to you abundantly whatever you need in every situation of life. *He orders and disposes all to your advantage*, for he loves you as a father loves his children; and the wish of his paternal heart is for your temporal and

eternal welfare. As you always acknowledge him as your Lord and Father, trust in him and do what is pleasing to him; you are in the best hands; he will give you tranquil and happy days on earth, and will hereafter reward you with the everlasting happiness of heaven. Amen.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE GUARDIAN ANGELS.

Behold, I will send my angel, who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the place that I have prepared.
Exodus 23: 20.

The feast of the Guardian Angels was formerly associated with that of the Archangel Michael, *i. e.*, the Church celebrated the feast of St. Michael and the feast of all the holy Angels on the same day, the 29th of September. In the sixteenth century the feast of the holy Guardian Angels was separated from that of St. Michael, and a proper day appointed for its celebration. Pope Paul V. confirmed this in the year 1608, and Clement IX. ordained that the feast of the guardian angels, with an Octave, should be annually celebrated on the second of October. For Germany, however, he permitted the celebration of this feast on the first of September. The words which the Lord spoke to the people of Israel apply to the holy guardian angel: "Behold, I will send my angel, who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the place that I have prepared." When the Israelites journeyed through the desert, God placed them under the special protection of an angel who went before them, protected them against all calamities, and conducted them into the land of Chanaan. The holy guardian angels do the same for us; they accompany us on our journey, guard and protect us, and lead us into heaven if we allow ourselves to be led by them. Of this comforting and encouraging truth, the protection of the guardian angels, I shall speak to you to-day. I say that the angels guard us —

- I. Before and after our birth;
- II. During the whole course of our life;
- III. At the end of our life.

PART I.

As the angel of the Lord went before the Israelites on their journey through the desert, so the holy angels precede us on our earthly pilgrimage; they guard us —

1. *In our mother's womb.* Famous theologians, such as St. Anselm, Albert the Great, St. Thomas of Aquin, St. Bonaventure, teach that God gives a guardian angel to children as soon as they are conceived in their mothers's womb. Thus St. Anselm says: "Every soul, when it comes into the body, *i. e.*, when God unites it with the body of the child, is entrusted to an angel." There are good reasons for this doctrine.

(a.) There is no doubt that the devil brings his dangerous influence to bear upon children in their mother's womb, and endeavors to implant in them many evil inclinations and passions; for he knows that these evil germs easily develop themselves and become the cause of many and grievous sins. The evil spirit strives especially to transfer to the children in their mother's womb those passions to which the parents, and particularly the mother, are subject, *e. g.*, avarice, voluptuousness, anger, envy; therefore they need an angel even before their birth to counteract the devil and prevent his injuries. Hence St. Thomas of Aquin says: "A guardian angel is appointed for children at the infusion of the rational soul, in order to put a stop to the power of the devil who seeks to injure them."

(b.) *Nature* too has numerous dangers for children in their mothers's womb. Since sin has found entrance into the world all nature is unfriendly to man and brings manifold woes upon him. Even the unborn child is subject to its pernicious influences, and its life is menaced so much the more because it is still exceedingly weak and resembles a tender plant which the first frost withers. Add to this, the life of the child is most intimately connected with that of the mother, and that whatever injures the mother is more or less disadvantageous to the child. Now it is the guardian angel that watches over the child, and keeps away from it whatever could endanger its life. It is a matter of the greatest importance to him that the child should be born *living* and be baptized, because otherwise it could not enter into heaven. Christian mothers therefore should not omit daily to recommend their unborn child to the protection of its guardian angel, that it may come happily into the world and receive the **grace of baptism.**

2. *After our birth.*

(a.) Little children specially need the protection of the holy angels. They have no presentiment of the dangers that menace them on every side; they are also thoughtless and curious, and therefore experience a desire to see, hear, and enjoy whatever has a charm for them. How easily then can they be injured! Not less are the dangers of the soul; since they cannot yet distinguish between right and wrong, are by nature prone to evil, and hear and see many evil things, it happens only too often that they deviate from the right path. Many children are not properly watched and guarded, for some parents care more for dumb animals than for their children. Is it not perfectly reasonable then to believe that God places children under the protection of his holy angels in order to guard them against all injuries of body and soul?

(b.) Jesus himself assures us in plain words that such is the case. "See that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 18: 10. That is to say: See that you do not scandalize children and induce them to sin, for he who does so, sins against the angels whom God has given them for their protection, and takes great responsibility upon himself. As there are sentinels placed at the palace of a king, day and night guarding the entrances to it, so the guardian angels watch uninterruptedly over their foster-children, and take care that no evil befalls them.

(c.) History furnishes numerous examples of the wonderful way in which children are protected by their angels. (*Give one or more examples.*) If you look back upon the years of your childhood, must you not confess that on various occasions you were in the greatest danger and would have been killed, if your guardian angel had not protected you? If, after all, children suffer loss in body and soul, we have no reason to conclude that their angels do not take care of them; the misfortune which befalls them is an ordinance or permission of God, to which the angels entirely submit.

PART II.

The angel of the Lord stood by the side of the Israelites on their journey through the desert in every danger and need. To us also God has appointed an angel upon our journey through a life which is so full of dangers and trials, and he guards us in all the necessities —

1. *Of the body.* We have evidence of this —

(a.) *In the Old Testament.* "God," says the Psalmist (90: 11, 12), "hath given his angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Proofs of this are, Agar, Abraham's bond-woman who lost her way in the wilderness of Bersabee, and whose child, Ismael, was perishing from hunger. She lifted up her voice and wept, when an angel appeared and showed her a well of water and saved her and her child from death.—*Gen.* 21. The prophet Elias fled from Jezebel into the desert; exhausted from the laborious journey and discouraged by solitude, he sat down and asked God to let him die. An angel of the Lord appeared to him and brought him a hearth-cake and a vessel of water and commanded him to eat. He ate and drank and walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God, Horeb.—*III. Kings* 19. An angel of the Lord went down with Azarias and his companions into the fiery furnace into which Nabuchodonosor had cast them, and drove the flame of the fire out of the furnace, and made the midst of it like the blowing of a moist, cool wind, and the fire touched them not at all, nor troubled them, nor did them any harm.—*Dan.* 3. Other examples are, Lot, whom angels conducted out of Sodom, in order that he should not perish; Tobias and his son, on whom the archangel Raphael conferred great benefits; and Daniel, whom an angel protected in the lions' den.

(b.) *In the New Testament.* Peter was in prison guarded by soldiers; the following day he was to be executed. An angel of the Lord came to him, awakened him from sleep, and said: "Gird thyself, and put on thy sandals. Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me." The chains fell from his hands, the iron gate opened to them of itself, the angel conducted him through the midst of the guards and accompanied him through a street till he was in safety. Full of amazement Peter exclaimed: "Now I know in very deed that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."—*Acts* 12. St. Paul, on his voyage to Rome, was in a ship which was overtaken by so violent a storm that all hopes of safety were lost. But he exhorted his fellow-passengers to be of good cheer, assuring them that an angel had stood by him that night, and told them that there should be no loss of any man's life among them. And thus it came to pass; every soul got safe to land.—*Acts* 27.

History furnishes many similar examples of the miraculous protection of the angels. Peruse the Lives of the Saints, and you will find many who enjoyed the special protection of the

angels. How thankful must we be towards God, who has given us his angels as guardians! But that we may count on their guardianship we must strive to lead a pious life. He who lives in sin hopes in vain for the protection and help of angels. As we read in the Sacred Scriptures, God employs his angels to punish sinners. Thus angels destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha with all their inhabitants; the angels struck Heliodorus and he fell to the earth as if dead. Live piously and virtuously that the angels may keep a loving watch over you.

2. *Of the soul.* The principal office of the angels is to watch over men that they may serve God and save their souls; wherefore the Apostle writes: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?—*Heb. 1: 14.* It is a part of the service of the angels —

(a.) *To protect us from the snares of the enemies of our salvation.* St. Peter Damian says: "Heavenly spirits daily hasten over the globe, and reach out to us a helping hand in the struggle. For how could man, weak as he is, resist the cunning of the wily and skilful enemy, if the power of the holy angels did not keep temptation away from us?" So long as we live upon earth we must fight; for the world, the flesh and the devil place all kinds of obstacles in the way of our service of God, and seek to lead us into evil. By the exertions of these our enemies, hard struggles ensue, in which even well-trained soldiers of Christ might well become faint-hearted. Now it is the angels that assist and inspire us with courage and obtain of God the grace to win the victory over all the enemies of our salvation.

(b.) *To oppose those who intend to pursue evil ways and to guard them against sin and vice.* When Balaam went to King Balac, the ass upon which he rode turned herself out of the way. He beat her and endeavored to bring her again to the road; but the ass thrust herself close to the wall, and bruised the foot of the rider. He still kept on belaboring the poor animal, for he was not aware that an angel prevented her from proceeding any further. At last his eyes were opened and he saw the angel standing in the way, with a drawn sword, who said to him: "I am come to withstand thee because thy way is perverse."—*Numbers 22: 32.* In like manner the guardian angel keeps man back when he is about to do evil. He does not resist him visibly, but invisibly, by interior inspirations and suggestions, by the motions of conscience, by the admonitions of priests in the pulpit and in the confessional, or by the fraternal correction of a well-meaning friend, he seeks to withdraw him from evil.

(c.) *To obtain of God grace for sinners, for the salvation of their souls.* Jesus once spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the dresser of the vineyard: Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down, therefore; why cumbereth it the ground? But he answering, said to him: Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it, and dung it; and if happily it bear fruit; but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."—*Luke 13: 6-9.* Let us recognize the guardian angel in the dresser of the vineyard. God frequently raises his arm, in order to cut down men on account of their constant impenitence, like unfruitful trees, and to cast them into the fire; but the holy guardian angels intervene, intercede, and obtain for them grace to do penance and escape perdition.

PART III.

After wandering for forty years in the desert the Israelites were obliged to fight vigorously, for the inhabitants of Chanaan would not voluntarily cede their beautiful country to them. But the angel of the Lord helped them to conquer all their enemies and miraculously conducted them into the land of promise. Hard struggles also await us at the end of our pilgrimage here below; our guardian angels will not forsake us; but will —

1. *Come to our assistance in our last struggle.*

(a.) The evil spirit, indeed, tempts men so long as they live, but especially at the approach of death, for he knows that there remains but a short time for his final efforts to plunge their souls into perdition. We may apply to the dying the words of the Apocalypse: "The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time."—*12: 12.* The dying man therefore experiences hard struggles. The devil will tempt him against faith and endeavor by various specious arguments to lead him into unbelief or errors concerning faith; he will represent all his sins vividly before his eyes in order to make him faint-hearted and to cause him to despair, or he will entice him to vanity, to inordinate confidence in his own goodness, and suggest to him: Heaven is yours by right, for you have more merit than many of the saints.

(b.) In these temptations the guardian angel will come to the help of the dying man. We cannot doubt this in the least, for if the angels give us so ready and powerful an assistance in the struggles which await us in the course of life, how would it be

possible for them to leave us without succor or to abandon us in our last struggle, on the result of which depends our whole eternity? We need not therefore trouble ourselves on account of the temptations which the devil prepares for us on our death-bed; if we lead a good Christian life our holy guardian angel will defend us against all his attacks, and help us safely to finish our course.

2. *The guardian angel will also conduct our soul to God.* Our Blessed Lord himself testifies to this when he says of Lazarus: "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom."—*Luke 16: 22.* Thus we read of many saints, that angels stood around their bed and carried their departed souls joyously to the bosom of God in heaven. At the death of St. Gerard, Bishop of Toul, the following occurrence took place: A monk named Falcuin was lying on his death-bed at the same time as the holy bishop. His brothers in religion thought he was dead, but he once more revived and said to those present: "Know that my departure has been delayed, but over another there is now great joy in heaven. I have seen how the rejoicing legions of angels hastened to meet a soul departing hence and lovingly carried it before the face of the Eternal Judge." Shortly after it was ascertained that the holy bishop had died at that time; and they concluded that the departing soul was his. In the belief that the holy angels accompany to heaven the souls of those who die in the Lord, the Church in her prayers for the dying asks for this grace when she prays: "May St. Michael, the prince of the heavenly host, receive thy departing soul; may the glittering choir of the angels of God hasten to meet and conduct her into the heavenly Jerusalem."

PERORATION

The guardian angels do to us what the angel of the Lord did to the Israelites. They go before us; for already in our mother's womb and in our early childhood they watch over us and take us under their protection. They guard us on our way, succor us in all the needs of body and soul, and confer on us many benefits. Finally, they bring us into the place which God has prepared for us, for they protect us in the hour of death from all the assaults of Satan and accompany our soul to God. Recognize, then, how much you owe to them, and labor to make yourselves worthy of their protection. Venerate them daily and invoke them every morning and evening to assist you in all dangers. Follow their suggestions and always behave yourselves properly and piously. Take heed that you scandalize no one, especially

the young and innocent; on the contrary, edify all by a good example, and endeavor to preserve them in the way of virtue; or if they have strayed from it, to bring them back to it. Thus you will make the holy angels your friends; they will keep a loving watch over you, protect you in life and death, and conduct your departing soul to God in heaven. Amen.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

LESSONS FROM THE FLOWERS.

Consider the lilies of the field.—Matt. 6: 28.

Our Blessed Lord admonishes us in the gospel of to-day to consider, among other things, the lilies or flowers of the field. And why should we consider them? First of all, that we may lay aside all anxious cares about the necessities of life and confide in God. If God cares for such insignificant things as the flowers of the field, and gives them everything that is necessary for their growth, how could he forget men, the crown of the whole visible creation, and withhold from them what they need for their life and subsistence? A glance at the flowers therefore should suffice to banish all needless solicitude from the heart and encourage us to commit ourselves to the providence of God, which most abundantly and lovingly cares for us and orders and guides everything for our good. The flowers indeed give many other salutary lessons to those who consider them attentively. We can learn from them especially, as we shall see to-day, how we are to act —

- I. *In regard to our life;*
- II. *In regard to the care of our body and clothing;*
- III. *In regard to our temporal interests.*

PART I.

1. We learn from the flowers that *our life is short.*

(a.) "Man's days are as grass, as the flower of the field so shall he flourish."—*Ps. 102: 15.* And Job (14: 1, 2) says: "Man born

of a woman, living a short time, is filled with many miseries. Who cometh forth like a flower, and is destroyed, and fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state." You all know that flowers are short-lived; their time of blooming is generally limited to one or two days; they then fade, wither and die.

(b.) Short also is our life here below. "The days of our years are threescore and ten years; but if in the strong they be fourscore years; and what is more of them is labor and sorrow."—Ps. 89: 10. A man of seventy or eighty is considered a very old man. But what are seventy or eighty years? How quickly they are gone. Ask a man of that age whether his life appears to him long, and he will answer you: Ah! no; my whole life seems only a dream, so quickly has it passed away. And how short must a life of seventy or eighty years appear to us, when compared with eternity! Certainly, with regard to eternity, a hundred, and even a thousand years are less than a grain of sand compared with the globe. Hence David says: "A thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday, which is past; and as a watch in the night."—Ps. 89: 4. The number of people, however, who reach the age of seventy or eighty years is comparatively small; a large majority die before they have attained the age of fifty years. If we take children into account, we may say that more than half of mankind die under ten years of age. Human life has been averaged at about thirty-three years; during the lapse of this time, about a thousand millions of people die, and another thousand millions, and perhaps more, are born. Indeed life is short; and St. James is right in asking the question: "What is your life?"—and in answering: "It is a vapor which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away."—4: 15. When you find pleasure in looking at flowers, and pluck them to enjoy their fragrance, say sometimes to yourselves: Like these flowers my life will soon fade away; after a few years, perhaps sooner, my last hour will come—I must die. This serious thought will be very salutary, for it will urge you to make provision for eternity.

2. We learn from the flowers that *our life is frail*.

(a.) Flowers are frail; they are most delicate plants. If we neglect to water them at the right time, or to protect them against frost, they will quickly die; a little worm which gnaws at them makes them wither; a strong wind strips them of their leaves and blossoms, and beats them flat to the ground.

(b.) Human life too is frail; a trifle can put an end to it. The rupture of a small blood-vessel, foul air inhaled into the lungs, a

fly which has sucked poison from a decomposed body and stings us, and countless other insignificant things, may bring death to us. History relates many such deaths. A certain Fabius, who after dinner drank a glass of milk, was suffocated by a hair that was in the milk; a certain Hadrian was killed by a fly which clung to his palate whilst drinking water; a certain Anacreon, who ate a grape in the evening with his friends, lost his life through a little grape-stone. Since the fall of our first parents death comes to us by a thousand avenues, and our body brings the germ of dissolution and decay with it into the world. Many men make their body still more frail through their passions, which rule over them and bring them prematurely to the grave. How many have shortened their lives by anger, gluttony, drunkenness and lust, and prepared for themselves an early death!

As people know that flowers are of a tender nature and easily perish, they take great care of them and guard them against everything injurious. Take care also of your life, because it is frail, and try to preserve it as long as it is the will of God. It is a sin against the fifth commandment to shorten your life in a culpable manner, or deprive yourself of it. Life is a precious gift, because so long as we possess it we can do much good and work out our salvation. Shun therefore everything injurious to life; curb your passions, live soberly and regularly, for these are the best means for the preservation and prolongation of life. But since our life is in the hands of God, and we do not know when he will demand it of us, be always prepared for death and live in such a way that you may at any time make a holy end.

PART II.

The flowers give us an instructive lesson with regard to the manner in which we must care for our body and its raiment. Christ himself directs our eyes to them, and says that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these.

1. *The flowers have their beauty and grace from nature.* Their shape, their leaves, their color, their fragrance, in short, whatever beauty and loveliness they have, is not the work of art, but of nature. No human hand gives them their splendor and brightness of color or their pleasant odor. The flowers teach us that man, in the care of his body, should avoid everything unnatural and exaggerated and should dress plainly and according to his state of life. The body is to be taken care of only in so far as health, cleanliness and decorum demand. With regard to clothing, it should correspond with our means; it should be decent,

for its only object is to make us appear properly before men and to protect us against the inclemency of the weather. This object is often violated. What do people not do in order to beautify the form of their body and to render themselves pleasing to men? They wash themselves with various kinds of medicated waters in order to make their skin soft and tender; if the hair is a little coarse or bristly they have their pomades and hair oils to obviate this defect; and their methods for making it curl into fascinating ringlets are not among the lost arts. Grey hair, which was formerly considered venerable, annoys some people very much; they dye it black, imitating deceitful horse-dealers, who, by coloring a grey horse give it the appearance of youth. The color of the face is often not such as could be wished for; it is too pale, too brown, too yellow, but they know how to powder and rouge, and thus the evil is remedied. What shall I say of dress? The clothing which God gave our first parents after their sin was certainly very plain, for the Scripture says: "And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins, and clothed them."—*Gen. 3: 21*. This is a hint that in clothing and adorning ourselves certain limits should be observed. But this is not the case. Common people appear in attire quite unbecoming to them. Servant girls dress as extravagantly as ladies; they put their earnings on their backs, invest them in drapery and millinery, and come to church decked out in finery which belongs neither to their station nor calling, and in fashions which are beyond their means. The women will soon be at a loss to know how to dress, one fashion following the other with such rapidity that they have scarcely made their appearance in one when they must adopt another; and no matter how absurd and ugly a fashion may be they say: "You might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion;" and every fashion is adopted just because one wants to be as good as another. Is there, for instance, anything uglier than the skirts which are the fashion now-a-days, so closely drawn together that the wearer can scarcely make a step forward, or stoop to pick up a pin. A few years ago hoops were all the rage, and were wide enough in circumference for a hogshead; now they run into the other extreme and wear skirts that would scarcely go over a churn. This dress is anything but decent; it offends against Christian moderation and modesty, and savors of sensuality. Of the head-dress of women I shall let the ancient Church writer Tertullian speak, that you may see whether Solomon was right when he says that there is nothing new under the sun: "Why," he asks women, "do you not leave your hair in peace; now you bind it up, now you let it hang down, now you wave it, now you curl it." Some wear an immense bundle of false hair plaited and coiled together so tight at the top of the head, that they dare

not sneeze. How strange that nature is fought against, for it is said that no one can add anything to his stature. But you purposely add to the weight of the head-dress. If you are not ashamed of the grotesque form, you ought at least to be ashamed of the uncleanness of adding to your Christian head the hair of another, perhaps of a sick person, a criminal, or a damned person. Your false hair and chignons are anything but a new fashion; they were in vogue more than sixteen hundred years ago, but even then they were in evil odor.

2. *The flowers wear a dress which costs them nothing and is not troublesome or disagreeable.* Whatever loveliness and beauty they have is a gift of nature and does not cost them anything. Neither can you notice in them anything inconvenient and troublesome. It should be the same with the children of men. Our clothing should not be so expensive, nor be inconvenient and troublesome to the body. These two rules are much disregarded. People say: This one or that one spends every hard-earned cent for clothes. It is only too true. How many servant girls are there whose earnings do not suffice for their expenditure in dress? How many married men are there who, with all their industry, can never thrive, because their better halves always follow the latest fashion and know no limits in their craving for costly dresses? Many a woman can say with the old philosopher: *Omnia mecum porto*—"I carry all with me," for she carries every cent on her back. Take a lesson from the flowers of the field. Love simplicity in dress. Why should you adorn and dress your body so carefully, for after a short time it will become the food of worms and return into dust and ashes? Think often of your shroud. Dress and adorn your soul with Christian virtues and good works that will make you acceptable to God and to all righteous people.

PART III.

With regard to temporal goods, flowers teach us these two important truths:

1. *Flowers are very frail and easily perish.* As already remarked, most flowers last only a few days or hours; an insignificant thing, such as a frost, a wind, an insect, is able to destroy their tender life. The same may be said of temporal goods; they are very frail and perishable.

(a.) Money and goods have many enemies. How often does it not happen that great wealth is swept away by fire, robbery, bankruptcy, or shipwreck! Think of Job; he was the richest prince in the land of Hus; he possessed seven hundred sheep,

three thousand camels, five hundred yoke oxen, and five hundred asses; his wide acres were countless. But you all know how one calamity after another came upon him and how he lost all his substance in a few days, together with his seven sons and three daughters, and how at length he was afflicted with a terrible sickness, and sitting on a dunghill, bewailed the day of his birth.—*Job* 1 and 2. How great in our times is the number of those who by unlucky speculation have lost their all! They participated in various undertakings, often risking all their substance, hoping to make large profits and to become rich in a short time; but they failed and were reduced to poverty, even to beggary. As we read in the public press, many of these unfortunate speculators, in their despair, became suicides. You know by your own experience that many who a few years ago were what is called comfortably off suddenly failed in business and now eat the bread of the poor. Thus all earthly goods resemble flowers, which soon fade.

(b.) And suppose that some one possesses money and lands and houses during his lifetime undisturbed by changes; he will lose all at the hour of death. No matter how rich he may be, not a cent follows him into the grave. Though he had millions, he must say when he comes to die: "Only the grave remaineth for me."—*Job* 17: 1. The Caliph Hesham, one of the richest princes of the earth, died at Raspha in the year 742. He left behind him seven hundred boxes filled with gold coins. He had scarcely closed his eyes when his palace was plundered of everything, so that there was not a vessel left to hold water wherewith to wash the inanimate body, nor even a yard of linen to wrap it in. So true are the words of the Psalmist: "When he shall die he shall take nothing away: nor shall his glory descend with him."—*Ps.* 48: 18. This will be the lot of us all; in a short time we shall die and leave all our possessions behind us, be they small or large.

2. *Flowers are beautiful to look at, but they do not satisfy.* If you had a whole garden full of the most beautiful flowers, you could neither appease your hunger nor allay your thirst with them, whilst a piece of bread and a little water will do both. Herein also earthly goods resemble flowers. They only excite the eyes of man and inflame his concupiscence; but they do not satisfy the heart. Many a one thinks: Oh, how happy, how contented I should be if I only had as much as this or that one! It would seem to me like heaven upon earth. What a foolish thought! If you had everything that you wish, and even more than you wish, if you were as rich as a Rothschild, who is said to be a centi-millionaire, you would not be contented, but would perhaps be more uneasy

and restless than you are now in the state of mediocrity or poverty. Nothing earthly can fill the human heart nor satisfy it, because we are not created for this earth, but for heaven and for God. The fish leaps about when taken out of the water and is wretched though you set the most precious things before it; the water is its element; there it feels at home; there it is happy. So, if I may be allowed to use the expression, God is our element; only in his possession are we perfectly happy and contented. For this reason Solomon, who had enjoyed in abundance whatever man can desire, repeatedly exclaimed: "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity."—*Eccles.* 1: 2.

How foolish then are Christians who devote all their solicitude to temporal things, and who, in the acquisition thereof, frequently violate the duties of justice and charity, and are not solicitous for the one thing necessary. A certain man wrote once on a human skull: "The reflecting man sells everything." He who seriously reflects that all earthly things are vain, frail and perishable, that they leave the heart of man dissatisfied, and at our death disappear as a vapor, will no longer love them inordinately, much less use them to offend God, and expose himself to the danger of eternal damnation.

PERORATION.

Consider these salutary lessons which the flowers give you. They remind you of the frailty and shortness of life. Employ this fleeting life in preparation for eternity, and so live that you need not fear death, come when it may. The flowers also admonish you to avoid all pride and vanity in the care of your body, and in dress; follow this admonition; dress plainly and according to your state of life, and make no provision for the flesh in its concupiscences. The flowers also tell you that everything under the sun is vain and perishable, and that nothing can satisfy your heart. Love the things of this world with moderation, and in the acquisition and the use of them guard against injustice and sin. To serve God as long as you live, and to be saved, must be your first, last and principal care. Amen.



FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

AVARICE.

You cannot serve God and mammon.—Matt. 6: 24.

Our divine Saviour declares in the gospel of this day that we cannot serve God and mammon. God and mammon are two masters who are always at war with each other, the will of one being always contrary to that of the other. For mammon is nothing else than the idol of riches or avarice, the inordinate desire after the goods of this world, and a sinful tenacity to them. The avaricious man always does the opposite of that which God enjoins as a duty. He does not seek first the kingdom of God and his justice; what he seeks and desires is money and goods; he thinks everything of them. He violates Christian charity and justice, for he sends the needy away, oppresses the poor, the widow and the orphan, and even commits the greatest injustice when there is a question of gratifying his avarice. With justice therefore the prophet cries out: "Woe to the avaricious!" And with justice also the Apostle places avarice among the greatest crimes, and declares that those who are addicted to this vice cannot possess the kingdom of God.—*I. Cor. 6: 10.*

I shall speak to-day of avarice, and explain to you —

- I. *In what it consists, and*
- II. *What we must do in order to guard ourselves against it.*

PART I.

First of all, I must remark that to be rich, and to be avaricious, are not one and the same thing. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job and David were rich, but not avaricious, for they were holy men. There are rich people who are not avaricious, and there are poor people who are very avaricious. Not every desire after money and goods is avarice. He who wishes to obtain something, to improve his position, and to increase his substance in order to provide for himself and his family in a becoming manner, does not do wrong; prudent economy is not avarice. **Wherein, then, does avarice consist? It consists in this —**

1. *That we inordinately seek and love money and other worldly goods.* And we seek and love money and other worldly goods inordinately —

(a.) *When we seek more than we need.* Our seeking for money and goods must correspond with our necessities. We are allowed, therefore, to wish that we may have as much as may be required to enable us to live according to our state. Hence the Apostle writes: "Having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content."—*I. Tim. 6: 8.* But many do not confine themselves to this. In their striving for temporal goods, their object is not to meet their necessities, but only to heap up riches; they never cease to save and economize, even long after they possess more than they need for themselves and their children. They never have enough, and are like a bottomless vessel, which always remains empty, no matter how much you may pour into it. Such persons must be reckoned among the avaricious, especially as they do not practise the corporal works of mercy at all, or only to a very slight extent.

(b.) *When the seeking of money and goods is accompanied with too much anxiety and solicitude.* To be solicitous for our subsistence, and to study how we can carry on our business with advantage and make an honest profit, is prudence, and not avarice. But many go further than that. They are always full of cares for temporal goods; the desire after money and possessions occupies them day and night; they scarcely say an "Our Father" without being disquieted by worldly cares. When their affairs take a favorable turn they are in a good humor; but when something goes wrong, they are very sad; and when they suffer any loss, they become despondent and know not how to console themselves. Example: Achab, who went to bed in a bad temper and refused to eat because he could not get possession of Naboth's vineyard. Persons of such a disposition of mind are not free from avarice.

(c.) *When we seek money and goods so earnestly that we neglect the duties of religion or commit injustice.* The avaricious man is constantly occupied with temporal things; his money matters prevent him from reflecting, he has neither time nor desire to think of his salvation and to fulfil his duties as a Catholic. He frequently neglects prayer, public worship, the reception of the sacraments, in short, all exercises of religion. He has a very elastic conscience, and commits various kinds of injustices. He is full of lying and deceit; and when he can circumvent his neighbor he will do so.

2. *That we inordinately love money and other temporal goods. We do this —*

(a.) *When we love money for its own sake, and not as a means of doing good.* There is a great difference between a proper and an inordinate love of money. He who properly loves money has not money itself in view, but the use of it; he would be quite indifferent to it, if he could not make use of it. Money is to him what medicine is to the sick man. He loves medicine because thereby he hopes to recover his health. On the contrary, he who loves money inordinately, has only the money, not the use of it, in view; he loves it simply because it is money, and because the possession of it gives him great pleasure. Thus the rich merchant, of whom Cæsius relates that his friends were obliged to promise him that they would bind a purse of gold upon his heart and put it into the grave with him, certainly loved money. Thus the Emperor Caligula loved money; he often rolled himself on it with great satisfaction. Many Catholics have indeed no purse bound upon their heart, nor do they roll themselves upon their money, but their heart and soul cling to it; when they see a piece of gold or silver, they gloat over it; and their most pleasant hours are spent in counting their money. That is what is called loving money inordinately.

(b.) *When we deprive ourselves or others of the necessities of life.* Since the avaricious man loves his treasure greatly and cannot resolve to diminish it, his heart bleeds when he is obliged to spend anything. He suffers hunger and thirst in the midst of abundance; he wears shabby clothes and deprives himself of the necessities of life; in sickness he will neither call in a physician nor take medicine because it costs money. Being so penurious towards himself, what wonder that he gives nothing to others? He is hard-hearted, and his neighbor may languish in great distress without affecting him. He gets angry when he sees a needy man approach him; to get rid of him he makes use of bland words or abusive epithets, and thus rids himself of troublesome beggars. He never has anything for a good purpose, or if he has, it is so little that it is not worthy of notice. When avarice is such that one considers money and worldly goods as one's chief object, and places one's hope and salvation in them; or when for the acquisition of temporal goods one is ready to commit grievous sins, or when one gives no alms and refuses help to one's neighbor in extreme necessity, it is evidently a mortal sin and eternal damnation is the consequence thereof. But even in cases where it does not pass the limits of a venial sin it is very dangerous, because it easily grows and becomes a mortal sin.

Hence the question arises, *What must we do in order to guard ourselves against avarice?*

PART II.

In order to guard ourselves against avarice, we must consider —

1. *That by this vice we render ourselves odious to God and man.*

(a.) *To God.* Who can doubt that God particularly hates and detests those vices upon which he pronounces woe? Avarice is one of them. Thus the Lord, through the prophet, says to the avaricious: "Woe to you that join house to house, and lay field to field, even to the end of the place."—*Is.* 5: 8. "Woe to him that gathereth together an evil covetousness to his house."—*Hab.* 2: 9. And our Lord says: "Woe to you that are rich; for you have your consolation."—*Luke* 6: 24. The reason why God so hates avarice and pronounces woe upon it is because the avaricious disregard and, as it were, trample underfoot the principal commandment of religion, the commandment of charity. They have not a spark of *the love of God*; their hearts belong to their money; this is the god they adore, and for whom they live; wherefore the Apostle absolutely calls it idolatry.—*Coloss.* 3: 5. Neither have they a spark of the *love of their neighbor*; they care not in the least about the distress of their fellow-men, and have no mercy on the wretched and miserable; on the contrary, they oppress them and suck their life's blood. We have an example of how uncharitably the avaricious man treats his neighbor in the unmerciful servant in the gospel, who cast his fellow-servant into prison on account of a small debt, in spite of his entreaty to be spared.

(b.) *To man.* He is the laughing-stock of all; he is ridiculed everywhere. His neighbors look upon him with contempt; his relations are ashamed of him; the poor execrate him; laborers and artisans are afraid to work for him, because they know that he is a "bad one to pay." He is intolerable to the servants in the house because he gives them insufficient board and deducts from their wages. He is hated even by his own wife and children, for they cannot obtain from him even the most necessary things. No one has compassion upon him when he is visited by a calamity; thieves think it no sin to steal from him; he is compared to a hog that is of no practical utility until it is slaughtered. Who then would not detest and shun avarice, a vice hated by God and man?

2. *That all earthly goods are vain and frail.*

(a.) *Vain.* This much is certain that all the treasures of the earth cannot fill and satisfy the human heart, for the simple reason that man is not created for them, but for God. Beasts are made for the earth; there they find their happiness, and for this reason they look down upon the earth. But man is made for heaven; he holds his head erect, and his eyes look towards heaven. Give a horse a bundle of hay, and a dog a piece of meat, and they are satisfied and wish for no more. The heart of man is created for love and union with God, and will never find rest in sensual enjoyments; only the possession of God can perfectly satisfy the cravings of the human heart. Though the avaricious man possess millions of money, he is disquieted and heavy cares oppress his heart; wherefore our Saviour compares riches to stinging thorns.

(b.) *Frail.* Whatever the earth gives is like itself, not durable. The richest man may lose all his substance by calamities and misfortunes, and be reduced to beggary during his lifetime; but death always tears from man what he possesses. Suppose a man has boxes full of gold, death will not leave him a cent; suppose he owns houses and lands and has a lucrative business, nothing remains for him but the coffin, in which his body is laid, and a few feet of clay in which he moulders. The Emperor Constantine one day demonstrated this truth to one of his officers, to cure him of his inordinate love of money. He marked out with his sword on the surface of the ground a space six feet long and two feet wide, and then said to him: "This is all that remains for us, my friend, why should we labor so much to gather riches?" Do the same, my friend, when covetousness torments you and avarice tries to nestle in your heart. Take a stick and mark out a space on the ground, six feet long and two feet wide, and say to yourself: "That is all that will remain to me in death."

3. *That temporal goods bring no blessing to the avaricious —*

(a.) *Either in this world.* Goods which are acquired through injustice and the violation of Christian charity are not durable; they resemble an edifice without a solid foundation, which soon crumbles and falls. And though the avaricious man is spared the loss of his wealth, it generally melts away in the hands of his heirs. The words of the prophet are often verified: "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the teeth of the children are set on edge."—*Jer.* 31: 29. How foolish are parents who from an inordinate solicitude for their children allow themselves to be ruled by avarice! Instead of establishing the prosperity of their

children, they lay the foundation of their impoverishment and perdition.

(b.) *Or in eternity.* What awaits the avaricious? Exclusion from heaven, and eternal damnation. The Apostle assures us in plain words that the covetous shall not possess the kingdom of God.—*I. Cor.* 6: 10. We are taught the same in the parable of Dives and Lazarus. The glutton, who allowed poor Lazarus to languish helplessly in his misery, died and was buried in hell. There in the place of torments he in vain begs Abraham to send Lazarus to him, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his parched tongue. But the unmerciful rich man finds no mercy.—*Luke* 16: 20, *et seq.* This is the lot of the avaricious man; after a life of anxiety and restlessness he dies and is damned. Oh, who would not detest the vice of avarice?

4. *That nothing is so much in contradiction to the words and example of Jesus as avarice.*

(a.) *To the words of Jesus.* He always teaches love and mercy towards all men, especially towards the needy and afflicted. Thus he says: "Love ye your enemies: do good and lend, hoping for nothing thereby; and your reward shall be great."—*Luke* 6: 35. But the avaricious man is uncharitableness itself, and will not hear of works of mercy. Jesus calls the poor in spirit blessed; but the avaricious man places his blessedness in money and possessions. Jesus requires us to seek first the kingdom of God, and his justice; but the avaricious man is entirely absorbed in temporal things, and neglects the service of God and the business of his salvation.

(b.) *To the example of Jesus.* Consider that your Lord and God when he came down from heaven upon earth would not possess riches, which you so greedily desire; nay, he loved poverty so much that he chose to be born of a poor and lowly virgin, and not of a rich and mighty princess of the earth. When he came into the world he would not live in a magnificent and luxurious palace, nor rest on a luxurious couch, but in a miserable manger where rough straw touched his tender body. So long as he sojourned upon earth he loved poverty and despised riches. He did not choose eminent men as ambassadors and preachers of his gospel, but poor, illiterate fishermen. What an inverted state of things it is when miserable man desires to possess riches, seeing that the Lord of all created things despised them on his account.

PERORATION.

Far from you be this vice so much hated by God and man. Moderate your desires for earthly goods which are vain and frail, and which instead of making you contented and happy, only excite your passions and prepare for you a life of troubles. Do not forget that you have no lasting city here below; that you can take nothing with you into the other world. Consider that your divine Judge will not ask you how much you owned in this world, but what you have done for heaven. If God has blessed you with the goods of this world, do not set your hearts and affections upon them, but make them give way to the riches of eternity. Be charitable and give to the poor: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."—*Matt. 5: 7*. Endeavor to be rich in virtues and good works; these are true treasures, far more precious than all the gold and silver of the world, for with them you can purchase for yourselves the everlasting joys of heaven. Never lose sight of your eternal destiny; provide for the salvation of your soul, and so pass through the temporal that you may not lose the eternal. Amen.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

THE SERVICE OF GOD AN EASY SERVICE.

No man can serve two masters.—Matt. 6: 24.

St. Bernard once wrote to a person who had lost her fervor: "You intended to live in a worldly way, but you could not accomplish what pleased you, and thus you have not rejected the world, but the world has rejected you. Because you had driven away God and the world, you fell, as the saying is, between two stools to the ground." These words are applicable to every Christian who tries to serve God and the world at one and the same time; he cannot succeed. If he obeys God, the world mocks him; if he obeys the world, his conscience torments him; and thus the saying of Jesus in the gospel of this day is true: "No man can serve two masters." Alas! there are many Catholics who do not serve God. They believe that the service of

God is beset with too many difficulties, that it demands so many sacrifices that one can never enjoy life: I shall endeavor to refute this pernicious error, and briefly show you that the service of God is an easy service —

- I. *In comparison with the service of the world or of sin;*
- II. *On account of the interior peace and consolation which it brings;*
- III. *On account of the great reward which follows hereafter.*

PART I.

When we compare the service of the world, or of sin, with the service of God, we shall find that the latter is far easier than the former.

1. What must you do to earn your living? In the winter mornings long before it is light, you are at your work; you work all day until evening; you endure many disagreeable things: and often the evening comes and you have not rested. So it goes on from week to week, from year to year. The hardened hands, the weary members, the tottering step, the bent form, the exhausted powers of the body, are witnesses of the pains and hardships which you must undergo in order to gain an honorable livelihood. And what must not the sinner endure that he may be able to gratify his passions! The avaricious man leads a wretched life and fasts as austere as did the ancient hermits in the desert of Egypt, with a view to add something to his hoard every year. The impure man watches whole nights and walks about in the worst weather to gratify his abominable appetites. The proud, the envious, the malevolent, so embitter their life that they cannot relish their meals; sleep flies from them, and they even wish themselves dead. In short, the ways in which the servants of the world and of sin walk are rough, hard ways, as the wicked themselves acknowledge in the Book of Wisdom (5: 7): "We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways; but the way of the Lord we have not known." All who live in sin find it so.

2. How is it with the service of God? Does this also impose such a galling yoke? By no means. You may eat and drink and rest yourself, and need guard only against excess and effeminacy; you are allowed to acquire and possess temporal goods, but not to set your hearts and affections upon them, and out of your abundance you must give alms; you may be merry and enjoy yourselves, but in the Lord; in a word, everything is permissible except sin. If you endure in the service of God only the tenth

part of what the worldling gladly suffers for the gratification of his passions, or what many must do in order to earn their daily bread, God will be satisfied with you and give you heaven for a recompense.

But how great is the perverseness of many people! If there is a question about earthly things, nothing is too difficult; but if something is to be done for the salvation of the soul, they seem paralyzed. When they are told to offer up at least a short prayer at night they say, I cannot, I am too tired, sleep overpowers me. But they will play, sing or dance till long after midnight, in fact till morning, and they do not complain of fatigue or sleep. When they are told to go to High Mass on Sundays and holidays, and hear a sermon, and to go frequently to confession and communion, they reply: It is impossible, I have no time. But for vain diversions and entertainments they can find time, and you never hear them complain that on that account they cannot do their work. When they are told to recollect themselves sometimes during the day, and think of God and eternity, they reply: I cannot do that, I have too much to do and am always thinking of my work. In the meantime nothing hinders them from entertaining sinful thoughts for hours. Oh, how great is the perversity of these persons! Do you belong to this class? Examine yourselves and amend.

PART II.

The service of God is an easy service *on account of the interior peace and consolation which it brings.*

1. The service of God alone procures true peace.

(a.) *The word of God* convinces us of this. "Much peace have they that love thy law, and to them there is no stumbling block."—*Ps.* 118: 165. And *Isaias* says: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."—*54: 13.* Christ himself assures us that he will take from those who serve him their tribulations and give them rest: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you . . . and you shall find rest to your souls."—*Matt.* 11: 28, 29.

(b.) *All pious, God-fearing persons* convince us of this. God filled them with heavenly consolation and made them experience in this valley of tears a foretaste of that felicity which awaited them in the next world. And this divine consolation made the most bitter thing sweet, and the days and hours in which they suffered most were to them days and hours of the most blessed

joy. Consider St. Lawrence. He was placed on a red-hot gridiron and roasted alive. Who can imagine the pain that he suffered. But he rejoiced in the midst of this inhuman torture, and jestingly said to his torturer: "You may turn me over now, for I am roasted enough on one side." After awhile he said: "I am now sufficiently roasted; you may take me up and eat me." We see the same in St. Francis Xavier, the Apostle of India and Japan. When many hundred miles distant from his own country, and entirely forsaken, he journeyed along, in an utterly unknown country, suffering from want of food and water and all the necessaries of life; yet with death menacing him on all sides, such joy and happiness thrilled his heart that he exclaimed: "Enough! O Lord, enough! give me heaven only when I have finished my earthly pilgrimage." Thus God rewards his servants even in this world; he sweetens all their privations and sufferings with heavenly consolation. How true, therefore, are the words of Christ: "My yoke is sweet, and my burden light" (*Matt.* 11: 30), and they indeed give rest to souls.

2. *But not the service of the world and of sin.* We are taught this—

(a.) *From the Sacred Scripture:* "There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord."—*Is.* 48: 22. And the Apostle says: "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil."—*Rom.* 2: 9. The heart of the sinner is like the troubled sea with its rolling waves, even when there is a great calm. Though the sinner may possess everything that the world can give, though he may be in good health, rich, respected, and in the enjoyment of all possible pleasures, yet his heart remains void and empty; he is discontented and unhappy, and can never find what he seeks—rest and contentment. When King David languished in the miserable bondage of sin, he went hunting, attended banquets and entertainments, but all these pleasures cried out to him: David, you want us to give you rest and peace, but ah! we cannot do it. Where is your God? Go and seek your God, for he alone can satisfy you. And for this reason David amidst all the pleasures and joys of life could never feel happy; he could only mourn and weep: "My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God?"—*Ps.* 41: 4.

(b.) *From experience.* There may have been a time when some of you gave free vent to your passions, participated in all pleasures and entertainments, and, in the true sense of the word, lived the life of the children of the world. Did you feel happy in your worldly and sinful life? By no means. On the contrary,

your hearts were always full of inquietude and perturbation, full of ill-humor and sadness, and your conscience, which often, especially in quiet moments, reproached you most poignantly, embittered all the joys and pleasures of life. Men in the service of sin feel like Damocles at the royal banquet. Why was he so restless and full of anguish while partaking of the most precious viands and the costliest wines? Ah! the hapless glutton saw above his head a sword hanging by a slender thread, and menacing his life. The thread might break at any moment, and the falling sword cause his death. For this reason he did not feel comfortable at this most costly banquet. What St. Chrysostom says of the sinner is only too true: "He may go wherever he pleases, he always carries with him his conscience, that relentless accuser; he condemns himself and cannot find a moment's rest. For in bed, at table, in the market-place, at home or abroad by day and by night, and even in his dreams, his sin is always before his eyes. He lives like Cain, moaning and trembling on earth; and without any one seeing it he carries a burning fire in his heart." He therefore who wishes to find lasting peace and true consolation here upon earth must enter into the service of the Lord, for in the service of the world and of sin nothing is found but inquietude, anguish, bitterness, and remorse of conscience.

PART III.

The service of God is an easy service on account of the great reward which follows hereafter.

1. In temporal concerns it frequently happens that our enterprises do not succeed, and we often labor without recompense. A farmer toils early and late and ploughs and plants his field with the greatest care, in order to obtain a good return. But behold! the moment he is ready to apply the sickle to the ripe grain, a hailstorm destroys his whole crop, and all his time and labor are lost. Parents save up for years and exhaust their strength by continual labor in order to provide for their children, perhaps for an only child. But this child dies quite unexpectedly and takes all the hope of the parents with him into the grave; or it frequently happens that he becomes dissipated and in a short time squanders the whole substance which the parents had gathered with so much pains. There are many such cases. Men bear the heat and the burden of the day, and their reward falls into a sieve; they make plans, toil and sweat, and exert their powers of body and mind, and at last all their labor is fruitless. They resemble senseless children who rush to catch the rainbow,

but who, after running till they are out of breath, and drenched with rain, are obliged to return empty-handed.

2. Now the question is: Is it so with the service of God? Do we also here run at an uncertainty and beat the air? No; in the service of God our hope is not deceived; we find a sure reward. The Apostle writes: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge, will render to me in that day, and not only to me but to them also that love his coming."—*II. Tim.* 4: 7, 8. To all who fight a good fight like the Apostle, the crown of justice is laid up, which the Lord the just judge, will put on their head. This is as certain as that there is a God, whose word is right, and whose works are done with faithfulness.—*Ps.* 32: 4.

And what crown is it that the faithful servants of God will receive? Perhaps a perishable crown, such as earthly kings and emperors wear? a crown which often burdens more than it adorns the head of him that wears it? Ah! no; this crown is imperishable; it is the crown of everlasting glory. Take all that is good, beautiful, lovely and desirable on earth, and in comparison with the beatitude which the servants of God enjoy in heaven, it is as insignificant and valueless as a drop of water in comparison with the boundless and fathomless ocean. St. Paul calls the felicity of the elect a superabundant, eternal glory, and in an ecstasy of joy he exclaims: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him."—*I. Cor.* 2: 9. When we come to dwell in the kingdom of our Father in heaven, inexpressible joy will fill our hearts, we shall rejoice in the society of angels and saints, we shall possess all we wish, and all our desires will be gratified every moment in the most perfect manner. And this felicity will never end, it will always be, for ever and ever. And it is this that makes the reward of the servants of God perfect. If there were anything under the sun that could satisfy us, the principal quality, durability, would be wanting to it. The goods and joys of this world are fleeting and end for ever with death. But if we have the happiness of being saved, we shall be saved for ever. "The just shall go into life everlasting."—*Matt.* 25: 46.

Does not the thought of the unspeakable and everlasting felicity in heaven render easy all the difficulties connected with the service of God? When the man of the world undergoes so many labors and exposes himself to so many dangers in order to acquire vain and perishable goods, shall we consider it too difficult to serve God, who promises us the everlasting joys of heaven for comparatively less exertion?

PERORATION.

As you perceive, God deals lovingly with us; he does not impose upon us such heavy burdens as the world does on its votaries. He makes his service easy for us by giving us that peace which the world with all its splendors and joys cannot give. As the reward for this service, which at most will last only a few years, he promises an immeasurable and everlasting felicity in heaven. Put your hand to the plough at once and try only for one year to serve God zealously. I assure you when the year is over you will know the sweetness of divine things by experience, and full of determination and holy joy you will say: I shall never more leave my Lord and my God, for he is a good master: he demands little, and repays much. I will serve him to my last breath, that I may then hear from him the comforting words: "Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—*Matt.* 25: 23. Amen.

