

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

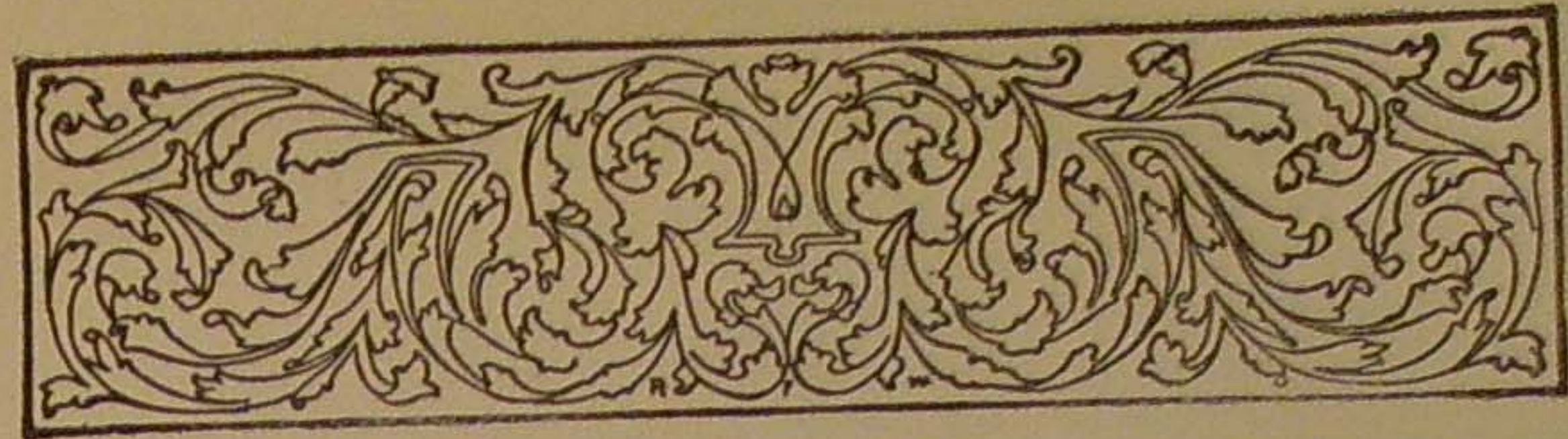
VOL. V.

FROM THE FIFTEENTH TO THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Frederick Dustet & Co.,

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

RATISBON ROME NEW YORK CINCINNATI



CONTENTS.

Page

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—How we must manifest the Indwelling of the Holy Ghost	7
2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—The Raising of the Young Man of Naim to Life	15
3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.—Why we must work out our Salvation with Fear	22
4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.—Funerals	28
5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.—The Widow of Naim, a Symbol of the Church	34
6. MORAL SKETCH.—We ought always to be prepared for Death	41
7. MORAL SKETCH.—Three Mothers	45

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—St. Paul exhorts and consoles the Ephesians and prays for them	51
2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—Christ heals the Dropsical Man, and instructs the Pharisees in Humility	59
3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.—The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass	67
4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.—Veneration of the Holy Name of Mary	73
5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.—The Healing of five Persons by Jesus on Sabbath days teaches us how we are to sanctify Sundays and Holidays	80
6. MORAL SKETCH.—Pride	87
7. MORAL SKETCH.—The Sanctification of Sundays and Holidays	94

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—Admonition to Unity	101
2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—Questions relating to the greatest Commandment, and also to Christ	107
3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.—Christ, true God and true Man	113
4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.—The Mother of Dolors	121
5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.—Fire, a Symbol of the Love of God	126
6. MORAL SKETCH.—Why we must love God	133
7. MORAL SKETCH.—How must we love God?	139

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—The graces which the Corinthians had received and might yet expect	146
2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—Twofold Healing of the Man sick of the Palsy	152
3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.—The Remission of Sins	160
4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.—The Rosary	166

COPYRIGHT, 1904.
E. STEINBACK,
Of the firm of Fr. Pustet & Co.

CONTENTS.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.—CONTINUED.

	Page
5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.—Similarity between us Christians and the Man sick of the Palsy	172
6. MORAL SKETCH.—Unchaste Thoughts and Desires	179
7. MORAL SKETCH.—Blasphemy	185

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—Spiritual Renovation	191
2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—The Rejection of the Jews, and the Calling of the Gentiles	199
3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.—The small Number of the Elect	206
4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.—The Anniversary of the Dedication of a Church	212
5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.—Charity, the Wedding Garment	219
6. MORAL SKETCH.—Signs of Election and Reprobation	225
7. MORAL SKETCH.—The Reverence due to Priests	233

TWENTILETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—Exhortation to Circumspection, and some other Directions	240
2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—Christ heals the Son of a Ruler	247
3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.—The Rule of Faith	254
4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.—The Ceremonies of Extreme Unction	261
5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.—Fever, the Figure of Sin	266
6. MORAL SKETCH.—Influence of the Example of Parents upon their Children	274
7. MORAL SKETCH.—The Sickness of the Body is a Blessing to the Soul	279

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—Resisting the Enemies of our Salvation	285
2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—The Merciful Master and the Unmerciful Servant	292
3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.—The Pains of Hell	299
4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.—The Ceremonies of the Sacrament of Penance	306
5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.—The four elementary Rules of Arithmetic in their Application to the Spiritual Life	311
6. SECOND SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.—The Unmerciful Servant, or unworthy Penitents	318
7. MORAL SKETCH.—Restitution	324

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—St. Paul speaks of his tender Love for the Philippians, and begs various Graces for them	330
2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—The Coin of the Tribute	337
3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.—The Veneration of Images	344
4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.—The pictorial Representation of God and the Saints	350
5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.—Coins a Figure of Good Works	356

CONTENTS.

Page

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.—CONTINUED.

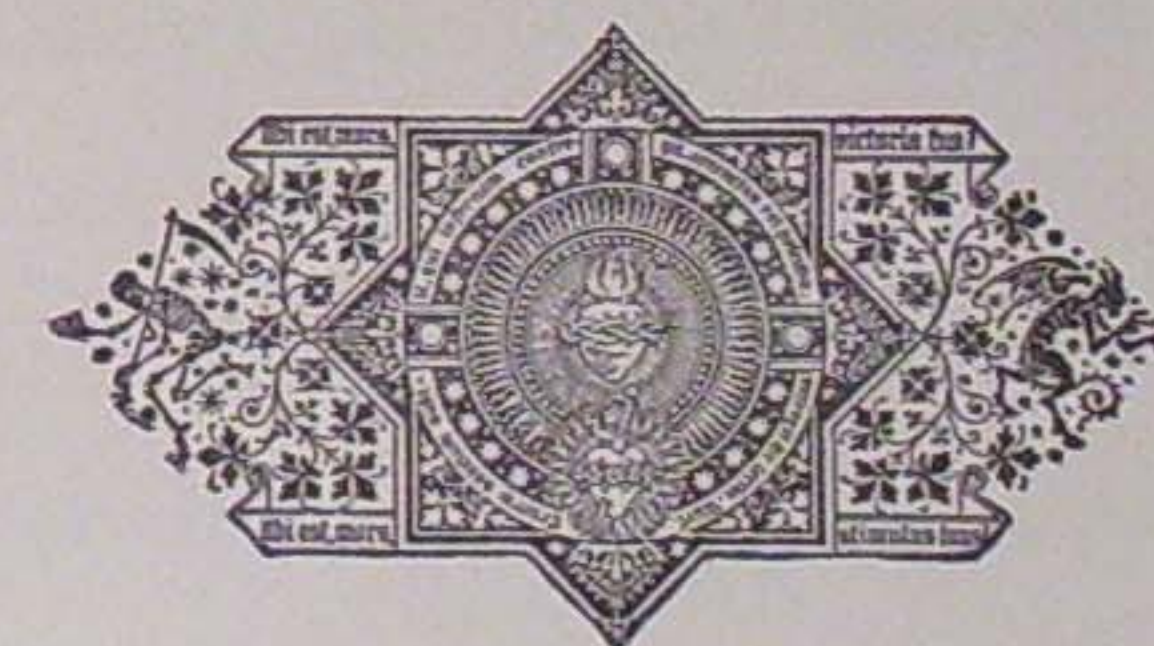
6. MORAL SKETCH.—A false Friend is more dangerous than an open Enemy	364
7. MORAL SKETCH.—When do we render to God the things that are God's?	369

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

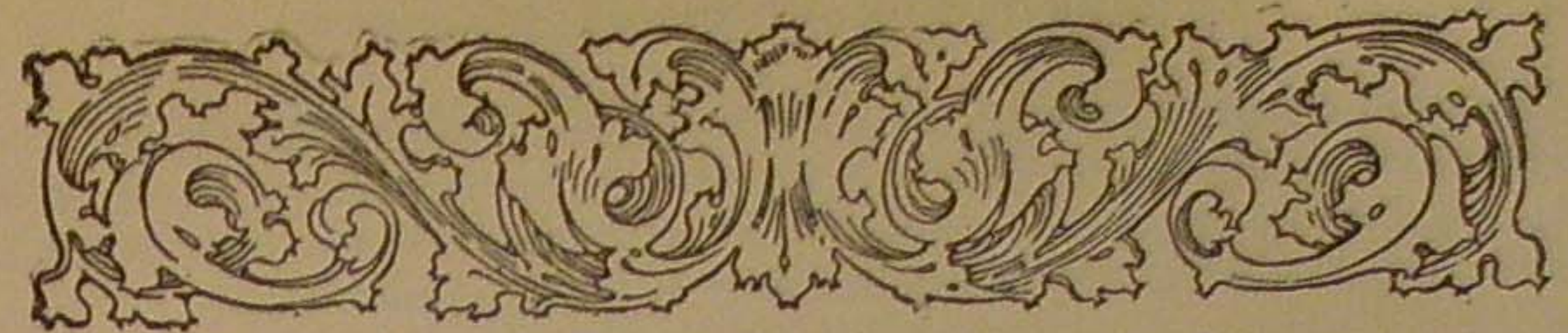
1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—St. Paul exhorts the Philippians to imitate him, and gives them some special Precepts	375
2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—Jesus healing the Sick and raising the Dead	382
3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.—The Resurrection of the Dead	390
4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.—Cemeteries	396
5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.—Death, a Sleep	402
6. MORAL SKETCH.—When must we think of Death?	409
7. MORAL SKETCH.—The death of the just Man	414

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—Prayer and Thanksgiving	420
2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.—The Destruction of Jerusalem and the End of the World	427
3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.—How Jesus Christ will hold the last Judgment	436
4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.—Processions	443
5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.—The Abomination of Desolation, a Figure of Sin	449
6. MORAL SKETCH.—Our Death is for us the End of the World and the Last Judgment	456
7. MORAL SKETCH.—What we must do in order to be prepared for the Last Judgment	462



GENERAL INDEX.
SEE VOLUME VI., PAGE 473.



FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*Gal. 5: 25 to 6: 10.* Brethren: If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be made desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ. For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every one prove his own work, and so he shall have glory in himself only, and not in another. For every one shall bear his own burden. And let him that is instructed in the word communicate to him that instructeth him, in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting. And in doing good, let us not fail. For in due time we shall reap, not failing. Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

HOW WE MUST MANIFEST THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

St. Paul begins the lesson of this day, which is taken from his Epistle to the Galatians, with the words: *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* To live in the Spirit, means to be animated and governed by the Holy Ghost, to possess sanctifying grace. *To walk in the Spirit* means to live piously and virtuously. The Apostle means to say: If the Holy Ghost lives and rules in us by his grace, we must manifest it outwardly by good conduct.

Hence St. Jerome says: "If we have life through the Spirit, we must live according to the Spirit, and no longer serve the flesh." St. Paul then enters more into detail and shows how we must manifest the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, namely:

- I. By guarding against ambition and pride;
- II. By practicing meekness;
- III. By works of Christian charity.

PART I.

1. St. Paul warns us against ambition and pride when he says: *Let us not be made desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.*

(a.) To seek honor is not wrong in itself, for honor is, of all earthly things, the most excellent, and is incomparably more precious than money and goods, as we read in the Book of Proverbs (22: 1): "A good name is better than great riches." Honor and a good name promote temporal welfare, for a man who enjoys a good reputation is loved by every one, is well received everywhere and finds employment and remuneration. Honor and a good name keep man from evil and are an incentive to a blameless and upright life. Lastly, he who stands in good repute and has the confidence of people can contribute very much to their temporal and spiritual welfare. Hence St. Francis of Sales says: "Charity compels us and humility permits us to care for our honor, because it helps us to perform services useful to our neighbor." In so far as honor is a means of doing good, *i. e.*, of promoting the honor of God and the good of our neighbor, we must seek it and be solicitous for its preservation.

(b.) Hence the Apostle does not forbid us *to seek honor, but only vain honor and vainglory*. He cautions us against vainglory or ambition. Who are they that seek vainglory or are ambitious? All the proud, and especially those who have an inordinate desire for the esteem and praise of men and do all in their power to satisfy this desire. They display their good qualities and actions to gain the applause of men; they elevate themselves above others and give people to understand that no one equals them; they wish always to be honored and preferred before others. This ambition is contrary to the fundamental virtue of Christianity—namely, humility, and is particularly displeasing to God. Hence Christ severely rebuked the Apostles who from ambition quarrelled about precedence, and intimated to them that unless they should be converted and become humble as a little child, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

(c.) Ambition is culpable, not only in itself, but also on account of its evil consequences; for it excites the mind and begets envy, discord, dissension and strife. This is the reason why the Apostle warns us against ambition. The ambitious man, seeing that others are considered equal to him or even preferred before him, is very much displeased, and ill-will and envy arise in his heart. His fellow-men also are indignant when they perceive that he boasts of his prerogatives, looks down upon them with contempt and claims from them undue consideration. The ambition of men is the cause that there is so much disquietude, so much envy, strife and contention in the world. Let him who is solicitous for peace and harmony shun ambition and pride and be truly humble.

2. The Apostle alleges another motive why we should guard against ambition and pride when he writes: *For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*

(a.) St. Paul declares that man is nothing. This is only too true. Of himself man is less than nothing; for he is misery and sin combined. He is born in sin, he usually lives in sin, and he may die in sin; when left to himself he is capable of nothing but of rushing headlong into all kinds of disorders. Look at your body, how frail it is! What will become of it? The food of worms, dust and ashes. Look at your soul! in the very first instant of its union with the body it was already contaminated with sin; its powers are weakened and helpless in all that concerns eternal salvation. Consider what must be done with man in order to attain his final object. He must be cleansed from sin, and be sanctified. And this can be done only by the *grace of God*; left to himself man remains a sinner for ever. After man is justified by the grace of God, can he persevere of his own strength in justice? By no means: he constantly needs the grace of God in order not to lose justice. Thus man of himself is a mere nothing. Why then should we yield to vain thoughts, and imagine ourselves to be something, whereas we are nothing?

(b.) And if, nevertheless, many people are so vain and proud, whence does this arise? Chiefly from self-love; for it is self-love that so blinds man that he does not see his misery and weakness, and that ascribes to himself and to his merits the good he has or does, and therefore he does not give the honor to God. Do not suffer yourselves to be blinded by self-love, but consider very often in the light of faith, that of yourselves you are nothing, and can do nothing and you will not find it difficult to suppress all pride and ambition and to remain humble.

3. *But let every one prove his own work; and so he shall have glory in himself only, and not in another, for every one shall bear his own burden.*

(a.) In these words the Apostle teaches us how we can guard ourselves against ambition and pride. If we prove ourselves, and seriously and impartially think of the things we have committed or omitted, we shall find very much that is wrong and sinful. This knowledge of our sinfulness, at which we arrive by this proving of ourselves, will banish all proud and vain thoughts from our hearts and cause us to humble ourselves before God and man. It will produce still another advantage, for coming thereby to the knowledge of our faults, we shall feel ourselves urged to correct these faults and to labor for our perfection. When we humble ourselves sincerely and endeavor to perfect ourselves we shall have glory before God, which is incomparably more precious and valuable than all the honors of the world, for what does it profit us if all men praise us and God reprehends us? if men extol us up to heaven while God looks down upon us with detestation? if men call us blessed when God condemns us?

(b.) In proving ourselves we must not look at others and make a comparison between ourselves and them, for self-love might easily blind us to think ourselves better than they, and thus yield to vain, self-complacent thoughts. Since every one must bear his own burden, *i. e.*, must answer for his own faults and sins (and even for those of others, if he make himself accessory to them), he must pay attention to himself, and not to others; judge himself only and not others, and thus he will be secure against self-conceit and pride.

Examine yourselves often, that you may come to a better knowledge of yourselves, for the more you know yourselves, the clearer you will see your misery and sins, and then it will be an easy task to keep all vanity, pride and ambition at a distance and to be truly humble. But if you must make a comparison between yourselves and others, do not consider lukewarm persons infected with the spirit of the world, but consider the saints; consider their lives, their actions, their mortifications, their contempt of the world, and their virtues, and you will blush at the comparison, I assure you, and exclaim, full of humility: "My God what are the saints, and what am I?"

PART II.

Another virtue that we must practice is *meekness*.

1. The Apostle exhorts us to this virtue in these words: *If a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual* (have made greater progress in the spiritual life), *instruct such a one in the*

spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted (and by proud confidence, fall into the same sin). The Apostle here recommends meekness, especially in fraternal correction, for several reasons.

(a.) First of all, he presupposes that he who is to be corrected has not erred with deliberation and through malice, but rather through inadvertence and surprise. It would certainly be acting most uncharitably to inveigh against such a one in anger and to treat him with severity. He has not yet a corrupt heart, therefore he is to be dealt with mildly and by friendly instruction and admonition to be warned against a repetition of the fault. Herein parents sometimes make great mistakes. When a child from ignorance or inadvertence does wrong, they become angry, and scold and chastise it with the greatest severity, as if it had committed a great fault, whilst they either entirely overlook real and often very considerable faults, or only make use of gentle words in correcting them.

(b.) Even when the error is committed with premeditation and malice, the correction is to be made in the spirit of meekness; at all events, one must not allow one's self to be carried away by the heat of passion. A warm gentle rain penetrates the dry soil and refreshes it, whilst a violent shower runs off quickly, beats down the grain and makes the earth harder than it had been before. A reprimand administered with charity and gentleness is always well received and has frequently the best effect, whilst rebukes and reproaches repel, and instead of amending persons only make them more obstinate. "With a spoonful of honey," St. Francis of Sales very appropriately says, "you will catch more flies than with a barrel of vinegar."

(c.) Another reason why we must proceed mildly and gently when reprimanding is the thought that we ourselves are weak and frail, and deserve more blame than praise. Perhaps we ourselves have frequently committed, and are more or less infected with, the same fault that we must reprimand in others. Should not this be a motive for us to proceed leniently and mildly with our brother? And suppose that we are entirely free from this fault, have we any guarantee that we shall be free from it for the future? Does not the Apostle say: "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall?—*I. Cor. 10: 12*. God frequently permits those who in the heat of passion reprimand their subordinates on account of a fault and chastise them with too great severity, to fall into the same or into a still greater fault, that they may learn to have compassion for the erring and to reprimand them with mildness.

2. When the Apostle says: *Bear ye one another's burdens; and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ*, he gives us another motive for meekness; for with these words he admonishes us to bear with patience the faults and frailties of others and to act mildly with them. Why should we act thus?

(a.) Chiefly because others bear our burdens, *i. e.*, must have patience with our faults. We are apt to believe that we are no burden to others and that they have nothing to bear from us. It is self-love that leads us to this belief, and so blinds us that we think ourselves perfect. We have our own faults, and we may be sure there is much in us that is burdensome to others. Now if our fellow-men must bear our faults, is it not just that we should also bear theirs and treat them gently? Oh, that married people, brothers and sisters, and neighbors would never forget the words of the Apostle: "Bear ye one another's burdens," and would have patience with one another and live in peace and concord!

(b.) The principal motive for the practice of meekness should be the *law of Christ*, according to the words of the Apostle: *So you shall fulfil the law of Christ*. What law is this? Charity, as Christ himself says: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you."—*John* 15: 12. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."—*John* 13: 35. But charity necessarily includes meekness, for, as the Apostle says, "it is patient, is not provoked to anger, beareth all things, endureth all things."—*I. Cor.* 13: 4-7. He therefore whose anger is suddenly excited against his neighbor, who treats him harshly, and calumniates and reviles him; in short, he who offends against meekness, sins against the principal commandment of Christ, charity, and does not deserve the name of a disciple of the meek Jesus. Fight, therefore, against all inordinate motions of anger, ill-humor and impatience; say and do nothing contrary to meekness. Preserve meekness especially when reprimanding others; never administer a rebuke except in the spirit of charity and meekness in order to gain their hearts and, if possible, to amend them. Be indulgent to the failings and frailties of your fellow-men, and never forget that you are faulty in many things, and that others must bear many burdens on your account. Look at Jesus and learn of him to be meek and humble of heart.—*Matt.* 11: 29.

PART III.

In the last verses of the epistle of this day the Apostle exhorts us to the practice of works of charity.

1. *Let him that is instructed in the word communicate to him that instructeth him, in all good things.*

(a.) The first, therefore, towards whom you must show yourselves charitable, are, according to the words of the Apostle, *your pastors*; you must contribute to their necessary support, and cheerfully give them their dues. Christ says: "The laborer is worthy of his hire."—*Luke* 10: 7. Since the pastors of souls labor for the salvation of men and exhaust their strength in so doing, they certainly have a claim to what they need for their support. Hence the Apostle says: "Know you not, that they who work in the holy place, eat the things that are of the holy place; and they that serve the altar, partake with the altar? So also the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel, should live by the gospel."—*I. Cor.* 9: 13, 14.

(b.) The words of the Apostle: *Be not deceived; God is not mocked*, refer to the subterfuges and excuses by which avaricious, covetous, and envious Catholics refuse their priests the necessary support, curtail it, or give it with ill-will. They may perhaps try to make themselves and others believe that their uncharitable and unjust action is right and just, but it is not so before God, the Omniscient, who at the last day will call them to a strict account. Beware of refusing to give your priests their dues, and of curtailing them.

2. *For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting.* That is, if you make an improper use of your temporal goods, and abuse them for the gratification of your passions, you sow in the flesh, and of it you will reap perdition—your temporal goods will bring eternal damnation upon you. But if you employ your temporal goods for the relief of the poor, or for other good purposes, you sow in the spirit, and you will reap life everlasting; in the world to come God will richly reward you for your acts of charity. Moreover, we have here an important motive for the practice of the works of mercy; they, as we know, weigh heavily in the scales at the Last Judgment, and are decisive. He who practices them is *just*, and *with the just* he will enter into life everlasting: he who omits them when he should practice them, will be damned in everlasting fire. "Judgment without mercy," says St. James, "to him that hath not done mercy; and mercy exalteth itself above judgment."—2: 13.

3. *And in doing good let us not fail. For in due time we shall reap, not failing.* In these words the Apostle points again to the

reward which is in store for all good works, but especially for the works of mercy and charity, but he adds the condition: *Not failing*. Like all other good works, the works of mercy must be practiced unceasingly, if we expect heaven as a reward, for "he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."—*Matt.* 10:22. There are persons who, when young, are liberal, but who, when they become older, cease to be so and will not hear of giving alms; for advanced age is, alas! more prone to avarice. The very contrary should be the case. The older we become, the more we should detach our hearts from temporal things, and, therefore, also give more abundant alms.

4. The end of our lesson reads: *Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

(a.) Here the Apostle exhorts us to employ our lifetime in works of mercy, for the reason that life is very uncertain and fleeting, and death approaches, when we can do no more good works and gain no more merits for heaven. The thought of the frailty of our life and the uncertainty of the hour of death ought to be reason enough for us to do every possible good, and especially to practice the works of Christian charity while we have the means of doing it, considering that God for this very purpose has appointed us his stewards in bestowing on us the goods of this world.

(b.) Moreover, the Apostle exhorts us to do good to all, whoever they may be, or in whatever relation they may stand to us. Our charity must extend to all men, even to our enemies, that we may be children of our Father, who is in heaven, "who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust."—*Matt.* 5:45.

(c.) But, according to the admonition of the Apostle, we ought to do good to those in particular who are of the same faith as ourselves. They are nearer to us than infidels and heretics, because with us they constitute one Christian community and family. Now if the members of one community or family must first relieve one another, it must be much more so with those who profess the same faith as ourselves. As Catholics we ought to do good to our fellow-Catholics, and prefer them to all who are not of the same faith.

PERORATION.

Be solicitous, then, to practice the three virtues to which St. Paul exhorts us in the epistle of this day. Be *humble of heart,*

and therefore shun all vainglory, vanity, pride, and ambition, considering that "God resisteth the proud, and giveth his grace to the humble."—*James* 4:6. Be *meek*, avoid all rudeness, vulgarity, bad temper and bitterness; have patience with the failings, frailties and short-comings of your neighbor; do not forget that you yourselves are not above reproach, and that you need the indulgence of God and man. Be *charitable and merciful* towards all men, but especially towards those who are of the same faith, for charity is the outgrowth of love, which is the principal commandment of the Christian law. Blessed are you if you unceasingly practice these three important virtues of *humility, meekness and charity*; as true and faithful followers of Jesus Christ you have the hope of eternal life. Amen.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* 1:11-16. At that time: Jesus went into a city called Naim: and there went with him his disciples and a great multitude. And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a great multitude of the city was with her. Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her: Weep not. And he came near and touched the bier. And they that carried it stood still. And he said: Young man, I say to thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on them all: and they glorified God, saying: A great prophet is risen up amongst us, and God hath visited his people.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE RAISING OF THE YOUNG MAN OF NAIM TO LIFE.

Our divine Saviour had healed the servant of the centurion at Capharnaum, where he stayed most of his time during his public life. Thence he went to Naim, a small city in Galilee, situated at the foot of Mount Thabor. *Naim* in English means *beautiful, pleasant, cosy*. This city derived its name from its beautiful location and picturesque surroundings. But no matter now

pleasant and cosy a place may be, that fell destroyer, Death, cannot be kept away. As the Latin poet has so beautifully expressed it: "He advances with unerring step, and knocks for admittance at the stately palaces of the rich, as well as at the humble cottages of the poor." Thus this unwelcome guest had found his way into the beautiful city, for when our Blessed Redeemer, accompanied by his disciples and a great multitude of people, *came nigh to the gate of the city, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.* Let us, to-day, make a meditation on the miracle referred to in the gospel, and with that object we shall consider the two following points:

- I. *A dead man is carried out of Naim;*
- II. *Christ raises the dead man to life.*

PART I.

The gospel says: *When Jesus came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a great multitude of the city was with her.* These words contain a great deal of instruction.

1. Christ came to Naim just at the moment the dead man was being carried out. This was certainly a remarkable coincidence, which must not be attributed to blind fate or mere chance, but to a divine arrangement. Christ wished to make use of this opportunity, and to glorify his Father by the working of a great miracle, as well as to console the deeply afflicted heart of the poor widow, and manifest himself as the Redeemer of the world. Hence this remarkable coincidence. From it we can learn —

(a.) *That nothing, however trifling and insignificant, is accidental, but is either ordained or permitted by God.* Christ expressly says: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? (And there are so many millions of them.) Yea, the very hairs of your head are all numbered."—*Luke 12: 6, 7.* In all the events and accidents of life we must recognize God's all-ruling providence and seek to profit by them. If it is something pleasing, let us give thanks to God, make a good use of it, and employ it for the glory of God, and our own and our neighbor's salvation. If something painful happens to us, let us be patient and offer it up to God as a penance for our sins.

(b.) *That man's extremity is God's opportunity.* The young man had died, his body was on its way to the grave; who could then have hoped that he would have returned again to life? But

when all human aid was ineffectual Jesus appeared. Let us stand firm in our confidence in God, in every situation of life, for "our God is our refuge and strength; a helper in troubles"—*Ps. 45: 2.* Let us not waver in our faith, especially in these days when so many and such powerful enemies arise against our holy Mother the Church, and do their utmost to bring about her destruction. Let us do what the early Christians did, pray, have patience and confidence in God, who will give us peace when his hour is come.

2. *A dead man was carried out.* This is repeated every day and everywhere. Where is the city, village or house from which no dead are carried out! Man comes into the world to die. The moment he is born he begins to die; and he ceases to die only when he ceases to live. Life is but a lingering death. The day will come when we also shall die and be carried out. "All things go to one place: of earth they were made, and into earth they return together."—*Eccles. 3: 20.* But what an important thing is death. It is decisive for all eternity; if we die a good death, we shall be saved for ever; if we die a bad death, we shall be lost for ever. Ought we not seriously to consider this? And yet there are many Christians who take more trouble about everything else than about dying. Their anxiety early and late is how they can make money, attain honor and dignities, or gratify their passions; these things occupy them early and late, but they never, or hardly ever, think of what they must do in order to die well. What blindness! Oh, that we would often meditate on the words of Christ: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?"—*Matt. 16: 26.*

3. The dead man who was carried out was only a youth, for Christ said to him: *Young man, I say to thee, arise.* No one is secure against death; all must fall beneath the fatal scythe, not only the grown and withered grass, but also the young and tender blades just beginning to sprout. Young people should consider this, and not live heedlessly and forgetful of God. The young man of Naim certainly did not think that he would die so soon, and yet he did. No one has a lease of life; the old *must* die, the young *may* die. Not a year passes that young people do not die in this parish. If death should snatch you away while you are in a state of mortal sin, you would be lost for ever. Consider this, and do not desecrate the best years of life with sins and vices, but serve God and keep his commandments.

4. *The dead man who was carried out was the only son of his mother.* It is a great affliction for parents to lose a child by death, especially when it is their only child. They weep, and are often—

times almost inconsolable in their sorrow. Now the question arises: "Why does God take children away from parents, and sometimes their only child?" We cannot, indeed, answer this question with certainty, for the counsels of God are inscrutable. But this much we know, that God always does well and wisely when he snatches away a child by death. Many parents would perhaps spoil that child in their blind love, especially when it is their only one, and so it would turn out badly afterwards, do much mischief in the world, and finally perish eternally. Now, to prevent such an evil God calls that child to himself whilst it is innocent, in order to save its soul. Should parents, then, grieve immoderately at the death of their children?

5. The gospel remarks that the mother of the young man was a *widow*. The saying was verified here, "misfortunes never come singly." It was not enough that the unfortunate woman had lost her husband; she also loses her only son, the comfort of her life, and the support of her old age. Had she perhaps deserved that so much affliction should come upon her? Certainly not; for if she had not been pious and God-fearing, Jesus would not have shown himself so compassionate, and raised her son to life. Thus again we see that God visits the pious with crosses and afflictions. But he does it for their good, in order to free them more and more from their faults, to perfect them and to give them an opportunity of increasing their merits, and to reward them hereafter with a greater crown of glory.

6. Lastly, we read in the gospel that *a great multitude of the city was with her*. As we see, funeral processions were customary with the Jews in the Old Law, and were conducted as with us in the New Law. Relatives and acquaintances paid the last honors to the departed man, and accompanied his body to its final resting place. There is no doubt that they also prayed for the dead, for prayers and sacrifices for the dead were prescribed among the Jews, and in the Second Book of Machabees we read: "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins."—12: 46. Take part in funeral services, but in such a way as becomes Christians. Go to the grave with the dead, to show your respect and esteem, and pray devoutly for the repose of their souls; think at the same time of the frailty of human life, the uncertainty of the hour of death, and of eternity, and make good resolutions so to live that you need not fear death. If you attend funeral processions in such a way they will be profitable both to you and to the departed.



PART II.

We will now consider how Christ raised the dead man to life. The gospel relates this miracle in the following words: *Whom when the Lord had seen (the mother), being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her: Weep not. And he came near and touched the bier. And they that carried it stood still. And he said: Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.*

1. Here we plainly see what an affectionate heart Jesus had. As soon as he saw the deeply afflicted mother following the corpse of her only son with sobs and tears, he was moved with compassion. This was not the only time that he showed the goodness of his heart. He had compassion on the hungry multitudes in the desert; he wept at the grave of Lazarus; so profound a sorrow seized him at the sight of Jerusalem, that he wept and said: "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."—*Luke 19: 41, 42.* We, too, must be compassionate if we are true Christians. The principal Christian virtue is charity; and compassion is an offspring of charity, for he who sincerely loves his neighbor feels compassion when he sees him afflicted or suffering. Human society constitutes one body, and every individual man is a member of this body. Now, as in a natural body the pain which one member feels is from sympathy extended to others, especially to those in close proximity, so every man, especially if he be ennobled by the spirit of Christianity, feels the sorrows and afflictions of his fellow-men. A man without sympathy is as it were a dead member in the body of human society and utterly un-Christian, because he is destitute of charity, the principal virtue of Christianity. Various passions, such as envy, hatred and avarice sometimes carry a man so far that they strip him of all sympathy with the unfortunate and afflicted; in fact, he even rejoices at their sufferings. We are men and Christians; let us have compassion and mercy on all whom we see in misery and affliction. St. Gregory says: "Sympathy is the most precious alms, for if we give our sympathy to the unhappy, we give them what they value most, our heart; they themselves are consoled when they see that we take a lively and heartfelt interest in their sufferings."

2. Jesus said to the widow: *Weep not.* He does not say so by way of reproach, as if he would blame the widow for weeping, or forbid it, but only to manifest his sympathy for her and to console her, as we also say when we have compassion on an unfortunate man and try to comfort him. We Christians are not

forbidden to weep at the graves of our relations and friends, since Christ himself wept at the grave of Lazarus (*John* 11: 35); and we read: "My son, shed tears over the dead, and begin to lament as if thou hadst suffered some great harm."—*Ecclus.* 38: 16. And in the Acts of the Apostles we read: "And devout men took order for St. Stephen's funeral, and made great mourning over him."—8: 2. But this mourning over the dead must not be immoderate and un-Christian. The true Christian comforts himself at the death of his friends, bearing in mind that whatever God does is well done, and that there will be a resurrection of the dead when he shall see the departed dear ones again, and be united with them for ever. The heathens and infidels who have no hope (*I. Thess.* 4: 12) may mourn immoderately over the death of their friends and abandon themselves to despair; we Christians do not thus; our mourning is tempered with consolation and resignation to the will of God; mitigated and sweetened by the hope that we shall see one another again.

3. Our Lord came near and touched the bier, thus intimating to those that carried it to stand still, and said: *Young man, I say to thee, arise.* Here Jesus Christ manifests himself as the omnipotent God, to whom everything is subject, and whose word heaven and earth obey. The Apostles and many saints worked miracles, not by their own power, but in the name of Jesus. Thus the miracles which Christ wrought, and those wrought by the saints in his name, are an incontrovertible proof of his Divinity. When he says: *Young man, I say to thee, arise,* he is as omnipotent as God his Father, and he has a right to say: "What things soever the Father doth, these the Son also doth in like manner. As the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life: so the Son also giveth life to whom he will."—*John* 5: 19-21. We must give thanks to Jesus for having proved his Divinity so clearly and incontrovertibly. For there is nothing so consoling and encouraging in every situation of life as the belief that Jesus Christ is truly God. If he is truly God his doctrine is true and divine, and everything that he has done and suffered for us has an infinite value; we are truly redeemed; we need not fear for the Church which he promised to protect; if we serve him with a loving heart, we can live peaceably and die happily.

4. At the words of Jesus: "Young man, I say to thee, arise," *he that was dead, sat up and began to speak.* At the words: "Young man, I say to thee, arise," the soul of the young man returns from the spirit world into its body, and animates it with new life; he sits up and lives, and as a sign that he lives he begins to speak. Thus Jesus raised the young man to life. As Christ raised the young man of Naim, so he will raise all men from the dead

at the end of the world. He himself assures us of this: "The hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."—*John* 5: 28, 29. Let us then walk in the fear of God, and be careful to keep our body in honor, never abusing it by sin, especially by impurity, that we may hope for a joyous resurrection. It is said of the young man that *he began to speak.* What did he say? Certainly something appropriate. There is no doubt that he gave thanks to Christ in the most glowing words for the grace of being raised to life, adored him with the most profound veneration, and promised to dedicate himself to him and to love him with all his heart. When Jesus, in the Sacrament of Penance, raises you from the death of sin to the life of grace, he bestows on you a greater grace than on the young man of Naim, whom he raised from natural death. You have far more reason fervently to give thanks to Christ after every confession, to adore him, and to make the strongest resolutions henceforth zealously to serve him. If you have not done this heretofore, do so for the future.

And he delivered him to his mother. Jesus could with justice have demanded that he should join his disciples and follow him. But no; he made no such demand, but returned him to his mother. Here Jesus gives us a beautiful example of the way in which we must do good to our neighbor without any selfish intention. Let us be satisfied that God knows the good we do, and will reward us for it, and let us beware of receiving praise for it from men, lest we share the fate of the Scribes and Pharisees, of whom Jesus says that they have already received their reward. Jesus, by delivering the young man to his mother, intimated that she had power over him, and that he, as her child, was obliged to obey her in all just and lawful things. Why should not man willingly obey those to whom he owes his life? Now, there are children who grievously sin against obedience. The older they become, the more stubborn they become towards their parents; they will not obey their mother when she is a widow, and they so embitter her life by their disobedience and bad conduct that she wishes to follow her husband into the grave. Woe to such children: "The eye that mocketh at his father, and that despiseth the labor of his mother in bearing him, let the ravens of the brook pick it out, and the young eagles eat it."—*Prov.* 30: 17.

PERORATION.

And there came a fear on them all; and they glorified God, saying: A great prophet is risen up amongst us, and God hath visited

his people. We need not wonder that all who were witnesses of this miracle and saw how the young man, at the word of Christ, suddenly sat up and lived, were filled with a holy fear. We should have been similarly affected had we been eye-witnesses of this miracle. It is natural for fear and awe to take possession of man when God manifests himself in his infinite power, and especially when he brings a dead man back to life. But what the people then did, when full of enthusiasm, praising and glorifying God, we also ought to do to-day and every day of our lives. Let us praise and glorify God with a heart full of thanks that he has raised up the great PROPHEET foretold by Moses (*Deut. 18: 15*); that is, that he has sent his only-begotten Son, to whom we owe our redemption from sin and from eternal damnation, our reconciliation with God, and grace and life everlasting. Amen.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

WHY WE MUST WORK OUT OUR SALVATION WITH FEAR.

And there came a fear on them all.—Luke 7: 16.

St. Luke observes at the conclusion of this day's gospel that there came a fear on them all when they saw that at the words of Jesus: *Young man, I say to thee, arise*, the dead man sat up, began to speak, left the bier, and went to his mother. No wonder that all who were witnesses of this event were struck with fear, for why should not man be in awe and fear when he beholds the manifestation of divine Omnipotence? Why should he not be terrified when a dead man who belongs already to the next world, suddenly returns again to this mortal life? Such a fear ought to come upon us, not only in wonderful events, but it ought rather to be our constant companion during life. So long as we live in this valley of tears we are not secure of salvation; dangers beset us and threaten us on all sides. But if we walk in the fear of God we shall guard ourselves against injustice and sin, and be anxious that we may be able hereafter to give a good account of our stewardship. I shall exhort you therefore to-day in the words of the Apostle: "Work out your salvation with fear

and trembling" (*Phil. 2: 12*), and give you three reasons for doing so:

- I. *The uncertainty of our salvation;*
- II. *The dangers that menace our soul;*
- III. *The strict justice of God.*

PART I.

It is a dogma of the Catholic Church that no man, without a special revelation from above, can have full certainty whether he will be saved or not. "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred."—*Eccles. 9: 1*. Now, since man knows not whether God loves or hates him, *i. e.*, whether he is in a state of sanctifying grace or not, it is obvious that he can not be perfectly secure of his salvation. St. Paul says of himself: "I am not conscious to myself of any thing; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord."—*I. Cor. 4: 4*. If the Apostle, so highly favored by God, did not know with certainty whether he would be saved, how much less can we know it who are subject to so many defects and failings. Although we must hope for our salvation with confidence, yet we must not lay aside all fear, because we do not know infallibly —

I. *Whether we are now truly just.*

(a.) Many actions which are considered good by men, are not so before God. We may perform works of fraternal charity, we may have compassion on the poor, we may observe the commandments of God and of his Church, and be conscientious in the discharge of our duties, but have we on that account a full assurance that we are just? No; for it is not enough to do good; it must also be done in the right manner; a great deal especially depends on good intention. Without it even the best actions are worthless in the eyes of God, as we see in the Scribes and Pharisees. Hence it is possible that God, owing to our lack of a good intention, will reject much of what we think good and meritorious.

(b.) The words of the Lord to the bishop of Laodicea are applicable to many Christians: "Thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."—*Apoc. 3: 17*. They have a mistaken conscience, and, in their delusion, they think themselves just, whereas they are sinners. They do not commit adultery, they neither rob nor steal, they do many good things, and outwardly fulfil the precepts of reli-

gion; but in their hearts they entertain immoderate pride, and vain human praise is the motive of all their actions. Are they just? They think so, but deceive themselves, for without humility true justice, able to stand the test before God, is absolutely impossible. They have a heart that is attracted by money, as iron by the magnet. Though they can never use the tenth part of their possessions for their support, they will not hear of giving alms. Are they just? They think so, because they have acquired their wealth honestly; but they deceive themselves, for, as Christ assures us, no man can serve God and mammon. In their business or trade they commit various frauds and injustices, which they do not consider sinful because others do the same. Are they just? They think so, but deceive themselves; for whatever is unjust God condemns, though the whole world commends it. They neglect the duties of their state of life; they keep silence at the excesses of their children and do not reprimand them for their sins and vices. Are they just? They think so, because in other respects they are good; but they are mistaken, for the Apostle says: "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. Thus there are very many Christians who think themselves just, but in reality are not so. They will be obliged to confess before the judgment-seat of God: "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."—*Wisd.* 5: 6.

May not we also be mistaken? Certainly; the possibility at least cannot be denied; and on that account we must not be without fear for our salvation.

2. *Whether we shall be just unto the end.* It is possible that by grievous sins we may fall from grace.

(a.) History convinces us of this. *Saul* was at first a good king, and did what was right before God. But he remained good for two years only; then he fell into grievous sins, was hardened in evil and came to ruin. What a wise and excellent ruler was *Solomon*; but he sinned, fell into idolatry, and we do not know whether in the end he found grace with God or not. *Judas* was good at first; like Peter he had left all to follow Jesus, and in return was promised a hundred-fold with the rest of the Apostles; he preached the gospel, and had power to baptize; but to what a miserable end he came!

(b.) Experience teaches the same, and places before us only too many instances of human inconstancy and fickleness. During missions, jubilees, and on other occasions, many Catholics exhibit

a very commendable zeal; they make a general confession, and firm resolutions to do penance. For some time everything goes well; they shun evil occasions, bridle their passions, and so live that they have the highest hopes. But their zeal gradually grows cold; they neglect prayer, the frequent reception of the sacraments, and other pious exercises; they begin again their intercourse with the wicked, seek again their former evil occasions, and thus it happens that they relapse into their former sins, and their last state becomes worse than the first. And how many innocent souls are there who fall victims to corruption! How many sons and daughters, the hope and consolation of their parents, fall into bad company, where by little and little they lose the fear of God, become frivolous and thoughtless, and fall into utter destruction! How many Catholics, even of advanced age, turn their back upon God, whom they had served faithfully for so many years, and enter upon the path of sin and ruin!

Thus it is certain that man is very frail, and always runs the risk of losing God's grace, and with it eternal salvation. Since we are not secure of our salvation, we must never lose sight of the admonition of the Apostle: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling."—*Phil.* 2: 12. And salutary fear is also necessary *on account of the dangers to the soul which menace us on all sides.*

PART II.

The dangers to the soul, to which we are exposed during our whole life, arise, as faith teaches us —

(a.) *From ourselves.* We read of a certain Thomas Rotarius, that he imagined himself made of glass; therefore he was continually in dread that he might be broken. He would let no one come near him, and cried out when he saw any one approach him. This man, of course, was insane, but this insanity illustrates the truth that our moral strength is brittle and fragile like glass. Hence the Apostle says that we have the treasure of grace (our virtue, such as it is) in earthen vessels.—*II. Cor.* 4: 7. In consequence of original sin, evil concupiscence arose in us, and is a fruitful source of temptation. "Every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured."—*James* 1: 14. We are tempted now to pride, then to covetousness, now to impurity, and then to anger. Sometimes one temptation ceases only when another arises fully as bad and even worse. We shall never be entirely free from these temptations so long as we live.

(b.) *From the world,* as St. John (*I. John* 2: 16) writes: "All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the

concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life." How much that we hear and see in the world is reprehensible. The commandments are boldly violated, the truths of our holy religion are ridiculed, infidelity and vice defended and commended. The zealous, faithful Catholic often experiences neglect, contempt and persecution, whilst the infidel who lives solely according to the flesh is honored and wins the applause of the many. The world tries every means to entangle us in its snares and destroy us. Now it displays before our eyes what flatters sensuality, then it makes us the most glorious promises, or it has recourse to threats, oppresses and persecutes us in order to win us over to its side. Even Catholics who were once pious may easily succumb to the temptation!

(c.) *From Satan*, who, as St. Peter writes: "goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."—*I. Peter* 5: 8. All men are exposed to his attacks, especially the just. When these have made great progress in perfection and are not much disquieted by the world, the devil begins his work and exerts himself in every way for their destruction. History proves that the saints suffered most from diabolical temptations. This is easily explained. So long as men live in heedlessness and sin, the devil need not take any pains with them; they are already on the road to hell; but when they are converted to God's service, he assails them in every possible way, in order to win them back, especially when he sees that the world and concupiscence cannot prevail against them.

In temptations so great and numerous we need not wonder that even the most tried servants of God have sometimes fallen. Remember *David*, who believed himself to be so firm in virtue that he said: "I shall never be moved" (*Ps.* 29: 7); *Joas*, to whom the Sacred Scripture itself gives the praise, "that he did what was good before the Lord" (*II. Paral.* 24: 2); *Origen* and *Tertullian*, those two great lights of the Church; *Heraclius* and *Henry VIII.* of England, who were justly considered patterns of Christian rulers; they sinned, and with them thousands of other servants of God have sinned, and many of them have perished for ever. How many may there be among us who will share the lot of those unfortunate souls! Let us therefore walk cautiously and in salutary fear so long as we live, specially remembering that we must appear before a judge whose *justice is inexorable*.

PART III.

God is infinitely just and therefore punishes not only *grievous sins*. but also *small faults*.

(a.) *Grievous sins*. Examples: *The fallen angels*. They sinned but once, and in thought only, and without mercy God cast them from their heavenly seats and plunged them into the abyss of hell, where they are tormented for ever. *Our first parents*. They ate of the fruit of the tree of which God had forbidden them to eat. On account of this *one sin* not only they, but their whole posterity, were punished most severely, and millions of souls are lost eternally in consequence of this sin. *The people in Noe's time; the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha; the Jews of Jerusalem*, who on account of their sins were delivered to temporal and eternal perdition. God is just; the vials of his wrath are emptied upon all who dare to transgress his holy commandments. Therefore he says himself: "If you will not amend, but will walk contrary to me, I also will walk contrary to you, and will strike you seven times for your sins. And I will bring in upon you the sword that shall avenge my covenant."—*Levit.* 26: 23-25. And St. John writes: "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, which is the second death."—*Apoc.* 21: 8.

(b.) *Small faults*. We have examples in *Lot's wife*, who, because she looked back at the burning Sodom, was at once changed into a statue of salt: in *Oza*, who, on account of an irreverent touch of the ark of the covenant, suddenly fell dead to the ground; in *Moses*, who, because of a little diffidence in the omnipotence of God, was not allowed to enter with the other Israelites into the land of promise, but died in the desert. St. Jerome confesses of himself that, in a dream, he received, by the command of Jesus, most painful stripes because he had read a book of the Gentiles. St. Catherine of Siena says that on account of a voluntary distraction in prayer she was so severely reprimanded that she would rather have endured all the contempt of the world than such a censure. So severely does God punish small faults! Hence the saints feared the justice of God and could scarcely divest themselves of a certain terror when they thought of their future account. Examples: St. Arsenius, who had served God with great fervor for seventy years, trembled at the approach of death. St. Agatho, when on his death-bed, was seized with great fear, and said to those around him, and who, in order to comfort him, reminded him of his pious life: "O friends, the judgments of God differ from the judgments of men." Now, when even the saints trembled at the contemplation of God's justice, what shall we do, who are anything but saints? What shall we do, who know not whether there are perhaps sins upon us which we do not remember, and therefore neither repent of them, nor confess

them? we who cannot tell whether the little good we do is not null and void before God on account of shortcomings; and lastly, we who do not know whether we have not perhaps long ago lost the grace of God on account of our numerous sins. Nothing then remains for us but to walk continually in the fear of God.

PERORATION.

Let us never forget the admonition of the Apostle: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." It is difficult to be saved, because it is difficult to persevere faithfully to the end. You know this, and to be forewarned is to be forearmed. Therefore be cautious, and caution will save you. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. You are making a journey through a forest infested with robbers. You know the danger; arm yourselves, procure a body-guard to protect you, and you will arrive safe at your journey's end. Blessed are you if childlike fear of God is the constant companion of your life! it will keep you from evil, enliven and strengthen your zeal for virtue and penance so that you may persevere in the state of grace to the end, and thus may find the words of the Holy Ghost verified in you: "Blessed is the man that is always fearful."—*Prov. 28: 14.* Amen.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

FUNERALS.

Behold, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow; and a great multitude of the city was with her.—
Luke 7: 12.

What was done with the youth of Naim, according to the gospel of this day, will sooner or later happen to us all. We shall die, and about forty-eight hours after our death our funeral obsequies will take place. A deeply afflicted, weeping mother walked behind the coffin of her only son, the solace of her life, and the staff of her old age. Many people took part in the funeral procession, to show the last marks of respect to the dead man, and to console his poor mother. When we are carried

out, a larger or smaller multitude of people will accompany our funeral. But one thing that happened at the funeral mentioned in the gospel of this day will not occur at ours. Jesus will not come and raise us to life, as he raised the youth of Naim. Our lifeless body will be delivered to the earth and remain there till the last day, when Jesus Christ will raise all the dead to life.

I now propose to explain how Catholic funerals are carried out.

- I. *The blessing of the body;*
- II. *The funeral procession;*
- III. *The burial of the body.*

PART I.

1. First, the bell is tolled. This is an invitation to the faithful to show to the departed the last act of charity and to attend the funeral, or at least to say a prayer for the repose of his soul. When you die you will wish many persons to accompany your body to the grave and there pray for you. What you wish others to do unto you, do you also unto them. Go to their funeral, not from worldly interest, but from Christian charity, with the intention of bringing consolation and help to the departed by means of devout prayer.

2. The priest and people assemble in the place where the corpse lies. The officiating priest is vested in a surplice and a black stole, or in a cope of the same color. The faithful, especially the relatives of the dead, also wear black clothes. Black is the color that symbolizes death, and manifests our mourning at the departure of our fellow-men. In primitive times the funeral obsequies had more of the character of joy than of sadness. This was chiefly in consequence of the funeral solemnities of the pagans. They hired men and women to raise loud lamentations over the dead. For better pay they would cut their arms with a knife; they lacerated their cheeks, dishevelled their hair, and perpetrated other follies; they had also female choristers who sang funeral hymns. The Church rejected this exaggerated and spurious mourning as entirely un-Christian; and when the relatives transgressed against the proper observance of mourning, she always disapproved of it. St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says: "We will not have you ignorant concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope."—*I. Thess. 4: 12.* St. Cyprian says: "We must not bewail our departed fellow-Christians, because, properly speaking, they have not died, but are really living with God; we shall soon follow them, therefore we may long for their society,

but should not bewail them. Since they put on the white garment of glory and immortality, we may put off mourning apparel as unbecoming their triumph; otherwise the pagans might be scandalized by us and think that we indeed talk much of the future happy life, but that by our lamentations and mourning for the death of our relatives we show that we do not believe in it." The Christians therefore wished to give public testimony to the pagans of their belief in the resurrection of the dead; therefore there was more joy than sadness at their funeral obsequies. They had still another reason for it. The primitive Christians lived so holily that there was every reason to hope that their death was only a transition to eternal beatitude. Why should they be grieved? In our days it is not so. The lives of most persons are not such as to entitle us to the conviction that their death is a transition to heaven. Many give us reason to fear that they have not died well; and of many more we may surmise that they must still suffer in purgatory. Our funeral obsequies therefore bear the true character of mourning. With regard to children who die in their baptismal innocence, the Church shows no sadness whatever, but only joy; therefore she uses white vestments at their obsequies as expressive of joy.

3. The priest now *blesses the corpse*. He says the Antiphon, *Si iniquitates*, and then recites the Psalm, *De profundis*, alternately with the servers. The Church remembers the sinfulness of man and the mercy of God, and exclaims therefore with a certain doubt: "If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand it?"—*Ps.* 129: 3. But mindful of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, she again hopes and says: "With the Lord there is mercy; and with him plentiful redemption."—*Ps.* 129: 7.

Having finished the Psalm, the priest sprinkles the corpse with holy water, and incenses it. The first signifies the prayer of the Church that God may free the soul of the departed from all stain of sin; the latter expresses the petition that the grace of God may come down upon the soul of the departed and receive her in love and mercy. Then the priest says the "Our Father," a few versicles, and a prayer in which he asks God, according to his most plentiful mercy to forgive the soul all the sins that it has committed though human frailty. Lastly, he sprinkles the corpse once more with holy water and says the Antiphon, *Exultabunt Domino*. The procession then begins.

PART II.

1. Formation of the funeral procession.

(a.) The confraternities, if there are any in the parish, lead off in the procession, for they stand in closer relation to the departed

than do the rest of the faithful; hence it is their duty to honor him particularly by their participation in his funeral obsequies and to assist him with their prayers.

(b.) Then comes the officiating priest with the acolytes, preceded by the cross-bearer. The cross is carried to manifest that a Christian funeral is celebrated, for the cross is the emblem of Christianity. By the cross we profess our faith that in Christ crucified alone there is salvation, and we hope that the departed, through the merits of Christ, and as his disciple and follower, has found grace and salvation. Lighted candles are borne, and this has a historical and symbolical meaning. During the persecutions the Christians could bury their dead only at night and in secluded places, generally in the catacombs, and of course they needed lights; and the lighted candles remind us of these obsequies in the early ages of the Church. Symbolically the lights remind us of the parable in the gospel, showing how the soul of the pious departed, who walked in the light of faith and shone before his fellow-Christians by a good example, goes with the prudent virgins, attended by angels, to meet the divine Bridegroom; and they admonish us at the same time to pray for the departed, that eternal light may shine upon him. The banners which are carried remind us of the victory of Christ over death and hell, of the struggles which the departed, during life, had with the enemies of his salvation, and of the victories he won over them; and finally, of our duty to fight a good fight, in order to be crowned as victors in heaven.

(c.) After the priest and his attendants follows the coffin. In the early days of the Church the dead were not carried in coffins, but, as was customary with the Jews, upon a bier, so that the corpse lay exposed to view. In order not to afflict the mourners by the sight of it, it was covered with a pall. But coffins are also of very ancient date; for, as Eusebius records, the corpse of Constantine the Great was deposited in a golden casket.

(d.) The coffin is followed by mourners, first the relatives and friends of the deceased, and then the rest of the faithful. Sometimes people of other denominations, to honor the memory of the deceased, attend the funeral to the grave, a custom which is not to be reprehended. All, however, who take part in the funeral should occupy themselves with wholesome thoughts and good resolutions.

2. During the funeral procession.

(a.) On the way the Psalm *Miserere* is chanted or recited, and concludes with the words: "Eternal rest give unto him (her), and

let perpetual light shine upon him (her)." If the way is long, other psalms from the Office of the Dead may be said. This use of psalms at funerals is as old as the Church, for in the Apostolic Constitutions we read: "At the interment of the dead carry forth with psalms those who have believed in the Lord." The faithful unite with the prayers of the Church, praying for the soul of the departed. Alas! in our days, especially in our cities, people attend funerals without even saying an "Our Father." Such attendance is neither a religious act nor a work of charity, but only an act of respect and official decorum. The dead will not be grateful to such persons.

(b.) According to the Roman Ritual, the funeral procession moves, not to the cemetery, but to the church. Having arrived in the church, the coffin is placed on the *catafalque*, and the sacrifice of the mass is offered up for the repose of the soul. After mass the priest goes to the coffin and says the *Libera*. From early times the funeral obsequies were celebrated in the presence of the corpse, and it was not until after this celebration that it was carried from the church to the cemetery and buried.

When the funeral has arrived at the cemetery, the priest says: "Come to his assistance, ye Saints of God; come forth to meet him, ye Angels of the Lord, receiving his soul, offering it in the sight of the Most High. May Christ receive thee, who called thee: and may the Angels conduct thee to Abraham's bosom." The words of this prayer call to mind that moment when the soul appears before the judgment-seat of God; for this reason they contain a fervent petition to the angels and saints that they may come to help her and conduct her into heaven. The prayer which the priest says on the way to the grave expresses the same thoughts. Having arrived at the grave he sprinkles it with holy water; after which follows the interment.

PART III.

The pagan Greeks and Romans did not bury their dead, but cremated them, a hideous custom which our modern pagans wish to revive. This cremation of corpses was from the first an abomination to Christians; therefore, even during the most violent persecutions, they endeavored to snatch the corpses of the martyrs from the fire and to procure for them a resting-place in the earth, according to the words of God: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken."—*Gen. 3: 19.*

1. When the coffin has arrived at the grave, it is let down into it, whilst the priest says: "Take, earth, what is thine; God take

what is his, the body is formed of the earth, the spirit is infused from above." The earth has a kind of a claim upon the body, because it is formed of it, but especially because through sin it has become its subject. But the soul is made to the likeness of God; she therefore does not belong to the earth, but to God, and he takes her to himself, whether she is the soul of a sinner or of a just man, with this difference, however, that in the first case he condemns her to the torments of hell, but in the latter he calls her to heaven.

2. When the body has been lowered into the grave, the priest sprinkles it with holy water, saying: "May God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, refresh thy soul with heavenly dew." Then he incenses it, saying: "May God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, nourish thy soul with heavenly odors. As water refreshes the thirsty, and sweet odor rejoices men, so may God refresh the soul of the dead with his love and grace and rejoice her with the felicity of heaven."

3. Then the priest throws a little earth three times on the coffin, saying: "Dust thou art, O man, and unto dust thou shalt return." As the descendants of sinful Adam we are all subjected to the sentence of death, and the coffin which has just been lowered into the grave brings this sentence vividly before our minds.

4. Now the scene changes; the Church diverts our attention from death and the grave, and announces to us the great truth of the resurrection. The priest intones the antiphon: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live; and every one that liveth and believeth in me shall not die for ever." Then the *Benedictus* is chanted, in which Zachary, full of enthusiasm, praises the Lord for having fulfilled his promise and sent the Redeemer. With the antiphon and the *Benedictus* the Church reminds us of the consoling truth that Jesus Christ has overcome death and merited the grace that our bodies shall one day come forth gloriously from the grave, and, united with the soul, live for ever in heaven.

5. After saying the "Our Father," a few versicles and a prayer for the repose of the soul of the deceased, he blesses all whose bodies are buried in the cemetery with the sign of the cross, saying: "May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. R. Amen." The Church, in blessing all and praying for all during the funeral obsequies of each individual person, renews the obsequies of all the departed.

6. The priest now takes a wooden cross, blesses the grave

with it and planting it at the head of it, says: "Mayest thou be signed with this sign of the Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ, who through the cross has redeemed thee, and may he not allow the evil spirit to injure thee for ever. Peace be to thee." For the last time the priest sprinkles with holy water the grave and all those who are present, and, after a short discourse, says with them in silence a pious prayer for the repose of the soul of the deceased, and this concludes the obsequies.

PERORATION

But it is not concluded for all of us; we have yet to pass through all this. Before many years, perhaps sooner than we expect, our lifeless body will be carried out and delivered to the earth. Let us often think of our obsequies; but especially at night when we go to rest, and during the night when we cannot sleep, and in times of temptation. The frequent thought of death, the grave and eternity, will fill us with salutary fear and preserve us in the path of virtue. If we do so, death will have no terror for us; we shall die in the sweet hope of finding grace with God, and of being admitted into the mansions of everlasting peace. Amen.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE WIDOW OF NAIM A SYMBOL OF THE CHURCH.

Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her: Weep not.—Luke 7: 13.

We see a mother in deep sorrow. Why should she not be sorrowful and shed bitter tears when her only son, the comfort of her life, has died and is carried out to the grave? But, good mother, weep not, dry up your tears; Jesus comes, the friend of man; he will have compassion on you, and change your sorrow into joy and gladness. Yes, Jesus comes just at the moment the young man is being carried out; he approaches the afflicted widow, and full of compassion says to her: *Weep not.* He goes near the bier, and raises the dead man to life. What amazement,

what joy, what exclamations of thanksgiving on the part of the mother and the people! In this mother and widow we have a symbol of the Church in our time, *i. e.*—

- I. A symbol of her present sorrow;
- II. A symbol of her future joy.

PART I.

The first severe blow to the woman of Naim was the death of her husband. The situation of a widow is deplorable at all times. If she is without means, the death of the husband and father takes away from her and her children their support, and reduces them to sore distress, poverty and need. Thus the widow of Sarepta with her child would have died of hunger, had not the prophet Elias by a miracle procured for her the necessaries of life.—*III. Kings 17: 10, etc.* Even a widow whose husband has been a tradesman or in a lucrative business finds herself now placed in a sad situation, for she sees herself reduced to the necessity of depending on strangers, at least during the minority of her children, if she wishes to carry on the business. Besides, she is well aware that strangers are often not very honest and have their own interest more at heart than that of their employer. Many other afflictions come upon widows. They are, as a general rule, less respected than before their widowhood, and cases occur in which they do not know how to act, having no one with whom they can consult or in whom they can place confidence as being truly sincere and interested in their affairs. In short, the state of widowhood is under any circumstances a difficult one, and the widow of Naim may have had sufficient opportunities of experiencing what it is to be a widow. Here we have a symbol of the Church in the widow of Naim. The Church in our time, for more than one reason, can be compared with a widow.

(a.) *Jesus, her bridegroom, appears no longer to live for her.* She has been in deep distress for many years; her enemies labor to effect her downfall and destruction everywhere. Millions of the faithful have prayed and exclaimed with the Apostles: "Lord, save us, we perish" (*Matt. 8: 25*), but it seems in vain. Jesus has not heard his bride; it is as if he were dead. Is this not a sad widowhood for the Church? Has she not reason to weep with the widow of Naim?

(b.) *Her spiritual fathers are hindered in many ways from providing for her, and from administering the means of grace.* Let us first cast a look at our Holy Father. As you know, his enemies have despoiled him of the states of the Church, and all his revenues,

so that for years he has been obliged to live on the alms of the faithful. He is a prisoner in Rome, for he cannot go through the streets of his own city without exposing himself to the danger of being insulted, reviled and maltreated. Infidelity and impiety are stalking through the holy land of Italy, and there are those who are never weary of mocking and calumniating him, representing him as a man who deserves nothing but contempt and hatred. *Ecce homo!* What is the lot of the *Catholic bishops*? Some of them live in exile away from their dioceses; some die at the hand of the assassin. Thus the archbishop of Paris and many of the secular and regular clergy were shot by the Commune; and only lately two bishops of South America were poisoned. The same may be said of *priests*. How many parishes are there that to-day are without pastors! Sundays and holidays come and go, but no priest appears in the church to preach the word of God, or to celebrate mass; the confessionals are closed, because there are no confessors; the tabernacles are tenantless, for Jesus, once dwelling there in the Blessed Sacrament, has disappeared. Many lie on their beds languishing and dying, and though they have the most ardent desire to receive the rites of the Church, there is no one who can comply with their wish; they must depart this life without priest or sacraments. On how many Catholic congregations in Prussia and Switzerland have hirelings been imposed since the expulsion of the lawful parish priests; how cruelly have Catholics been treated, especially in Prussia, because they would not acknowledge the hireling as their pastor! Thus the Church may well be sorrowful; for her enemies have made her as it were a widow by persecuting and banishing her spiritual fathers, or impeding their ministry.

2. The woman of Naim was a widow, and, as such, deserved to be pitied, but she had a son who was already grown up, and he mitigated her sorrow at the loss of her husband; she looked upon him with pleasure and with the hope that he would be the comfort and support of her declining years. But she was to be deprived of this son. One day he feels ill; the mother, full of anxiety, has recourse to the physician and to medicine, but in vain; the illness becomes critical, and he wastes away. How the mother's heart beats! what anguish seizes her! how she nurses the beloved child day and night and hopes he may recover! But all in vain; the son is in his agony and life ebbs away. Who can describe the sorrow of the childless mother? Ah! how she weeps! how she sobs and moans; how she wrings her hands! Recognize in the widow of Naim a symbol of the Church. She laments and bewails the loss of her children. Many of them have died —

(a.) *By suffering shipwreck of their faith.* Some of them have publicly renounced their allegiance to her, and gone over to the

infidels and free-thinkers. They are now of the number of those who deny the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, heaven and hell, and the difference between virtue and vice. Through neglect of Christian instruction, intercourse with unbelievers, the reading of godless papers and books, they have gradually lost all good principles and delivered themselves up to complete unbelief. Once children of the Church, they are now her most bitter enemies; they hurl their calumnies against the Church, and having entered into a confederacy with infidels they labor restlessly to ruin her. What sorrow must the Church feel at the doings of such men whom she formerly counted among her children. Besides these there are others who outwardly are in union with the Church, but inwardly have fallen away from her. Such are those who make themselves judges of the Church, and believe only those doctrines which coincide with their own notions, rejecting those which do not. They have ceased to be Catholics because they do not believe all that the Catholic Church proposes to our faith as the infallible word of God, and commands us to submit to with all our heart. Such are those who are the confederates of the enemies of the Church and speak for them and defend their principles. Their minds must necessarily be anti-Catholic and perverse, otherwise it would not be possible for them to join the enemies of their faith. Those also who support, read or spread anti-Catholic papers and books, for they show only too plainly that they are inwardly at war with the Church and are governed by principles contrary to her faith. The Church has cause to complain of such nominal Catholics even more than of those who have outwardly fallen away, because, pretending to have faith, they lead the unwary astray.

(b.) *By living in sins and vices.* The words of Osee can be applied to the modern world: "There is no truth, and there is no mercy, and there is no knowledge of God in the land. Cursing, and lying, and killing, and theft, and adultery have overflowed; and blood hath touched blood."—*Osee 4: 1, 2.* How prevalent is the vice of impurity! Are the large cities any better than Sodom and Gomorrhah? How many thefts, robberies, burglaries, murders, come before the jury at every session of the courts! What shall I say of suicides? How frequent are perjuries? How numerous and lasting are enmities? But when should I come to an end if I recounted all the sins that are committed in the world, and even by Catholics? How much reason then has the Church to be sorrowful when so many of her children have died to God, and are in imminent danger of being delivered to eternal death? Thus the widow of Naim is truly a symbol of the Church in her present sorrow—but, for your consolation, I can add, she is also a symbol of the Church in her future joy.

PART II.

1. Our Blessed Lord prepared the widow for the joy which was in store for her by approaching her and saying, full of love and mercy: *Weep not.* We need not wonder that the poor widow felt greatly comforted at the sympathy which Jesus showed her. Nothing is more soothing to the afflicted soul than heartfelt condolence. As dew refreshes the parched flowers, so a tear of condolence comforts the afflicted heart. What Jesus did for the widow of Naim, he does for his Church; he comforts her in her tribulations and sufferings and prepares her for the great joy which shall hereafter fall to her share. He consoles her especially —

(a.) *By the loyalty of the faithful to the Holy Father.* You can scarcely find a period in Church history in which Catholic Christendom has given to a Pope so many proofs of love and devotion, and manifested so great an interest in his joys and sorrows as has been the case with regard to Pope Pius IX. I need only remind you of his golden jubilee as bishop, which he celebrated a few years ago. Was not the whole Christian world filled with the greatest joy? Did not great multitudes of bishops, priests and laity go to Rome and deem themselves happy in having an opportunity of seeing the Holy Father and of showing him their veneration and receiving his blessing? How numerous were the alms given to him! In truth the faithful could not have better and more beautifully manifested their love and veneration than they did on that occasion. Thus Jesus prepared the sweetest consolation for his Church in her present tribulation, for what could be more comforting for her than to see her children adhere to the Holy Father with love and fidelity, and share with him his joy and his sorrow?

(b.) *By the constancy of the bishops, priests and laity.* The faith of the Catholic priesthood and laity is obliged in our time to stand a hard trial. I shall call your attention only to one thing. When the Fathers of the Vatican Council were about to define the infallibility of the Pope, when teaching *ex cathedra*, a dogma, and did really declare it, a hue and cry, never before equalled in history, was raised against the Church. The free-thinkers and liberals rejected the whole Council, reviled the bishops, and asserted that Catholics were idolaters because they made the Pope a God. Even some who up to that time were considered lights in the Church rose up against her and fell away. It was the general belief that there would be as great a defection from the Church as in the sixteenth century. But nothing of the kind happened. Among all the Catholic bishops, there was not one

who did not submit to the decrees of the Vatican Council, or who wavered in the faith; in like manner among the many thousands of Catholic priests, there were very few who became disloyal to the Church, and most of those who did so returned penitently to her bosom. The same must be said of the laity. The number of those who wavered in their faith was comparatively small, and at present amounts to only a few thousand, and these are always dwindling away, whilst the Catholic Church numbers about two hundred and fifty millions. Is not this a comfort for our Holy Mother the Church? Must not the fact that her children are so strong in faith rejoice her?

(c.) *By special revelations of his divine protection.* First of all, I mention the miraculous apparitions of the Blessed Virgin which occurred a few years ago, and lately, in several places. Although these apparitions, especially the latest ones, are not yet authenticated by the judgment of the Church, yet they rest upon such credible evidence that they cannot possibly be denied. Add to this the miracles by which these apparitions were accompanied, and which still continue. Many sicknesses and bodily infirmities, which had lasted for years and were considered incurable, suddenly disappeared, and those who were afflicted with them confessed with a loud voice and a grateful heart that they were healed through the mediation of Mary. I would also refer you to those persons who were favored with the marks of the holy wounds. The number of those persons, of whom some are yet living, amounts, so far as known, to thirteen in this century, of which number no other century since the foundation of the Church can boast. Are not these wonderful apparitions a source of consolation for all the faithful, and a cause of confidence in the victory of the Holy Catholic Church over all her enemies?

2. Having comforted the widow in so gracious a manner, Jesus went to help her in reality and to change her sorrow into joy. He went to the bier on which the dead man lay, touched it, and said: *Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak; and he delivered him to his mother.* What must have been the feelings of the widow at the sight of this miracle! Who can describe the astonishment and joy which filled her maternal heart when she saw her son alive before her, and embraced him? Will our Lord deliver the Church, his bride, from her tribulation, and prepare for her such a joy?

(a.) *Most certainly;* he expressly assured and promised her, never to forsake her. "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."—*Matt. 28: 20.* "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell

shall not prevail against it."—*Matt.* 16: 18. Through how many hard trials has the Church already passed, how many persecutions has she endured! No century has yet passed in which enemies did not rise against her. Now it was temporal rulers, who fought against her and persecuted her; then apostates and heretics who reviled and calumniated her; and sometimes both labored for her destruction. Often it seemed as though she could exist no longer, that she must succumb to the blows of her enemies; the ancient Roman emperors boasted of having destroyed her, and many of her adversaries prophesied her approaching ruin; but Jesus was at all times her shield and protection, and at last made her triumph over all her enemies. The same will again come to pass; aided by the power of Almighty God the Church will fight and conquer.

(b.) *But when will this come to pass?* Without doubt, not in the near future, but later, perhaps only when necessity is extreme. How often may the widow of Naim have prayed for the health and life of her sick son! But she prayed in vain; she was not heard; her son wasted away; she prayed still more fervently but again in vain; her son died. All hope now seemed to be lost; the dead man is carried out to be buried. And, behold! when her necessity was the greatest, the help of God was nighest;—Jesus goes near the bier and raises up the dead man to life. Perhaps Christ will act in this way with his Church. Her tribulations have already lasted a long time, but there is every appearance that the end thereof is not yet at hand. It may go so far with the Church as to cause one to fear that she must perish; but the Divine Saviour will suddenly arise in his might as her protector, and dash to pieces, as a house made of cards, all that her enemies have done for years to accomplish her destruction, and will then give her peace. God is patient, because he is eternal. The measure of the sins of the enemies of the Church must be filled; those who have fallen away from the Church and are absorbed in temporal cares must by severe chastisements be compelled to comprehend their error and do penance, and only then will better times come, and Christ will change the sorrow of the Church into joy.

PERORATION.

Let us persevere in patience and in confidence in God. Jesus, who comforted the widow of Naim and rejoiced her heart by raising her son to life, will also give joy and consolation to his Church in all her tribulations. The widow of Naim prayed and wept in the days of her hard trial; let us do the same. Tears and prayer are the weapons of a Christian; with these weapons we

shall overcome all the enemies of our holy faith. Let us cling the firmer to the Church the more we see her oppressed and persecuted; and let us pray with the greater fervor and confidence the longer God makes us wait for his help. At the same time let us lead devout lives; then Christ will certainly arise at the right moment, command the winds and the sea, and a great calm will come. Amen.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

WE OUGHT ALWAYS TO BE PREPARED FOR DEATH.

A dead man was carried out.—Luke 7: 12.

The event related in the gospel of this day is one that has been renewed numberless times, and will be renewed every day so long as there are men upon earth. Where is there a city, a village, or even a house, out of which no dead are carried? Since death has gained entrance unto the world, death is the order of the day, "for the wages of sin is death."—*Rom.* 6; 23. Hence the Apostle further says: "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. About thirty millions of people die annually; our own turn will come sooner or later; like the young man of Naim, we, too, shall be carried to the cemetery and there our body will find its last resting-place until the day of the general resurrection. Nothing is more certain than death; and yet, nothing is more uncertain than the time and circumstances of death. From this truth naturally follows the strict obligation of being always prepared for death, because we do not know —

- I. *When,*
- II. *Where,*
- III. *Or how it will come.*

PART I.

1. We do not know *when death will come.* We are convinced of this truth —

(a.) *By the Sacred Scripture.* "Man knoweth not his own end; but as fishes are taken with the hook, and as birds are caught with the snare, so men are taken in the evil time, when it shall suddenly come upon them."—*Eccles.* 9: 12. Our Blessed Lord frequently speaks of this truth and brings it before us in many parables. Thus in the parable of the *rich man*, who, in order to house his abundant harvest, had his barn pulled down and built larger (*Luke* 12: 16-20); of the *wise and the foolish virgins* (*Matt.* 25: 1-13); and of the *householder* who would watch if he knew at what hour the thief would come, which parable he concludes with these words: "Be you then also ready; for at what hour you think not the Son of Man will come."—*Luke* 12: 40.

(b.) *By the history of all times.* The first family consisted of four persons, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel. Who would have believed that Abel, the youngest member of the family, would die first? The people in Noe's time, as Christ himself says, "were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark," when the flood came, and took them all away.—*Matt.* 24: 38, 39. (Heli and his sons; Absalom.) "Watch ye, therefore; because you know not the day nor the hour."—*Matt.* 25: 13.

(c.) *From our own experience, and the history of our days.* How often do the daily papers report sudden deaths! We read that some were killed by burglars and robbers, that one fell from a scaffold and broke his neck, that many persons were drowned, that others lost their lives by explosions in mines, by collisions on railroads. And are there not sudden deaths in our parish every year? Does it not occur that this or that person, by sickness or by accident, is suddenly snatched away, without having had time to receive the rites of the Church? Every one of us must say with David: "There is but one step between me and death."—*I. Kings* 20: 3.

2. What lesson should we draw from this?

(a.) If you are in a state of grace, you must employ all diligence to persevere in it unto the end. For he that perseveres to the end shall be saved. If you depart from the path of virtue and enter upon the road of sin, death may come suddenly upon you and snatch you away in the midst of your sins.

(b.) If you have lost the grace of God by grievous sin you must strive without delay by true repentance to recover it. Who would live heedlessly in sin when he is at no moment secure against death? Who can count all the unfortunate ones who,

thinking that they had the prospect of many years before them in which they could yet amend their lives, were suddenly snatched away and rejected for ever? "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."—*Eccles.* 5: 8, 9.

PART II.

1. We do not know where death will come.

(a.) Death is active everywhere and knows where to find its victims. It penetrates into all places; no wall, no lock, no bolt can keep it out. People generally die when they least expect it. Death is almost always a surprise or an accident.

(b.) Proofs of it. At the invitation of his brother, the unsuspecting Abel goes out into the field, when Cain falls suddenly upon him and slays him. Aman has a gallows erected for Mardochai; and a few days afterwards he swings on that very gallows himself. Heli sits down in an arm-chair to rest himself; he falls backwards over the chair, and breaks his neck. Man is nowhere secure against death; he can die anywhere.

2. Lessons to be drawn from this.

(a.) *We must have God everywhere before our eyes and shun injustice and sin.* O, how terrible would it be if death should overtake us in a place where we have grievously sinned! Example: The Israelite whom Phinees killed, together with the unchaste woman, in the chamber in which they committed the sin of impurity.—*Numb.* 25; 7, 8. What happened to these two and to numberless others may happen to any one. Therefore be careful not to desecrate any place with sin and vice. Above all things, the bed in which you lie every night should be held in honour, because it is probable that you will die in it. If your conscience should reproach you in your dying hour, that in the bed on which you lie and are going to die you had committed the most horrible sins with yourselves or others, would you not be lying on burning coals? Be chaste and pious, if anywhere, in your bed, and occupy yourselves with pious thoughts and prayer when you awake and cannot sleep for some time.

(b.) *Without urgent necessity do not frequent places dangerous to life.*

PART III.

1. *Lastly, we do not know how death will come.*

(a.) The manner of its coming varies. Some are confined to bed a long time, for weeks, months, and even years, and suffer a great deal before death releases them from their pain; others are sick only for a few days or hours, and they are gone. With others it is still more sudden; they drop down dead in the street. The gospel tells us of a man who was sick for thirty-eight years, and a woman who was sick with an issue of blood for twelve years. Thus death has a thousand ways of coming to man and snatching him away from amongst the living.

(b.) At all events, it does not matter much how we die, whether quickly or slowly, whether we die suddenly, or after a protracted illness, provided that we die in the grace of God. We know that some of the saints died suddenly, and others after a long sickness. Whilst St. Lidwina saw her last hour approach only after a sickness of thirty-eight years, St. Francis of Sales died suddenly of apoplexy; the great and zealous lover of souls, Francis of Cordova, was found dead at his writing desk, where he had just written his last words: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

2. *Lessons to be learned from this.*

(a.) If it should be the will of God that we are to die suddenly and unexpectedly, we must be resigned to his holy will, for in this case also the words of the Apostle are applicable: "To them that love God all things work together unto good."—*Rom. 8: 28.* It is also very acceptable to God to be willing to make him the last and greatest sacrifice, the sacrifice of our life, and leave it entirely to him when and where we are to die. Hence the Church teaches us to say: "Jesus, for thee I live; Jesus, for thee I die; Jesus, I am thine in life and in death."

(b.) But we do well to pray to God *not to let us die unprepared*; and the Church, in the Litany of the Saints, puts these words into our mouth: "From a sudden and unprovided death, deliver us, O Lord!" To us, who are weak, frail and sinful creatures, and who offend God in many ways, it must be very desirable to have time to prepare ourselves well for death by the worthy reception of the holy sacraments. We should daily pray to God for this grace.

(c.) When a dangerous sickness befalls you, do not delay to send for the priest to be strengthened by the rites of the Church. Every delay is dangerous, and many sick persons who were dilatory have gone out of the world without the sacraments. But because the sick generally do not know the peril of their situation, it is a duty incumbent on their relatives and friends to remind them of the danger, and to exhort them to receive the sacraments.

PERORATION.

I conclude with the well-known words: *I know that I shall die; I know not when, nor how, nor where, but if I die in mortal sin I shall be lost for ever.* Ponder these serious words and often repeat them, especially when you go to bed, and in all temptations. Be always prepared for death; keep your conscience undefiled; and if you should have the misfortune of falling into sin, make at once a sincere confession, in order to reinstate yourselves in a state of grace. Pray to God every day to grant you the greatest and most desirable of all graces, the blessing of a happy death. Amen.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

THREE MOTHERS.

Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her: Weep not.—Luke 7: 13.

Whilst meditating on the gospel of this day, the subject of which is the renowned miracle wrought by our Saviour in favor of a widow's son, whom he was pleased to raise to life, and as I placed myself in spirit beneath the gateway of the city of Naim, out of which the funeral procession slowly moved, and where Jesus, accompanied by his disciples, met it, three mothers, whose sorrow and grief God changed into consolation and joy, presented themselves to my mind as I reflected upon the words which Jesus spoke to the sorrowful widow: *Weep not.*

- I. *The first is the widow of Naim;*
- II. *The second, St. Monica;*
- III. *The third, the Catholic Church.*

PART I.

The poor woman had only a little while before lost her husband; this was certainly a great privation, for the situation of a widow is at all times not an enviable one. And now she goes weeping behind the coffin of her only son, with whom she buries the only joy of her heart, the only support of her old age. The tears of the mother, and the great funeral procession, bore testimony to the fact that he was a good son, a pious youth, beloved by all, whom death suddenly snatched away from amongst the living. But this happens almost every day, and thousands of others have felt the same sorrow and grief, and every one who follows a coffin that contains a treasure snatched away from a bleeding heart feels it. This is the character of death; he is a relentless foe; he regards neither age, rank nor sex; he spares neither the merry child that plays about, nor dreaming of any accident, nor the old man bent down with age and looking forward to his dissolution. Death cuts down not only the strongest and loftiest trees, but also the tenderest flowers of the morning. All complain bitterly of the ravages of death. But whilst you complain of death, of whom do you complain? Properly speaking, you complain of God, his wisdom and his justice; for death can snatch away only those whom God has pointed out as ripe. I do not blame any one for his sorrow and grief, for the tears shed at the graves of deceased relations and friends are reasonable and human; but these human tears may be either good or bad, because they may be either Christian or heathenish. The heathens have no future hope; the present life is everything to them because they know no other; hence they look upon death as the greatest evil. But has not the Christian an infinite hope? He knows that the grave is not the end but the beginning of a new, an eternal, and a better life, and that death is the terminus of all our labors here below and the gate leading to a glorious immortality hereafter. Shall his grief find no consolation in this hope? Shall we weep at the graves of our dead like the heathens, who have no hope? Christ does not meet your funeral processions, to raise to life the dead, whom you bewail, but he will reanimate them, not for this temporal life, but for eternal life; he will change tears into joy. Therefore, whether God calls us from this world this moment, or allows us to travel a few miles more, his holy will must be welcome to us; he is master of life and death; but neither the one nor the other is a punishment for those who love him, for all things are right for those who love God. Let us not care whether we live or die; but let our only care be how we live, for as we live so shall we die. But although Christ does not meet our funerals, to raise to life the dead whom we bewail, is he not able to become the consoler and comforter of those left behind?

Parents, you bury good, pious children; great is your grief; and this is reasonable; but is it not a consolation to hear what the Holy Ghost says in the Book of Wisdom: "A spotless life is old age. He pleased God and was beloved, and living among sinners he was translated. He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the innocent mind. Being made perfect in a short space he fulfilled a long time; for his soul pleased God; therefore he hastened to bring him out of the midst of iniquities."—*Wisdom* 4: 9, *et seq.* Children, you weep at the graves of your parents, and justly; but is it no consolation that you, being pious orphans, and looking up to heaven, can say with the Psalmist: "My father and my mother have left me, but the Lord hath taken me up."—*Ps.* 26: 10. "Be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope."—*I. Thess.* 4; 12. Let us not be like those of whom the Holy Ghost says: "The people see this, and understand not, nor lay up such things in their hearts; that the grace of God and his mercy are with his saints, and that he hath respect to his chosen."—*Wisd.* 4: 14, 15.

PART II.

As God consoled the widow of Naim by raising her to life from *corporal death*, so he consoled another mother by the conversion of her son from *spiritual death*. This mother is St. Monica. She had an only son, who suffered himself to be led astray by levity, and by his bad life grieved his mother so much that, according to his own confession, she mourned over him as dead, and, in her grief, would not so much as eat with him at the same table. When her pious example and maternal admonitions seemed to be of no avail, she applied the last means in the power of every mother, and which no mother who considers education not only as a training of the mind, but also as culture of the soul, should neglect. As parents are under the obligation of educating their children for God, they can accomplish this in no better way than by educating them with the help of God, and therefore the Scripture says: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" and hence it is the will of the Church that Christian mothers should go to church as soon as convenient after their confinement, to ask the blessing of God upon themselves and their offspring, that human effort may be united with divine grace, and that by this means the great work of Christian education may be achieved in the child, for time and eternity.

Now what means did St. Monica make use of? It was prayer that she incessantly sent up to heaven for the salvation of her

son, whereupon a holy bishop consoled her with these words: "Woman, cease shedding your tears; it is impossible for a son of such tears to perish." And did God, who consoled the widow of Naim, leave this mother without consolation? Hear the words of the son himself: "Thou, O Lord, hast stretched out thy hand from on high, and hast rescued my soul out of this deep darkness, when my mother, my faithful friend, prayed for me, and indeed wept over me more than other mothers bewail the natural death of their children; for in the faith and in the spirit which she had before thee she saw my death, and thou, O Lord, hast heard her prayer, and hast not despised her tears, which ran down from her eyes and moistened the ground in all places of her prayer." And who is this son? It is the great St. Augustine, who after his conversion dedicated all his powers and faculties to the Church, and who owing to his sanctity and learning is and ever will be one of her greatest lights and brightest ornaments. It is St. Augustine, by whose conversion God consoled the widow Monica, who not with useless tears, but with tears of Christian hope and confidence, prayed to him who said: "I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."—*Ezech.* 33: 11. Behold Christian mothers, what a powerful means you have of drawing upon your children the blessing, grace, and mercy of God. Parents often say: I have tried everything, but all in vain. But have you tried St. Monica's means? Have you prayed with such confidence and motherly love? Oh, how seldom is this the case! Yes, instead of praying you curse your children in your anger, and though your curses and maledictions are not always thunderbolts that dash your children to pieces, yet the words of the Sacred Scripture are corroborated both by history and experience: "The fathers blessing establisheth the houses of the children; but the mother's curse rooteth up the foundation."—*Ecclus.* 3: 11. Stop your curses; they are unworthy of a Christian; change your curses into prayer. Pray to God like St. Monica for the son or daughter who has gone astray, and God will hear your faithful and fervent prayers rather than your curses and maledictions, as the gospel of this day assures us: *Whom when the Lord saw, being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her: Weep not.*

PART III.

As God consoled the widow of Naim and St. Monica, so he consoles continually, and especially in our days, a mother who is oppressed everywhere—the Catholic Church, by the conversion of many of her children whom she bewails as dead. We know from Bible history that Christ raised three dead persons to life, the daughter of Jairus, whose corpse was still in the house, the

young man at Nain, who was being carried out of the gate of the city, and Lazarus, whose body had already lain in the grave for three days. These three persons naturally dead are a symbol of those who are spiritually dead.

(a.) The Church mourns and weeps over those who are still in the Church but are dead before God by a bad life.

(b.) The Church mourns and weeps over those who by a sad indifference have died to the saving faith and are already outside the pale of the Church.

(c.) The Church mourns and weeps over all those who live in separation from her, and in whom heresy has killed the Catholic life, or who, owing to Jewish superstition, modern or ancient pagan infidelity, are in the grave of spiritual death.

On the anniversary of the death of the God-man who died for the sins of the whole world, on Good Friday, the Church prays for all that are out of her pale. She prays for heretics and schismatics, for Jews and Pagans; she prays for all men; and as Christ came to save all, she condemns no man who has the misfortune to consider error as truth, if it is not his own fault; but she condemns error, and must condemn it, so long as she firmly holds the truth which God has entrusted to her keeping for ever; for error is never harmless, nor can it ever be countenanced. Yes; the Church prays for all those members whom she bewails as dead, and though the spirit of the world, lies, and malignity may impede and stop her for a while in her victorious course, they can never prevent the victory that comes from above. The Holy Father is a prisoner in his own palace, robbed of his dominions, deprived of his revenues, and supported by the charity of the faithful. The spirit of the world can put Peter in prison, but the Church prays in her affliction, and God's omnipotence strikes the chains from his hands and feet, opens the iron gates, and confounds all the plans of liars and maligners. They may send out Sauls to hunt down Catholics, but God's arm will strike them speechless and blind, and convert them into Pauls.

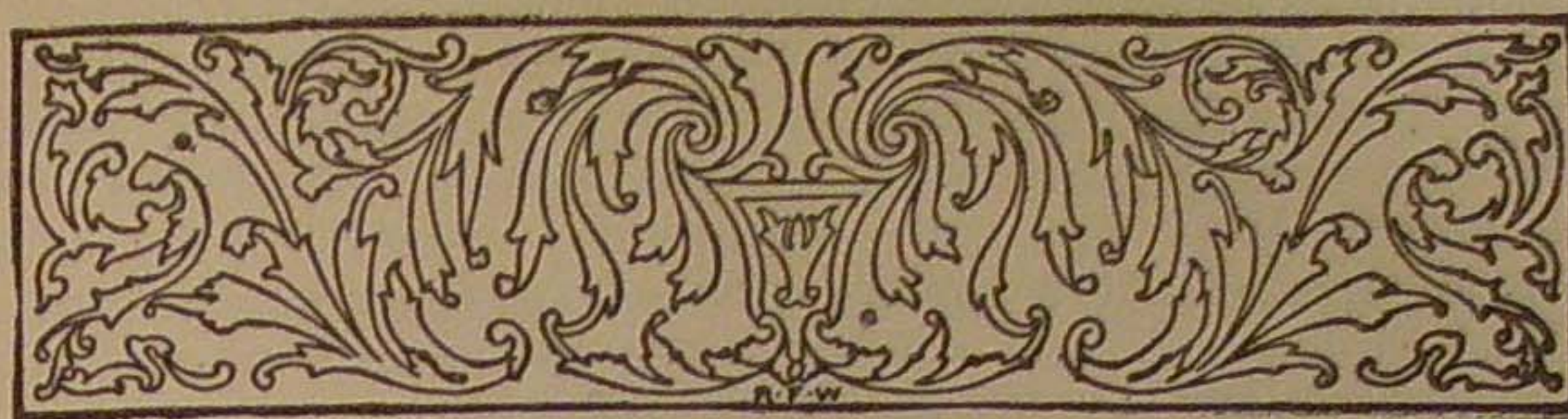
In our days the Church is indeed surrounded by thousands of enemies and oppressed in almost every corner of the globe, for the work which was started a hundred years ago in France, and which hurled down both altar and throne, is now threatening every nation. Just as Christ had foretold, the time will come when every one that killeth you will think he does a service to God. That time seems now at hand. The enemies of the Church are determined to destroy her, the unspotted bride of Christ, and to banish her from the face of the earth; but what is impossible can never become possible; she is built upon a rock; and the

gates of hell cannot prevail against her, much less the powers of earth. Christ was hated, reviled, and persecuted when on earth, and his Church will be persecuted, according to his own words; and by this it is evident that she is the true Church, and we are members of the true Church, disciples and servants of Christ; and the servants, as he says, are no better than their master. The Church mourns when she contemplates these unhappy doings; she is grieved because many of her children are only imposters; she casts an eye of compassion upon them, weeps and prays for them, and will not the prayer of this mother he heard? Doubt it not. Christ, who seems asleep in the ship, will, in his own good time, arise in his might and command the winds and the waves, and there will be a great calm. The words of the gospel of this day concern her at all times, and are applicable in our days: *Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her: Weep not.*

Look around you; England, America, and the Catholic missions can tell you how God hears the prayers of his Church, how he consoles this mother in an extraordinary manner, even in the time of great sufferings, among which those are not the least that are caused by the levity and indifference of so many of her own children. Thousands who were sitting in the darkness of infidelity and paganism, in countries where the gospel was never before preached, call the Catholic Church their mother, and the blood of martyrs again moistens the earth, and amidst the greatest sufferings she flourishes more than she ever did before. There is no doubt that great wickedness and malice abound; but there is also great heroic virtue. Sauls are changed into Pauls, and wolves into lambs; conversions from Protestantism to the Church are an every-day occurrence. It cannot, however, be denied that Catholics sometimes fall away; but, I assure you, no practical Catholic ever became a Protestant.

PERORATION.

Live then as Christians, as Catholics. Do not play with religion. Practice what you believe. Hear the Church. You are her children. Give her no reason to blush at your conduct. Honor her. She is your mother. Cause her no tears. If she shed tears on your account, how would you be able to answer for them! What has she done to you that you should turn traitors to her? Rise from your indifference and listen to the voice of your afflicted mother: "Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten thee." Let us show the purity of our faith by the purity of our Catholic lives, and let us change the grief and sorrow of our holy Mother the Church into joy and consolation. Amen.



SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*Eph.* 3: 13-21. Brethren: I pray you not to *vaunt* at my tribulations for you, which are your glory. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened by his Spirit with might unto the inward man, that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts: that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth: to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God. Now to him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand, according to the power that worketh in us: to him be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations, world without end. Amen.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

ST. PAUL EXHORTS AND CONSOLES THE EPHESIANS AND PRAYS FOR THEM.

The lesson which I have just read to you is taken from the epistle which St. Paul wrote to the Christians of Ephesus and adjacent congregations. At the time he wrote this epistle he was in prison at Rome, into which he had been cast by the Jews, because of their hatred to his preaching of the gospel. This imprisonment must have been very painful to the great Apostle, who was so zealous and indefatigable in the service of Jesus Christ, for he could no longer fulfil the obligations of his office as he wished. Nothing was left to him but by written instructions to labor for the good of the Christian congregations and to pray for them. He did this for the Christians of Ephesus and its vicinity. All the members of these congregations were before

his mind, and he daily recommended them in prayer to the protection and blessing of God; and as it was now impossible for him to come to them he wrote to them to console them in their sufferings, to strengthen them in their faith, and to exhort them to a virtuous life.

Let us then hear how the Apostle —

- I. Exhorts and consoles the Ephesians, and
- II. Prays for them.

PART I.

I pray you not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are your glory.

1. With these words the Apostle consoles the Ephesians and beseeches them not to lose courage and confidence on account of his tribulations. As already remarked, he was in prison. He was in fear that the Christians at Ephesus might become disheartened on account of his tribulations and persecutions; he feared that they might be tempted to think that the religion which he had preached might not be divine, or that he himself might not be acceptable to God, and not a teacher of truth, and that his enemies were right in representing him as a bad man, and a seducer of the people; or that the whole Christian religion might be only the work of man, because otherwise God would not permit that those who preached and confessed it should everywhere be hated and persecuted. There always are weak and faint-hearted Christians, who because of the calamities which come upon the Church and its ministers are easily scandalized and led astray. St. Paul means this: That I am in chains and prison, must be no stumbling-block to you; Christ foretold sufferings and persecutions to his faithful followers.—*John 16: 1-4.* They are a proof of the truth and divinity of the Christian doctrine. As regards my own person, I am hated and persecuted; not on account of a crime, but only because I profess myself everywhere before Jews and Gentiles an apostle of Christ, and preach the gospel. What I suffer and endure is no disgrace to you, but rather your glory, for you can boast of having an apostle who is a prisoner for the sake of Christ and his doctrines, and who, even in prison, gives testimony to the truth, and is ready to lay down his life for the holy faith.

2. Lessons.

(a.) As in the days of the Apostles, so in our age the Church is hated and persecuted in many ways. Irreligion and unbelief

are spreading more and more, and threaten to destroy Christianity. There is no doctrine of our holy faith that is not attacked, denied and rejected. The priesthood is calumniated in word and writing, and subjected to much contempt; prayer, church-going, the reception of the sacraments, and everything good, are suspected and ridiculed. It is publicly said that Christianity has outlived its usefulness, that it kept the distracted nations long enough in a strait-jacket, and must now be put out of the world. We have indeed fallen upon evil times, which remind us of the words of the Psalmist (2: 1-3): "Why have the Gentiles raged and the people devised vain things? The kings of the earth stood up and the princes met together against the Lord and against his Christ, (saying) let us break their bonds asunder; and let us cast away their yoke from us." But do not lose your courage, and do not waver a moment in your confidence in God on account of these tribulations and persecutions which the Church is obliged to endure from her enemies, for Jesus Christ has promised that he will continually assist her and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. In everything that concerns your salvation obey the priests and pastors of the Church, and do what they teach you; "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.* Be constant and immovable in the holy Catholic faith, and suffer yourselves to be robbed of everything rather than of your faith.

(b.) Let us consider St. Paul. Though he is languishing in prison and threatened with death, we see him perfectly calm, joyful, and resigned to the will of God; instead of looking for consolation from others he consoles them, especially the Christian congregation at Ephesus. Do not lose your courage in any tribulation, in any need; be not faint-hearted but stand firm and immovable in your confidence in God. He who rescued St. Paul from the hands of his enemies, and liberated him from prison and immediate danger of death, is powerful and merciful enough to rescue you from every danger and tribulation. He is also just, and will recompense your sufferings with heavenly felicity and eternal beatitude. Do not despond, poor suffering Christian, for it is written: The Lord hears the wishes of the poor; he inclines his ear to them, and rejoices their heart. The Lord is the refuge of the poor, and their helper in the time of tribulation; he forsakes no one who seeks him. He feeds the young ravens, takes care of the birds, which neither sow nor reap: he clothes the lilies of the fields; how could he refuse to us, his children, the necessaries of life? Be not discouraged in sickness and pain. Though your sickness may cause you much inconvenience and all the remedies you make use of afford you little mitigation and help, persevere

in patience and resignation to the will of God; Jesus, who healed many sick persons and raised even the dead to life, is yet living and will restore your health when the right time comes, and when it is for the salvation of your soul. In a word, whatever sufferings may befall us, let us preserve patience and confidence in God, and console ourselves with the words of the Apostle: "I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."—*Rom.* 8: 18.

PART II.

St. Paul prays for the Ephesians. In this prayer we must contemplate the beginning of it, the subject matter, and the conclusion.

1. *The beginning.* It reads: *For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named.*

(a.) *I pray you*, says the Apostle, *not to faint.* St. Paul could indeed beseech the Ephesians not to faint; he could console them with words; he could urge them in every situation of life to trust in God; but he could not cause all this really to take place. For this reason he appeals to God in prayer in order that his petitions and wishes may be realized. Learn of the Apostle to ask the blessing of God on all your undertakings. Though you do all that human diligence, prudence, and circumspection are able to do, yet all your labors and pains will be fruitless, unless God blesses them. "Unless the Lord build the house, thy labor in vain that build it. Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it."—*Ps.* 126: 1. Therefore never omit to recommend all your labors and undertakings to God in prayer, and commence no important business without having first invoked God's blessing and assistance. Pray and labor, and God will help you

(b.) The Apostle says: *I bow my knees.* Here we see that praying on bended knees, or in a kneeling posture, is as old as Christianity, since St. Paul prayed thus. It is also known of St. James that he prayed kneeling so much and so long that the skin on his knees became as hard as that of a camel. And of our dear Lord we read that in the garden of Olives he not only knelt, but prostrated himself on his face and prayed to his heavenly Father. When we kneel down we look a great deal smaller. and when we pray in this posture we indicate that we make ourselves little before God, that we humble ourselves; and humility is the chief

requisite for a good prayer. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds; and till it come nigh he will not be comforted: and he will not depart till the Most High behold."—*Eccclus.* 35: 21. Accustom yourselves to pray kneeling, especially in Church during holy mass, and at your other devotions.

(c.) St. Paul bows his knees *to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, therefore directs his prayer to God the Father. He follows the instruction of Jesus Christ, who not only himself prayed to his heavenly Father but also taught us in the "Our Father" to do the same. Therefore, as a rule, the Church directs her prayers to God the Father, for God is the origin and the source of all that is good; as St. James (1: 17) writes: "Every best gift, and every perfect gift is from above." We must also direct our prayers to Jesus Christ and to the Holy Ghost, because they also are God, like the Father, and because they can and will give us everything good.

(d.) The Apostle adds: *Of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named.* The meaning of this is that God is the Father of all men, Jews and Gentiles, even of the angels, because he created them and loves them as his children. God being the Father of all men and angels, all these are children of God and form one large family, which the Church calls *the communion of saints*. The bond which unites all members of this family with one another is charity. The angels and saints love us, and therefore they pray for us and afford us protection and help in all our necessities. According to their example we also must sincerely love all men, and manifest this love upon every occasion in word and deed.

2. *The subject matter.* St. Paul prays to God, the heavenly Father, *that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened by his Spirit, with might unto the inward man.* We distinguish an inward from an outward man. The outward man is the body, with its qualities, members and senses; but the inward man is the soul, with its faculties, especially the will, reason, memory and understanding. The inward man, the soul, must be strengthened by the Holy Ghost, that is, may not succumb to the outward man, to concupiscence, and become disheartened by sufferings. St. Paul therefore prays that God would strengthen the Ephesians by his holy spirit in everything good, and especially by perseverance in faith, by victory over the sensual passions, by a pure and holy life, and by a constant endurance of all the tribulations of life. Let us daily petition God for these gifts, and often say devoutly the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*.

(a.) *That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts: that being rooted and founded in charity.* With these words St. Paul prays that the Ephesians may become stronger in holy faith, love God with their whole heart, and with constancy persevere in faith and charity. Faith is the root and the beginning of salvation, for without it, it is impossible to please God. Let us daily thank God for the holy faith, which we have received in baptism, and let us preserve it to our last breath; but let that faith be active in good works, for only faith that worketh by charity justifies and leads to life everlasting.—*Gal. 5: 6.* Therefore 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.* Faith and charity are the two feet with which we enter into heaven. Take to heart the words of St. John: "This is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not heavy."—*I. John 5: 3.*

(b.) *You may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth.* What the Apostle desired to be comprehended by the Ephesians and all the saints, that is, by all Christians who in the Sacred Scriptures are often called saints because they are sanctified in baptism and called to holiness, is the mystery of Redemption through Jesus Christ. The *breadth* of the Redemption embraces all men, for Christ immolated himself on the cross for all men, and all can become partakers of the fruits of Redemption if they comply with the prescribed conditions. The *length* of the Redemption reaches back to the beginning of the world, and forward to the end of it, since all men, even those under the Old Law, owe their salvation to the merits of Christ. The *height* of the Redemption elevates man from the terrestrial to the heavenly. Redeemed by Christ, we must no longer love the world and the things of the world, but seek the things that are above; we must live and labor for heaven, where Christ has prepared a place for us in the mansions of bliss. Finally the *depth* of the Redemption reaches to the lower regions, into the empire of the dead, Jesus Christ having redeemed and liberated the souls from Limbo and merited for the just the grace of a glorious resurrection. Frequently make a short meditation on the Redemption and consider wherein it consists, what graces it comprises and what sacrifices it cost Jesus; return thanks to your dear Saviour for these graces, and endeavor by zeal for penance and a diligent use of the means of salvation to acquire those fruits of grace.

(c.) *To know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.* The deeper we penetrate into the mystery of our Redemption, the

more we shall comprehend the *charity of Christ.* A perfect knowledge of this love, however, is impossible for us, for how could we comprehend the greatness of the love of Christ, who for our sake became man, was born in extreme poverty, suffered all the helplessness of infancy, the bitter contempt of an ungrateful world, and died on the cross the death of a malefactor, and who continues to dwell among us in the adorable Sacrament of the altar, giving us his own flesh and blood for the nourishment of our souls? By the *fulness of God*, with which we shall be filled, we are to understand all supernatural gifts and virtues; for it is our duty to endeavor to become as perfect in all virtues, especially in charity, as it is possible for us to become with the grace of God. It must, therefore, be our principal business in life, more and more to lay aside our faults, to curb all inordinate inclinations, and to make progress in the way of virtue, according to the words of Christ: "Be you perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."—*Matt. 5: 48.*

3. *The conclusion.* St. Paul concludes his prayer for the Ephesians with these words: *Now to him, who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand, according to the power that worketh in us; to him be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations, world without end. Amen.*

(a.) In this praise of God the Apostle declares that God is able to give us a great deal more than we desire or understand. If an earthly father is able to give more than his child desires or understands, our heavenly Father will certainly be able to give us good things more abundantly than we desire or understand. Proofs of this truth: The Israelites at the exodus from Egypt had the Red Sea before them, and the army of Pharaoh in hot pursuit close behind them. God conducted them through the Red Sea, and thus rescued them in a manner unexpected by them. When Joseph was sold by his brothers into Egypt he no doubt prayed to God to help him. God made him a prosperous man and even elevated him to the highest dignity of the state and enabled him to procure a home in Egypt for his afflicted family. Oh, what a consolation for us that in God we have a Father who in his unlimited power and goodness can give us far more and far better things than we desire or understand!

(b.) St. Paul adds: *According to the power that worketh in us.* That God can give us more and greater graces than those which we have already received we must conclude from the power which he now imparts to us, and which produces such great effects in us. God is almighty; he therefore can so strengthen us

that we shall be able to accomplish the most difficult things and, full of confidence, to say with the Apostle: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me."—*Phil. 4: 13*. We have numerous examples of this in the saints, who performed such heroic deeds, especially the martyrs who despite frightful tortures kept the faith; by no torments could they be separated from the love of God. Let us be humble of heart and instant in prayer; then God will support us by his grace, that we may overcome all temptations and persevere in the practice of virtue unto the end.

(c.) The words of the Apostle: *To him be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus*, have this meaning: the members of the Church, all the faithful, should praise and glorify God in Christ Jesus, through whose merits alone we are able worthily to praise God and to glorify his holy name. But this praise and glory of God must be given not only with the mouth in prayer, but our actions and our whole life must be for the greater honor and glory of God. To this the Apostle exhorts us when he writes: "And this I pray . . . that you may be sincere and without offense unto the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of justice, through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."—*Phil. 1: 9-11*.

PERORATION.

Let us pray to God for fervor and confidence with the same reverence that St. Paul prayed for his beloved Ephesians. At all times, but especially in the present moment of severe trial, we stand in need of the Spirit of God, to enlighten, govern and protect us; we need strength to overcome all temptations, and to carry out our good resolutions; we need a firm, active, living faith, that we may remain loyal to the Church; finally, we need a sincere and active charity, that we may please God and with constancy walk in the way of his commandments. Let us daily ask God for these graces, and let us serve him with unchangeable fidelity all the days of our lives, and we shall then most assuredly come safely to our journey's end, and be saved. Amen.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke 14: 1-11*. At that time: When Jesus went into the house of one of the chiefs of the Pharisees on the Sabbath day to eat bread, they watched him. And behold, there was a

certain man before him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? But they held their peace. But he, taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, he said: Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer him to these things. And he spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them: When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited by him: and he that invited thee and him come and say to thee: Give this man place: and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee: Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee. Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

CHRIST HEALS THE DROPSICAL MAN, AND INSTRUCTS THE PHARISEES IN HUMILITY.

The Jews were accustomed to have better meals on their Sabbaths and festivals than on week-days. The respectable and rich among them, such as the Scribes and Pharisees, frequently had sumptuous dinners on the Sabbath day, to which guests were invited. It was to one of these banquets that a certain prince of the Pharisees invited our divine Saviour. Christ knew very well that anything but a friendly disposition and kind feeling prompted it: yet he accepted the invitation because it afforded him an opportunity of performing a corporal and spiritual work of mercy—namely, to heal a poor sick man, and to instruct the deluded people. All the guests watched him, not for the purpose of seeing something laudable and of profiting by it, but in the hope that he might say or do something which they could construe as an accusation against him. The hypocrites had words of honey on their lips, but gall in their hearts; they had invited him merely for the opportunity of laying snares for him and, if possible, of destroying him.

Let us consider what the gospel of this day tells us; that Christ—

- I. Heals a man who had the dropsy, and
- II. Instructs the Pharisees in humility.

PART I.

1. *And behold, there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy.*

(a.) The gospel does not say whether this dropsical man came into the dining hall of his own accord, or whether he was invited there by the Pharisees. He may have come of his own accord, because he heard that Christ was to be there as a guest, and he hoped, like many other afflicted persons, to be healed by him. But it is more probable that the Pharisees urged him to come to the house without revealing to him their wicked intention, and that they introduced him to Christ. They hoped to entrap Jesus; for they thought to themselves, "he will heal him, or he will not; in either case we have an opportunity of rendering him odious to the people. If he heals him, we will denounce him as a breaker of the Sabbath; and if he does not heal him, we will say: either he cannot or will not heal him; he is therefore no true prophet, much less can he be the Son of God, because he will not or cannot work a miracle, and consequently he is neither almighty nor merciful."

(b.) Whether the man that had the dropsy came of his own accord, or whether the Pharisees brought him there, his presence is very instructive. If he came of his own accord, he teaches us that in our difficulties we must have recourse to Christ with confidence, since he himself cries out to us: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt. 11: 28.* Many men in their difficulties and perplexities seek help from every one except from him who has said: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."—*Ps. 49: 15.* The result is that in their trouble they helplessly languish without relief, because men will not or cannot help them. Therefore in all your necessities first of all have recourse to God and ask him to help you, and then apply to men and employ the appropriate means to be delivered from the impending evil; only in this way can you expect the desired help. If the man who had the dropsy came at the instigation of the Pharisees, it is a lesson to us that God makes use of the wicked, in order to carry his wise purposes into effect and to bestow benefits on men. Christ had determined to heal the man that had the dropsy, therefore it came to pass that the Pharisees invited Christ to dinner and brought in the dropsical man. God thus gives freedom to the wicked in their actions; he does not hinder them from doing many evil and pernicious things; but his wisdom interferes in their actions, and so disposes them that good comes from them. This is certainly a great consolation for

us in the present time when we see the Catholic Church so much oppressed and persecuted; God permits it for the good of the Church, and all that wicked and perverse men have done to accomplish her ruin will most assuredly fall to the ground, like a house built of cards.

2. Jesus asked the Pharisees: *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?*

(a.) Our divine Lord evidently did not put this question to the Pharisees for the purpose of learning from them whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day, for he frequently healed on that day, and every child would know that good works, works of mercy, are not forbidden on the Sabbath day; but he asked them this question merely to show them that he saw through their cunning and wicked purposes, and, if possible, to bring them to a change of disposition. The thought: "Jesus knows our intentions, and he now knows that we plot evil against him," should have made them ashamed of themselves, and induced them to change their mind.

(b.) Christ gives us here a beautiful example to show us that we also must proceed with leniency and charity in the correction of the erring. If you must reprove any one who has offended you, do not permit yourselves to be carried away by the heat of passion or a desire of revenge, but treat him gently, mildly, and with indulgence, and do not correct him for the purpose of self-gratification, but with a view to amend him. Let us also take care that the good name of him whom we correct does not suffer; let us correct him if possible in private, and in such a way that he is not unnecessarily shamed, and that his honor is not impaired.

(c.) The question whether it is lawful to do this or that on a Sunday or a holiday we must also put to our own conscience, but we must not allow it to be answered by flesh and blood or by the spirit of the world, but by the Christian law. Is it lawful on Sundays and holidays to work in the morning, and in the afternoon to amuse ourselves? Is it lawful on those days to content one's self with a low mass, to omit hearing the word of God, pious reading and spiritual exercises, and to spend the whole day in idleness and amusements? Is it lawful on those days to give one's self up to drinking, gambling and carousing till far into the night, to commit impurity and other sins and vices? Consider well that you must give a strict account of your conduct on Sundays and holidays, and that many Catholics owing to their profanation of these days will lose their souls.

3. *But they held their peace.*

(a.) Why did they remain silent? From malice. If they had not had malice in their hearts they would certainly have given an answer; they would have answered either affirmatively or negatively. But they would not answer in the affirmative, because in this case they would have no reason to denounce him as a profaner of the Sabbath day; neither would they answer in the negative, because they feared that he would question them and put them to shame, or that they would offend the dropsical man by thus preventing his cure.

(b.) Keep silence when Christian charity or prudence demands it, but never from a motive of cunning or of dishonesty: speak when the glory of God, the good of your neighbor, or the duty of your station requires it. When irreligious discourses are carried on in your presence do not keep silence from human respect or fear, much less consent to such discourses, but defend your faith and declare openly and plainly that you esteem it a happiness to be a Catholic. Speak when calumnies are uttered against your neighbor, defend his character and try to prevent slanderous conversations as much as possible. Speak when your children and those under your charge make mistakes, and correct them; speak when you see them enter upon evil ways, and make use of all your authority to guard them against sin and vice. Speak when you know that your brothers or sisters are out in the streets at unseasonable hours, or keep improper company, or do other sinful things; inform your parents of it, that they may remedy the evil. Consider that to conceal a sin by remaining silent, is to make one's self accessory to that sin.

4. *But he, taking him, healed him and sent him away.*

(a.) Christ healed the dropsical man without being asked to do so. It is thus that the divine benignity ever acts towards us. God gives us his graces without our thinking of them; he provides for our wants and gives us help before we ask it. This anticipatory love and grace of God should be to us a model of fraternal charity and an encouragement cheerfully to help others and not wait to be asked. He who helps quickly, helps doubly; he who is condescending towards the needy, treats them kindly and gently and does them a good turn without making them feel it, acts in a noble and Christian manner.

(b.) Our divine Saviour was well aware that the healing of the dropsical man would be misconstrued, and that this act of charity would be imputed to him as a sin, and yet he healed him. This should be a lesson to you to do good without being deterred from it by others. Perform your religious and social duties with-

out caring what people say, and consider that God, not the world, will be your judge. "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."—*Gal. 1: 10.*

5. Christ justified himself by putting the following question to the Pharisees: *Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath-day?*

(a.) If, as the Pharisees themselves admitted, one does not profane the Sabbath by rescuing an animal that meets with an accident, how could it be a sin to help an unfortunate man on that day? Is man to be considered less than a beast? From this we see how blind the Pharisees were when they declared the healing of the sick on the Sabbath to be sinful. Thus, ambition, envy and hatred so blind men that they are unable to perceive what is right. Since our Lord often healed the sick on the Sabbath day, for instance, the man with the withered hand (*Matt. 12*), the infirm woman (*Luke 13*), the man that was under his infirmity thirty-eight years (*John 5*), we must learn from his example that we should specially sanctify Sundays and holidays by the practice of works of Christian charity.

(b.) The gospel says of the Pharisees: *And they could not answer him to these things.* They were unable to refute Christ; they were compelled to admit that it was lawful on the Sabbath day to draw the ox out of the ditch and save his life, and, consequently, that it could not be unlawful to heal a sick man on the Sabbath day; therefore they held their peace. If the enemies of Christ were here put to shame and became dumb, what will they reply to his reproaches on the Judgment Day? What will they answer when omniscience asks, justice decides, and omnipotence executes judgment? Oh, let us often, but especially in the hour of temptation, think of the severe judgment which awaits us all; let us do penance for our sins, and walk in the fear of God.

PART II.

Our Blessed Lord now relates a parable, and at its conclusion he points out its moral, which ever since has been one of our most beautiful lessons.

1. *The parable: When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited by him: and he that invited thee and him come and say to thee: Give this man place, and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to*

thee: Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee.

(a.) In this parable our Blessed Lord tells us, first, that we must not *sit down in the first place*. Who are those who sit down in the first place? They are those who from ambition are not satisfied with their station, but desire to be of more importance and to rise higher in the social scale; those who on account of imaginary or real prerogatives exalt themselves above their fellow-men; those who think themselves better and more pious than others and who on that account look down upon them with contempt, as the Pharisee did upon the publican; and finally, those who outwardly humble themselves for the purpose of being honored and praised as humble persons.

(b.) Then our Blessed Lord says that we should *sit down in the lowest place*. Who are they that sit down in the lowest place? They are those who obey rather than command, who seek no honor and preferment, but who prefer to go out of the way, who are bent only on fulfilling their duties faithfully; they are those who occupy a high position in the world, are wealthy, learned and respectable, but yet they think nothing of these prerogatives, acknowledging them to be unmerited gifts of God; who consider themselves as the worst of men on account of their faults and defects and on account of the graces of God which they have received more copiously than others. Though they know that they are free from the great sins and vices with which some others are infected, they do not exalt themselves above them, but on the contrary put themselves below them; for they reason thus: "If God had given as many and as great graces to this or that sinner as he has given to me, he would perhaps be far more perfect and virtuous than I; therefore I have no reason for exalting myself above him, but rather for humbling myself beneath him."

(c.) Our Lord now tells what will happen to those who sit down in the highest place, and to those who sit down in the lowest place. Those who sit down in the highest seats must give place to others and sit down in the lowest. This frequently occurs even in this life, where vain, proud, self-conceited people are often very deeply humiliated. How many who prided themselves on their fine figure and beauty, their knowledge and accomplishments, their wealth and high rank in society, scarcely condescending to look at others, in time come down in the world and are treated with contempt? But hereafter the proud will experience the greatest humiliation; at the General Judgment they will be put to shame before the eyes of the whole world, and in hell will be tormented by reproaches that will never cease.

But those who sit down in the lowest place will be asked to go up and sit down in the highest place. Truly humble souls are often appreciated even on earth. Thus we know of many saints that the more they humbled themselves and fled from all honor, the more they were honored. But though it should happen that the humble always live in obscurity and contempt upon earth, the greater will be the glory that awaits them hereafter. Crowned with honor and glory, they will shine among the saints at the wedding banquet of the divine Lamb in the kingdom of heaven. For this reason Christ says that those who humble themselves as a child shall be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.—*Matt. 18: 4*. Consider the words of the "Following of Christ", book 1, chapter 7: "It will do thee no harm to esteem thyself the worst of all, but it will hurt thee very much to prefer thyself before any one." If you prefer yourself even before only one, it is a mark of pride, and it will hurt you very much; but if you esteem yourself the worst of all, it is a mark of humility which will do no harm, but a great deal of good.

2. *The lesson: Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* In these words Christ declares still more emphatically that pride humiliates man, not only before men but also before God; and that humility is honored and appreciated, not only by men, but also by God.

(a.) There is scarcely a vice which God hates and detests more than pride; and it is for this reason that he punishes the proud most sensibly. Lucifer and the apostate angels were deprived of all their beauty, dignity and felicity, on account of their pride, and were changed into devils, and hurled into the abyss of hell. Our first parents, who desired to be like God, on account of their pride lost the grace of God and forfeited their position as his children, as also paradise and heaven, and became subject to manifold miseries in their lives, and finally to death. If they had not humbled themselves and been converted, they would, like the evil spirits, have perished eternally. Proud Aman ended his life on the same gibbet that he had erected for Mardochai. Nabuchodonosor on account of his pride was driven out among the beasts of the field and compelled to eat grass and herbs with them.

(b.) On the other hand, God finds the greatest pleasure in humility. It is to the humble that he gives his graces; it is the humble that he exalts and rewards. It was humility that raised Joseph to the seat of government in Egypt; it was humility that elevated David to the throne of Israel; it was humility that

crowned all the virtues of St. John the Baptist and made him so great a favorite of heaven; it was humility that rendered the Blessed Virgin so acceptable in the eyes of God and exalted her to the eminent dignity of the mother of God. Who then would not detest and shun pride? Who would not love humility and study to acquire it? Reflect seriously on the words of St. Augustine: "On account of the great sin of pride the humble Saviour came down upon earth. This fatal sickness of the soul brought the Almighty Physician from heaven, humiliated him to the form of a servant, overwhelmed him with calumnies, fastened him to the cross, that through the efficacy of such a remedy this swelling of pride might be healed. Let man blush and be ashamed to be proud, since for his sake God himself became humble."

PERORATION.

Remember two lessons from the gospel of this day, and resolve to follow them. Sanctify the Sundays and holidays, as all good Catholics should, that they may become to you days of blessing and grace. Do no unnecessary servile work on these days; keep away from improper, frivolous amusements, and avoid all sins and vices, especially drunkenness and impurity. Assist with devotion at mass in the morning and at vespers or devotions in the afternoon or evening; read spiritual books and practice the works of Christian charity and mercy. Learn to be truly humble, little and contemptible in your own eyes, and be willing to be despised by others from an intimate conviction that you are deserving of contempt. Keep down all vain and proud thoughts, avoid all discourses that violate humility, and in all your works seek not the praises of men and the applause of the world; on the contrary, do all for the greater honor and glory of God; do not prefer yourselves before any one; despise no one. Thus you will become humble followers of the humble Jesus, who has said: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (*Matt. 11: 29*), and his words in the gospel of this day will be fulfilled in you: *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* Amen.



SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?—Luke 14: 3.

God himself instituted the Sabbath and repeatedly and expressly commanded the Israelites to observe it. "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labor, and shalt do all thy works. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast."—*Ex. 20: 8, et seq.* The Scribes and Pharisees went still further, and exceeded the limits of the divine law by maintaining that not servile works only, but even works of charity, such as the healing of the sick, were unlawful on the Sabbath day. Christ showed them the folly of their opinion in the gospel of this day, when he proved to them that neither they nor others considered it unlawful or sinful to succor an animal that met with a mishap.

We Christians no longer celebrate the Sabbath as did the Jews, but the Sunday, because Jesus Christ on that day accomplished the work of our Redemption, our second creation, by rising from the dead and by sending the Holy Ghost. We celebrate Sunday chiefly by hearing holy mass, because the sacrifice of the mass is the most sublime act of divine worship. To-day I propose to speak of this holy sacrifice and shall —

- I. Explain what the holy mass is, and
- II. Prove that the holy mass is a true sacrifice.

PART I.

The mass is the perpetual sacrifice of the New Law, in which Christ our Lord offers himself by the hands of the priest in an unbloody manner, under the appearances of bread and wine, to his heavenly Father, as he once offered himself on the cross in a bloody manner.

- I. The mass is a sacrifice, for we find in it everything that is required for a sacrifice, namely —

(a.) *A sensible victim.* This visible or sensible gift which is sacrificed is Jesus Christ, who, under the appearances of bread and wine, is truly present. This truth of our faith is evident from the words of Christ: "This is my body; this is my blood;" also from the words of the Apostle: "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?"—*I. Cor.* 10:16. That which is upon the altar in the mass, after the consecration, is not bread and wine, but the body and the blood of Christ, or Jesus Christ both God and man under the appearances of bread and wine.

(b.) A sensible victim *which is offered to God.* It would be an error to believe that the holy sacrifice of the mass is offered not only to God but also to the saints. The Church cannot, and will not, offer this sacrifice to any one but to God. Sacrifices from the beginning were the most emphatic expression of homage and adoration, which are due to God alone. We offer sacrifice to none but God. We make commemoration of the saints; we build temples to the honor and glory of God, and we call them by the names of the saints, placing each under the protection and patronage of a saint, and invoking that saint in order that our prayers may be acceptable to God, at the same time doing honor to the saints, whom God himself has honored; but much as we may honor the saints, much as we may venerate the Blessed Virgin, we know that she is but a creature, no matter how pure, how glorious and perfect, and we offer no sacrifice to her, nor to any saint; only to him who is King of all, to God alone, who alone has an indisputable right to it. God alone is to be adored, and to him alone can sacrifices be offered.—*Council of Trent, Sess. 22, c. 3.*

(c.) A gift which is offered to God *in order to honor and adore him as our sovereign Lord.* Jesus Christ is immolated, or rather he immolates himself, by the hands of the priest of God, to his heavenly Father, in order to make due satisfaction for us and in such a way as to pay God the homage we owe him.

2. Holy mass is a *perpetual sacrifice*, because it will be offered to the end of the world. The first holy mass was celebrated by Jesus Christ himself on Holy Thursday; afterwards the Apostles celebrated it by the command of Christ, and after them the bishops and priests down to our times, and mass will be celebrated so long as the world exists. In the primitive days of the Church, when bloody persecutions prevailed, the faithful assembled in private houses and other secret places, especially in the catacombs, and risked their lives in order to assist at it. In the time

of Antichrist, which will be shortly before the destruction of the world, fearful persecutions will come again, but the holy sacrifice of the mass will never cease. The last mass will be said on the last day of the world.

3. The holy mass is a sacrifice *in which Christ our Lord offers himself by the hands of the priest.* In the sacrifices of the Old Law the victims and priests were different from one another; the priest was a man; the victim which he offered was a creature, for example, an animal. But it is not so in the holy sacrifice of the mass. Here priest and victim are one and the same. Jesus Christ is victim and priest at one and the same time; he is the victim, for he is truly present under the appearances of bread and wine; but he is also the priest who sacrifices, for he employs human priests only as his instruments, by whose hands he offers himself. As it is he who baptizes, so it is also he who offers and consecrates, and we may appropriately say that the priests only lend him their tongues and hands. Therefore he is a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech. The priest, however, is also the offerer in a twofold sense: as a *minister of Christ*, being ordained and authorized in the name and person of Christ to consecrate, to offer and to continue the sacrifice; and as a *minister of the Church and of the faithful* in whose name he offers it.

4. Holy mass finally is a sacrifice *in which Christ offers himself in an unbloody manner, as he once offered himself on the cross in a bloody manner.* The holy sacrifice of the mass is essentially the same sacrifice as that of the cross. When Christ died on the cross, it was he himself who offered himself; the Jews were only the instruments which he employed for the performance of his sacrifice; he died voluntarily. In like manner it is also he himself who offers himself in the holy mass, for the priests are only his ministers and visible representatives, and act, when they celebrate mass, in his name, for they do not speak in their own name, but in the name of Christ: "This is my body; this is my blood," and they celebrate mass at his command: "Do this for a commemoration of me." Christ, at the sacrifice of the cross was not only priest, but also victim, for it was he who suffered and died on the cross. In like manner he is also the victim in the mass, because he is really and truly present under the appearances of bread and wine; hence there is no essential difference between the sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the mass, because the same offers and is offered in both, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Only the manner of offering is different in each. On the cross Christ offered himself in a bloody manner; but in the mass he offers himself in an unbloody manner, because he renews the sacrifice perfected on the cross, without suffering, without shed

ding his blood, or dying any more. The Council of Trent says (*Sess. 22, cap. 2*): "In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the mass the same Christ is contained and immolated in an unbloody manner, who once offered himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross; . . . for the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; the manner alone of offering being different."

PART II.

Holy mass is a true sacrifice.

1. Jesus Christ teaches this, saying: "This is my body, which is given for you. This is my blood, which shall be shed for you."—*Luke 22: 19, 20*. Here he already does in a mysterious manner what he did the following day on the cross; he dies in a mysterious manner, representing, separated from each other, his body under the appearance of bread, and his blood under the appearance of wine. Now if, as no one doubts, his death on the cross was a true sacrifice, the mass must also be a true sacrifice, because here his death takes place in a mysterious manner in virtue of the words of consecration by which the bread and wine are changed into his body and blood. Again, when Christ says: "This is my body which is given for you," he declares that it is the same body that he gives as a sacrifice for men. Consequently, he was present as a victim, after he had spoken these words. The same is to be said of the blood, which the Apostles drank; it was the blood of the same Christ who immolated himself for the salvation of mankind.

2. St. Paul teaches the same. He writes: "We (Christians) have an altar, whereof they (the Jews) have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle."—*Heb. 13: 10*. To eat of the altar evidently means nothing else than to eat of the sacrifice which is offered upon the altar. By those who serve the tabernacle the Jews are to be understood, who must not eat of the sacrifice of the Christians, because they are not Christians. What sacrifice can this be? Certainly not the sacrifice on the cross, for neither Christians nor Jews can eat of this; consequently it can mean only the holy sacrifice of the mass which is offered upon the altar and eaten as food in holy communion.

The same Apostle makes a comparison (*I. Cor. 10: 14-21*) between the partakers of the Christian sacrifice and those of the Jewish victims, evidently considering that the Christian table is an altar where Christ is mystically immolated and afterwards eaten by the faithful, as in the Jewish sacrifices the victim was

first offered on the altar, and then eaten by the people; whence the Apostle infers that they who were partakers of this great sacrifice of the flesh and blood of Christ should not be partakers with devils, by eating of the meats sacrificed to idols. In the consecration of the Holy Eucharist bread and wine are really changed into the body and the blood of Christ; and, consequently, in and by this consecration, the real body and blood of Christ, our victim which was immolated for us upon the cross, is in the mass exhibited and presented to God; and as the sacrifice that was offered upon the altar of the cross was a real sacrifice, so the sacrifice of the mass is properly a sacrifice, because in both the victim is the same, the body and the blood of Jesus Christ.

3. Tradition. In the history of the martyrdom of the Apostle St. Andrew, which the priests of Achaia wrote, we read that this apostle said to the Governor Ægeas: "I daily offer to the Almighty, the one and true God, not the odor of incense, neither the flesh and blood of oxen, but I offer the immaculate Lamb whose flesh is eaten indeed after being offered, but the Lamb remains whole, undivided, undefiled and living." The Apostle here evidently speaks of the holy mass as a sacrifice, in which Jesus, the Lamb of God, who has been immolated on the altar, is daily offered.

St. Irenæus says: "The sacrifice of the New Law is the Last Supper. When Jesus instituted it as a sacrament, he also instituted it as a sacrifice. When he said: 'This is my body; this is my blood,' he taught us that this is the sacrifice of the New Law, a sacrifice which the Church offers throughout the whole world as she received it from the Apostles." Does not St. Irenæus plainly and emphatically call the holy mass a sacrifice?

St. Cyprian writes: "If Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is himself the High-priest of God the Father, and has offered himself to his Father as a sacrifice, and ordained that the same should be done for a commemoration of him, every priest who imitates that which Jesus did is really Christ's vicegerent and officiates in his person; he offers in the Church a sacrifice to God as he sees Christ himself offer." This same Father in many other passages calls the Last Supper a sacrifice.

Very affecting is a scene which the historian Philostorgius describes. During the reign of the Emperor Maximinian a holy priest and martyr named Lucian was cast into prison and cruelly tortured on account of his faith. Wishing before his death once more to celebrate the holy sacrifice of the mass, and there being no altar in the prison, he ordered the few faithful who had come to visit him to put what was necessary for mass on his breast, he being prostrate on the ground, and thus he consecrated the bread and wine. This occurred in the year 312, and Philostorgius

adds: "He offered the adorable sacrifice, partook of it himself, and permitted those who were present to partake of the immaculate sacrifice. And while he was offering, the Christians surrounded the dying priest, in order that the heathens might not see what was done."

4. The Councils of the Church.

The first Ecumenical Council of Nice (325) says of the mass: "Here at the divine table we must not view as bread and wine that which is set before us, but we must lift up our spirit and know in faith that the Lamb of God lies on that holy table, that Lamb which takes away the sins of the world, and which has been immolated by the priest in an unbloody manner." The Council of Toullana declares: "It having come to our knowledge, that in Armenia those who offer the unbloody sacrifice offer only wine at the holy banquet, without adding water to it, we declare that a bishop or a priest, who does not act according to the Apostolic tradition and add water to the wine, and thus offer the unbloody sacrifice, is to be suspended." The second Council of Nice (787) calls the Sacrament of the Altar "our unbloody sacrifice, which is offered by the priest."

5. Lastly, the most ancient liturgies. These were books which contained the prayers of the holy mass, together with the rubrics which explained how the sacrifice of the mass was to be offered; they were what we at present call missals or mass-books. All these liturgies, of which some, judging from their principal contents, originate from the Apostles, or from the time of the Apostles, and according to which the holy sacrifice of the mass is offered in all the parts of the world, give evidence that the mass has always been considered a sacrifice and, with little variation, has always been celebrated as it is to-day. In all these liturgies we find special mention made of the three principal parts of the mass, namely, the Offertory, the Consecration, and the Communion.

PERORATION.

These are a few facts to prove that the mass is truly and properly a sacrifice. Christ instituted it at his Last Supper and celebrated it for the first time; afterwards the Apostles celebrated it; and it has been celebrated by the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church throughout the whole world up to this very day. This is a stubborn fact which no one can gainsay; hence many heretics confess that the mass is properly a sacrifice and they sincerely regret that they no longer possess it. They fre-

quently go to mass and even come to Catholic priests, requesting them to say a mass for them. Thank God that you are children of the Catholic Church, which to this day celebrates the holy sacrifice of the mass as it has been celebrated for more than eighteen hundred years. Have the greatest reverence for this thrice holy, adorable, and tremendous sacrifice, always assisting at it in the spirit of penance and interior recollection and devotion, in order that you may become partakers of its fruits. Amen.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

VENERATION OF THE HOLY NAME OF MARY.

The virgin's name was Mary.—Luke 1: 27.

The feast of the Name of Mary was first introduced through the devotion of the faithful, and afterwards, in the year 1513, was approved of by the Apostolic See for the city and diocese of Cuenca, Spain. Pope Innocent XI. extended it to the whole Christian world, in grateful remembrance of the victory which the Christian army, through the intercession of Mary, gained over the Turks at Vienna. This feast is celebrated annually on the Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, because among the Jews the custom prevailed of giving children their names a few days after their birth. The name of Mary is venerable because it is the name of her who is the Mother of God. She is the purest, the most glorious and perfect of all the daughters of Eve; she is the Queen of heaven and earth. I shall speak to-day of the veneration due to the holy Name of Mary, and shall answer the two following questions:

- I. *Why must we venerate the name of Mary?*
- II. *How must we venerate it?*

PART I.

According to the holy Fathers, and the interpreters of the Sacred Scriptures, the word *Mary* means *lady*, *star*, or *sea*. In this threefold meaning the Blessed Virgin justly bears the name of *Mary*, and this her name justly deserves our highest veneration. *Mary* means —

1. *Lady*.

(a.) This name is due to her, for royal blood flowed in her veins; she is a descendant of the royal house of David. But she deserves still more to be called *Lady* because she is the Mother of God. She is a noble Lady; noble, not through man, but through God. Jesus Christ, whom she conceived and brought forth, is the Son of God, King of heaven and earth. Where is there a mother who brought forth such a son? Therefore she justly claims the highest nobility. *She is a mother*; she therefore possesses the right of mothers, who can command their children. She is the *Mother of Jesus*: to her belongs the right to give commands to Jesus; she is the *Mother of God*; by divine ordinance she can command God to obey; he obeys her every call, anticipates her every wish, for of him it is said: "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them."—*Luke 2: 51*. This maternal relation of Mary to Jesus exists even now in heaven. Mary remains for ever the Mother of Jesus, and Jesus for ever the Son of Mary. When she turns to her Son in order to obtain any grace of him for us, she does so, not like the angels and saints, as a servant, but as the Mother of God, and her word avails much more than that of any angel or saint. "Thou (Blessed Mother of God) approachest the golden tribunal of divine justice, not as a petitioner, but as one who commands, not as a servant, but as a mother."—*St. Peter Damian*. How great is the dignity of Mary! how truly is she called Lady!

(b.) Mary is not a haughty Lady and Mother, but a Lady full of meekness and goodness; therefore we call her "our Blessed Lady," "our dear Lady." She most tenderly loves us, and her hands are ever open to give us ample proofs of her love. St. Bernard says: "All in Mary is full of grace and mercy, for as Mother of mercy she has become all to all; because of her great love she has become a debtor to the just and to sinners; to all she opens the bosom of mercy, that all may share her fulness." Who therefore would not venerate the name of Mary, since this name gives such eloquent testimony of her dignity and goodness?

2. *Star*. Mary is also called a *star*; hence in the Litany of Loretto she is saluted as *the morning star*, and, in a hymn, as *the star of the sea*.

(a.) Mary resembles that star which we call the morning and evening star; morning star, because it disappears in the morning at the rising of the sun; evening star, because it appears again immediately after the setting of the sun, and looks down benignly upon us. A night of four thousand years had settled upon the

earth; the people were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death; they were sunk in idolatry and were scarcely able to distinguish between virtue and vice. At length Jesus Christ appeared, the long night gave place to day, for he led men again to the true knowledge and worship of God. Jesus is the light of the world, the Sun of Justice. But as the morning star precedes the sun and announces the approach of day, so Mary preceded Jesus Christ, the Sun of Justice, and announced the day of salvation.

(b.) The morning star disappears when the sun rises, but becomes visible again soon after the sun sets, and it is then called the evening star. Thus also Mary retired and led a hidden life during the public life of Jesus, who shone by word and deed like the sun; and it was only when the Sun of Justice began to set, that Mary showed herself as the evening star, for we see her on Calvary, standing under the cross of her Son. And now that Jesus has ascended into heaven, Mary shines in the Church as a friendly star, and her gentle light will never be obscured till the end of time.

(c.) The morning star surpasses all others in splendor, but it belongs to those planets which derive their light, not from themselves, but from the sun. Herein also Mary resembles the morning star, for she surpasses all the angels and saints in the splendor of her dignity and sanctity; but she derives her dignity, her fulness of grace, her favor, her exemption from original sin, not from herself, but from and through the blood of her Son. All that she has, and is, she derives from Christ, her Son, and she says with the Apostle: "By the grace of God I am what I am."—*I. Cor. 15: 10*.

(d.) But as the morning star shows itself susceptible of the light which it receives from the sun, and then makes it radiate from itself, so Mary received the graces which flowed abundantly to her from God with all readiness, and made use of them with the greatest fidelity. She can say with greater justice than St. Paul: "His grace in me hath not been void; but I have labored more abundantly than all they."—*I. Cor. 15: 10*.

(e.) The morning star is to mariners the star of the sea, for it is the first star that they see in the evening, and the last that they see in the morning. When this star looks down upon them with its friendly light there is no danger for them; the ship glides upon the bosom of the ocean; but when dark clouds veil the heavens and obscure the star there is danger ahead; violent storms may be then brewing which cause shipwreck and loss of

life. Mary is the star of the sea; she looks down upon us with maternal solicitude and love, and guides the ship of our souls upon the treacherous ocean of the world, that it may not suffer shipwreck and bring us to eternal perdition.

3. *Sea.* Albert the Great says: "Mary must in truth be called a sea, *i. e.*, a sea of graces which she has received from God, and which God again, through her, distributes to others."

(a.) The sea contains a far greater quantity of water than a spring, a brook, a river, or a lake. Thus Mary also possesses more graces than any other creature, whether angelic or human. The renowned divine, Suarez, says: "Mary received more prerogatives, graces and favors in the first moment of her conception than all the souls of saints—nay, even more than all the choirs of the angels, because God loved her more than all the saints and heavenly spirits."

(b.) The sea continually receives a new influx of water from a number of streams which empty themselves into it. Mary also increased continually in graces. God, who at the moment of her conception had imparted to her more graces than to all the angels and all mankind, never ceased during all her days to pour out upon her the treasures of his gifts and graces: to this was added that incomparable increase of graces which corresponded to her unceasing and perfectly faithful co-operation with the gifts granted to her by God, whereby she increased every moment the measure of graces which had been imparted to her

(c.) The sea does not retain the water for itself, but forces it through the crevices of the earth even to the tops of the highest mountains. Such a sea is Mary; "she is," as a spiritual writer says, "an overflowing sea, which in a thousand channels waters the whole surface of the holy Church, flows over the souls of the faithful in abundance, and fructifies them unto every good. Upon the whole earth there is no land, no place, where Mary's stream of graces does not flow; no man is so little or so miserable that no graces flow to him through Mary."

Mary's name, therefore, is exceedingly venerable and holy, because it represents to us her greatness and dignity, all her favors and graces, and all her mother's love. After the name of God, there is no name, either in heaven or upon earth, to which such honor and veneration are due as to the name of Mary. The question now is: *How must we venerate the name of Mary?*

PART II.

1. *We must have a great reverence for the name of Mary.*

(a.) The Church has held this name in the greatest veneration from the beginning, and therefore she directs her priests to bow the head when they pronounce it, even at mass, as well as at all other functions. In former times the name of Mary was so highly revered in some countries that females were not allowed to bear that name. When King Casimir I., of Poland, married the daughter of the Grand Duke of Russia, she changed her name of *Mary*, which she had received at her baptism, for another, as it was forbidden in Poland for any woman to have the name of *Mary*.

(b.) All good and fervent Christians have at all times evinced the greatest reverence for the name of Mary. St. Stephen, King of Hungary, renowned for his Christian piety, and for his virtues as a king, had so great a veneration for the name of Mary that he dared not pronounce it. He used to call her "the great Lady." All his subjects, following his example, gave her the same title, and if it happened that in their presence the name of Mary was mentioned they at once fell on their knees and prostrated themselves to the very ground, to manifest their veneration for so sublime a name.

a. *We must put our whole confidence in her.* (a.) In the year 1683 the Turks laid siege to Vienna. Their army was so numerous and so favored by fortune that all hope for the unfortunate city seemed to be lost, and the Emperor Leopold I. fled. In this necessity the people had recourse to Mary and with confidence invoked her name. On the day of her Nativity they prayed with special fervor. And behold, their prayer was heard, for flying banners were suddenly seen on distant hills. The pious Polish hero Sobieski, at the head of his brave Poles, came marching on to rescue Vienna. Under the invocation of the holy name of Mary he achieved with his little band of soldiers a glorious victory over the Turks. The defeat of the enemy was complete, and so great that the whole battlefield was covered with corpses. Those who could not save themselves by flight, met their death in the Danube. Sobieski entered Vienna in triumph and the first thing he did was to proceed to a church to return thanks to God for this signal victory. In order to establish a perpetual memorial in thanksgiving for this benefit, Innocent XI. ordered that throughout the whole Christian world the feast of the glorious name of Mary should be celebrated on the first Sunday after her Nativity.

(b.) *Refuge of sinners.* If sinners invoke the name of Mary with confidence and an earnest desire of amendment, they may confidently hope to obtain the grace of repentance; for Mary is the mother of mercy, and the refuge of sinners, and, as the devout Blossius says: "No sinner, however wicked and depraved he may be, is rejected by Mary." If such a one seek her help, she certainly will reconcile him with Jesus and obtain pardon for him.

(c.) *Protector of the just* against all the attacks of hell. After the name of Jesus, there is no other name which the devil fears more than the name of Mary, for he knows that she is the woman who crushed his head; therefore he desists from temptation and departs terror-stricken when we devoutly invoke the name of Mary. As men fall to the ground in consternation when lightning strikes something close to them, so the evil spirits fall down in terror when they hear the name of Mary.

(d.) *Consoler of the dying.* St. Bonaventure says: "Blessed is the man that loves thy name, O holy Mother of God; thy name is so glorious and wonderful that no one who invokes it in his dying hour need fear the attacks of his enemies." St. Camillus of Lellis told his brothers in religion often to remind the dying to invoke the names of Jesus and Mary, he himself doing this for the dying to whom he was called.

3. *We must strive as much as possible to become all that it signifies.* The name of Mary means, as we have heard —

(a.) *Lady, mistress.* That we may become what this name signifies, we must make our soul the lady, the mistress; she must rule over the body and its sensual motions and inclinations. This authority is proper for the soul, because it is the superior part of man. It would invert things to subject the soul to the body; it would be equivalent to making the lady the servant, and the servant the lady. Let the soul be Mary, *i. e.*, lady, mistress. We must follow the admonition of the Apostle. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body so as to obey the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin; but present yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of justice unto God." —Rom. 6: 12, 13.

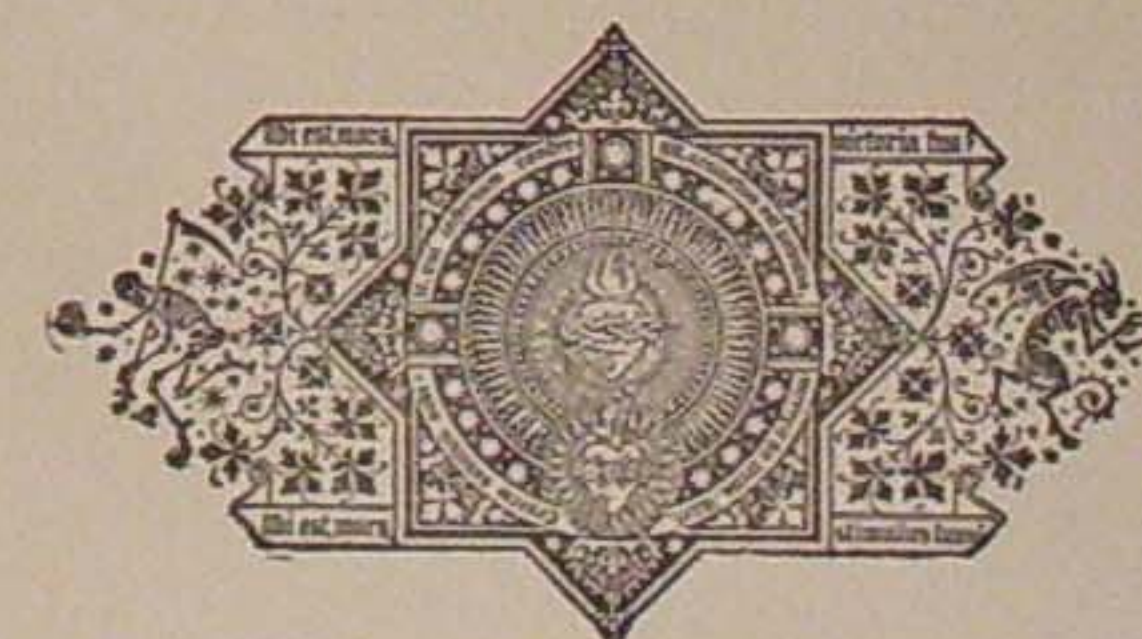
(b.) *Star, star of the sea.* Mary, like the morning and evening star, looks down with friendly eyes upon us and guides us through the perils of the ocean of the world, to the haven of eternal salvation. Such a star we ought to be to our fellow-men; we must love them sincerely and assist them to save their souls.

The Apostle admonishes us to do this, saying: "By charity of the spirit serve one another."—Gal. 5: 13. Endeavor, therefore, to save souls, which Christ has redeemed with his precious blood. Instruct and correct them; show them a good example and recommend them in prayer to the grace of God.

(c.) *Sea, sea of graces.* We also have been highly favored by God, for he has sanctified us by baptism and placed us in the holy Catholic Church, and thus we receive numberless graces, to enable us to work out our salvation. It is our duty diligently to avail ourselves of them for our sanctification, that we may become holier from day to day, according to the admonition of the Apostle: "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—II. Pet. 3: 18. The more zealously we avail ourselves of the proper graces, the more we shall advance in Christian perfection, and the greater will be the reward we may expect hereafter; for "he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings."—II. Cor. 9: 6.

PERORATION.

Now you know why and how you are to venerate the name of Mary. This name is holy; have reverence for it, and always pronounce it devoutly and reverently. This name is very powerful and salutary; therefore put great confidence in it, and never omit, in all perils of body and soul, in every temptation, and especially on your death-bed, to pronounce it often and with confidence. This name is, as it were, a mirror of justice; for it signifies her who is the truest likeness of God, and in whom there is found neither spot nor wrinkle, nor the least imperfection. Take her for your pattern, and endeavor to do what her name signifies. Blessed are all those who venerate the holy name of Mary with true devotion, for it will bring them grace in life, consolation in the hour of death, and salvation hereafter. Amen.



SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE HEALING OF FIVE PERSONS BY JESUS ON SABBATH DAYS TEACHES US HOW WE ARE TO SANCTIFY SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS.

Jesus taking him, healed him, and sent him away.—Luke 14: 4.

The gospel of this day tells us that Christ healed on the Sabbath day a man who had the dropsy: *He, taking him, healed him, and sent him away.* This, however, was not the only sick man that Christ healed on the Sabbath day, for the Evangelists mention five persons who were so healed. Besides the man who had the dropsy, he healed a woman who was almost bent double, and could not look upwards at all, a man with a withered hand, the man born blind, and the man who had been under his infirmity for thirty-eight years. Let us consider the healing of these five persons by Christ on Sabbath days, and learn how we are to sanctify Sundays and holidays.

PART I.

The healing of the man who had the dropsy.

1. Let us first turn our attention to the man who had the dropsy and of whom the gospel of this day speaks. From him we can learn how we are to conduct ourselves on Sundays and holidays.

(a.) Dropsical persons are always thirsty, they drink often and much, but they are never satiated; they cannot quench their thirst. The covetous resemble these ever thirsty dropsical persons; they are enslaved by the vice of avarice, setting a higher value upon earthly goods than upon God and eternity. They are not conscientious in their methods of making money. Fraud, usury and perjury are not detested by them, if by these means they can increase their riches. Ever desirous of accumulating wealth, they work on Sundays and holidays and make others work. Oh, that such Christians would seriously reflect that thereby they not only sin against the third commandment, but also expose themselves to the danger of incurring temporal loss, for Sunday work brings no blessing, at least no lasting one, but often great loss.

(b.) Dropsical persons feel very much fatigued and enervated; their malady deprives them of the power of walking even a few steps. The slothful resemble these fatigued, enervated and dropsical persons; they are disgusted with everything good and will move neither hand nor foot for the salvation of their soul. They often neglect to hear mass on Sundays and holidays, and spend these days in idleness; going to church and kneeling in church are distasteful to them; in winter it is too cold for them; in summer it is too hot; public worship lasts too long; they either do not pray at all or without any devotion, and full of distraction; during the sermon they yawn or sleep. Do you call that sanctifying Sundays and holidays? Have not such negligent, slothful Christians reason to fear the lot of the unprofitable servant who buried his talent in the earth and upon whom the sentence was passed: "The unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—*Matt. 25: 30.*

(c.) Dropsical persons are swollen; their hands and feet, and often the whole body, attain an unnatural size. They are a true picture of the proud, who indeed every day, but especially on Sundays and holidays, offend God in many ways by their pride and vanity. To this class belong all those who in church assume a haughty mien, as if they were doing God a service by honoring him with their visit; those also who come to church clothed in finery which belongs neither to their station nor calling, decked out in fashions which are beyond their means in order to attract attention. Those who are proud in church give scandal and receive no graces; on the contrary, they draw down upon their heads God's displeasure and punishment.

2. Now when Christ healed a man with the dropsy on a Sabbath day, what else does this teach us but that we must guard ourselves on Sundays and holidays against dropsy in a spiritual sense? Do not abuse these days by the service of mammon; seek not temporal, but eternal riches, and carefully avoid all servile work and occupations which hinder or render impossible the sanctification of the day. Since God gives you six days for the performance of all your temporal works, it is certain that nothing is more just and reasonable than that you should devote at least one day to his service. Do not spend in idleness and sloth the days consecrated to God, but go to mass, and if you are prevented from so doing, say your mass prayers at home, and read some spiritual book. Above all, guard against vanity; humble yourselves whenever you appear in church before the infinite majesty of God, and by your attire seek to please God, not men.

PART II.

The healing of the woman bowed down with infirmity.

1. St. Luke (13: 11-13) relates of this woman: "Behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; and she was bent down, and could not look up at all. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said to her: Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight and glorified God." She was now healed of her lingering infirmity and could walk erect like any healthy person. But it was on the Sabbath that he wrought that miracle.

2. According to St. Gregory the Great, this woman symbolizes all business men, laborers, artisans, and all who must work; fathers and mothers of families, sons and daughters, male and female servants who, during the whole week, are so loaded down and overwhelmed with business, with toiling for the necessities of life, that they have scarcely a few moments to look up to God and to think of the affair of their salvation. How miserable such Christians would be if there were no day on which they could rest from their labors and devote their attention to the salvation of their souls! By degrees they would lose all religious sense and feeling and be the victims of spiritual blindness. To obviate this, we have Sundays and holidays, on which all, even those who are obliged to occupy themselves a great deal with earthly things, find time to direct their thoughts to eternal truths and to care for the one thing necessary.

3. And this was just the reason why Jesus on the Sabbath healed the woman who was bent down. He thereby gave us to understand that we should turn at least on Sundays and holidays to heavenly things and seek the kingdom of God. St. Chrysostom says: "It is an unchangeable law that on Sundays and holidays we should leave our temporal cares and occupations and devote these days to the adoration of God and to the salvation of our souls; on these days compel no one so to bend down, be they married persons, children, laborers or servants, that even on those days they cannot erect themselves for the salvation of their souls." A good workman was once offered a lucrative situation, but on condition that, as a rule, he would work on Sundays and holidays. The mechanic went to his parish priest to ask his advice. The priest said: "Do not allow any one to take your Sunday away from you. It is your own, and most precious to you. A person who takes a situation which involves giving up Sundays promises more than manual and mental work; he sells his soul. And what doth it profit a man if he gain the

whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" The man remained with his old employer, where he received smaller wages, but where he had plenty of time to observe Sundays and holidays in a Catholic manner and to look after his soul. Take to heart what that priest told the mechanic, and do as he did. If through the week you are loaded down with much business and work and have no time for prayer and pious exercises, make good use of the Sundays and holidays for the salvation of your souls; be recollected on these days; reflect on your final end; make good resolutions amidst the distractions of the world to have God before your eyes and to preserve a pure conscience.

PART III.

The healing of the man with the withered hand.

1. As we read in the gospel of St. Luke (6: 6-10), Christ was once teaching on a Sabbath in the synagogue; there was a man there whose right hand was withered. And the Scribes and Pharisees watched to see if he would heal on the Sabbath, that they might bring an accusation against him. But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand: "Arise, and stand forth in our midst. And he, rising, stood forth. Then Jesus said to them: I ask you, if it be lawful on the Sabbath days to do good or to do evil? to save life or to destroy? And, looking round about on them all, he said to the man: Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and his hand was restored." The Scribes and Pharisees were enraged; and they considered one with another what they could do to Jesus. And, as St. Matthew reports, they decreed his death. Hatred and envy brought things to such a pass that they wished to take his life because he had done good to a poor man, and healed his withered hand!

2. By this man with the withered hand we are to understand the *unmerciful*, who will not hear of giving alms and doing works of Christian charity. St. Chrysostom says: "Every Christian, who does not reach out his hand to give alms to help his neighbor, and to do good to him, has a withered hand. The right hand of such a man is, as it were, withered and dead, because it does not move and stretch itself forth to perform works of mercy."

3. What then did Christ teach us by healing on a Sabbath the man with the withered hand? He taught us that on Sundays and holidays we must in a particular manner practice the works of Christian love and mercy. Of course, we ought to practice these works always, as often as we can, but especially on Sundays and holi-

days, because on those days we have particular reasons for so doing. St. Chrysostom says: "Sunday is especially suitable for almsgiving. . . . On this day people rest from all labor; through rest the mind becomes more joyous and cheerful, and therefore more inclined to give. But what is much more, on this day we are obliged to return thanks to God for numberless benefits; for on this day death was conquered, the curse abolished, sin blotted out, hell overthrown, the prince of darkness cast out, a long war ended, and man again reconciled with God, reinstated in his friendship, and restored to his former, in fact, even to a greater prosperity. If we think of all this, Sunday will be an intercessor for the poor." The early Christians showed themselves particularly charitable on Sundays. On these days they made collections for the poor. They also had love-feasts at which all the poor of the congregation were treated to the best of everything. Employ Sundays and holidays in exercises of Christian love and mercy. Feed a poor person, or send something from your table to a sick person, that he also may feel happy; visit the sick and assist them with alms if they are poor. Then perform the spiritual works of mercy, holding spiritual conversations with your dependants and acquaintances, instructing them in matters of religion, encouraging them to virtue, praying for them and promoting their spiritual welfare according to your ability.

PART IV.

The healing of the man who was born blind.

1. Near the temple at Jerusalem, where many poor persons and cripples were always sitting and asking alms of those who went in, there was a certain man who had been blind from his birth. And Jesus passing by saw him, "spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said to him: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloe. He went therefore and washed, and he came seeing."—*John 9: 1-7.*

2. In this man who was blind from his birth, we have a picture of a man spiritually blind, *i. e.*, of a man who is ignorant of the truths and doctrines of our holy religion. There are many such persons spiritually blind, even among Catholics. They have quite erroneous ideas on the subject of religion; they do not even know the principal and fundamental doctrines of our holy faith; they know neither the connection between the separate truths of faith, nor the proofs upon which they are based; they have little knowledge of Christian morality, holding many things to be lawful, or at least not particularly sinful, that are in reality criminal. The unbridled passions and the false maxims and bad

examples of the world are a fruitful source of blindness, and the reason why many Catholics adopt various errors and run the risk of suffering shipwreck of their faith. What is more necessary for such persons than the hearing of the word of God, which the Psalmist (*Ps. 118: 105*) calls a lamp to our feet, and a light to our paths? He who diligently hears the word of God as it is preached in the Catholic Church will by little and little be thoroughly instructed in matters relating to faith and morals, and receive at the same time the strongest motives for a virtuous life.

3. Now as Christ healed on the Sabbath a man who was born blind, is it not a hint to you diligently to hear the word of God on Sundays and holidays? Many Catholics during the course of the whole year do not hear a single sermon or a catechetical instruction. Such persons show little love and respect towards the Church, which exhorts all her children to hear the word of God on Sundays and holidays and imposes upon bishops and priests the strict duty of preaching it; they do not act as the early Christians did, who not only assisted at mass, but at all the discourses, sermons and instructions, with great fervor; they sin against fraternal charity, because by the neglect of the divine word they give a bad example to their fellow-Catholics, and especially to their dependants; they sin against Christian self-love, because they do not avail themselves of a very necessary or at least a very useful means of salvation; finally, they act contrary to the words of Christ: "He that is of God, heareth the words of God;" and let them consider if what Christ adds is not applicable to them: "Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God.—*John 8: 47.* Renew your resolution to-day to hear the word of God every Sunday, that you may be better instructed in the doctrines of our holy religion and be encouraged to lead a holy life.

PART V.

The healing of the man who was sick for thirty-eight years.

1. There was at Jerusalem a pond called Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel of the Lord went down at a certain time into the pond, and the water was moved. And he that went down first into the pond, after the moving of the water, was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under. There was a certain man there, that had been eight and thirty years under his infirmity. Upon Jesus asking him whether he wished to be healed, he said that he had no one to put him into the pond when the water was troubled, and that

just as he was going, another went down before him. Jesus said to him: "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole; and he took up his bed, and walked. And it was the Sabbath that day."—*John 5: 1-9.*

2. The pond at which Christ healed the man that was under his infirmity for thirty-eight years was also called *Probatia*, that is, the *sheep-pond*, because the sheep were washed therein that were to be offered up in sacrifice in the temple. It was also called *Bethsaida*, "place of healing," in a miraculous manner, without doubt, because the sick that were put into the pond after the moving of the water were healed. The water had no natural virtue to heal, as only one of those put in after the moving of the water was healed. If the healing quality had been in the water, the others would have had the same benefit from being put into it at the same time. By this pond we may also understand the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist; for, as out of this pond the corporally sick came forth sound, healthy and strong, so the spiritually sick, who worthily receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, become healthy and renewed in the life of grace.

3. Jesus, by healing the sick man at this pond, teaches us that we must come to it on Sundays and holidays, *i. e.*, we must go to confession and communion that we may be healed of the sickness of our soul, and be strengthened in the spiritual life. As we read in the Acts of the Apostles, the first Christians communicated not only on Sundays, but daily. "Continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart."—*Acts 1: 46.* Even in the fourth and fifth centuries, according to the testimony of St. Jerome, it was the custom of the Christians at Rome and in Spain to go to communion daily. At the time of Charlemagne, in the eighth century, the bishops ordained "that all Christians should receive the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar on Sundays and holidays, those only excepted who were commanded to abstain from it." The Church at the Council of Trent, also expressed the wish that the faithful should live in such a manner as to be able often to go to communion.—*Sess. 22, cap. 6.* There is, indeed, no precept that obliges you to go to communion on all Sundays and holidays, but the Church can require of you that on several Sundays and holidays you receive the holy sacraments. What is more proper for the worthy celebration of these days consecrated to God than the devout reception of the holy sacraments? Do not act as so many Catholics do who only once a year, at Easter, go to confession and communion, and even then more from compulsion

than of their own accord; but receive the sacraments frequently during the year, and deem yourself happy that on all Sundays and holidays you have an opportunity of approaching them.

PERORATION.

Learn from the healing of these five persons on the Sabbath day, how you are to sanctify Sundays and holidays. Do not abuse these days for the gratification of avarice, pride or sloth; seek not temporal, but eternal gain; be humble in church, and employ your free time in exercises of devotion. Do no servile works on Sundays and holidays without absolute necessity, and see that all those under your charge do the same: devote these days exclusively to God and the salvation of your souls. Employ them especially in works of Christian charity and mercy, in order to show yourselves thankful for the numerous graces and benefits which God has bestowed and is bestowing on you. Go regularly to church on Sundays and holidays in the morning and **afternoon**; assist devoutly at mass and hear the sermon. Receive often on those days the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist, in order to cleanse yourselves more and more from the stains of sin and to make progress in the way of virtue. Blessed are you if you thus sanctify Sundays and holidays: they will procure you grace for time and salvation for eternity. Amen.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

PRIDE.

Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled.—*Luke 14: 11.*

Our Blessed Lord having cured the dropsical man of his malady tried to heal the Pharisees of a spiritual evil, *i. e.*, their ambition and pride. He illustrated to them by a parable that pride leads to humiliation and confusion, and told them that *every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled.* Alas! pride is a sin with which almost all men are more or less infected; even Christians who otherwise lead a good, edifying life, are not entirely free from it. It is also certain that no sin causes so much evil and

ruin as pride, for it is, as St. Bernard appropriately and truly remarks, *the origin of all vices, and the ruin of all virtues*. At the same time it is a very hidden sin; it knows and understands how to conceal itself in the most secret folds of the human heart, or even to cover itself with the mantle of virtue, so that most of those who are proud do not know or believe that they are so. It is therefore expedient for us to make pride the subject of our meditation, and to consider —

I. How we can sin by pride.

II. What we must bear in mind, in order to guard against pride.

PART I

We sin by pride —

1. When we exalt ourselves; and this is done —

(a.) When we make ourselves more than we really are. To this class belong all those who attribute to themselves qualities and perfections which they either have not at all, or only in a degree inferior to that which they believe they possess. Thus many a one thinks himself skilful in his work, whereas he is far from proficient. Many a woman imagines herself to be a paragon of beauty, while the whole world is laughing at her. Many believe that they have reached a high degree of holiness and are worthy to be rapt into the third heaven with St. Paul, whilst they are full of faults and imperfections. These and the like overestimate and exalt themselves, and sin by pride.

(b.) When we wish to appear to be more than we really are. People in the lower walks of life deck themselves out in fine clothing and in fashions far beyond their means, assuming a style belonging neither to their station nor calling, so that one is tempted to think that they belong to a high family. So also in their gait, manners and countenance, they assume such affected, haughty airs, that you would think they had discovered the philosopher's stone, and if the truth were known they are scarcely able to read or write correctly. Some talk so piously and pray so devoutly that they appear to be saints, and a superficial observer would expect them one day to be canonized. These and the like wish to appear to be more than they really are; they exalt themselves, and sin by pride.

(c.) When we desire honor which we cannot justly claim, or a situation for which we are not fit. People of this description wish to be preferred everywhere; they expect to be saluted respect-

fully, and the first place to be assigned them in society; when they open their mouth they think that all should look upon their utterances as those of an oracle; that they should be more considered than all their equals, that all should take their part and praise whatever they say and do. They are greatly displeased when others make no fuss about them. They think themselves competent to fill every post of honor, and if they do not obtain it they complain of injustice, and of the disregard of their merits, and they bear ill-feeling against those who are preferred before them. These and the like exalt themselves, because they desire more honor than they deserve, and therefore they sin by pride.

2. When we refuse God the honor due to him. Who does this?

(a.) Those who attribute the good they do, not to God, but to themselves. All natural and supernatural goods which we possess are gifts of God; for "every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." Hence the Apostle says: "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hast not received it?"—*I. Cor. 4: 7*. If one ascribes to one's self the good which one has, one is unjust towards God, and sins by pride. This kind of pride is very common. People ascribe everything to their own application, to their own skill, energy, and dexterity, and pretend to have received nothing from God, so that they may not be obliged to give thanks to God. Thus the farmer says: "It is no wonder that I have good crops, I have prepared my ground well. There is no mystery in my prosperity." The business man says: "I understand my business; I am a shrewd business man and a capital financier; I am at my office early and late." These proud persons do not consider that with all their diligence and shrewdness in business they could not accomplish the least thing if God withheld his blessing.

(b.) Those who in their works and actions do not seek the glory of God, but their own glory. All honor and glory are due to God alone. He himself assures us that he will give his glory to no one, but reserve it for himself alone: "I will not give my glory to another."—*Is. 42: 8*. Hence St. Augustine thus addresses God: "He who desires to be praised for what is thy pure gift, and does not seek thy glory, but his own, is a thief and a robber, and is like the devil, because he would rob thee of thy honor." In all good works we must distinguish two things: *the fruit or the utility and the honor*. God has ordained and wills that the entire fruit of the good work shall fall to man's share, but that the honor shall be his alone. If any one with his good works seeks honor and praise from men, he inverts the order established by God and

does him a great injury and injustice; for God demands that men, insignificant worms of the earth, whose chief end is to praise and glorify God, should occupy themselves in glorifying him. Let us therefore guard against seeking our own glory in anything, but rather have God's glory in view in all our actions, according to the admonition of the Apostle: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all things to the glory of God."—*I. Cor.* 10: 31.

3. *When we despise our neighbor.*

(a.) *The proud man has a very high opinion of himself; he imagines that others have not the good qualities and prerogatives which he ascribes to himself; he goes mad with the idea that he is better, does more, has more merits than others, and that nobody is equal to him. This exaggerated opinion of himself and his self-sufficiency, this overesteem, this egotism, carries him so far that he disregards others and looks down upon them with contempt. Witness the proud Pharisee in the temple.*

(b.) If this contempt extends to all men, it is obviously madness, for only a madman can imagine himself better than all other men. If it refers only to some, it militates against *charity and justice*. *Against charity*, which obliges us to respect every man, even the poorest and most miserable, and to honor in him the dignity of man. *Against justice*, for although every man cannot require to be honored, he has a right to demand that he should not be dishonored and despised. He who despises his neighbor sins also against God, because all men are his creatures, his images and children. We must not despise even the greatest sinner, for how can he be contemptible for whom Jesus has shed his precious blood? Moreover, he who is now a great sinner can be converted in a moment and become a saint of heaven; whilst no one, not even the most just man, knows whether he will not fall into sin and perish eternally. Since we know how sins are committed by pride, the question arises: "What must we bear in mind in order to guard against it?"

PART II.

In order to guard against pride, we should bear in mind —

1. *That Almighty God hates and punishes no vice more than this.*
 - (a.) How much God *hates* the proud, may be easily inferred from the conduct of Christ towards the Scribes and Pharisees. He was all mildness even towards the greatest sinners; he par-

doned the public sinner Mary Magdalen, the publican Zacheus, the thief on the cross, and he invited all sinners to himself with the consoling words: "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt.* 11: 28. But he conducted himself in an entirely different way towards the Scribes and Pharisees, whose chief vice was pride. He showed them no mercy nor mildness, he pronounced woe upon them repeatedly, and declared that eternal damnation would be their lot. He who wishes to draw down upon himself God's displeasure need only be proud.

(b.) God *punishes* no vice so severely as pride. As high edifices, steeples and tall trees are in greater danger of being struck by lightning than low houses, huts and small trees, so God strikes the proud heads which lift themselves up above others. He cast the proud angels out of heaven and precipitated them into hell. He drove our first parents out of paradise and subjected them to many miseries, unruly passions, and finally to death. Pharaoh of Egypt, full of overbearing haughtiness, said: "Who is the Lord, that I should hear his voice, and let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."—*Ex.* 5: 2. The proud king, with his whole army, found his grave in the waters of the Red Sea. Nabuchodonosor was most severely punished on account of his pride; he was forced to eat grass like an ox, and live among the beasts of the field. On account of his pride, Aman was hanged upon the same gibbet that he had erected for Mardo-chai. Thus God often punishes the proud very severely upon earth; how severely will he punish them hereafter!

2. *That pride in itself makes man miserable.* It is an inherent quality of every vice that it renders life bitter and miserable in many respects, and this is particularly true of pride. St. Augustine says: "Pride brings forth envy as its legitimate child, and the bad mother is always accompanied by her bad child." From this we may easily infer that pride is connected with much bitterness. When the proud man sees others esteemed, and himself slighted, anger and envy at once arise in his heart; he gets excited, peace departs from his soul, and he feels nothing but ill-humor and discontent. Witness Aman. This man was highly favored by King Assuerus, he possessed an abundance of temporal goods, all people bent their knees to him, and yet he felt unhappy because Mardo-chai did not, as he thought, humble himself enough before him, and this offended his pride. "Whereas I have all things," he himself confessed, "I think I have nothing, so long as I see Mardo-chai, the Jew, sitting before the king's gate."—*Esth.* 5: 13.

3. *That pride robs man of all his merits for eternity.* Only those exercises of virtue and good works which have the glory of God for their object are meritorious and have a claim to a reward in heaven. On the other hand, whatever is done for one's own glory is destitute of supernatural merit, and is valueless before God, no matter how praise-worthy and great it may appear in the eyes of the world. The Scribes and Pharisees did much good, but because they were filled with ambition and pride, Christ declared that they had already received their reward. St. Bernard says: "As pride is the origin of all vices, so it is also the ruin of all virtues. No matter how many good works a man may have done, how many virtues he may have practiced, if he takes pride in them he becomes the most deplorable and miserable of men." St. Basil says: "Ambition does not indeed prevent us from doing any good works at all, but it waits till we have done them and have labored very hard; then it robs us of them, and snatches out of our hands the palm due to us." Oh, how foolish is the proud man! What an injury does he not do to himself!

4. *That we are poor miserable creatures.* St. Bernard says that in order to keep the spirit of pride away from us, we must often make the three following questions the subject of our reflections: *What were you? What will you be? Remember whence you came, and be abashed.* We all came from our mother's womb as weak creatures who could not help ourselves in the least, and who would have perished if others had not cared for us. "I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me."—*Ps. 50: 7.* Can we be proud of our origin? Thousands of years passed before we had existence, and we should still be in our original nothingness if it had not pleased God to form us out of nothing and to give us the existence we now enjoy. Again, St. Bernard continues: *Remember where you are, and sigh.* Where is our soul? In a body, which is subject to a thousand frailties and to the law of animal sensuality, in a body which is but one degree from putrefaction. Where is our body? Upon an earth on which the curse of God rests; in a valley of tears from which countless sighs and groans daily ascend to heaven. And should we be proud? What can dust be proud of? *What are we?* Criminals, condemned to death. *Remember,* says St. Bernard, again, *whither you go and tremble.* Whither go you? You are on your way to the place of execution; the sentence is already pronounced: "You must die." Whither does our body go? Into the grave, where it will moulder and return into its original dust. "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return." And whither will our soul go? Before the Divine Judge, who will demand an account of every idle word. Shall we never understand our misery and wretchedness, our insignificance and unworthiness, and humble ourselves before God and man?

5. *That Jesus was humble.* The adorable Son of God chose for his mother a poor maiden of Galilee, for his foster father a poor carpenter, for his palace a stable; he lived thirty years the reputed son of a carpenter in the greatest obscurity; he was despised and reviled, and at length died on the cross between two malefactors. He who was God became man to teach us that we are but men. Could he have humbled himself more? Could he not in truth cry out to us: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart."—*Matt. 11: 29.* If we contemplate the example of Jesus, how can we give place to pride? "On account of the great sin of pride the humble Saviour came down upon earth. The deplorable sickness of souls brought the almighty physician from heaven, humbled him to the form of a servant, covered him with ignominies, and fastened him to the cross, that by virtue of such a remedy this disease might be healed. Be ashamed, O man, to be proud, when God humbled himself on your account."—*St. Augustine.*

6. *That all the saints were humble.* The saints served God with fidelity, practised all the virtues, rendered great services to men, wrought great miracles—and yet they were little in their own eyes, and no vain thought found room in their hearts. Mary, the holy and immaculate Mother of God, calls herself the handmaid of the Lord. St. John the Baptist, the greatest among those born of women, deems himself unworthy to loose the latchet of the shoes of our Saviour. St. Paul, who was rapt to the third heaven, says of himself: "I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle."—*I. Cor. 15: 9.* What humility! Looking at such examples, should we not banish all pride from our hearts? Are we not blind if we suffer pride to reign within us?

PERORATION.

"Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind, or in thy words; for from it all perdition took its beginning."—*Tob. 4: 14.* Frequently think of the awful consequences which pride draws after it; consider your misery, and keep the example of Jesus and his saints before your eyes, that you may learn of them to be meek and humble of heart. Suppress every vain, self-complacent thought, and never forget that all the good qualities of mind or body you possess are an unmerited gift of God, to whom alone all honor is due; they are talents entrusted to you; and since much will be required of him to whom much has been given, the more graces and favors you have received the more you should tremble at the thought of the rigorous account you must one day give of your stewardship. Never say of yourselves without a special

reason anything that may redound to your honor; disregard the praise of men and the applause of the world, for they are vain; on the contrary, endeavor to merit praise from God on account of your virtues, for this alone has value. "Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God; that he may exalt you in the time of visitation."—*I. Peter* 5: 6. Amen.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

THE SANCTIFICATION OF SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS.

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?—Luke 14: 3.

The Scribes and Pharisees declaimed with great warmth against the profanation of the Sabbath; they regarded it as a desecration that Christ healed the sick on that day. "This man is not of God, who keepeth not the Sabbath."—*John* 9: 16. They blamed Christ for healing the sick, for performing an act of charity on the Sabbath, whilst they themselves did not hesitate for a moment to violate and profane it by rescuing their domestic animals from imminent danger. Many of our modern Catholics think and act quite otherwise. They work on Sundays and holidays without scruple—nay, they even indulge in sinful pleasures, saying: "It is a holiday to-day, we may enjoy ourselves a little." What a want of sense! as if it were lawful to do on Sundays and holidays what is sinful on week-days. To guard you against the delusion of the ancient Jews and of many of our modern Catholics, I shall speak to-day of the sanctification of Sundays and holidays and explain to you—

- I. *What is to be avoided;*
- II. *What is to be done on these days.*

PART I.

On Sundays and holidays—

1. *All servile works are to be avoided.*

Servile works are those corporal works which are usually done by servants, day-laborers, and artisans, in a word, all those works which require the powers of the body more than the faculties of the mind, and have for their object the temporal, not the eternal, welfare of man. The fine arts, which occupy the mind more than the body, or which have the development of the understanding, or an innocent entertainment, for their object, are not servile works, and, consequently, are not forbidden on Sundays and holidays. Therefore it is lawful on Sundays and holidays to give instructions in art or science, to read, to write, to solve a mathematical problem, to draw, to paint, to play music, provided that such works do not captivate the mind too much and do not interfere with the performance of religious duties.

There are, however, three cases in which even servile works are lawful on Sundays and holidays.

(a.) *When there is an absolute necessity.* Christ himself taught this; for when the Pharisees held their peace on hearing the question: *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?* he said to them: *Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day?* In these words Jesus indicates that servile works done in case of urgent necessity are not a profanation of the Sunday. Thus it is lawful for the Fire Brigade to turn out at conflagrations and strive to quench the flames. If there is a prolonged spell of wet weather in harvest time, the farmer is justified in harnessing his team and carting his hay and grain into the barn. A mother who has too much to do during the week is allowed on Sunday to repair clothes for herself, her husband, or her children, to knit, or even to weave. Children and servants are allowed to do necessary things for themselves or for the house, for "it is better to dig all day, than to dance all day on festivals."—*St. Augustine.*

(b.) *When the work is done for the glory of God.* This kind of work is that which is connected chiefly and immediately with the service of God, such as the ringing of the bells, the blowing of the bellows of the organ, the adorning of the church and altars, the erection of altars on the feast of Corpus Christi. That such works do not violate the third commandment of God is evident from the words of Christ; "Have ye not read in the law, that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are without blame?" (in slaughtering the animals to be offered in sacrifice.)—*Matt.* 12: 5.

(c.) *When the love of our neighbor obliges us.* "What man shall there be among you, that hath one sheep; and if the same fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not take hold on it, and

lift it up? How much better is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do a good deed on the Sabbath days."—*Matt. 12: 11, 12.* Hence it is lawful to assist the sick, though in so doing you might be obliged to lose mass, for the *natural* law has precedence over the *ecclesiastical*. The service of the sick is the service of God.

In the absence of any of these three cases, you would sin grievously should you do servile work on Sunday and holidays. We can doubt this so much the less because God forbade servile work in the Old Law under the penalty of death.—*Ex. 31: 14.* According to the opinion of most theologians, we commit a mortal sin when we work four hours, because four hours are a considerable part of the day. It does not, however, depend so much upon the time as upon the quality of the work done, and upon the circumstance whether it is done in a quiet or a boisterous way, and whether scandal is given by it or not. Even the most insignificant labor done in contempt of the divine or the ecclesiastical commandment would be a mortal sin.

2. *And all sinful works are to be avoided.*

(a.) That which is sacred must be kept sacred. Therefore we must avoid with special care on Sundays and holidays whatever is sinful. Sin is never permissible, but is more abominable when committed on Sundays and therefore more culpable, and deserves greater punishment; and the reason why it is more culpable is this, that on Sundays and holidays which are especially dedicated to the service and worship of God, we ought to avoid sin with greater care and endeavor to do good with greater fervor. "Is it not a great offense against God and even a kind of sacrilege, to spend days particularly dedicated to the Lord in the follies of the world and in vain pleasures?"—*St. Cyril.* It is therefore advisable that in your confessions you mention the circumstance that you have sinned on Sundays and holidays; for although the mention of it is not absolutely necessary, yet it is useful, that the confessor may better understand the grievousness of the sin and be able to prescribe a suitable penance and proper remedies.

(b.) Alas! it is generally on Sundays and holidays that most sins are committed. We may say without the least fear of exaggeration that in the six days of the week there are not so many sins committed as on Sunday alone. To mention only a few, how many sin by *pride*! Many women go to church for no other purpose than to see and to be seen, and to display their fine clothes. They appear in church in very showy attire, even adopting a very "fast" style, as it is called, thus showing by their whole conduct that they have not God, but the devil, in their heart. How many

sin by *impurity*! This abominable sin may justly be called a Sunday vice. Most of the unchaste familiarities and dangerous intimacies are indulged in on Sundays. How many sins are committed against *fraternal charity*? Thus it is that the devil has a rich harvest on Sundays and holidays, and many souls become his slaves.

PART II.

What must we do on Sundays and holidays?

1. *We must attend mass.* It is a strict precept of the Church to hear mass on Sundays and holidays; but besides the precept of the Church the natural law obliges us; for we know by the law inscribed in our hearts that we should endeavor, especially on the Lord's day, to honor God in the manner most pleasing to him. But God is honored most by the holy sacrifice of the mass, for the mass is the chief part of the worship of God—nay, the centre of the whole Christian religion. We must daily adore God, thank him for his benefits, ask pardon of our sins, and petition for graces and blessings. But where can we better comply with this duty than in the holy sacrifice of the mass, which is the most sublime sacrifice of praise, of thanksgiving, of propitiation, and of petition?

In order, however, to satisfy the ecclesiastical law, we must assist with devotion at the whole of the mass.

(a.) *At the whole of the mass.* He who neglects through his own fault any part of the mass commits a mortal or a venial sin, according to the greatness and importance of the part omitted. Some theologians declare it to be a mortal sin to come to mass after the "Offertory," because this is one of the principal parts of the mass. In like manner some teach that a person who leaves the church before the communion of the priest commits a mortal sin. Endeavor, therefore, always to be in time for mass; never come too late, and never leave the church until the priest has left the altar. According to Pope Innocent XI., it does not suffice to hear half of two masses, whether they are said simultaneously, or after each other.

(b.) *We must hear it with devotion.* In order to be made partakers of the fruits of grace, we must hear mass devoutly. He who lacks devotion goes away empty-handed, offends God, and merits his displeasure. Those who, instead of devoutly praying, entertain worldly and even sinful thoughts, gaze around, laugh and talk, sit during the whole of mass, although strong and healthy, and quite able to kneel, lack devotion. St. Chrysostom with

grief complains of such unbecoming and unworthy behavior at mass. "I see some standing and talking whilst the prayers are being said; they talk even whilst the priest is consecrating. Oh, what audacity and impertinence! . . . Is it not a wonder that lightning does not descend, not only upon them, but upon us all?"

2. *We must hear with zeal the word of God.* Although the Church does not impose upon all her children the hearing of the word of God as being equally as strict a duty as the hearing of mass, no one should from negligence omit it, for the following reasons:

(a.) Most Catholics do not possess so thorough a knowledge of religion as to need no further instruction. Even many of those who are counted among the learned, are often very ill-informed in regard to religious matters and would be very much embarrassed if they were obliged to answer the simple questions of the Catechism. Not a few hold erroneous opinions in direct opposition to the Catholic faith, which they will never get rid of unless they diligently listen to sermons and religious instruction.

(b.) Since sermons have for their object not only to instruct, but also to amend and to perfect the faithful, all should hear them, sinners, as well as good people; the former, that they may amend their lives; the latter, that they may attain a higher degree of perfection.

(c.) Good example also comes into consideration here. Catholics, particularly those in a responsible position, by the diligent hearing of the word of God, edify their fellow-Catholics, especially their dependants; whilst they would give scandal by seldom or never appearing at the instructions. But, that you may make the most of the word of God, you must hear it attentively, and with a heart solicitous for salvation apply it to yourselves and endeavor to regulate your life according to it; for Jesus says: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it."
—*Luke 11: 28.*

3. *We must assist at the afternoon service.* Many persons believe that after mass in the morning all is over; that they have complied with their duty, that the afternoon is theirs and that they may employ it in amusing themselves. This, however, is an erroneous idea, and cannot be reconciled with the duty of the observance of Sunday. A master would not be satisfied with his servant who would work only in the morning and then take the afternoon to himself. In like manner God will not be satisfied with us if we dedicate to him only the first half of the Sundays and holidays,

and employ the second exclusively for ourselves; it is his will that, with the exception of a few hours of recreation, we should spend the entire Sunday and holiday in his holy service. A good Catholic, therefore, also visits the church in the afternoon in order to assist at the service then held. If this is sometimes impossible, he should pray and read devotional books at home.

4. *We must receive the holy Sacrament of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist.* In the first centuries of the Church it was the universal custom for the faithful to receive holy communion on all Sundays during mass. St. Justin the martyr tells us, that holy communion was sent to those Christians who on account of sickness or some other obstacle could not assist at mass, that they might communicate at home or wherever else they were. Even in later times Christians used to communicate on Sundays; therefore St. Chrysostom calls Sunday the *day of bread*. I do not indeed ask you to go to confession and communion on all Sundays and holidays, but I exhort and advise you to go frequently during the year. It would not be too much for young people, persons who are not married, to go once a month; for married people equally as often, or at least every three months, viz., four times a year. A frequent reception of the holy sacraments would contribute materially to the sanctification of Sundays and holidays and put a stop to many sins on these days.

5. *Lastly, we must perform works of charity, especially the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.* "Although we are forbidden on festival days to perform servile works, yet we are commanded to perform charitable works."—*Irenaeus*. Only Pharisees do not acknowledge this obligation; they even consider the performance of such charitable deeds a profanation of the Sunday, but Christ and his Apostles performed these works especially on the Sabbath day. On this day he healed the man sick with the palsy, and the man who had a withered hand (*Matt. 12 and 9*), the blind man at Jerusalem (*John 9*), the man who had the dropsy (*Luke 14*), the woman that was bent down (*Luke 13*), and the man languishing thirty-eight years (*John 5*). St. Peter healed a lame man on a Sabbath day (*Acts 3*); and St. Paul performed a miracle at Lystra on a Sabbath day.—*Acts 14*.

Many during the week have no time for the performance of works of charity, while Sundays and festivals afford much leisure for such works, by which the necessities of our neighbors are alleviated and God is honored and glorified in a most eminent manner. Therefore St. James says: "Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father is this; to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation, and to keep one's self unspotted from this wor'd."—*James 1: 27*. In the primitive ages of Chris-

tianity collections were made for the relief of the poor and afflicted, and for many other charitable purposes.—*I. Cor.* 16: 2. These charitable collections, as you see, are of very ancient date; they are as old as the Church: "The poor you always have with you." Therefore do not complain of the number of charitable collections, and there is all the more reason for your not doing so because we live in a country where the Church is entirely dependent on the voluntary contributions of the faithful. What you give to the Church and to the poor you give to the Lord, and he is a liberal rewarder. "Alms delivereth from death; and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting."—*Tob.* 12: 9. The works of charity and mercy are a species of sacrifice which we offer to God and by which we draw down upon us his favor and protection in a special manner. Hence the Apostle writes: "Do not forget to do good and to impart; for by such sacrifices God's favor is obtained."—*Heb.* 13: 16.

PERORATION.

Following the good example of the early Christians and practical Catholics of all times, spend your Sundays and holidays in such a manner as to make them days of grace, blessing and salvation. Shun the sins which are often committed on these days. Attend mass in the morning and the service in the afternoon, and assist devoutly, thanking God for the benefit of Redemption; hear the word of God, frequently during the year receive the holy Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, read devotional books, shun worldly and sinful amusements, perform works of mercy and charity, in short, observe the Sundays and festivals in such a manner that on your death-bed you can look back upon them with consolation, hoping to be called to the eternal joys of heaven, which they symbolize, that so may be fulfilled in you the promise of the Lord: "Every one that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and that holdeth fast my covenant, I will bring him into my holy mount."—*Is.* 56: 6, 7.



SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*Eph.* 4: 1-6. Brethren: I, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called, with all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all, who is blessed for ever and ever.

I. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

ADMONITION TO UNITY.

The Christian congregation at Ephesus which St. Paul had founded consisted of converted Jews and Gentiles. Previous to their conversion the diversity in their religious opinions as well as in their manner of living was considerable. This very probably had given rise to various errors and dissensions among the new Christians, and consequently St. Paul deemed it necessary to exhort them with all earnestness to unity and peace. To give emphasis to his admonition, he reminded them of his imprisonment at Rome; since he was suffering so much for the sake of Christ and the faith, they, as Christians, should have forbearance and patience with the faults and frailties of others, and carefully guard themselves against dissension and disunion. At the same time he reminded them of their vocation and pointed out to them, that as Christians it was their duty to conduct themselves in all things without blemish, and especially to preserve peace and unity with one another.

The Apostle exhorts us, then, in the epistle before us to unity, and shows —

- I. What is necessary for the preservation of this virtue;
- II. What must induce us to preserve it.

PART I

St. Paul first shows what is necessary for the preservation of unity, saying: *I, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called, with all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.* In these words the Apostle mentions four virtues which are required for the preservation of peace and unity; namely —

1. *Humility.* Pride and unity are as incompatible as fire and water. Pride begets self-will, selfishness, disobedience, envy, hatred, persecution, self-exaltation, and contempt of others, and, in fact everything that disturbs peace. Hence we read in the Book of Proverbs (13: 10): "Among the proud there are always contentions." And St. Gregory the Great says: "Dissension, stubbornness and discord emanate from pride." As the vapors of the earth ascend into the air and beget thunder and lightning and other stormy phenomena, so the vapors of pride, which arise from the heart into the head, raise discord and dissensions. Experience teaches that one proud man by his wilfulness, positiveness and stubbornness can bring much dissension into a family — nay, into a whole community.

From this the necessity of humility for the preservation of unity is apparent. The humble man knows his faults and frailties and thinks little of himself; he seeks no vainglory; he despises no one; he looks upon himself as the worst of all, and for this very reason he says and does nothing that could offend others or cause disturbance or dissension. He is friendly and condescending towards every one, obeys willingly, sits down in the lowest place rather than in the highest, and preserves peace with himself and with others. Oh, that all were humble of heart! all things would be done in peace instead of in discord and dissension: no disunion and enmity would find a habitation among men.

2. *Meekness.* The meek man controls all motions of ill-will, hatred and revenge, which may arise in his heart, he bridles his tongue and carefully abstains from insults and calumnies; he is friendly and benevolent to all. Even when he is offended he remains calm; he defends himself when injured without flying into a passion, but preserves Christian charity towards his enemies. In such a way he avoids everything that might cause a disturbance, and does all he can to live harmoniously with everybody and to preserve unity. Every one likes to have dealings with a peaceable man and he has the good will of every one who knows him. He attracts even perverse, ill-disposed people

to himself and makes them his friends. St. Chrysostom says: "The meek man knows so well how to win hearts that he banishes therefrom all the bitterness caused by contumely or enmity." A mason forgot himself upon a certain occasion so far as to throw into a limekiln the holy bishop Ubald, who had felt constrained to rebuke him. The Saint managed by dint of great labor to get out of the limekiln, and quietly went home as if nothing had happened. But the people on hearing it were not so forbearing; they thought that they ought to avenge the insult offered to their beloved bishop. Hearing of their intention, however, he took the mason into his own house that no injury might be done to him. The man was moved so much by this act of kindness that he resolved to atone for his crime by death and deliver himself up to the enraged populace. But Ubald embraced him and assured him of the most perfect forgiveness. Behold how the meek man heaps, as it were, burning coals upon the head of his enemy, which so burn him, that he acknowledges his injustice and repents of it in the bitterness of his soul.

3. *Patience.* We are human beings; each one of us has his faults and frailties; we all need patience and forbearance to be shown to us. Therefore the Apostle admonishes us to bear with one another, writing: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ."—*Gal. 6: 2.* When stags swim across a wide river they plunge into the water one after another in a line, and each one lays his head upon the back of the one preceding him. The leader of the herd alone has to hold up his head without support, and willingly does this, in order to afford alleviation to those that follow. But lest the burden should become too difficult for this one, they all take the leadership in turns, and as soon as the first is tired he falls back to the rear to lay his weary head on the back of the one before him. In like manner among us, each must bear with the other, that peace may be kept. The chief reason why disunion and dissension are so common in many families lies in this, that patience and forbearance are wanting; they will put up with nothing, and thus they fall out and quarrel. Mindful, therefore, of your own frailties and imperfections, be forbearing towards others, especially towards those who by nature are self-willed, morose, positive, excitable and irritable. Make it a rule in life at all times to yield to others when it can be done without sin; keep silence when they are in a passion; let them have the last word, and treat them in a friendly way for the sake of peace.

4. Finally, *charity.* The Apostle speaking of this virtue, says: "Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own,

is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."—*I. Cor. 13: 4-7*. He who sincerely loves his neighbor, avoids everything that might disturb harmony, and does whatever is required for the preservation of peace. He conducts himself kindly and meekly towards his fellow-men, willingly believes everything good of them, hopes always for the best, and bears with patience anything that is unpleasant in them. He guards himself against envy, boasting, ambition, conceit, sensitiveness, suspicion and everything that might be the occasion of dissensions. Charity, therefore, is a panacea against all dissensions; where it exists, peace and unity reign; but where charity finds no resting place, there dissension and discord, disunion and enmity dwell; *where there is no charity, there is hell*. Since Christ wished that we should live in peace with one another, he made charity a new commandment and the mark of his disciples, saying: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."—*John 13: 34, 35*.

Humility, meekness, patience, and charity are the four virtues which we must possess, that we may live in harmony with our neighbor.

PART II.

St. Paul now gives several motives for the preservation of unity, writing: *One body, and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.*

1. *One body*. All Christians, although these are millions scattered over the world, constitute only one body, whose head is Christ. Though differing from one another in language, customs, color and other respects, they stand in the most intimate connection with one another, because all have the same faith, the same head, the same means of grace, and the same final hope. Now as the members of a body work together in unity, and one assists the other, so all Christians as members of one and the same body must live in unity and peace. It would certainly be very unnatural for the members of the human body to war against and injure one another; *e. g.*, for the hand to take an axe and cut off a foot. It is just as unnatural for Christians to quarrel and to be at variance with one another.

2. *One spirit*. The one spirit of whom the Apostle speaks, is the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies and enlightens Christians, supports

them in all good, and dwells in their hearts. "In one spirit," he says in another place (*I. Cor. 12: 13*), "were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free." We are all one, for in baptism we have all received one and the same spirit of regeneration. From this again arises for us the duty of living in peace and harmony with one another; for how can we who have one and the same Holy Ghost, the Spirit of love and peace, persecute and quarrel with one another?

3. *As you are called in one hope of your calling*. With the help of God's grace we hope to be saved. This hope, which is grounded on the promise and the merits of Christ, is our consolation and joy in life and death. Why should we who are to meet one another again, and be united in everlasting love and friendship and enjoy the never-ending felicity of heaven, pass this short time of our earthly life in disunion, pursue, hate and persecute one another? And how can we hope to go to heaven, if we live on earth in hatred and disunion with our fellow-men, since Christ calls only the peace-makers blessed and the children of God? Most assuredly a quarrelsome, combative man is quite unfit for heaven, for he would even there, if it were possible among the angels and saints, disturb the blessed harmony and change heaven into hell. Considering this, who could entertain hatred and enmity against his fellow-men?

4. *One Lord, one faith, one baptism*. There is but one Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ; one Lord whom we all serve, who has redeemed all by his death on the cross and reconciled us with God, his heavenly Father. There is but one Lord, who has given us the commandment to love one another as he has loved us, to forgive our enemies and those who offend us from our hearts and to return good for evil; the same Lord who has so often said to us: "Peace be to you." There is but one Lord before whose tribunal all must appear, in order to be invited by him into heaven, or to be condemned to hell. Now, do you think Christ will be pleased with us if we violate his chief commandment, the commandment of love? Will he unite us again in heaven who upon earth have lived in disunion and dissension? We Catholics all have but one faith, one and the same law according to which we must live. We also have but one baptism, in which we were regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost, sanctified and incorporated with Christ and his Church. And shall we, who are so intimately united and who constitute the communion of saints, bear ill-will towards one another, hate and persecute one another?

5. *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all*. We are all children of one and the same Father in heaven.

and can say with the Prophet: "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?"—*Mal. 2: 10*. We have become children of God especially through Christ, so that with a joyous heart we can look up to God and say with confidence: "Our Father, who art in heaven." This our God is Father *above all*, since he is the Lord of heaven and earth, and no one can resist him; he is in all, and works through all, since by his providence he orders, governs and rules all; he is in us all, for he vouchsafes to come to us and dwell in us; therefore Christ says: "If any one love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him."—*John 14: 23*. As we are children of God our Father in heaven, who embraces us all with equal love, should we not heartily love one another?

PERORATION.

Let us ponder on what St. Paul, in the epistle of this day, teaches us on unity, and let us be *careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*. Let us practice humility, meekness, patience and charity; for these virtues are as it were the four columns on which the temple of peace and union stands and rests. Let us not forget that we form the one great family of the children of God upon earth, who by the same faith, by the same sacraments, and by one and the same head, are most intimately united; that we all have one Father, God the Father in heaven, and one mother, the holy Catholic Church on earth; and that as children of God we are all called to the same inheritance. Let us be good children of our heavenly Father; let us walk worthy of our calling, and live in peace and harmony together, that we may have the well-grounded hope of being admitted into the number of the blessed of heaven, where reigns eternal, never-ending peace. Amen.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt. 22: 35-46*. At that time: The Pharisees came to Jesus: and one of them, a doctor of the law, asked him, tempting him: Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second

is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets. And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying: What think you of Christ? Whose son is he? They say to him: David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool?" If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word: neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT, AND ALSO TO CHRIST.

We read at the beginning of the gospel of this day that the Pharisees came to Christ, and one of them, a doctor of the law, put the question to him: *Master, which is the great commandment in the law?* The Jewish teachers of the law were not unanimous with regard to which was the greatest commandment of the law. Some of them asserted that it was circumcision; others, that it was prayer; some said that it was the offering of the prescribed sacrifices, and others that it was the keeping of the Sabbath. It was not for the purpose of being instructed that the Pharisees put this question, but only to lay a snare for our Blessed Saviour. They thought it was a very difficult question, and that in answering it either one way or the other he would be sure to offend one or the other party, and thus incur enmity. Christ plainly and emphatically answered the query, and then in turn put one to them, which silenced them, for *no man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions*.

Let us meditate to-day on the two questions, namely:

- I. The question which the Pharisees put to Christ;
- II. The question which Christ put to them.

PART I.

To the question of the Pharisees as to which is the greatest commandment of the law, Christ replied: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*

On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.

1. What does it mean to *love God with the whole heart, with the whole soul, and with the whole mind*? It means that we must love God with all the faculties of the soul, and that we must set no limits to our love of him, but that we must love him with an immeasurable love, according to the beautiful saying of St. Bernard: "The measure of the love of God is to love him without measure." Since God is infinite, he deserves an infinite love, but because as creatures and finite beings we are not capable of such a love, we must love him at least as much as we can. We must love God above all, that is, we must love him more than all else in the world. Christ expressly requires this, saying: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me."—*Matt.* 10: 37. This is loving God with the whole heart. The heart is the seat of love; for this reason God demands the tribute of our heart when he says: "My son, give me thy heart." We must not divide our heart between God and something else. We love God with *our whole soul* when we give ourselves so thoroughly to him that we live and act for him alone, seek not our own, are ready to make sacrifices, and rejoice in having an opportunity of making them. We love God with *our whole mind* when we endeavor to know him and to serve him, because we cannot love him until we know him, as love is not bestowed upon that which we know not. The more therefore we try to know God and his perfections, the more nearly shall we approach to the fulfilment of the duty of loving him with our whole mind. That we love God above all things, we must show by our unflinching determination to lose all earthly goods, and even life itself, rather than separate ourselves from him, or, what amounts to the same thing, commit a mortal sin. This, however, is only the lowest degree of the love of God. According to the example of the saints we must make it a rule never to commit even a venial sin with knowledge and premeditation; for although venial sin does not separate us from God, it is displeasing to him and lessens his pleasure in us, and therefore it is a greater evil than all earthly evils. Our maxim ought to be: "No sin, not even a venial sin."

2. Why does Christ say that *the love of God is the greatest and the first commandment*? Because the love of God or charity is the rudimental, most comprehensive and most necessary of all virtues, as St. Paul teaches in plain words: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of the angels, and have not charity, I am as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And 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. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—*1. Cor.* 13: 1-3. No matter what good works one may do, all is useless and without merit for eternity, if one lacks charity. St. Francis of Sales says: "Where charity is not, there the store of virtues is a useless pile of stones." "Even the most beautiful and lovely of virtues, chastity, if it be without charity, resembles a lamp without oil. Take the oil away, and the lamp will give no light; take charity away, and chastity will not please me."—*St. Bernard.* But if our heart is animated with true love, God looks down with pleasure upon all our exercises of virtue and good works, and will reward them hereafter in heaven. This holds good even of insignificant works, as Christ tells 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. What a rich mine of supernatural merits does not charity open for us! When we work, pray, bear patiently the hardships of life, do good works—nay, when we do quite common, indifferent things, *e. g.*, eat, drink, or sleep, all these actions are meritorious before God, for it is charity that imprints upon them the seal of merit. Oh, what a great virtue is charity! How solicitous should we be to possess and practice it, that we may be able to gather together an abundant store of merits for heaven!

3. Why does Christ say that *the commandment to love our neighbor is like the commandment to love God*? Because the love of our neighbor is not a self-existing love, but only an emanation of the love of God, for we do not love our neighbor for his own sake, but for God's sake. It is an express, oft-repeated, and strict commandment of God to love our neighbor. "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you."—*John* 15: 12. We do not love our neighbor because he does us good, or because he has amiable qualities; quite apart from his relation to us and from his personality we love him because God commands it. As we love God because he wills it, so we love our neighbor because God wills it. God alone is the cause that we love our neighbor. The love of God, therefore, differs from that of our neighbor only in the object, not in the cause, because the one as well as the other rests upon the same basis—namely, upon God. Hence St. Augustine says: "He that understands the matter rightly, easily perceives that each of the two commandments comprises the other. For he who loves God cannot despise the commandment which he has given us to love our neighbor, and he who loves his neighbor piously and spiritually loves in him nothing

but God. There are, therefore, two commandments of love, but there is but one love: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and thy neighbor as thyself. One love and two commandments, for no other love is that which loves the neighbor than that which loves God." It is natural and suitable to a loving heart to have a mind in sympathizing conformity to that of the one beloved, and to love what he loves. "If any one loves a certain person," says St. Alphonsus, "he also loves his relations, servants, pictures and clothes, and why? Because these things are loved by the person beloved." Now faith teaches us that God loves all men. "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. If we truly love God, it follows that we also love our fellow-men; because, as I said above, it is proper that the one who loves should love what the beloved loves. The love of God and that of our neighbor belong to each other, and the former without the latter is absolutely impossible. Hence St. John writes: "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?"—*I. John* 4: 20. Persons, therefore, who think that they love God when they entertain enmity against their neighbor and uncharitably reject him, greatly deceive themselves.

4. Finally, why does Christ say that *on these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets?*

(a.) *Because these two commandments comprise all others.* All that God has commanded in the Old Law is contained in the two commandments: "Love God above all things, and thy neighbor as thyself." Love is the centre in which all commandments unite; for he who sincerely loves God, also desires to keep all the commandments of God; without this desire the love of God is manifestly absent from his heart. Therefore Christ says: "If anyone love me, he will keep my word. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words."—*John* 14: 23, 24. In like manner we shall do our duty towards our neighbor if we love him. Hence the Apostle writes: "Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment it is comprised in these words: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."—*Rom.* 13: 8, 9.

(b.) *Because charity is the end or the aim and object of all the commandments,* as the Apostle says: "The end of the commandment is charity" (*I. Tim.* 1: 5), that is, whatever God commands

must serve only as a means for the fulfilling of the great commandment of love. A physician gives advice to his patients; they must diet themselves, take medicine, and he gives this advice that they may recover their health. What health is to the physician in giving his advice, love is to God in giving his commandments. All commandments have charity for their aim. He gave us some of them to remove the obstacles which stand in the way of love; others to make us fit and able to fulfil the law of love perfectly. From this it is evident that all good works and virtues are fruitless when charity is wanting.

We now come to the question Christ put to the Pharisees.

PART II.

1. Our Blessed Lord said to the assembled Pharisees: *What think you of Christ? Whose son is he?* By Christ, we are to understand the Redeemer promised by God, for under the name of *Christ* or *Messias* the expected Redeemer was known to all the Jews. As in the Old Law kings and high-priests were anointed, and the promised Redeemer was to unite in his person both the royal and the priestly dignity, he was named *Christ, the Messias, or the Anointed*. Christ's question, therefore, may be put like this: "What do you believe of the promised Redeemer? From whom will he descend." The Pharisees answered: "From David." The belief of the Jews was that the promised Redeemer would be a descendant of David, because it had many times been foretold, and in the clearest words, by the Prophets. Thus we read in *Jeremias* (23: 5, 6): "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, and I will raise up to David a just branch; and a king shall reign, and shall be wise: and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In those days shall Juda be saved, and Israel shall dwell confidently: and this is the name that they shall call him: The Lord our just one."

2. Christ then asked them: *How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying: The Lord said to my Lord, sit on my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?* Christ here refers to *Psalm* 109, which all the Jews held as one in which David by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost speaks of the promised *Messias* and of his dignity as king and priest. In the very first verse of the *Psalm* which Jesus mentions, we read: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool." David here calls the *Messias* his Lord, to whom the Lord, that is, God, said: "Sit thou at my right," etc., *i. e.*, rule with the fulness of my power until I have made all thy enemies thy footstool, until I have all thy enemies subjected to thee. David, therefore, speaks of a

higher one than he is himself, for he calls him *his Lord*, and says of him, that he is invested with *divine power*, and he shall reign over all his enemies. Christ means to say: "If David calls the Messiah his Lord, armed and fortified by divine power, how can this Messiah be David's *son*? David certainly cannot call his *son* his Lord, much less can he attribute to him divine power as he does to the Messiah. With this question our Lord wished to point out the great truth of faith that the promised Redeemer was not, as the Pharisees and most of the Jews believed, a mere man, and as man, a mere descendant of the royal house of David, but that he was also God, begotten by God the Father from all eternity, and of the same essence with him, and that he was the Son of God, and God is David's Lord, consequently that David speaks of the Divinity of Christ when he calls him his Lord.

3. The gospel remarks that *no man was able to answer him a word*. The Pharisees indeed could not explain how the promised Redeemer could be *David's son*, and *David's Lord, that is God*; this was a mystery to them. Christ would have solved this enigma for them if they had humbled themselves and with a sincere heart had desired information. He would have told them that the promised Messiah is God and man at the same time, and that as man, or according to his human nature, he is a son of David, descending from the royal house of David, but that as God he is David's Lord, begotten by God the Father, and that he is the second Person in the God-head, the only-begotten Son of God. He would have told them that this Son of God had already assumed human nature, and that as God-man he was walking then upon earth, in order to accomplish the work of the Redemption of mankind, and that this God-man was no other than himself; that he was David's son, because he descended from the house of David, but that he was also David's Lord, truly God, as proved by the numberless miracles which he wrought and which they could not deny. In such a way our Lord would have instructed and convinced the Pharisees that he was the Son of God and the promised Messiah if they had been sincere and willing. But because they hated him unto death and would receive no instruction from him, he could not prevent them from persevering in their unbelief and blindness.

PERORATION.

Let us give thanks to God that we are instructed in this principal and fundamental truth of our holy religion, the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ, and let us not suffer ourselves to be led astray by those who deny his divinity; let us hold firmly to our holy faith and confess with St. Peter, full of joyous confi-

dence, that in no other is there salvation (than in Jesus Christ). "For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."—*Acts 4: 12*. Let us also show our faith in works, making the doctrine and example of Christ the rule of our life, and let us especially observe the first and the greatest commandment, that of love, which he has given us, that the words of the Apostle may be fulfilled in us: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for them that love him."—*I. Cor. 2: 9*. Amen.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

CHRIST, TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN.

What think you of Christ? Whose son is he?—Matt. 22: 42.

Our Blessed Lord in the gospel of this day puts the question to the Pharisees: *What think you of Christ? Whose son is he?* Without much reflection, they said: *David's*, for they knew from the predictions of the Prophets that the promised Messiah would descend from the royal house of David. But Christ put another question to them, to which they could not give an answer: *How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying: 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool?'* The meaning of these words is: You know that David by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost calls the Messiah his Lord, that is, his God; now if the Messiah is God how can he be the son of David? To this question the Pharisees could give no answer; they therefore did what every sensible man does when he does not know what to answer—they kept silence. This question of Christ does not perplex us; we can easily reconcile the two apparently contradictory truths that Christ is both a son or a descendant of David, and at the same time God: for we know and believe that Christ is both God and man; that as son of God he is God, and that as son of David he is man. But because in this our age there are many, even among Christians, who disregard or wholly reject this chief and fundamental truth, I shall

speak of it to-day at length. I therefore say: *Christ is true God and true man.* This is —

- I. *A truth of the faith that is certain,*
- II. *A truth of the faith that is important.*

PART I.

I. *Jesus Christ is true God.* Witnesses of this truth are —

1. *The Prophets in the Old Testament.* Thus David says of the Redeemer: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of uprightness."—*Ps.* 44: 7. In this passage, which St. Paul purposely applies to Christ (*Heb.* 1: 8), the Psalmist absolutely calls the Redeemer God, and says that his throne is for ever and ever, that is, that he shall reign for ever. Isaias says: "A CHILD is born to us; and a son is given to us; and the government is upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, God, the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace."—*Is.* 9: 6. And again: "Say to the faint-hearted: Take courage, and fear not; Behold, your God will bring the revenge of recompense; God himself will come, and will save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened; and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.—*Is.* 35: 4, 5. Here the prophets not only apply to the Saviour names which signify God, but they also call him God and say of him that he will perform divine works—namely, work miracles.

2. *The Apostles and Evangelists.* St. John begins his gospel with the words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."—*John* 1: 1. He says that the Word, *i. e.*, the Son of God, was God, and then attributes to him the creation of the world, adding: "All things were made by him; and without him was made nothing that was made."—*John* 1: 3. St. Peter publicly gave testimony of the divinity of Christ, saying to him: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."—*Matt.* 16: 16. The Apostle St. Thomas prostrated himself before his risen Saviour, and full of reverence and contrition exclaimed: "My Lord, and my God."—*John* 20: 28. St. Paul testifies to the divinity of Christ numberless times. Thus he says that "Christ is over all things, God blessed for ever." (*Rom.* 9: 5), and that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head corporally."—*Coll.* 2: 9. St. Matthew also remarks of the disciples of Christ, that they came and adored him, saying: "Indeed thou art the Son of God."—14: 33.

3. *Christ himself.* He says: "All things are delivered to me by my Father. And no one knows the Son but the Father; neither

doth any one know the father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal him."—*Matt.* 11: 27. Christ here calls himself the Son of God, to whom the Father has delivered all things and who in virtue of his omniscience knows the Father, and therefore he is God like the Father. The identity of his essence with that of God the Father he also asserts when he says: "I and the Father are one" (*John* 10: 30); "he that seeth me, seeth the Father also" (*John* 14: 9); "all things whatsoever the Father hath, are mine" (*John* 16: 15); "what things soever he (the Father) doth, these the Son also doth in like manner" (*John* 5: 19). When the high-priest adjured him by the living God to declare if he was the Son of God, he solemnly declared that he was Christ the Son of the living God, that he should sit at the right hand of God, and come in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty to judge the living and the dead, and he sealed this profession with his agony and in his blood.—*Matt.* 26: 63, 64.

But Christ proved his divinity not only by words but also by works—namely, by the numberless miracles which he wrought throughout Judea. These miracles were so manifest that even his worst enemies were obliged to admit them. Thus the assembled high-priests and Pharisees said: "What do we, for this man doth many miracles?"—*John* 11: 47. The miracles are an incontrovertible proof of his divinity, for if he had not spoken the truth when he declared himself to be God, we must suppose that God himself, by granting the power to work miracles, cooperated in the deception of men and led into idolatry all those who believed and still believe in Christ, and adore him as the Son of God. But it would be the greatest blasphemy to think such a thing of God.

4. *Finally, the miracles which the Apostles, and Catholics of all times, have worked in the name of Jesus.* As the Sacred Scripture and Church history for the last eighteen hundred years testify, the Apostles and the faithful of all times have wrought numberless miracles in the name of Jesus, miracles which even the most inveterate unbelief could not deny. Now, if it is certain that miracles are possible only through the omnipotence of God, and that in the name of Jesus, *i. e.*, by the invocation of Jesus, miracles have been wrought at all times by the faithful and are wrought even in our days, does it not follow as a necessary consequence that Jesus Christ is truly God? I cannot forbear to mention a very conspicuous miracle by which Christ glorified the profession of his divinity. Hunneric, king of the Vandals, an Arian, who denied the divinity of Christ, commanded in the year of our Lord 484, at Tiposa, a city of Africa, that the tongues of all Christians who professed the divinity of Christ should be cut off

at the root. It is said that the number of those who were thus cruelly mutilated amounted to thousands. But, behold the miracle, and not a transient, but a permanent one. All those whose tongues were cut out, spoke afterwards as loudly, fluently, and plainly as they had spoken before. Many of these Christians, scattered over the whole of the then known world, lived for many years and thus bore constant testimony to the divinity of Christ.

II. *Jesus Christ is also true man.*

1. The gospel emphatically says that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was made flesh.—*John 1: 14*. St. Luke the Evangelist relates in detail the adorable mystery of the Incarnation of Christ. The archangel Gabriel appeared to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and saluting her, said: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus." When Mary, who desired always to remain a virgin, asked how this could be done, the angel explained to her that this great mystery should be accomplished without sullyng the purity of her innocence: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the most High shall over-shadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."—*Luke 1: 35*. Christ the Son of God by the operation of the Holy Ghost assumed human nature in the womb of Mary, or, to express it more accurately and plainly, the Holy Ghost formed a human body from the pure flesh and blood of Mary and united it with a human soul, and in the same moment the Son of God united this body and soul with his divinity and became man. Thus he is not only God, but also man.

2. That Christ is true man, is evident from the fact that he lived upon earth for thirty-three years; and during all that time he was, with the exception of sin, "made in the likeness of man, and in habit found as a man."—*Phil. 2: 7*. He had the two essential, constituent parts of man, viz.,

(a.) *A human body*, as the Evangelist expressly remarks of him: "But he spoke of the temple of his body," and as he testifies himself: "She is come beforehand to anoint my body for the burial."—*Mark 14: 8*. After his resurrection he showed his disciples his hands and his feet, saying: "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet."—*Luke 24: 39, 40*. He ate and drank like other men, as he says himself: "The Son of man came eating and drinking."—*Matt. 11: 19*. He slept: "Behold, a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the ship was covered with

waves; but he was asleep."—*Matt. 8: 24*. He suffered hunger and thirst: "When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry."—*Matt. 4: 2*. "He said" (on the cross): "I thirst."—*John 19: 28*. He sweat blood: "His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground."—*Luke 22: 44*. And he died: "And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."—*Luke 23: 46*. Christ was, with the exception of sin, subject to all the necessities and infirmities of human nature, therefore the Apostle says: "We have not a high-priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities; but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin."—*Heb. 4: 15*.

(b.) *A human soul*. He says himself: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death."—*Matt. 26: 38*. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."—*Luke 23: 46*. He had the two principal parts of the soul, *a human understanding*, which differed from the divine, by gradually developing itself: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men" (*Luke 2: 52*); and *a human will*: "Not my will (human), but thine (divine) be done."—*Luke 22: 42*. For this reason Christ calls himself not only the Son of God, but also the Son of Man. Thus he says: "The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."—*Matt. 8: 20*. "The Son of Man shall be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." St. Paul also calls him a man: "For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus."—*I. Tim. 2: 5*. The true faith necessary for salvation consists, as the Athanasian Creed says, in this, "that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man. He is God of the substance of his Father, begotten before the world; and he is man of the substance of his mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect man; subsisting in a reasonable soul and human flesh. Equal to the Father according to his Godhead; and less than the Father according to his manhood." That Christ is both God and man is a very important truth of our holy faith.

PART II.

There are men who say that it matters not whether one believes in the divinity and humanity of Christ or not, that it is enough to lead a good life. We will briefly consider how erroneous and un-Christian such language is.

I. *We shall first consider the divinity of Christ*. What would be the consequence if Christ were not true God?

1. *The result would be that our faith would be a mere human faith, and we should have no sure guarantee for its truth.* Christ demands adherence to, and unconditional belief in, all the truths and doctrines which he has taught us, and makes eternal salvation depend thereon. Thus he says: "He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."—*John* 3: 36. And again: He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned."—*Mark* 16: 16. Let us suppose for a moment that Christ was not God, but only man; what would follow? Obviously this, that in our whole life we could have no firm, undoubting faith. Why? For two reasons.

(a.) *Men tell falsehoods and deceive others.* How many have already arisen who have pretended to be teachers of truth and have demanded that they should be believed, but who were false teachers and imposters! Thus Mahomet asserted that he was the great prophet of God, that his doctrine descended directly from heaven, and that God himself had revealed it to him, and yet he was, as we all know, an imposter. Now, if Christ had been a mere man, it necessarily follows that he deceived men by his doctrine, and we could never arrive at a firm, undoubting faith.

(b.) *Men can err and be deceived themselves.* Do not tell me: "Christ could not deceive us; his holiness, which no one can gainsay, is a guarantee that he taught the truth." It is true, Christ led a most holy life, so holy that he could exclaim to his worst enemies: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?"—*John* 8: 46. But even the greatest holiness is no security against error. Church history tells us that the most pious men have erred in matters of faith. St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, for some time maintained and declared that baptism by heretics was invalid. Origen fell into various and even egregious errors, when, e. g., he taught that the pains of hell were not eternal. In modern times Archbishop Fenelon of Cambrai published a book which contained several errors against faith, and which, consequently, was condemned by the Apostolic See; whereupon the pious archbishop submitted, and forbade the book to be read. If Christ had been a mere man, in spite of his holiness and his intention to teach the truth, he might have taught untruth and error. God alone is the eternal, infallible truth; he alone deserves a faith excluding all doubt; therefore, our faith rests upon an immovable foundation and pillar, because Christ is more than a mere man; he is also true God.

2. *That our Redemption would be vain.* All men are sinners; for all are conceived and born in original sin, and almost all render

themselves guilty of personal sins. Sin is an infinite evil, since by it God, the Infinite, is offended. For the expiation of sin it is necessary that a corresponding, *i. e.*, an infinite, satisfaction be made. Such a satisfaction cannot be made by any creature singly, nor by all creatures jointly. Suppose millions of people were to die on the cross for their and our sins, it would be no adequate satisfaction; suppose all the angels in heaven were to assume human nature, suffer and die for our sins, again, it would be no adequate satisfaction. The reason is because all men and angels are only finite beings, and therefore cannot perform a work of infinite value. The faith of Abraham, the meekness of Moses, the penance of David, the tears of Jeremias were insufficient to pay the ransom. None but an infinite being could satisfy for an offense committed against an infinite being; none but an infinite Mercy could satisfy an infinite Justice. Therefore when God had decreed that complete satisfaction must be made for the sins of men, to obtain their forgiveness, no creature, neither angel nor man could accomplish the work of the redemption of mankind. Hence the Psalmist says: "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, and shall still live unto the end."—*Ps.* 48: 8-10. Christ alone could accomplish the work of our redemption, because he was not a mere man, but truly God; because he was God, all that he did for our redemption had an infinite value, and was therefore a perfect satisfaction for our sins. See how much depends on the truth that Christ is true God! He who rejects this article of the faith destroys the whole work of our redemption.

II. Let us now also cast a glance at the *humanity* of Christ. If Christ would redeem sinful man, he was to be not only God but also man. Why?

1. *In order to be able to do what according to the decree of God was necessary to be done for our redemption.* What was necessary for it? Nothing less than that Christ should suffer and die for us. But to enable Christ to suffer and die, it was necessary that he should be man, for if he had been and remained only God, as he is from all eternity, he could have neither suffered nor died; for God, as an unchangeable, purely spiritual, and infinitely happy being, is absolutely incapable of suffering and dying. He who denies the humanity of Christ—as some heretics, called the Docetæ, really did, who said that Christ had not assumed a real but only an apparent body, as the angels do when they appear in human shape to men, destroys the whole work of redemption; for if Christ had possessed only an apparent body he would not have been true man, and, consequently, he would not have

suffered truly and really, but only apparently, and offered himself on the cross only apparently.

2. *In order to represent men, who had sinned, before God and to blot out their sin.* It was through a man, our progenitor, Adam, that we all became sinners; it was to be a man, *i. e.*, one who as man belonged to us, who as our second progenitor was to expiate the guilt of our sin and redeem us. Christ by the assumption of human nature became the head of the whole human race; he became the new Adam, who by his obedience unto the death of the cross brought salvation to his spiritual posterity, just as the old Adam by his disobedience had brought a curse and perdition upon his corporal posterity. The Apostle teaches this in these words: "Therefore as by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation; so also by the justice of one, unto all men unto justification of life." And again: "For as by the obedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just."—*Rom.* 5: 18, 19. What holds good of the sin of Adam, holds good also of the merits of Christ. We can offer the merits of Christ as our merits to the heavenly Father, and say: Behold, Heavenly Father, we offer to thee these merits as a superabundant recompense for our guilt and as the most perfect and complete satisfaction for our sins. And God declares this offering to be perfectly acceptable to him, for his justice is completely satisfied by it.

PERORATION.

Know, then, how important the truth of the faith is that Jesus Christ is both true God and true man. With the admission or rejection of this doctrine all Christianity with all its blessings and graces stands or falls. If Christ is not God, we miss in our faith the character of divinity; it would rest upon a human foundation and be subject to error, and everything that Christ did and suffered for our redemption would be insufficient. If Christ had not been man, he could not have suffered and died, and we should still be languishing in the bondage of Satan, and heaven would be barred against us. But if Christ is true God and true man, our faith is infallible, because divine; we are redeemed; we are children of God and heirs of heaven. Oh, let us give thanks to our dear Saviour for having so clearly revealed to us the mystery of his divinity and humanity; let us stand firm in our belief in this great mystery, as well as in all the truths and doctrines of our holy faith: and let us labor more diligently, so that by a penitential life and a diligent use of the means of salvation we may partake of the precious fruits of our redemption. Amen.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE MOTHER OF DOLORS.

(See also Vol. VI.)

O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.—Lament. 1: 12.

The feast of the "Seven Dolors," or Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, which is celebrated twice in the year, the first time, on the Friday after Passion Sunday, and the second, on the third Sunday in September, had its origin in the diocese of Cologne, where it was introduced by a provincial council, in order to put a stop to the temerity of the Hussites, who, in their blind fanaticism, profaned and burned the pictures of Christ and his blessed Mother. There is some difference between the first and the second feast. On the Friday of the "Seven Dolors" Mary appears as the mother sympathizing with Jesus and taking an active part in the sufferings of her son, and by her example teaches us that according to the Apostle we must suffer with Christ, if we wish to be glorified with him.—*Rom.* 8: 17. But to-day we behold Mary as the Queen of Martyrs, who in heaven now prays for us.

Mary, the Mother of Dolors, is commonly represented with one or seven swords in her heart. The representation with *one* sword refers to the prophecy of Simeon: "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce."—*Luke* 2: 35. The representation with *seven* swords signifies the various dolors which Mary endured in the life, sufferings and death, and after the death of her divine Son, and which were reduced to the number of seven by the founders of the Order of the Servites, who had a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Dolors. The Seven Dolors are: *The Prophecy of holy Simeon, the Flight into Egypt, the Loss of the Child Jesus, her meeting Jesus carrying his Cross, her standing beneath the Cross, her receiving on her lap the Body of Jesus taken down from the Cross, and her witnessing the Burial of her Son.* As the contemplation of each of the Seven Dolors of Mary at great length would take up too much time, I shall speak to-day of her Dolors in general, and say that Mary is —

- I. *The Mother of Dolors;*
- II. *And always was the Mother of Dolors.*

PART I.

Mary, the Mother of Dolours in truth can exclaim to us in the words of the Prophet: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow." In order to comprehend the greatness of the dolours of Mary, we need only reflect—

1. *That her principal suffering was in her soul.* It is true, our body is sensitive and can endure much. What pains do not some diseases and infirmities of the body cause! Who is not seized with horror when he hears or reads of the tortures which many martyrs endured? But greater and more painful was the suffering of the Mother of God, for she suffered, not as the sick and the martyrs, only in the body, but in the soul. The sword of sorrow did not pierce her body, but her soul, as Simeon had foretold her: "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce." Now it is certain that the soul is susceptible of greater pains than the body. Who can describe the anguish of a criminal on the way to the place of execution? The body can endure pain only to a certain degree; when that degree is passed, man faints or dies; but the soul, being spiritual, cannot lose consciousness even in the greatest pain. From this we may understand that the dolours of Mary surpassed all that is bitter or painful, because they were pains of the soul. Take all corporal pains together that men have suffered from the beginning of the world until now, and shall endure to the end of time, they are as nothing when compared with the sufferings of the soul of Mary. Oh, how much did Mary suffer!

2. *That she suffered as a mother and as the Mother of God.*

(a.) Good mothers love their children, take the liveliest interest in their prosperity, and grieve in their adversity; what their children suffer, they suffer. This is particularly the case when they are witnesses of the sufferings of their children. Hence St. Augustine says of the mother of the Machabees: "By her presence she suffered with all; because she loved all, she suffered in heart what they suffered in their body." The same may be said of Mary. She felt in her heart all the sufferings which Jesus endured in all their bitterness. "The heart of Mary," says St. Lawrence Justinian, "resembled a mirror, in which one could see the stripes, the wounds and all that Jesus endured." We may say that the heart of the Mother of Dolours, on account of her love for her Son, was mocked, scourged, crowned with thorns, and crucified.

(b.) *Mary was the Mother of God.* Other mothers love their children as they love themselves, or sometimes even more than themselves, but always only as children of men. But the Mother of God loved differently. Her Son is God himself; as such she loved him infinitely more, I might say, than any mother loves her child. As great as was her love for Jesus, and it was unspeakably great, so great also was her affliction at his sufferings. If a mother who tenderly and affectionately loves her child would be ready to die, if by her death she could save her child from sufferings and death, in the case of Mary we must go still further and say that she would have been ready to die a thousand times if she could thereby have delivered her divine Son from death. The reason is simple, for Mary loved Jesus a thousand times more than her own self and her own life. Now if the pain must be measured according to love, it follows that Mary suffered more than if she had been scourged, crowned with thorns, and crucified a thousand times.

3. *That she suffered without comfort.* The holy martyrs were often tortured most painfully, but their love for Jesus so sustained them that in their inhuman and cruel tortures they exhibited a courage and joyfulness that astonished even their torturers. Thus we know of St. Lawrence, that lying on a gridiron, he jested and said to his torturers: "If you wish to eat of my flesh, behold, one side is broiled enough; now turn me over and eat." Did Mary also draw comfort from her love for Jesus, her suffering and dying Son? Ah! no; her suffering and dying Son was the cause of her pains, and her love for him was the source from which her sufferings flowed. The more she loved him, the more bitter was the pain. What mitigated the pains in the holy martyrs and the other saints increased Mary's pains and inflicted the deepest wounds on her heart! Hence St. Bernard says: In other martyrs love diminished the pain; but the more Mary loved, the more she suffered, and the more painful was her martyrdom.

Mary, then, in truth, is the Mother of Dolours; for what she suffered is more bitter and painful than all the sufferings of men. We need not wonder at this. Since Mary was destined to become the queen of heaven, she was obliged here below to become the queen of martyrs; she was obliged to be nearest her Son in sufferings, in order to be able to be nearest to him in glory. Follow courageously in the footsteps of Jesus and Mary; "think not strange the burning heat which is to try you, as if some new thing happened to you; but if you partake of the suffering of Christ, rejoice that when his glory shall be revealed you may also be glad with exceeding joy."—*I. Peter 4: 12, 13.*

PART II.

Mary always was the Mother of Dolors.

The pains of the martyrs were transient; the sufferings and afflictions of the other saints were not continuous, but Mary *always was the Mother of Dolors* —

1. *Because the sufferings of her Son were always before her eyes.* She understood the meaning of the prophecies which treated of the passion of Christ; and without doubt she knew by a special revelation all the circumstances of his passion and death. Good Friday, on which she saw her beloved Son suffer and die on the cross under unspeakable pains, was always present to her mind; whether she was alone or in company, whether she prayed, worked or rested, her suffering and dying Saviour was always before her eyes. As often as she saw him, as often as she heard his voice, the sword of sorrow pierced her heart. She could say with the Psalmist: "My sorrow is continually before me."—*Ps. 37: 18.* Time generally mitigates the grief and sorrow of the suffering, but this was not the case with Mary; on the contrary, time increased her sorrow. The more Jesus advanced in years, the more she recognized his amiability on the one hand, and the nearer she saw the hour of his death approach on the other; her sorrow, therefore, became greater and greater in consequence of the thought that she would lose him. An angel said to St. Bridget that Mary grew among sufferings as a rose among thorns; and that as the thorns grow together with the rose, this chosen rose of the Lord was always tortured by the thorns the more she increased in years. Even after the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, Mary always remembered his bitter passion and death: this remembrance and her separation always pierced her soul anew with the sword of sorrows; her suffering and sorrow ended only with her last breath.

2. *Because one sorrow succeeded another in her material life.* Sorrows —

(a.) *At the birth of Christ.* The time when she was to bring forth the Saviour was nigh. In obedience to a decree of Cæsar she was compelled to travel many a long and weary mile from Nazareth to Bethlehem, to have her name enrolled among the rest. There was no room for her at any of the inns; she was obliged to take refuge in a stable, and there Jesus was born; she laid her Divine Child in a crib, a little hay and straw supplied the place of a bed. What a sorrow for her to become a mother in such poverty and abandonment!

(b.) *Immediately after the birth of Christ.* Herod sought the life of the child. Being admonished by an angel, she was obliged to flee into Egypt with Joseph, in order to withdraw the child from the murderous hands of Herod. What must she have felt, what must she have endured, on her flight into Egypt, and in Egypt itself where she lived several years!

(c.) *At the loss of Jesus in Jerusalem.* How painful must that loss have been to her! When at length she found her beloved son she exclaimed: "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."—*Luke 2: 48.* Several spiritual writers remark that this sorrow was the most bitter that she ever endured, because she feared that she might have committed a fault, on account of which Jesus would no longer stay with her. The thought of having incurred the displeasure of her Divine Son being intolerable to her, we are justified in assuming that this loss grieved her more than even his death on the cross.

(d.) *During the public life of Christ.* Simeon's prophecy of Christ, "He is set for a sign that shall be contradicted," was literally fulfilled. He had scarcely made his appearance in the world, teaching and working miracles, when he was contradicted on all sides; the Jewish priests, the Scribes and Pharisees, calumniated, reviled, persecuted and hated him, laying snares for him and seeking his life. Even in Nazareth he was persecuted, and his fellow-townsmen tried to cast him down from a precipice. What deep wounds did these persecutions and sufferings of her Son inflict on her maternal heart!

(e.) *In his passion and death.* Since at this tragedy even the powers of nature were moved, the sun was darkened, the earth trembled, the rocks were rent, what must have been the feelings of her maternal heart? What must she have felt when Jesus in unutterable anguish sweat blood, when he was apprehended and maltreated as a malefactor, scourged, crowned with thorns, loaded with the cross and led to Mount Calvary? Who can describe the sorrow of the divine Mother when she stood under the cross and Jesus broke out into the doleful cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—*Matt. 27: 46.*

Is there one who would not weep,
Whelm'd in miseries so deep
Christ's dear Mother to behold?

Can the human heart refrain
From partaking in her pain,
In that Mother's pain untold?

PERORATION.

Yes, let us sympathize with Mary; she deserves our most profound sympathy, for she is the *Mother of Dolors*, and *always was the Mother of Dolors*. To her the words of the Prophet apply: "To what shall I compare thee, or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? to what shall I equal thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? for great as the sea is thy destruction; who shall heal thee?"—*Lam. 2:13*. Let us learn from Mary, the Mother of Dolors, willingly to accept the sufferings and tribulations of this life from the hand of God, and to bear them with patience. If Mary, the holiest, the most glorious, and the purest of creatures, has suffered so much and so long, why should we sinners find our short and comparatively trifling sufferings too hard? Let us consider that crosses and afflictions are the most effectual means of expiating our sins, extinguishing the flames of purgatory, keeping from sin, and gaining merits for heaven. Let us gather around Mary, the Mother of Dolors, and place ourselves with her under the cross, for the cross is the tree on which the fruits of eternal life ripen. Amen.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

FIRE A SYMBOL OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled.—*Luke 12:49*.

By the fire which Christ came to cast on the earth and which he desired might be kindled, we understand principally the love of God, the fire of charity, by which all men ought to be inflamed. The love of God is, as our Lord expressly says in the gospel of this day, the greatest commandment in the law; for to the question which the Pharisees put to him: *Which is the greatest commandment of the law?* he replied: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment.* According to the example of Christ, I shall to-day compare the love of God with fire, and show you how it operates in those who are in-

flamed by it, and how we must preserve it. I say: *Fire is a symbol of the love of God*—

- I. *As regards its effects;*
- II. *As regards what has to be done to keep it burning.*

PART I.

I single out only three effects of fire, viz.:

1. *It purifies.* It tolerates nothing that is unclean. Any filth which we throw into the fire is at once consumed by the flames. Fire frees the precious metal from dross and all impure matter, separating them from it or consuming them entirely. Various objects which have been soiled are purified in fire and recover their former brightness. The electric fluid which often originates in the higher regions of the air, and which is discharged in the form of sparks of fire, commonly called lightning, has an effect similar to that of common fire; it burns the pernicious vapors and purifies the atmosphere. God himself often made use of fire for the purification of places which had been contaminated by the sins and vices of men. Thus he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha by fire which fell from heaven, in order to consume the most abominable and unnatural vices with their perpetrators. As all living things in the world were once destroyed by *water*, so will everything be destroyed by *fire* at the consummation of the world. When this comes to pass there will be a great conflagration, which will consume and destroy everything that is bad, especially all the sins and vices wherewith the world has been defiled, as St. Peter assures us: "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief, in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence; and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth and the works which are in it shall be burned up."—*II. Pet. 3:10*. Even in the other world God makes use of fire, or of something like fire, as a means of cleansing the poor souls from their stains and rendering them worthy of heaven.

Here we have in fire a symbol of the love of God. "Charity is like a burning fire, which is infused into the hearts of the saints and consumes in them everything that is temporal and earthly, purifies what is impure, and perfects what it touches."—*St. Ambrose*. Perfect love (which consists in loving God above all things because he is infinitely good) frees man from all grievous sins. For Christ expressly says: "He that loveth me, shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him; . . . and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him."—*John 14:21-23*. To him who truly loves God, God gives his love and even makes an abode in his heart; consequently he can be no longer a sinner, for God

does not love a sinner, much less does he make his abode with him. St. John writes: "Every one that loveth God is born of God."—*I. John 4:7*. Perfect love, therefore, effects the spiritual regeneration, or, what amounts to the same thing, the purification and sanctification of man. We have a very striking evidence of this truth in Mary Magdalen, of whom Jesus expressly says: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."—*Luke 7:47*. Should you have the misfortune to commit a grievous sin, make at once an act of perfect contrition, which proceeds from perfect love, and resolve to go to confession on the first opportunity; for by so doing you can obtain the forgiveness of sin, and eternal salvation, should you die suddenly and without confession. Make daily such an act of perfect contrition, especially in the evening, for it is one of the best means of freeing ourselves from the small faults, which we frequently commit, and thereby blotting out the punishment we deserve.

2. *It diffuses heat.* Everything that is put into the fire or near it becomes heated. Though it is extremely cold in rooms on wintry days, yet, if a good fire is made and fed with fuel, a pleasant warmth is spread throughout the whole room; in fact, if the fire is too fierce, it becomes so hot that you must open the windows and doors to diminish the excessive heat. If you put a piece of iron into a fierce fire it becomes red-hot and no one can touch it without burning his fingers.

Herein, too, love resembles fire. It takes away a man's numbness, warms his heart, and so inflames him that he is able to overcome all the obstacles and difficulties of salvation. Hence we read in the Canticles: "Love is strong as death: jealousy as hard as hell; the lamps thereof are fire and flames. Many waters cannot quench charity; neither can the floods drown it; if a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing."—*Cant. 8:6, 7*. What does not earthly love do, what exertions and dangers does it not undergo, in order to obtain the object of its love? Why did Jacob serve his uncle Laban fourteen long years under so many and great tribulations? Because of his love for Rachel. Why do so many people, from year to year, bear with fortitude every hardship of life? Is it not for money and worldly goods? Why does many a man watch for hours or run about in the snow, cold, rain and wind, and even risk his life? On account of his love for a certain person who has become the idol of his heart. Now, if an earthly—nay, even an unchaste and unworthy love is so ready to make sacrifices, what will not the love of God be able to do? "It conquers all," says St. Chrysostom, "neither fire, nor sword, nor poverty, nor sickness, nor death, nor anything of the kind, appears difficult to him who is animated by the love of God."

Witnesses: The martyrs and all the saints. Who can describe the torments which the martyrs endured? But they remained constant under every torture; their tormentors grew tired of torturing them before they grew tired of being tortured; the fire of charity that burned in their hearts rendered them invincible. How brave and constant were all the saints in the service of God! They trampled under foot everything that the man of the world loves, lived in continual mortification, practiced the Christian virtues with the greatest zeal, and full of courage said with the Apostle: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword?"—*Rom. 8:35*.

How is it with you? Does the fire of charity burn in your hearts? It is easy for you to answer this question. All you need do is to examine yourselves and see whether you bear the hardships of the spiritual camp as a brave soldier of Christ, and practice the mortifications which are required for a virtuous life. If you do this, you can hope to possess that charity which leads to life. But if you are slothful and lukewarm in the service of God, if you do not mortify your inordinate inclinations and desires, if you seek an easy, effeminate life, you are sadly mistaken if you believe you possess the love of God. That is no fire that does not warm and heat; that is no charity which leaves you cold in the service of God.

3. *It ascends.* Take a candle and hold it any way you wish, sideways or downwards, the flames invariably go upwards. When a fire breaks out in the basement of a building, it works its way upwards, and unless it is checked penetrates to the roof, and through the roof into the air, and at night illuminates the whole heavens.

Here again we have a picture of charity; like the fire, its flame is upwards. God-loving souls seek what is above; their hearts belong to God; their thoughts and affections tend to a union with him. True, they live and work in the world, and diligently attend to the duties of their station of life; they possess money and property, and endeavor to ameliorate their circumstances; they also sometimes enjoy innocent pleasure; but all these things are to them only secondary matters, only means for attaining their eternal salvation; they use everything as the sick man uses medicine. Herein we have the example of all the saints before us. St. Bernard made his appearance in the world amidst all the advantages which could make it desirable to a young nobleman. His temperament, vivacity, wit, and cultivated genius, his prudence and natural modesty, his affability and sweetness of temper, and the agreeableness of his conversation made him beloved by all. Yet he thought the world with all its glory but a fleeting show,

exclaiming: "I long after something of which I cannot be robbed," and he resolved to dedicate himself unreservedly to the service of God. He communicated his resolution to his relations and friends, and inflamed their hearts with a love of heavenly things, and thirty noblemen and knights, including four of his brothers, renounced all earthly goods, possessions, joys and pleasures, in order to lead a contemplative life in an almost inaccessible desert, called Citeaux, there to devote their lives to the service of God in fastings, night-watchings, prayer, and meditation. On the appointed day, in the year 1113, Bernard and his brothers went to take their last farewell of their father and to beg his blessing. They had left Nivard, their youngest brother, to be a comfort to him in his old age. When they were going away, they saw him playing with other children of his own age. Gug, the eldest brother said to him: "Good-bye, Nivard, you will have all the estates and lands to yourself." The child replied: "What! you are going to take heaven for your portion, and leave me only the earth? The division is too unequal." They went away, but Nivard followed them soon after. See what the love of God does!

To be sure, it is not necessary for you to leave the world and serve God in perfect retirement; but the love of God requires that you entertain no inordinate love for anything earthly, that in the midst of your temporal affairs you do not neglect the business of your salvation and that in the distractions of life you never lose sight of God and your eternal destiny.—*I. Cor. 7: 29-31.*

PART II.

To keep fire burning it is necessary —

1. *To tend it carefully.* A little flame, *e. g.*, a lighted candle, or a lamp, is easily extinguished; a draught of air can put it out; it must therefore be protected in a lantern or a glass globe, if one wishes to use it out of doors. Water is the great antidote to fire, and when used in abundance will quench the largest conflagration.

There are some gases which are almost incompatible with fire, *e. g.*, carbonic acid gas, or choke-damp, that noxious vapor well known to miners. Fire will not burn in a flame without a supply of oxygen, and if you withdraw all air from it, it first languishes, then ceases to burn altogether. It is so with the love of God; that its flame may not be extinguished it must be carefully attended to. Therefore you must protect it —

(a.) *From every mortal sin.* Mortal sin and the love of God are incompatible. He that loves God rejoices at his greatness and

felicity, prefers him before every one and everything that is in heaven or upon earth, and is solicitous to do what pleases him; he also feels himself drawn towards him and desires nothing so ardently as to be united with him and to possess him. But what does he do who commits a mortal sin? He shows disrespect to God: he separates himself from him, turns to things which he prefers before him, and does what greatly displeases and offends him. Sin, therefore, is the very contradiction of charity, and therefore incompatible with it. Charity consists in keeping God's commandments, as Christ himself assures us: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them; he it is that loveth me."—*John 14: 21.* But what does he do who commits a mortal sin? He violates the commandments of God, for sin is a wilful transgression of the law of God. From this it is evident that charity and sin are as incompatible as fire and water. The saints knew this; for that reason they hated and detested sin above all things and were ready to die rather than to offend God by a mortal sin. Are you thus disposed? Do you look upon mortal sin as the greatest evil? Are you prepared to lose house and home, honor and reputation, aye, even your life, rather than commit a mortal sin? If you can answer these questions in the affirmative, then you love God.

(b.) *As much as possible from venial sins.* Why?

First. *Because they weaken the love of God.* A small quantity of water poured upon a fierce fire will not extinguish it, it only weakens it so that for a few moments it does not burn so brightly as before. The oftener a little water is poured on the fire the more the fire is diminished. The same may be said of venial sin and the love of God. Venial sin resembles a few drops of water; it does not extinguish the fire of charity, but diminishes it, and the oftener venial sin is repeated the more this fire is diminished. It is an essential quality of love that it seeks to please the object of love in all things, even in trifles. He, therefore, who loves God sincerely, guards himself even against the smallest faults, that he may not offend him. If, therefore, you disregard venial sins, and carelessly commit them and do no penance for them, it is a sure sign that your charity has grown cold. And with how many is this the case?

Secondly. *Because they lead to mortal sin.* "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little."—*Eccclus. 19: 1.* St. Chrysostom assures us that he knew many who seemed to be adorned with great virtues, but who through disregarding small faults sank into the abyss of vice. And St. Isidore says: "God permits those who disregard venial sins to fall into mortal sins as a punishment for their carelessness. These utterances are corro-

borated by history and experience. If you wish to preserve the love of God you must, according to the example of the saints, avoid not only grievous but also venial sins.

To keep the fire burning it is necessary—

2. *To feed it with fuel.* Fire needs food. Thus a fire in a stove will burn as long as it has combustible materials; hence from time to time we must add wood, coal or turf, otherwise it will die out. Charity also needs nourishment.

But charity is nourished —

(a.) *By prayer.* Devout prayer puts us in a devout frame of mind, arouses in our hearts religious feelings and good resolutions, and is consequently well adapted to enliven and strengthen the love of God within us. Hence St. Francis of Sales says: "Nothing so effectually purifies our understanding and our will as prayer, for it enlightens our understanding with the lucidity of divine light and inflames our will with the fervor of heavenly love." Though prayer in itself is the most powerful means for the preservation of love, divine revelation designates it also as the key to all treasures of grace. Thus our Lord himself says: "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing you shall receive."—*Matt. 21: 22.* If, therefore, we fervently practice prayer we shall, together with other benefits and graces, receive the special grace enabling us to preserve charity.

(b.) *By meditation.* If we put iron into a fierce fire, it becomes soft and even fluid, and we can make what we please out of it. So also our soul becomes soft by meditating on the truths of salvation, and susceptible to the impressions of divine love. Above all, it is meditation on the bitter passion and death of Christ that inflames the fire of charity in our hearts. Who would not love a God who died for us on the cross?

(c.) *By frequent confession and communion.* The Sacrament of Penance not only frees us from sin, but also imparts to us particular graces which enable us to overcome all temptations, to bring forth fruits worthy of penance, and consequently to preserve the love of God. But it is chiefly holy communion that enkindles the fire of charity in our hearts. St. Gregory of Nyssa applies the words of the Canticle (2: 4, 5) to holy communion: "He brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me: stay me up with flowers; compass me about with apples, because I languish with love." He compares holy communion with a cellar of wine, in which the soul becomes so intoxicated

with the love of God, that, forgetting the world and everything created she has no other desire than to be united with God for ever. For this reason the Council of Trent says that our Saviour has in the holy Eucharist poured out all the treasures of his love upon us.—*Sess. 13, cap. 2.* St. Thomas of Aquin calls it the Sacrament of Love, and St. Bernard, the Love of all Love. Should we not be full of the love of God, since we are so often united to Jesus, who is love itself?

PERORATION

Thus love resembles fire as regards its effects as well as regards what has to be done to keep it burning. As fire cleanses, warms and mounts upward, so love does the same spiritually; it cleanses us from the stains of sin and from all inordinate inclinations, brings warmth into our hearts, encourages and strengthens us to overcome all difficulties and obstacles in the practice of virtue; it infuses a heavenly disposition into us and causes us to turn away from the world and its vanities and to aspire to that which is above. As fire to keep it burning must be well tended and nourished, so we must also pay attention to love, that its holy flame may not die out in our heart. Let us then, first of all, avoid mortal sin, and as much as possible, venial sin; practice prayer, read devotional books, meditate on the truths and mysteries of our holy religion, and frequently receive the holy Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist. By so doing we shall with the grace of God preserve love, which, according to St. Augustine, is a strong tower of all virtues and the highest reward of the saints in heaven. Amen.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

WHY WE MUST LOVE GOD.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.—Matt. 22: 37.

A doctor of the law put this question to our Lord: *Master, which is the great commandment in the law?* He answered and said that the precept of charity is the greatest and first command-

ment: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.* If the love of God is the greatest and first commandment, it is evident that we must be bent upon the fulfilling of this commandment: for if we are strictly obliged scrupulously to keep all the commandments which God has given us, how could we disregard the very one that according to the express declaration of our Lord is the greatest and the first?

To exhort you to the observance of this commandment, I shall explain to-day *why we must love God*, pointing out that we must do so —

- I. *For his own sake,*
- II. *For our own sake.*

PART I.

We must love God *for his own sake* —

1. *Because he is infinitely lovable in himself.* It is implanted in the heart of man to be attracted by the beautiful, the good, and the perfect, and to love it even when we derive no benefit from it. It is the nature of love to draw hearts together. We all know what is our own feeling when we love a certain object. We see in it our ideal of the beautiful and the good, and in so doing we can no more help loving than we can help seeing objects that are before our eyes. Love is a natural inclination of the heart towards that which we consider to be good. Now, in order to love God we must fill our souls with a conviction of his goodness, that he is infinite in every perfection, and then it is that our heart will be drawn towards him. He is almighty; heaven and earth were called into existence by his single word; all creation bows down before him and does his holy will. Unfathomable is his wisdom; therefore the Apostle full of amazement exclaims: "O the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!—*Rom. 11:33.* He is infinitely holy. The holiness of Mary and of all the saints and angels disappears before the splendor and brightness of the divine sanctity, as the flame of the night lamp disappears before the light of the sun. Unspeakable are God's majesty and beauty. If there are many things in creation which enrapture us with their beauty and elicit our admiration and wonder, how beautiful, how glorious must God be, who has made all these beautiful things by his word alone? He said, "Let it be," and it was made. St. Peter saw Jesus in his transfiguration, and, filled with astonishment, exclaimed: "Lord, it is good for us to be here."—*Matt. 17:4.* St.

Chrysostom used to say that he was ready to endure the punishment of the damned for the privilege of seeing Christ in his glory, even for a moment. Thus God possesses, in an infinite measure, everything that can attract the human heart—nay, there is nothing in the whole world that, compared with God, deserves our love. Hence St. Augustine says: "I admired the bright light of the sun, the fertility of the earth, the interminable extent of the ocean, the attraction of human beauty, the glitter and pageantry of kings, the power of princes, the eloquence of orators, the wisdom of the wise; but I soon returned into my own self, contemplated my God, and said: Nothing of all this is like to my God; he has infinitely more and greater perfections, which can enrapture my heart and fulfil my wishes for ever." Why should we not love God, who is infinitely lovable? Ah, let us repent from the bottom of our hearts that heretofore we have loved him so little, and perhaps the greater part of our life not at all, and let us say with St. Augustine: "Oh beauty, ever ancient and ever new, too late have I loved thee!" Let us accustom ourselves to exclaim with him: "O Lord, may I know thee, and may I know myself."

2. *Because he is infinitely good to us* —

(a.) *In the work of creation.* Many centuries passed before we had any existence, and we should still be in our original nothingness, if it had not pleased him to form us out of nothing and to give us the being which we now enjoy. It was his love that called us into existence. That we should enjoy our life and be happy here and hereafter is the reason why he created us. And all things that are in the heavens and upon earth are for our use and benefit. All created things, from the greatest to the smallest, are an evidence of the love of God for us men; everything calls upon us to love him. The sun, the moon and the stars cry out to us: "He created us for your sake, therefore love him." The goods of our life, health, food, clothes, dwelling, cry out to us: "We are gifts of God, therefore love him." The faculties of the soul, will, memory, and understanding, cry out to us: "We are gifts of God, therefore love him." The angels say to us: "We are appointed by God to minister unto you; therefore love him." "Let us, therefore, love God, because God first hath loved us.—*I. John 4:19.*

(b.) *In the work of Redemption.* Great was the work of our creation, to be formed out of nothing; but greater was the work of our Redemption, to be freed from sin and hell. The first was an effect of God's power, the other was an effect of God's love: "God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son." Our

first parents sinned and plunged themselves and their posterity into the greatest misery. When the angels fell from the mansions of bliss owing to their pride, they were irretrievably lost—no Redeemer was promised to them, no remedy provided for their relief, no means were granted whereby they could have recovered the grace which they had forfeited. But the case was quite different with men. Immediately after the fall of our first parents, God, in his mercy, promised to send them a Redeemer, telling the serpent who had seduced Eve that the seed of the woman should crush his head. This seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, in the fulness of time made his appearance in the world in the form of a servant, to redeem and save us from sin and damnation by his sufferings and ignominious death on the cross. "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: 18, 19. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." He gave up everything for our sake. He might have been rich, great and powerful, but for us he became poor, humble and suffering: he concealed his power and majesty and the glory of his Godhead under the garb of human poverty, suffered all the helplessness of infancy, the bitter and rude contumelies of an ungrateful world, and offered himself on Calvary in order to redeem the stubborn heart of man, to avert his Father's wrath, to recover for us that bright inheritance lost by sin, to open for us a pathway into heaven, and to hand over to us, sealed in his agonies and blood, the immortal character of Redemption from the thralldom of centuries. Is this not an incomprehensible love? Is not St. Francis of Sales right when he says: "Is it love or is it folly, that hath killed thee, O Jesus? It is love and also folly; my folly and thy love."

Is it difficult to love with our whole soul a God, who has not only overwhelmed us with all kinds of benefits, but has even died for us on the cross? Remembering all this, would it not be abominable ingratitude to remain cold—aye, and even to offend him by sins?

PART II.

We must love God for our own sake —

1. *Because without love we can do nothing meritorious.* What the impression is to a coin, charity is to virtues and good works. Though the coin be of precious metal, of gold or silver, it is not accepted in ordinary transactions, if it is only a shapeless piece of metal and is not stamped. It is the same with virtues and good works; if they lack the stamp of charity, they have no value in

the eyes of God. Hence St. Paul says: "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. To give away one's whole substance in alms to the poor—is not that something great? Yes, but without love it will be of no advantage hereafter. To lay down one's life for the holy faith—is not that something great? Yes, but without charity it is without merit before God. "In a ship," says St. Chrysostom, "there are large masts, but without sails they are useless. In the human body there are large bones; but without union, without nerves, they are useless. In like manner all doings are fruitless without charity." St. Bernard says: "No virtue is of any value without charity." If, however, the fire of charity burns in our hearts, all things that we do, even the most insignificant, become meritorious before God and acquire for us an eternal reward. When we work, pray, endure the various hardships of life with patience, when we practice a virtue or do a good work, when we do quite common and in themselves indifferent things, *e. g.*, eat, drink, walk, or sleep, all these actions are pleasing to God and are entitled to a reward: for it is charity that stamps upon them the seal of merit. Should not this be a powerful incentive to love God?

2. *Because without the love of God we cannot become perfect.* St. Paul says: "Above all things have charity, which is the bond of perfection."—*Col.* 3: 14. According to this utterance of St. Paul, it is charity that unites all virtues together and makes them perfect; we must therefore strive after charity, in order that we may become perfect. St. Augustine says: "Incipient love is incipient justice; progressive love is progressive justice; great love is great justice; and perfect love is perfect justice." As this saint here teaches, the measure of justice, or what is the same, the measure of perfection, is the measure of love, and we are perfect when we have perfect love; Christian perfection consists in love. Reason teaches us the same. Every one admits that the perfection of a thing consists in its perfectly suiting the purpose for which it is intended, for which it is created. Thus we call an eye perfect when it plainly sees all objects, because it is the purpose of the eye to see. It being our destiny to be one day united with God and to possess him for ever, our perfection can consist in nothing else than in love, for it is only love that unites us with God and causes us to possess him for ever. He, therefore, who loves God as he should be loved, is perfect.

It would be a great error for a Christian to suppose that perfection consists in the performance of some particular good work. Let us suppose for a moment that a man practices with great fervor the three principal good works, *prayer, fasting and alms;*

he would not on that account be perfect; he might, like the Pharisee, be a sinner and perish. The same may be said of the Christian virtues. If you were as humble as St. Francis of Assisi, as meek as St. Francis of Sales, or as chaste as St. Aloysius, you would not necessarily be perfect: you might possibly be sinners, and perish as such. Perfection does not consist exclusively in the observance of the evangelical counsels, voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity and entire obedience, for even heathens, such as Crates and many others who were anything but saints, have in a certain sense observed them. The exercises of virtues and good works are necessary to perfection; but they do not constitute perfection itself; perfection consists chiefly and solely in the love of God. If therefore we would be perfect, let us love God.

3. *Because without the love of God we cannot be saved.* Faith teaches us that nothing defiled can enter heaven. If we wish to enter heaven we must be free from every stain of sin. Our dear Lord has instituted the holy sacraments that by means of them we may be freed from our sins and be sanctified. But what is necessary for the worthy reception of the sacraments? Charity, or the love of God. Where that is wanting the sacraments do not effect the salvation, but the damnation of the soul. Even in the two sacraments of the dead, Baptism and Penance, at least an incipient love is required for their worthy reception. He who has not charity cannot be justified; he remains in sin and cannot be saved. Hence St. John says: "He that loveth not, abideth in death" (1. John 3:14); that is, he cannot be raised up from the death of sin to the life of grace.

We read in the gospel of a man who went to the marriage feast, not having on a wedding garment. The king noticing him among the guests, said to him: "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—*Matt. 22: 11-13*. This will be the lot of those who without the wedding garment of charity appear before the heavenly King; he will pronounce over them the sentence of condemnation, and cast them into the prison of hell. Though they had *faith* and *hope*, and though they practiced various virtues and good works, all will avail them nothing without *charity*; they will be rejected. "It is charity alone", says St. Augustine, "that distinguishes the children of the kingdom from the children of perdition. Other gifts also are imparted by the Holy Ghost, but they profit nothing without charity. Without it man will not be put from the left to the right." Blessed, therefore, are those who love God with their whole heart. Though they may have sinned grievously, God forgives them, as he for-

gave Mary Magdalen and many other penitent sinners, and bestows upon them his favor and grace, "for charity covereth a multitude of sins."—*I. Pet. 4: 8*.

PERORATION.

These are some of the reasons why we must love God; he deserves to be loved for his own sake, because he is infinitely lovable in himself and infinitely good to us. We must also love him for our own sake; for without the love of God it is impossible to do anything meritorious, to become perfect and to be saved. Resolve to-day to love God above all things and to manifest your love by doing his holy will in all things and by guarding against every, even the least, fault. Let the love of God reign in your hearts, and let it be the vital principle of all your actions. Frequently look up to heaven and say: "O my God, I love thee with my whole heart; and all that I do and suffer, I do and suffer for the love of thee. In thy love I wish to live and to die." Blessed are we if we give God our whole undivided heart; the words of the Apostle will be fulfilled in us: "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* Amen.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

HOW MUST WE LOVE GOD?

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.—*Matt. 22: 37*.

As we read in the gospel of this day, the Pharisees again gathered around Christ, and one of them, a doctor of the law, asked him: *Master, which is the great commandment in the law?* Perhaps he was not guilty of trying to lay a snare for our Lord, but wished to hear his opinion, for it was a moot question which was the greatest and first commandment in the Mosaic Law. Our Blessed Lord indicated charity as the greatest commandment, saying: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and*

with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. To this commandment we shall to-day direct our attention and answer the question: *How must we love God?* As Christ tells us, we must love God—

- I. With our whole heart;
- II. With our whole soul,
- III. With our whole mind.

PART I

We must love God—

1. *With the heart.* What does this mean? It means that we must love God not only exteriorly, but also interiorly. We often make an act of charity, saying: "O God, I love thee above all things, because thou art the highest, most perfect good, worthy of all our love." These are beautiful words, but if they come only from the mouth and not from the heart, they are empty sounds and have no value before God. It is not the mere tribute of our words or external demeanor in prayer that he demands, for he has expressed his displeasure at the service of those who make an act of love only with their lips. "This people honoreth me with the lips; but their heart is far from me."—*Matt. 15:8*. And who are those who love God only with their lips? They are—

(a.) Those who, when they make an act of love and say their prayers, *give themselves up to voluntary distractions*, who at prayer move only their tongue and lips without thinking of what they say, or without directing their heart to God. Such worshippers by their want of attention and devotion offer an insult to God, and can not expect any advantage from their prayer. And how many are there who pray thus? Recollect yourselves before you begin to pray and endeavor to keep away all distractions, whether you make an act of love or say any other prayer.

(b.) Those who give their heart not to God, but to some creature, and therefore *do not love God, but something else*. How great again is the number of these persons? The ambitious, the avaricious, the unchaste, the revengeful, in short, all those who live in mortal sin, do not love God; they love their evil lusts and passions; they tell a direct lie to God as often as they say: "My God, I love thee." If perhaps there are some among you who are guilty of grievous sins, repent of them from your heart and make a good confession as soon as possible, that you may no

longer tell an untruth when you say: "My God, I love thee with my whole heart."

2. *With the whole heart.* God is not satisfied with a divided heart; we must not divide our love between him and his creatures; he demands our undivided love. We may—aye, must, love our neighbor, but the love of our neighbor must be based upon the love of God: that is, we may and must love our neighbor only because God wills it. If by loving our neighbor we should withdraw our hearts from God and love some one, *e. g.*, from self-interest or sensual inclination, or if thereby we intend something sinful, *e. g.*, the gratification of carnal lust, our love would be diametrically opposed to the love of God and would be sinful. We may also love temporal things, such as health, money, possessions, but again only according to the will of God, and in so far as they are his gifts and a means for the attainment of our eternal salvation. But he who loves earthly goods for their own sake and so loves them as to make bad use of them, sins against the love of God. To love God with the whole heart means to love God alone, and everything besides God for God's sake and in such a manner as he wills. He who loves God with his whole heart can truly say with David: "What have I in heaven? and besides thee what do I desire upon earth? for thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away: thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion for ever."—*Ps. 72:25, 26*. St. Francis of Sales loved God with his whole heart, for he says of himself: "If I knew that there was in my heart a single fibre not for God. I would tear it out at once."

God is a jealous God and does not allow anything to interfere with the worship due to him. Examine yourselves and see whether your heart is not divided between God and creatures; whether you have an inordinate love for any person or thing. If you discover that you have, expel it from your heart, for the heart of a man is a tabernacle in which God alone should dwell.

PART II.

We must love God with our whole soul. Our soul has three powers: the *understanding*, the *will* and the *memory*; it has two principal qualities, it is *spiritual* and *immortal*. In order to love God with our whole soul, we must make use—

1. *Of the three powers of our soul according to the will of God.*

(a.) *The understanding.* Our holy religion contains many truths which we cannot comprehend, *e. g.*, the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of Christ, the providence of

God, justification and grace. We must receive these and all revealed truths with a believing heart and adhere to them, and, according to the words of the Apostle, bring into captivity our understanding to the obedience of Christ. So soon as we are certain that any doctrine of faith is revealed by God we must not for a moment doubt its truth, for such a doubt would be a great offense against God. But what God has revealed to us he teaches us by the Catholic Church, for she is, as the history of all centuries testifies, the Church established by Christ, and having the continual assistance of the Holy Ghost she is the infallible teacher of truth. To believe her is to believe Christ; her mouth is God's mouth. Woe to him who does not receive and believe as God's word what the Church teaches; to him the words of Christ apply: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."—*Matt.* 18: 17. The love of God requires that we subject the first power of the soul, the understanding, to faith, *i. e.*, that we believe all that God has revealed and proposes to our belief through the Catholic Church, no matter whether we can comprehend it or not.

(b.) *The will.* Charity requires that we always will what God wills, that we make a sacrifice of our will to God, and therefore receive cheerfully all crosses and afflictions from his hand. In this way all pious souls manifest their love of God. When St. Gertrude said the "Our Father", she used to repeat three times the words: "Thy will be done." While praying thus one day, our Blessed Lord appeared to her, having *health* in one hand and *sickness* in the other, and said to her: "Choose, daughter, between health and sickness." Which do you suppose the saint chose? health, of course. No. Well, then, sickness? No. As she did not know what our Lord thought good to give her, she said: "Lord, not my will, but thine be done." Let the petition in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done," be verified, let us be satisfied with whatever God is pleased to send us, firmly convinced that he will send us only what is good and expedient for us.

(c.) *The memory.* When we love some one sincerely we often think of him, for where our treasure is there also is our heart. If, therefore, we truly love God, we shall frequently think of him and raise our heart to him. St. Aloysius was always occupied with the thought of God and divine things, and, whether alone or in company, whether he worked or rested, had no room in his heart for anything but God. To spare his weakened health, his superiors ordered him to turn his thoughts sometimes from God and to divert himself. But it was impossible for him to do so; his thoughts involuntarily reverted to God. Hence it is not a good sign that so many of us have our thoughts everywhere except

with God; that we rise in the morning and lie down in the evening without thinking of God, that we occupy ourselves the whole day exclusively with temporal affairs, without even a passing thought of God, that even on Sundays and holidays, and in church during mass, we give way to distractions, and that in general we care as little about God as about a stranger. We certainly do not wrong ourselves by saying that either we do not love God at all, or that our love is very weak and resembles a tiny spark which is liable every moment to be extinguished.

2. Our soul is of a *spiritual nature*; in this respect it resembles the angels, who are pure spirits, in fact, even God himself, who, as Christ says, is a Spirit. When Christ tells us to love God with our whole soul, he indicates that our love for God ought to be spiritual, as our soul is. It is not a sentimental love that is required; tender feelings of love do not belong to the essence of the love of God; one may even have these tender feelings of love without truly loving God. Many naturally tender-hearted persons, on certain occasions, *e. g.*, when hearing a sermon, or listening to the music, experience a sentimental love of God; but if they are in a state of sin and do not free themselves from it by penance, it is anything but a true love of God. Even tears are nothing and profit nothing unless we give up our sinful life. Do not therefore desire tender feelings and sensible devotion; leave it to God whether he will give you such or not; but let your only anxiety be to hate and detest sin and to keep the commandments of God; this is the true love that leads you to salvation, as Christ himself says: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he is that loveth me."—*John* 14: 21.

3. Our soul is a spirit, and therefore is immortal, as Christ says: "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul."—*Matt.* 18: 28. Since according to the words of Christ we must love God with our whole soul, our love, like our soul, must be immortal, *i. e.*, *constant*. We are destined to love God also hereafter through all eternity, for, as the Apostle says, "charity never falleth away."—*I. Cor.* 13: 8. What we shall do hereafter, if we are so fortunate as to get to heaven, we must do now here on earth; we must love God without interruption till we draw our last breath. Hence St. Augustine says: "We must not leave a single part of our life void of the love of God, for he does not permit us to withdraw our love from him even for a moment and to turn it to a creature." Let us then guard against forgetfulness of God and against inconstancy, considering 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.

PART III.

We must love God *with our whole mind*. By mind we may understand inclinations which are innate in us or by custom are gradually formed in us. These inclinations may be bad or good; the former lead us away from God, the latter draw us to him. That we may love God with our whole mind, we must—

1. *Mortify the evil inclinations within us.* Every man, in consequence of original sin is inclined to evil. Hence God himself says: "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth."—*Gen. 8: 21*. These evil inclinations differ in different persons. Some are particularly inclined to ambition and vanity; others to avarice, others to impurity, others to anger. These inclinations, unless we curb them, will become the fruitful source of sins. Examples: Cain, the fratricide; King Saul; Judas, the traitor.

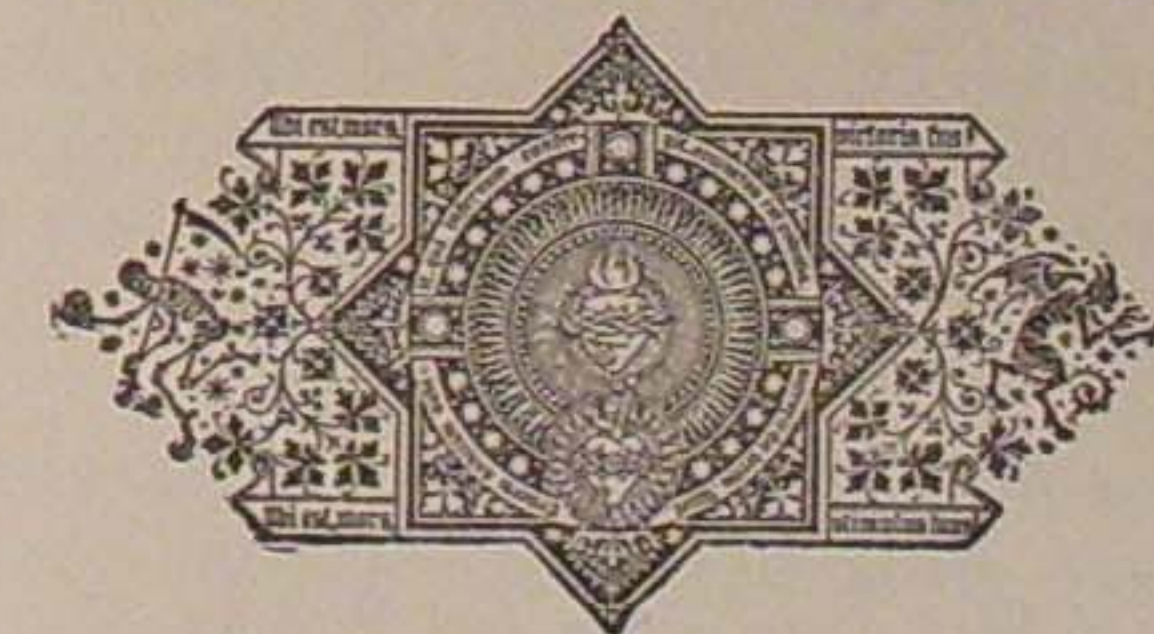
If we wish to preserve the love of God, nothing remains for us but continually to mortify our evil inclinations. For this reason our Lord admonishes us in these words: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—*Matt. 16: 24*. Let us pay particular attention to those evil inclinations which are predominant in us. We shall soon discover them, if we diligently examine our conscience and seek for the source from which most of them originate. When once we know our predominant passion we must employ the means best calculated to overcome it. When a bad inclination arises in us, we must resist in the beginning, and beg of God the grace to overcome it.

2. *Foster the good inclination within us.* All men naturally have good and evil inclinations. There are persons who are naturally humble, charitable, peaceful, and who have a particular predilection for silence, temperance and a retired life. Now the love of God requires us to foster these good inclinations and upon every occasion to make use of them. As often as you have an opportunity of doing something good for which you naturally have an inclination, you must do it. For instance, you are naturally meek; practice meekness when any one offends you, and preserve thereby your interior and exterior tranquillity. You are naturally taciturn, practice silence when there is a question of concealing your own good works, or the faults of others, which concern only themselves. But that these exercises may become meritorious before God, sanctify them by love of him. You know that our virtues and good works have a claim to a reward only when they are done for the love of God. The Scribes and Pharisees did many good works, but because in them they

had not God in view, but themselves, and sought the praise and applause of the world, Jesus told them that: "They have received their reward."—*Matt. 6: 2*. Have always a good intention in all your good actions and frequently raise your heart to God, saying: "My God, whatever I do, I do for the love of thee."

PERORATION.

I have now explained to you *how you must love God*. Love him *with your whole heart*. Give your love to him alone and love all beside him only for his sake and in so far as he wills. Your heart is made for God and finds rest in him alone, therefore give him your heart. Love God *with your whole soul*, subject your understanding to the obedience of faith, make use of your will only to will what God wills; dedicate to him your memory, often think of him and walk in his presence. Your love must be spiritual like your soul, and must manifest itself not only in pious sentiments, but by filial fear of God and a scrupulous fulfilment of his commandments. As your soul will never die, so let your love never die; therefore shun every mortal sin, which is the death of love. Love God *with your whole mind*, bridle and mortify all evil inclinations, foster and nourish the good ones and employ them in the practice of Christian virtues and good works. Finally, whatever you do, do all for the love of God, that you may become richer and richer in merits in this world, and hereafter receive in heaven the reward of all that love God. Amen.





EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE. *I. Cor. 1: 4-8.* Brethren: I give thanks to my God always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus, that in all things you are made rich in him, in all utterance and in all knowledge: as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace, waiting for the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who also will confirm you unto the end without crime, in the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE GRACES WHICH THE CORINTHIANS HAD RECEIVED AND MIGHT YET EXPECT.

The Church has already on ten occasions during the course of the year brought before us in her lessons on Sundays portions of these two epistles which St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, his beloved converts. To-day we again have a selection from the first chapter of the first epistle, in which he gives the Corinthians the assurance that he returns thanks to God unceasingly for the grace of their conversion to the holy Faith through Jesus Christ. He sets these graces before their eyes, to urge them to show themselves thankful for them and to avail themselves of them for their salvation.

Let us make a short meditation on the lesson of this day. St. Paul speaks —

I. Of the graces which the Corinthians have already received from God;

II. Of the graces which they may yet expect.

PART I.

1. The Apostle directs the attention of the Corinthians to the grace of God which has been given to them in Jesus Christ. What

grace is it? It is *sanctifying grace*, which they received through the merits of Jesus Christ. For at their conversion to the Christian faith, they received holy baptism and with it sanctifying grace. But baptism, as well as the other sacraments, derives its virtue of sanctifying man from Christ; for if he had not become incarnate, and died on the cross for the salvation of mankind, we should have no sacraments, no means whereby we might recover the grace which we have forfeited. Hence the Apostle tells us that we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"—*Rom. 3: 24*; and that, "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."—*Rom. 5: 10*. Sanctifying grace is most precious; he who possesses it is just; his sins, at least all mortal sins, together with their eternal punishment, are forgiven him; he is a child of God, therefore he enjoys the highest dignity to which mortal man can be elevated, and heaven with its unspeakable joys is promised to him as an inheritance. "We are," says the Apostle, "the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."—*Rom. 8: 16, 17*. He who possesses sanctifying grace, possesses at the same time the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity, and all his actions, even the most insignificant, if they are performed with a good intention, are meritorious before God and obtain an increase of holiness and happiness.

What a great benefit then is sanctifying grace! How we ought to esteem and preserve it! Shun nothing so much as sin; for faith teaches us that sanctifying grace is lost by every mortal sin. According to the example of the saints your maxim ought to be: Lord, I would rather die than sin. If you should have the misfortune of falling into mortal sin, do not persevere in that unhappy state, for nothing is more perilous and injurious than to live in sin for any length of time. In a state of sin you can do nothing meritorious, and if death, against which you are never secure, overtakes you in a state of sin, you will be lost for ever. What levity and forgetfulness of salvation would it be to persevere in sin for months and years! Whenever you commit a grievous sin, make as soon as possible a sincere and humble confession, in order to recover the grace you have forfeited.

2. St. Paul reminds the Corinthians of another grace which they had received, saying: *You are made rich in Christ, in all utterance and in all knowledge.* The Apostle and his companions had thoroughly instructed the Corinthians in the doctrine and mysteries of the Christian religion; they knew whatever was necessary and useful for the service of God, their own sanctification and perfection, and they were able to instruct others. This indeed was a grace for which the Corinthians were bound to thank God; for there

were many Christian congregations that were not so well instructed, and, consequently, had not such a thorough knowledge of the Christian religion. Is there not an opportunity offered to you to acquire a thorough knowledge of religion? Is not the word of God preached to you on Sundays and holidays, and are you not taught what you must believe and do, in order to please God and to save your souls? Are there not many books in which everything relating to faith and morals is explained thoroughly and intelligibly even to the humblest capacity? Think of the millions of pagans, who, to make use of the language of the sacred Scripture, are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. These poor people have but a glimmering knowledge of God and divine things; the mystery of Redemption, and everything connected with it, is entirely hidden from them; they often cannot even distinguish between right and wrong, between virtue and vice. Our children who go to school for a few years only, know more about religion than the most learned pagans. Oh, how grateful you ought to be to God for the instruction which you received in the Christian religion in your childhood and youth and which you can continue to receive so long as you live! Appreciate this grace and be present at the sermons and instructions, which are given on Sundays and holidays. In religious affairs we can never finish our studies; hence we must hear sermons whenever we have an opportunity, and also read spiritual books, with a view to perfect ourselves in the knowledge of religion, according to the admonition of St. Peter: "Increase in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."—*II. Pet. 3: 18*. But employ your religious knowledge for the improvement of your conduct, remembering that not your knowledge, but your deeds, will lead to life. "That servant who knew the will of his lord, and prepared not himself and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."—*Luke 12: 47*. If Catholics lead a sinful life, they will fare worse hereafter than pagans, because these poor creatures have on account of their ignorance at least a partial excuse. Hence Christ pronounces woe over the cities Corozain and Bethsaida, where he had so often taught and worked miracles, and says that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for them.—*Matt. 11: 21, 22*.

3. The Apostle says that *the testimony of Christ was confirmed in the Corinthians*. By the *testimony of Christ* we must understand the gospel, the doctrine of Christ. St. Paul testifies to the Corinthians that the gospel which he preached to them has produced an effect on them, and that they gave evidence of a truly Christian life. The Corinthians deserved this beautiful **encouragement, for they received the Christian religion which St. Paul**

preached to them with a believing heart, and led an edifying life so long as he remained with them. But later, after he had left them, it was otherwise; several of them returned to the vices and excesses of their former Gentile life. This was the reason why St. Paul wrote the first epistle, exhorting them to penance and amendment, and strictly forbidding them all intercourse with perverse and corrupt companions, by whom they had been led astray. It was also a grace of God that the Corinthians at the beginning of their conversion led a pious, edifying life, for with only natural means no one is able to live piously and to practice Christian virtues; the Apostle emphatically declares that we are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is from God.—*II. Cor. 3: 5*. Christ himself assures us that without him, *i. e.*, without his grace, we can do nothing. It is true, grace does not do everything; man also must work, must co-operate with grace, he must make use of the grace which God confers upon him, illuminating, urging, and strengthening him, for only in this way is it possible to act as we ought. But as it is God with his grace who begins in us all good and continually supports us in order that we may persevere therein, every exercise of virtue is more his work than ours. We must therefore thank God as often as we have done something towards our salvation, and full of humility say with David: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us: but to thy name give glory."—*Ps. 113: 9*. He who prides himself on his virtues and good works, and thereby seeks the praise and applause of the world, and desires honor from men, will lose all merit before God and share the lot of the Scribes and Pharisees, of whom our Lord declared that they had already received their reward.—*Matt. 6. 2*.

PART II.

St. Paul now speaks of the *graces which the Corinthians may yet expect from God*.

1. He says: *Nothing is wanting to you in any grace, waiting for the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ*. With these words he means to say that the Corinthians may with confidence await the coming of Christ to judgment since they have graces in abundance, with the help of which they can work out their salvation. It was so in reality. The Christians at Corinth had received not only ordinary, but also extraordinary graces; they enjoyed various spiritual gifts, such as power to heal the sick, and to work other miracles, to prophesy, to discern spirits, and to speak with divers tongues. These spiritual gifts were to them a continual and powerful proof of the truth and divinity of their holy faith, and at the same time a strong incentive to live according to its pre-

cepts, in order to be able with joyful confidence to look forward to the judgment to come.

The graces necessary for our salvation are not wanting to us: in respect to these graces we, like the Corinthians, can hope with confidence that the day of judgment will have a favorable issue for us; "for God," as the Apostle says, "will have all men to be saved."—*I. Tim.* 2: 4. But since, as faith teaches us, no one can work out his own salvation without grace, it is evident that God imparts to us as many graces as we need for salvation. The Christians at Corinth had received faith from an Apostle, St. Paul; the same grace is given to us, for the bishops and priests who instruct us in the Christian doctrine are the successors of the Apostles, like them ministers of Christ, and dispensers of the mysteries of God.—*I. Cor.* 4: 1. The same Holy Ghost that the Corinthians received has also been imparted to us in the holy Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, and his grace operates in us as strongly as in them. In the Christian congregation at Corinth there were some who were specially favored with spiritual gifts; there are some Christians also in our days endowed with such. It would not be difficult to mention some such highly-favored souls at present who bear the marks of the holy wounds in their bodies, possess the gift of the most profound contemplation, or foretell future things. It is therefore certain that as many graces for our salvation come to us as to the Corinthians, and perhaps even greater. When we look at the multitude and magnitude of these graces, we have every reason to be of good cheer, and to hope with confidence for salvation; for why should we fear that we shall be unable to comply with the conditions upon which eternal salvation depends, when God by means of his graces so facilitates our progress in the path of salvation? In effect, we need nothing except earnest co-operation with the graces of God and we shall then certainly be of the number of the elect.

2. The Apostle asserts this still further with the words: *Who (Christ) also will confirm you unto the end without crime, in the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The Apostle means to say: Since God has made you his sons and heirs of his kingdom, he will also keep you in his grace to the end, if you are solicitous for your salvation, so that when Jesus shall come to judgment at the end of time, or to the particular judgment immediately after your death, you may be without sin, justified, and sanctified and, therefore, called to eternal salvation. The Apostle speaks here of the grace of *perseverance*. Nothing is more necessary for salvation than perseverance in good to the end, *i. e.*, we must serve God all the days of our life with unchangeable fidelity, commit no mortal sin and possess sanctifying grace at

least at the moment of our death. It is not enough to begin well and serve God for a while; everything depends upon our perseverance. St. Jerome says: "With Christians we do not look at the beginning but at the end." What did it avail Judas to have been a disciple of Christ? What did it profit him to have preached the gospel, to have baptized, to have worked miracles? Because he did not persevere in good, he perished. Suppose a Christian were to serve God the greater part of his life with all fervor, but at the end of it were to fall into grievous sins and die in them, he would infallibly be lost. Jacob saw the Lord standing at the top of the ladder, not at the bottom, nor in the middle, but at the top, to give us to understand that it will avail us nothing to begin well unless we continue and persevere to the end.

But to persevere in the practice of virtue to the end, we need a particular grace. God must continually assist us, that we may gain strength to overcome all temptations, or, if we should succumb to them, to do true penance and die a good death. But God gives this grace to those only who ask for it. St. Augustine says: "It is certain that God gives some things, as the beginning of faith, to those who do not pray; but other things, such as final perseverance, he gives only to those who pray." The saints were well aware of this, therefore they did not rely upon their own virtue and holiness, imagining that nothing more was wanting to them; on the contrary, they had recourse to prayer and unceasingly implored God to keep them in his grace in life and death. St. Philip Neri admonished his penitents to invoke God uninterruptedly for the gift of final perseverance; for this end he made them daily recite five "Our Fathers" and five "Hail Marys," in order to obtain of God the grace to persevere in good to the end.

PERORATION.

You should also adopt this practice. Daily implore God to assist you with his grace, that you may be able to overcome all temptations and to persevere steadily and faithfully in his holy service. But let not your co-operation be wanting; shun as much as possible the occasion of sin, and love a retired life. As soon as a temptation arises in your heart, turn away from it without delay and invoke the help of God. Have God always before your eyes; often think of the shortness of life, the vanity of all earthly goods, and the four last things; pray diligently, read devotional books, and frequently receive the sacraments. If you do what is required of you, God will do his part; he will keep you in his grace and love here, and will admit you into the number of his elect in heaven. Amen.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt. 9: 1-8.* At that time: Jesus entering into a boat, passed over the water and came into his own city. And behold they brought to him one sick of the palsy, lying in a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold, some of the Scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth. And Jesus, seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether it is easier to say: Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say: Arise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then said he to the man sick of the palsy): Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it, feared, and glorified God who had given such power to men.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

TWOFOLD HEALING OF THE MAN SICK OF THE PALSY.

In the land of the Gerasens, in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee, Christ had healed two men who were possessed by the devil, and had allowed the expelled spirits to enter into a herd of swine, which forthwith rushed into the sea and were drowned. When the Gerasens heard of this occurrence, they asked him to leave their country, for they feared his stay among them would cause them still greater damage. How foolish! They considered their swine to be of greater value than their souls. Christ then entering into a boat, passed over the sea of Galilee, and came into his own city. This city is neither Bethlehem, where he was born, nor Nazareth, where he spent the greater part of his life, but Capharnaum, the great commercial city on the Sea of Galilee. This city was called the *City of Jesus*, because he stayed there frequently, preaching and performing many miracles. In this city occurred what the gospel of this day relates, and which we shall make the subject of our present consideration. It may be divided into three parts:

- I. Christ forgives the sins of the man sick of the palsy;
- II. He confutes the Scribes;
- III. He heals the sick man.

PART I.

1. *And behold, they brought to him one sick of the palsy, lying in a bed.* St. Mark relates that he was carried by four men.—*Mark 2: 3, 4.* In order to gain admittance into the house in which Jesus was at the time (for a great crowd surrounded it), "they went up upon the roof, and let him down through the tiles with his bed into the midst before Jesus."—*Luke 5: 19.* (Description of the Jewish roofs.)

(a.) Let us first turn our attention to the man sick of the palsy. As you are aware, palsy is one of the most dreadful diseases; it causes great pain, sometimes almost intolerable pain, and renders all the members powerless when it has reached the last stage. Various remedies have been tried, but generally in vain; we may say that there is no medicine for the cure of the palsy, and when once it becomes chronic it is incurable, and lasts ten, twenty or thirty years, till death relieves the sufferer. He was truly in a pitiable condition, but what made him still more unfortunate was the miserable state of his soul; he was compelled to say to himself that he was a sinner and that God had justly punished him with the palsy on account of his sins. That this sickness was the result of his sins and in punishment thereof is evident from the fact that our Lord forgave him his sins; therefore he first removed the cause, and then healed him of his palsy.

God visits many people with sickness, as he visited this man with the palsy, in order to chastise them for their sins, and if possible to bring about their repentance and to save them from perdition. There is scarcely anything so effectual for the conversion of the sinner as sickness and sufferings. When a man lies on his sick bed, full of aches and pains, his eyes are opened and he sees how vain and frail are all earthly things; his conscience is aroused, and brings his faults and sins, as well as the account he must give, vividly before his eyes; fear and anguish seize him and he finds no rest till by a sincere confession he frees his soul from sin and begins to do penance. Many thousands who were sinners owe to sickness the salvation of their souls. When, therefore, God sends us sickness, we must look upon it as a grace and patiently resign ourselves to his holy will, because sickness is one of the most effectual means of penance and, therefore, of salvation. We must not, however, judge rashly when another suffers a lingering sickness, and think that it is a punishment for his sins; for we know that the greatest saints, *e. g.*, St. Gertrude, St. Lidwine, endured most lingering and painful sicknesses. Sufferings and sickness are the portion of the saints; God sends them

to them, in order to make them more conformable to his Son, and capable of receiving a greater measure of glory hereafter.

(b.) *The four men who carried the man sick of the palsy* give us an example of fraternal charity which we ought to imitate. Their love was *active*. They were not content with only sympathizing with the unfortunate man, or consoling him with friendly words, they really helped him as well as they could, they carried him to Christ. Our love also must be active: "My little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth."—*I. John 3: 18*. Mere compassion and words of consolation resemble a tree that blossoms but yields no fruit. We are not pleased with such a tree. Neither is God pleased with us if we only sympathize with the wretched, but do not aid them in their need when without much trouble we could do so.

The charity of these men was *ready to make sacrifices*. It was not easy to get the sick man into the presence of Christ. Let us also make sacrifices when there is any question of assisting the wretched. In order to encourage ourselves to do so, let us think of the sacrifices which Christ made for our redemption. The charity of the men was *unselfish*. The sick man very likely was poor; they therefore could expect no recompense for their act of kindness. Let us do good to our neighbor as often as we can without expecting a recompense for it. Let it be satisfaction enough for us to know that God will reward us in heaven for all the good we do on earth.

2. *And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee.*

(a.) Here again we have a proof of the truth that oftentimes when men petition God for one favor, a greater and more profitable one is granted to them. The four men brought the sick man to Christ, in order to obtain the health of his body; even the sick man himself had no other wish and desire. Christ conferred on him a far greater favor than he asked; he cured the soul rather than the body and pronounced the pardon of his sins. We need never fear that God will leave our prayers unheard, if the petition itself is good; he always hears it, for the words of Christ are eternally true: "Ask, and you shall receive." But God oftentimes does not hear us in the way we wish; he denies us what we ask, and in its stead gives us something better. Many of us petition for health, prosperity, or to be delivered from some evil, yet we do not obtain the purport of our prayer, but in place of the things we ask for he gives us something better, *e. g.*, a contrite disposition of mind, contempt of temporal goods, or greater fervor in the practice of virtue. We must therefore leave to God

the granting or refusing of our requests; he knows best what is good for us and what we need.

(b.) The Evangelist gives the reason why Christ announced to the palsied man the forgiveness of his sins, for he says: *Jesus seeing their faith*. What kind of faith was it that the bearers and the sick man had? It was not a dead but a living faith, united with a penitential disposition of mind. The sick man knew very well that he had contracted his sickness by his excesses; he recognized the chastising hand of God; he repented of his sins, and was firmly resolved to amend his life; at the same time he put his confidence in Christ and hoped for grace and mercy through his merits. And this disposition, dictated by the spirit of penance, obtained for him grace and pardon.

You also must be thus disposed in order to obtain the forgiveness of your sins; you must not only believe what God has revealed and the Catholic Church proposes to your belief, not only trust in the merits of Christ, but also truly repent of your sins and firmly purpose never more to offend God. There is no forgiveness of sin without true contrition and a firm, unflinching determination never again to commit a mortal sin. Do not forget this, and at every confession strive with great diligence for true contrition and a firm purpose of amendment.

(c.) How gracious and merciful is the conduct of Christ towards the sick man! He does not rebuke him; he only utters words inspiring confidence and conveying forgiveness: *Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee*. The conduct of Christ towards penitent sinners is the same to-day. No matter how much and how grievously we may have sinned, we need not despair of our salvation; Christ came, as he says himself, to seek and to save that which was lost. He no longer walks visibly among us; we no longer hear from his own lips the sweet and comforting words: *Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee*: but he has given power to his Apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests, to forgive sins.—*John 20: 23*. When a priest gives us absolution, it is just the same as if Christ himself pronounced pardon upon us, since the priest in the confessional is the representative of Christ, and if we confess sincerely and receive the priest's absolution our sins are as surely forgiven us as they were in the case of man sick of the palsy, to whom Christ said: *Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee*. Oh, what a blessing, what a comfort is the Sacrament of Penance!

PART II.

Christ confutes the Scribes.

1. *And behold, some of the Scribes said within themselves. He blasphemeth.*

(a.) To forgive sin is a divine attribute, because it is God that is offended by sin; consequently none but God can forgive sin: and because sin is an infinite evil, an infinite Being alone can remit it. If Christ had been a mere man, the Scribes would have been right in calling him a blasphemer when he announced the forgiveness of the sick man's sins, for it is blasphemy for man to assume to himself that which belongs to God alone. But had the Scribes any reason for judging thus of Christ, and for considering him a blasphemer? Certainly not; the fact that Christ led a most holy life and always showed the most profound reverence for God, should have convinced them that he could not possibly be a blasphemer. Moreover, the multitude of miracles which Christ wrought, and which they themselves could neither deny nor explain away should have convinced them that he was God, and, as such, had power to forgive sins. Their passions, however, especially their pride and envy, blinded them, and caused them to judge rashly of Christ and to call him a blasphemer.

(b.) Beware of uncharitably judging your neighbor. Think well of every one, till you are perfectly convinced that he is undeserving of your good opinion. Charity demands this; for, as the Apostle says: "Charity thinketh no evil."—*I. Cor.* 13: 5. A man often does something that has the appearance of evil, but which after all is not bad. If a superficial observer had not known the motives by which Judith, the heroine, was actuated when she went into the camp of Holofernes exquisitely attired, might he not have entertained suspicions with regard to her chastity? Therefore judge not by appearance, which frequently deceives. Neither be over credulous; do not at once believe a bad report that is spread about your neighbor. How much evil is said of persons of which not a word is true! Make it a general rule never to judge the actions of those for whom you are not accountable. Judge neither them nor their actions. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own lord he standeth or falleth."—*Rom.* 14: 4. "Judge not, that you may not be judged."—*Matt.* 7: 1.

2. *And Jesus, seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts?*

(a.) What must have been the thoughts of the Pharisees when they heard Christ say these words? Must they not have been filled with confusion and terror when they were constrained to say to themselves: "He looks into our hearts; he knows our most secret thoughts!" And what inference should they have drawn from this? They should have said to themselves: "As Christ knows our thoughts, he must be omniscient, and, consequently God; but if he is God, he can forgive sins, and we have greatly erred in believing him to be a blasphemer." Did they draw this inference? No; certainly not, for, blinded as they were, they were incapable of pronouncing an impartial judgment upon Christ.

(b.) *Why do you think evil in your hearts?* Important words for us, which ought to make us thoughtful. The adage: "Thoughts are free," may be true before men, but not before God. Men cannot look into each other's hearts; they cannot therefore judge of the thoughts of others. "But God," says St. Paul, "is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."—*Heb.* 4: 12. He therefore forbids in the ninth and tenth commandments all sinful thoughts and desires: he even looks more to the thoughts and to the interior disposition of the heart than to outward actions, because the latter proceed from the former. No man speaks or does evil unless he has first thought and willed it in his heart. Hence Christ says that from the heart come forth murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies and blasphemies.—*Matt.* 15: 19. Never permit bad thoughts or desires to arise in your heart, much less entertain them with complacency, and beware of consenting to them, lest you defile your conscience.

3. *Whether it is easier to say; Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say: Arise and walk?*

(a.) We can answer this question: Both are equally easy and equally difficult. It is as easy for Almighty God to forgive sin as it is to heal the sick. Considered in itself, each is equally difficult; for the forgiveness of sin, as well as the healing of the sick, is a work far surpassing all mere human power and only possible with Almighty God.

(b.) The forgiveness of sins being a divine attribute, and, like the healing of the sick or raising the dead to life, a miracle, who would carelessly commit a sin? Would it not be a great presumption for some one, full of levity, to injure his health or even take away his life, because it is easy for God by a miracle to restore health or life? But, my dear children, are you not guilty of the same presumption when you commit mortal sins, thinking that it is easy for God to forgive you your sins? Can people who

thoughtlessly contract a sickness expect that God will work a miracle and restore their health? And can you, who heedlessly live in sin, expect that God will work a miracle in your behalf and forgive you? Let no one sin trusting in God's mercy, for this would be to sin against the Holy Ghost and expose one's self to the great danger of being rejected by God.

PART III.

Christ heals the sick man.

He said: *But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then said he to the man sick of palsy): Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house.*

1. Our Blessed Lord here gives the Scribes a palpable, incontrovertible proof of his power to forgive sins by healing this man. When a man, powerless hand and foot, lying on his bed, upon the word of Christ, *Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house*, is healed at once, takes up his bed, and walks, it is evidently a miracle; for it was entirely contrary to nature that such a one, without the employment of any visible means, should suddenly and perfectly, recover his health. All that were present were obliged to own that Christ had wrought a miracle. But Christ performed this as well as other miracles, not as Moses and the other prophets, by prayer, but by his own power, for he said to the sick man: *Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house*, and the sick man, perfectly healed, did as Christ bade him. Those who were present should have said to themselves: "Christ works this miracle by his own power, and God alone can do this, therefore he must be God; but if he is God, he must also have power to forgive sins." But even if they believed that Christ wrought the miracle by means of prayer, and not by his own power, considering him to be a mere man endowed by God with the power of working miracles—even in this case they could not have denied to him the power of forgiving sins; for if he had falsely attributed to himself this power, it is not possible that God would have imparted to him the power of performing miracles, for he would have confirmed a shameless lie as truth, and co-operated in the deception of men, an act that would be in contradiction to his holiness and truthfulness, to entertain the thought of which would be horrible blasphemy.

2. Christ intended to give us a clear and incontrovertible proof of his power to forgive men their sins, because the whole work of Redemption rests on this power. If he had not the power to forgive sins, all that he did, and all that he suffered for us, would

be fruitless, and we should be still groaning in the thralldom of sin, and the gates of heaven would be for ever barred against us. If Christ had not the power to forgive sins, the words which he spoke to his Apostles: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (*John 20: 23*), would be useless and untrue, because a man cannot give to another what he has not himself; consequently, neither the Apostles nor their successors, the bishops and priests, would have the power to forgive sin;—there would be no Sacrament of Penance, and people would be obliged to live and die in their sins. So much depends upon Christ having the power of forgiving sin.

Let us return thanks to our dear Lord for having forgiven the sins of the man sick of the palsy, and for having bestowed this power on his Apostles and their successors for all time to come. Let us render ourselves worthy of this grace by preparing ourselves diligently for every confession, that we may always make a good one and obtain the forgiveness of our sins.

PERORATION.

At the end of the gospel for this day we read: *And the multitude seeing it, feared, and glorified God, who had given such power to men.* We need not wonder that the people seeing this great miracle, feared, for it is natural for man to be seized with holy fear at the sight of the miraculous events by which God manifests his presence and power. The people did not recognize Christ to be what he really was; they only saw in him, as did most of the Jews, a Prophet sent by God. With regard to us, we know and believe that Jesus Christ is not only true man, but also true God, and that he possesses all perfections which belong to God. Let us show him the reverence due to God, let us especially adore him in the church, where he is present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar as God and man; let us serve the Lord our God with all fidelity, let us put our whole confidence in him as our Redeemer and Mediator, and avail ourselves of the means of salvation which he has deposited in the Catholic Church, that we may participate in the grace of Redemption. Amen.



EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE REMISSION OF SINS.

Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee.—Matt. 9: 2.

The man sick of the palsy, mentioned in the gospel of this day, had reason to be of good heart when our Blessed Lord forgave him his sins. Palsy is indeed a great affliction; but the sins by which he had contaminated his conscience were a still greater evil. Palsy prepared for him only a miserable earthly life; but his sins, if he had died in them, would have brought eternal damnation on him. What a grace to receive the forgiveness of his sins! The very moment Christ said to him: *Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee*, he was no longer a slave of Satan, but a child of God; he possessed that inestimable treasure, sanctifying grace, and had a claim to the eternal happiness of heaven. Men can become sharers of this great boon now as then, for our Saviour who came to seek and to save what was lost has made provision in his Church, so that all truly penitent sinners can receive the forgiveness of their sins. This is the subject which I have selected for our meditation to-day. I shall speak of the forgiveness of sins, answering the two following questions:

- I. *What does faith teach us in regard to the forgiveness of sins?*
- II. *What must we do in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins?*

PART I.

1. Faith teaches us—

1. *That the forgiveness of sins can be obtained only in the Catholic Church.* Christ conferred on his Apostles the power of forgiving sins, when he said: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."—*John 20: 23*. This power could not die with the Apostles, for there always are, and always will be men who need the forgiveness of their sins; it must therefore continue to the end of time. Who possesses the power to forgive sins after the time of the Apostles? Evidently, their lawful successors, who, together with their other spiritual powers, received from the Apostles the power of forgiving sins. These are the bishops of the Catholic

Church. They and the priests commissioned and empowered by them possess the power of forgiving sins; to them we must go personally and have the words of pardon pronounced over us, if we wish to obtain the forgiveness of our sins. From this it evidently follows that the forgiveness of sins can be obtained only in the Catholic Church.

The holy Fathers of the Church teach the same. St. Augustine says: "In her (the Catholic Church) sins are remitted; but outside of her they are not remitted." St. Fulgentius says: "In the Catholic Church alone there is forgiveness of sins; in her alone it is received; of her the bridegroom says that she is the only dove, the only chosen one, whom he has founded upon a rock, and to whom he has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to whom he has also given the power to bind and to loose." It is indeed a great grace that God has conferred upon us by calling us to the Catholic Church. How wretched we should be if like so many millions of men we had not the true faith! We should be doomed to live and die in sin, for no one would have the power to forgive us our sins.

2. *That we owe the forgiveness of sins to the merits of Christ.* Sin is an offense against God. Since God is not only merciful, but also just, he must require us to make satisfaction before forgiving us. But it is required for satisfaction that we make it of our own strength, and that we make it according to the measure of the offense which we have offered to God by our sins. In the one case as well as in the other we cannot make satisfaction to God; we cannot, of our own strength, because all that we have is a gift of God; we cannot, according to the measure of the offense, because every offense in regard to God is infinite, and we as finite beings can do nothing that would have infinite value. Christ alone could make this satisfaction. Being the Son of God, he did not need the assistance of another, in order to do something good; he did everything of his own divine power; moreover, every act he did had an infinite value, because it was the act of a God-man. Now, since Christ alone could satisfy infinite justice for our sins, and really has satisfied it, the grace of the forgiveness of sin is based exclusively on his merits. Hence St. Paul writes: "God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins.—*Cor. 1: 13, 14*. "The meritorious cause of the forgiveness of sins, or justification, is our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when we were enemies, through his exceeding charity wherewith he loved us (*Ephes. 2: 4*), merited justification for us by his most holy passion on the wood of the cross, and made satisfaction for us unto God the Father."—*Council of Trent, sess. 6, cap. 7. Conse-*

quently, we received the remission of sins only through the merits of Christ.

3. *That all sins without exception can be forgiven.* This truth is evident from the words of Christ: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." If our Lord had meant to restrict the power of forgiving sins, he would not have expressed himself in such general terms; he would, moreover, have mentioned the sins in detail which could not be remitted. But since he did not do so, but spoke in the most general and absolute terms, we justly conclude that he has given his Church the power of forgiving all sins. St. John also teaches that there is no sin that cannot be remitted, when he writes: "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.* For this reason the Church condemned the Novatians who asserted that the sins of those who denied the faith could not be forgiven.

When Christ says: "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men; but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven" (*Matt. 12: 31*), we must observe that by blasphemy against the Holy Ghost we are to understand, not so much a specific sin, as impenitence and obstinacy in sin. The Pharisees to whom Christ addressed these words did not believe his miracles, and in the malice of their hearts went so far as to attribute them to Beelzebub, the prince of devils, so that they might be able to deny the Divinity of Christ; from sheer malice therefore they persevered in their unbelief and hatred of Christ. Sinners who resemble the Pharisees cannot be forgiven; but the reason is not to be sought in the sin, but in the malicious, obstinate hearts of sinners; they obstinately persevere in sin and are seldom or never converted; and consequently they are never forgiven, because they will not repent. The forgiveness of sin presupposes a true change of mind and a real conversion. If such sinners would change their minds, give up their wilful opposition to the Spirit of God, and be truly converted, they could, like all other sinners, be forgiven. For there is no sin which God cannot or will not forgive to such as sincerely repent and have recourse to the Sacrament of Penance. The Roman Catechism says: "We must by no means believe that the power of forgiving sin is restricted to certain kinds of sin; for there is no sin, however grievous, no crime, however enormous or however frequently repeated, which penance does not remit." "If," says the Almighty, by the mouth of his Prophet, "the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment, and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die. I will not

remember all his iniquities that he hath done."—*Ezech. 18: 21, 22.* When we meet in the Sacred Scriptures and in the writings of the Fathers passages which seem to indicate that some sins cannot be remitted, the meaning is that it is very difficult to obtain the pardon of them. A disease may be said to be incurable when the patient loathes and refuses to take the medicine that would accomplish his cure; and, in the same sense, some sins may be said to be unpardonable when the sinner rejects the grace of God, the proper medicine of salvation.

4. *Finally, that all punishments deserved by sinners can be remitted.* These punishments are either eternal (those of hell) or temporal, which must be atoned for either here or in purgatory, according as we have committed mortal or venial sins. The reason why these two kinds of punishment can be remitted is because Christ gave to his Church the same power that he himself possessed. Now it is evident that Christ had the power not only to remit sin, but also its temporal and eternal punishments. Witness: The penitent thief on the cross, to whom the crucified Saviour remitted all temporal and eternal punishments, together with his sins, when he said to him: "Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise."—*Luke 23: 43.* That the Church has power not only to remit sins, but also the punishments due to them is manifest from the words of Christ: " whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."—*Matt. 18: 18.* With these words our Lord gave his Church unlimited power; she can remove everything that obstructs our entrance into heaven, therefore she can remit not only sins, but the punishments due to them. I may remark here that the eternal punishment is remitted in baptism and penance; the temporal punishment, entirely in baptism, and at least partially in penance and in the other sacraments; it is especially remitted by indulgences, and frequently by the sacramentals.

PART II.

For the remission of sins and their punishments, it is necessary—

1. *That we do true penance,* for penance is the only plank of safety; he who looses his hold of it, must infallibly perish. "The soul that sinneth, the same shall die. . . . But if the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed . . . living he shall live, and shall not die."—*Ezech. 18: 20, 21.* And Christ says: "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish."—*Luke 13: 3.* Hence the Council of Trent also teaches that "penance is

necessary for all men who have defiled themselves by any mortal sin, even for those who begged to be washed by the Sacrament of Baptism, in order to attain grace and justice."—*Sess. 14, cap. 1.*

We must do *true penance*. "This consists in turning to God sincerely and with the whole heart, and in hating and detesting our past transgressions, with a firm resolution of amendment of life, hoping to obtain pardon through the mercy of God."—*Rom. Catechism*. He therefore who does true penance returns to God whom through sin he abandoned. He changes his mind; formerly he loved what is bad; he now loves it no more, but hates and detests it sincerely and heartily, and would give anything if he could undo it. He was indifferent towards what is good; it even displeased him and was distasteful to him; but now he loves it and has the greatest desire for it. Formerly he was worldly-minded; he placed his happiness in the joys and goods of the world; now he finds joy and pleasure in heavenly things and desires nothing more ardently than to serve God and to belong to him for time and eternity. This is true penance, which God requires of us, when he exclaims by the Prophet: "Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning."—*Joel 2: 12*. The Jews were accustomed when doing penance to rend their garments, in order to express thereby their interior sorrow for sin. Many imagined that they were doing penance when they thus rent their garments, put ashes on their heads, and manifested externally the appearance of penitence, and that it was not necessary to change the evil disposition of their hearts. But this was a great delusion, therefore God demanded of them not to rend their garments, but their hearts. The change of the perverse mind is absolutely necessary and indispensable; without it all expressions of penance, such as weeping, striking the breast, wearing the garments of a penitent, are nothing but empty appearances. Hence St. Chrysostom says: "We must be on our guard not to deceive ourselves in this respect; for I have seen many who prayed and fasted, struck their breasts, and wore cinctures, so that if one had judged from appearance, one would have thought that they were true penitents; but they were not, for their interior was not in accordance with their exterior; and all these exterior mortifications, in which the heart takes no part, are nothing but a shadow of penance."

2. *That we receive the sacraments which were instituted for the forgiveness of sin.* These sacraments are—

(a.) *Baptism*. This cleanses man not only from *original* but also from all *actual* sins, if he has committed any. St. Gregory says: "At the baptismal font all sins disappear, as a spark of fire would be extinguished in the waters of the sea; for nothing condemn-

able remains in those who by baptism are in Christ Jesus." This sacrament at the same time blots out all punishment deserved by sin, the eternal and the temporal, so that those who sin no more after baptism can after their death immediately enter heaven. The Council of Florence expresses this doctrine in these words: "The just, if they die before they commit a sin, at once enter into heaven."

(b.) *Penance*. This sacrament as regard its effect is inferior to baptism; but still by means of it we obtain the graces necessary for the salvation of our soul. In the Sacrament of Penance all sins committed after baptism, and the *eternal* punishment due to them, are remitted, but not always the whole of the *temporal* punishment. The bishops and priests of the Catholic Church have power to forgive sins, for they alone are the lawful successors of the Apostles, to whom Christ committed the power of forgiving sins. St. Chrysostom remarks: "The Jewish priests had the power to free from the leprosy of the body—but no, not to free, but to pronounce sentence over those who had already obtained deliverance from it. But our priests have the power not only to declare free, but really to free, from leprosy, not the body but the soul." That we may become partakers of the effects of baptism and penance, we must receive them worthily. Of infants that are baptized no preparation of course is required, for it would be impossible for them to make any; but if adults wish to receive baptism they must have faith, repent of their sins from supernatural motives, and be firmly resolved to serve God and to live according to the Christian law. The same is required for the worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance; moreover, we must confess our sins sincerely, and perform the penance enjoined on us by our confessor.

PERORATION.

Give thanks to God with your whole heart for the two sources of salvation which he has opened for you in the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, and be solicitous to participate in the graces of these sacraments. Esteem the grace of baptism above all things, for there is no greater treasure. He who would preserve baptismal grace during his whole life would at his death immediately go to heaven. But as there are few who preserve their baptismal innocence inviolate, and almost all in the course of life commit grievous sins, avail yourselves of the means which God has ordained for the salvation of your soul, and with a well-prepared heart receive the Sacrament of Penance, that the words which Christ spoke to the sick man in the gospel of this day, may be fulfilled in you: *Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee.* Amen

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE ROSARY.

[See also Vol. VI.]

Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck.
—Luke 11: 27.

The feast of the Rosary has for its object devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. The Rosary in its present form was introduced by St. Dominic, the founder of the Order of Preachers, or the Dominican Order. The Sovereign Pontiffs have not only approved of the Rosary, but have also enriched it with many indulgences. This prayer soon became a favorite with the people who frequently said it at home and in the church. Confraternities were established, the members of which undertook to say the Rosary daily or weekly. But the Church did not as yet celebrate the Feast of the Rosary. It was instituted in consequence of the signal victory which the Christians gained over the Turks at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. This victory was generally attributed to the intercession of Mary as it was gained on the same day that the members of the Rosary Confraternity were holding public devotions and saying the Rosary to implore her to give victory to those engaged in the battle. After the victory, St. Pius V. desired that a feast in honor of "Our Lady of Victories" should be established to celebrate the anniversary of so memorable a struggle. It is this feast which Gregory XIII. dedicated under the title of "the Holy Rosary". It was subsequently extended to the whole Church and ordered to be celebrated annually on the first Sunday of October—Rosary Sunday. I will now explain to you—

- I. *Why we must say the Rosary;*
- II. *How we must say it.*

PART I.

- I. *We must say the Rosary in order to venerate in a becoming manner Mary, the Virgin Mother of God.*

(a.) When we devoutly say the Rosary, we not only venerate Mary, but in the first place and principally we honor *our divine Saviour*. We begin the Rosary with the *Apostles' Creed*, in which we confess that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Redeemer, and that we believe without doubting all those things which he has taught us, that we belong to him entirely, and that we are willing to live and die for him. Is not this to honor Christ? We say the *Our Father*, and repeat it several times. But the *Our Father* is our Lord's prayer. Do we not then honor Jesus when we devoutly repeat the prayer which he taught us, and direct the petitions, which he puts in our mouths, with confidence to his and our Father? We say the *Hail Mary*, in which we call Jesus the blessed fruit of the womb of Mary and declare that we honor Mary principally for the sake of her Son. Finally we meditate on the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries. All these mysteries, with the exception of the last two, treat of Jesus Christ and have his honor for their object; even the last two refer to him, for the glory of Mary in heaven is the work and the merit of her divine Son. It is evident then that in the Rosary we venerate Jesus far more than Mary. And whereas Mary desires nothing more ardently than that appropriate honor be given to her Son, she rejoices and feels herself honored as often as we devoutly say the Rosary.

(b.) By the Rosary we also honor Mary in a particular manner. By saying the *Hail Mary* immediately after the Creed and the Lord's Prayer we indicate that Mary is, of all creatures, the nearest to God, and that we honor her more than we do all the angels and saints. And what great honor we pay to the Blessed Virgin by repeating the words with which the Archangel Gabriel by God's command saluted Mary! When we say, as it were: Mary, thou art too exalted for us to dare to address thee in our own words, we therefore use angelic—in fact, divine words; is not this to honor Mary as much as we are able? And is not the angelical salutation glorious praise of the blessed Mother of God? And must not Mary feel honored, when with filial confidence we implore her intercession in life and death? Finally, what does the frequent repetition of the angelical salutation aim at if not at the veneration of Mary? The mysteries on which we meditate also contain the praises of Mary, for in them she appears as Mother of God, and, consequently, as the one who took a most important part in the work of our Redemption and who possesses the highest dignity and glory among all creatures

2. *In order to obtain her protection and assistance in all necessities.*

(a.) The Rosary is the Jacob's ladder on which the angels of God ascend and descend; our Aves ascend to Mary; her graces

descend to us, bringing us consolation and help. In lives of the saints we find a multitude of examples which bear testimony to the great graces which have been imparted to the faithful by the devout use of the Rosary. We read there that by this prayer the greatest and most obdurate sinners have been converted, the sorely tempted strengthened, the afflicted comforted, the sick healed, and those in perils of body and soul rescued.

(b.) In public calamities especially the Rosary has often proved itself most effectual. I will mention the event to which the feast of the Rosary owes its origin. The Turks, having conquered Constantinople in the year 1453, encroached still further on Christian territory and bid fair to subject all Christendom to the Crescent. With incomprehensible carelessness the princes of Europe suffered the boundaries of the Christian empire to be invaded on all sides and one province after another to be torn away. Fortunately a man was found who was to become the saviour of Christendom; this was the great Pope Pius V., whom the Church reveres as a saint. In the year 1570 he summoned the Christian people to an alliance against the common enemy. Selim II., the Turkish Sultan, flushed with victories and elated with pride, proposed to himself nothing less than the total overthrow of all Christendom, and to add all the western kingdoms to his empire. Alarmed at the danger which threatened the whole of Christendom, Pius V. entered into a league with Philip II., king of Spain, and the Venetians, with a view to check the progress of the fierce Ottomans, the other Christian princes excusing themselves from acceding to it on account of domestic broils. This alliance was ratified in May, 1570. To avoid dissension among the princes who formed this alliance, the Pope was declared chief of the league and expedition, and he appointed Don Juan of Austria Commander-in-chief of all the forces. The Pope sent his Apostolic benediction, predicted certain victory, and ordered the dismissal from the Christian army of all soldiers whose vices and immorality might call down the wrath of heaven upon their arms. The Christians sailed direct from Corfu and found the Turkish fleet at anchor in the harbor of Lepanto, about 70 miles from Athens. The battle was fought on the 7th of October, 1571, and continued from about six in the morning till evening. The Turks being sure of an easy victory and knowing well that it would deliver Europe into their hands, bore down with great impetuosity on the Christians. The battle was most obstinate and sanguine; but the Christians gained a glorious victory; in fact, never before had such a victory been gained over the Ottomans. At the time the battle was being fought the Confraternity of the Rosary was offering up solemn prayers for

victory in the church of the Minerva. Pope Pius V. was conversing with some cardinals on business; but on a sudden he left them abruptly, opened the window, stood some time with his eyes fixed on the heavens, and then shutting the casement, said: "This is not a time to talk on business, but to give thanks to God for the victory he has granted to the arms of the Christians. The astonished cardinals followed him into St. Peter's, asking among themselves whence this sudden revelation came to the Pope. The people ascribed the miracle to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and full of joy chanted the Litany of Loretto, which St. Pius enriched on that day with the invocation *Auxilium Christianorum*—"Help of Christians." The Christians as we have stated had really won the victory. The Turks lost thirty-five thousand men, about two hundred and fifty men-of-war and galleys, besides ninety that were either stranded, burnt or sunk; three hundred and seventy-two large guns, five thousand prisoners, and fifteen thousand Christian slaves, with a large number of officers of rank. The booty was enormous. This glorious victory over the infidels God granted to the Christians through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To preserve the memory of this great boon, St. Pius V. instituted a feast in honor of "Our Lady of Victories" and it is this feast which Gregory XIII. dedicated under the title of "The Holy Rosary". This feast was afterwards extended to the whole Church and ordered to be celebrated annually on the first Sunday of October (Rosary Sunday), as already explained.

You certainly have every reason to esteem highly and to love the devotion of the Rosary, for by this prayer we can not only venerate Mary as she deserves, but we can also obtain many graces. In these times particularly, seeing that the Church is so oppressed, let us turn with confidence to Mary, the Help of Christians, and recite the Rosary with renewed fervor, that she may take us under her maternal protection, and frustrate all the assaults of our enemies.

PART II.

We must say the Rosary—

1. *With a pure, or at least a penitent heart.*

(a.) Mary is holy, she detests all evil and delights only in good. From this it follows that we must pray with a pure heart, that our prayer may be well received. We are disgusted with the best viands when we see them in dirty vessels. In like manner the devotion of the Rosary does not please Mary when we perform it with a heart contaminated with sin and evil desires. The

ark of the covenant was the most holy object of the Israelites, and through it God bestowed on them many benefits. Nevertheless, in the time of the high-priest Heli, notwithstanding that the ark had been conveyed into the camp, they were defeated and the ark of the covenant itself fell into the hands of the enemy. Why? Because the Jews had deviated from the right path and persevered in their impenitence. The same may be said of the Rosary; though the prayer is good, it remains ineffectual when said by Christians who live in sin. How can Mary take pleasure in the prayer of a man who is an enemy of her Son, and does not cease to crucify him anew by his sins?

(b.) But it is otherwise with *penitent sinners*. To them Mary is a merciful mother, and they may hope for every good if they devoutly recite the Rosary. Hence St. Gregory the Great says: "The more exalted and the holier Mary is, the milder and more merciful she is towards those sinners who desire to be converted and have recourse to her." He who has fallen into grievous sins must sincerely repent of them, and resolve to confess them as soon as possible and to amend his life; only on this condition will Mary receive his prayers with pleasure.

2. With devotion.

(a.) True devotion requires that we *keep our thoughts from wandering whilst we pray*, and guard ourselves as much as possible against distractions. I do not call it prayer if you think of other things whilst reciting the Rosary. The words of God would apply to you: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."—*Matt. 15: 8*. Therefore when you say the Rosary, at home or in church, banish everything else from your mind; do not think of your farm, your business, your household, or a thousand other things, but only think that you are now praying and occupying yourself with God. If during your prayer something presents itself to your mind, recall your wandering thoughts and again direct them to God.

(b.) True devotion also requires that you recite the Rosary *with a pious disposition of mind*. In prayer your understanding and will must be active. While you direct the understanding to God and pay attention to the prayer, the will must be engaged with holy aspirations and good resolutions. If, *e. g.*, you say the *Hail Mary*, you must be penetrated with the dignity, holiness, and the fulness of grace of the Blessed Virgin; you must desire to be made sharers of the grace of God, and resolve according to the example of Mary to make good use of grace: awaken *within your hearts feelings of joy and gratitude towards God*

for having given you so powerful and good a mother, and lastly, have the fullest confidence in Mary and ask her to be a merciful mother to you in life and death. That is what I call saying the Rosary with devotion.

3. With confidence. This confidence is based—

(a.) *Upon the power of Mary*. There is no doubt that the saints avail much with God, for they are his friends and he loves them as a father loves his children. Hence St. James writes: "Pray for one another, that you may be saved; for the continual prayer of a just man availeth much."—5: 16. If the prayer of the saints avails much, how much more will the prayer of the Queen of all saints avail! Since Mary far transcends the holiness of all the saints, she enjoys a greater love of God than all of them, and, consequently, has more influence with him than they. When no saints can help us and even the intercession of angels is ineffectual, through the mediation of Mary we can still obtain assistance. Moreover, Mary possesses a far higher dignity than all the other saints; for they are only *servants*, but she is the *Mother of God*. If the sons of men who love their mothers only imperfectly, no matter how much they may love them, are ready to comply with the requests of their mothers, think you that Jesus, who loves his mother with a perfect and infinite love, will refuse her requests? Who could believe this? St. Bonaventure says: Mary is preferred by her Son before all others; she is all-powerful, and obtains what she asks."

(b.) *On the good will of Mary*. She has a heart full of love and mercy towards us and is ever ready to bestow benefits upon us. St. Bernard says: "Mary is not harsh or severe; she is full of mildness and mercy. Peruse the whole Bible, and if you find the least appearance of hard-heartedness in her, she may awaken fear within you. But if, on the contrary, you find in her a mother's heart, full of mildness, goodness and mercy (as you will surely find), return thanks to him who in his great goodness gave us a mediatrix in whom there is nothing severe."

With what confidence may you say the Rosary, since Mary is a mother who through her intercession can and will help you in all your difficulties! You say: We oftentimes have said the Rosary and have not been heard. I answer: You have perhaps prayed for things which would not have been expedient, but injurious to you, and which Mary as a prudent mother would not request for you. Perhaps you have not prayed with a pure or at least a penitent heart; how could Mary grant your petitions when, by your impenitence, you continually crucify her dearest Son? Perhaps you have prayed without any devotion, while cold and

distracted, or without confidence; your prayer therefore displeased the Mother of God, and was not heard.

PERORATION.

Reflect how you have hitherto said the Rosary, and if you find that your recitation of it has not been satisfactory endeavor to do better for the future. Love to say the Rosary. The greatest saints said it every day. Thus, St. Francis of Sales, and St. Alphonsus Liguori. If you cannot say it daily, say it at least often, especially on all Saturdays, which are dedicated to the Mother of God. Endeavor always to say it properly, with a pure or penitent heart, with true devotion and great confidence. I conclude with the prayer of the Church: "O God, whose only-begotten Son, by his life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech thee, that meditating on these mysteries in the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may both imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

SIMILARITY BETWEEN US CHRISTIANS AND THE MAN SICK OF THE PALSY.

*They brought to him one sick of the palsy, lying in a bed.—
Matt. 9: 2.*

As the gospel of this day informs us, a man sick of the palsy, lying in a bed, was brought to Christ when he came to Capharnaum. The poor man was not able to stand on his feet nor to walk; he was obliged always to lie down and undoubtedly suffered great pain, for palsy is one of the worst and most painful of diseases. Our Blessed Lord had compassion on the unfortunate man and wrought a double miracle in his favor, healing his sick soul by the forgiveness of his sins, and his sick body by delivering it from the palsy. In this man sick of the palsy we behold our own image, for if we view our moral conduct we shall find that it bears a manifold resemblance to him. Oh, that we were exactly like him! It would indeed be a great blessing for us; we

could then hope to be true penitents and obtain salvation. Our similarity to the man sick of the palsy is, however, only partial for many of us resemble him, as I intend to show you—

- I. *Up to the time of their cure, but*
- II. *Not after their cure.*

PART I.

1. The man sick of the palsy was a *sinner*. This much is indisputable, otherwise our Lord would not have said to him: *Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee*. It is probable that he had spent his youth in sin and dissipation and grievously offended God. Herein most Catholics, even those who now lead a pious life, resemble the man sick of the palsy. Ah, youth is the most beautiful time of life; the innocence and piety of youth fill the heart of God with the greatest joy; yet how many of us have not considered this, but spent the spring-time of life so wickedly that the remembrance of it to-day brings the blush of shame to the cheek? And what shall I say of young persons now-a-days? Are not the majority of them frivolous and dissipated, contaminating their consciences with the most grievous sins? Oh, that all parents, masters, mistresses, superiors and aged persons would use their influence with these young persons as much as possible, in order to preserve them from degeneration. This would be the best way of making reparation for the sins of their own youth.

2. The sick man had without doubt well deserved his sickness in punishment of the sins which he had wilfully committed; it was the result of his own wickedness. Many sicknesses are a natural consequence of various sins and vices. Unbridled passions, such as drunkenness, impurity and anger, often draw sicknesses after them, which are incurable and bring a countless multitude of people to the grave before their time. God often punishes men for their sins. Examples: Joram (*II. Paralip.* 21: 18, 19), Alcimus (*I. Mach.* 9: 54-56), Antiochus (*II. Mach.* 9: 11, 12), Herod (*Acts* 12: 21-23), whom God chastised on account of their grievous sins, and snatched from the face of the earth by an unhappy death. We should, however, greatly err if we looked upon all sickness as a punishment for personal sins, for God visits even entirely innocent and pious people with sickness and sufferings. Examples: Tobias, Job, in the Old Testament: numerous saints mentioned in the New Testament and in the Lives of the Saints. When you fall sick, reflect whether your sickness is not perhaps a punishment of God for your sins. If this is the case, humble yourself before God, suffer with patience and make a resolution to amend

your life. But if you should be entirely innocent, look upon your sickness as a trial from God for your advantage. There is no more effectual means of escaping the pains of purgatory, acquiring merit for heaven, increasing and preserving fervor in the service of God, than to be sick and suffer tribulations with patience and resignation.

3. *The state of the sick man was indeed very deplorable*; his body was full of pain; every motion and touch caused the most acute suffering; moreover, there was no prospect of cure. But the state of his soul was still worse. His conscience tormented him and bitterly reproached him with his sins; deprived of supernatural life, sanctifying grace, he could do nothing meritorious for heaven; he was constrained to say to himself: "I am miserable and unfortunate even in this world, and if I die in my sins a still worse lot awaits me hereafter, for I shall be lost for ever." In such a situation is every sinner! When he lies dangerously ill, how miserable he must feel! What melancholy must seize him when he perceives himself abandoned by the world and all its pleasures and enjoyments! What anguish must take possession of him when he thinks of his sins, of judgment and of hell! But even if the sinner is in the enjoyment of bodily health, will he be in peace, contented and happy? By no means; for "there is no peace to the wicked."—*Is. 48: 22*. Though in the tumult of the world and in the enjoyment of its pleasures sinners endeavor to stifle their conscience for a time, it will awaken again and in quiet moments cause them the most painful remorse. Tell me, is it not so? Must you not confess that you never had true peace so long as you lived in sin? Are you not to-day filled with shame, sadness, grief and sorrow when you think of your former wickedness?

4. Report had reached the man sick of the palsy that Jesus Christ was going about doing good to all who came within his reach. He had heard of many miracles wrought in favor of other sufferers; that even the dead were raised to life, that Christ was very merciful to sinners, and that he himself had declared that he was come to seek and to save that which was lost.—*Luke 19: 10*. How consoling was this message to that poor man! Now he felt that even he might share in blessings which had been so generously bestowed; now for the first time a friendly star of hope illuminated the dark night of his corporal and spiritual misery, and he appealed to his friends and asked them to carry him out and to bring him into the presence of this kind and powerful benefactor. Herein many Catholics resemble the paralytic. God, who wills not the death of sinners, but that they be converted and live, grants them various interior and exterior graces for

their salvation. He influences them by the voice of conscience, representing to them their miserable state and bringing their danger vividly before their eyes, filling them with fear, remorse and anguish, urging and impelling them to tear themselves from their sinful life and to enter upon the way of penance. He makes use of a sermon or a spiritual book in order to arouse them from their lethargy and to convince them of the necessity of a thorough conversion. He moves them powerfully at the time of a mission or a jubilee, that like many other of their fellow-creatures they may avail themselves of this time of grace for the salvation of their souls. Often he treats them severely; he sends them a lingering and painful sickness, reduces their means and even brings them to abject poverty, snatches from them a person near and dear to them, in order to exhibit plainly before their eyes the vanity of all earthly things, and, as it were, to compel them to turn from their evil ways and by repentance to save their souls from perdition. Consider all that God has done for you, to induce you to return to him by repentance!

5. The wish of the poor man is fulfilled; he lies at the feet of Jesus. In the presence of the most holy God-man he feels his sinfulness still more than heretofore; he sincerely repents of his trespasses and makes the firm resolution not to offend God any more. That he was penetrated by this penitent sentiment we cannot doubt for a moment; for if he had been impenitent, our Lord certainly would not have turned to him full of compassion and forgiven him his sins. We know how he dealt with the obstinate Scribes and Pharisees and frequently proclaimed woe against them. Like the man sick of the palsy, many Catholics are truly contrite for their sins when they make their confession. The thought that they have grievously offended God, their kind father and just judge, that they have lost heaven and deserved hell, causes them with the help of divine grace to have great sorrow and to detest their sins and earnestly to resolve to renounce their sinful life and to do penance. Oh, how happy are Catholics who make their confessions in such a disposition! Though they may have sinned grievously, they may, like the man sick of the palsy, confidently hope to obtain the forgiveness of their sins, for at the very moment that God perceives true contrition and a firm purpose of amendment in the heart of the sinner, in his mercy he inclines unto him and forgives him his sins. Examples: David, Mary Magdalen, the penitent thief on the cross. But how unfortunate are those who go to confession without contrition and a firm purpose of amendment! Ah, poor wretches! they confess invalidly and leave the confessional greater sinners than they were before they entered it. Oh, that all who go to confession would seriously consider this? Oh, that

at every confession they would take the greatest pains to excite true contrition and purpose of amendment, fervently asking God for the necessary grace.

(b.) Christ said to him: "*Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee.*" Who can describe the joy and happiness which the man sick of the palsy felt at these words of Christ? The sins which heretofore had lain heavily upon his conscience were now forgiven him; he was no longer an enemy, but a friend, a child of God. Christ called him emphatically *son*; he was reconciled with God and possessed his love and grace. The poor man felt so happy that he would have been glad enough to be carried home again and be allowed to continue in his infirmity to the end of his life. Have you not often been made partakers of the same happiness? When you had made a good confession, especially a general confession, did you not feel really happy, and that your sins were forgiven? Did you not enjoy a pleasure and a peace which the world with all its enjoyments cannot give? Did you not say: "Oh, how happy am I! Now I should like to die." Thus God even here below rewards truly penitent Christians; he gives them a slight foretaste of that unspeakable happiness which in heaven awaits those who here persevere in penance. Oh, if sinners knew what joy is caused by a sincere conversion, I am confident that they would without delay make a good confession.

PART II.

But many Catholics do not resemble the man sick of the palsy after his cure.

Having rebuked the malicious Pharisees, Christ turned to the man sick of the palsy, and said: "*Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house.*" He had scarcely said these words when the man sick of the palsy was restored to health and strength; he arose and walked home.

(a.) If that man, notwithstanding his cure, had not risen, but remained lying in the bed, would he not have deserved great blame? Would not such indolence, such disobedience have grievously offended our Divine Lord? What this man did not do, many Catholics, alas! do. Christ having healed them of their spiritual malady in confession, they should at once arise from their slothful spiritual slumber and walk in the path of virtue. They ought to manifest great zeal and fervor in the practice of good works, in order to show themselves grateful to God for benefits received, to atone for their sins, and to repair their

negligences to the best of their ability. But do they do this? Ah, no; after the reception of the sacraments they relapse into their former tepidity. They neglect their devotions at home or perform them in a very lukewarm and distracted manner; they neglect to hear mass on Sundays and holidays, hardly ever read a spiritual book, and let months or a whole year pass without confession and communion; they hardly ever have a good thought in their hearts, but are always occupied with earthly things. Reflect if this is not the case with you, whether you have not confessed twenty or thirty times, or even oftener, and every time remained in the same lukewarm state. If so, your case is really a deplorable one, for heaven is not promised to the lazy and negligent, but only to those who use violence; and the servant who buried his talent and passed his time in idleness was severely rebuked by his master, and at his command cast into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.—*Matt. 25: 24-30.*

(b.) Let us suppose that the man who was cured rose from his bed, but joined the Scribes and Pharisees, took part with them against Christ, reviled and calumniated him, or that on Good Friday he cried out with the Jews: "Crucify him!" tell me, would not this have been a base ingratitude? Would you not burn with righteous anger against him and say: This ungrateful man does not deserve to live another moment; may the earth open itself and swallow him up. But the man did no such thing; he was not so ungrateful toward his divine physician; he did not mingle with the enemies of Christ, but took up his bed and went into his house. And this much is certain that all the days of his life he was greatly devoted to Jesus and wept bitterly when he heard that the Jews had nailed him to the cross.

But many Catholics do what the man cured of the palsy did not do. How do many Catholics conduct themselves after their confession, after Christ has shown them mercy and forgiven them their sins? Do they walk constantly in the way of penance? Ah no; they join his enemies again, revile, insult and crucify him. Are there not numerous Catholics who after their confession commit their former sins again? Catholics who again commit impurity, who curse and swear, get drunk, cheat and steal, in short, sinning just as they did before their confession? Are there not Catholics who must acknowledge that for a long series of years they have always relapsed after their confessions into their former mortal sins? But is not this taking side with the enemies of Jesus and delivering him up to death? Does not the Apostle say that such relapsing sinners crucify the Son of God anew?—*Heb. 6: 6.* And what must such sinners expect? Certainly nothing good. They must fear that God will withdraw

from them his graces more and more, that they will fall into total blindness and obduracy, die impenitently and be damned for ever. Oh, that you would reflect well on the great danger of losing your soul by repeated relapses, and that you would carefully guard against offending God again by grievous sin after your confession.

2. Lastly, the gospel says of the man who was cured: *And he arose, and went into his house.*

(a.) He showed prompt obedience. Perhaps he would have preferred after being healed to remain for a while with the assembled multitude; but when our Lord commanded him to go home, he promptly obeyed. Thus you also must promptly obey the priest who in the confessional as the representative of Christ gives you good advice. These instructions are given for your benefit; they serve also as a remedy to preserve you against relapse and to lead you to greater perfection. But if you spoke the truth, you must confess that up to this time you have not followed the good advice of your confessor. How often have you not left the confessional without even thinking for a moment of what has been there said to you? You have performed the penance enjoined on you, but you have cared nothing about the instructions and directions given you. The confessor admonished you to be more regular in saying your prayers, daily to make good resolutions to avoid a certain fault, to have recourse to God in every temptation, to implore his assistance and to be more prudent and circumspect in speaking; but you have not followed these admonitions. The sad result is that after so many confessions and communions you are the same old sinner and have not made any progress in spiritual life. Must not such conduct be very displeasing to God?

(b.) It is said of the man who was cured, that *he went into his house.* In this also he followed the injunction of Christ. He did not seek amusements and pleasures, he did not seek company, but he went into his house. How many Catholics also in this respect conduct themselves quite differently! After their confessions they do not go home—do not lead a retired life, but mingle again with the corrupt and frivolous world, keep company with dissolute people, and are to be found in places of amusement, seeking to gratify their inclination for enjoyment. The result is that the good resolutions and the impressions of grace are wiped away, zeal grows cold, and worldly-mindedness takes possession of the heart, and in a short time they begin their sinful life anew. He who wishes to live penitently and persevere in good, must go into his house; he must shun all evil conversation and avoid

dangerous enjoyments and amusements, as much as possible leading a life hidden in God.

PERORATION.

Take the sick man referred to in the gospel of this day for your pattern, and imitate him not only before but also after his cure. If in confession you have been healed of your spiritual maladies by Jesus Christ, arise and go into your house. Be thankful to him for the great grace of the forgiveness of your sins, and with the utmost care guard against any relapse. Nothing is more dangerous for the salvation of the soul than after confession to commit again the mortal sins which you have confessed. After your confessions show a true zeal for penance, comply with the directions which your father confessor sees fit to give you, walk in the presence of God, pray fervently, lead a retired life, and daily renew the resolution to walk in the way of virtue for the rest of your life. If you do this, God will be with you, give you the grace of perseverance, and after this life conduct you as his good and faithful servants into everlasting life. Amen.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

UNCHASTE THOUGHTS AND DESIRES.

Why do you think evil in your hearts?—Matt. 9: 4.

It is generally said that thoughts are free. This saying may be true before men, who cannot look into the heart, and, consequently, are not able to judge of what we think and wish, but not before God, "who searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the thoughts of minds."—*I. Paralip. 28: 9.* For this reason our Lord in the gospel of this day rebukes the Scribes for thinking evil of him, saying: *Why do you think evil in your hearts?* We must give an account to God of evil thoughts and desires as well as of sinful words and works; for what we are not allowed to say and to do, we are not allowed to think of, wish, or desire. For this reason all evil thoughts and desires are forbidden by the sixth and the ninth commandments. Countless sins are

committed by evil thoughts and desires, and on the day of the General Judgment we shall see how many souls are delivered to eternal perdition on account of such sins. To-day I shall speak of unchaste thoughts and desires, and show you —

- I. *How we can sin by unchaste thoughts and desires;*
- II. *How we must conduct ourselves in regard to such thoughts and desires.*

PART I.

When we represent to ourselves in our mind something unchaste and think of it without having the desire of seeing, hearing, or doing it, we then have unchaste thoughts. We have unchaste desires when we not only represent to ourselves something unchaste, but also desire to see, hear, or do it. By unchaste thoughts we can sin *mortally*, or *venially*, or *not at all*.

1. *We sin grievously —*

(a.) By unchaste *thoughts*, when we take *voluntary* pleasure in them. I say voluntary pleasure, for the pleasure in unchaste thoughts can also be involuntary and not sinful, proceeding only from nature corrupted by original sin. Suppose that unchaste thoughts and representations arise in your heart, in which at once you find pleasure or sensual delight, but which you disapprove of and resist as soon as you perceive that they are sinful; in this case the pleasure in the unchaste thoughts is involuntary, because your will offers resistance, and consequently, you commit no sin. But if once you know that what you think of is unchaste and sinful, and nevertheless entertain it with pleasure, not fighting against it and trying to banish it from your mind, you commit a mortal sin, because the pleasure in the unchaste thought is entirely voluntary. It is not necessary that you take pleasure in the unchaste object for any length of time; for to entertain this voluntary pleasure only for a moment is a mortal sin. That impure thoughts, in which we take voluntary pleasure, are grievous sins, St. Augustine teaches in these words: "If the mind takes pleasure in unlawful thoughts, which it ought to banish at their first appearance, it evidently commits a sin, and this even when it does not propose to itself to execute what it thought." The great doctor of the Church here does not speak of venial, but of mortal sins, because, immediately after, he remarks that man must expect eternal damnation on account of such sins, unless they are forgiven him by the mercy of the Redeemer. From this you may conclude what a countless number of mortal sins are committed by those who daily entertain a

multitude of unchaste thoughts and desires and take pleasure in them. And how many are there who think lightly of these sins of thought and who hardly ever accuse themselves of them in the confessional!

(b.) By unchaste *desires*, when they are *voluntary*. But they are voluntary when we perceive that what they aim at is a grievous violation of chastity, and yet use no violence to suppress them, but entertain them with pleasure. It is not necessary to make a formal resolution to undertake something or to employ means for the gratification of the unchaste desires; the mere desire of something unchaste suffices for a mortal sin, if the desire is perfectly voluntary. As of impure thoughts, so of impure desires we must remark that they are a grievous sin when they are entertained quite voluntarily even for a moment; for if the will turns itself totally from God, though only for a moment, it is a separation from God, and, consequently, the mortal sin is committed. That voluntary impure desires are mortal sins is evident from the words of Christ: "But I say to you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.—*Matt.* 5: 28. Unchaste desires according to their nature are more grievous sins than unchaste thoughts; for it betrays a greater corruption of the heart to wish, to desire or to have the will to wrong, than only to take pleasure in it. You are therefore obliged to declare in the confessional whether you have had unchaste thoughts or desires; and if the unchaste desires were directed to married people, near relatives, or persons consecrated to God, you must also add this, because such circumstances not only render the sin more grievous, but also change its nature.

2. *We sin venially —*

(a.) *When we do not purposely provoke or deliberately entertain unchaste thoughts and desires, but are the causes of them through our own, although not grievous, fault.* This generally happens when we carelessly allow ourselves looks, words and jests which are anything but decent, and of which we know only too well that they are very apt to produce unchaste thoughts and desires. If any one knows from experience that he habitually consents to such thoughts and desires, he is bound, under penalty of mortal sin, to avoid such occasions as much as possible. Examples: Looking at certain persons, intimate familiarity with them, participation in dances.

(b.) When, instead of resisting and suppressing the impure temptation at once, we yield a little to it from inconsiderate

curiosity, without, however, taking pleasure in it. Thus Eve in the beginning, when she listened to the suggestions of Satan, but did not consent to them, did not sin grievously, but she cannot be pronounced free from a venial sin, because from curiosity she entered into conversation with the tempter, instead of rejecting him with contempt. In like manner you will commit no grievous sin by entertaining unchaste thoughts and desires a little while from curiosity, but you are not free from a venial sin, because we ought to reject the temptation with all earnestness the very moment we perceive its wickedness. We must not here overlook *that all voluntary pleasure in th. unchaste thoughts must be excluded*, because otherwise we should not commit a venial but a mortal sin.

(c.) When we *take some pleasure in impure thoughts and desires, but lack the proper deliberation or knowledge of the evil*. It often happens that one is overwhelmed by an impure temptation, the wickedness of which one does not perceive at once, because one's thoughts are not collected. One stops for a time in the contemplation of this sinful object, and also takes some pleasure in it, but one wants the necessary deliberation, and does not recognize at the time that what is thought of and taken pleasure in is something very sinful. In this case only a venial sin is committed, because one does not yet possess the necessary deliberation or knowledge of the evil. But if from the moment one perceives the sinfulness of the temptation and one does not offer earnest resistance, but perseveres in it longer with pleasure, a mortal sin is committed, because the pleasure is entirely voluntary.

(d.) Finally, when *we indeed detest and resist unchaste thoughts and desires, the sinfulness of which we sufficiently know, but not with such determination as we ought*. In this case the will of man is not without all fault, because it does not determinedly and strongly enough resist the temptation. Want of a sufficiently strong resistance against impure temptation is the reason why most of the venial sins against purity are committed.

3. *We do not sin at all when we find displeasure in unchaste thoughts and desires and endeavor to banish them from our mind*. So long as we do not wish to sin we do not sin. Though the temptations against chastity may be very violent, though they may frequently return and last long, they are not sinful provided that we do not carelessly cause them and consent to them. St. Francis of Sales says: "Though a temptation may last during our whole life, it will not make us displeasing to God, provided that we take no pleasure in it and do not consent to it. The temptation during which we are in a passive rather than an

active state, and in which, therefore, we take no pleasure, can in no way be imputed to us as a sin." Yes, those who strongly resist and banish temptations, not only commit no sin, but acquire great merit for themselves, and our Lord will richly reward them in the other world.

PART II.

1. How ought we to act in regard to unchaste thoughts and desires? We ought —

(a.) *To resist them at the very beginning*. We must resist them at the beginning so that we may not sin; for he who does not fight against and banish these the very moment he perceives them to be sinful, commits at least a venial sin, as already remarked. They must be resisted at the beginning, that we may more easily overcome them. It is with impure temptations as with a spark which falls upon an inflammable object. You can easily extinguish it and prevent a conflagration, but if you neglect it for a little while, the spark will kindle a great fire which cannot be checked and controlled at all, or only with the greatest difficulty. Hence St. Augustine says: "If a bad thought arises in you and you banish it at once your heart will not be defiled by it, or at least it will again obtain its purity; but if you leave it in your heart for any length of time you can banish it only with difficulty and great labor." Hence an ancient poet says: "Resist the beginning; it is too late for medicine when through long delay the evil has grown strong."

(b.) *The resistance must be earnest*. St. Ignatius very appropriately compares an impure temptation to a woman quarrelling with her husband; she takes to flight when she finds she is resisted; but if the man displays timidity, she storms and rages all the more. If we let our tempter perceive our weakness he becomes bolder and more impetuous; he will perhaps succeed in overcoming our feeble resistance and gain a complete victory. But if we offer a determined resistance in the beginning, he generally loses courage, for he sees that he gains nothing by his assaults. The thought that the salvation of our soul is endangered ought to urge us to resist energetically. What a calamity it would be to consent to the temptation and sin grievously! This resistance, however, must not be impetuous, but calm and considerate; we must avert our thoughts from the dangerous object and direct them to eternal truths, such as the four last things, and to Jesus Christ, our crucified Redeemer.

2. *To call upon God for help*. Solomon did this, saying: "As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent. except God gave

it, and this also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was, I went to the Lord and besought him with my whole heart."—*Wisd.* 8: 21. St. Francis of Sales says: "As soon as you perceive a temptation, do as little children who, when they see a bear or a wolf, run to their father or mother, or at least cry out for help; in like manner have recourse to God and beg him to help you." Our Saviour himself furnishes you with the remedy when he says: "Pray, that you enter not into temptation." Frequently make the sign of the cross, for, as St. Augustine says, "through the power of the cross all the assaults of the devil are frustrated."

3. *Not to be discouraged when the temptation lasts a long time, but we should persevere in using the means of combating it, until we obtain the victory.* Persons who have long and permanent temptations to endure must first of all consider what is the cause of these temptations, and regulate their conduct accordingly.

(a.) He who in time past has often sinned against purity, usually endures many unchaste temptations afterwards. Thus we read of the holy penitent Margaret of Cortona, that she was very much tormented by these temptations exactly as many years as she had lived a sinful life. Persons who on this account are troubled with impure temptations must humble themselves before God and mortify themselves a great deal, in order to prevent a relapse.

(b.) Impure temptations have their origin often in this, that people are not watchful enough, allow too much liberty to their senses, and do not carefully avoid occasions of sin. Many do not guard their eyes, are too free in their intercourse with persons of the opposite sex, or foster a too sensible inclination for some one. Such persons are in imminent danger of losing their souls; they must put a stop to anything which causes the temptations, otherwise they will never get rid of them.

(c.) Many are greatly tormented by unchaste thoughts and desires without giving occasion to them, for they lead a retired, mortified life, and diligently fulfil their religious duties. Such persons must not be disquieted, for these temptations are not disadvantageous to them, but rather a gain. God permits them to be tempted in order to keep them in humility, to preserve them from tepidity and levity and to afford them an opportunity of practicing various virtues and increasing their merits. They must, however, redouble their watchfulness and fervor in prayer and often excite themselves to the love of God with a view to avoid the danger of consenting to the temptations. We also advise them

to disclose their temptations in the confessional, for "a revealed temptation is already half conquered."—*St. Philip Neri.*

PERORATION.

When you are assailed by unchaste thoughts and desires you must offer a determined resistance in the very beginning, and call upon God for grace and help. If the temptation lasts, you must not be discouraged, but persevere in the use of the appropriate means, and as much as possible avoid everything that might afford an occasion for such temptation. If you use all the means in your power to overcome your temptations you may rest assured that God will do his share, for, as the Apostle says, "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. Amen.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

BLASPHEMY.

He blasphemeth.—Matt. 9: 3.

God alone can forgive sins, for it is he alone who is offended by sin. When priests forgive sins, they do so, not of themselves but as the representatives of Christ, and by the power of God. By forgiving the sins of the man sick of the palsy, Christ declared himself to be truly God. This was the opinion of the Scribes. But because they considered Christ to be only man, they thought that by forgiving sin he infringed on the rights of God and made himself guilty of blasphemy. Therefore they said within themselves: *He blasphemeth.* How blind they were! They accused our divine Lord of blasphemy, but it was they who committed that grievous crime. Christ had oftentimes proved his Divinity by manifest miracles; they, therefore, could and should have known that he was God, and, consequently, had power to forgive sins. By persevering nevertheless in unbelief, and denying to him the power of forgiving sins, they made themselves guilty of blasphemy.

This grievous sin shall be the subject of my discourse to-day, and I shall explain to you —

- I. *What we understand by blasphemy;*
- II. *What kind of a sin blasphemy is.*

PART I.

By blasphemy is meant contemptuous and abusive language uttered against God, the saints, or holy things.

1. *We blaspheme God when we use contemptuous and abusive language against him.* This is done —

(a.) When we attribute to him something at variance with his divine attributes. Thus it should be blasphemy to say that God is a tyrant, that he rejoices at the misfortune of men, that he is unjust. These and the like are contemptuous utterances against God, for they ascribe to him things which absolutely contradict his goodness, holiness and justice.

(b.) *When we deny or doubt one or the other of his perfections.* It would be blasphemous to assert that there is no justice in heaven, and that, therefore, God does not punish, or that he is not just, that he would have a great deal to do if he cared for all. Such assertions contain a horrid blasphemy, for they deny something to God, or represent as doubtful what he is.

(c.) *When we lower his infinite majesty by contemptuous language.* Thus we should be guilty of blasphemy if we should say: "God is good-natured, we have known each other for a long time; he will not harm me; or, whether God wills it or not, it must be done; or, I will raise twenty-five bushels of wheat to the acre, if God blesses it; but whether God blesses it or not, I will have fifteen any-how;" and similar expressions.

(d.) *Finally, when we attribute to creatures what is due to him alone.* Thus it would be blasphemy to say of a man that he is the light, the saviour and redeemer of the world. Such blasphemies are not rare in our day when men favored by a combination of fortunate circumstances are, as it were, deified. People who are in love also blaspheme God, when they call the object of their sensual affection the only treasure of their heart, their life and their all—yes, even their god, and absolutely say that they adore it.

2. *We blaspheme God when we use contemptuous language against the saints.* St. Thomas of Aquin says: "As God is praised in his

saints when we praise the works which God accomplishes in them, so blasphemy against the saints reverts to God himself." A king is honored or insulted in proportion as his ambassador is honored or insulted. He who speaks disparagingly of the Blessed Virgin and the other saints, ridicules, reviles or insults them, commits the sin of blasphemy.

3. *God is blasphemed when we utter contemptuous language against holy things.* To this class of sins belong reviling, cursing and swearing. He who speaks against the sacraments either in a direct manner, or in connection with holy or unholy things, blasphemes God in a terrible way. Blasphemies of this kind are very common and those who utter them seldom amend themselves. It is to be feared that many people are eternally lost on this account.

4. *God is blasphemed when we wish him evil, or when we curse creatures, in so far as they are God's works.* He who wishes that there was no God, or that he had not the power to punish the wicked, is guilty of the most horrid blasphemy. He who curses men, cattle or anything else, such as the weather, is guilty of blasphemy, according to St. Thomas of Aquin, since these are creatures, works or ordinances of God; for dishonoring that which God has made, does or ordains, is in fact dishonoring God himself. But God can be blasphemed not only with words, but also with signs and gestures; when a man, for instance, full of rage, raises his clenched hand towards heaven, gnashes his teeth, spits against saints and holy things, as the soldiers did who spat upon Jesus, bent their knees before him and in derision saluted him as their king.

Like any other sin, blasphemy can also be committed in thought, when we voluntarily think something of God or his saints which is to their dishonor. But if such thoughts come into your mind against your will, and you are displeased with them and try to banish them, they are not sinful. Persons who are troubled with such involuntary blasphemous thoughts must not allow themselves to be disquieted and disturbed in their devotion. They should say: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," or they may recite acts of the three theological virtues. Now, the question is, what kind of a sin is blasphemy?

PART II.

The holy Fathers and divines unanimously declare blasphemy to be the greatest and most grievous of all sins, and say with St. Jerome, that in comparison with it all other sins may be

looked upon as small. How true this is will become evident when we consider:

1. *That by every other sin God is dishonored only indirectly, or in so far as his holy law is violated, but that by blasphemy God is attacked personally and his honor violated.* Now, as he who offends the king personally, commits a greater crime than if he transgressed one of his laws or ordinances, so the blasphemer commits a far greater sin than any other sinner, who sins not immediately against God, but only against his law. It is, indeed true, that man cannot dishonor God in reality by his blasphemies, nor injure him, but, as with every other sin, so also with blasphemy, the will goes for the deed. Because the blasphemer has the will to diminish God's honor, he acts as criminally as a man who intends to commit murder, but cannot execute his wicked design.

2. *That it is men and Christians who blaspheme God.* What is man in comparison with God? Far less than the lowest subject in comparison with his sovereign, a mere nothing. Now if a man dares to insult and blaspheme God, whom the Cherubim and Seraphim adore with the most profound veneration, must it not be a horrible sin? But we are Christians, Catholic Christians; we possess the only true, saving faith, and receive in the holy Catholic Church innumerable graces for our salvation. Now, if a Catholic curses God for so great graces and evidences of his love, instead of praising and glorifying him, and if he reviles, abuses and blasphemes him, instead of thanking him, is it not the most atrocious crime? Is not St. Bernardine right when, full of holy indignation, he addresses the blasphemer in these words: "O diabolical tongue, what can induce you to utter curses and imprecations against him who has created you, who by the blood of his Son has redeemed you, and who by the Holy Ghost has consecrated you for an instrument of his honor and glory."

3. *That much scandal is given by blasphemy.* There is scarcely a sin so prevalent as cursing, swearing, and blaspheming. In cities, towns and villages, in the streets, in houses, manufactories and workshops, everywhere you hear curses and blasphemies. Even children, who scarcely know how to make the sign of the cross, know how to give themselves to the devil; they learn how to curse sooner than to pray. Whence does it come that this sin is so prevalent? Without doubt from this, that one learns cursing and blasphemy from others. What species of sin then does the blasphemer commit? Evidently the sin of scandal. Therefore that sin against which Jesus Christ has pronounced woe. Oh, that parents would reflect on this, and carefully guard

against cursing and blaspheming, so as not to give scandal to their children! Oh, that they would never forget the terrible words of Jesus: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea."—*Matt.* 18: 6.

4. *That the greatest punishments are decreed against blasphemy.*

(a.) *By God.* A son of a woman of Israel disputed violently in the camp with a man of Israel. And when he thereupon blasphemed God and cursed him, he was brought to Moses; "and they put him into prison, till they might know what the Lord would command. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Bring forth the blasphemer without the camp: and let them that heard him, put their hands upon his head; and let all the people stone him. And thou shalt speak to the children of Israel: The man that curseth his God shall bear his sin; and he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying, let him die; all the multitude shall stone him, whether he be a native or a stranger."—*Levit.* 24; 10-16. When Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, through his general, Rabsaces, in blasphemous expressions demanded the surrender of Jerusalem, an angel of the Lord came to the camp of the Assyrians and slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand men. Sennacherib himself was slain with the sword by his own sons after his return to Nineve.—*IV. Kings* 19. In like manner God yet punishes his blasphemers. In the year 1850 a rich English landlord visited his domain, to see whether the wheat was ripe. It was a wet summer, and the frequent rains retarded the ripening of the grain, whereupon he exclaimed: "It is high time to turn God out as he does not know how to govern the world; I am sure I could manage things a great deal better." He had scarcely spoken these words when he fell down dead from a stroke of apoplexy.

(b.) *By the Church.* To deter Christians from blasphemy the Church in former times imposed a very severe penance for this crime, and ordained that a blasphemer should stand at the door of the church during the divine offices for seven successive Sundays, and, on the last Sunday, without mantle and shoes and with a rope round his neck; that he should fast for seven days on bread and water, and, if possible, feed two or three poor persons on each of these days; if this was not possible he was to do something else as a penance. He who refused to accept this penance was deprived of Christian burial.

(c.) *By the temporal authority.* The emperor Justinian ordained capital punishment for blasphemy. St. Louis of France made

a law that the lips of a blasphemer should be branded with a red-hot iron. When a respectable citizen of Paris was convicted of this crime and the king was petitioned to spare him the disgrace, he made this answer: "When my own person is reviled I forgive, but when the majesty of God is publicly insulted, never; in fact, I would suffer my own tongue to be pierced through with a red-hot iron if thereby I could banish blasphemy from my kingdom." At the instance of Pope Clement IV., Louis changed this penalty into imprisonment or corporal punishment. The penal code of the German Empire, of the year 1871, decrees three years' imprisonment for all those who publicly blaspheme God by contemptuous utterances.

PERORATION.

From what you have heard to-day you may infer that blasphemy is a very grievous sin. If you have committed it, make to-day an earnest resolution not to commit it any more. Consider what you would have to reveal before the throne of God, when you must give an account of every idle word. How could you utter curses and blasphemies against God, to whom you owe all benefits for time and eternity! How can you answer for the scandals which you give by curses and imprecations! If for the future a curse or a blasphemous word should inadvertently escape your lips, make an act of contrition at once, and ask pardon of God. In conclusion, I recommend you, in reparation for the offenses which are offered to God by curses and blasphemies, every day to say devoutly this prayer, which is enriched with an indulgence of one year: "Blessed be God; blessed be his holy name; blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man; blessed be the name of Jesus; blessed be his Most Sacred Heart; blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar; blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy; blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception; blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother; blessed be God in his Angels and in his Saints. Amen."



NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*Eph.* 3: 23-28. Brethren: Be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor; for we are members one of another. Be angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger: Give not place to the devil. He that stole, let him now steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffereth need.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

SPIRITUAL RENOVATION.

As we heard two and three weeks ago in the lessons which were portions of the epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, the Apostle, even in his prison at Rome, was solicitous for his beloved converts at Ephesus. He fell on his knees, as he tells us himself, in his prison, and prayed fervently for their salvation; and when he could no longer speak with them personally, he exhorted and entreated them by letter to lead a blameless life as becomes Christians. And in the lesson for this day, taken from the same epistle, the Apostle speaks —

- I. Of spiritual renovation in general, and he explains,
- II. How this spiritual renovation must manifest itself.

PART I.

1. *Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.* To renew something means to restore what is decayed, or to perfect what is imperfect. This renovation must take place in the spirit of the mind, that is, it must not only be exterior but also interior. Many

persons think that conversion or piety consists in mere external things, such as plain garments, the practice of various devotions, or the frequent reception of the sacraments. Such an outward renovation is indeed good and worthy of all praise, and manifests itself where there is true repentance and piety, but of itself it would be nothing but an appearance and a delusion. Witness the Scribes and Pharisees, who, if judged by their conduct before the world, might be considered saints, but whose justice Christ declared insufficient for heaven.—*Matt.* 5: 20. The renovation must be principally inward, and must consist in the amendment and perfecting of the mind. Such a renovation is necessary —

(a.) *For the sinner.* He must turn from sin to God, that is, he must hate and detest above all things the evil which he loved, and love that which is good and pleasing to God and which heretofore was indifferent and distasteful to him: he must renounce all his sins and zealously do good. Conversion begins by complete change of the heart, and manifests itself outwardly by a pious life. God demands such a conversion when he says: "Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord, your God."—*Joel* 2: 12, 13. It is a great error on the part of many Catholics to believe that a mere confession, that is, a mere recital of their sins, is sufficient without true contrition and a firm purpose of amendment, the evil dispositions remaining as before.

(b.) *For the just man.* He must free himself more and more from his lesser faults, resist and mortify his inordinate emotions and inclinations, revive his zeal for virtue when it threatens to die, and perfect himself in good. Even the just man is not devoid of faults; he often commits them, for it is a doctrine of the Church, that no one, not even a saint, can abstain from all venial sins without the grace of God; hence we read in the Book of Proverbs (24: 16): "A just man shall fall seven times," that is, he frequently commits lesser faults. 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. The same may be said of inordinate emotions and inclinations: for to these also every one is subject, and they can never be entirely eradicated. Moreover, every man is by nature slothful in doing good, and it costs him more or less self-denial to fulfil his duties and to practice the Christian virtues. Finally, it is the will of God that so long as we live we become always more and more perfect, according to the words of the Lord: "He that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still."—*Apoc.* 22: 11. Hence even pious Catholics, solicitous for their salvation, must renew them-

selves in the spirit of their mind and endeavor to correct their faults, to mortify their inordinate inclinations, to revive their zeal for virtue, and diligently to avail themselves of all the opportunities of doing good. Do you do this?

2. *And put on the new man.*

(a.) To put on the new man means, as St. Jerome says, to adopt the mind of Christ, to think, act, speak and move as Christ thought, acted, spoke and moved. The Apostle proposes Christ, the infinitely holy, as a pattern to us, and desires us to become conformable to him. Our eternal salvation depends on our conformity with Christ, for the Apostle says: "Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son."—*Rom.* 8: 29.

(b.) Examine yourselves and see whether in your mind and conduct you resemble Jesus Christ. He says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice" (*Luke* 12: 31): "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul" (*Matt.* 16: 26)? "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (*Matt.* 5: 3); "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work."—*John* 4: 34. In these and other passages our Lord gives us plainly enough to understand that he despised earthly things and always thought of what is eternal; that he considered it the first and principal business to do the will of his heavenly Father; that he despised what worldlings value and aim at with all their energy, such as honors and dignities, money and lands, pleasures and joys; but that, on the contrary, he valued and loved what worldlings look upon as evils, such as poverty, lowliness, contempt, crosses and sufferings. Such was the mind of Christ. Are you so minded? Have you no inordinate love for anything earthly? Does your will and desire aim at eternal things? Ah! how many of us cannot answer these questions in the affirmative? How long will it be before we can say with St. Paul: "I live; now not I, but Christ liveth in me!"—*Gal.* 2: 20. And how did Christ live? So purely and holily that he could even challenge his enemies to convince him of sin: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?"—*John* 8: 46. Who does not admire his humility, his meekness, his patience, his love, his mercy, his obedience, and his fervor in prayer? Ah, how much room is there for correction and improvement, if we really desire to become in any degree conformable to Christ! How imperfect and defective is our humility, our meekness, our patience, our obedience, and our prayer! How much is wanting to us, before we can say in truth: **We have put on the new man!**

3. *Who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth.*

(a.) The Apostle says of the new man that he is *created according to God*. To be created according to God, means to be like God, an image of God. When man is born he is not created according to God, for he is defiled with original sin, and he is consequently destitute of the supernatural image of God, justice and holiness. It is only in the bath of regeneration, holy baptism, that man is cleansed from sin, justified and sanctified, and created according to God, that he can become an image of God. The Apostle adds, *in justice and holiness of truth*, whereby he signifies two qualities in men created according to God, or justified. Such a man is *just*, his spiritual state is set in order, that is, the right order is re-established, because the flesh obeys the spirit, and the spirit, God. He is *holy*, that is, he diligently practices the Christian virtues and performs all the good works he can. The Apostle says, *in holiness of truth*, in order to contrast the justice of the justified Christian with the sanctimoniousness of the Pharisees and all other hypocrites. The Pharisees conducted themselves outwardly in such a manner that they were considered saints: but they had evil hearts, wherefore God compares them "to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness."—*Matt. 23: 27*.

(b.) As Christians we also must possess *justice and holiness of truth* if we wish to be saved. Is this really the case? Are we just? Has the spirit full sway over the flesh, over all sensual inclinations and carnal desires? Do we subject ourselves to God without reserve, and is his holy will all to us? Are we truly just? Does a true zeal animate us in the service of God? Do we diligently seize every opportunity of doing good? Let us examine ourselves on this point and amend what is defective in us and displeasing to God.

PART II.

The Apostle now shows *how this spiritual renovation must manifest itself*

1. *Putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor; for we are members one of another.*

(a.) This admonition was the more necessary for the Ephesians, because formerly they were pagans, and, moreover, Greeks. Many even of the most enlightened pagans maintained that a

lie which did no particular injury or damage to any one, was lawful, and in some cases even necessary. The Greeks, in particular, on account of their mendacity, were everywhere in bad repute. The Ephesians, having become Christians, should have abandoned that bad habit entirely, and on no account have allowed themselves to tell a lie, and the Apostle assigns as the reason the intimate relation that exists among them. The members of *one* body do not deceive one another, are not false, but sincere towards one another. So also Christians, as members of one body, whose head is Christ, must act honestly towards one another, and carefully and religiously guard against falsehood and lies.

(b.) This admonition concerns us too. There is scarcely a sin which God detests so much as a lie. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord."—*Prov. 12: 22*. "A thief is better than a man that is always lying; but both of them shall inherit destruction."—*Ecclus. 20: 27*. Shun therefore every injurious lie, and take care that by an untruth you do not injure any of your neighbors in regard to honor, reputation or good name, or other temporal goods; for such a lie would be an offense not only against veracity, but also against justice, and you would be strictly obliged to repair all damage caused by it. Guard also against prevarication and jocose lies, for such lies are also sinful before God. It is sometimes lawful to conceal the truth, and sometimes it may be even necessary, but to tell a lie is always wrong and sinful. Persons ought to remember this who consider those lies permissible which injure no one, or are even advantageous to others and help them out of some difficulty. Although such lies are not ordinarily mortal sins, yet they are venial sins, and will be punished most severely in purgatory. Catholic parents, do not allow your children to tell lies; punish them severely as often as you detect them in telling them; but when, on the contrary, they candidly and sincerely acknowledge a fault they have committed, do not punish them at all, or only mildly.

2. *Be angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger. Give not place to the devil.*

(a.) St. Paul here speaks, in the first place, of the motions of ill-will and anger. These motions are involuntary, and it is not in our power to prevent them. But we must keep them within bounds and control them, that they may not degenerate into enmity, hatred or revenge, or break forth in sinful words and actions. When the Apostle says that we must not let the sun go down upon our anger, it is not to be understood that it is lawful to cherish anger and ill-will till evening, but that we ought to

suppress our anger immediately, for if one entertains it longer, the devil gains access to the heart and fills it with hatred, enmity and other grievous sins. Hence he says: "Give not place to the devil." St. John the Almoner one day modestly spoke to Nicetus the governor, against the project of a new tax very prejudicial to the poor. The governor in a passion left him abruptly. St. John sent him this message towards evening: "The sun is going to set." This admonition had the desired effect on the governor and pierced him to the quick. He arose, went to the patriarch, and bathed in tears asked his pardon, and by way of atonement promised never more to give ear to informers and talebearers. Do likewise and never nourish anger in your heart.

(b.) The words of the Apostle, *Be angry, and sin not*, may be referred to that anger which is caused by our zeal for the honor of God and the salvation of our neighbor, or by our love for him who sins. This anger is evidently not sinful, but is just and holy. Such a holy anger or zeal Christ had when he drove out the profaners of the temple. "He cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple; and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves. And he said to them: It is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves."—*Matt. 21:12, 13*. And although our anger may have its origin in a just cause, we must see that it does not transgress the bounds of moderation and become sinful. Thus parents sin who are so much enraged at their children's faults that they break out into curses and blasphemies, and, like madmen, strike their children; so also those sin who become so angry with wicked people that they wish God would take vengeance on them and damn them for ever. Even the most just anger becomes sinful when the desire of revenge, not charity, is at the bottom of it. Do not forget this.

3. *He that stole, let him now steal no more*. When the Ephesians were still pagans, some of them perhaps sinned against the natural law, which imposes upon us the duty of giving and leaving to every one his own; perhaps they encroached on other people's property and committed injustice in their business transactions. The Apostle says that now, being Christians, they must do so no more, for as Christians they are taught that God strictly forbids not only every unjust action, such as theft, cheating, and usury, but also every inordinate desire after the goods of others, and that in general they must moderate the desire after temporal goods, and endeavor to lay up treasures for heaven, "for what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?"—*Matt. 16: 26*.

(a.) This is also an important lesson for you: *He that stole let him now steal no more*. If there should be any one among you whose conscience rebukes him on this point, let him put the affair in order by restitution or the reparation of the damage. Consider that your eternal salvation depends on the fulfilment of this duty. From henceforth shun all injustice; be honest in your dealings, take no advantage of others, cheat no one, and permit no unjust gain to come into your house. Remember the adage: "Ill-gotten goods do not thrive."

4. *But rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffereth need*.

(a.) The Apostle here gives a twofold reason why the Ephesians, should work: first, in order not to be compelled to have recourse to theft and other unlawful means, but to gain their livelihood in an honest way; secondly, to enable them with the profits of their labor to assist the needy and to practice the works of charity. From the very beginning, Christians, animated by the spirit of love, obeyed this apostolic injunction. They worked not only for themselves, to support themselves and their families, but also to be in a position to relieve the needy and to promote good works by charitable contributions. Thus we read in the Acts of the Apostles of a pious woman, Dorcas or Tabitha by name, who distinguished herself by good works and alms. She died, and Peter was brought into the chamber where the corpse was; all the widows stood about him weeping, and showing him the coats and garments which Dorcas had made them. Her works of mercy were richly rewarded even here upon earth, for Peter raised her to life again.—*Acts 9: 36, et seq.*

(b.) Labor then for yourselves and others; for yourselves, that you may live honestly in the world and become no burden to others; for others, first for those of your own household, to provide for them properly, then for the poor and needy, and in general for good purposes, in order to bestow blessings out of your abundance. It is the works of charity and mercy that God is particularly pleased with and that he rewards temporally and eternally. St. Chrysostom says: "Do not consider alms to be a loss, but a gain, for you receive more in return than you give. You give some bread, and in return you receive eternal life; you give a coat or a garment, and in return the garment of immortality is given to you; you give shelter, and receive for it the kingdom of heaven; you give that which is transitory, and you receive that which will continue for ever." And St. Jerome says: "I have read, heard and seen much, but I have never read, heard

or seen that a man who in life practiced works of mercy has ever died an unhappy death. Such a one has so many intercessors in his behalf that is impossible for their petitions to be in vain."

PERORATION.

Follow the lessons and admonitions of St. Paul in the epistle of this day. *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.* Always have Jesus before your eyes as your pattern, and endeavor in all things to become conformable to him. Only in so far as you are renewed according to Jesus in your thoughts, words and actions are you perfect and have the hope of eternal life. Guard especially against those sins which the Apostle mentions in the epistle, such as falsehood, lying, anger, hatred, and enmity, theft and every kind of injustice. Love the truth, and be sincere towards your neighbor: give and leave to every one his own; study Christian meekness, and practice works of Christian charity and mercy. If you do so, you will become good Catholics and walk in the way that leads to salvation. Amen.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt. 22:2-14.* At that time: Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the marriage. But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and, having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard of it he was angry, and, sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers and burnt their city. Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready: but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with

guests. And the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE REJECTION OF THE JEWS, AND THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES.

The kingdom of heaven spoken of in the parable of the gospel of this day is the Church established by Christ. The Church is a kingdom, for she possesses everything required for a kingdom, viz., officers, subjects and laws. She is called the kingdom of heaven, because she comes from heaven and leads to heaven. The king is God, the heavenly Father. The son is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. When it is said that the king made a marriage for his son, it means this: It was the will of God that his Son should become man, establish a new Church, that is, a new community consisting of Jews and Gentiles, unite himself with her as with a bride and raise her to the participation of his eternal inheritance. But the Church is compared to marriage or a marriage-feast, because between her and her divine Founder Jesus Christ, there exists the same relation as between bridegroom and bride. A bridegroom loves his bride; Christ also loves his Church and loves her so much as to shed even his blood for her purification and sanctification. A bride, on the other hand, is devoted to her bridegroom, and obeys him; so the Church also loves her heavenly bridegroom, is faithful to him in all sufferings and persecutions, and nothing can separate her from him. The bridegroom and the bride are united with each other in wedlock to propagate the human family and to complete the number of the elect in heaven. Thus Christ remains for ever united in love and grace with his Church, that she may bring forth children for heaven, that is, that she may cleanse and sanctify men and make them fit for heaven. Having briefly explained the words of Christ: *The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son,* we shall consider the whole parable, which I divide into these two heads —

- I. *The rejection of the Jews;*
- II. *The calling of the Gentiles.*

PART I.

The first part of the parable speaks of the rejection of the Jews, for it records —

1. That Jews were called to enter into the Church established by Christ.

(a.) *He sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage.* The Jews are here signified as already invited, because they were the chosen people of God, and to them first was made the promise of a Redeemer from whom they were to receive grace and salvation. The servants, through whom the Jews were invited to the wedding, *i. e.*, to the Church, were St. John the Baptist, the Apostles and disciples, whom Christ sent during his life to preach the gospel to the Jews. Thus we read of St. John the Baptist, that by the command of God he preached penance to the Jews and prepared them for the coming of the Redeemer. We also read in the gospel, that Christ commanded his twelve Apostles to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to preach to them and to say: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."—*Matt. 10: 5, et seq.*

(b.) *Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come ye to the marriage.* Here I must remark that according to Oriental custom the invitation to a banquet was sent out twice. At the first invitation the cause of the banquet, and the day on which it was to be held, were announced; the second invitation was sent immediately before the banquet, and was a request to come immediately. Who are the servants whom the king sent out the second time to invite to the wedding? These are again the Apostles and disciples of the Lord, who, after the feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost had come down upon them, preached the gospel in Jerusalem and in the whole Jewish land. The call which was now tendered to the Jews was more urgent, because the work of Redemption was already accomplished, and the Church established by Christ was introduced into the world. What great mercy and goodness did not God show to the Jews when he chose them in preference to all the nations of the earth, when he promised them a Redeemer through the Patriarchs, through Moses, and the Prophets, and when he again invited them after the coming of Christ and the accomplishment of the work of Redemption to enter into the Church and to make themselves partakers of the grace of Redemption! But ungrateful that they were, they

despised and rejected the proffered grace, for the gospel tells us —

2. That they did not accept the call of God to enter into the Church.

(a.) *But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise.* They paid attention neither to St. John the Baptist, who prepared them for Christ and exhorted them to penance, nor to the Apostles and disciples, who by the commission of Christ preached the gospel to them, nor to Christ himself, who for three years instructed them in the truths of salvation and wrought numerous miracles to convince them of the Divinity of his Person and mission. The Jews were a degenerate people, carnal and sensual, strongly attached to earthly goods and bent upon the gratification of their passions. They flattered themselves with the idea that the Messiah whom they expected would free them, not from sin and the slavery of Satan, but from the yoke of the Romans; they wished for a Redeemer who would reign upon earth as a mighty monarch and make them the most powerful and happy people in the world. But when they heard that his kingdom was not of this world and he preached to them only humility, poverty of spirit, mortification and the desire after heavenly goods, they obstinately refused to believe in him; being offended and scandalized at his poor and humble condition, they turned their backs upon him and his doctrine and would not hear of his Church. Do not many Catholics act like the Jews? God invites them through his priests in the confessional, in the pulpit, and in private life, through the good example of pious Catholics, through the voice of conscience, through prosperity and adversity, through sufferings and tribulations. But they do not accept these invitations of God. They refuse to come to mass, to sermons, to confession and communion. Sensual and attached to earthly things, like the Jews they have no relish for spiritual things; they pass their life in distractions and neglect of the business of their salvation.

(b.) *And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death.* Many Jews were not content with simply rejecting the gospel, but they also persecuted those who preached it, and took their lives. Thus we read in the Acts of the Apostles that the Apostles were cited before the tribunal, cast into prison and scourged because they would not desist from preaching the gospel. St. Stephen was dragged out of the city and stoned to death. St. James was beheaded; and the Prince of the Apostles, St. Peter, would have shared the same fate had he not been released from prison by an angel.

St. James, the relative of our Lord, was cast from the pinnacle of the temple. And how did the Jews persecute St. Paul? He was imprisoned often, dragged before different tribunals, scourged five times by the Jews and three times by the Romans, stoned by a mob in the streets, and left for dead. This was the crime of the Jews, who would not receive the Christian faith. But many Catholics do very little better. God has frequently and urgently admonished them to abandon their criminal conduct and to do penance. But instead of giving ear to him they are full of hatred and rancor against those who wish to put a stop to their excesses and vices; they revile and blaspheme them, and if it were in their power they would deprive them even of liberty and life. They have a corrupt heart; hence they are the mortal enemies of the Christian religion and would have it banished and destroyed from the face of the earth. Woe to them! they will share the fate of the obstinate Jews concerning whom the gospel records —

3. That the judgments of God fell upon them.

(a.) *When the king had heard of it, he was angry, and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city.* This prophecy of our Lord was fulfilled to the very letter. Forty years after the death of Christ, Roman armies under Vespasian and Titus invaded Judea, and laid siege to the city of Jerusalem. After it had experienced all the misery that is connected with a long siege, it was taken by storm, and levelled to the ground; even the temple was destroyed by fire and became a shapeless mass of ruins, and more than eleven hundred thousand Jews lost their lives by the sword, by hunger, and by pestilence. Thus God punished the Jews because they rejected his gospel, persecuted its preachers, and persevered in impenitence.

(b.) Oh, that the judgments that came upon the Jews, would rouse sinners from their spiritual lethargy and move them to repentance! Oh, that they would take to heart the words of the Apostle: "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and patience, and long-suffering? Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath, against the day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God."—*Rom. 2:4, 5.* God is patient and merciful towards sinners; he gives them time and grace for conversion; but if they allow these to pass unprofitably to themselves and unacceptably to God, and persevere in wickedness and sin, God calls them before his tribunal and delivers them to everlasting torments. Oh, that every sinner would consider this and rescue his soul by a speedy and thorough repentance!

PART II.

1. *Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage.*

(a.) The Church with all its means of grace was now established; the Jews were the first that were called into it; but instead of accepting the gracious invitation, they resisted the preachers of the gospel, persecuted and put them to death. They were therefore rejected, and the Apostles were obliged to go and preach the word of God to the Gentiles. Hence St. Paul and Barnabas said to them: "To you it behoved us first to speak the word of God; but because you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles; for so the Lord hath commanded us: I have set thee to be the light of the Gentiles: that thou mayest be for salvation unto the utmost part of the earth."—*Acts 13: 46, 47.*

(b.) As God formerly dealt with the Jews, so has he dealt at all times with men, who rendered themselves unworthy of his graces; he withdrew them from them and gave them to others, who made a better use of them. When the Greek Church separated itself from the Catholic Church in the ninth century, God extended his kingdom into the northern countries of Europe and called them to the holy faith, in order to console the Church in her grief for this great loss. When in the sixteenth century a great defection from the Church took place and millions of her children fell away, she was compensated for this loss by the conversion of pagans in America and Asia. As a kingdom is transferred from one people to another, because of injustices, and wrongs, and injuries, and divers deceits (*Ecclus. 10: 18*), so the holy faith goes from one people to another. God deals with individuals in like manner. Saul is rejected, and his sceptre passes over to David; Aman receives the punishment of his wickedness, and Mardochai fills his place; Judas loses his dignity as an apostle, and Matthias is chosen in his stead. How many graces had God perhaps appointed for us which have been given to others who made better use of them! How many have thankfully received those graces which had been offered us in vain; they profited by our tepidity and have become rich through our benefits and graces. Perhaps we shall find these persons hereafter in heaven in the place which had been appointed for us. Let us take to heart this earnest truth and guard against nothing so much as the rejection and abuse of proffered graces.

2. *And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests.*

(a.) At the command of Christ the Apostles went to the Gentiles and admitted into the Church those who believed. The servants gathering together all that they found, both bad and good, refers principally to the Gentiles. As St. Chrysostom remarks, there was great diversity among the Gentiles as regards morals, some of them fulfilling the natural law (*Rom. 2: 14*), and others violating it and yielding to all vices. No matter whether the Gentiles were good or bad, when they embraced the Christian faith and were truly converted, they were cleansed by baptism, justified, and admitted into the Church. Here we see that God offers the grace of salvation to all men; though a person may have grievously sinned, he is rescued, provided that he accepts the proffered grace and is truly converted, for God wills not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. Should not the goodness and mercy of God move the sinner to accept without delay the proffered grace for the rescue of his soul, and to employ it for the working out of his salvation?

(b.) The expression: *And the marriage was filled with guests*, is not to be understood as if so many Gentiles had been converted that all the places in the Church were taken and no more could be received; it only indicates the great multitude of Pagans who were converted in the beginning. In the Church of Christ there is room for the men of all times and all countries; it is also the will of God that men enter the Church, since it is the only institution established by Christ for the salvation of men. Therefore he said to his Apostles: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature."—*Mark 16: 15*. It is for this reason that the Church, even in our days, sends her messengers of faith into all parts of the world, to preach the gospel to unbelievers and heretics.

3. *And the king went in to see the guests; and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment. But he was silent.* The king coming in at the banquet to see the guests signifies the coming of our divine Saviour on the day of our death and at the end of the world, at the particular judgment and at the general judgment. The wedding garment is charity or Christian justice, which consists in carefully avoiding evil and doing good. The man who without a nuptial garment came to the wedding represents all those Catholics who have the faith, but lead a sinful life, who therefore neither possess the love of God, nor

sanctifying grace. Faith alone saves no one; it must be united with charity, that is, with the love of God. It was a custom among the Orientals for the king to provide costly garments for those who were invited, that they might present a dignified appearance. When this man presented himself without a wedding garment it was very culpable, even an insult to the king, and for this reason he could offer no excuse—he was silent. The same holds good of those who do not live piously, and without sanctifying grace appear before the judgment-seat of God. They receive from God graces in abundance for virtue and piety; if therefore they live in sin it is their fault; therefore, at the tribunal of God they will be unable to make an excuse, but, like the guest in the gospel, they will be silent. We must all consider this well and serve God zealously, that we may be able to stand before him at the Day of Judgment.

4. *Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* In the East, banquets were held at night. The dining halls were gorgeously decorated and illuminated and sounds of hilarity and merriment issued from them. Now when the guest was cast out at the behest of the king, because he had no wedding garment, he was in darkness and in misery and wretchedness, and, as his hands and feet were bound, he was in a very helpless condition. We have here an image of the miserable state of the reprobate *in hell*. They are famishing in exterior darkness, excluded from heaven and its inexpressible joys, in a most miserable condition, since nothing appears to be, or really is, harder for man than to be confined in a solitary, dark prison, into which a ray of the sun never penetrates. They are bound hand and foot, *i. e.*, utterly powerless to effect their delivery from hell or to obtain the mitigation of their pains. They weep, and gnash their teeth, for they suffer great torments, and rage with fury and despair against themselves, because they know that they are damned through their own fault, and will remain so for ever. Oh, who could think of the awful condition of the damned without being filled with a salutary fear? How could it be possible for a man who has any faith to live for weeks, months and years in mortal sin, if he were to bring hell with its everlasting torments before his eyes? Let us follow the admonition of St. Chrysostom: "Man, descend in thought into hell while you live, that you may not be compelled to descend there at your departure from hence, for no one who has this pool of fire before his eyes will be plunged into it, nor will he who despises and forgets it escape its jaws."

PERORATION.

Our divine Saviour concludes the parable, with these words: *For many are called, but few are chosen.* Many—all men, are called to be saved through Jesus Christ, but only few are really saved. Many are excluded from eternal beatitude because, like the obstinate Jews, they do not follow the call of grace, but maliciously persevere in unbelief and error. To them the words of Christ apply: "He that believeth not, shall be condemned."—*Mark* 16: 16. Even many Catholics will be lost, because they do not live according to the requirements of the faith, for Christ emphatically says: "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. Therefore believe firmly and live holily; believe what the Church teaches, and do what she commands; then you will be of the number of those who are not only called but also chosen. Amen.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE ELECT.

Many are called, but few are chosen.—*Matt.* 22: 14.

In the parable of the gospel of this day we see a king who invites not only rich and respectable people, but also the poor, good and bad, to the marriage feast of his son. This king is God, the king of heaven and earth, who calls Jews and Gentiles, consequently all men, to the Church established by Christ his Son, in which are offered to them all the graces necessary for salvation. From this it evidently follows that he wills all men without exception to be saved, for why should he call them to his Church, for what purpose would he give them so many graces, if he wished to condemn them? No; "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance."—*II. Peter* 3: 9. But the question arises: Are all men saved? To my regret, I must answer this question in the negative, for our Lord says at the conclusion of the gospel of this day: *Many are called, but*

few are chosen. Let us to-day earnestly consider this utterance of our Lord, that we may not become careless, but serve God with a holy and wholesome fear. I therefore say: *Only a few are saved.* Witnesses of this truth are—

- I. *The infallible word of God;*
- II. *The conduct of men.*

PART I.

It is a doctrine of the faith that Jews and Gentiles, unbelievers and heretics, will be lost if they remain in error through their own fault, for Christ says: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned."—*Mark* 16: 16. Hence to-day I do not speak of those who are outside the pale of the Catholic Church, but only of Catholics, that is, adult Catholics, and I assert that only a few of them will be saved. I prove this assertion by the word of God, viz. :

1. *The Sacred Scripture.* It contains—

(a.) Several *similitudes*, from which, according to the explanation of the holy Fathers, it is evident that only a few adult Catholics will be saved. In the days of Noe the deluge spread over the earth, and the whole human race perished; only Noe and his own family, eight souls in all, were saved. The holy Fathers, and among them St. Augustine especially, see herein a figure. For, as at the time of the deluge only a few were saved, so on the Day of Judgment only a few will escape eternal perdition. Another picture we have in the six hundred thousand men who, under the leadership of Moses, left Egypt. There were all destined to enter the land of Chanaan and to dwell there permanently. But how many reached their destination? Only two, Josue and Caleb; all the rest found their graves in the desert. "Now these things," says the Apostle, "were done in a figure of us: that we should not covet evil things, as they also coveted."—*I. Cor.* 10: 6. Christ indeed has redeemed us from the slavery of sin; we are all called to enter heaven, the spiritual Chanaan. But as the great majority of the Israelites perished on their journey and were not allowed to enter into the land of promise, so most Catholics will for ever remain excluded from heaven. In the Prophet Isaias (17: 5, 6, and 24: 13) the number of the rescued Israelites is compared to the number of ears of corn that are picked up by the gleaners; to the olives which after the olive tree has been shaken remain hanging here and there on the branches. Many interpreters of the Sacred Scriptures see herein the small number of Christians who will be saved. That,

even as regards Catholics, only a few will be saved, seems evident also —

(b.) *From the express words of the Sacred Scripture.* Christ stated this on two occasions. His words may indeed be applied to the whole human race, so that the meaning may be: All the people who live upon earth are called to the true faith and salvation. But few obtain these blessings. However, since our Lord uses these words in the gospel of this day in connection with the parable of the marriage feast they can be understood as referring only to Catholics. By the marriage feast, at which a guest had appeared without the wedding garment, we must understand the Church of Christ; and by the man without the wedding garment, those members of the Church who have the true faith, but not the love of God, and who on that account are rejected. And since our Lord concludes this parable with the words, *Many are called, but few are chosen*, we have every reason to admit with St. Gregory the Great, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine, and many other Fathers, that among Catholics more will be damned than will be saved. A certain man once put the question to our Saviour: "Lord, are they few that are saved?" Jesus did not give a direct answer, but said: "Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able." — *Luke 13: 23, 24.* Christ addressed these words to those who surrounded him; they were all believers; and from this the Fathers again infer that even of the orthodox only the minority will be saved. St. Paul writes: "Know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain." — *I. Cor. 9: 24.* On the race course at Corinth there were races. Many were usually entered, and competed; but only the one who reached the goal first received the prize. In this passage the Apostle, according to St. Thomas of Aquin, speaks of three things: first, of *running*, of *our sojourn, our pilgrimage on earth*; secondly, of *the great number of those who run*, that is, who are in the Church, and, consequently, on the way to their destination, on the way to salvation; thirdly, of *the small number of those who receive the prize, i. e., are saved.* The Apostle seems then to intimate that, even of Catholics, only comparatively few will be saved.

2. *Tradition.* St. Chrysostom said in a sermon to the people of Antioch: "How many are there, do you think, in our city who will be saved? What I must say is terrible indeed, but I will say it. Among so many thousands not one hundred can be found who will be saved." The great Father of the Church here reckons that scarcely one in a hundred will be saved. In the same sense St. Gregory the Great says: "We fill the Church

with people, but who knows how few there are who will be numbered with the elect?" And again: "Many come to the faith, but few arrive at the kingdom of heaven." St. Augustine says: "It is certain that in comparison with the great multitude who will be lost only a few will be saved." To these and the other Fathers of the Church must be added the names of the most renowned divines, such as the two Cardinals Cajetan and Bellarmin, Alphonsus Tosta, Bishop of Avila, who on account of his astonishing wisdom, was called the Solomon of his time; and also the learned Suarez, who is believed to have been favored with special, divine illumination. They unanimously pronounce the universally prevailing opinion, that among the orthodox believers the number of the damned will exceed that of the elect. Thus Scripture and tradition convince us that, even among Catholics, only few will be saved. This will become all the plainer to us when we take into consideration the conduct of people, that is, the way in which they live.

PART II.

The reason why so few are saved, even among Catholics, is—

1. *Because they lead a sinful life.*

(a.) Faith teaches us that nothing defiled can enter into heaven and that every one who commits a mortal sin renders himself liable to eternal damnation. Think of the apostate angels; because they sinned they were deprived of heaven and plunged into the abyss of hell. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, unto torments, to be reserved unto judgment." — *II. Peter 2: 4.* Think of the people of Noe's time, of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, of the various tribes of Chanaan, of the Jews at Jerusalem, of Cain, Ophni and Phinees, Absalom and Judas; they were all damned on account of their sins. The same lot will befall every sinner who does not reconcile himself with God by true repentance, for, says Christ, "except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." — *Luke 13: 5.*

(b.) What is your conduct? Is it pure and undefiled? That surely is not the case. If we consider the seven deadly sins, we must confess that they prevail in many Catholic congregations. Look around you in this congregation. Do you know none that are proud, envious, revengeful, addicted to gluttony, drunkenness, idleness, impurity and effeminacy? Are not the commandments of God and the precepts of the Church frequently transgressed? Many are only nominal Catholics. They curse, swear, blaspheme God and his holy sacraments; they give false testi-

mony and perjure themselves; they lie, cheat, steal and commit all sorts of injustice; they profane Sundays and holidays, and neglect to hear mass. Many parents neglect the education of their children; many children and servants will not hear of obedience and submission, but lead a loose, dissolute life. Burglary, quarrelling and murder, overrun the land, and the vice of impurity reigns almost everywhere supreme. It is therefore only too certain that the greater part of mankind, and even of Catholics, pass their life in vice and sin, and consequently will be lost.

(c.) But cannot the sinner do penance and save his soul? I do not indeed deny it; but the question is whether he does penance, or does it in time, and truly. Many sinners do no penance; they continue in sin. They confess either not at all, or very seldom, perhaps at Easter; but they have not the will at all to renounce their sinful lives. Thus they live, thus they die; and the necessary consequence is that they are lost. Many defer their conversion from time to time, from their youth to manhood, and from manhood to old age, and from old age to the death bed. At last death approaches like a thief in the night and summons these unhappy people, laden with their sins, before the judgment-seat of God. Finally, many do penance, not a true, but only an apparent penance. They abstain from their former sins, such as drunkenness or impurity, but not for the love of God, but from natural reasons, *e. g.*, because they lack the strength, the opportunity, or the means. They resemble birds which can no longer fly because their wings have been clipped. Such a repentance does not lead to life, but to death, because the heart is not changed and renewed.

2. *Because they neglect their duties.*

(a.) When our Blessed Lord speaks of heaven, he represents it as a reward, which is to be earned by hard labor. When one of his disciples asked him whether they are few that are saved, he answered: "Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able."—*Luke* 13: 23, 24. And again he says: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."—*Matt.* 11: 12. He therefore who is indolent can only expect to be treated like the slothful servant who buried his talent in the earth, and on that account was severely rebuked by his master, and cast out into exterior darkness.

(b.) How do matters stand with us in this regard? It cannot be denied that the majority of men are extremely active as regards temporal things; for the sake of a worldly advantage they labor

early and late, and submit to a life of toil and privation, but what do they do for their immortal soul? What for heaven? Really little or nothing. They neglect prayer in the morning and evening, because, as they say, they have no time; they do not hear mass on Sundays and holidays: they defer the reception of the sacraments from time to time; they neglect the duties of their state of life; they do not avail themselves of opportunities of doing good works, and they spend their lives in distraction and lukewarmness. And can we suppose that such persons will, like the diligent laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, receive the penny of life everlasting? Impossible; for, as St. Augustine says, we cannot attain a great reward otherwise than by hard labor; the kingdom of heaven will not be given to the slothful and to those who are spiritually slumbering, for it is said: "Call the laborers, and give them their hire."

PERORATION.

As we have heard, it cannot reasonably be disputed that the utterance of our Lord: *Many are called, but few are chosen*, applies also to Catholics. The reason, however, why even the greater number of Catholics are lost, lies in their perverse way of life. Our parish numbers two thousand souls. If you all serve God faithfully, you will all be saved; not one will be lost. But if you live in sin and vice, if you neglect the duties of religion and of your state of life, and do no penance, you will all be lost, not one will be saved. Life and death are before you; what you choose will be given you. Choose the best. If heretofore you have lived in sin, turn from it and employ the time of grace that you may bring forth fruits worthy of penance. If you have been lukewarm and indolent in well doing, redouble your fervor, work out your salvation whilst it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work. Live not as the great crowd of worldly people, in forgetfulness of God, but serve him in persevering zeal with the few faithful Catholics, that you may be saved with them, and may not be lost with the many. Amen.



NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.

This day is salvation come to this house.—Luke 19: 9.

The annual festival in commemoration of the consecration of a particular church, which we celebrate to-day, dates back to the Old Testament; for the Jews annually celebrated the feast of the dedication of the temple, in which Christ himself participated.—*John 10: 22.* The Christians also from the earliest times annually celebrated the day of the dedication of their churches. Thus history mentions that the consecration of the Church of the Martyrs, built at Jerusalem by Constantine the Great, was annually celebrated by an eight days' festivity. From the writings of Pope St. Gregory I., in the sixth century, it appears that this feast was also celebrated in Rome. In the seventh and eighth centuries it was introduced into Germany. As a rule, the feast of the dedication was celebrated annually on the day on which the church was dedicated. But when, in the course of time, several abuses crept in, in many countries they began to celebrate the dedication of each particular church on one and the same day. In most dioceses of Germany the annual commemoration of the dedication of the several churches takes place on the third Sunday in October.

I shall explain to you to-day—

- I. *Why we celebrate this feast;*
- II. *How we celebrate it.*

PART I.

We celebrate this feast *in order to give thanks to God for the graces which we receive in our churches.* All that we see in the church tells us that it is a place in which graces are received. We see in the church—

1. *The pulpit, from which the word of God is preached. How great is the blessing and efficacy of the divine word! It is this word that—*

(a.) *Instructs the ignorant, and brings the wanderer into the right path.* In what darkness were men languishing in the time before Christ! Most of them had false conceptions and ideas of God and divine things, and did not even know how to distinguish between right and wrong. But as soon as the gospel was preached to them, a light suddenly dawned upon them. They were made acquainted with God and with their duties; they now perceived what they were to do, what to avoid, in order to reach their high destiny. The word of God produced this effect at all times. It is, as it were, the spiritual sun of the world, giving light to all men of good will who do not close their eyes and hearts against it. We also owe it to the word of God that we no longer belong to Paganism, and that we possess a thorough knowledge of all things that refer to God and the salvation of our souls.

(b.) *Converts sinners.* The word of God strikes the heart of the sinner and arouses him from his sleep. It fills him with salutary thoughts by representing to him the near approach of an unhappy death, judgment, and hell, where he must burn for ever; or if he really repents, it promises him heaven with its unspeakable and eternal joys. Again it exhibits to him a God full of mercy and grace towards repentant sinners, and it admonishes him to take courage and have confidence, seeking his salvation by repentance. Who can count the sinners who, through the word of God, have been conducted into the way of penance? When St. John of Capistran preached the word of God, all shed tears, sighed, sobbed and groaned, the most obstinate sinners were converted, and numerous heretics returned to the true faith. The Hussites in Bohemia used to say that they were more in dread of this monk than of an army of thirty thousand men.

(c.) *Confirms the just in good.* No matter how well a house is built, the time will come when it will need repair, and if neglected it will be in danger of falling to the ground; no matter how bright a fire burns, it will go out if fuel be not added; no matter how strong a body is, it will become weak if it be not nourished from time to time. These examples show that even the just man, in order to persevere, needs help, support and nourishment. The word of God effects all this; it calls a person's attention to the injuries which his soul may have suffered and admonishes him to repair them; it supports his virtue and confirms it; it strengthens him to overcome all obstacles to salvation and to persevere to the end in the struggle with the enemies of his soul. Hence St. Thomas of Villanova justly says: "The word of God affords our soul manifold and invaluable advantages, for it guards it against sin, enlightens, warms and strengthens it, helps

to cure the sick and to give strength to the healthy. "How much reason then have you to-day fervently to thank God for having his holy word announced to you on Sundays and holidays.

2. *The baptismal font*, which reminds you of the grace of holy baptism. Baptism is the most necessary sacrament, for without it no one can be saved. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—*John 3:5*. Baptism is also a sacrament conferring most wonderful graces. In it man is cleansed from all sin, both from original and personal sins, and all punishments, eternal and temporal, are remitted to him; he is spiritually regenerated, becoming a child of God and the heir of heaven; he is made a member of the Church and capable of receiving all graces and means of salvation. What a blessed place is the church, because in it holy baptism is administered! Should we not with a grateful heart call to mind this grace as often as we see the baptismal font in the church?

3. *The confessional*. If there were no confessional in the church the baptismal font would be of little use to most of us; almost all of us would be lost. The number of those who never in life commit a mortal sin, and who preserve their baptismal innocence till their last breath, is very small. Jesus Christ, who knows our weakness, has therefore placed confessionals in our churches and offers us in them a plank by means of which we can yet be saved after having suffered shipwreck. If we confess our sins sincerely they will be remitted to us, though they be numerous and great; we shall recover the grace we have forfeited, and God will say to us by the mouth of the priest: "Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee."—*Matt. 9:2*. Oh, how dear should the church be to us, for we always have the opportunity of obtaining the forgiveness of our sins.

4. *The high-altar*. Who can enumerate all the graces which flow to us from this holy place?

(a.) The sacrifice of the mass is daily offered on the high-altar. This sacrifice is the same as that on the cross, for on the altar, as on the cross, Jesus Christ is both priest and victim, only the manner of offering is different, Jesus Christ having offered himself on the cross in a bloody manner, whilst on the altar he offers himself in an unbloody manner. In the sacrifice of the mass the fruits of the sacrifice of the cross are continually applied to us, and we have in this sacrifice not only the means of offering to God all the adoration and thanksgiving due to him, but also of obtaining all graces and benefits for this

life and the next. St. Lawrence Justinian says: "No human language can express what rich fruits, and what great gifts, well up from the holy sacrifice of the mass. The sinner is reconciled with God, the just man is still more justified, merits are increased, sins remitted, virtues increased, vices diminished, the temptations of the devil are overcome, the sick are healed, the fallen raised up, and the weak strengthened."

(b.) *On the high-altar is the tabernacle where Jesus Christ is really and truly present as God and man, under the species of bread*. Here we can visit him as often as we please; we are always welcome; we can present to him our necessities with confidence, and need not fear that we shall be repulsed, for he is a God of charity, and never dismisses us without grace, without solace and help. St. Alphonsus Ligouri says: "We must never forget that Jesus Christ is present upon our altars as upon a throne of love and mercy, and that he remains hidden among us day and night, in order to give us a proof of his love." This saint says of himself: "From gratitude to my Jesus I must confess that it was owing to devotion to the Blessed Eucharist (which, however, I practiced tepidly and imperfectly) that I left the world in which I had lived for twenty-six years to my misfortune."

(c.) *From the high-altar Jesus comes to us in holy communion for the nourishment of our souls*. Can a greater grace be imagined than that which is imparted to us in holy communion? Here Jesus Christ gives not only graces and blessings, but himself as he is, not only as man, but also with the plenitude of his Divinity. "O wonderful love," exclaims St. John Chrysostom, "the Lord gives himself to us in the Most Holy Sacrament; he gives us all that he possesses, so that nothing seems to remain to himself: *he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him.*"—*John 6:57*. In these words Christ declares that he unites himself most intimately with us in holy communion, and that he becomes, as it were, one with us, therefore St. Bernard says: "He who eats is changed into the food which he eats, for to eat the body of Christ means nothing else than to become the body of Christ. We do not, indeed, cease to be men, but Christ penetrates our human nature like a fire that penetrates a piece of iron, and ennobles us, as a graft does an uncultivated tree, and causes us to become conformable to him in our thoughts, desires and actions, so that we can say with St. Paul: "I live; now not I, but Christ liveth in me."—*Gal. 2:20*. How great and numerous are the graces of which we become participants in the church! How good it is to celebrate annually the anniversary of the dedication of a church, in order to remind us of these graces and to exhort us to avail ourselves of them for our salvation!

PART II.

The feast is celebrated *at the church and in the family*. I will say only a few words on each.

I. *The celebration at the church.*

1. During High Mass twelve candles burn before the twelve crosses on the walls of the church. These twelve crosses with the burning lights signify the Apostles, who preached Christ crucified and with the light of the gospel illuminated the whole world. This is an invitation for us to thank God that we are members of the only true saving Church established by Christ upon the Apostles.

2. A flag is hung out from the belfry. This reminds us of the victory which the Church has won over all her enemies. She has had many hard struggles and persecutions to endure from Jews and Gentiles, from heretics and schismatics, but God has been her protection and shield in all these attacks and give her the victory. The flag is also a sign that the gates of hell can never prevail against the Church established by Christ upon a rock. It is likewise an admonition to us manfully to struggle with the enemies of our souls, that we may obtain the crown.

3. *The Mass.*

(a.) The Introit is as follows: "Terrible is this place. It is the house of God, and the gate of heaven. And it shall be called the court of God. How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord." The first part of this Introit contains the words which Jacob uttered on awakening from his wonderful dream (*Gen. 28: 17, et seq.*), and we are reminded by them that the church is the house of God, and consequently a very holy place which we should never enter but with the most profound veneration. The second part of the Introit is a verse of a psalm in which David, in his flight from Absalom, and far from Jerusalem, expresses his desire again to enter the holy tabernacle and there to adore God. This psalm puts to shame those who prefer to be anywhere rather than in the church, and who do not hear mass even on Sundays and holidays. They are indeed lukewarm Catholics, utterly forgetful of their salvation.

(b.) In the epistle (*Apoc. 21: 2-5*) the Church appears as the type of the New Jerusalem, *i. e.*, of the triumphant Church in heaven. Our churches are prepared as a bride adorned for her

bridegroom, for here our souls are prepared and adorned by the service of God, especially by holy communion. Our churches are *the tabernacles of God with men*; for here Jesus dwells really and truly in the tabernacle, and we can always appear before him and present to him our necessities. Of our churches we can say that *death* shall be there no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, and that all things shall be made new; for here the spiritually dead are awakened to the life of grace by the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance; here mourning, crying and sorrow, cease, because here we find consolation and help in all our necessities; here all things are made new, for here sinners are converted, the weak made strong, and the lukewarm changed into earnest, zealous Catholics. That all this may be accomplished we must go to church in a reverent and penitential spirit, we must assist at the divine offices with devotion, and worthily receive the holy sacraments.

(c.) The gospel is read which tells us of Zaccheus. With far greater justice it is said of a church than of the house of Zaccheus: "This day is salvation come to this house." Christ remains in the church, not only for some time, as he did in the house of Zaccheus, but always; he continues to give us daily and hourly such graces as Zaccheus and his house received, for it is here that he teaches, consoles, cleanses, and sanctifies us. The gospel of this day also teaches us how we are to go to church and behave in it. Zaccheus ran before, etc. Thus you must try to come in time to the different devotions. Zaccheus climbed up into a sycamore tree, that he might see Jesus. So you also must in church pay attention to Jesus and to the holy ceremonies, and be deaf and blind to everything else. At the word of Jesus, Zaccheus made haste and came down, and received him into his house with joy. Oh, that you all would obey the admonitions which the priests, as the representatives of Jesus Christ, give you from the pulpit, and in the confessional! Zaccheus declared himself willing and ready to give the half of his goods to the poor, and if he had wronged any man, to restore it fourfold. So you also ought to make reparation for your sins and perform works of mercy as a penance for them.

II. *The celebration in the family.*

1. The feast of a dedication of a church is a joyous feast, and is celebrated in families with special marks of joy. Even those who are not rich keep a better table on that day. The custom of giving dinners on this occasion may have been suggested by the gospel of the feast, for it tells us that Zaccheus entertained our Lord and other persons in his house. But the principal cause of

these banquets and worldly joys must be sought in the feast itself. The Catholic is grateful for the blessing of having churches in which he is made partaker of so many graces, of possessing his Lord and God, and being able to visit and adore him at all times; he is grateful for the benedictions and graces which he receives from his holy mother, the Catholic Church. He gives expression to this joy by having better meals and by entertaining his relatives and friends, and enjoying other innocent amusements.

2. The Church does not disapprove of these rejoicings; on the contrary, she loves to see her children rejoice on the anniversary of the dedication of their church. Joy and merriment are not incompatible with Christianity; the Apostle even urges the faithful to be always joyful: "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, rejoice."—*Phil.* 4: 4. Of course these joys must not be sinful, nor include any proximate danger of sin, hence the Apostle says: "Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh."—*Phil.* 4: 5.

PERORATION.

Give thanks to God from your heart that you are children of the Catholic Church, in which you possess all the means of grace in abundance, and pray to God to have compassion on infidels and heretics, and to lead them into the Church, that they may work out their salvation. Being Catholics, lead a pious life, and do not forget that you must one day give an account of the many and great graces which are offered you by the Church. Think of the words of the Apostle: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?"—*I. Cor.* 3: 16. Guard against destroying this temple by mortal sin, and by banishing the Holy Ghost out of your heart. Keep a pure conscience, that you may ever enjoy the presence of the Holy Ghost, and finally be received into heaven, where, with all the elect, you will celebrate an eternal feast of joy. Amen.



NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

CHARITY, THE WEDDING GARMENT.

Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?—Matt. 22: 12.

In the parable which is brought before us in the gospel of this Sunday we are told that the king found a man who had not on a wedding garment, and he commanded his servants to bind his hands and feet, and to cast him into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. According to the explanation of the Fathers and interpreters of the Sacred Scripture, we understand by that man those who have the true faith, but have not charity. Faith is the first requisite for salvation, but without charity even faith is insufficient, as the Apostle assures us: "If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 2. It is charity that gives value to faith and leads to salvation, for "in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith, that worketh by charity."—*Gal.* 5: 6. But charity, which together with faith is required for salvation, chiefly consists in this, that we keep the commandments of God: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them; he it is that loveth me."—*John.* 14: 21. This charity may aptly be represented under the figure of a wedding garment, for there is a marked similarity between them, as we will demonstrate to-day. Hence I say that charity resembles —

- I. A garment;
- II. A wedding garment.

PART I

Charity resembles a garment.

1. A garment covers all defects and want of beauty in the human form and cannot be laid aside without violating modesty. When our first parents lost their innocence, God himself made them "garments of skins," that they might be decently covered.—*Gen.* 3: 21. And when one has a defect in one's body, such as a badly healed wound, an eruption, etc., a garment covers

such a defect and hides it from the sight of men. We here have a type of charity, for "charity covereth a multitude of sins," as St. Peter (*I. 4: 8.*) says. It is charity that conceals our sins, as it were, from the eye of God, and so covers them that he no longer sees them. Witness Mary Magdalen. She was so notorious a sinner that the people pointed their finger at her, and the Evangelist says that seven devils went out of her.—*Luke 8: 2.* The Pharisee was greatly scandalized when he saw that Christ did not reject that public sinner with scorn and contempt. But Mary Magdalen had made her appearance before Christ in a garment which covered all her sins, in the garment of charity. As the gospel says of her, she was "standing behind at his feet," which she washed with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed and anointed with the ointment which she had brought in an alabaster box. And why did she do all this? From the love of God, as Christ himself declares: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."—*Luke 7: 47.* Pardon is promised in proportion to love. It was her love that made her so bitterly bewail her sins at the feet of Jesus and so determined henceforth to dedicate her life to God and to bring forth fruits worthy of penance; but it was this same love also that moved Jesus to forgive her numerous sins and to reward her with his particular favor and grace.

Be filled with admiring love for him who spoke such words of pity and affection. Admire the power of love. No sin is so grievous, no number of sins so great that charity does not cover them and cause them to disappear from the sight of God. Hence St. Peter Chrysologus says: "Guard against despair. There is a means left by which you can make satisfaction to God. Do you wish to be absolved from your sins? Love then, for charity covers a multitude of sins. Endeavor in all your confessions to have perfect contrition, that is, contrition which has its first and, of itself, sufficient cause in the love of God, for you may rest assured then that you will always make a good confession and obtain the remission of the temporal punishment due to your sins."

2. *The garment warms the body.* Without clothes even the hardest people could not endure the cold in winter; they would freeze to death if they were to live outside the house. But being warmly clad, they can face the severest cold without injury. Charity warms the soul still more than the garment warms the body, and inflames it with all that is good and pleasing to God. "Love is strong as death."—*Canticle 8: 6.* Here St. Augustine very appropriately remarks: "As no medicine or art can enable us to resist death when it comes, and it avails nothing to be a king or an emperor, since death conquers all, so nothing withstands the man who is thoroughly penetrated with the love of

God. Examples of saints: What induced St. Francis Xavier to cross seas, to wander about in foreign lands, and to preach the gospel to the heathens amidst a thousand perils and privations? What induced St. Peter Claver to devote himself with invincible patience and admirable zeal to the service of the lowest and most despised class of men, the negroes, and to form them into well-behaved and moral Christians? What moved St. Louis, king of France, to visit the hospitals, to make the beds of the patients, to feed them, and to serve them in every possible way? What induced St. Vincent of Paul to suffer himself to be chained in a galley, so that one man might be liberated from captivity? What was it that induced the Apostles and martyrs after terrible torture to give up their lives for the holy faith? Was it not fraternal love that inflamed their souls and gave them strength to accomplish such great things? And when in our day missionaries leave home and all that is dear to man and cross the ocean, in order to preach the gospel to savage tribes despite countless privations and dangers; when young men and women renounce the world with all its attractions and pleasures and prefer to lead a mortified life in monasteries and convents; or when persons living in the world restrict themselves in every way so that they may be able to give more abundant alms to the sick and poor, and when they patiently endure lingering and painful sicknesses—is not all this a proof of the wonderful power of love?

Love effects this; it warms and inflames the hearts of Christians and enables them to make any sacrifice to God for their salvation. Therefore if we are slothful in the service of God, and in the affair of our salvation, if we dislike exerting ourselves to do good, if we will not hear of mortification and self-denial, and neglect religious exercises, such as prayer, spiritual reading, mass on Sundays and holidays, confession and communion, it is a sure sign that the fire of charity is either entirely extinguished or not far from being so.

3. *The garment protects against the inclemency of the weather.* Heat, cold, wind, rain, and snow would not only cause us much inconvenience and unpleasantness, but would bring upon us various evils, sicknesses, and even death. How often has it happened that people who were poorly clad have had their hands and feet frozen, or have to suffered in other ways? The same may be said of rain and snow. Now, as the garment is a means of protecting the body against injuries, so charity is a means of protecting the soul against injuries, that is, against sin. We shall endure temptations as long as we live, for the world, the flesh and the devil are at war with us and strive to ruin us. We are tempted to pride, avarice, impurity, anger or some other sin. It is charity that resists all these temptations,

and protects us from sin. Witnesses: Joseph of Egypt was allured to a most wicked action by Putiphar's wife, and not only once, but day after day. He well knew that he would draw the most violent anger of the wicked woman upon himself if he did not comply with her wish, and that the worst was in store for him, still he resisted her criminal desire, saying: "How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?"—*Gen.* 39: 9. Why was it that he rejected the temptation with such constancy? What else was it but his love of God, since he would endure prison and death rather than offend his Lord and God? The chaste Susanna was tempted by two old men to adultery; they threatened her with false accusation and death if she refused. But she resisted their base lust and would have rather died than sin. And why? Because she loved God above all things. Therefore she said: "It is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord."—*Dan.* 13: 23. Thus it is charity that resists all, even the greatest, temptations, and shuts out sin from the heart. If a man truly loves God, he can exclaim: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword?"—*Rom.* 8: 35. In temptation therefore it is best at once to have recourse to God and to make an act of charity. If the fire of love burns in your heart, any sinful inclination that arises will be consumed and you will be preserved from sin.

PART II.

The love of God resembles a wedding garment.

1. *The wedding garment adorns man.* We say: "Clothes make the man." Many a man would make a despicable figure were he to appear in a poor suit of clothes; but good clothes improve his appearance. This is particularly true of wedding garments, in which the main object is that the bride and bridegroom and all the wedding guests should appear to the best advantage. Far more than the wedding garment does charity adorn man. It ennoble his exterior. What a difference there is as regards countenance, language, features, and gestures between a pious man who is inflamed by the charity of God, and a worldling governed and controlled by evil passions. Whilst in the former everything breathes calmness, bears the imprint of spirituality and attracts us, in the latter that which is sensual and animal is predominant and impresses us unpleasantly. But charity adorns the *soul* of man even more than it does his body. Take all that is beautiful and glorious in nature, it cannot be compared to a soul adorned with the love of God. You will easily comprehend this when you

consider that such a soul is a supernatural image of God and therefore is similar to God, the sovereign good, who in an infinite measure comprises in himself all that is beautiful and lovable. If we could see a soul adorned with the love of God, we should not consider it to be a created, but a divine being, and we should not be able to endure the splendor of light which it would spread around. Therefore St. Ambrose says: "Recognize, O soul, that thou art beautiful, that thou art the image of God, that thou art the honor and joy of God."

Many a man thinks a great deal of the beauty of his face and person, and employs and does everything he can to preserve and if possible increase his beauty. How vain, how foolish! What does beauty profit, if the soul is deprived of the love of God and therefore disfigured! How many beautiful persons will burn in hell! And how fleeting is the beauty of the body! A sickness, an accident, often destroys it for ever, and it vanishes of itself with age. And what do death and the grave care for it? The empress Isabella of Spain, who during life was a marvel of beauty, after death presented so awful an aspect that all who were present were terrified and withdrew. Only St. Francis Borgia remained and he, looking at her body, now so fearful a spectacle and spreading a terrible odour, and seeing in her the vanity of all earthly things, said: "O Isabella, where is thy beauty, that all so much admired in thee only a few days ago Thus," he considered within himself, "all the glory of the world passes away. From this very day I will serve a Lord who cannot die," And he dedicated himself entirely to the love of Jesus and made a vow to enter into a religious order, which, after the death of his wife, he fulfilled by joining the Society of Jesus. I do not demand of you, in view of the vanity and perishableness of all earthly beauty, to leave the world and go into a monastery, but I do demand of you not to take care of your corporal beauty at the expense of your soul, to be more solicitous to please God with a beautiful soul than to please men with a beautiful body, and when your soul has become disfigured by sin, to wash it white again by penance.

2. *The wedding garment is made of costly material.* When the daughters of princes or of other opulent parents marry, they receive superb dresses, the value of which is so great that you could buy a large tract of land with the price of them. Charity too is a splendid garment, made of precious materials, for it is the sum of all virtues. He who has charity has faith, for charity "believeth all things." He who has charity has hope, for charity "hopeth all things." He who has charity, has the fundamental virtue of the moral life, humility, for charity, "is not puffed up, is not ambitious." He who has love, has meekness and patience,

for charity "is not provoked to anger, beareth all things, endureth all things." He who has charity, is just, without deceit, sincere, loving the truth, for charity "seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth."—*I. Cor. 13: 1-10*. In a word, he who has charity has all virtues. "Love," says the Apostle, "is the fulfilling of the law."—*Rom. 13: 10*. And St. Gregory the Great says: "As the branches lose their life and freshness when the root is cut off, so the virtues cease to bloom when the root of love is taken away." If, therefore, you wish to acquire all virtues, aspire only to this one virtue, *charity*, for if you possess it, you possess all virtues. But if you will acquire charity, aspire to *all other virtues*, for it is only when you possess all virtues that you also possess charity. If only one virtue should be wanting to you, *e. g.*, faith, humility, chastity, obedience, or meekness, it would be an egregious self-delusion to suppose that you had charity. And in proportion as you possess all other virtues, you possess also charity. The more zealously, therefore, you practice the Christian virtues upon every occasion, the more perfect is charity in you; and the less your fervor in virtue, the more imperfect and the weaker also is charity in you. From this you can judge for yourselves how matters stand with your love.

3. *The wedding garment is carefully preserved.* Many people appreciate no garment more than that which they wore on their wedding day. This garment is in a certain way held sacred by them, because it reminds them of the most important step of their life, their marriage. There are married persons who, after thirty or forty years, have their wedding garment still in their wardrobe and some even preserve it for their shroud, wishing to be buried in it. This solicitude is laudable and salutary, for a glance at it reminds the married people of their wedding day, of the good advice and the graces they received on that day, and of the good resolutions they then made; a look at the wedding garment also represents to them their duties, the vanity of the world and the shortness of life, and admonishes them to make provision for eternity. In this also charity resembles the wedding garment. According to its nature it is imperishable and eternal. All other virtues end with this life; faith ceases, because in the next life we shall see with our eyes what we here believe; hope ceases, because there we shall possess what we here hope for; patience ceases, because in heaven there will be nothing to be endured; meekness ceases because there we shall not be offended by any one; in short, all virtues will cease and only one will remain for ever—charity. The saints in heaven love God for all eternity and are loved by God, and in this love they feel themselves inexpressibly happy. And because charity in

its essence lasts for ever we must most carefully preserve it in our earthly life. Faith teaches us that it is lost by every mortal sin. Mortal sin is an awful offense against God, for he who commits it despises God, refuses him obedience, and rebels against him, in fact, crucifies Christ anew. How could we say of a man who does this, that he loves God? And how could we believe that God loves a man who grievously offends him? For this reason you ought to detest and shun nothing so much as mortal sin: and say in every temptation: Lord, let me suddenly die rather than fall into a mortal sin.

PERORATION.

In conclusion call to mind once more the man who came to the wedding without a wedding garment, and who on that account was cast out into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. The same unhappy lot would befall us, if without the wedding garment of charity we should appear before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ! We should be condemned to the everlasting torments of hell. Appreciate then the wedding garment of love, and preserve it pure and undefiled so long as you live, that the words of the Apostle may be fulfilled in you: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him."—*I. Cor. 2: 9*. Amen.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

SIGNS OF ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

Many are called, but few are chosen.—Matt. 22: 14.

Many, yes, all, are called to salvation, but only a few obtain it. An important truth, worthy of our most serious consideration. What will be our lot? Shall we, with the small number, enter into heaven, or, with the great crowd of reprobates, go down into hell? This question cannot be answered with absolute certainty, for so long as we live upon earth, without a special revelation from above we cannot say with certainty whether we are

worthy of love or hatred, whether we shall persevere in the grace of God to the end and die a happy death or not. Nothing, therefore, remains for us during the time of our pilgrimage here below but to follow the advice of the Apostle, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling. There are, however, certain signs from which we may infer whether *we shall be saved or damned*, and of these signs I shall speak to you to-day.

- I. *Signs of election;*
II. *Signs of reprobation.*

PART I.

Signs of election are—

1. *The hatred and the detestation of all, at least, mortal sins.* Faith teaches that every mortal sin excludes from heaven. Nothing that is defiled can enter into heaven.—*Apoc.* 21: 27. He who dies in mortal sin is lost for ever. Cain, Ophni, Phinees, Absalom, Judas. He who, on the contrary, hates and detests sin above all things and walks in innocence, will be saved. These words are written over the gate of heaven: "This is the gate of the Lord, the just shall enter into it."—*Ps.* 117: 20. The more we hate and detest sin, the more we guard against it and the more fervently we serve God, and, consequently, the more secure is our salvation. St. Ignatius erected two spacious houses for those who wished to retire into solitude for some time in order to make the spiritual exercises. After he had spent much **labor and money on these houses, some one remarked to him** that all the labor and money were spent uselessly, because not many would be converted. Whereupon the saint replied: "All my expense and labor will be richly repaid if thereby I succeed in preventing God from being offended only for one night." St. Catherina of Genoa used to say to God: "I do not mind if when I die thou shouldst show me the evil spirits in all their misery and pain, for I hold them as nothing compared with the sight of even the least offense against thee." Mary Theresa, consort of King Louis XIV. of France, once committed an insignificant fault, of which she constantly thought with great sorrow. People tried to console her, telling her that the fault was only a venial sin. She replied: "God is offended by it, and for this reason what I have done is a deadly wound to my soul." Those who have such detestation of sin have a sign of election. How is it with you? Do you detest sin above all things? Are you prepared to lose house and property and even life, rather than offend God by a mortal sin?

2. *Speedy repentance after having sinned.* Even zealous servants of God are not proof against a fall; being by nature prone to evil and exposed to many temptations, they may easily sin and lose God's grace. Witness David; this man, who was according to the heart of God, in an unguarded moment committed two very grievous sins; St. Peter, that zealous Apostle, who in the hour of temptation forgot all his solemn promises and denied his Lord and Master three different times. But when those who have fallen into a sin make use of God's grace for a speedy and lasting repentance, it is a good sign, and there is hope that they will be saved; for God wills not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. Witnesses of this again are David and St. Peter. As soon as David through Nathan the prophet had come to the knowledge of his sins, he cried out full of contrition: "I have sinned against the Lord."—*II. Kings* 12: 13. Scarcely had our Lord cast a look upon Peter, when he went out and wept bitterly. Both speedily repented, and thus secured their salvation. If you should have the misfortune of falling into a grievous sin, make at once an act of contrition and avail yourself of the very first opportunity of making a sincere confession, in order again to reconcile yourself with God, and ever after lead a penitent life. This is a sign of election.

3. *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.* Renowned divines and spiritual writers express in the clearest words that devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the promotion of this devotion is a sign of election. St. Bonaventura says that those who are solicitous to promote the honor of Mary may be sure of their salvation. B. Richard of St. Lawrence confirms this when he asserts that "he who venerates Mary will be saved, for this grateful Queen will certainly honor those in the next world who were solicitous to promote her honor here upon earth." We read in the Revelations of St. Bridget that the Blessed Bishop Remigius used to begin all his sermons with the praises of Mary. One day the Blessed Virgin appeared and said to her: "Tell the pious bishop that because he begins all his sermons with my praise, I will be his mother and will one day conduct his soul to God, for he will have a holy and happy end." The bishop did die as a saint, praying most fervently and full of heavenly peace. Even great sinners may, if they fervently venerate Mary, hope for salvation, provided they do not obstinately persevere in sin, but are earnestly resolved to amend their lives. Hence St. Alphonsus says: "Though the sinner may not have as yet abandoned sin, if he endeavors to do so, and asks the help of Mary, this good mother will assist him to obtain again the grace of God." St. Bridget heard Jesus Christ say to his mother: "Thou assistest him who endeavors to raise himself up, and thou withdrawest

thy consolation from no one." St. Alphonsus continues: "So long as a sinner pertinaciously perseveres in sin, Mary cannot love him; but although he is captivated by a passion which makes him a slave of hell, when he recommends himself to the Blessed Virgin and implores her with confidence and perseverance to free him from sin, this mother of mercy will certainly reach him her succoring hand, break his fetters, and conduct him back to the way of salvation." Who then should not venerate Mary most zealously, when the veneration of her is, both for the just, and for sinners who desire to be converted, a sign of election?

4. *Diligent hearing of the word of God.* Many holy Fathers consider it a sign of election when one hears the word of God with joy. Thus St. Chrysostom says: "As it is a sign of a healthy body to have an appetite for food, so it is a sure sign of eternal life when one is desirous of hearing the word of God." St. Augustine says: "I consider it a sign of eternal election to hear the word of God." And our dear Lord himself says: "He that is of God, heareth the word of God."—*John 8: 47.* The hearing, therefore, of the word of God is a sign that one is of God. But is this not identical with being a child of God, and, consequently, with securing one's salvation? We need not wonder at this, for in him who, with a good disposition, hears the word of God, it will produce effects that will be most beneficial to him. It will enlighten him, and cause him to know what is true, good and pleasing to God, for "thy word is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our paths" (*Ps. 118: 105*); it will take hold of his will and incline it to the fulfilling of the divine commandments; it will powerfully move his heart, for "it is sharper than a two-edged sword, and reaches unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also, and the marrow."—*Heb. 4: 12.* Since the word of God seizes, transforms and renews man when his heart is susceptible, the fervent hearing of it is doubtless a sign of election. What a motive for you to listen to the word of God, which is preached to you on all Sundays and holidays.

5. *The love of prayer and fervor in the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist.* Prayer is the key of all the treasures of heaven. Christ himself assures us: "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you."—*John 16: 23.* "Ask, and it shall be given you."—*Matt. 7: 7.* Moreover, prayer is a means both necessary and effectual for the overcoming of temptation. "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."—*Matt. 26: 41.* Prayer is also absolutely necessary for perseverance in good. The grace of perseverance cannot be merited, but only acquired by persevering and fervent prayer.

Hence St. Thomas of Aquin says: "A continuous prayer is necessary to man after baptism that he may attain heavenly joy; for although sins are forgiven by baptism, the inclination to sin remains within us." In order to be saved, we must fight and conquer. But without the grace of God we cannot gain the mastery over so many powerful enemies, and the grace of God is only obtained by prayer; consequently there is no salvation *without prayer.* The same holds good of the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist. The Sacrament of Penance has the virtue of freeing the worthy receiver from all stains of sin. The more frequently we receive this sacrament, the purer we become, and, consequently, the better prepared to enter into heaven and to see God. By the frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance we also receive the special grace of constantly leading a penitent life. All this entitles us to the hope of salvation, for the purer our conscience and the more constantly we persevere in penance the greater is our assurance of heaven. Of the Blessed Eucharist Christ assures us repeatedly that those who receive it with due preparation shall have life everlasting: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day."—*John 6: 55.* Holy communion cleanses from venial sins, weakens concupiscence ever reigning within us, strengthens us in good, inflames us with the fire of divine love, and procures for us great graces for our sanctification and perfection. If, therefore, you go as often as possible, and every time with a heart well prepared, to confession and communion, it is a sign that you will obtain salvation. Who would not then be fervent in the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist?

6. *Finally, compassion for the poor and afflicted.* God, who is all goodness and mercy, is especially pleased with men who exercise mercy, giving them great and extraordinary graces. Proof hereof is the Centurion Cornelius, who was converted to Christianity in a most wonderful manner. The angel who appeared to him gave his prayers and alms as the reason of his obtaining the grace of faith in an extraordinary way, when he said: "Thy prayers and thy alms are ascended for a memorial in the sight of God."—*Acts 10: 4.* That the works of mercy give a particular claim to salvation is evident from many passages of Holy Writ. Thus Raphael says to Tobias: "Alms delivereth from death; and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting."—*Tob. 12: 9.* Our Lord himself says: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (*Matt. 5: 7*): and, as his description of the last judgment shows us, our salvation depends in a great measure upon the practice of the works of mercy.—*Matt. 25: 34, et seq.* Hence St.

Jerome says: "I have never yet heard that any one who practiced the works of mercy ever died a bad death. For such a one has so many intercessors with God, that it is almost impossible for God to leave their prayers unheard." If, therefore, we wish to secure a good death and a happy eternity, we must diligently practice the works of mercy.

PART II.

Signs of reprobation, of which I shall mention only three, are—

1. *Sloth in doing good*, which consists in feeling a repugnance to things relating to salvation, and in performing one's religious duties carelessly, or neglecting them altogether. The slothful man will not hear of prayer, of going to church, of hearing the word of God, of confession and communion; he either makes no use of these means of salvation, or uses them but seldom, and then with dislike and without any fervor; his thoughts are bent upon temporal things, and he lives wholly in distractions; he is not solicitous for God, the salvation of his soul, or eternity, and therefore he takes no pains to eradicate his inordinate inclinations, bad habits and passions and to improve himself. Matters are highly unsatisfactory with such careless persons, and it is to be feared that at last they will find themselves among the damned. We have only too many proofs of this in the Sacred Scripture. The bishop of Laodicea had fallen from his first fervor and become lukewarm. God made known to him his displeasure in these words: "I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot; but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth."—*Apoc.* 3: 15, 16. What does the vomiting out of the mouth signify but the reprobation which awaits the lukewarm? In the gospel we read of five foolish virgins who neglected to provide oil for their lamps, and who when they asked the bridegroom to open to them the closed door and to admit them to the marriage feast, heard these words: "Amen, I say to you, I know you not."—*Matt.* 25: 11, 12. What does this rejection of the foolish virgins signify but the reprobation of slothful Catholics who neglect to make sure their vocation and election by good works? How did the unprofitable servant fare who buried his talent? His Lord commanded that his talent should be taken from him and that he should be cast out into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.—*Matt.* 25: 26-30. But this servant represents to us those who leave unemployed the grace of God and the opportunities of doing good, and who are rejected for their sloth. Jesus one day saw by the wayside a fig-tree which had nothing but leaves, and he said:

"May no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig-tree withered away. And the disciples seeing it, wondered, saying: How is it presently withered away."—*Matt.* 21: 19, 20. This fig-tree is a symbol of Christians who bring forth no fruits of virtue and good works, who are slothful and lukewarm, and on that account are lost. These divine utterances and parables bring before us the truth that spiritual sloth and tepidity are signs of eternal reprobation. But the reason is because the slothful frequently neglect the good which is necessary for the obtaining of life everlasting, because sloth is the forerunner of grievous sins, and finally, because those who are infected with the vice of sloth never strive to be converted. Hence St. Bernardine says: "I have seen many usurers, cruel soldiers, harlots and heathens converted to the Lord and become better; but I have never yet seen a lukewarm man become truly converted."

2. *Quietness of conscience in a vicious life.* When a man sins he will sooner or later feel remorse of conscience, for his conscience is that secret tribunal before which all that is good is defended, but all that is evil is condemned. Remorse of conscience is indeed a painful sensation, and nothing more tormenting can be imagined, but it is nevertheless one of the greatest graces that the sinner can receive. God intends by it nothing less than the conversion and salvation of the sinner. By remorse of conscience God, as it were, compels the sinner to turn from his evil ways and do penance. The sinner, however, can by degrees so deaden his conscience that its sting is scarcely perceptible to him, for the longer he gives himself up to his sinful desires and excesses, the more he is blinded, till at length his conscience is silent altogether, and then he can be merry although one foot is in hell. A terrible state! Sinners who have once lost remorse of conscience cannot be saved without a miracle of grace, for if conscience can no longer be touched by interior inspirations and impulses or by outward influences, such as instructions and admonitions, conversion is absolutely impossible. We see this in the Scribes and Pharisees. How often and how convincingly did Jesus instruct them in things relating to salvation? How earnestly did he not upbraid them for their vices, and announce to them the judgment of God! How many miracles did he not work before their eyes, to convince them of his divine mission! But they remained obdurate and would not believe, because their conscience was deadened. Sinners, give thanks to God when you feel remorse of conscience, for it is a sign that you can yet be saved. But how infinitely worse would it be with you, if at the sight of your excesses and vices your conscience should no longer be aroused. You would then have the sign of reprobation.

3. *Temporal happiness and prosperity of the sinner.* It does not infrequently happen that people who lead a bad life enjoy worldly prosperity; they possess great wealth, their business flourishes, their undertakings prosper, they are blessed with good health, they are honored and respected and have an abundant share of the joys and pleasures of life. In view of the prosperity of such people we might think that God favors his enemies more than his faithful servants, and be tempted to envy such happy sinners. But we shall change our opinion when we consider the matter in the light of faith. Criminals to whom the day and the hour of their death have been already announced, are generally treated well during the short time remaining to them; all their wishes are complied with; they get the best food and drink, and are treated with every consideration. God often deals in a similar way with impenitent, obdurate sinners. He gives them for some time honors, happiness, pleasures and joys, perhaps as a reward for the little good they have done or will yet do, in order afterwards to hand them over to the pains of hell, in punishment for their crimes and vices. Thus as regards *the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha* he permitted everything to go according to their wishes; they had an abundance of earthly goods, which they employed for the gratification of their shameless passions to their hearts' content. But when these days had passed they were destroyed from the face of the earth and condemned to the fire of hell. *Holofernes* was happy and victorious in spite of all the blasphemies which he uttered; but when the measure of his sins was full, he lost his life by the hand of a woman, and his soul went to hell. The impious *Jezebel* led a life of sensual enjoyment for many years; at length what the prophet had foretold came to pass; her lustful flesh became the food of dogs, and her soul a prey of the devil. *Dives* enjoyed himself on earth; he clothed himself in purple and feasted sumptuously; but death overtook him in the midst of his life of pleasure, and his soul was buried in hell; he who feasted now sighs in vain for a drop of water wherewith to cool his parched tongue. How little is the happiness and prosperity of the sinner to be envied! How much has man to fear that he will be obliged to exchange his brief earthly joys for the everlasting torments of hell!

PERORATION.

I have now indicated and explained the principal signs of election and reprobation. Examine yourselves; reflect and see how you have conducted yourselves heretofore and whether you find in yourselves signs of election or reprobation. If you have been slothful in doing good, if you have experienced no remorse of

conscience on account of your sins, and if, while leading a wicked life you have enjoyed prosperity, these indeed would be bad signs; and unless you do penance without delay, you would have reason to fear the worst. But if you have lived piously, or after a false step have reconciled yourselves again with God by true repentance, if you have had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, have loved prayer and the word of God; if you have received the sacraments frequently and practiced the works of mercy, these are good signs and you may hope that if you preserve them unto the end you will be saved. From this day, then, serve God with persevering zeal, and in all your actions have before your eyes your last end; then you will not be rejected with the many, but will be chosen with the few and be admitted to the joys of everlasting life. Amen.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

THE REVERENCE DUE TO PRIESTS.

The king sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage.—Matt. 22: 3.

The servants whom the king sent to call them that were invited to the marriage were John the Baptist, who prepared the Jews for the coming of Christ, and the Apostles, who preached to them the gospel. But the carnal Jews, attached as they were to earthly goods, gave no ear to these messengers of God; they even persecuted and put them to death. God inflicted a severe punishment upon them, more than eleven hundred thousand of them perishing at the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. What he did for the salvation of the Jews, he also does for us. He sends his priests to preach the gospel to all, believers and unbelievers. But as in those days, so now, many disregard the beneficent labors of the ministers of God; they give no ear to their admonitions, and they are not far from laying violent hands upon them and putting them to death. Even among Catholics there are many who upon every occasion show themselves the adversaries and enemies of priests, and despise their admonitions and counsel. It may not therefore be superfluous for me to ex-

plain to you to-day how we must conduct ourselves towards the priests and pastors of our souls. I say, then, we must—

- I. Honor;
- II. Love;
- III. And obey them.

PART I.

We must *honor* priests:

1. *On account of their dignity.* What are priests and pastors of souls? They are—

(a.) *Ambassadors of God*, according to the words of Christ: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."—*John* 20: 21. It was not man that invested them with the priesthood and gave them authority to guide souls, but God himself, as the Apostle expresses it in these words: "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God."—*Acts* 20: 28. St. Ambrose asks: "Who imparts the episcopal and priestly grace, God or man? You will without doubt answer God. Man lays his hands on them but God gives the grace; the priest imposes his right hand in prayer, and God blesses with his omnipotent right hand; the bishop performs the holy ordination, and God imparts the dignity." Now, if honor is due to the ambassadors of an earthly ruler, how much more must we honor priests, who are ambassadors of God, the King of heaven and earth? But priests are still more; they are—

(b.) *The representatives of God*, because in discharging their holy office they act not in their own name but in the name and the person of Christ. When they offer up the holy sacrifice of the mass, administer the sacraments, preach the word of God, or bless and guide the faithful, they do so by the commission of Christ, in fact, it is Christ himself who acts in them and through them and uses them as instruments in order to apply to men the fruits of Redemption. Hence St. Paul writes: "For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us."—*II. Cor.* 5: 20. Now, I ask again, if a temporal superior deserves to be honored because he is the representative of his sovereign, do not priests and pastors of souls deserve a far greater honor, since in all their holy functions and in the exercise of their spiritual power they represent the God-man, Jesus Christ?

2. *On account of their power.* What man is able to express the power of the priest? Great was the power of the first man, who

as king of the universe commanded all the creatures of the earth and was unconditionally obeyed. Great was the power of Moses, who with one word divided the waters of the sea, and between the two walls of water conducted the whole people "through the midst of the sea dried up" without wetting their feet. Great was the power of Josue, who said to the sun: "Move not," and the sun stood still. Great is the power of kings who with their armies subjugate entre nations, and whom millions of men, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, obey. But there are men who are still mightier, who have power not only over the body, but also over the soul of man, who have power not only over creatures, but even over the Creator himself—and these are the priests. "Priests," says St. Chrysostom, "have received a power which God has given neither to angels nor to men; for to these he did not say: 'Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.'—*Matt.* 18: 18. It is true, temporal rulers have power to bind, but only the body; the binding power of priests concerns the soul and reaches to heaven. Whatsoever priests rightly do in the performance of their sacred duties upon earth, is sanctioned and approved of by God in heaven; the sentence pronounced by his servants is ratified by the Master." And St. Augustine says: "The Word of God (Jesus Christ, the God-man) is in a certain measure conceived in the hands of the priests, as in the virginal womb of Mary, and assumes in them flesh anew."

It is on account of this dignity and truly wonderful power by which God has distinguished the priesthood, that well-disposed Catholics of all times have showed great honor to the priests of the Catholic Church. St. Anthony, who was renowned for his sanctity, and to whose prayers kings and emperors recommended themselves, honored priests so much that when he met them, he prostrated himself before them on his knees and would not rise up until they had given him their blessing. St. Francis of Assisi used to say that if he should meet a priest and an angel in company together, he would first salute the priest, because the latter has a greater power than the former. The emperor Constantine the Great had so great a veneration for a priest, that he said: "If I should see a priest committing a fault, so far should I be from making it known that I would rather cover him with my imperial mantle, in order that men might not take scandal to the detriment of religion." This has always been the sentiment of all good Catholics; they honor priests, for they see in them, not frail men, but ambassadors and ministers of God, for the rescue of the sinful world. Thus you also must honor priests, and always treat them with respect, remembering the words of Christ: "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.*

PART II.

1. *We must love priests.* Why must we love them? On account of the great benefits which they confer upon us. It is they who impart to us in the waters of regeneration, in the holy Sacrament of Baptism, the life of grace, making us children of God with the right to the inheritance of heaven. It is they who continually instruct us in the doctrines and truths of our holy religion, and in all possible ways labor for us so that we may serve God and be saved. It is they who in the Sacrament of Penance forgive us our sins and reconcile us with God. It is they who daily offer the sacrifice of the mass by which the infinite merits of the sacrifice of the cross are continually applied to us. It is they who in holy communion give us Jesus, the Giver of all graces, and unite us most intimately with him. It is they who day and night succor our sick, be they rich or poor, or infected with whatever disease, and give them the holy sacraments of the dying in order to sanctify, solace, strengthen and prepare them for a good death. It is they who ever encourage our best endeavors, continually exhort us to virtue and the fear of God, share our joys and woes, daily pray for us, and long after our death continue to recommend us to the mercy of God in the sacrifice of the mass and in prayer. Now, judge yourselves, are not priests the greatest benefactors of men? Do they not deserve that you should love them on account of so many and great benefits? Would it be right and just for you to be indifferent towards them or to persecute them with hatred and enmity?

2. *How must you manifest your love towards them?*

(a.) *You must live in peace with them.* There are in our days many Catholics who are hostile to priests. But when we look at their conduct, we almost always find that they are irreligious people, who have little or no faith, and who live according to the perverse maxims of the world. That men of this stamp should hate priests is not to be wondered at, for the priests as champions of religion must be opposed to them and condemn their evil maxims and deeds. On the other hand, he who has religion and the fear of God in his heart, is not an enemy of priests; he loves them sincerely and lives in peace with them. Take a pattern from the primitive Christians, who clung to their priests with their whole soul; be at peace with the pastors of your soul and do not forget that hostility to them is hostility to God.

(b.) *You must pray for them.* The gratitude which you owe them for the benefits they bestow upon you demands this. The Apostle exhorts you to do so when he says: "Brethren, pray for us, that the word of God may run (that is, may be diffused, and have free course), and may be glorified, even as among you."—*II. Thess. 3: 1.* The first Christians did this. When Peter was in prison, they prayed without intermission for him, till God through an angel delivered him. Pray also for your pastors, that the Lord may bless their labor, and especially for the Pope, for the bishops and priests who suffer persecution, that God may console, strengthen, and deliver them from their tribulations.

(c.) *You must conscientiously and with a good will give them what is due to them.* Christ told his disciples if they entered into a house, to "remain, eating and drinking such things as they have; for the laborer is worthy of his hire."—*Luke 10: 7.* And St. Paul writes: "Know you not, that they who work in the holy place, eat the things that are of the holy place; and they that serve the altar, partake with the altar? So also the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel, should live by the gospel."—*I. Cor. 9, 13: 14.* It is not merely good will, charity, or a human ordinance that directs you to supply your pastors with the necessary support; but it is a duty, it is an ordinance of God. Good, conscientious Catholics give their pastors what is due to them, according to justice and usage, the more cheerfully because they know that they will employ their savings for charitable purposes.

PART III.

You must obey your pastors. This obedience extends to all things that concern salvation, viz.—

1. *Faith.* For the obtaining of life everlasting it is, first of all, required that we believe all that God has revealed and the Catholic Church proposes to our faith. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned."—*Mark 16: 16.* But the priests preach to us the truths of our holy faith, for they are commissioned and empowered to teach Christian doctrine in school and church. What they teach and preach is not their own word, but the word of God, the doctrine of the Catholic Church. They are under the supervision and guidance of their bishop and the whole Church, and dare preach no other than Catholic doctrine. If one of them should broach anything contrary to Catholic faith and morals, he would speedily be called to account and be compelled solemnly to retract. Should he not obey, the punishment of suspension and excom-

munication would be inflicted upon him. Therefore, although the gift of infallibility does not belong to the persons of priests, they nevertheless deserve belief, because as the coadjutors of the Pope and the bishops, and commissioned by them, they preach the Catholic doctrine. He that does not subject himself to them, sins against the teaching of the Church, and to him these words of Christ apply: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."—*Matt.* 18: 17. Those ought to reflect on this who disdain the teaching of their pastor and say: "I do not believe what the priests preach; I follow my own conviction, and believe what I please." Such presumptuous persons sin, not only against their priests, but also against the Church, and become guilty of heresy, if they obstinately continue in their unbelief. Good Catholics receive the teaching of their pastor with a believing heart, for they know that he preaches not his own doctrine, but the doctrine of the Church which is the pillar and ground of truth.

2. *Good discipline.* It is the strict duty of priests and pastors of souls to extirpate sin and vice from their congregations and to exhort them to virtue and the fear of God. To them are addressed the words of St. Paul: "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine."—*II. Tim.* 4: 2. If priests should be negligent in the care of souls, they would become accessory to many sins of others and would be subjected to a most severe judgment, according to the words of the Lord: "If, when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, that he may be converted from his wicked way, and live; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but I will require his blood and thy hand."—*Ezech.* 3: 18. But if priests and pastors are under the obligation of drawing you from evil and encouraging you to a pious life, you on the other hand are certainly obliged to heed their admonitions and to submit yourselves to their rules and regulations. The Apostle inculcates this duty when he says: "Obey your prelates (your bishops and priests), 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. The judgment of God will fall upon the man who does not follow the salutary admonitions and ordinances of his pastor, but treats him with contempt, and resists, or thwarts him in his undertakings, or finds fault with whatever he does.

PERORATION.

Guard against violating your duties as Catholics towards your priests and the pastors of your souls. *Honor them.* The sacred office they administer makes them venerable, though as men they may have some faults and frailties. *Love them,* for they are your greatest benefactors, caring for your souls and conferring many graces on you for your salvation. Always live in peace with them; pray for them, and give them their dues. *Be obedient to them* in everything concerning your salvation, that their painful labor may be crowned with success. Rest assured, it will be to you a sweet consolation on your death-bed if you can say to yourself that you have always honored and loved your pastors, and have conscientiously obeyed their admonitions and ordinances. You will depart this life with the confident hope of being united in heaven with Jesus, the chief Pastor. Amen.



TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*Eph.* 5: 15-21. Brethren: See how you walk circumspectly: not as unwise, but as wise: redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore become not unwise, but understanding what is the will of God. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury; but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord: giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father: being subject one to another in the fear of Christ.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

EXHORTATION TO CIRCUMSPECTION, AND SOME OTHER DIRECTIONS.

The lesson for this day is taken from the epistle which St. Paul wrote to the Christians of Ephesus from his prison at Rome, on the eve of his martyrdom. The Christians at Ephesus were in great danger of being corrupted by pagan errors and vices, for they were as yet neophytes in Christianity and lived in a city where excesses and vices of all kinds were prevalent. The great mass of the people still adhered to Paganism, frequented the temples of their gods, took part in the revelry of the sacrificial festivities, gave full scope to all their passions, and yielded themselves to the most horrid and abominable impurity. How easy was it for Christians, who were not yet firm in the faith and scarcely weaned from Paganism, to be attracted by the pomp and pageantry of idolatry, and to be prevailed upon again to participate in these orgies and to apostatize from the Christian faith, which was so much despised and hated by the Gentiles. St. Paul therefore was the more concerned about his beloved converts at Ephesus, and admonished them in his letter to walk

wisely and circumspectly, that they might not be seduced and suffer shipwreck of faith. The lesson of this day contains—

- I. An exhortation to circumspection;
- II. Some particular directions.

PART I.

1. Brethren, see how you walk circumspectly. What does it mean to walk circumspectly? It means to pay attention to our interior, to our senses, and to the outside world.

(a.) To our interior. There is in us the *concupiscence for evil*, which causes us many temptations and endeavors to tempt us now to this, now to that sin; there is in us *self-love*, which makes us, in all we do, seek our own honor and advantage at the cost of God's honor and to the injury of our neighbor; there are in us many *inordinate inclinations* which entice us to different sins, such as anger, envy, revenge, impurity and avarice. We must watch these and make the necessary preparations against their attacks so as to render them harmless. The Holy Ghost exhorts us to this in these words: "With all watchfulness keep thy heart." —*Prov.* 4: 23.

(b.) To our senses. These if they are not properly watched and subdued lead us into a multitude of most grievous sins. How many bad thoughts and desires, and, in consequence of them, how many sinful deeds originate from incautious and thoughtless looks! To how many temptations and sins do not the ears afford an occasion, if they are not closed to evil discourses! And who can enumerate the sins that man commits with the tongue when he gives free rein to it!

(c.) To the outside world. It is the bad examples, scandals and various dangerous occasions, *e. g.*, associating with persons of evil repute, plays, dances and other entertainments that plunge man into vice and sin if he is not on his guard and carefully watches over himself. The Apostle, therefore, has not only too much reason to cry out to us: *See how you walk circumspectly*. Yes, walk circumspectly, and be attentive to everything that passes within and without, that you may in due time discover the danger and protect yourselves from every injury by the speedy employment of the appropriate means.

2. Walk, not as unwise, but as wise.

(a.) He acts wisely who is more solicitous for the soul than for the body, for heaven than for earth; for the soul is worth infinitely

more than the body, and heaven is infinitely more precious than the earth: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?"—*Matt.* 16: 26. He acts wisely who holds fast to the holy faith and does not permit himself to be shaken by faithless and irreligious men, for common sense tells him that people who allow themselves to be governed by bad passions and lead a questionable life, deserve anything but credit. He walks wisely who detests and shuns nothing so much as sin, conscientiously fulfils his duties and leads a mortified life, for faith tells him that all this is necessary and expedient for the obtaining of his final aim. He acts wisely who follows the advice of the Apostle: "It remaineth that they also who have wives, be as if they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not: for the fashion of this world passeth away."—*I. Cor.* 7: 29-31.

(b.) Unwisely and foolishly does that man act who desires and does the very contrary; who is more solicitous for the body than for the soul, who labors more for earth than for heaven, who pays more attention to the conversation of frivolous and irreligious men than to the word of God, who takes more pains to become rich in worldly goods than in virtues and merits for eternity, or who obeys his sinful lusts and passions rather than the law of God. Examine your sentiments and actions with a view to find out whether you are of the wise or the unwise. "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. . . . And the world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof. But he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever."—*I. John* 2: 15-17.

3. *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

(a.) Time has an immensely high value. "It is," says St. Bernard, "worth as much as God, for by time well employed God is gained." What value time has, the damned in hell, and the blessed in heaven, tell us; the damned, for had they but a minute they could be saved, but because time is entirely wanting to them they remain for ever damned; the blessed in heaven, for by employing their time well in the service of God whilst on earth they have acquired heaven with its eternal and unspeakable joys. Who would not make good use of time, on which so much depends? But we do so when we diligently employ it in the practice of Christian virtues and good works.

If we have not heretofore used it as we should have done, or perhaps used it for committing sins, we must redeem it in a cor-

responding degree. When the oracle told the Egyptian king Mizerinus that he would live only six years more, he said; I will make twelve years out of these six. How did he do this? He redoubled his enjoyments and yielded himself day and night to lust and debauchery. Let us do the reverse and redouble our fervor in order to repair and redeem as much as possible what in our past life we have neglected or done amiss.

(b.) The reason why we must make good use of time is because, according to the Apostle, *the days are evil*. By these evil days we must understand temptations and dangers to salvation, and the sufferings and afflictions to which our life is subject. So long as we live we have many and often violent temptations to endure, temptations which can easily rob us of grace and heaven, and plunge us into eternal perdition. The world is full of snares, full of dangers to salvation; in it are the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life; and countless is the number of those who in contact with the world lose virtue, the fear of God, and even faith. May not the same happen to us? We live in an age in which unbelief and hatred of religion everywhere are spread broadcast, in which vice has lost its guilt in the eyes of most men, and is even praised as a virtue; in which falsehood triumphs over truth, and injustice over justice. What wonder then if in such evil days we should deviate from the right path and suffer the loss of our souls? How necessary it is, therefore, for us to walk circumspectly in order to defend ourselves against the dangers that threaten us.

4. *Wherefore become not unwise, but understanding what is the will of God.*

Whereas the world lies in wickedness and makes every exertion to deceive and corrupt men, the Apostle repeatedly exhorts us to be circumspect and carefully to prove everything, that we may know with certainty what is the will of God. When you wish to know whether this or that is the will of God, *i. e.*, right, and pleasing to God, all you have to do is to examine it and see whether it is compatible with Catholic doctrine as to faith and morals or not. In the former case it is good and according to the will of God; in the latter it is bad, and must be rejected. If you cannot of yourselves arrive at any certainty as to whether something is right or wrong, go to your priests and ask their advice; especially mention your doubts in the confessional, that you may receive the right solution of them and the proper instruction, and so be preserved from error and sin.

PART II.

The lesson of this day contains, moreover, some particular directions for a Christian life.

1. *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury, but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit.*

Drunkenness is in itself an abominable vice and wholly unworthy of a Christian, who ought to lead a sober, mortified life; it has also many other vices and sins in its train. It is usually connected with the vice of impurity. If those who live soberly often have trouble enough to subdue their carnal desires, how would it be possible for drunkards to do so, since they lose all command over themselves? With justice, therefore, St. Jerome says: "Where drunkenness reigns, there is luxury; I do not therefore believe that a drunkard can lead an orderly and chaste life." Guard, therefore, against drunkenness, and remember that gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins and leads to damnation; for the Apostles says that drunkards shall not possess the kingdom of God.—*I. Cor. 6: 10.* Woe especially to fathers of families, who are addicted to drunkenness! They commit not one but many sins. If the following words of the Apostle apply to any man, they certainly do to the drunkard: "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.* Instead of taking too much wine and other intoxicating drinks, we ought to be filled with the Holy Spirit; that is, we must be filled with the grace of the Holy Ghost, which disposes us to holy joy, encourages us to good, and strengthens us. The grace of the Holy Ghost, which produces in us these salutary effects, we obtain by devout prayer, attendance at mass and at sermons, spiritual reading, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and the frequent and worthy reception of the sacraments. Let us avail ourselves of these means, that the spiritual life may be nourished and strengthened more and more in us, and that we may always serve God with holy joy.

2. *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.* By "psalms," St. Paul, no doubt, understands the psalms of David, which were recited or chanted by the Christians; by "hymns," songs of praise, which have for their subject the perfections and mercies of God; and finally, by "spiritual canticles," such as are of a religious character in opposition to worldly songs. But the Apostle does not here speak of religious meetings and the usual sacred songs, but only of those songs which were cus-

tomary in the civil life of the Christians. As Tertullian remarks, the Christians used to sing sacred songs at table, and at the conclusion of their meals.

3. *Giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* In these words the Apostle exhorts us to gratitude towards God, our heavenly Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *i. e.*, through the merits of Jesus Christ; for these alone enable us worthily to give thanks to God. We must give thanks to God as long as we live; for as his benefits continually flow to us and there is not a moment in our lives in which we do not receive them from him, we must continually give him thanks. We must give thanks to God *for all things*, that is, not only for the good things, but also for the evil he sends us, for health and sickness, for riches and poverty, for prosperity and adversity, for life and death. Even Jews and pagans give thanks to God *for benefits*; but according to the Apostle, it is the greatest act of gratitude to give thanks to God *even in dangers and tribulations*, saying "May Jesus Christ be praised." Considered in the light of faith, sufferings and tribulations are benefits, and oftentimes greater benefits than prosperity and good fortune, for they are excellent means to free our hearts from all inordinate love of the world and to preserve us from levity and sin, to atone for the temporal punishments due for our sins, and to practice many virtues, such as humility, patience, confidence in God, and resignation to his holy will, and to increase our merits for heaven. How much reason, therefore, have we to give thanks to God for crosses and afflictions, because herein he manifests his particular love towards us, according to the words of the Apostle: "Whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth; and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."—*Heb. 12: 6.*

4. *Being subject one to another in the fear of Christ.* Here we are warned to be obedient to our superiors. Nothing is more necessary than obedience, for without it there would be no order, no security of property and life and we should not be able to live together in peace. Without it no kingdom, no society, no family could exist. Reason, history and experience teach us this, and Christ himself says: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall."—*Luke 11: 17.* Obedience is also a very useful and salutary virtue. How good it is that children should obey their parents, and servants their masters. Only in this way can they be kept from evil, guarded against dissipations and encouraged in good. How expedient it is that subjects should obey the laws of the land. Only in this way can the passions of men be curbed, and honor, liberty, property and life protected, and quietude, peace and secu-

city preserved. How desirable it is that the faithful should obey the Church. Only thus can they be safe against error and sin and be enabled to pursue the way that leads to salvation. When the Apostle adds *in the fear of Christ*, he means to say that we must obey not from human motives, nor from servile fear; not for the sake of temporal advantages, but on account of Jesus Christ, fearing that we might offend him by our disobedience; out of love for him, because for the love of us he was obedient unto the death of the cross. He who is governed only by human motives in his obedience, does not obey as a Christian, and his obedience is without merit and value before God. As Christians we must obey for God's sake, because God imposes obedience upon us as a duty, and our superiors take his place so long as they do not command anything contrary to his will.

PERORATION.

Follow these directions given you by the Apostle in the epistle of this day and make them the rule of your life. Walk circumspectly and be watchful over all that passes within and without you, that you may not be overcome by temptation and fall into sin. Employ the time which God gives you in preparing yourself for a happy eternity. Guard against drunkenness, for as Christians it is your strict duty to live soberly. Detest from the bottom of your heart whatever violates purity, and shun every obscene word and song. Give thanks to God for the numberless graces and benefits which continually flow to you from his hand, and employ them for his honor and the salvation of your soul. Finally, obey conscientiously all to whom according to the will of God you owe obedience; for obedience is better than sacrifice, and it is the key that opens heaven. Amen.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*John 4; 46: 53.* At that time: There was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. The ruler saith to him: Lord, come down before my son die. Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to

him, and went his way. And as he was going down, his servants met him; and they brought word, saying that his son lived. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him: Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him: Thy son liveth; and himself believed and his whole house.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

CHRIST HEALS THE SON OF A RULER.

The event related in the gospel of this day occurred in the second part of the public life of Christ. Our Lord had been at Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover, and had gone thence into Galilee, to evade the persecution of the Pharisees. On the way he had a conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, who with many of the Samaritans in Sichar believed in him. Thence he went to Cana. This place is known to you, for it was there that Christ, at the request of his mother, wrought his first miracle by changing water into wine. Cana is also the scene of the miracle narrated in to-day's gospel, which may be divided into three parts:

- I. A ruler asks Christ to heal his son;
- II. Christ heals his son;
- III. The ruler and his whole house believe in Christ.

PART I.

A ruler asks Christ to heal his son.

1. The gospel tells us that a ruler having heard that Christ had come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down to Capharnaum and heal his son, who was at the point of death. The ruler was probably in the service of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch, who was also called king; and Capharnaum, where the ruler lived and his son was sick, was a day's journey from Cana.

(a.) *Necessity teaches us to pray.* The ruler probably would not have come to Jesus if his son had not been afflicted with a dangerous sickness. But if he had not come to Jesus he and his house would probably not have come to the faith, but would have perished with the great multitude of the obstinate Jews.

Behold what great benefits of divine grace spring from sufferings and tribulations? God by means of them seeks to draw us to himself and to save our souls. Let us cheerfully accept them from his hand, and employ them for our advantage.

(b.) *How solicitous was the ruler for his son!* He made the long journey from Capharnaum to Cana, humbled himself before Jesus and prayed most urgently for help. This father puts many parents to shame. Are there not many who neglect the temporal welfare of their children, refuse them the necessary food, clothing and care, leave them without medical aid in sickness and even rejoice over their death? And how many parents are there who care more for dumb animals than for the spiritual welfare of their children! They do not keep a watchful eye over them, they permit them to keep bad company, they do not punish and correct their frivolities and sins, and do not see that they fulfil their religious duties. How can children who have such careless parents turn out well?

(c.) The ruler set out as soon as he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee, and went to him. He was right in doing so, for if he had not sought help from Christ, his son probably would have died, and what would be still more deplorable, he and his house would have been deprived of the grace of faith. So much depends upon making good use of opportunities. He who permits favorable opportunities to pass, such as a mission, or a jubilee, perhaps lays the foundation of his eternal perdition. Examples from history and experience.

(d.) *The ruler prayed Christ to heal his son.* St. Lawrence Justinian here shows the great difference between human and divine help. "Physicians," he says, "are induced only by good pay to impart health to us, but God gives it in return for prayer." Men often require much money and other sacrifices for the services they render us; not so God; he gives us his graces gratuitously; all that he demands of us is that we ask him. "Ask, and it shall be given you."—*Luke 11:9*. Oh, how good is God! but how wicked are those who will not comply even with this light condition and ask God for his gifts and graces!

(e.) The belief of the ruler was as yet *imperfect*, for he thought that Jesus could not heal his son in his absence, He judged wrongly, for if Christ was the Son of God it was an easy matter for him to heal a sick person whether he was present or absent. But we men are so little disposed to think; we often do not judge according to the principles of faith, but according to our limited understanding, whence it comes that our judgments are often incorrect. Thus we look upon sickness,

accidents, poverty, contempt, as real evils, which they are not; whilst we consider honor, reputation, riches, health and prosperity the most desirable things, but they are not. Let us pray to God to enlighten us with the light of the holy faith, that we may judge rightly of all occurrences of life and make a good use of them.

(f.) The ruler prayed Christ to come because *his son was at the point of death*. When some one in the house is ill, do not wait such a long time before you call Jesus, *i. e.*, do not postpone the last sacraments till the sick person is at the point of death, for he might depart this life without them, or he might no longer be able to do what is required on his part for their worthy reception. Never omit to remind the sick person of the danger when there is danger, and to call a priest without delay. You would reproach yourself all the days of your life, if a sick person were to die without the sacraments through your fault.

2. Upon the request of the ruler to heal his son, Christ replied: *Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not.*

(a.) This reproach was meant not only for the ruler, but for all present, the Galileans, whose faith was far weaker than that of the Samaritans. Christ had found faith among the Samaritans, for they said to the woman: "We now believe, not for thy saying; for we ourselves have heard him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."—*John 4:42*. Far less willing to believe were the Galileans; for they only believed because they had witnessed the miracles he wrought at Jerusalem (*John 4:45*); and those who had not been eye-witnesses of those miracles did not yet believe, but demanded that Jesus should do still more signs and wonders before they would believe in him. They were like Thomas, who would not believe the assertions of the other Apostles that Christ was risen and had appeared to them, but was only convinced when he saw the risen Saviour and touched the marks of his wounds.

(b.) We need no further miracles to be induced to accept and believe as divine truth all that Jesus has taught; for the numerous miracles which he himself and his Apostles wrought are more than sufficient to convince us of the truth and the divine origin of the Christian religion. Hence St. Gregory the Great says: "So long as faith resembled a tender plant, which must first grow, and become deeply rooted and strong, it was more abundantly watered by the Almighty with the water of miracles; but now that it has grown into a large and strong tree, the watering process is no longer necessary, although every

year up to this very hour many undeniable miracles occur." That also in our age many miracles are wrought, and perhaps more than in former times (apparitions of the Mother of God, and the consequent cure of many persons), we must attribute to the goodness and mercy of God, who does far more than would be absolutely necessary for the salvation of men. But that these miracles take place only in the Catholic Church, and in no other religious society, is a manifest proof that she alone is the true Church established by Christ, and therefore the Church in which alone man can be saved. How grateful should we be to God for having called us to the Catholic Church from our infancy! How solicitous should we be not only to believe as Catholics, but also to live as such and to give a good example to those outside the pale of the Church!

5. *Lord, come down before my son die.*

(a.) The rebuke which our Blessed Lord had directed to the bystanders on account of their weak faith, referred also to the ruler; but he did not mind the rebuke, he humbled himself before Jesus and prayed him only the more urgently and fervently to heal his son, who was at the point of death. Let us also humble ourselves when God appears to refuse our petition; let us continue our supplications, full of confidence and perseverance, and leave it to him when he will hear us. When he delays it is for a wise purpose. The longer he refuses to hear us, the more opportunity we have of exercising fervor in prayer, patience, and confidence in God, and the better we shall employ the graces and benefits which are finally bestowed on us.

(b.) In the ruler we see again what good parents do for their children. He makes a long journey from Cana to Capharnaum, humbles himself before Christ, silently accepts the rebuke, and repeatedly prays that his son may be healed. Oh, that children would never forget the trouble and anxiety which their parents undergo for the love of them! Oh, that they would be grateful to them for their countless benefits; that they would guard against embittering their lives by rudeness, disobedience and bad conduct! Oh, that they would treat their parents with love, nurse them when old and sick, and do all in their power not to let them suffer want!

PART II.

Christ heals the son of the ruler.

1. He said to the ruler: *Go thy way, thy son liveth.* As you are aware, on another occasion a centurion of Capharnaum came to

Christ saying: "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus said to him; I will come, and heal him."—*Matt. 8: 6, 7.* We might ask: Why did Christ declare himself ready to go to the house of the centurion and to heal his servant, whereas he would not go to the house of the ruler, although he repeatedly asked him to do so?

(a.) St. Jerome replies to this saying: "Jesus offered himself to the centurion voluntarily, but not so to the ruler, even when asked, because faith was perfect with the centurion and imperfect with the ruler. This ruler could not perceive how Christ, being absent, could heal his son; our Lord therefore did not go with him, in order to show him that he could heal at a distance. He was to learn by this refusal that which the centurion already knew of himself." It was therefore neither through disrespect nor want of condescension, but through love, that our Lord refused the petition of the ruler to go with him to his house, and healed the son in his absence; for thereby he wished to free the ruler from the false idea that he could heal sick persons only in their presence, and by thus convincing him of his power, make his faith perfect. Here you see how gracious God is, though sometimes he does not grant your petition. He knows that what you ask is not salutary, therefore he does not grant it, but gives you in its stead something good and salutary for you.

(b.) Another reason why Christ did not go into the house of the ruler, while he declared himself ready to go to the centurion's, is to be found in his humility and his special love of the poor and the people of the lower class. When Jesus was willing to go to a poor servant to heal him, it was as it were a humiliation for him, neither could he thereby gain much honor and praise; on the contrary, at least in the eyes of the world, it was an honor for him to appear at the sick-bed of the son of a ruler, and he could gain distinction by healing him. But as he nowhere sought his own glory, but only that of his Father, he gave the preference to lowly actions, and because the lowly and the poor are generally more humble and appreciate eternal things better than the rich and powerful, he preferred to be with them, and showed a special love for them. This is a great comfort for those who must spend their lives in a state of poverty and lowliness; if they are pious, they are more in the sight of God than exalted personages, and such as have money in abundance; and they have far more reason to hope for heaven than they, because it is the poor in spirit that Christ calls blessed. At the same time you are taught by the example of Christ, that you must treat poor and despised people just as courteously, and do them acts

of kindness just as willingly, as if they were rich and exalted. Reflect on what St. James says: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with respect of persons. For if there shall come into your assembly a man having a gold ring, in fine apparel, and there come in also a poor man in mean attire, and you have respect to him that is clothed with the fine apparel, and shall say to him: Sit thou here well; but say to the poor man: Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool; do you not judge within yourselves, and are become judges of unjust thoughts?"—*James 2: 1-4.*

2. *The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way.* Having received the assurance from Christ that his son would live, the ruler showed himself strong in faith; he did not doubt for a moment that his son was healed, therefore he prayed no more, but contentedly retired. Thus we also must believe the promises of Christ, although we do not see their fulfilment, in fact, we must not even call them into question when they have the appearance of not being fulfilled. Thus Christ has assured us that he would build his Church upon a rock and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. Let us not waver in our faith and confidence in this promise, although our times make us fear the worst for the Catholic Church and her enemies put forth all their energies to destroy her; for "Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass."—*Matt. 24: 35.*

3. The gospel relates that his servants met the ruler on his way, and brought him word, saying that his son lived. These servants are an example to all servants, showing them that they should also sympathize in the joys and sorrows of their employers. Christian love requires this, still more the relation of service, for servants are members of the family, and stand to their employers in the same relation as children to their parents. As children have a particular love for their parents, so servants must have a particular love for their employers and have their interests at heart. Those are not good servants who take no interest in the joys and sorrows of their employers, but injure them by carelessness and slothfulness, or even rejoice when loss or misfortune befalls them.

4. When the ruler asked his servants at what hour his son grew better, he did not do so as if he doubted the words of Christ, but to convince himself of the miracle just performed, and especially in order to explain matters to those of his house who had no knowledge of what had happened between him and Christ, and to strengthen them in the faith. Thus we must be more and more solicitous to learn to understand the doctrines and truths

of our holy religion, for the more thorough the knowledge we possess, the more easily we shall be able to refute the objections and difficulties which our opponents bring forward against Catholic faith and morals, and to reject doubts that may arise in our own minds. For this end love to listen to sermons and to read good religious books.

PART III.

The ruler and his whole house believe in Christ. The gospel concludes with these words: Himself believed, and his whole house.

1. Why is it said of the ruler, that *he believed*? He already believed when he went to Jesus and asked him to heal his son, for if he had not believed, he would not have asked his help. Moreover, he gave testimony of his faith, when at the words of Christ: *Go thy way, thy son liveth*, he went his way without any remark. If he had doubted the healing of his son, he would have manifested his doubt. The ruler had faith indeed, but it was yet imperfect; he probably regarded Christ as a performer of miracles, a prophet sent by God, but not as the Son of God and Redeemer of the world. But now, when his son who had been sick unto death was suddenly healed, and at the very hour wherein Christ had said to him: *Go thy way, thy son liveth*, his faith became perfect, and he believed in Jesus Christ. From this we can see that even in faith there is a gradation as in the other virtues, which have a beginning, growth, and perfection. His faith began when he asked for the health of his son; it increased when he believed the words of our Lord: *Go thy way, thy son liveth*; and it rose to perfection when his servants brought him word of the convalescence of his son.—*Ven. Bede.* As in other virtues, so we ought also to grow in faith, hence at the beginning of the Rosary we pray that God may increase our faith. But to perfect ourselves therein, we must often, or at least once a day, make an act of faith; we must also diligently pray, and often receive the sacraments, and read spiritual books, and it is most essential that we live according to the rules of faith; for as a sinful life weakens faith and even leads to apostasy, so virtue and piety strengthen faith and cause us to cling to it with all our soul and to be ready to make any sacrifice for it.

2. The gospel says that the ruler *believed, and his whole house.* He was not satisfied with believing himself, but he was anxious that his children and domestics should also believe. He spoke to them in such a convincing way of the Divinity and dignity of the Messiah that they all believed in him. Oh, that all fathers of families would take this ruler for their pattern! They

are strictly bound to be solicitous for their children and servants. St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom compare fathers of families with bishops and priests, and say that the former must give an account of those of their house, as the latter must of their diocesans or parishioners. The bishops and priests could not defend themselves before God if they did not care for the salvation of their subjects, should they be silent as to their sins and vices, or give scandal by unworthy conduct. In like manner an awful judgment will await Catholic parents, if they neglect their duties towards their children. All the sins which your children commit in consequence of defective training, you will have to answer for at the judgment-seat of God. Consider this and do your duty; keep a careful watch over them; see that they comply with their religious duties, and give them a good example.

PERORATION.

In conclusion, I exhort you, children, conscientiously to fulfil your duties towards your parents. Do not forget that they hold the place of God; treat them with reverence. Far be it from you to treat them irreverently in word or deed; this would draw upon you the displeasure of God, and his punishment. Be thankful to God for all the benefits you receive from them. But above all things obey them not only in temporal matters, but also in the affair of your salvation. Obedience is especially pleasing to God, brings you happiness and blessings for this life and entitles you to the hope of finding grace with Jesus Christ, who for the love of us was obedient unto the death of the cross. Amen.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE RULE OF FAITH.

And himself believed, and his whole house.—John 4: 53.

Our Blessed Lord in the miracles he wrought had not so much the temporal welfare of men before his mind as their eternal salvation. By his miracles he intended to give them convincing proof that he was the Son of God, and that as such he was worthy of

belief. All that were of good will were convinced of the Divinity of his Person and doctrine, and believed. So the ruler in the gospel of this day. When he saw that his son who had been at the point of death had been healed by the simple word of Christ, he and his whole house believed. Miracles are not necessary in our days to bring men to the faith, for the Catholic religion is at present spread over the whole globe and confirmed by so many miracles that one must indeed be blind to doubt its truth and divinity. But the question is: "What is the ordinary way by which men can come to the faith? I shall answer this question to-day, in order to convince you that non-Catholics err in their assertion that we must ascertain the truths of faith from Holy Scripture only. I say the way to find out these truths is:

- I. *Not through the Sacred Scripture, but*
- II. *Through the infallible Teaching Church.*

PART I.

I. *The Sacred Scripture never was the way by which men arrived at the true faith.*

(a.) *It was not the way in the Old Testament.* Up to the time of Moses, that is to say for about two thousand five hundred years, there was no Sacred Scripture. During this long period of time the faith which men had received from God was handed down by oral tradition from one generation to another. Even the Pentateuch, which Moses wrote by the command and inspiration of God, was not the means by which the Israelites came to the faith, and could not be, because it did not contain all the truths which they believed. Thus there are in it but faint indications of the immortality of the soul and of reward and punishment after death; yet the Israelites from the beginning believed these fundamental truths of religion. We therefore find from the time of Moses to the time of Christ, besides the Sacred Scripture, a Teaching Body, which carefully preserved the faith and implanted it in their descendants, therefore Christ says: "The Scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All, things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do."—*Matt. 23: 2, 3.*

(b.) *Nor in the New Testament.* Christ taught orally only; he did not tell his Apostles to write down his doctrine and to give their writings to the Jews and Gentiles for their conversion; but he commanded them to announce the gospel orally: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them. . . teaching them

to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—*Matt. 28: 17-20*. The Apostles did this; they dispersed all over the world and preached the gospel. There were already many thousands of Christians before the Apostles and disciples had written a syllable. They afterwards, indeed, wrote the four gospels and several epistles, but it was by no means their intention that henceforth the truths of the faith should be exclusively drawn from these sources. The supposition that it was their intention, is contradicted by the fact that they everywhere appointed bishops and priests and committed to them the office of teaching. "The things which thou has heard of me, the same commend to faithful men, *who shall be fit to teach others also.*"—*II. Tim. 2: 2*. The reason why some of the Apostles and their disciples wrote was owing to the particular circumstances of certain congregations. Errors arose here and there, dissensions in matters of faith and morals occurred, and the Apostles and their disciples wished to rectify them; therefore they wrote gospels and epistles, because they could not appear personally. Even after the time of the Apostles we have no example of the Sacred Scripture being substituted for missionaries and sent for the conversion of a single nation. The gospel has been preached wherever a Christian congregation has existed, and the faith flourished for a long time before the people ever saw a Bible. We have of the Bible only two ancient versions, the Syriac and the Vulgate. The Vulgate, or the ancient Latin version dates back to the second century, and was known only in Africa. Therefore the western churches in France and Spain, where Christianity had been introduced at an early period, had no Bible in the vernacular for at least eighty years. Even the Syriac version was little known in the Asiatic churches for three centuries. The words of the Apostle: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ," are true to-day as they always were. Therefore the Sacred Scripture never was the way by which the truths of the faith were ascertained.

2. *And it never can be.* Why not?

(a.) Because it can never be proved from itself alone that it is genuine, that is, that it originated with those men whose names it bears as its authors; that its whole contents have been preserved pure and unadulterated up to our time, and finally, that its authors were under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and wrote nothing but divine truth. The assertion may occur in a book a hundred times: "This one or that one is my author; not a word has been changed in me; what I contain is the pure word of God;" notwithstanding all these assurances it deserves not the least credit, for you can print and write on paper what you

please. We must, therefore, have an external proof that the Bible as a whole is a divine book. The Church alone can give us this proof, because she alone has been in the possession of the Bible from the beginning. He, therefore, who rejects the authority of the Church and yet admits the Bible, has not a divine foundation for his faith and consequently he cannot be certain that it comes from God and is true.

(b.) Because no one is perfectly certain that he interprets the Bible rightly. For to do so it would be necessary, first of all, to understand thoroughly the languages in which the Bible was originally written, *i. e.*, Hebrew and Greek, for translations may be false or incorrect, just in the most important passages. But how could every one learn the Hebrew and Greek languages? Moreover, a scientific education is required for the right interpretation of the Bible. How small is the number of those who have such! But even erudition does not shield from error. History teaches that the most learned men have contradicted themselves, and continue to contradict themselves in the interpretation of the Bible. If we were to admit the Bible only as the rule of faith there would be an end to all unity of faith, and out of a hundred persons forming and drawing their faith from the Bible only, there would scarcely be two who would perfectly agree with each other; as we know, this is the case. Now, since Christ and his Apostles urge and inculcate unity in faith and condemn all schisms, it is evident that the Bible alone cannot be the way by which we ascertain the true faith, for by it unity is absolutely impossible.

PART II.

1. We can ascertain the true faith only from the Church, whose teaching is infallible. No Christian denies that Christ established a Church, for during his public life upon earth he established a society of men who received his holy doctrine with a believing heart, lived according to his rules and used his means of grace for the attainment of eternal salvation.

(a.) *In his Church Christ established an infallible teaching ministry.* This was necessary for the preservation of the true faith, so that we may not be children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, owing to the wickedness of men. If our Lord had given his Church the Bible only, but not an infallible teaching authority, it would have fallen to pieces immediately after its establishment, because there would have been no one with authority to rectify the false interpretations of Scripture and to root up the luxuriant growth of cockle, *i. e.*, heresies,

in the garden of God. Reason, therefore, tells us that Christ was obliged to give his Church an infallible teaching ministry. That he really did this the Scriptures testify in plain words. He said to his Apostles: "Go ye, teach all nations, baptizing them. . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." When Christ made the Apostles teachers of all nations, it was self-evident that he obliged all men to hear them and to submit to be instructed by them in the truths of religion. Again, he declared that he would give his Apostles the same power that he himself had received from his heavenly Father, and that the same obedience was due to them as to himself, saying: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."—*John* 20: 21. "He that heareth you heareth me: and he that despiseth you despiseth me."—*Luke* 10: 16. And finally he positively declared: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."—*Matt.* 18: 17. Now, if our Blessed Lord conferred on his Apostles the teaching ministry and strictly obliged all men to submit themselves to them, it evidently follows that they could not err, otherwise he himself would have exposed men to the danger of being led into error and of being seduced. But that the least doubt might not arise that the Apostles when teaching would be infallible, Christ assured them of his continual assistance, and promised them the Holy Ghost, who would teach them all truth and abide with them for ever. The Apostles were conscious of this infallibility conferred on them by Christ, and for this reason they insisted that all the Christian congregations should hold fast to the faith received from them, and even pronounced anathema upon those who presumed to preach contradictory doctrines.

(b.) *The infallible teaching authority established by Christ in his Church has existed without interruption until now, and will so exist to the end of time.* This is self-evident. Christ established his Church not only for the time of his Apostles but for all future time, in order that the people of all ages might be saved. Now, if at the time of the Apostles, when the Church numbered comparatively few members, an infallible teaching authority was necessary for the preservation of the true faith, how much more was it necessary in later times when the Church spread more and more, and was destined to receive all nations into her bosom? How would unity in faith and the preservation of its purity be possible, if there were no infallible teaching authority in the Church capable of giving a final decision in all religious controversies, and declaring with certainty what is true or otherwise? The religious societies separated from the Catholic Church furnish us with a manifest proof that faith cannot exist without an infallible teaching authority. Having rejected the teaching authority of the Church and accepted the Bible as the exclusive

Rule of Faith, they fell into the greatest errors and lost all unity in doctrine. We have the most incontrovertible proofs in the Bible itself that there is a continual infallible teaching authority. When Christ made his Apostles the teachers of all nations he promised them his continual assistance in these words: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." In like manner he promised them the Holy Ghost, who would teach them all truth, and abide with them for ever: "And I will ask the Father and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth."—*John* 14: 16, 17. "He will teach you all things."—*John* 14: 26. Since the Apostles did not live to the end of the world, it is evident that these promises refer not only to them, but also to their successors, the Pope and the bishops. Therefore, in matters of faith and morals they possess the same infallibility as that of the Apostles.

The Fathers of the Church also teach this. Thus St. Irenæus, says: "Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church with her gifts, therefore with the *Spirit of Truth*." Origen says: "We must pay no attention to those who say: 'Behold, here is Christ,' but who do not show him the Church which is full of splendor from the rising to the setting of the sun, full of true light, and which is the pillar and ground of truth, in which is the coming of the Son of Man, who says to all, whoever they may be: Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." SS. Chrysostom Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine assert that it is an utter impossibility for the Church to err. The continual assistance of Christ promised to her, and her designation as the pillar and ground of truth, vouch for the belief that she can never waver, and that the sun in the firmament can sooner be destroyed than the truth of the Church.

2. *Infallible teaching authority is found only in the Catholic Church,* for the promises of Christ, that he and the Holy Ghost would abide with her for ever, and teach her all truths, refer to her alone; because she alone is the Church established by Christ. But that the Catholic Church alone is established by Christ is evident—

(a.) *From her hierarchy and spiritual power,* to which the Pope, the bishops and the priests belong. Christ has given his Church a visible head in the person of Peter; this head we call the Pope. He also appointed bishops; these were the other Apostles; finally he appointed priests; these were the seventy-two disciples. That spiritual power we have in the Church to this day; we have a Pope, and many bishops and priests. We can also prove that these spiritual superiors have immediate succession

from those whom Christ appointed and from them have received their commission. Our present Pope is Leo XIII., whose predecessor was Pius IX., whose predecessor was Gregory XVI.; and if we go back from one Pope to another, we come in an uninterrupted line to Peter, whom Christ appointed Pope. With the bishops and priests the apostolic origin cannot be proved so manifestly, but that is not necessary, for this much is certain that in the Catholic Church there never was tolerated a bishop or priest who was not lawfully ordained. Every bishop and priest of the Catholic Church, back to the Apostles, can name the Pope or the bishop from whom he has received his consecration or ordination and mission, and thus the episcopal and priestly power is derived from the Apostles, and, consequently, from Christ. This hierarchy reaching back to the beginning is wanting in the religious societies separated from the Catholic Church. They have no Pope, for they have rejected the Papacy; neither have they bishops or priests who originate from the Apostles, for they can name no Pope nor legitimate bishop from whom they have received their ordination and mission. Now, since the religious societies separated from the Catholic Church have no succession from Christ and his Apostles, it necessarily follows that they are not the Church established by Christ, and that with them the true faith cannot be found. Hence St. Chrysostom says: "When you hear of people who call themselves Christians, but who are not called after Christ, but after another . . . rest assured that they do not form the Church of Christ, but the synagogue of Satan, for, having originated at a later period, they make themselves known as those whom the Apostle in his epistle to Timothy has designated as seducing spirits that scatter devilish doctrines."

(b.) *From their names.* The Arians, Nestorians, Pelagians, Lutherans, in short, all the sects that have in the course of time separated themselves from the Catholic Church, were, and were called Catholics before their apostasy; the names which they afterwards went by and still go by, were, up to the time of their apostasy, entirely unknown. On the contrary, the Catholic Church never had any other name than the *Catholic Church*. The oldest Fathers call her Catholic, and this name she has always had up to our time. If the Catholic Church had fallen away at any time from the Church of Christ, she would necessarily have received another name, otherwise she could have no longer been distinguished from the Church of Christ, which had the name of "Catholic Church."

PERORATION.

We need not seek and search in order to find the true faith; all we need do is to go to the Catholic Church; for in her is infallibility in teaching, because she is the Church established by Christ. Let us give thanks to God from our hearts that we belong to the Catholic Church, and let us stand firm by our holy faith, like the many millions who have poured out their life's blood for it. But let us also live according to its precepts, leading a blameless, pious life, that we may so shine before those who are not of the faith, that by the light of our good example we may be deemed worthy to associate with all the saints in heaven and there receive the crown of eternal glory. Amen.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE CEREMONIES OF EXTREME UNCTION.

Lord, come down before my son die.—John 4: 49.

In the gospel of this day mention is made of the son of a ruler, who was afflicted with a dangerous illness, and, as we perceive from the words of his father, was at the point of death. If Jesus had not had compassion on him he would without doubt have died. Sooner or later our turn will come; unless God calls us suddenly and unprepared into eternity we shall lie on a bed of sickness for a longer or shorter time, become weaker every day and finally die. But that we may die a good death on which ultimately all depends, the holy sacraments will be administered to us, especially Extreme Unction, which Christ purposely instituted in order to secure for us a happy death. I shall speak to you to-day of this sacrament, and explain to you the ceremonies which—

- I. *Precede;*
- II. *Accompany, and*
- III. *Follow Extreme Unction.*

PART I.

All ceremonies at Extreme Unction are little more than an explanation and development of the words of St. James: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."—*James* 5: 14, 15. The ceremonies of Extreme Unction are as follows:

1. The priest on entering the chamber of the sick person, greets him by saying: "Peace be to this house, and to all who dwell therein." In this he obeys the injunction which Christ gave to his disciples: "Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: Peace be to this house." The peace which the priest wishes to the sick person and to all the inmates of the house is:

(a.) *Peace with God*, which consists in perfectly submitting ourselves to his holy will. What better and more desirable benefit could the priest wish to the sick person, and to those that surround him, than peace?

(b.) *Peace with our neighbor*. Those who dwell together in the house ought to live in peace with one another and nurse the sick person, who perhaps causes them much trouble and pain; the sick person especially is to make peace with all and keep it, according to the admonition of the Holy Ghost: "Remember thy last things, and let enmity cease."—*Ecclus.* 28: 6.

(c.) *Peace with himself*, which consists in a good conscience. All the inmates of the house need this peace, but especially the sick man, that he may live peacefully and die happily.

2. The priest now puts the vessel containing the holy oil upon the table, and being vested in a surplice and violet-colored stole, approaches the sick person and offers him a crucifix to be piously kissed. A consoling and significant ceremony. The crucifix reminds the sick person that he is a Christian, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and may hope to be saved; that, although he may have sinned much, he need not despair of his salvation, because Jesus Christ has made superabundant satisfaction for his sins; that he must submit with patience to his sufferings and pains, because Jesus Christ, the Innocent, has suffered infinitely more.

Then the priest sprinkles the sick person, the room and the bystanders with holy water, saying the *Asperges*: "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. This sprinkling is for the sick man and those present an admonition to penance, for penance is the only plank of safety for us sinners; "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish."—*Luke* 13: 3. The chamber is sprinkled with holy water that the evil spirit may be kept away; for holy water has the virtue of putting the devil to flight and of preventing him from doing any injury.

4. After this the priest comforts the sick man with pious exhortations and if he wishes to confess, he hears his confession and absolves him; he also induces him to make acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition, and then says three prayers, which are a blessing of the house and its inmates, and which aim at making the administration of Extreme Unction fruitful for all.

5. The sick person, or some one in his name, says the Confiteor, after which the priest imparts to the sick person the general absolution. Both are closely connected. The sick person, having prayed for mercy and pardon, the priest petitions God for mercy, pardon, and life everlasting.

6. Then the priest exhorts the bystanders to pray for the sick person while Extreme Unction is being administered to him. For this end they may say the Seven Penitential Psalms, with the Litany of the Saints, or other prayers. The sick person needs prayer very much, that he may submit with patience and resignation to the will of God, overcome all the assaults of the evil spirit, and continue in the state of grace to his last breath; therefore all present should pray fervently for him.

7. The priest makes the sign of the cross over the sick person, and addressing himself more particularly to him, he says: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, may all the power of the devil be extinguished in thee, by the imposition of our hands, and by the invocation of all the holy Angels, Archangels, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, and all the Saints. Amen."

(a.) The sign of the cross which the priest makes over the sick person serves him for a shield against the arrows of Satan, and for a protection against all his assaults. "The cross is a sign of victory against the power of the prince of this world; which, when he sees, he trembles, and when he hears of it, he is afraid."

(b.) The priest lays his hand upon the sick person, in order to implore for him power and grace; he places him under the pro-

tection of the angels and saints, that they may defend him against all the attacks of Satan and obtain of God grace for him.

PART II.

Now the priest administers to him the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and anointing him with holy oil on the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the hands, and feet, says: "Through this holy unction, and through his most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by seeing—hearing—smelling—taste and speech—touch—and walking Amen."

This visible sign of Extreme Unction is significant and instructive.

1. *The holy oil*, with which the sick person is anointed by divine ordinance, represents the operations of the graces of Extreme Unction. Oil has especially three qualities: *it gives light, it heals, and strengthens*. Extreme Unction produces these three effects in the soul of the sick person, if he receives it well prepared. It *enlightens* him, that he may perceive the vanity of all earthly things, detach his heart from the world and desire only heavenly things. It is efficacious in soothing pain and healing the wounds with which sin has stricken him—his weakness and inordinate inclinations—and procures his bodily health if advantageous for the salvation of his soul. It *strengthens* him, giving him strength and courage to overcome all the temptations of the evil spirit and to obtain the crown of life everlasting.

2. *The priest anoints the senses of the sick man*. This is done that they may again receive the sanctification imparted to them by baptism but lost by sin, by which they have been abused, that henceforth they may no longer be accessible to sin and its lust, closed against all temptations and become ready and willing instruments in the service of God; finally, that they may rise from the dead purified and as pure vessels of the soul be worthy to enjoy the felicity of heaven. What grace and consolation for the sick and the dying, that through this holy unction all the sins which have so often been committed by their senses are remitted, and that the integrity and purity which are due to them as Christians and citizens of heaven are restored!

3. The anointing is made in the form of the cross. This also has its significance. The cross is the emblem of our salvation. If it were not for the cross we would not be redeemed from the slavery of sin and Satan, and could not be saved. Again, it is from the cross that the sanctifying virtue of Extreme Unction, as

well as of the other sacraments, proceeds. Finally the cross is the seal which is imprinted on the senses of the sick person, that the evil spirit may no more use them for sinful purposes. With what feelings of gratitude and joy ought he to look up to heaven, when Extreme Unction is administered to him, by which he is purified and sanctified through the precious blood of Jesus at the very portals of eternity! But that he may receive this sacrament more worthily, he ought to excite, during the respective anointings, the corresponding acts of humility, contrition, love, confidence, and resignation to the will of God.

PART III.

After the unction the priest purifies his thumb with salt and water; this salt and water, as well as the cotton wool used for wiping off the oil, must be consumed by fire, that the holy oil adhering to them may be preserved from profanation.

1. The priest now continues the prayers begun before the anointing, according to the admonition of the apostle: "Let the priests pray over him." The contents of the three prayers which follow the unction are urgent petitions to God that he would impart to the sick man the graces of Extreme Unction in an abundant measure. In each prayer especially recurs the petition that God would drive out of him all pain of body and mind, and restore him to health. It must be evident to all that those sick persons act foolishly who, out of fear that they must die, put off the reception of Extreme Unction to the last moment.

To these solemn prayers the priest adds such words of encouragement and consolation as his own heart suggests. He should place the crucifix before the eyes of the sick person, and close to him, so that he may embrace and kiss it. The priest then extends his hand once more over him and beseeches the Most Holy Trinity to restore him to health, to drive away from him every evil, and to give him all things that may be advantageous to him for time and eternity. Then he addresses a few words more to him and reminds him of his duty to give thanks to God for the reception of the sacraments, and advises him diligently to employ the time of his sickness for the salvation of his soul. When he sees that the sick person is about to die, he gives him as his viaticum (provision for his journey) the living bread which gives life everlasting, even him who has said of himself: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day." In order to strengthen the dying person in his last struggle, the priest repeats the prayers for the recommendation

of the departing soul and grants the plenary indulgence, by virtue of the faculty received from the Holy See. I cannot here give in full these exhortations and prayers which are the simple and sublime expression of the most lively faith and perfect confidence in the divine goodness, but trust that at our last hour we may all be enabled to hear them and share their sentiments. —*Con. Trid.*

Having administered the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, the priest leaves the sick person. He continues his visits, however, until the sick person either recovers or dies, in order to give him the necessary spiritual consolation.

PERORATION.

Thus the Catholic Church accompanies her children from the cradle to the grave, and everywhere stands beside us, assisting us as often as we need her consolation and means of salvation. Oh, what a happiness, what a comfort for us to belong to a Church that watches over us with such solicitude, nurses us with such love, protects us with such devotedness and with such perseverance leads us to our eternal destiny! Oh, let us be obedient children of our beloved mother; let us love her with all our heart, obey her and employ the graces which she gives us so abundantly. Then death may come sooner or later; it will have no terror for us; being faithful children, God will be to us a good Father and give us heaven for our inheritance. Amen.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

FEVER THE FIGURE OF SIN.

Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.—John 4: 52.

The sickness with which the son of the ruler was afflicted was a fever. This is evident from the answer which the servants gave to the ruler, when he asked at what hour he grew better: *Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.* Fever is a sickness of frequent occurrence, and there are but few men who have not suffered from it at some time or another. But there is a fever

which is more widely spread than any bodily disease, and this is the fever of the soul, or sin. Hence St. Ambrose says: "Our fever is our pride and ambition; our fever is our concupiscence and unchastity; our fever is our avarice; our fever is our desire of revenge; we are infected with as many spiritual fevers as we are with sins and vices." As a physician of souls, it is my province to speak of these spiritual fevers and to tell you something about them that may be of advantage to you. I say therefore: Fever is a figure of sin—

- I. *In its various forms;*
- II. *In its effects;*
- III. *In its cure.*

PART I.

There are many kinds of fever; I shall mention only a few, and show you how they are figures of sin.

1. *Intermittent fever* returns at certain or uncertain intervals; it lingers, and exhausts us very much. You have no doubt heard of people who had fever for six months and longer, and could not get rid of it in spite of all they did. Intermittent fever is, however, rare. Would to God that it were so with sin, that spiritual fever! But it is not the case. How many are there among us who again and again commit, I will not say, venial faults, but mortal ones! They frequently relapse into the vice of impurity; they get drunk again; they do not give up their cursing, swearing, blaspheming, their immodest discourses and obscene witticisms, their lies, slander and detraction; they continue their enmities, their injustices and cheating. They commit to-day the sins which they committed ten or twenty years ago, and there is no prospect that they will ever be converted. If the fever always returns and cannot be controlled, the sick man runs the risk of dying. No less great is the danger which attends a person who continues his sinful life for years and never amends; he falls deeper and deeper into blindness and obduracy; the grace of God departs from him more and more, and it is to be feared that he will live and die in sin and be lost. Oh, that all relapsing and habitual sinners would make a note of this!

Sometimes the fever returns every day, or every third, eighth, or fourteenth day. Sufferers feel quite well on the days on which they are free from fever; but whenever it returns, they are very ill. There are sins also which are daily committed, or every three, eight, or fourteen days, or very often. In the case of many scarcely a day passes on which they do not become angry, break out into invectives and calumnies, lie, speak unchaste words,

consent to impure thoughts and desires. We ought to improve every day, and yet we do evil every day; in fact, many of us daily commit mortal sins. How great the number of our sins will finally become! And what a severe judgment awaits us!

2. *Fever chills.* These commence with cold shivers. The patient may bury himself in a warm bed, or use furs in the hot summer time, yet he cannot get warm. It is also peculiar to sin under certain circumstances to spread an icy coldness over man, so that he can be warmed by nothing. Man frequently falls into this state of tepidity when he commits a certain sin very frequently or continues long in a life of sin. When he is yet a tyro, his conscience is aroused; it presents vividly before his eyes the grievousness and the consequence of sin and fills him with anxiety, fear, and sorrow, but these salutary thoughts decrease little by little and finally cease altogether. In this sad state nothing makes an impression upon the sinner. Entreaties, warnings, threats, and punishments are fruitless; his heart, quite icy, cannot be thawed and warmed. Examples: Pharaoh in Egypt; the Scribes and Pharisees; the inhabitants of Jerusalem. To such obdurate sinners the words of the Apostle apply: "According to thy hardness, and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God."—*Rom. 2: 5.*

3. *Typhus.* When persons are suffering from this fever, the head and chest, and often the whole body, are very hot; the face is dark red; the lips, tongue and throat are parched; they breathe heavily, and they frequently become delirious. Look at a man who permits himself to be controlled by the passion of anger; does he not resemble a man with a burning fever? Is not his face red and as it were burning with heat? Does he not breathe heavily? Does he not say and do things more like a maniac than a rational being? Is not St. Basil right when he says of a man in a rage: "He is not master of himself, he knows neither himself nor those who are present: but, as in a nocturnal fight, he knocks everything over, talks nonsense, cannot control himself, reviles, blasphemes, strikes, cuts, threatens, swears and yells." Henry II., of England, was unmanageable in his anger, and in his words and actions committed follies of which even an ordinary man should have been ashamed. One day he endeavored to tear out the eyes of a man who had brought him a letter containing unpleasant news; he succeeded in scratching his face all over. Another time he furiously abused a gentleman who in conversation appeared to take the part of the king of Scotland. He knocked his hat off, tore his clothes, and attacked him with his teeth, as if he were beside himself. Breaking out into bitter complaints

and reproaches, using abusive language and even threatening death, were quite usual with him when things were contrary to his will. Oh, that when you are in danger of falling into the passion of anger, you would look up to Jesus, who says to us: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart."—*Matt. 11: 29.*

PART II.

The effects of fever.

1. *Fever weakens the body and renders it unfit for work.* Every fever, especially nervous fever, causes great weakness: sufferers from it are so weak and feeble that they can neither walk nor stand, and scarcely move a hand. They must be lifted and moved. The effect of sin is still more deplorable, for it prevents man entirely from doing anything meritorious for heaven. Infected with mortal sin, he is separated from Christ, and resembles a branch cut off from the vine; he can therefore yield no more fruit, *i. e.*, can no longer do anything that would be entitled to a reward hereafter. Thus Christ assures us: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine; so neither can you, unless you abide in me."—*John 15: 4.* He that is in a state of mortal sin is destitute of charity; and he that has not charity is incapable of acquiring merit for heaven. St. Paul says this in plain 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.* He who is contaminated with a mortal sin has not sanctifying grace; and he who has not sanctifying grace is devoid of supernatural life; he is spiritually dead; and therefore can do nothing meritorious for eternity. Fever patients are to be pitied, for they cannot work, and consequently can earn nothing. But are not sinners far more to be pitied when by their sins they render themselves incapable of meriting anything for heaven? Should you not, if you have the misfortune to fall into a grievous sin, without delay make a sincere confession, in order to recover sanctifying grace and to enable yourselves to acquire merit for heaven?

2. *Fever takes away all appetite.* The fever-stricken have no desire to eat, and whatever they eat is repugnant to them; they have no taste; all food is insipid. You have to compel them to take even a little nourishment. Sin produces the same effect; it deprives man of all desire for spiritual good. Sinners have no pleasure in prayer; they either neglect it altogether or perform it without any devotion. They prefer to be anywhere rather than in the church; on Sundays and holidays they fre-

quently lose mass; the word of God is distasteful to them, as the manna was to the Israelites; they are hardly ever seen at a sermon. They detest nothing so much as the reception of the sacraments; months and even years pass without confession and communion. How sad is the state of such careless Catholics. God withdraws his grace from them more and more; they sink deeper and deeper into sins and vices, come more and more under the dominion of the devil, and are therefore in the greatest danger of dying in their impenitence. How can a person who is solicitous for the salvation of his soul neglect the means of grace and salvation which his holy religion offers him?

3. *Fever causes great thirst.* The less appetite the fever-stricken have, the more thirst they endure. They wish for nothing but drink; and no matter how much they drink, they can never quench their thirst; it is as if they poured water upon glowing iron, so quickly does their mouth become parched. Is it otherwise with sinners? Are they not tormented by a great thirst without being able to quench it? What do they not do in order to gratify their ambition, avarice, concupiscence of the flesh, desire of revenge? What energy do they not put forth for this purpose? What trouble and labor do they not undergo, what sacrifices do they not make? And when they have obtained what they aspired to, is their thirst quenched? Are they contented and happy? No; the desire of the sinner is a bottomless vessel which cannot be filled, however much may be poured into it. Examples: King Saul, who permitted himself to be controlled by jealousy, pride and envy, and whose mind on that account was clouded with uneasiness and dejection; Aman, who, although his king Assuerus honored him very much and exalted him above all the other princes of the realm, was wholly discontented on account of his boundless pride. Examples from life: The drunkard, the voluptuous, and the avaricious. They are spurred on by their evil desires, and as often as they satisfy them, they clamor anew for gratification. This is the curse of sin, that it urges its slaves forward to wicked deeds and never satisfies their desire. Justly therefore has St. Augustine said: "The human heart which is not firmly grounded in the desire for eternity can never be constant, but more inconstant than all inconstancy it goes from one thing to another and seeks rest where there is no rest." Oh, that we would consider what this great Doctor further says: "O soul, He only who created thee can satisfy thee; if thou ask for anything else, it is thy misfortune, for He alone who made thee in his image can satisfy thee."

PART III.

Cure of the fever.

1. *Medicine is necessary*, either for purging or as an emetic. Many if not all fevers originate from impurities in the blood and the stomach; these impurities must be removed from the body, that the fever-stricken may be healed. Therefore physicians prescribe emetics as the first medicine to be used in fever cases. These remedies are not pleasant; they cause griping pains, sick headache, and other ills; but they are necessary, because by their use the causes from which the fevers originate are removed. Such remedies are also necessary for the sinner that he may be cured of sin, the fever of his soul. He must remove the cause and occasion of sin. If he has lived unchastely with a person, he must give up keeping company with her; if he has sinned by drinking and gambling, he must shun the places where it happened; if he has visited houses and places of amusement that caused him to fall, he must keep away from them as much as possible. This may indeed be difficult for him and perhaps more disagreeable than emetics to the fever-stricken; but, like the sick man, he must swallow it down, otherwise the cure of his soul would be impossible. St. Isidore says: "He who does not shun the occasion of sin does not put off sin, for it is a part of true penance to shun the occasion of sin." Christ says that we must pluck out an eye, if it scandalize us, and cut off a hand or foot if it scandalize us, for it is better for us, maimed or lame, to go into life, than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into hell-fire.—*Matt.* 18: 8, 9. If therefore the avoiding or removal of what is to you a proximate occasion of sin should be as hard and painful to you as the plucking out of an eye, or amputation of a hand or foot, you must nevertheless make the sacrifice, for otherwise you can neither get rid of sin nor escape the fire of hell. Consider also the words of Christ: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."—*Matt.* 11: 12.

2. *Diet.* This must be strictly attended to by the fever-stricken, otherwise medicine avails nothing. It often happens that the fever is allayed for some time, but a mistake in the diet brings it back with greater vehemence. Those who are sick with nervous fever must be very careful as to their diet at the beginning of their convalescence. For if they indulge themselves a little too much they may have a relapse and die. Sinners also must diet themselves, if their sick soul is to become well and remain so. They must deny themselves everything that entices to sin, and therefore mortify themselves *interiorly* and *exteriorly*. *Interiorly*, by fighting against and suppressing all inordinate inclinations

and desires as soon as they become conscious of them. God wills this, therefore he said to Cain: "The lust thereof (of sin) shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it."—*Gen. 4:7*. The Apostle also exhorts us to this, saying: "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof."—*Rom. 6:12*. *Exteriorly*, by subduing our senses and preventing them from admitting any outward impression leading us into sin. We must especially guard our eyes and allow them no sinful glances; our ears, by shutting them to evil discourses; our tongue, by refraining from immodest and sinful words. These interior and exterior mortifications are indispensably necessary for true repentance and conversion. Therefore, St. Basil says: "Mind well that Christ says first: 'Let him deny himself,' and then: 'And follow me.' For if you do not do the first, *i. e.*, deny your own will, mortify evil inclinations and desires, you will find many impediments and obstacles which will withdraw you from following Christ. The road to virtue must first be levelled by mortification."

3. *Strengthening remedies*. When the fever is suppressed and health restored, strengthening remedies must be employed that the fever may not return, and that the sick man, weakened by it, may gradually recover his strength. After the body has been properly purged, quinine is frequently prescribed. This medicine tones and strengthens the whole system when the fever has quite departed; a little good wine is added.

The sinner too needs strengthening remedies in order to preserve himself from a relapse. Such remedies are—

(a.) *Prayer*, by which we receive the grace of God which enables us to overcome all temptation and to persevere in good. Christ himself recommends this means, saying: "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."—*Matt. 26:41*. St. Bonaventure says: "If you wish successfully to overcome temptations, to keep down your inordinate inclinations, to discover the snares of the devil and how to escape them, to warm and strengthen your soul with good thoughts and pious aspirations, to lay aside your faults and to acquire virtues, and if you desire to attain the fruition of everlasting joys, be fervent in prayer."

(b.) *The hearing of the word of God, spiritual reading and meditation*. The word of God which we hear, read, and meditate upon is attended with the most salutary effects. It enlightens us so that we come to the knowledge of what is pleasing to God, and therefore it is necessary and advantageous to us; it infuses into us a detestation of sin and a love of virtue; it gives us courage and strength so that we resolve to renounce everything dangerous to our salvation, to overcome the obstacles to virtue and to

serve God with fervor. Many have been brought to penance by means of the word of God. "The word of God is a manifold and priceless benefit to our soul, for it preserves us from sin, enlightens, warms and strengthens us; it heals the sick and strengthens the healthy."—*St. Thomas of Villanova*.

(c.) *Frequent confession and communion*. He who makes a good confession obtains not only the remission of sins but also special graces, by which he is enabled to guard himself against a relapse and to walk with constancy in the way of penance. "Confession is the salvation of the soul, the destruction of vice, the victory over the devil; it closes the gates of hell and opens the portals of heaven."—*St. Aug.* But we receive still greater graces in holy communion, for it unites us most intimately with Christ, the dispenser of all graces, gives us extraordinary strength against the enemies of our salvation, and urges us on to every virtue, especially to the love of God. The oftener we go to confession and communion, provided we always go with a heart well prepared, the more abundantly are the graces of these holy sacraments imparted to us.

PERORATION.

In conclusion I exhort you to flee from sin as much and even more than from fever; if unfortunately you have fallen into sin, endeavor to free yourselves from it as quickly as possible. It is a raging fever; but we are not left without appropriate remedies against it. Sin, as you all know, is a worse evil than the most malignant fever, because it injures and destroys not only the body but also the soul. Hate, then, and detest it above all things, and shun it more than any sickness, indeed, more than death. In order to preserve yourselves against relapse, avoid the proximate occasion of sin, mortify yourselves interiorly and exteriorly, and deny yourselves manfully whatever is detrimental to your salvation. Pray fervently, especially in the time of temptation; hear and read the word of God, meditate on it, and go as often as possible to confession and communion. If you employ these means with persevering zeal, you can hope to be preserved from sin, or, if you have sinned, to bring forth fruits worthy of penance and rescue your souls from perdition. Amen.



TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

INFLUENCE OF THE EXAMPLE OF PARENTS UPON THEIR CHILDREN.

Himself believed, and his whole house.—John 4: 53.

At the conclusion of the gospel of this Sunday we read that not only the ruler, but also his whole house, believed in Jesus. *Himself believed, and his whole house.* From this we perceive how much depends on example, especially on the example of superiors. If the ruler had not believed in Christ, those of his house, without doubt, would not have believed in him; in spite of the miracle which he wrought on the sick son, they would have considered him merely as an extraordinarily good and kind man, perhaps a prophet. But since the ruler believed in him, his whole house, his wife, children, and domestics believed in him. I can recommend to you, Catholic parents, no better means for the proper training of your children, than your own good example. If you always give your children a good example, they will cheerfully follow your admonitions, and you will very seldom find it necessary to treat them with severity; for good example is the best teacher of good morals. But it is equally certain that the bad example of parents renders a good education almost impossible, for children pay little attention to admonitions when good example is wanting, and they are not improved even by punishment. I shall, therefore, show you to-day what influence the good example of parents exercises upon children, and explain to you the two following truths:

- I. *The good example of parents makes the children good;*
- II. *The bad example of parents makes the children bad.*

PART I.

The good example of parents exercises the most beneficent influence upon the children, and forms the basis of a good education, *whether we consider it in itself, or in connection with the other means necessary.*

1. *In itself.*

(a.) *The nature of children convinces us of this.* It is well known that the imitative instinct is nowhere stronger than in children; they do not act independently, but do only what they see others doing. As they have an unbounded confidence in their parents, they consider that everything they do is right and good, and they do the same things in imitation of them. Now, if they perceive that their parents pray very devoutly, diligently visit the church, and their daily conduct shows that they have the fear of God before their eyes, it will make a salutary impression upon them; that which is good will take root in their hearts at an early age and will become almost a second nature to them. Arrived at mature age, when hard and dangerous trials have to be endured, they will be so confirmed in virtue, that sin will not overcome them. And even if they should occasionally succumb to temptation, they will soon rise from their fall; their wounded conscience will give them no rest, but will urge and impel them to reconcile themselves with God as soon as possible by true repentance. The Prophet Ezechiel speaks of a wagon drawn by four living beings; as these moved along, the wheels of the wagon turned round and followed. By this wagon we can understand a family; the beings that draw the wagon are the parents; but the wheels are the children. Now, just as the wheels turned round and went in the same direction as the beings that drew the wagon, so children act according to the example of their parents, and are their true followers in the path of virtue or vice. Hence St. Chrysostom says: "The works of the parents are books from which the children learn. The tongue, the lips of the parents, are as so many books, from which children derive instruction."

(b.) *History.* Whence comes it that the descendants of Seth lived piously and religiously for centuries, whereas all other men fell away from God and yielded themselves to vices? It was because Seth, their progenitor, served God zealously all the days of his life. Why did young Tobias lead so blameless and holy a life in the midst of a godless, vicious city. Because he was so fortunate as to have a father who not only instructed him in every virtue, but also gave him a most beautiful example. How was it that Timothy lived so piously that St. Paul states that he had found a disciple who was entirely of his own disposition, and who interested himself in the welfare of the faithful as zealously as himself? The Apostle traces the source of this praiseworthy conduct of Timothy, to his mother and grandmother, saying: "Calling to mind the faith which is in thee unfeigned, which also dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice."—II. Tim. 1: 5. There lived at Caesarea, in Cappadocia, a pious couple, Basil and Emily. They had ten children, one of whom died shortly after birth. The parents together with their

old grandmother, St. Marina, lived very piously and were models as regards all Christian virtues; therefore they had the happiness of seeing all their children grow up in innocence and serve God with unalterable fidelity. The eldest child, named Marina after her grandmother, died a nun, in the odor of sanctity; and three sons became bishops, viz., Basil, bishop of Cæsarea; Gregory, bishop of Nyssa; and Peter, bishop of Sebaste. All three are doctors of the Church, and posterity venerates them as saints. History does not mention the other children, but no doubt they lived a pious life and died a good death.

(c.) *Experience.* What parents have, as a rule, good children? To whom belong those girls and boys who are distinguished above their equals for modesty, obedience, fervor in prayer, and the fear of God? Who are those young men and women of whom no one says anything disparaging, and who by their reserve and modesty are patterns to the whole congregation? They are the children of those parents known to be good Catholics, conscientiously fulfilling the duties of religion and of their station of life. Since those young people see and hear nothing at home but what is good, they become good and entitle their parents to the hope that they will always remain so, and become happy in time and eternity.

2. *In connection with the other means necessary for a good education.* Such means are—

(a.) *Lessons and instructions.* How effectual must they be when they come from parents who themselves are living examples of piety? If, for instance, they say: "Children, pray diligently, go to church, go frequently to confession and communion, avoid all bad company, and have God everywhere before your eyes;"—if they themselves do all they tell their children to do, will not the children give a willing ear to their admonitions and conscientiously obey them? Yes; the lessons and admonitions of parents sink deeply into the hearts of the children and resemble a gentle rain, which moistens the soil and causes a plentiful supply of fruit.

(b.) *Punishments.* These too will be effectual, if they are supported by a good example. The children will institute a comparison between themselves and their parents; a glance at the parents will bring visibly before their eyes the magnitude of their faults. They will therefore willingly submit to parental correction and resolve thoroughly to amend their lives. The parents will hardly ever be under the necessity of repeating a punishment, the first one generally effecting a permanent amendment. Oh, that you, Catholic parents, since so much de-

pends on a good example, would shine before your children in all virtues, and be an example to them in word, in charity, in faith, and in purity!—*I. Tim. 4: 12.*

PART II.

The bad example of parents makes children bad. This is evident—

1. *From reason.*

(a.) *Bad example attracts far more than good example.* The reason is because all men are more inclined to evil than to good. The best person, if he has bad examples always before him, will gradually lose his good principles. This is evidently still more true of children, whose understanding is as yet undeveloped, and who imitate all that they see and hear without comprehending the consequences of sin. In their innocence and simplicity they think that everything done by their parents is good and lawful. How pernicious, then, must be the bad examples of parents under such circumstances. Their children tread without fear in their footsteps and commit the same sins as their fathers and mothers. Nor is this the worst. It often happens that during their whole life they never turn from the evil to which they have been accustomed from their youth. As the youth, so the man. The result is that such children live and die in sin and perish eternally. What a fearful responsibility rests upon those parents who by their bad example and scandals are the cause of the damnation of their children!

(b.) *The bad example of parents frequently renders their advice, instructions, corrections and punishments useless.* "Nothing is more unsatisfactory," says St. Chrysostom, "than a teacher who is wise only in words; for this is not the province of a teacher, but of an actor." Parents may give their children the best instruction and inculcate upon them as much as they please the obligation of avoiding cursing and swearing, gambling and drunkenness, bad company and late hours; they may advise them to pray diligently, frequently to go to confession and communion; but all these instructions and admonitions will make no impression upon them when they perceive that the parents' conduct gives the lie to their words. All punishments will be useless. As the parents themselves are guilty of the very faults they punish in their children, the children will retaliate and say. "If what we have done is wrong, why do you do it?" When older they can no longer be punished, and they rebel against their father

and mother if they say anything about their bad conduct. Thus, owing to the bad example of parents, the proper education of children is impossible.

2. *History.*

We read that the descendants of Cain soon turned their backs upon God and led a very bad life. Why? Because of the iniquity of their ancestor. That wicked man, who had killed his brother Abel, lived and died impenitently; his children and descendants followed his example, and became as wicked as he; for as the tree, so the fruit. As long as David himself was pious and religious, his children were the same. But as soon as the father sinned grievously, the children also departed from the right path, and committed heinous crimes. Amnon ravished his own sister Tamar, for which crime his brother Absalom caused him to be slain; Absalom in turn rebelled against his father, and was slain by the hand of Joab. Adonis, another son of David, also conspired against his father and intended to deprive him of the government, when he was captured as a rebel and put to death. Thus the sin of David, although shortly afterwards he was converted and did penance for the rest of his life, was the cause of this appalling catalogue of sin and crime. We burn with indignation when we read in the gospel that a young girl, the daughter of Herodias, was so lost to every womanly instinct as to demand of Herod the head of St. John the Baptist in a salver; and that when her sinful request was complied with, she handed to her mother the bleeding head of the greatest man born of woman. But how could it be otherwise than that every human feeling and every germ of virtue should be driven out of the heart of the daughter whose mother publicly lived in adultery, and upon every occasion manifested her hatred against St. John? What are the bad examples and scandals of parents but weapons with which they murder the innocence of their children, or ropes which with which they deliver their children bound to the devil?

3. *Experience.*

Where there are bad parents we find as a rule bad children. Let us go into a house where the father has no religion, swears and blasphemes, drinks and gambles, lives in strife and enmity. How about his children? Do they serve God? Do they keep his commandments? No; they are counterparts of their father, and are almost as wicked as he. Let us then visit a house in which the mother neglects prayer, going to church, confession and communion, dresses finely, uses obscene words, and has no modesty.

How about her children? Are they well-behaved, retired, modest? Do they pray diligently, go frequently to confession and communion? Do they live as Catholics? Anything but that. Bad parents have bad children; the apple never falls far from the tree; there are exceptions, but they are few and far between.

PERORATION.

Take to heart, Catholic parents, the words of our divine Saviour: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he was drowned in the depth of the sea" (*Matt.* 18: 6); and carefully guard against giving bad example to your children. Have God always before your eyes and never do what might be a stumbling block to your children. Let your light shine before them, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, who is in heaven. If you carefully avoid everything sinful, and lead a truly pious life, the difficult business of education will be very much easier for you; your children will follow your example and serve God all the days of their lives. Amen.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

THE SICKNESS OF THE BODY IS A BLESSING TO THE SOUL.

*There was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum.—
John 4: 46.*

Shall I compassionate the ruler in this day's gospel, or congratulate him? When I look at his sick child I cannot help pitying the poor father; but when I consider the happiness which was the result of the son's sickness, I have reason to congratulate both father and son. Why should his father not grieve? He was very dear to him; now he was to be taken from him, for as the gospel tells us: *He was at the point of death.* Unhappy father, to see himself deprived of what he valued most in this world is indeed hard. But is there no remedy? He had tried

everything and spared nothing to have him restored to health and life, but all to no purpose. Now he has recourse to Jesus. Hearing that Christ had come from Judea into Galilee, he went to him and prayed him to come down and heal his son. Our Lord reproached him, saying: *Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not.* The ruler, not in the least dismayed, repeated his petition: *Lord, come down before my son die;* and Christ, moved to compassion, said: *Go thy way, thy son liveth.* The ruler believed the words of Christ, and went his way; and, before reaching the house, his servants met him, and brought him word that his son was well. And asking of them the hour wherein he grew better, they said to him: *Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him.* The ruler and his family were heathens, and no doubt would never have come to the knowledge of the truth had not God inflicted that sickness upon the son. The sickness of the son was the cause of the conversion of the whole family. Behold herein the wonderful designs of Providence. God wounds the body to heal the soul. Sickness makes us know and acknowledge our guilt, do penance and increase the glory of God; hence—

1. *The sickness of the body is a blessing to the soul.*

(a.) In the ninth chapter of the gospel of St. Matthew, we read of two patients; the one sick both in body and soul; the other only in his soul; the one was lying on his bed, the other sitting in the custom-house. Of the one the gospel says; "They brought to Jesus one sick of the palsy;" and the other gives testimony of himself in these words: "Jesus saw a man sitting in the custom-house, named Matthew." Two kinds of sick persons, and a twofold manner of healing. Our Lord not only imparts health to the body of the palsied man, but also relieves him from the sickness of his soul, saying: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." He acted differently with Matthew; he does not instantly announce to him the remission of his sins, but says to him: "Follow me." Why did he not also say to him: "Thy sins are forgiven thee?" Perhaps he was not a sinner? But he was; he was what the Scripture calls a publican, one of the tax-gatherers, a dishonest class in those days. What difference then is there between the man sick of the palsy and the publican, for although both were sick in their souls, yet he imparts health to the soul of the one instantly, and not to the other. St. Chrysostom answers this question, saying: "Both were infected with a disease of the soul, but the one was also diseased in his body; the bodily health of the publican was an obstacle to the soul, but the unhealthy body of the man sick of the palsy was the cause of the health of the soul."

(b.) The judgment of the world differs greatly from this. The world knows no greater evil than sickness; for the children of the world think of nothing but enjoyment and the gratification of every desire; and as they know that it will be no satisfaction to them to possess the whole world if they are ill and therefore prevented from enjoying it, they look upon sickness as the greatest evil in the world. But if we form a right judgment of it, we shall find that it is frequently the best thing that can befall man, for it opens his eyes and discovers to him the danger to which his salvation is exposed. In many cases sickness is more beneficial than health. This is no idle saying, but is clearly laid down in the Sacred Scriptures. Thus we read in the Fourth Book of Kings, chapter 5th, that Naaman was a leper. A little maid who had been led away captive out of the land of Israel, waited upon Naaman's wife, and one day she said to her mistress: "I wish my master had been with the prophet that is in Samaria; he would certainly have healed him of the leprosy." Naaman took her advice and went to Eliseus, and having, at his command, washed himself seven times in the Jordan, his flesh was restored, like the flesh of a little child, and he was made clean. Naaman, full of joy, returned to the man of God, and said: "In truth I know there is no other God in all the earth, but only in Israel." Naaman up to this time had been a heathen, adoring idols, but having been healed he professed his belief in the one true God, saying: "In truth I know there is no other God in all the earth, but only in Israel." It was his sickness, his leprosy, that brought him to the knowledge of the true God; had he not been afflicted with sickness he would have died without this saving knowledge.

(c.) What happened to Naaman, who by reason of his leprosy came to the knowledge of God, also happened to another, who, in consequence of sickness, returned from the state of sin to the state of grace. We read in the fifth chapter of the gospel of St. Luke that "men brought in a bed a man who had the palsy, and they sought means to bring him in, and lay him before Christ. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went upon the roof, and let him down through the tiles, with his bed, into the midst, before Jesus. Whose faith when he saw, he said: Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." Whence this happy deliverance from sin? In consequence of the palsy that afflicted the body. Perhaps his soul would never have been healed had his body not been sick. In the seventeenth chapter of the same Evangelist, we read that ten lepers, who stood afar off, prayed Jesus to free them from their leprosy, saying: "Jesus, master, have mercy on us." Jesus said to them: "Go, show yourselves to the priests;" and obeying the

order, they were made clean, and freed, not only from the leprosy of the body, but also from that of the soul. Thus the sickness of the body was the occasion of the health of the soul. In the fifth chapter of the gospel of St. John we read that Jesus healed a certain man that had been under his infirmity for thirty-eight years, and our Lord afterwards meeting him in the temple, said to him: "Behold, thou art now made whole; sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." This may be paraphrased thus: "I have healed not only thy body but also thy soul; thou hast deserved this punishment and brought it upon thyself by thy sins; but now go and sin no more, lest perhaps some worse evil befall thee."

(d.) There is another instance mentioned in the Bible, which I cannot pass by in silence. Christ was one day journeying near the confines of Tyre and Sidon, when a woman of Chanaan came out of those parts, and crying out said to him: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil." But Jesus answered her not a word. His disciples having compassion upon her, said to him: "Send her away, for she crieth after us." But even the disciples' prayer was not heard. The poor woman, actuated both by fear and hope, threw herself on her knees, saying: "Lord, help me." He merely said: "It is not good to take the bread of children, and to cast it to the dogs." (*Matt.* 15: 22—28.) Our Lord wished first to try her faith and humility; he likewise perceived from her prayer that she considered her daughter's sickness to be a very great evil, and had not God afflicted her with sickness, she and her mother would never have had recourse to Christ, and consequently would never have been converted. Thus it is evident from Holy Writ that God frequently sends us crosses and afflictions to serve as an opportunity to return to him.

2. Have you ever been ill? How did you behave? Were you not impatient? Alas! there are only too many who lose their patience in their sickness, and murmur at the dispensation of Providence. To such I say, your illness, however painful and lingering, is either unto death or not; it is either your last illness or not. If your illness is not unto death, why are you so impatient? Why should I not be impatient, you say, when I am confined to my bed for so long a time, and am obliged to suffer almost unendurable pain? But I say, you lose your patience because you do not distinguish between the value of the soul and the body, and because you banish the sins of your former days, especially of your youth, from your memory. Have you never grievously offended God? If you have, receive the sickness as a just punishment for your sins. What are the pains you suffer compared to what you have

deserved by your sins? Next to nothing. But, perhaps, it will be your last sickness, a sickness unto death. If so, what is your disposition? You do not wish to be reminded of the danger; you do not like to hear that you must die; the name of death perhaps alone is sufficient to terrify and alarm you. "O death, how bitter is thy remembrance to the wicked!"

We must do penance for every sin we commit; and as you cannot find time for doing it when you are well, God, in his mercy, gives you time by sending you an illness. As you would not do penance voluntarily, he compels you to do it, yet at the same time he leaves it to your own free choice whether you will make good use of your illness or not. It is you yourself who must bear your illness, no one else can bear it for you; you may just as well bear it patiently and make a virtue of necessity. How many has God called to his tribunal without a moment's warning, without giving them time to prepare for this all-important event! Why did he not call you when you were totally unprepared and in mortal sin? He sends you an illness, offering you a favorable opportunity of atoning for the sins of your youthful days. Far from murmuring against God, you ought to be thankful to him for thus dealing so mercifully with you. Hence, whether your illness be unto death or not, it is always a grace and a blessing, and thus it is true that the sickness of the body is the health of the soul. What I have said is for the consolation of sinners; from this they may learn what they must do when they fall ill, and how they must console themselves. If there be any sick among you, of whom could be said what the messengers of the sisters of Lazarus said to Christ: "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick," then I say *that this sickness is for the glory of God*. I do not deny that there are people afflicted with sickness without having deserved it by their sins. What words of consolation shall I say to them?

3. I can say nothing else than that their sickness is for the glory of God. To prove my assertion I quote the words of Christ himself. In the ninth chapter of St. John's gospel we read that "Jesus saw a man that was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him: Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered: "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Christ does not here deny the existence either of original, or of actual sins, of the blind man, or of his parents; he only denies that they were the cause of his blindness. Original sin was indeed the cause in so far as all evil has its source therein; but that the evil of original sin in this man took the form of blindness, was not on account either of the original or the actual sins of the blind man or of his parents. God per-

mitted it, that Christ's mission might become manifest. But could not Christ's mission and the glory of God be made manifest without this blindness? It could, indeed, but it would also be made manifest by this means. But you may say, a wrong has been done to this man just for the sake of the glory of God. What wrong, what injustice? I assert a great blessing was conferred upon that man and his parents, for our Lord opened the eyes of their souls. Of what use to the Jews were their eyes? With eyes open they saw not, and were punished accordingly. "They have eyes and see not."—*Ps.* 113.

Thus it is with you if you suffer innocently. Consider that in proportion as the honor of God is increased by you, as being instruments in his hands, your glory will also become greater according to the words of the Apostle: "For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."—*II. Cor.* 4: 17. The sinner as well as the just man has herein a consolation, and each ought to change his lamentations into canticles of joy and exultation, imitating St. Paul, who says: "For myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities. Gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."—*II. Cor.* 12: 5, 9. The same Apostle says in his epistle to the Hebrews: "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast fitted to me."—10: 5. He does not desire the sacrifice of irrational beings; we must make a sacrifice of our own free will. Let us then bear patiently all the infirmities of our body, that thereby we may be brought either to the knowledge of our guilt, to penance, or to the increase of God's glory. Let us frequently cry out with St. Augustine: "Here burn, here cut, and here spare me not, but spare me hereafter."

PERORATION.

And in conclusion, I say that the best health sometimes consists in not being healthy, that is to say, the health of the soul sometimes consists in the sickness of the body. A state of continual good health has cast many into hell, whom a little sickness would have conducted to life everlasting; and many whom good health would have ruined for ever, have through sickness been admitted into the mansions of bliss, and thus it is true, as I said at the beginning, that the sickness of the body is a blessing to the soul.



TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*Eph.* 6: 10-17. Brethren: Be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of his power. Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high places. Therefore take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice: and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

1. HOMILETTIC SKETCH.

RESISTING THE ENEMIES OF OUR SALVATION.

On several Sundays during the year the Church gives us selections from the epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians; she does so again to-day, for the last time in the Ecclesiastical Year. In the second part of his epistle, the Apostle gave his converts at Ephesus instructions as to how they were to lead a pious life; he then exhorted married people, parents and children, servants and masters, to fulfil their duties conscientiously. At the conclusion of it he addresses all the Ephesians and exhorts them courageously to fight against the enemies of their salvation, and to use in this struggle weapons that would ensure victory. The Apostle treats in this epistle—

- I. *Of the enemies against whom we must struggle;*
 II. *Of the weapons which we must use in the struggle against them.*

PART I.

1. *Brethren, be strengthened in the Lord and in the might of his power.* The enemies of our salvation are strong; in order to be able to battle against them, we also must be strong. But if left to ourselves and to our own strength, we are weak, so weak that we cannot even think a good, salutary thought.—*II. Cor.* 3: 5. Yet, *in the Lord and in the might of his power, i. e.,* when God supports us by his grace, we become strong, so strong that, full of confidence, we can say with the Apostle: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me."—*Phil.* 4: 13. St. Francis of Sales suffered great temptations for a long time. He writes with regard to them: "I am attacked so violently that it seems to me as if all power of resistance were wanting to me, and that I should fall if an opportunity offered itself. But the weaker I feel, the more my confidence in God grows; for I am confident that God, even in the presence of the objects of a sinful desire, would impart to me so great strength that I could destroy my enemies as young lambs." In spite of all our weakness, we need not fear the struggle with our enemies, for God assists us and strengthens us so that we can overcome every temptation, even the strongest. "If God be for us, who is against us?"—*Rom.* 8: 31.

2. *Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil.* The Apostle compares Christians to soldiers who go to war, amply provided with the necessary arms. The enemy with whom they must struggle is the devil, the author of all evil, the father of lies, the seducer from the beginning of the world, who goes about, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.—*I. Pet.* 5: 8. This arch-enemy of our salvation is not only strong, but also full of cunning; he comes when he is least expected and attacks the unguarded senses, causing the most violent temptations; he does not attack openly, in front, but artfully, sideways, and therefore does not represent the sins to which he wishes to seduce us in their real form, but under the appearance of an indifferent thing, or even a virtue. Thus he calls pride, noble self-esteem; avarice, wise economy; impurity, human weakness or natural pleasure; injustices and impositions, good financiering. He studies the weakness of every one, and therefore tempts each man to that sin to which he is most inclined.

3. *For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the world of this*

darkness; against the spirits of wickedness in high places. In these words the Apostle gives the reason why we must be well armed, for we are obliged to withstand supernatural, not natural powers; and in this struggle it is a question not only of our body and our life, but of our soul and our salvation. By *flesh and blood* we are to understand men. These also cause us many hard struggles and endanger our salvation by their bad example and scandals, their flatteries and threats, their artifices and violence; far more severe, however, are the struggles, and far greater the danger to our salvation, prepared for us by the evil spirits, because they far surpass men in power, cunning and malice. When the Apostle speaks of *principalities and powers*, he intimates that there is a hierarchy among evil spirits as well as among good spirits, for, as St. Jerome observes, after the fall they retained the same distinctions of rank as in heaven. The evil spirits, therefore, differ from one another in power and influence; some command, others obey. The Apostle calls them *rulers of the world of this darkness*. They rule the world, not absolutely, but only so far as God permits them; therefore, without the permission of God, they can injure no one in person or property; as the history of Job teaches us, their power goes only so far as God wills and permits. Concerning salvation, they can injure no one against his will; they resemble, as St. Augustine says, a chained dog that can bark, but can bite only those who go near him. Hence the Scripture says: "Resist the devil and he will fly from you."—*James* 4: 7. The addition, *of this darkness*, means that the evil spirits have power over those men only who lie buried in the darkness of unbelief, error and sin. Lastly, the Apostle designates the evil spirits as *spirits of wickedness in high places*. According to the unanimous doctrine of the Fathers of the Church and theologians, all evil spirits are not imprisoned in hell, but can leave it from time to time and visit the earth, in order there to tempt men and do mischief so far as God permits them. I must, however, remark, that wherever they may be, they carry hell, as it were, with them and suffer its torments, and that on the Day of Judgment they will be cast into it for ever. As St. Jerome remarks, it is the unanimous doctrine of the Fathers, that the air it is full of evil spirits who inflict various evils on men. In order to protect the faithful from their injuries, the Church applies sacramentals, especially exorcisms. Make use of those means of the Church, such as the sign of the cross, the invocation of the name of Jesus, and holy water, with devotion and confidence, in order to experience their salutary effects against the power of darkness.

4. *Therefore, take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day and to stand in all things perfect.* As

the Apostle says, we have so many and such powerful enemies, that we must take unto ourselves the armor of God, that is, we must have in readiness the necessary means for overcoming all temptations and removing all that is dangerous to salvation, for only in this way shall we be able to resist in the evil day, that is, to stand immovable in the time of temptation, and to persevere in the grace of God. This is the lot of all; we must fight against the enemies of our salvation so long as we live; for "the life of man upon earth is a warfare."—*Job 7: 1*. We must labor in order to be admitted into heaven, for "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence; and the violent bear it away" (*Matt. 11: 12*); we must fight and conquer, for no one is crowned unless he has legitimately gained the victory.

But what are the arms that we must use in the combat, in order to win the victory?

PART II.

The Apostle mentions these arms by bringing the complete armor of a Roman soldier before our eyes. A Roman soldier had a helmet on his head, a sword in his right hand, a shield on his left arm, and a coat of mail on his breast, around the loins a broad belt bound with thin iron, and on his feet short boots provided with sharp points.

1. *Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice.*

(a.) The enemies of our soul endeavor to blind and seduce us by various misrepresentations and lies, as formerly the infernal serpent seduced Eve. They say this or that is not a sin, at least not a mortal sin; that we shall become perfectly happy by committing it; that God is infinitely merciful and indulgent with the weakness of men. We must protect ourselves against these lying suggestions of the devil with the girdle of truth; to his persuasions we must oppose the truths of our holy faith, and reply to him: "What you suggest to me is untrue; for my infallible faith tells me the very opposite, and to that faith I will cling." If Eve had girded herself about with truth, the devil could not have persuaded her to sin; and if we gird ourselves about with truth in every temptation, we shall be safe against every fall.

(b.) *We must have on the breastplate of justice.* Justice means here the perfect fulfilment of the divine law, true holiness; the breastplate of justice, therefore, is, as St. Chrysostom observes, a life adorned with every virtue. As the breastplate defends the

breast of the soldier against the missiles of the enemy, so justice is a protection against the assaults of Satan. When Satan tempts the just man to pride, he is overcome by humility; when he tempts him to impurity, he is overcome by chastity; when he tempts him to anger and revenge, he is overcome by meekness; in short, when he tempts him to any sin, he is invariably overcome by the virtue opposed to that sin. The just man who loves God with his whole heart, and hates and detests sin as the greatest evil, employs the means necessary for the overcoming of the temptation, and for this reason he cannot be overcome by the enemies of his salvation.

(c.) *And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.* The Roman soldiers wore shoes which covered the feet and ankles, and enabled them to walk safely on all kinds of roads, and prevented injury by bushes and thorns. With such shoes we also must be provided; they consist in a true zeal for virtue, in a continual aspiration to perfection. This zeal is necessary, because walking in the path of virtue has many difficulties in its train. He who falls away from his first fervor and becomes tepid, will soon grow weary in well-doing. The Apostle says that our feet must be shod, that is, we must have great zeal for the gospel of peace; and he thereby indicates that walking in the way of virtue leads us to peace with God. For if we fervently serve God, we already here below enjoy the peace of a good conscience, and the everlasting peace of the children of God awaits us in the next world. When the worldling does so much for the acquisition of temporal comforts and conveniences, which are vain and fleeting, why should we not readily and willingly make any and every sacrifice in order to acquire for ourselves the unspeakable blessing of heavenly peace?

2. *In all things taking the shield of faith wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.* The Apostle calls faith a shield, for as a shield protects the soldier against the darts, so faith protects the Christian against the sins into which in moments of temptation he is liable to fall. For faith tells us how miserable we make ourselves when we yield to temptation and sin—that we forfeit the love and grace of God, all acquired merit, as well as heaven, and expose ourselves to the danger of everlasting perdition; again, faith tells us what a great reward awaits us if we overcome the temptation and remain faithful to God—that we acquire the love and approbation of God, and eternal salvation. Who that ponders well on these truths of the faith, could consent to a temptation, and fall into sin? The fiery darts of the most wicked one are especially the temptations to impurity, with which the devil assaults people; also in general

all temptations that frequently assail them with great vehemence and allure them to sin. Against these the shield of faith protects us, for its serious truths, when we meditate upon them, place us in a holy frame of mind, inspire us with a detestation of all evil, and urge us to have recourse to God by fervent prayer, whereby we gain strength sufficient to come forth victorious from the most severe struggles.

3. *And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

(a.) By *helmet of salvation* we are to understand the hope of eternal salvation. For as the helmet protects the head against all the blows of the enemy, so the hope of eternal salvation protects us against all the attacks of Satan. Witnesses, the holy martyrs. They were promised honors and dignities, riches and pleasures of every description, if they would renounce their faith, but they resisted the temptation and remembered the words of Christ: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?—*Matt.* 16:26. They were threatened with the confiscation of their property, with prison and death, and these threats were executed with unheard-of cruelty; but they remained faithful to Jesus and to the holy faith, and said with the Apostle: "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."—*II. Cor.* 4:17. It was also in the hope of heaven that so many Christians of both sexes renounced the world, with all its pleasures and enjoyments, and passed their whole lives in seclusion, in mortification, and in works of Christian charity; they said with St. Paul: "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. In all your temptations think of heaven and its unspeakable joys; then it will become plain to you how vain and fleeting is what the world and Satan offer, and so you will turn away from them with contempt and disgust.

(b.) *The sword of the Spirit* is the word of God. The Apostle calls the word of God a sword, which is one of the most effectual weapons to put the evil spirit to flight. But the word of God comprises edifying discourses and hymns, ejaculatory prayers, sermons, catechetical instructions, wholesome admonitions, the Sacred Scriptures, spiritual books, and the lives of the saints. Christ resisted and overcame the devil with the word of God.—*Matt.* 4:3-10.

PERORATION.

You now know the weapons with which you must fight against Satan. Make use of them, and struggle with courage and determination, with bravery and perseverance. Short is the time of warfare, for it extends itself only over our fleeting earthly life, but the fruits of the victory will endure when time is no more. Blessed are we, if in the days of our earthly life we struggle manfully with the enemies of our salvation and conquer; at the close of our earthly career we can confidently look forward to eternity, and say with the Apostle: "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."—*II. Tim.* 4:7, 8. Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* 18; 23-35. At that time: Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence; and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he paid the debt. Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE MERCIFUL MASTER AND THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT.

St. Peter one day approached our Lord, and asked him how often he was to forgive his neighbor, if he had been offended by him. He added to his question: Until seven times? He thought it was enough to forgive the offender seven times. But Christ corrected him, saying to him: "I say not to thee, till seven times, but till seventy times seven." Therefore, if any one offends us seventy times seven, that is four hundred and ninety times, we must as often forgive him. That certainly is the extreme, for it is not likily that any one would offend us four hundred and ninety times. But there may be some stubborn, degenerate children, who grieve and offend their parents more than four hundred and ninety times. Christ, however, by the expression, "seventy times seven," did not intend to limit him to a definite number, but meant that we must forgive as often as we are offended. In order to convince us of this obligation of forgiving those who offend us and to urge us to its fulfilment, immediately after answering St. Peter's question he spoke the parable in the gospel of this day, which we will now consider.

- I. A master shows himself very merciful towards his servant;
- II. This servant treats his fellow-servant very unmercifully;
- III. The master severely punishes the unmerciful servant.

PART I.

1. The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants.

By the kingdom of heaven we understand the kingdom of God upon earth, the Church established by Jesus Christ; the king is God; the servants, men; the account which the king would take of his servants, is the account to which God calls men in their life, and after their death. Here we must chiefly understand the judgment which takes place in the present life, and which is a judgment of mercy. God calls us to account through the voice of conscience, through his holy word, which is made known to us in various ways, through many joyful and sorrowful events in life, and especially in holy confession, when we ourselves examine our conscience, and the priest calls our attention to the greatness and grievousness of our sins. All these judgments are

judgments of mercy, for God exercises them for the sole purpose of making us do penance for our sins, and of rescuing our souls from perdition. Blessed are we if we avail ourselves of these judgments, for then we need not fear the judgment after death.

2. When he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents.

A talent was seven hundred and fifty ounces of silver, which at the rate of \$1.20 to the ounce is \$900. Ten thousand talents, then, according to our money standard, is nine million dollars, an immense debt for a man to owe, a debt which the servant had contracted by various injustices, and also by carelessness in the service of his master. This servant with this appalling load of debt represents man—it pictures us in our sins. Every sin is a debt before God; for when we sin we deny God the honor, love and obedience which are rightly due to him from us as our Creator, Preserver and Redeemer. We are therefore bound to make some reparation or satisfaction to him. Sin is an immense, in a certain degree, an infinite debt, because it is an offense against God, the sovereign, infinite good. St. Thomas of Aquin says: "Sin has, in a certain sense, something infinite in itself on account of the infinity of the divine majesty; for the offense is the more grievous, the greater he is that is offended". Now, when we consider that one sin, even a venial one, is an offense against God, an immense debt, how enormously great must our indebtedness be, since we have so often and so grievously sinned from the days of our infancy up to this hour, in thought, word, deed and omission. Should we not profoundly humble ourselves before God, strike our breast, and say with the publican: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

3. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

Our divine Lord refers here to the Mosaic law (*Deut. 15: 12*), according to which creditors were allowed to sell their debtors who could not pay, together with their wives and children, and thus obtain payment. Since the servant was unable to pay his debt, the lord was justified in invoking the law against him. Like this servant, we are unable to pay the debt of our sins to God, that is, to make satisfaction to him for them. We are creatures, therefore finite, limited beings, and so can do only finite things, but our sins, as an offense against God, being an infinite debt, it is evident that we of ourselves cannot atone for them. Moreover, while in sin all our good works are devoid of merit before God, and cannot satisfy. Finally, all that we do for God is a duty, and,

therefore, no compensation or reparation for our sins. If Christ had not made atonement for our sins, we should for ever remain debtors to God, and eternal damnation would await us. Oh, what thanks do we not owe to our Saviour for having redeemed us, and enabled us with his grace to make satisfaction to the divine justice for our sins, and by exercises of penance to blot out all temporal punishments.

4. *But that servant falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

The knowledge of his immense debt seems to have made little impression upon this servant, for he did not exert himself to get rid of it; it was only when his lord announced to him the punishment, and commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and his children and all that he had, that he became sensible of his miserable situation, that he begged for indulgence and patience, and promised to pay all. Many sinners resemble this servant. They live for years in the greatest heedlessness and forgetfulness of God and eternity, and heap sins upon sins, without thinking of penance and conversion; it is only the punishments which God inflicts upon them that open their eyes, and make them put a stop to their sins and think of conversion. Examples, King Manasses, who lived wickedly for a great number of years, and only in painful captivity did penance.—II. Paral. 33: 2, et seq.; the prodigal son, whom poverty and extreme destitution brought back from his wandering. The sufferings and tribulations which come upon sinners are great graces from God, and often the only means for their rescue from eternal perdition. Blessed is the sinner who employs this means of penance; he finds mercy and grace, and saves his soul! But sinners who even in sufferings and tribulations remain obdurate are lost without hope.

5. *And the Lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt.*

How easily is God moved to compassion when we implore his mercy. We owe it to his patience and long suffering that we are not among the reprobate. The angels were plunged into the abyss of hell the moment they sinned; and we, who have so often deserved hell, still live and can still work out our salvation. We can never sufficiently thank God for it. *I will pay thee all.* This must also be our language, for we are all debtors to God. Although we can not make full satisfaction to God, we must at least have the will to do so, and must do what we can. But how negligent are we in the performance of this duty! How slothful in the practice of penitential works! We content ourselves with the

light penance which the confessor enjoins on us, and believe that all is done. How bitterly shall we bewail our tepidity in purgatory! Let us resolve daily to do some penitential work, and especially to bear patiently the sufferings which God sends, as a penance for our sins.

PART II.

1. *But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence, and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest.*

St. Thomas of Aquin names five circumstances from which the malice of this servant is particularly observable.

(a.) *The shortness of time.* It happened just when that servant was gone out. If months or years had elapsed, his uncharitable conduct would have been less revolting, and would appear less culpable. Do not many Catholics act as this servant? They come from church, where they have prayed, assisted at the sacrifice of the mass, have been at confession and communion, and then if something disagreeable occurs they fall into a rage, quarrel, allow their other passions to break out again, and continue their sinful course of conduct. Are these the fruits of your exercises of devotion, of your confessions and communions?

(b.) *His sanctimoniousness.* In the presence of his lord he was humble and contrite; but he was scarcely out of his sight, when he was overbearing, and treated his fellow-servant with cruelty and contempt. Do not some Catholics act similarly? Before their superiors, and those from whom they hope or fear something, they pass compliments, and prostrate themselves, as it were, on the ground, and are personified humility, but towards their inferiors and such as can neither harm nor profit them they are rude, harsh, unmerciful. Is not such conduct base and unworthy of a Catholic who is bound cordially to love all men?

(c.) *Unkindness.* He whom he treated so unmercifully was no stranger, but his fellow-servant, one of his equals, a poor man on whom he should have had compassion in a special manner. But he had not the least regard for this; he treated him as cruelly as if he were his worst enemy. Was not this base of him? How do you behave towards your domestics, friends and acquaintances? Children, how do you conduct yourselves towards your parents? And you, husbands and wives, towards each other? Are not some of you as uncharitable towards others, as this servant was towards his fellow-servant?

(d.) *Insignificance.* His fellow-servant owed him only a hundred pence, according to our money, about seven dollars; what a small amount compared to the nine million dollars which he himself owed his lord! And yet he who had just experienced the generosity of his lord in so high a degree, could be so cruel towards his fellow-servant! How revolting! But, my dear friends, do you not act as culpably, in fact, even more so than this servant, if, after God has so often forgiven you your sins, you are implacable towards your neighbor and will not hear of forgiveness?

(e.) Lastly, *cruelty*, when he laid hold of his debtor, throttled him and rudely demanded payment. His cruelty was the more unnatural, because he himself had so recently experienced how an unfortunate man feels, who is to be sold into slavery with his wife and children because he is insolvent. Are there not Catholics who have recourse to law against their debtors, who with the best will cannot pay at once, and thus reduce them to beggary? Is this Christian conduct?

2. *His fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

The fellow-servant did as the other one had done before his master; falling down, he asked for time, promising him to pay all. Should not the servant, remembering the goodness of his lord, have found herein a motive to deal leniently and mercifully with his fellow-servant? The benefits which we receive from God should induce us to deal charitably and gently with our fellow-men. We must say within ourselves: "God benefits me so much in body and soul, I can never repay him, therefore I will show myself at least more grateful towards him by assisting the poor and needy according to my ability, and doing good to all as far as I can." Christ says: "Give to him that asketh of thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away."—*Matt. 5: 42.* "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.*

3. *And he would not; but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt.*

It was not unlawful for this servant to refuse to hear the petition of his fellow-servant, and cast him into prison, for the law permitted the imprisonment of insolvent debtors. The servant therefore was a just man in the eyes of the world; and if any one had blamed or rebuked him on account of the cruel treatment of his fellow-servant, he could have sued him and demanded satisfaction. Here again we see how the judgments of God differ

from those of man, and that what appears right and good to men, may be before God a great injustice and a most grievous sin. In our day we can see plenty of men who are highly respected and occupy an exalted position in society, but who on account of their injustices are criminals in the eyes of God and liable to eternal damnation. Therefore be not satisfied with a righteousness which stands before the world, but regulate your actions according to the law of God, that you may be found just before the judgment-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PART II.

1. *Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved; and they came and told their Lord all that was done.*

The fellow-servants, first, are the *angels*, who call themselves our fellow-servants (*Apoc. 22. 9*), who bring our prayers before the face of God, but who will also appear before God full of holy indignation as accusers against us, if we treat our fellow-men unmercifully, or give them occasion of scandal; secondly, the people who are oppressed and persecuted by us, whose sighs and tears reach the throne of God; thirdly, the sins and vices themselves which cry to God for vengeance and call down his punishments upon the wrong-doers. Guard especially against any oppression of the poor, widows and orphans, and against scandal and corruption, in order that the holy angels and those oppressed and corrupted by you may not rise as accusers against you and demand of God the sentence of condemnation against you.

2. *Then his lord called him, and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me; shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee?*

The conduct of the servant is remarkable when his lord called him the second time. The first time he had recourse to prayer: *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* The second time, he made no such prayer; he did not even open his mouth, but was silent, although from the angry look and the words of his lord he could perceive that the very worst was awaiting him. The important truth is brought before our mind, that we can ask graces of God, do good, obtain pardon, and work out our salvation only in this life, but that after our death, all this is no longer possible. Where the tree falls, there it will lie. Therefore: "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly, for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, shall be in hell,

whither thou art hastening."—*Eccles.* 9: 10. After death the most skilful can no longer work and the wisest and most learned no longer do anything. And Christ himself says: "I must work the works of him that sent me, whilst it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."—*John* 9: 4.

What infinite folly in men to allow year after year, during which they could do so much for the salvation of their souls, to pass away unemployed, without profit to themselves, when hereafter they will not have a moment to redeem neglect! Be zealous in good and employ the time of grace for the service of God, that according to the words of St. Peter, "by good works you may make sure your calling and election."—*II. Peter.* 1: 10.

3. *And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt.*

(a.) Philip, king of Spain, while hearing mass, noticed that two courtiers during the whole time of the holy sacrifice were talking to each other. Coming out of the chapel, the king cast an angry look upon them, and said: "Is this the way you hear mass? Never be seen again at my court." This sentence was a thunder-bolt to both of them. One died two days after, and the other became insane. Now, if the anger of an earthly king had so crushing an effect upon the two courtiers, what terror and consternation will seize the sinner when he stands before God, his angry judge, and hears the sentence of condemnation! Oh, let us now so live that God may be pleased with us, in order that we may not be condemned on the Day of Judgment.

(b.) The unmerciful servant was delivered to the torturers, that is, he was cast into prison and compelled there to languish till he should have paid the whole debt; but as he would never be able to pay this debt of ten thousand talents he had no hope of ever being delivered out of prison. Here the truth of the faith is expressed that the torments of hell last for ever, because in the next world there is no time for merit, and penance can no longer be done for sin; the reprobate must burn in hell for ever. Damned once, damned for ever. There is an entrance into hell, but no exit. Christ himself declares that he will say to the wicked: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire." And again, he says: "These (the wicked) shall go into everlasting punishment."—*Matt.* 25: 41-46. Oh, that we may never forget the solemn truths that the joys of earth are fleeting and that the pains of hell are eternal.

PERORATION.

At the end of the parable Christ says: *So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.* This will be the lot of the unmerciful and implacable. The divine Judge, full of holy anger, will condemn them to the eternal torments of hell, as the king delivered his unmerciful servant to the torturers. And would you still be unmerciful towards your fellow-men, would you live in discord and refuse to hear of reconciliation? Oh, think of death; think of judgment; think of hell; and shun nothing so much as unmercifulness, discord and enmity. "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you; that you may be the children of your Father, who is in heaven; who maketh his sun to rise upon the good, and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust."—*Matt.* 5: 44, 45. Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE PAINS OF HELL.

His lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt.—*Matt.* 18: 34.

The servant was cast into prison, and was obliged to languish there till he paid the entire debt. But it was absolutely impossible for him to pay that amount, for how could the poor man, who while in prison could not earn a penny, hope to pay ten thousand talents? He could, therefore, have no hope of ever being liberated; he had entered his prison with the full consciousness of living and dying there. This servant is an image of the damned in hell, for as the servant could never leave his prison again, so out of hell there is no redemption; the pains of hell last for ever. This awful truth shall be the subject-matter of our meditation to-day. I shall speak of the pains of hell—

- I. *Of their greatness;*
- II. *Of their everlasting duration.*

PART I.

The pains of hell are—

1. *The pain of loss*, which consists in this, that the damned are for ever deprived—

(a.) *Of heaven.* In order to represent to ourselves the greatness of this loss, we must consider what heaven is. It is the most desirable good: its felicity surpasses all possible human conceptions; its joys are inexpressible. 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 felicity of heaven," says St. Augustine, "is so great that if the smallest portion of it were to fall into hell, all its pains would instantly cease, and hell itself would be changed into a paradise." Now, if men take so much to heart the loss of a temporal good, that they break out into loud complaints, who can comprehend the grief of the damned who say to themselves: We have lost heaven? This sorrow is so great that it cannot be imagined, much less be expressed in words. Hence St. Chrysostom says: "To be excluded from everlasting felicity, and to be torn away from what God has prepared for those that love him, causes so awful a torture, that even if there were no outward flame to cause pain, this alone would suffice to make hell a place of despair."

(b.) *The vision of God.* In this mortal life indeed the sinner does not know, and cannot know, what it is to *lose God*, otherwise he could not be wicked. St. Anthony says: "When he has stripped off the bonds of sensuality, he knows God as the supreme and sovereign good;" and as a stone that falls from above tends with all its weight to the earth, so he tends upwards to a union with the source of all beauty and excellence; but in vain, for his sins have placed a partition wall between himself and God.—*Is. 59: 2.* When David intimated to his son Absalom that he must never again appear before his face, he was so grieved that he sent word to his father that he would rather he would kill him than forbid him ever again to see his face. From this we can conceive in some measure what the damned will feel when God shall say to them: "Depart from me, you cursed." "In these words consists hell," says St. Alphonsus, and he continues: "If any one loses a precious stone that is worth a hundred dollars, he regrets it very much. But if the precious stone had cost two hundred dollars, his grief would be doubly great, and if it had cost four hundred, his grief would increase proportionately. In short, the greater the value of thing lost, the more the sorrow increases. But what treasure has the damned soul lost? An infinite one—

namely, God, and for this reason his torment must be infinite." St. Thomas of Aquin says this in these words: "The torments of the damned are infinite, because they include the loss of God, the infinite good."

2. *The pain of sense.* This comprises—

(a.) *The torments of fire.* That there is in hell a species of fire, although different from ours, is evident from a multitude of passages in Sacred Scripture. Thus Christ says: "If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee having one eye to enter into life, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire."—*Matt. 18: 9.* Dives in hell cries out to Abraham: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame."—*Luke 16: 24.* "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels."—*Matt. 25: 41.* The reality of a fire in hell is also evident from various passages of the Sacred Scripture. Thus hell is called a furnace of fire (*Matt. 13: 42*); a pool that burns with fire and brimstone (*Apoc. 21: 8*); a fire from which smoke ascends (*Apoc. 14: 11*); a flame that causes great pain (*Luke 16: 24*); a fire that can never be extinguished.—*Matt. 25: 41.*

The Fathers also teach that there is fire in hell. Thus St. Justin says that an everlasting fire is prepared for the sinner. St. Augustine in several passages speaks of real fire burning in hell. And St. Gregory the Great says: "I do not doubt that there is a real fire in hell." The fire of hell is far more terrible than all earthly fire. "In comparison with it," says St. Augustine, "every other fire is as a painted fire." The reason is because God has created the earthly fire for the benefit of creatures, but the fire of hell for the punishment of the evil spirits and wicked men. How awful will be the pains of the damned when they must suffer in so terrible a fire day and night without any interruption! Take to heart the words of the prophet: "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"—*Is. 33: 14.*

(b.) *The torments caused by the damned.* Even in this world there is nothing worse than to be obliged to live with disagreeable, irreligious men. But in hell there is worse company. Evil spirits, full of cunning and malice, of hatred and envy, that take pleasure in tormenting their victims in every possible way; vicious men, who blaspheme God, who have not a spark of love and compassion, and only load one another with curses and imprecations. What must a damned soul feel in such company, when the evil spirits revile him in his misery and invent new torments for him,

when the wild howling, the cursing and raging, the lamentations of the damned continually resound in his ears; when near him he sees the accomplices of his sins, who for ever curse him as the author of their damnation, and cry vengeance against him. Consider this.

(c.) *The torments of conscience.* "Their worm dieth not."—*Mark* 9: 47. These reproaches of conscience are of a threefold kind. First, the thought torments the damned *that they have plunged themselves into eternal perdition for a mere trifle.* When king Lysimachus was besieged by the Scythians, he surrendered himself for a little water to drink. But he had scarcely drunk it when he perceived his folly, and, full of despair, exclaimed: "Ah, what have I done! For the sake of a little water I have lost my kingdom and my liberty." What grief, what despair must seize the damned, as often as they remember that for the sake of a fleeting earthly good, of a momentary lust, a transient pleasure, they have made themselves so infinitely miserable. Secondly, the damned are tormented by the thought *that they could easily have been saved.* They must say: If we had labored as much for heaven as for hell, we should now be with God and possess the joys of the elect. Ah, what fools we were! Lastly, the thought torments them, and this is the most terrible of all, *that they are damned through their own fault.* This thought will especially torment Catholics who are damned, because they either made no use of the many means of grace and salvation which were offered to them, or they abused them for their perdition.

(d.) *The torments in the body and its senses, after the resurrection of the flesh.* It is just and meet that the body, which served the soul as an instrument of evil, and in various ways enticed it to sin, should also be punished. It will chiefly be the fire that will torment the bodies of the damned. There will be appropriate pains for the individual senses of the body, which have been used for sinful purposes. The sight will be punished by the exterior darkness of hell (*Matt.* 8: 11, 12); the smell, by intolerable stench (*Is.* 34: 3); the ear, by continual howlings, lamentations, cursing and blaspheming of the companions of sin (*Job* 18: 15); the taste, by hunger and thirst.—*Luke* 6: 25, and 16: 24. These are the torments which the damned feel in hell; they are deprived of heaven and of the sight of God, and are greatly tormented in body and soul. What the Apostle says of the joys of heaven can be applied to the pains of hell: Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what torments God has prepared for them that hate him. And these pains will last for ever.

PART II.

That the pains of hell will last for ever, or, in other words, that the damned will be tormented for ever in hell, is evident—

1. *From the Sacred Scripture.* "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." And again: "And these shall go into everlasting punishment."—*Matt.* 25: 41-46. That the word *everlasting* must be taken in the literal sense of endless duration is evident from the fact that it is used in the same passage as a quality of celestial felicity. "The just shall go into life *everlasting.*" Since the word *everlasting* here signifies, as nobody doubts, a duration without end, and that consequently the just shall be for ever in heaven, the same word in the passage: "And these shall go into *everlasting* punishment," must also be taken in the literal sense, so that the damned in hell must endure an everlasting pain, or a pain without end. The Sacred Scripture, however, itself explains that the words "eternal," "everlasting," whenever it speaks of hell, have the meaning "unceasing," never having an end; for what in some passages it calls "the everlasting fire," it calls in others "*an inextinguishable, ever burning fire.*" Thus it says, *e. g.*, "It is better to enter lame into life everlasting, than, having two feet, to be cast into the hell of *inextinguishable fire,* where their worm *dieth not,* and the fire is *not extinguished.*" And again: "The chaff he will burn with *unquenchable fire.*"—*Luke* 3: 17. These expressions: *Inextinguishable, unquenchable, never dying, always burning,* evidently mean that hell will last for ever, that it will burn without ever ceasing, that its torments will never have an end. Moreover, the Sacred Scripture expressly declares that not only hell, but the torments of the damned will last for ever, for it says that the worm of the damned *shall not die,* and the *smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever* (*Apoc.* 14: 11); and that some shall awake unto reproach *to see it always.*—*Dan.* 12: 2.

2. *From tradition.* The Church from the beginning held the everlasting duration of the torments of hell as a truth of the faith, and rejected the opposite doctrine as heresy. When Origen, in the third century, asserted that the time would come when all the damned in hell would be reconciled with God and saved, the whole Church rose against him and condemned his doctrine. Nor do we find a single Father of the Church who denied the eternity of the torments of hell. Irenæus says: "The punishment of those who do not believe the word of God and who despise his advent, is not only temporal but eternal; for to whomsoever God shall have said: 'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, they will be damned for ever.'" St. Cyprian says: "Hell will for

ever burn those who are condemned to it." St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, says: "He who is a sinner will receive an everlasting body which is capable of bearing the punishments of sins; so that it burns in fire for ever, and is never consumed." St. Gregory the Great says: "Those wretches (the damned) have *death without a death, need without relief*, because death always begins there, and never ends."

3. From reason.

(a.) *Sin from its very nature demands an everlasting punishment*, for it is an offense against God, and is, in a certain sense, an infinite crime, because God, who is offended, is an infinite good. Now, since the punishment must be in proportion to the crime, the sinner deserves an infinite punishment. The punishment can be infinite in a twofold manner, in its intensity, and in its duration. The sinner is not capable of an infinite punishment in the first sense, because as a creature he is a finite being, and, therefore he cannot undergo a punishment infinite in intensity; his punishment must, therefore, be infinite in its duration, *i. e.*, everlasting. It has often been said that it is incompatible with the justice of God, that a sin, which often lasts but a few moments, should be punished with an everlasting punishment. A foolish objection, which is refuted even by human justice. A theft, a robbery, a murder takes generally but a few moments for its perpetration, and yet it is punished with imprisonment for several years, or even for life, nay, with death. The punishment is not in proportion to the duration, but to the greatness of the crime. Moreover, sin is very seldom the act of a moment; generally speaking, the bad disposition which prompted the crime already existed a long time before it manifested itself by the act.

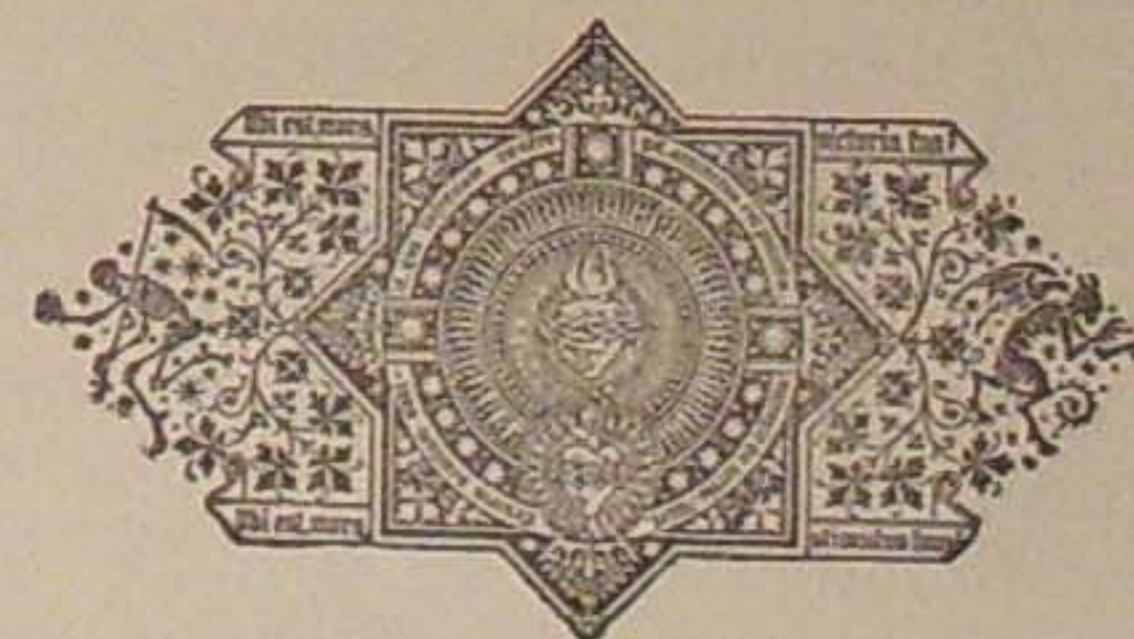
(b.) *The state of existence to which the sinner is transferred hereafter demands an everlasting punishment*. Here is the seed-time, hereafter is the time of harvest. "What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap; for he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption."—*Gal. 6: 8*. So long as a sinner is still upon earth he can work out his salvation, for God gives him grace: but after death, he can do no more for his salvation; for the time of grace is past. As the sinner no longer receives grace, and penance and conversion are impossible without it, his damnation consequently must endure for ever. But even if God would give a damned soul the grace to do penance, that soul would not be converted, because it is obdurate.

(c.) *The pains of hell must be eternal, because this alone suffices to deter man from evil*. Suppose the torments of hell were not

everlasting, what would be the result? Certainly the **worst**. Most men would give full scope to their passions, add sin to sin, and never be converted. They would say: "Why should I labor so hard to lead a pious life? I shall not perish for ever, though my life may be a very wicked one; in the end it will be all right." Then God would have given his commandments in vain; the world would be flooded with vice and crime, and human society could no longer exist. But God cannot possibly will this, because it would entirely contradict his wisdom; consequently, the torments of hell must be everlasting. Hence St. Chrysostom says: "If even now, when we tremble from fear, there are some who live carelessly, as if there were no hell, what wicked deeds should we do if nothing had been revealed and threatened? Thus, then, as I always say, hell, no less than heaven, tells us of the love and wisdom of God."

PERORATION.

Having explained to you that there is a hell in which the damned suffer the most excruciating torments, and that these torments are everlasting, I conclude with the admonition of St. Bernard: *Descend into hell during life, that you may not descend after death*. Yes, descend frequently in thought into hell, and consider the terrible pains which the damned are doomed to suffer for all eternity, that you may work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Consider what the damned in hell suffer for less faults than you, perhaps, are guilty of. Beware of committing a mortal sin; and should you ever be so unfortunate as grievously to sin, do speedy and earnest penance. If it should be difficult for you sometimes to continue to mortify yourselves, and to overcome all temptations, reflect that it is better to suffer a little on earth than in the next life to be condemned to the everlasting torments of hell. Walk in the fear of God, and do what is right and good, that you may escape hell and be admitted into heaven. Amen.



TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE CEREMONIES OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt.—Matt. 18: 27.

What a kind and charitable lord was the king of whom the gospel of this day speaks! One of his servants owed him ten thousand talents, a sum which the richest man would find it difficult to pay; how much more so a poor servant! But when the servant, falling down, besought him to have patience with him, the lord, being moved with pity, forgave him all the debt. God is as gracious to sinners as this king was to his servant. No matter how grievously and how much we may have sinned, we need not despair; God ever forgives us, if with a humble and contrite heart we fall on our knees and worthily receive the Sacrament of Penance. I have frequently, in the course of the Ecclesiastical Year, spoken to you of this consoling sacrament and explained what is required for the worthy reception of it. There yet remains for me to explain to you the ceremonies which the Church has prescribed for the Sacrament of Penance. I shall do this to-day and speak of the ceremonies—

I. Before,

II. At, and after the absolution of the priest.

PART I.

Ceremonies of the Sacrament of Penance before the absolution of the priest.

1. When the priest hears confessions in the church, he is vested in a white surplice, as denoting innocence, and a violet-colored stole, which signifies the unhappy state to which sin has reduced man. When he hears confessions elsewhere than in the church he wears only the stole. Regulars generally hear confessions in the habit of their order with or without a stole. Surplice and stole are priestly garments, and as the administration of the Sacrament of Penance belongs only to priests, the ecclesiastical ordinance to hear confessions with surplice and stole is well grounded. In case of necessity every priest can hear confessions

without surplice and stole. The stole of purple or violet color also signifies the penitential sorrow which is required for the worthy reception of the sacrament, and is an admonition to us, in all our confessions, to excite ourselves to a sincere contrition.

2. The place where confessions are generally heard is called the "Confessional." In every parish church there ought to be as many confessionals as there are priests engaged in the care of souls. In the primitive ages of Christianity it seems that confessions were heard in the sacristy, in the vestibule or the side chapels of the church. From the fourteenth century a chair was placed for the confessor in a chapel attached to the church; to the right of this chair was fixed a partition with a grating, below which was a kneeling bench, on which the penitent knelt. It was in these confessionals that females were heard; the men generally confessed in the sacristy. The present style of confessional was first introduced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

3. The priest hears confessions in a sitting posture. Judges always pronounce sentence seated. Thus Pilate when he condemned Jesus to death.—*John, 19: 13.* The priest sits, because, when in the confessional he binds and looses, he performs a judicial act. To his office as judge it is also becoming to *cover his head*, which, however, is not an express ordinance of the Church. The penitent must neither sit nor stand, but kneel, unless prevented by particular circumstances; for the kneeling posture is the only appropriate one for a sinner who with a humble and contrite heart begs for mercy and pardon. It was thus that Mary Magdalen prostrated herself at the feet of Jesus when she came to him in order to obtain the forgiveness of her sins.

4. When the penitent has knelt down in the confessional, the priest pronounces the blessing over him, in these words: *The Lord be in thy heart and on thy lips, to help thee to confess aright all thy sins. In the name of the Father*, etc. That a Catholic may make a good confession, heart and mouth must do their duty; he must confess with contrition and sincerity. That God may give him the grace to do so, the priest blesses him in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, because all blessings proceed from thence; and with the sign of the cross, because on the cross Christ has merited all graces for us.

5. The penitent in the confessional signs himself with the sign of the cross, for with this a Catholic ought to begin every important undertaking. Then he begins his confession with these or similar words: *I confess to Almighty God, to Blessed Mary,*

ever Virgin . . . and to you, father, etc. Now he mentions when he made his last confession. It is necessary for the priest to know how much time has intervened since the penitent's last confession, that he may be the better able to judge of the state of his soul and give him seasonable counsels.

6. Then follows the confession itself, or the accusation of sins. The confession in the early days of the Church was not only, as it is now-a-days, a *secret*, but also a *public* one. The secret confession in particular cases was followed by a public one, which consisted in the penitents confessing their sins in the public assembly before the whole congregation. They did this, either from free impulse, or from their special zeal for penance, or at the counsel of the bishop or priest, to whom they had first confessed in secret. There never was a general law obliging all Christians to an open, public confession. When in the course of time the fervor of Christians grew cold, and scandal was given by the confession of grievous sins, public confession ceased altogether; but private or secret confession remained, and must ever remain, because it is a divine institution and ordinance. After the introductory formula you must confess all your sins, at least all mortal sins, so far as you know them, with their number and the circumstances which change the nature. If you act dishonestly and conceal in confession a mortal sin which you know to be such, or purposely diminish the number of the grievous sins, or omit a circumstance which ought to be mentioned, your confession would be invalid and sacrilegious. After the confession of sin, the penitent should make an act of contrition with a firm purpose of amendment, and then ask for a salutary penance and absolution. Then the priest, after considering the number and gravity of the sins committed, gives the penitent seasonable counsels, and merited reproofs, and endeavors to lead him to sorrow and contrition by efficacious exhortations, persuades him to amend his life and regulate it better, and suggests the suitable remedies. Then he imposes a salutary penance, and imparts absolution.

PART II.

Ceremonies at and after the absolution. It must be remarked that the imposition of penance and the absolution are not mere ceremonies, but are necessary constituent parts of the Sacrament of Penance. It is the duty of the priest to impose a penance, and the penitent must perform it, in order to make at least some satisfaction for his sins, and to render himself worthy of mercy. The priest's absolution is necessary, for without it no forgiveness of sins takes place.

1. Penance in early times.

(a.) *Public penances.* Those who had sinned publicly and grievously were obliged to undergo a public penance. Ash-Wednesday was appointed for the beginning of it. On this day the parish priests of the whole diocese were obliged to conduct all their parishioners who had public penance to perform to the cathedral of the bishop. Arrived there, they waited in penitential garments at the portals of the church till the bishop with the clergy came to lead them into the church. The Seven Penitential Psalms were recited over them; the bishop sprinkled them with holy water, put ashes on their heads, and, admonishing them to penance with earnest words, sent them out of the church. There were four kinds of penitents: the *class of the weeping, hearing, lying prostrate or kneeling, and standing.* The time of penance for each of these classes sometimes lasted several years. The public and solemn reconciliation of the penitents took place on Holy Thursday.

(b.) *Secret penances.* The confessors were obliged to obey the old penitential laws in the imposition of penances, which prescribed for each sin particular, and often very severe, penitential work. He who, *e. g.*, did servile work on a Sunday or holiday, was obliged to fast three days on bread and water; he who talked in church, ten days; he who reviled his parents, three years. For grievous sins, usually three, five, seven, or more years were prescribed as the penitential period. When a person was obliged to do penance for a sin during one or more years, he was forbidden on every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to take anything but bread and water, and even on the other week-days, with the exception of Sunday, he was to abstain from any luxurious food. Other works of penance were sometimes joined with this fasting, such as abstinence from amusements, lying on the bare ground, vigils, etc. This austerity, in some places, lasted to the twelfth century, when the Church was obliged to depart from her penitential canons, owing to the tepidity of Christians, and to leave confessors to impose on penitents whatever penance they deemed seasonable and suitable.

2. *Penances of our times.* The penances which confessors impose now-a-days are generally very lenient, consisting of exercises of prayer, little mortifications, and works of charity and mercy to our neighbor. If austere penances were now imposed as in former days there is much reason to fear that many Catholics would cease to go to confession, or not perform the penances enjoined, and consequently sin grievously and risk their salvation. The confessors therefore choose the lesser of two evils, preferring to send their penitents to purgatory, rather than let them rush

headlong into hell. You ought therefore to impose voluntary penances upon yourselves after your confessions, otherwise a long purgatory awaits you.

3. Absolution.

(a.) The priest first turns towards God, begging him to have mercy on the penitent and to forgive him his sins. Then he absolves him from all censures or ecclesiastical punishments, with the words: *Our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee: and I, by his authority, absolve thee from every bond of excommunication, suspension and interdict, so far as I have power and thou standest in need.* There are certain grievous crimes, for which the Church has appointed censures or punishments—namely, excommunication or exclusion from ecclesiastical communion, suspension, a particular punishment for priests; and the interdict or prohibition in certain places to administer or receive the sacraments, to hold public worship, and to perform the funeral rites. Since penitents might have incurred such ecclesiastical censures, the priest first absolves them from these for prudence sake, that he may then give them absolution from sin validly and lawfully.

(b.) The proper and sacramental absolution he gives them in these words: *I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.* The words: *I absolve thee*, express that the priest, as the representative of Christ, really remits sins and does not merely declare that they are remitted. Whilst the priest pronounces the words of absolution *he raises his hand over the penitent.* This custom was introduced in place of the imposition of hands, which can no longer be done as the penitent is separated by the partition from the confessor. The raising of the hand, however, is also a sign of judicial power, for the priest does it to indicate that he acts as a representative of Christ, and that the absolution is ratified in heaven. The priest gives absolution *in the name of the Most Holy Trinity*, in whose name all graces are imparted to man. The *sign of the cross* which he makes when he gives absolution calls to mind the truth that the remission of sins is a fruit of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

4. The prayer after the absolution runs thus: *The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the saints, whatever good thou hast done, and whatever evil thou hast endured, be imputed to thee for the remission of sins, the increase of grace, and reward of life everlasting. Amen.* This prayer mentions the basis of the indulgence, i. e., the passion of Jesus, the merits of Mary and the saints, and the personal satisfaction of the penitent; also the efficacy of the indulgence, i. e., the re-

mission of the temporal punishments due to sin, the increase of grace, and a special reward in heaven. At these words Lazarus comes forth from the grave; the prodigal child is restored to his father; hell is closed beneath his feet, and heaven is opened over his head, there is joy in heaven at his conversion more than over ninety-nine just who need no penance; he is reconciled to his God, is at peace with himself, and tastes a happiness which he would not exchange for all that the world can offer.

PERORATION.

Having explained to you the ceremonies of the Sacrament of Penance, I would earnestly exhort you zealously to avail yourselves of this inexpressibly important means of grace for your salvation. If you should be so unfortunate as to commit a mortal sin, go to confession at the first opportunity, for nothing is more pernicious and perilous than to live in sin for any length of time. Go to confession often in the year, for frequent confession is one of the most effectual means for the amendment and perfection of life. Confess not only once a year, merely to comply with the letter of the law, but as often as possible, that you may cleanse your conscience more and more, preserve yourselves from relapse, make good progress in virtue and secure your eternal salvation. Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE FOUR ELEMENTARY RULES OF ARITHMETIC IN THEIR APPLICATION TO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants.—Matt. 18: 23.

In the parable of the gospel of this day we read of a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to do this, one was brought to him, who had managed so badly that there was found to be a defalcation of ten thousand talents. As a matter of course he was expected to make good this deficiency. But being unable to do so he was to be sold into slavery,

together with his wife and children, that, besides the just punishment, some reparation might be made from the proceeds of the sale. Sooner or later our turn will come; we too must give an account; God himself will reckon with us; he will review our whole life and examine how we have administered his goods, and employed his graces. That we may be able to render such an important account which will decide our lot for all eternity, we must, as I shall show you to-day, apply the four elementary rules of Arithmetic to our spiritual life. We must diligently—

- I. *Add;*
- II. *Subtract;*
- III. *Multiply;*
- IV. *Divide.*

PART I

Addition.

1. To *add* means to put to, to join together, to count, or, as we generally express it, to add up. When we add one number to another, we call the process "addition." Addition is the simplest form of arithmetic; even little children are taught it, and every one is constantly doing addition sums. When they count money they add the columns of dollars and cents, to find the total amount. When tradesmen and business men make out a bill, they add up the different items, and write down the total amount.

2. We must diligently add in our spiritual life. We must add up all the days, from the beginning to the end of the year, without intermission, till we lie down and die. But what are we to add? Copper, silver and gold coins? No. Our addition is for something more necessary; we must sum up good works.

(a.) Good works, as faith teaches us, are *absolutely necessary* to salvation for everyone who has arrived at the age of discretion. Thus Christ assures us in plain words: "Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt. 7: 21*. Therefore not he who merely professes Christianity, but he who unites his faith with a pious life, and does good works, will be saved. Again Christ says: "Every tree that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire."—*Matt. 3: 10*. He, therefore, who does no good works will share the fate of the unfruitful tree; he will be cast into hell-fire. The sentence at the general judgment also bears testimony to the necessity of good works,

for only those who have done good works will be saved; those, or the contrary, who have neglected good works, will be rejected.—*Matt. 25*. From this you perceive how necessary it is to add one good work to another, for your eternal salvation depends on it.

(b.) But how is it possible, by diligent addition, to collect a number of good works sufficient for salvation? Oh, this is possible for everyone. Whatever is according to the will of God, can be added to the column of good works. If you keep the ten commandments of God, and the six precepts of the Church, you perform exceedingly good works. If you fulfil the duties of your station of life, you do good works; for it is the will of God that each one should do what his station imposes upon him as a duty; for instance, parents must give their children a good Catholic education; children must obey their parents cheerfully in all things. To the good works which are especially recommended in the Sacred Scripture belong *prayer, fasting and alms-deeds*, or the exercises of devotion, interior and exterior mortification, and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Where is there a Catholic who could not often practice these good works—in fact, daily and even hourly? Even actions that are of their own nature indifferent may be added to good works, if they are done in the state of grace and with a good intention, for the purity of intention stamps a merit and a value even upon the most insignificant actions of our life, such as eating, drinking, or sleeping. More than this, with God *the will goes for the deed*; therefore, when we excite in the heart various virtues, such as the three theological or the moral virtues, *e. g.*, humility and meekness, or when we have the will to do something good if we had the opportunity, they are good works. Add, therefore, diligently; do as much good as you can, that after this life you may be able to appear before the judgment-seat of God with a very large amount of good works.

PART II.

Subtraction.

1. Subtraction means to deduct. When we take something away from a number, be it little or much, the process is called subtraction. The number from which we deduct is of course the larger number; if we deduct from it a number equal to itself, there would be no remainder. The process of subtraction is going on continually in life. Thus men subtract from their money in the bank or in their purse as often as they make any outlay, and many spend so much that ultimately nothing remains to be subtracted, although to satisfy their wants it would be very desirable and necessary to subtract something.

2. In the spiritual life, too, there is much to be subtracted. What must we subtract?

(a.) *Our sins.* We often acknowledge that from our infancy we have often and grievously sinned in thought, word and deed and by the omission of many good works, and that this has been done secretly and publicly, knowingly and unknowingly against the ten commandments, by the seven deadly sins, by the senses of our body, against God, against our neighbor, and against the salvation of our own soul. When we look back upon our past life we find sins upon sins; we find scarcely a day on which we have not offended God; we find not only venial but also mortal sins. Ah, when God at last sums up all our sins, and he will certainly do so on the day of reckoning, what an enormous sum it will be! That we may be able to stand before him on that day, it is absolutely necessary that we subtract more and more from the number of our sins, and continue to subtract till no remainder, or only a very insignificant one, of venial sins appears against us. What must we do to accomplish this? First of all, we must make a good confession; for confession is the means for the remission of sins. If you have never yet made a general confession, make one so that you may hope to get rid of your sins. But as we sin daily, and without a special grace of God cannot preserve ourselves from all venial sins, go frequently to confession, that you may blot out the sins which you usually commit; at the same time strive to amend your life, and to this end, avoid the proximate occasions of sin, do violence to yourselves, give up your evil habits and employ the proper means for your amendment, especially those which your confessor prescribes or recommends.

(b.) *Our inordinate inclinations.* "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth."—*Gen. 8: 21.* This is only too true. We are all inclined to evil, and each one of us has certain evil inclinations, *e. g.*, to pride, ambition, avarice, impurity, anger, etc. These evil inclinations are a source of countless sins, for they have an enticing effect upon man, and allure him to sin. We must ever continue to subtract these inclinations, that is, we must endeavor to eradicate them. With this object we must continually mortify ourselves, and with constancy deny ourselves everything that entices to sin. The Apostle admonishes us to do this when he writes: "Let not sin reign in your mortal body so as to obey the lusts thereof."—*Rom. 6: 12.* It will also be of great advantage diligently to practice the virtues that are the very opposite of our sinful inclinations.

(c.) *The temporal punishment for sin remaining due to us.* After our confessions, as a rule, some temporal punishment remains,

which must be satisfied for, either here or hereafter. We also knowingly and wilfully commit many venial sins, for which perhaps we are not sufficiently sorry; for these also we deserve temporal punishment, and if satisfaction be not made in full in this world, it must be in the next. Here again we must diligently subtract, that is, we must diminish the number of these temporal punishments as much as we can. We possess many means for this, such as the frequent and worthy reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, the patient endurance of the sufferings and tribulations of life, the exciting of a perfect contrition, and especially the gaining of indulgences. Let us make good use of these means and so subtract, that of our temporal punishment nothing or only a small portion may remain to be atoned for in eternity.

PART III.

Multiplication.

1. To multiply means to increase. If I multiply ten by four, I shall have forty. Multiplication of our joy and sorrow frequently occurs in life. Thus our good God multiplies as often as he gives us a plentiful harvest, for he increases the seed which we sow, in such a manner that from a single grain three, four, or more stalks grow, of which every ear contains forty, fifty, or more grains. There are years in which mice and insects so increase that they do great damage to gardens, trees, and fields.

(a.) If we wish to be good Catholics, we must diligently multiply in the spiritual life. And what we must multiply? Chiefly *sanctifying grace*, that is, that grace by virtue of which we are holy and just before God.

(b.) Sanctifying grace is capable of multiplication or increase; this is clearly stated in the Sacred Scripture. Thus St. Peter writes: "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—*II. Pet. 3: 18.* In the Apocalypse we read: "He that is holy, let him be sanctified still."—*Apoc. 22: 11.* It is with the supernatural gift of sanctifying grace as with the natural faculties of the mind. If we diligently cultivate the faculties within us they are more and more improved. In like manner, if with the assistance of grace we do good, we arrive at a higher degree of sanctity. For God rewards our fervor in virtue, and after every good work which we perform with a pure intention he increases the indwelling sanctifying grace, so that we gain his love more and more and become more just and holy.

(c.) The increase of sanctifying grace affords us the greatest advantage, for with the measure of grace grows the measure of our future happiness in heaven. The words of the Apostle apply here: "He who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings."—*II. Cor.* 9: 6. The Blessed Virgin is in possession of the greatest glory in heaven; she is the Queen of all the angels and saints. And why? Not merely because of her dignity as Mother of God, but chiefly because of all the angels and saints she increased in sanctifying grace the most. In a certain sense we can say of her what is said of Jesus, that she "advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men."—*Luke* 2: 52.

(d.) That we too might multiply or increase sanctifying grace in ourselves! But how can we do this? In many ways. If we practice the Christian virtues and good works with persevering zeal, if we do and suffer all for the love of God; if we frequently, and worthily receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, we increase sanctifying grace and become more just, holy and pleasing to God, and therefore capable of receiving in heaven a greater reward from him. Since the worldling labors so assiduously to increase his worldly goods, to acquire the comforts and conveniences of life, which of their own nature are so vain and fleeting, should you not be anxious to increase sanctifying grace and to acquire treasures which you can possess for ever in heaven?

PART IV.

Division.

1. When parents have children and give their property to them, they divide; for they divide their movable and immovable goods among them, reserving a larger or smaller share for themselves. God continually divides or distributes his gifts and graces, imparting them to us for time and eternity. When men divide, *i. e.*, distribute something among others, nothing remains, but it is otherwise with God; no matter how much he may distribute, his goods decrease no more than a light from which a multitude of candles are lighted.

2. We must take great interest in division for the salvation of our souls. We must distribute to others—

(a.) *Some of our temporal goods.* Charity demands this. "He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall put up his bowels from him; how doth the charity of God abide in him?"—*I. John*, 3: 17. Christ himself

says: "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away."—*Matt.* 5: 42. As is plain from the sentence of Christ at the last judgment, our salvation depends in a great measure on the performance of works of mercy.—*Matt.* 25: 35, *et seq.* If we cheerfully distribute some of the superabundance of the fruits of our labor and industry, for the consolation and support of our distressed fellow-members in Jesus Christ, we make God our friend, and may hope to obtain from him every blessing in life and death. Follow the admonition which the elder Tobias gave 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.

(b.) *Some of our spiritual goods.* We must employ them as well as we are able for the salvation of men. Spiritual alms are far better and more meritorious before God than corporal, because the soul is of incomparably greater value than the body. Christ herein gives us the most sublime example, for all that he did from his birth to his death on the cross had for its object the eternal salvation of men. Therefore he says himself: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—*Luke* 19: 10. We possess various spiritual goods, some of which we can contribute to our neighbor, namely, *instruction, good example and prayer.* Let us make a proper use of these goods; let us instruct the ignorant in matters of religion, correct them when they have committed a fault; and give them an edifying example, for words move, but example draws. Let us pray for our fellow-men, for unbelievers, heretics and sinners, that they may accept the truth and do penance; for the just, that they may walk with constancy in the path of virtue, "for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour."—*I. Tim.* 2: 3.

PERORATION.

Thus the four elementary branches of arithmetic can be applied in many ways to the spiritual life. *Add* with diligence; employ every opportunity of doing good; add one good work to another so long as you live that you may be able to exhibit a large total amount of merits before God. *Subtract* industriously; lay aside more and more your faults and evil habits; mortify your inordinate inclinations, and endeavor by a penitential life to atone for the temporal punishment of your sins, that you may not be obliged to suffer long in purgatory. *Multiply* diligently, and endeavor to increase sanctifying grace, that you may become better and more virtuous from day to day. *Divide* without

ceasing; be charitable towards all men, and perform, on every occasion, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. If you zealously practice these four elementary branches of arithmetic during your whole life, you need have no fear; when the great day of retribution shall arrive you will be able to give a good account of yourselves and of your administration, and God will reward your labors beyond your most sanguine expectation. Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. SECOND SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT, OR UNWORTHY PENITENTS.

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants.—Matt. 18: 23.

By the account which the king takes of his servants, we understand chiefly those judgments which God holds upon earth, and in which mercy is exercised with boundless liberality. Thus he continually enters into judgment with each man by the voice of his own conscience, which warns him against evil, reproaches him, urges him to amendment, and shows him what the final consequences will be if he does not heed that warning. Again, God enters into judgment with men by favorable and unfavorable events, in order to attract the good more closely to himself and to confirm them in virtue, and to move sinners to repentance and thus to rescue them from perdition. But he does this in a special manner in the sacred tribunal of Penance, where he sits, as it were, on the throne of mercy, and fills with grace even the greatest sinners, if they appear before him with a humble and contrite heart. But there are many persons who, like the unmerciful servant in the gospel of this day, show themselves entirely unworthy of the mercy of God, and therefore are delivered to the severe punishments of his justice. Let us think seriously on this matter to-day; and take for the subject of our meditation "The Unmerciful Servant, or unworthy Penitents."

I. Before;

II. At;

III. After confession.

PART I.

Before confession.

1. The unmerciful servant was without doubt a careless man who took no interest in his work, and neglected his duties, and consequently his master suffered great damage and loss. At the same time he lived in good style, and wasted large sums owing to his dissipated, luxurious life, so that his income was no longer sufficient for his wants. Therefore he appropriated money from the treasury of his lord, embezzled and cheated wherever he could and by degrees accumulated a burden of debt, amounting to no less than ten thousand talents. This servant had no conscience at all; he respected neither divine nor human law, had no regard for justice, but considered that everything his evil passions demanded was permissible and lawful. Many penitents resemble this servant. All their thoughts are bent upon earthly things and the gratification of their passions; they care little for what is eternal; they regulate themselves according to the maxims of the world, and do what pleases their inclinations and passions; they are slaves to the vice of pride, avarice or impurity; they entertain hatred and enmity against their neighbor; they are dishonest and deceitful in their dealings with others, and in this way heap up in a long series of years a multitude of sins which can well be compared to a debt of ten thousand talents. Thus unworthy penitents act who live in forgetfulness of God, and do not think of the salvation of their soul, of penance or conversion. Are there perhaps some in our congregation who bear in themselves this sign of unworthy penitents?

2. The gospel says of the unmerciful servant, that he was brought before his lord when he began to take an account. Hence he came not of his own accord but was compelled to do so; violence was resorted to and he was bound like a criminal and brought before his lord. If violence had not been used his lord might never have seen him again; he would probably have fled, as so many defaulters do in our days. In this also many resemble the unmerciful servant. To those who live according to the spirit of the world in vice and sin, nothing is so distasteful as confession. No time is more inopportune to them than Easter, when, according to the law of the Church, they must receive the holy sacraments. They would make any and every sacrifice if they could only escape confession. When such persons confess at Easter, or in a dangerous sickness, or in the face of death, they do it more from compulsion than from free impulse; they confess because they are importuned to do so by their friends or

relations, or not to fall into ill-repute with people, and to lose all honor and credit. But what can be expected of such confessions? I do not think I exaggerate or judge too severely when I say that out of a hundred Catholics who do not confess voluntarily, but only when compelled by external circumstances, but few make a good confession; for we have every reason to believe that they are devoid of a penitential disposition, without which a good confession is utterly impossible. How is it with you? Have you heretofore always confessed willingly and cheerfully, or perhaps only with repugnance and from compulsion?

PART II

At confession.

1. *When he began to take the account.* The king had examined the books and was obliged to tell the servant first how much he owed him; for the servant, in his carelessness, had not troubled himself much about the debt, and had not calculated the amount. Those who do not care at all how much they owe, and do not even take the trouble to find out how they stand, are, to say the least, very careless people. Such debtors certainly are not anxious to satisfy their creditors. There are Catholics too who do not care to arrive at an accurate knowledge of their sins. It never occurs to them to examine their conscience with a view to discover their faults, and to correct them. And how do they conduct themselves in the sacred tribunal where a careful and diligent examination of conscience is absolutely necessary, in order to be able to make a good confession? As they seldom go to confession, generally only once a year, and as they lead a very irregular life, they should examine their conscience very carefully and thoroughly, for otherwise it is impossible to arrive at the knowledge of the state of their soul. But they do the whole business of the examination of their conscience in a few minutes; they look only at the surface, without endeavoring to penetrate and fathom the sources of their sins, and the consequences thereof. They do not try the patience of their confessors by the prolixity of their self-accusation; their confession is remarkably short; they mention one or two sins and conclude with the words: "That's all; I know no more." Whether God knows no more of what they could and ought to know, if they had examined their conscience more carefully, does not trouble them. Such Catholics evidently expose themselves to the greatest danger of confessing invalidly on account of the imperfection of their accusation. This is to be feared even when the confessor, by asking questions, seeks to supply the defect; for it is hardly possible

that he would be able to find out all their sins in this way; it may also happen that as they have not properly examined themselves, they say, "no," to many questions, when the answer should be, "yes." Many act so dishonestly in their confessions that they purposely wait to be questioned, and do not intend to confess a certain sin or circumstance of sin unless they are questioned. Who can believe that such people make a good confession and obtain the forgiveness of their sins?

2. It is said of the servant in the gospel that falling down, he besought his lord, saying: *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* Why did he do this? Evidently because of the threatened punishment, for his lord had commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and that payment should be made. This punishment inspired him with great fear, therefore he humbled himself before his lord and begged for time and mercy. Herein many penitents resemble this servant. They are sorry for their sins and beg for grace and mercy. But why? Only on account of temporal evils, which they have drawn on themselves through their sinful life. A woman, for instance, who has violated the sixth commandment sighs and weeps to such an extent that one might think her a penitent Magdalen. But she sighs and weeps only because she has brought disgrace on herself. A servant with tears confesses a theft. Why this sobbing? Because he has been found out, dismissed, and threatened with the penalty of the law. Another accuses himself with sorrow of his repeated drunken carousals; but this feeling has its cause in the ruin of his health, and the loss of his worldly substance. These, as well as all those whose contrition is only natural, are of the number of the bad penitents, and must no more expect forgiveness of God than did Antiochus.—*II. Mach.*

9. Many Catholics who have lived very carelessly, in forgetfulness of God, when they are attacked by a severe sickness or when death announces his coming, manifest great contrition for their sins; they pray to God for mercy and pardon, and seem to be very penitent. But why? Only from servile fear. It is not their sins that cause these doleful sighs, but solely the fear of death, and the miserable fate that awaits them; and therefore they do not obtain pardon. It is not indeed impossible for a sinner truly to repent of his sin on his death-bed, and to make a good confession, but it is always doubtful, for he who during his life never made a really good confession cannot be expected to do so at the hour of death.

3. The servant promised his lord that he would pay him all. But he certainly could not have been in earnest when he made that

promise. We may infer this from the fact that he did not make it before, but only when it was announced to him that he and his wife and children should be sold into bondage. He, therefore, made the promise only in order to excite the sympathy of his lord, and thus move him to compassion. And how could his promise have been sincere when he clearly understood the impossibility of ever being able to pay this immense debt? It is the same with the resolutions and promises which many Catholics make in their confessions. They indeed make an act of contrition, and generally say in the confessional after the accusation of their sins: "I purpose to amend my life and never more to offend God;" but these are frequently empty words, resolutions spoken merely with the lips, but not coming from the heart. Since they confess only from habit, or pressure that may be brought to bear upon them, or from human respect, they frequently have no intention at all of changing their sinful lives and being truly converted. They repeatedly assure the confessor that they will never again commit this or that sin, that they will avoid the proximate occasion of sin, *e. g.*, bad company, that they will give up evil habits, but they only do so in order to receive absolution. Who could doubt that their confessions are invalid for the want of a good purpose of amendment? And how many Catholics may there be who for this reason confess invalidly?

PART III.

After confession.

1. *When that servant was gone out.* The servant did not stay with his lord; as soon as the debt was remitted he went away. This was the reason why he was unmerciful towards his fellow-servant; for in the presence of his lord he would not have dared to treat him so cruelly. Why do so many penitents relapse into their former sins? Because they separate themselves from God; they no longer have him before their eyes, and walk no more in his presence? They yield themselves again after their confessions to all the distractions of a worldly life, and seek the former occasions of sin; what wonder, then, that they forget God, become careless and begin their old sinful life again. If, after confession, a thorough and lasting amendment is to follow, it is necessary not to lose sight of God, to avoid all dangerous intercourse with the world and to lead as much as possible a retired life.

2. It is said of the servant that laying hold of his fellow-servant he throttled him, and demanded the payment of the trifling

debt owed to himself, and in spite of his urgent petition for patience, unmercifully cast him into prison. How was it possible for this servant who had just now experienced the mercy of his lord in so high a degree to treat his fellow-servant so harshly? The answer is manifest. The servant had forgotten the mercy of his lord; he no longer remembered how kind and charitable he had been to him when he forgave him all the debt; hence it was that he could be so uncharitable towards his fellow-servant. There are penitents too who forget that they have been pardoned, and sin again. They no longer think of the miserable state in which they were, or of the infinite mercy of God who remitted their sins, together with the eternal punishment, received them again as his children and made them heirs of heaven; therefore they relapse into their former sinful life. Have not some of you for this reason relapsed after your confessions?

3. The end of the unmerciful servant was very sad; for his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all the debt; and not being able to pay so immense a sum, nothing remained for him but to languish in prison during the remainder of his life. In like manner will God deal with those who after their confessions never amend their lives, but commit sins as before. On the day of Judgment he will deliver them to the eternal torments of hell. Nothing is so displeasing to God, as when those whom he has magnanimously forgiven continue to offend him. Hence St. Chrysostom says: "He, who after his forgiveness sins again and tears open the healed wound, is ungrateful and unworthy of forgiveness. He who, after the reception of grace again soils himself, deserves not to be cleansed any more." Thus Saul, who always relapsed into his former sins, was rejected by God, and came to a miserable end. How many are there among us, who heretofore have always relapsed after their confessions! Oh, that they would consider the terrible consequences of this recurring relapse, and aspire once for all to a thorough and permanent amendment of life!

PERORATION.

See that you do not resemble the unmerciful servant, *before, at or after* your confessions. Be grateful to Jesus Christ for the institution of the holy Sacrament of Penance, and make use of this consoling sacrament for the salvation of your souls. Deem yourselves happy that you have always an opportunity of confessing, and endeavor to comply with the conditions which are required for a good confession. Examine your conscience diligently, excite a true supernatural contrition for your sins and resolve not to

offend God any more. Accuse yourselves sincerely of your sins, and after your confessions lead a good life. Thus the words of St. Augustine will be fulfilled in you: "Confession is the salvation of the soul, the destruction of vice, and the victory over the devil; it shuts the gates of hell, and opens the portals of heaven." Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

RESTITUTION.

Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.—Matt. 18: 26.

Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. It was thus that the servant in the gospel of this day addressed his lord when he commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and that payment should be made. The same words of supplication were addressed to this servant when, going out, he met a fellow-servant, and laying hold of him, throttled him, and roughly demanded payment, saying: *Pay what thou owest.* But both these servants had reason to promise payment, for the payment of debts is a strict duty, and every creditor can in justice demand that his loan be paid back to him. But we must not only pay our debts, but also restore what belongs to others, or has been unjustly acquired. This is a sacred duty on the fulfilment of which depends our eternal salvation. On the last day it will become manifest that numberless souls have been rejected because they omitted to make the necessary restitution. It is, therefore, not superfluous for me to speak to you to-day of restitution, and explain to you—

- I. That we are strictly obliged to make restitution;
- II. That the objections to it are groundless.

PART I.

1. *The natural law* obliges us to make restitution. This natural law of our conscience tells us: "Do unto others what you wish

them to do unto you." When any one takes anything from us, or causes us an injury or loss, we certainly do not wish him to keep what belongs to us, or leave us unindemnified; our desire, on the contrary, is that he should restore the stolen property or repair the damage. According to this principle, we must deal with our fellow-men; we are bound to repair any injury we have caused them. He who does not do this, sins against the natural law, which God has inscribed in the heart of every man. Hence we see that even pagans, who had no knowledge either of the Mosaic or the Christian law, considered theft, imposition and every kind of injustice as odious vices, and obliged those who rendered themselves guilty of them to make restitution.

2. *The law of justice.* The law demands that we give and leave to every one his own, that we make restitution and repair damage, if we have taken anything from any one or caused him to suffer loss. Hence the Apostle writes: "Render to all men their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything, but to love one another."—*Rom. 13: 7, 8. Res clamat domino,* "the thing cries for its owner," and it will cry until justice is satisfied and the thing is restored. This truth is clearly illustrated by an event in the life of St. Medard. A thief stole from the saint an ox that had a bell on its neck. He brought the ox home and put him in the stable; and, although he moved not, the bell was continually ringing. When it began to get dark and the thief feared discovery, he filled the bell with hay, but in spite of this precaution it still rang. What was he to do? He tore the bell from the ox, took the hammer out of it, and locked it up in a box; but it ceased not to ring; he buried it in the earth, but it continued to ring. Finally, full of fear, he returned the ox to St. Medard, when the bell ceased ringing. This ever-ringing bell is justice, which demands restitution till it is satisfied.

3. *The written law of God.* "If any man steal an ox or sheep, and kill or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for one ox, and four sheep for one sheep."—*Exod. 22: 1.* Again: "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."—*Exod. 22: 5.* The duty of restitution is enjoined in the seventh commandment: "Thou shalt not steal." For if restitution consists in nothing else than to restore another's property, and so to cease from injustice, the opposite, *i. e.*, not to restore, can be nothing else than to persevere in injustice or

to continue in theft. Now, when God forbade stealing, he at the same time commanded restitution.

4. *The salvation of the soul.* The salvation of the soul depends on the forgiveness of sins, which is absolutely impossible without restitution, if it can in any way be made. St. Anthony says: "He that is in possession of another's goods, and can make restitution, and does not do so, cannot obtain forgiveness, though he may do all possible works of penance. He may pray, fast, and give alms. All is in vain." No priest, no bishop, not even the Pope, has the power to absolve him from his sins, as long as he does not make restitution or repair the damage, provided that it is possible for him to do so. Since the priest, as St. Thomas of Aquin says, is the agent of God, and in the confessional represents him, he can now and then remit what one owes to God, *e. g.*, he can free from a vow, but not being the agent of his neighbor, and not holding his place, he can free no one from the duty of making restitution or repairing a damage; on the contrary, he must say to the unjust possessor: "Restore what is not your own, repair the damage which you have caused." Take notice also that the duty of restitution never ceases by right of limitation. Be it twenty, thirty, or forty years, since you have stolen from your neighbor, cheated or injured him, you are bound to make restitution, or reparation for the damage, just as if you had committed the injustice yesterday or to-day. Though in lapse of time, you forget your injustice, God does not forget it, but will summon you to the strictest account for it. If restitution is not possible, you must at least have the desire to make it, and do what you can to make it in due time either entirely or partially.

PART II.

The objections which are usually made against restitution have no foundation. The most common of these are:

1. *If I make restitution, very little would be left for my children; my family would be reduced to beggary.*

(a.) How foolish! Will you, for the love of your children and your family, to give them a little worldly prosperity, plunge yourself into eternal damnation? And yet that will be the case, if you do not restore goods unjustly acquired, for "thieves shall not possess the kingdom of God."—*I. Cor. 6: 10.*

(b.) What do unjust possessions profit your children? They, like you, have the duty of making restitution. If they leave this

duty unfulfilled, eternal damnation awaits them as well as you. And even in life the goods unjustly acquired will afford them no blessing. Example: Achab, who unjustly acquired the vineyard of Naboth. He himself fell in battle; his impious wife came to a wretched end, and all his descendants, seventy-two in number, were beheaded in one day. Ill-gotten goods never prosper. He who acquires them, frequently loses them, but always those who inherit them. Many children or children's children, whose parents left them a great but unjustly acquired property, have been reduced to poverty, and now eat the bread of the poor. The words of the Prophet are only too true: "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the teeth of the children are set on edge.—*Jer. 31: 29.*"

2. *Those to whom I have to make restitution are rich; they do not feel what I have taken from them.* The seventh commandment: "Thou shalt not steal," is general in its application, and forbids you to take anything, not only from the poor, but also from the rich. Restitution, therefore, is a duty, no matter whether it is to be made to the poor or to the rich. Between the restitution to the poor and that to the rich there is only this difference, that the omission of it to the former is a greater sin than to the latter. But a mortal sin is committed, and one becomes liable to eternal damnation, if the unjust goods which are to be restored to the rich man are considerable.

3. *I do not know exactly how much or to whom to make restitution.*

(a.) If you really do not know how much you are to restore, restore as much as, after a conscientious calculation, you think that you should restore. If you alone cannot arrive at a conclusion, consult your confessor, leave the decision to him, and do what he tells you.

(b.) You may do the same, if you do not know to whom to make restitution. The rule, however, obtains here: "Restitution must be made to the proprietor, or when he is no longer living, to his heirs. If neither the proprietor nor his heirs are living, or if they are unknown, then the ill-gotten goods, if their possessor does not himself live in destitute circumstances, must be applied to the poor."

4. *It would jeopardize my honor and reputation, if I were to restore the ill-gotten goods.* This is a totally groundless excuse. It is not necessary, as every one knows, to make restitution publicly; we satisfy this duty by making restitution secretly. In most cases

the restitution can be made through the confessor, where it is certain that the person by whom it is made will remain entirely unknown. But if restitution were to be made publicly even, honor and good name would suffer no damage, for only the doing of wrong, and not the repairing of it, brings dishonor and shame. Who thinks it a dishonor to Zaccheus when he publicly declared, that if he had wronged any man of anything he was willing to restore it fourfold?—*Luke 19: 8.*

5. *I give alms, contribute to charitable purposes, and have masses said, in order to get rid of the duty of restitution.* That will not do. You have not stolen from the poor or cheated them, but from this or that particular man, and to him only must you make restitution. If you steal a dollar from a man, and by way of restitution give ten dollars to the poor, or have ten masses said, the injury is not thereby repaired; it is still your imperative duty to return the dollar to the person from whom you have stolen it. Hence St. Chrysostom says: "If you have stolen one penny, and give a hundred pounds of gold as alms, you have not on that account restored that penny. Only in two cases can restitution be made by giving to the poor, or for charitable purposes. The first is when there is a question of a very insignificant thing, and the restitution would be attended with great difficulty; the second, when the owner is altogether unknown, or when it is impossible to restore the thing to him. In these two cases it may be presumed that the owner would be willing to have it applied to the poor or to charitable purposes.

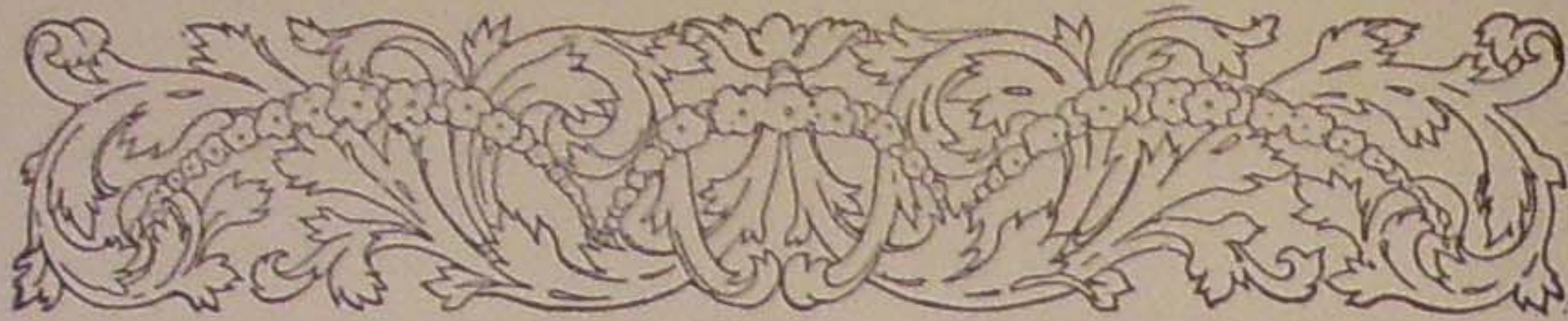
6. *I have often repented of my injustices, and for many years have committed none.* That is all very good; but remember, your contrition is not a true one so long as you will not remove the consequences of your sins; and this is not done if you do not make restitution, and repair the damage which you have caused. Nor is it enough for your reconciliation with God to have given up stealing; you must also restore all that you have stolen, or acquired unjustly. We must consider theft as a sin and as an injustice; as a sin it must be repented of and amended; as an injustice it must not only be repented of and amended, but also repaired, otherwise there is no possible forgiveness.

PERORATION.

I conclude my instruction with a twofold admonition. Beware of acquiring the property of others by theft, cheating, or in any other unjust way. The property of others must be sacred to you; do not appropriate to yourselves a penny that is not lawfully

your own. Ill-gotten goods are a curse, and no blessing will ever rest upon them, either here or hereafter. An unjustly acquired cent swallows up a justly acquired dollar. Do not forget this. But if you have acquired unjust goods, or injured any one in his property, make restitution and reparation for the damage without delay and as thoroughly as you can. Reflect on the words of St. Augustine: "If the goods of others are not restored when one can restore them, one does not perform a true, but only an apparent penance, for sin is not remitted so long as the stolen goods are not restored." Be honest in your dealings: give and leave to every one his own, that when the end comes you may die peacefully and be able to exclaim with David: "The Lord will reward me according to my justice, and according to the cleanness of my hands he will render to me."—*II. Kings 22: 21. Amen.*





TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*Phil.* 1: 6-11. Brethren: We are confident in the Lord Jesus, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus. As it is meet for me to think this for you all, for that I have you in my heart, and that in my bands, and in the defense, and confirmation of the gospel, you are all partakers of my joy. For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding: that you may approve the better things, that you may be sincere and without offense unto the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of justice, through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

ST. PAUL SPEAKS OF HIS TENDER LOVE FOR THE PHILIPPIANS AND BEGS VARIOUS GRACES FOR THEM.

The lesson of this day is a small portion of the epistle which St. Paul wrote to the Christians of Philippi towards the end of his first captivity at Rome. These Christians had a particular affection for St. Paul, in gratitude for the faith which he had preached to them. They manifested their love for him in every possible way, especially by contributions of money which they sent to him for his own support as well as for the relief of the poor Christians. When they heard of his imprisonment at Rome, they sent a pious man named Epaphroditus with their charitable gifts in order to alleviate his hard lot in prison. Moved by this love and solicitude, the Apostle wrote them a letter in which he heartily thanks them for their charitable gift, cautions them against Jewish false doctrines, and exhorts them to constancy in the faith, to the patient endurance of all sufferings, and to a pious

life. I shall divide the contents of the epistle into the two following points:

- I. St. Paul expresses his tender affection for the Philippians;
- II. He begs several graces for them.

PART I.

1. We are confident in the Lord Jesus, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

(a.) In these words the Apostle expresses his confidence that God, after beginning in them the good work, that is, after having called them to the faith, after having justified and sanctified them, would also impart to them the grace of perseverance in faith and morality according to his injunctions, unto the day of Christ, *i. e.*, to the Day of Judgment, which will come at the death of each individual, and at the end of the world.

(b.) God has also begun the good work in us; we all, soon after our birth, received the Sacrament of Baptism, by which we were purified, sanctified and incorporated with Christ and his Church. While millions of men live and die without baptism, and on that account are deprived of the blessings of Christianity for time and eternity, God has made us partakers of the graces of baptism without any merit of ours. How can we sufficiently thank him for this grace?

Let us contribute our mite to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, for these have for their object the conversion of Pagans, and the redemption, baptism, and education of pagan children. How many immortal souls can we rescue from perdition, and introduce into heaven, if we are zealous and active members of these societies! That God began the good work in us was his grace exclusively, but that he will also perfect it in us is conditional upon our own efforts. God, who created and redeemed us without our assistance, will not save us without our co-operation. We must diligently employ his graces for our salvation. It is especially necessary for the obtaining of final perseverance on our part that we ever walk in humility and persevere in prayer. Pride closed and barred heaven against us; humility opens it again. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."—*James* 4: 6. But because every man, though he be never so humble, is weak and cannot resist the temptations of the enemies of his soul for any length of time, if he lean only on his own strength, he must pray—pray without ceasing; for by fervent, persevering prayer we obtain God's grace, which enables us to overcome all temptations

and to persevere in good. Therefore our Lord himself says: "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."—*Matt.* 26: 41.

2. *As it is meet for me to think this for you all, for that I have you in my heart, and that in my bands, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you are all partakers of my joy.*

(a.) The Apostle here assigns his love for the Philippians as the reason why he is confident that they will receive the grace from God to work out their salvation. He says that he has them in his heart, and thereby expresses his affection for them. People hang up in their rooms the portrait of a dear friend, or even carry it about them, in order frequently to think of him and look upon it. St. Paul carries his dear Philippians in his heart; he cannot forget them; even in bonds and in prison, and before tribunals where he defends himself and gives testimony for the gospel, he thinks of them and is continually occupied with them, knowing that they take an active interest in his welfare.

(b.) "Charity," says the Apostle, "thinketh no evil, believeth all things, hopeth all things."—*I. Cor.* 13: 5-7. As the Apostle loved the Philippians affectionately he thought well of them, believed and hoped with confidence that God would always keep them in his grace and conduct them to everlasting salvation. Behold here the effect of the true love of our neighbor. Love is well-wishing. When we love any one we wish him all good, and especially the best of all, heaven. Whatever one wishes one also hopes, if one has any reasonable cause for it; consequently one hopes that a person whom one loves will be saved. If he be a just man, one hopes that he will persevere in good; if he be a sinner, that he may be converted and by true penance save his soul. Thus charity makes us always hope the best for our neighbor. But charity also urges us actively to assist our neighbor in the way of salvation. St. Paul's love for the Philippians was active and manifested itself. He thought of them in his prison, prayed for them, wrote them a letter, in which he urgently admonished and begged them to persevere in good and never suffer themselves to be turned aside from the right road, come what might. In such a manner we too must show our love for our neighbor. We can do this in various ways. First, by *words*. Gentle, affectionate instructions, admonitions, and corrections avail much with our neighbor; they keep him from evil, and, if he has gone astray, they bring him back again to the right path, encourage him in good, and confirm him in the service of God. Secondly, by *good example*. Works speak louder than words. For this reason Christ admonishes us to shine before men by good

example that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven.—*Matt.* 5: 16. Thirdly, *prayer*, according to the words of St. James: "Pray for one another, that you may be saved."—*James* 5: 16. St. Stephen prayed for Saul, who from a most violent persecutor of Christians became the most zealous Apostle of Christ. St. Monica prayed for her erring son Augustine, and he became a great light of the Church and a saint in heaven.

3. *For God is my witness how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.*

(a.) The Apostle calls God to witness, therefore assures the Philippians with a solemn oath that he loved them, not from self-interest or worldly motives, not merely because they supported him so charitably with money, or manifested so great a zeal for him, but truly and from the heart, *in the bowels of Jesus Christ*, that is, in the manner Jesus Christ loves men, for he sacrificed his life for them, and wills all men to be saved.

(b.) Like the Apostle, we too must take the love of Jesus for our pattern in the love of our neighbor. The love of Jesus for men was, first, *supernatural and holy*: for in everything he did for them he had nothing in view but the salvation of their souls. His Incarnation, his doctrines, his miracles, his passion and death, the establishment of his Church, are intended to purify and sanctify men; therefore he says himself: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." *Luke* 19: 10. So in our conduct towards our neighbor we must have chiefly his salvation in view. When we admonish him, correct him, show him any act of kindness, or do him a favor, we must be able to say with truth: "I do this because it is my wish that he serve God and be saved." If we confer benefits on another only from a certain predilection, because he is a relative, has a pleasing appearance, or is captivating in his manner, it would be only a natural love, a love without value before God. Examine and see whether your love of your neighbor is not in many respects only a natural one. The love Jesus had for men was, secondly, *disinterested*; for in all that he did for them he sought only their advantage and interest; everything aimed at their Redemption and eternal salvation. When we show ourselves obliging to others, hoping that in some way they may compensate us, it is an interested, selfish love, and valueless in the eyes of God. For this reason our Lord tells us that when we give alms the left hand should not know what the right hand does (*Matt.* 6: 3); and that we must do good to our neighbor without hoping anything from him in return.—*Luke* 6: 25. Finally, the love of Jesus was *sincere*;

he meant well to all; his heart knew no deceit; neither was guile found in his mouth.—*I. Pet.* 2: 22. His words and actions never were in contradiction with his sentiments; whether he treated any one kindly and gently, or earnestly and severely, whether he praised or reproached him, he ever wished his welfare. How rare is such a sincere love found among men! How many are there to whom the prosperity of their neighbor, their rival tradesman, is a thorn in the eye; who envy him his success in business, and rejoice when some adversity overtakes him! How many outwardly act in a friendly way towards their neighbor, flatter him to his face, but in their heart cherish aversion to him, seek to undermine his happiness and to injure him. Such persons resemble the Pharisees, who gave themselves the appearance of being the best friends of Jesus, but who bitterly hated him and sought his ruin. Examine yourselves and see whether your love of your neighbor is sincere.

Let us now consider *what the Apostle asks for his beloved Philippians.*

PART II.

And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge and in all understanding; that you may approve the better things; that you may be sincere and without offense unto the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of justice, through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. In these words St. Paul asks for three things necessary for their salvation, viz.—

1. *Growth in the knowledge of Christianity.* Charity without knowledge is in danger of being deceived. As the Philippians were very good-hearted and charitable, they could easily be deceived and seduced, especially by false teachers; the Apostle wished for them a thorough knowledge of religion, that they might be able to prove everything, distinguish truth from error, and not be deceived by wicked men. We also need a thorough knowledge of religion in order to walk in the way of truth and virtue. Whence comes it that so many suffer shipwreck of faith and fall into various errors? Chiefly from this, that in matters of religion they are not sufficiently instructed. They cannot distinguish between truth and error; they allow themselves to be deceived by the fallacious arguments of the enemies of our holy religion, and thus lose the faith. Whence comes it that so many transgress the commandments of God and the precepts of the Church without scruple? Again from ignorance in matters of religion. They do not know what is enjoined and what is forbidden by the commandments, and how strictly they bind us; therefore they transgress them. Employ the means which are

necessary for the acquisition of the necessary religious knowledge. Hear the sermons that are preached on Sundays and holidays, for in these you are instructed in religion; love to read spiritual books, in which the doctrines and truths of the Catholic faith are explained and proved at greater length. In this way you will acquire the necessary knowledge, and will be enabled with the grace of God to keep the faith and to live according to its regulations.

2. *Blameless conduct*—“*that you may be sincere and without offense.*” It is not enough to be firm in faith; to preserve it pure and unadulterated, we must also live as our faith commands, and avoid everything that is blameworthy before God. First of all, we must be free from *every mortal sin*. Mortal sin deprives man of the love and grace of God, closes heaven against him, and plunges him into everlasting perdition. Ah, who would commit a mortal sin if he would but consider these terrible consequences? Who would live in mortal sin, if he reflected on the appalling danger in which he is of being lost for ever? O Christian, fear mortal sin more than death. Do not delay your conversion any longer if you have one or more mortal sins on your conscience, but consider the words of the Lord: “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. But shun also venial sins as much as possible, for they are an offense against God, draw temporal punishment after them, and often lead to mortal sins. Make the resolution never to commit even a venial sin deliberately, and if through inadvertence or surprise you have committed one, be heartily sorry for it and humbly beg of God forgiveness.

3. *The zealous practice of good works, which are the “fruit of justice, through Jesus Christ,” i. e.,* which we can only perform with the grace of God, which Jesus Christ has merited for us. Christian justice, which is necessary for the obtaining of eternal salvation, requires of us not only to avoid evil, but also to do good, for “every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire.”—*Matt.* 7: 19. Hence we read in the gospel, that the Lord paid in the evening only to those who had gone into the vineyard and labored there; that he took the talent from the servant who had buried it and commanded him to be cast into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.—*Matt.* 25: 30. Hence it would be a great self-delusion for any one to comfort himself with the thought: I do no evil, therefore I shall go to heaven.” No, no! Heaven is neither for him who does evil nor for him who omits good; hell is for both; for him who does no good, and for him who does evil. This

should be an incentive for you "to labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election."—*II. Pet.* 1: 10. Conscientiously fulfil the duties of your religion and station of life; practice the three good works, so particularly recommended in the Sacred Scripture—namely, the works of devotion, mortification, and Christian love and mercy.

4. Finally, that in all their words and actions they may have the glory and praise of God for their aim and object; for which reason he says, *unto the glory and praise of God.* Only those exercises of virtue and good works which are done for his honor are pleasing to God, and will be rewarded by him in the next world. The best of human actions, the most shining virtues that attract the attention of mankind, if the intention that gives them birth be not a desire to promote the honor and glory of God, are as so many sacrifices offered at the shrine of self-love, nuts without a kernel, without any merit and value for eternity. St. Arsenius says: "He who does good works merely to please men (from a motive of inordinate self-love and self-gratification), resembles a man who continually draws water, but pours it into a sieve." Ah, how many good works will remain unrewarded on the Day of Judgment for no other reason than because they were not done for God! Never omit daily in the morning to make a good intention, and to protest to our Lord with heart and lips: "My God, whatever I do to-day, I will do for thy honor; all my words and actions I offer to thee; all for the love of thee!"

PERORATION.

The Apostle in the epistle of to-day speaks twice of the day of Jesus Christ. This means the Day of Judgment, which at the end of the world after the resurrection of the dead shall come for all men, but for each individual man immediately after his death. It is called the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ will be our judge on that day, and because at the Last Judgment he will receive homage and adoration from heaven and earth. Let us make provision for that day, for it will decide our doom for eternity! Let us follow the admonition of the Apostle. Let us keep the faith, lead an undefiled life, fervently practice the Christian virtues and good works, but doing all things for the greater honor and glory of God; then we may humbly but confidently hope at the end of our life to receive the reward of the good and faithful servant, and hear the same consoling 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: 21. Amen.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* 22: 15-21. At that time: The Pharisees went and consulted among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in his speech. And they sent to him their disciples with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou dost not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what dost thou think. Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Show me the coin of the tribute. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus said to them: Whose image and inscription is this? They say to him: Cæsar's. Then he saith to them: Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE COIN OF THE TRIBUTE.

What is related to us in the gospel of to-day, occurred in the latter part of the life of Christ, a few days before his passion and death. The high-priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees, had already decreed to put him to death, cost what it might. But they dared not publicly lay hands on him, for they feared the people, who were attached to him with great affection, and had only lately received him with loud hosannas and acclamations at his solemn entry into Jerusalem. They, therefore, had recourse to stratagem, consulting among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in his speech. As frequently before, so now, they again put to him a question which in their opinion was so captious that it would certainly ruin him, whether he answered it affirmatively or negatively. But as before, so now, our Lord defeated their artifices, so that they were obliged to depart without having accomplished their design. Let us meditate to-day on the contents of the gospel, which may naturally be divided into —

- I. The malicious question of the Jews;
- II. The wise answer of our Lord.

PART I.

1. *The Pharisees sent to him their disciples with the Herodians.*

(a.) On this occasion the Pharisees did not come themselves, but sent to him their disciples. They did this either from artifice, in order to conceal their designs from Jesus, or out of prudence, in order to spare themselves the confusion and humiliation which they would necessarily bring upon themselves, should they be confounded by him, as had often happened before. It cannot be doubted that they instructed their disciples how they should conduct themselves. But they added some Herodians to their disciples. These were adherents of Herod Antipas, and were warm friends of the Romans, because the family of Herod owed their appointment to the Roman Emperor. The Pharisees and their disciples were enemies of the Romans, and endeavored in every possible way to shake off the Roman yoke. The embassy, therefore, consisted of two parties that had opposite aims. In whatever way Christ might answer the proposed question, whether in favor of the Jews, or of the Roman emperor, he could not fail to offend one party or the other and to incur their enmity. The Pharisees had cunningly planned it to ensnare him in their meshes.

(b.) Thus has the world been at all times—and so it is to-day—full of tricks and malice, and very artfully inventing means for carrying out its wicked designs. Honesty and sincerity are strangers to it; it has recourse to artifice and deception, and often resorts to influential men to further its designs. Alas! there are always men found who from self-interest and other sinister motives permit themselves to be used as instruments of every iniquity; they will bear false witness, spread falsehood and calumnies, or conceal crimes and iniquities. Reflect and see whether you have ever in your life persuaded or induced any one to commit a wicked action, or whether you have not permitted yourself to be persuaded or induced to do so.

2. The disciples of the Pharisees thus addressed our Lord: *Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth; neither carest thou for any man; for thou dost not regard the person of men.*

(a.) As you perceive, the disciples of the Pharisees gave themselves the appearance of being great friends of Christ, and spoke as if they had turned to him in confidence for the solution of a difficult question of conscience. They began their speech with praises, in order, as they thought, to incline Jesus to them and to win his confidence. What detestable vices are hypocrisy and

dissimulation! "I hate a mouth with a double tongue.—*Prov.* 8: 13. "Cursed is the deceitful man.—*Malach.* 1: 14. Hypocrites and flatterers are followers of Cain, Joab, and Judas, of whom the first enticed his brother Abel out into the field and killed him; the second deceived and killed Amasa; and the third betrayed and delivered his Master to his enemies. No vice is more opposed to fraternal charity, which is upright and sincere, than hypocrisy and deceit; therefore detest this vice and deal honestly and sincerely with all men. Guard especially against those who always flatter you before your face and overwhelm you with praises. Such flatterers do not mean well towards you; they are not your friends; they eulogize you from self-interest, to obtain some favor from you, or to obtain your assistance in their wicked designs. I would especially warn you, sons and daughters, against flatterers; for thousands of young persons, deluded by the flatteries of wicked people, have lost their innocence and made themselves miserable for time and eternity.

(b.) Our divine Lord deserved the praise which the disciples gave him. He was truth itself, and thought only what was true, good and pleasing to God; no human fear could deter him from speaking and acting according to justice and truth. Nor did he regard the person of men; it was all the same to him with whom he had occasion to deal, with the rich or the poor, with exalted personages or with ordinary people; he treated all alike, and gave preference only to him who distinguished himself by his virtues. How is it with you? Do you also deserve the praise which the deputies gave to Christ? Are you true to God, to your promises, to your conscience? Do you carry out what you have so often promised in your prayers, in your confessions and on many other occasions? Are you true to your neighbor? Are you sincere with him? Do you not seek to deceive him? Are you true to yourself? Do you not permit yourself to be blinded by self-love, to the extent of excusing your faults, or even considering them virtues? Can temporal views or human fear and respect induce you to act contrary to the will of God? Do you not regard the person of men? Are you not friendly, affable and courteous towards some, and unfriendly and disagreeable towards others? Do not the words of St. James apply to you: "If there shall come into your assembly a man having a gold ring, in fine apparel, and there shall come in also a poor man in mean attire and you have respect for him that is clothed with the fine apparel, and shall say to him: Sit thou here well; but say to the poor man: stand thou there, or, sit under my footstool: Do you not judge within yourselves, and are become judges of unjust thoughts?" *James* 2: 2-4.

3. After the deputies had flattered Christ, and, as they thought, gained him over, they came to the real point, and put the question: *Tell us, therefore, what dost thou think; is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?*

(a.) The Jews paid a double tribute; (1) to the temple, which was obligatory on every Israelite when he attained his twentieth year: and (2) to Cæsar, ever since they had lost their independence and come under the dominion of the Romans. All the Jews were opposed to giving tribute to Cæsar; like the Roman dominion, it was most hateful to them. They believed that as the chosen people of God they were subject to none but God, and ought not to be compelled to obey any foreign autocrat, especially a pagan. The Herodians, as already remarked, thought otherwise; they were devoted to the Roman emperor, for they owed their power and influence to him; they therefore considered it a strict duty to submit to him and to pay him tribute. The Pharisees had really devised the question very cunningly, for in whatever way Christ might reply, he could not fail to offend one party, either the Pharisees or the Herodians. If he sided with the latter, he was looked upon as an enemy of the Jews; and the Pharisees, with the consent of the people, could arrest him and deliver him to death; but if he sided with the former, he was looked upon as an enemy of Cæsar, as a seducer of the Jewish people, and this, too, might cost him his life.

(b.) Observe here the diabolical malice of the Pharisees who would employ the basest means to destroy Jesus, whom they hated with the most intense hatred. Draw from this the two following lessons:

First. Never allow pride and ambition to arise in your hearts, for it was chiefly these vices that caused the Pharisees to hate our Saviour so bitterly. Ambition begets hatred against all who stand in its way; but hatred incites to every crime, even to murder. Be humble of heart, for humility is the foundation of love and peace.

Secondly. Beware of people who endeavor to excite you against spiritual and temporal authority. There must be superiors, temporal and spiritual, for without them we could neither live quietly, peacefully and securely on earth, nor attain our eternal destiny. Both the temporal and spiritual authorities derive their power from above: "For there is no power but from God; and those that are, are ordained of God."—*Rom.* 13: 1. It is therefore the will of God that we subject ourselves to the temporal authority in all things that are right and lawful; hence the Apostle says:

"He that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation."—*Ibid.* 2. Though temporal and spiritual superiors may have their faults, this gives you no right to despise them, to revile them, or to refuse them obedience. Here again the words of the Apostle apply: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own lord he standeth or falleth."—*Rom.* 14: 4.

PART II.

1. *But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites?* In these words Christ gave the disciples of the Pharisees to understand that he saw their hearts and knew their wicked designs. As these eulogies were not the expression of their convictions, but were only employed by them with the object of enticing him into the snare, he called them hypocrites, that is, men who represent themselves otherwise than they really are. He reproached them for endeavoring to tempt him, saying that they resembled the devil, who goes about to blind and to ruin men by his wicked suggestions. From this we must learn—

(a.) What a disgraceful and hateful vice hypocrisy is. Christ was most charitable and merciful towards sinners; the Samaritan woman, Mary Magdalen, the adulteress in the temple, the thief on the cross, could all bear testimony to the truth of this assertion. But he acted quite differently with the Pharisees; he treated these hypocrites often with the greatest severity, publicly called them wicked men, and often pronounced woe upon them. How is it with you? Do you not render yourself guilty of hypocrisy towards God? In your prayers you call Jesus your Lord and your God, but could he not exclaim to many of you: "Ye hypocrites, if I be your Lord and your God, why do you refuse me honor, love and obedience?" You pray to God for various graces, e. g., humility, meekness, purity, etc.; but could he not say to some of you: "Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites?" You ask for graces which you do not really desire, for you do not take the least pains to acquire them. You promise God that you will avoid this or that sin, practice this or that virtue; but could he not exclaim to some of you: "Ye hypocrites, how much you offend and grieve me by your promises, for you do not intend to keep them." Oh, let us beware of being hypocrites before God.

(b.) How must you behave towards hypocrites? Far from listening with pleasure to their praises and giving consent to them, you should rather show your displeasure by your countenance and gestures, or when prudence permits, indicate to them seriously that you detest their flatteries and do not wish to hear any more of them.

Such treatment drives away flatterers, as a storm disperses the clouds, and they will never again molest you. Make it your rule in life to listen to censure rather than to flattery, for whilst the latter easily elates and blinds, the former leads to the knowledge of faults, to humility and amendment.

2. *Show me the coin of the tribute. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus said to them: Whose image and inscription is this? They say to him: Cæsar's. Then he saith to them: Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.*

(a.) Christ asked them to show him a penny, which was a Roman coin, because only Roman coins were received by the Romans in the payment of taxes or tribute to the emperor; and the deputies offered him a penny. When he now asked them whose image and inscription it was, he did it to convince them of their duty by their own words. When they were obliged to confess that the coin bore the image and inscription of the Roman emperor the right answer to their question was easy to give, viz., *Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.* Christ wished to say by these words: "You have in your country coins of the Roman emperor; since you have just offered me one, this is a sign that you are Cæsar's subjects, otherwise you would not permit this coin to circulate here. But if, according to your own acknowledgment you are subjects of the Roman emperor, you cannot pretend to doubt that you must pay taxes to him. The Roman money is for the emperor; but as regards the temple, pay in the coin of your own country, and thus give to God what is God's." It was thus that Christ confounded the Pharisees by his wisdom, and destroyed the net in which they had intended to catch him. Without replying and full of confusion they silently went away. And here again were fulfilled the words of the Lord: "There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord."—*Prov. 21: 30.*

(b.) The words of Christ: *Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's,* are also important to us, for they teach us *the duties which we must fulfil towards the temporal government and towards God.* Our duties towards temporal authorities are:

(1.) *Reverence.* "Fear God; honor the king."—*I. Peter 2: 17.* This reverence must be *interior*, in the heart; we must accept the temporal authorities for what they are, the representatives of God; *exterior*, we must honor them in word and deed, even though as men they may have many faults.

(2.) *Obedience.* "Be ye subject to every human creature for God's sake; whether it be to the king as excelling, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of the good."—*I. Peter 2: 13, 14.* We have examples of this obedience in Mary and Joseph, who made the long and laborious journey to Bethlehem, in obedience to an edict of Cæsar to have their names enrolled there among the rest of the descendants of the royal house of David.—*Luke 2.* Also in Christ himself, who submitted himself to the unjust sentence of Pilate, and was obedient unto the death of the cross.—*Phil. 2: 8.*

(3.) *Fidelity.* This imposes upon us the duty of adhering to the temporal government in good and evil times, and serving it faithfully. Examples: Chusai, Ethai, Abisai, who showed themselves especially loyal to David (*II. Kings: chap. 15, 17, and 21*); and the primitive Christians, in whom Tertullian glories, for they remained faithful to the emperor even in the time of persecution and never conspired or rebelled against him.

(4.) *The payment of lawful taxes,* as the Apostle prescribes: "Render to all men their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."—*Rom. 13: 7.* Jesus Christ worked even a miracle in order to be able to give the required amount for himself and Peter.—*Matt. 7: 23-26.* Taxes and dues are necessary, for otherwise the expenses of the state incurred for the good of the subjects could not be defrayed.

(5.) *Prayer,* as the Apostle writes: "I desire, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made by men for kings, and for all that are in high stations, that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable life, in all piety and chastity."—*I. Tim. 2: 1, 2.* The primitive Christians, who in their religious meetings prayed for the temporal authorities, although they were sorely pressed and persecuted by them, furnish us with a good example in this respect.

Our duties towards God are:

(1.) *Interior veneration,* that is to say, we must believe in him, hope in him, and love him above all things; we must adore him profoundly, give him thanks for all his graces and benefits, be zealous for his honor, and subject ourselves in humble obedience to his holy will.

(2.) *Exterior veneration.* We must manifest our interior reverence towards him by our actions, such as vocal prayer, partici-

pation in public worship, and the devout reception of the holy sacraments.

PERORATION

These are the principal lessons which the gospel of this day inculcates, and which you as good Catholics must diligently observe. Detest all hypocrisy and deceit, be candid and sincere towards your neighbor and wish him well. Beware of hypocrites and flatterers, and courageously reject them, in order to preserve your moral character unstained. Fulfil your duties as subjects, and have nothing to do with men who revile the authorities and incite to disobedience, for it is the will of God that you revere and obey them. Fulfil also your duties towards God, adore him, love him, and constantly walk in the way of his commandments. Thus you will give to God what is God's; and you may confidently hope that he will give you what according to his promise is yours—life everlasting. Amen.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE VENERATION OF IMAGES.

Whose image is this?—Matt. 22: 20.

According to history there have been images at all times and among all races and peoples; and the Romans had on their coins the image of their emperor, as we have on our coins the images of kings, emperors, etc. In like manner we find among the most ancient nations religious images, which enjoyed not merely a civil, but a religious veneration. Thus the Jews had two cherubims on the ark (*Exod. 25: 18*); and Moses, by a command of God, had a brazen serpent made and erected, that those who had been bitten by serpents might be healed by looking upon it.—*Numb. 21: 8, 9.* We Catholics, too, have various images and pictures, such as the images and pictures of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the angels and saints, to which we show religious veneration. But we do this only on account of Christ and the saints, who are represented to us by them. In this we adhere

exactly to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, which, in the Council of Trent, has expressed herself respecting the veneration of images in these words: "That the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints, are to be had and retained, particularly in churches, and that due honor and veneration are to be given them: not that any divinity, or virtue, is believed to be in them, on account of which they are to be worshipped; or that anything is to be asked of them; or, that trust is to be reposed in images, as was of old done by the Gentiles, who placed their hope in idols; but because the honor, which is shown them, is referred to the prototypes, which those images represent; in such wise that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover the head, and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ; and we venerate the saints, whom they represent, as by the decrees of various Councils, and especially of the second Synod of Nice, has been defined against the opponents of images."—*Con. Trid. Sess. 25.*

I shall speak to you to-day of the veneration of images, and explain the two following truths:

- I. *That it is right to venerate images;*
- II. *That it is useful to have and to venerate them.*

PART I.

It is right and lawful to venerate the images of Christ and of the saints.

1. *Reason* teaches this. The image and the original stand in close relation to each other. We honor him whose image we honor; we insult him whose image we insult. The honor, as well as the dishonor, which is given to the images refers to the originals, that is, to those who are represented by the images, to Christ and the saints. The holy abbot Stephen made use of this argument against the iconoclast Constantine Copronymus. The emperor said to him: "Do you trample Jesus under your feet when you trample on his images?" Instead of giving him a direct answer, he took a coin with the image of the emperor and asked these present: "Whose image and inscription is this?" "The emperor's," they said. He then threw the coin to the floor and trampled it under his feet, saying: "If I be deserving of punishment for dishonoring the image of my temporal prince, how much more criminal is he who despises, blasphemes, and destroys the image of the heavenly King?" This argument in favour of the veneration of images was decisive; nevertheless the death of the saint was decreed, and he died shortly after as a martyr. The image and the original cannot be separated from

each other; what is done to the one, is done to the other. If the saints deserve to be venerated, their images also must be treated with affection and respect. Moreover, images are something holy, because they represent Christ and the saints; they serve a high purpose, for by them the honor of God and our own salvation are promoted. Now if images are holy for this twofold reason, it is right that we should honor them, for honor is due to what is holy. The love and veneration which we bear towards God and his saints should urge us to venerate their images. Since a child honors the image of his parents, a subject the image of his king, why should we refuse our veneration to the images of Christ and of his saints?

2. *The Sacred Scripture* teaches this. God himself commanded Moses to have the ark made as a symbol of his presence; there were to be two cherubims on the two sides of it, and it was to be preserved in the Holy of Holies.—*Exod.* 25: 17, 18. Hence Therasius, patriarch of Constantinople, in the second Council of Nice, said: "As the Old Testament possessed cherubim, which overshadowed the ark, we should have images of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Mother of God and of the saints, to overshadow our altars." The Sacred Scripture says that the Jews showed religious veneration to the ark. Thus we read: "Josue fell flat on the ground before the ark of the Lord until the evening, both he and all the ancients of Israel."—*Jos.* 7: 6. David also says: "Exalt ye the Lord our God, and adore his footstool, for it is holy."—*Ps.* 98: 5. Religious veneration was also given to the brazen serpent, the type of the crucified Redeemer. God sent serpents to the Israelites in the desert, because they had grievously sinned, and many died from their bites. In this calamity they asked Moses to pray to God to take the serpents away. Moses, at the command of God, made a brazen serpent and set it up for a sign, announcing that he who confidently looked upon this image, should be healed of the bite of the serpents. This was fulfilled; all the Israelites who had been bitten of the serpents looked upon the brazen serpent and were healed.—*Numb.* 21: 5-9. From this it evidently follows that even to the Israelites the use and veneration of images were not unconditionally forbidden, because God himself had commanded them to venerate the ark and the brazen serpent. The Old Testament, indeed, contains passages in which God forbids the making of images. "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them. I am the Lord, thy God."—*Exod.* 20: 4, 5. "You shall not make to yourselves any idol or graven thing, neither shall you erect pillars, nor set up a re-

markable stone in your land, to adore it."—*Levit* 26: 1. As is evident from these passages, God did not absolutely forbid the Israelites to make images; they were only forbidden to make an image for the purpose of adoring it, for that would have been idolatry.

3. *Church History.* Images were not common among the primitive Christians; this was owing to the circumstances of those times. If images had been in use then as they are now, the opinion might have obtained among Jews and Gentiles that the Christians adored images, as did the pagans. It would, moreover, have been difficult to restrain the newly converted Gentiles, who had been accustomed to adore images, from this vice. Besides, the situation in which the Christians then lived prevented the use of images; they were compelled to keep their religious services, and everything pertaining thereto, most secret, so that they might not be discovered and delivered up to death. Therefore they could not have images, and particularly large and immovable ones, because they might easily have betrayed them. They were not, however, altogether without images. Clement of Alexandria admonishes his contemporaries to have Christian emblems, such as a dove or a fish, engraved on their signets. We also learn from Tertullian that in his time, Jesus, in the character of the Good Shepherd, was so represented on the chalices. Similar representations are also found in the catacombs; they exhibit images from the first centuries, especially of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Since those images are affixed to the altar, it follows that religious veneration was given to them. When the Church obtained peace, churches were built everywhere and numerous images were placed therein for veneration. The emperor Constantine, according to Eusebius, caused a cross to be erected in front of his palace, for the protection and security of the empire, as it were. It is also said that he gave many churches several images made of the finest silver. But not only churches were thus adorned and decorated with images, but also private buildings; and priests and lay people venerated them and prayed before them. St. Basil writes: "I invoke the Apostles, prophets and martyrs, that they may pray to God to be merciful to me and to forgive me my sins. I esteem and venerate their images, because these things are ordained, according to tradition, by the Apostles and are in use in all churches." When, therefore, in the eighth century, the Greek emperor, Leo III. stigmatized the veneration of the images as idolatry, and cast them out of the churches and destroyed them, all orthodox Christians condemned his impious act; and Theodore the Studite declared to him that "there is no place, no region, no house where there are no images. You wish to put aside in a moment, and according

to your own notion, the veneration of images sanctioned by all for eight hundred years, and propagated together with Christianity itself." The second Council of Nice thereupon declared that it is allowed to venerate the images of Christ and of the saints. The Council of Constantinople in the year 869, and the Council of Trent, declare the same.

PART II.

It is also useful to have and to venerate the images of Christ and the saints.

1. *They give us silent instruction in our holy religion, and in this way supply to some extent the want of books.* St. Gregory says: Images are placed in our churches, that the uneducated may at least read with their eyes what they are not able to read in books." He who contemplates the fourteen stations of the Way of the Cross has as clear an insight into the history of the passion of Christ as if he read it in a book. With the vividness of our eyesight we also read the virtues of the saints in their images and pictures and learn to love their humility, meekness, purity and devotion. How useful then are images in this respect!

2. *They increase devotion.* When at our devotions we turn our eyes to an image we can collect our thoughts better; pious aspirations arise in our soul, our mind is occupied with what the image represents, and thus it comes to pass that we pray more devoutly than we could without it. It is therefore very advantageous always to say our prayers before an image of Christ, of Mary, or of a saint.

3. *They stimulate to good.* The ancient Greeks and Romans erected monuments of illustrious men in public places, that their youth might be encouraged by the sight of them to imitate them, and, like them, to distinguish themselves by heroic deeds. And will not the images of Christ and of the saints have a beneficent influence upon the minds of Christians? Will they not animate them to renounce sin, to serve God and to strive for heaven? We cannot doubt these salutary effects, since history gives such striking testimony of them. St. Gregory of Nyssa says of himself that he could never look at the pictures which represented Abraham about to sacrifice his son Isaac without shedding tears. A young man of noble extraction, who for a long time had led a dissolute life, once saw in a church an image of the penitent David, from whose eyes tears flowed, while an angel caught them in a golden goblet. Beneath the image were written the

words of St. Augustine: "David sinned only once, and always wept; you always sin, and never weep." The contemplation of this image so deeply moved the young man that he fell on his knees, bewailed his sins with bitter tears, and from that hour led a penitential life. Many such examples could be adduced. Therefore the Council of Trent says with justice that "the images of the saints are very useful," not only because the people are thereby reminded of the benefits and graces which flow to them through Jesus Christ, but also because the miracles of God and their salutary examples are placed before the eyes of the faithful in order that they may give thanks to God for them, regulate their lives and morals according to the examples of the saints, be encouraged to adore and love God, and aspire to true piety.

4. *Finally, by using them we can obtain of God many graces and benefits.* The images, indeed, are merely lifeless forms, the work of human hands, which of themselves have not the least power or virtue; all power comes from God either directly, or indirectly through the intercession of the saints. We approach no image of Christ or of the saints with the hope and intention of asking help of the image itself: our confidence is solely and purely in God, and in the intercession of the saints. It cannot, however, be denied that God frequently makes use of images in order to impart to men various benefits. He is accustomed generally to impart his graces to men by means of outward, visible means. Examples: Naaman, the Syrian, who was to wash himself in the river Jordan, in order to be cleansed of his leprosy (*IV. Kings 5*); the woman with the issue of blood, who was healed by touching the hem of Christ's garment; the holy sacraments, to which as visible signs great graces are attached; in like manner also the sacramentals. We need not wonder, then, if, according to the testimony of history, men have oftentimes found help in their corporal and spiritual necessities before images. It is related of the holy abbot Stephen, that in the many miracles he wrought he always made use of an image of Christ. Before such an image he healed a man who was born blind, saying: "In the name of Jesus Christ, whom you adore in his image, receive your sight." He freed the only son of a certain woman from a devil which possessed him, commanding the unfortunate man to adore Jesus Christ in his image. In the same manner he cured a noble lady who had been sick for seven years. In several places there are miraculous images, by means of which many miracles are wrought. It would be folly to deny all these miracles, since many of them have been most severely scrutinized and examined and have been found perfectly credible.

PERORATION.

Hold the images of Christ and of his saints in honor; for the honor which you show to them refers to Christ and his saints who are represented by them. Place the images and pictures of saints in your houses for contemplation and veneration. It is far better to have these sacred objects than merely profane, and sometimes offensive, ones from the pagan world. The image of the crucified Saviour, of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph, of your patron saint, and of one or another of the great company of the blessed, ought to be in every house. Often look at them devoutly and resolve to follow the saints and to serve God with the same persevering zeal with which they served him. In this way the use and veneration of the images of the saints will bring you a blessing for time and eternity. Amen.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION OF GOD AND THE SAINTS.

Whose image is this?—Matt. 22: 20.

When you look at portraits in a gallery or elsewhere, you are often under the necessity of asking, "Whose image is this?" For there are so many and different pictures, that it is impossible for us to know who is represented by each of them. There is, however, a mark which enables us at once to distinguish between holy pictures and all others, and this is what is called the *nimbus* or *halo*. For if you contemplate attentively the pictures of Christ or of the saints, you will always see that a light streams from their heads, and forms an aureola, or circle of rays as a crown of glory about it, and this is what we call the nimbus or halo. This nimbus is a distinction and a mark of something that is divine or holy, and therefore is attributed only to God and his saints. The shape or form of the nimbus differs. Thus the nimbus of God the Father is usually in the form of a triangle, by which it is expressed that God the Father is the first Person of the Most Holy Trinity; the nimbus of the Son is usually in the form of a circle with a cross in it, by which the Son is represented as

our Redeemer, who suffered and died for us on the cross. The Holy Ghost has the same nimbus, probably because he applies to us the fruit of Redemption. As regards the Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints, the nimbus appears as a disk, and is larger and more brilliant, according to the degree of holiness attained by those to whom it belongs. In order to make easy the answer to the question: *Whose image is this?* and to explain to you what is characteristic of holy images, I shall speak to you to-day of the pictorial representation of God and the saints:

- I. *Of the Three Divine Persons;*
- II. *Of the saints of God.*

PART I.

The Three Divine Persons are sometimes represented singly, sometimes all three together.

1. The person of the Father commonly appears only in group with the other Persons. In the primitive ages of Christianity God the Father was represented only as *a hand that reaches out of the clouds in the act of blessing*. The reason why the Father was seldom represented, was because he had not revealed himself in a visible form to man, as was the case as regards the other two Persons, and for this reason he is designated in the Sacred Scripture as the *Invisible*.—*Col. 1: 15*. But he was also represented at an early period as a whole figure in the form of a venerable patriarch, in a white robe and a magnificent mantle, with a white, unparted beard, a circular nimbus containing the symbolical triangle, with a sceptre or an orb in his hand. In the middle ages he was represented with the tiara on his head. This has its significance, although the propriety of this representation has been questioned by critics. He appears as an aged man with a white beard, and this reminds us of the passage in Daniel (7: 9), where he is called the "Ancient of days;" the appearance of age indicating his eternity. It is true, the Son and the Holy Ghost are also eternal; in the Father, however, the age is rendered purposely conspicuous because both the Son and the Holy Ghost have their source and origin from the Father. His beard is *unparted*, as being distinguished from the beard of the Son, which is parted. The circular nimbus again signifies his eternity; but his triangular one expresses that he is the first Person of the Blessed Trinity; the sceptre and the orb in his hand intimate that he is the Creator, Lord, and Ruler of the world. The tiara, the triple crown on his head, symbolizes the three empires over which he holds sway—namely heaven, earth, and hell.

2. God the Son is not only represented with the other two Persons, but very often alone by himself. In the former case he appears at the right hand of the Father, because the Sacred Scripture says that he sits at the right hand of God. Sometimes he is represented as standing at the right hand of the Father, for thus St. Stephen saw him when he was about to be stoned to death. "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."—*Acts* 7: 55. Concerning the other representations of our Lord, he is represented from the earliest times with oval face, parted beard with fair hair parted on the top of the head, with a white robe and a mantle over it, with the marks of his wounds, and with a cross in his hand. He is also often represented with the orb under him for a footstool, whereby reference is made to the words of the Psalm (109: 1): "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand: until I make thy enemies thy footstool." As at present, the Son of God was represented also in the earliest times by himself. This representation was frequently by way of emblems. Thus he was represented as a *vine*, as he designates himself (*John* 15); as the *Lamb of God*, as St. John the Baptist calls him; as a *lion*, because in the Apocalypse (5: 5) he is called the lion of the tribe of Juda; and especially as a *fish*, as is often the case on antique Christian monuments. This symbol points to the Resurrection of Christ; for as Jonas came forth from the belly of the whale, so Christ issued forth from the bowels of the earth. In our days Christ is often represented as an *infant*, a *teacher*, as *crucified*, or as our *judge*. As an infant he is represented standing, either blessing or holding the orb in his hand, or sitting on the arm or in the lap of his mother. As a teacher he appears standing erect, with the right hand raised in the act of blessing, and with an open or a closed book. But he is generally represented as the Crucified, and justly so, for thus he exhibits himself as our Redeemer. Therefore, the Council of Trullo (692) decreed that Jesus Christ should be represented in images as the Crucified. But that this representation may be worthy of Christ, even on the cross, his divine power and the liberty with which he offers himself, and his triumph over death and hell, must shine forth. In his glory, and especially in his character as judge, Christ is represented as enthroned on a rainbow, raising the right hand in benediction, and holding a book in the left, rejecting the reprobate. At his right and left, and near him, stand the Blessed Virgin, as Mother of mercy and Refuge of sinners, and St. John the Baptist, preacher of Penance.

3. The Holy Ghost is represented almost invariably under the form of a *dove*, because he descended in the form of a dove and

rested on Christ at his baptism in the river Jordan.—*Matt.* 3: 16. The dove is a very appropriate emblem of the Holy Ghost. The dove is clean and tolerates no stain on itself. The Holy Ghost, too, is a lover of purity and dwells only in pure souls, for it is said of him that "he will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins."—*Wisd.* 1: 4. Sometimes he is also represented in the form of tongues of fire, because on the feast of Pentecost he came down in the form of parted tongues of fire that sat upon each one of the Apostles.

PART II.

Pictorial representation of the *saints*.

1. Of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

(a.) She is often represented with the moon and the serpent, whose head she crushes under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. This picture refers to the following passage of the Apocalypse: "And a great sign appeared in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."—12: 1. The woman here mentioned is the Blessed Virgin Mary, who stands here as a symbol of the Church of God. The woman is clothed with the sun. *i. e.*, surrounded by a brilliant light, which signifies that Mary possessed a great knowledge of God and was more fully initiated in the counsels of God than all mankind together. The moon under her feet signifies that she is exalted above the changeable things of the world; serving God with equal fidelity in all situations of life; therefore we address her in the Litany as "Virgin most faithful." She crushes the head of the serpent, and this refers to the words of the Lord: "She shall crush thy head." *Gen.* 3: 15. The twelve stars with which she is crowned are the twelve Apostles, whose queen she is.

(b.) There are many other representations of the Blessed Virgin, which bring before us her extraordinary graces and the events of her life. I shall mention only a few: The image or picture of *her Immaculate Conception*. In this the representation of the serpent whose head Mary crushes is essential, for by it the dogma of faith is expressed that Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin. The representation as a *Virgin*, with a lily in her hand; the lily being the emblem of virginal purity. The representation as *Mother of God*, with the divine Infant on her arm, or on her lap. In this she generally has the sign of her royal dignity, the sceptre in her hand; for as Mother of God she

is the Queen of all angels and saints. The *Mother of Dolors*, with one or seven swords in her heart. The representation with one sword refers to the prophecy of Simeon: "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce" (*Luke 2: 35*); but that with seven swords refers to the seven events in the life, passion and death of Jesus, which were especially painful to Mary.

2. *Of the angels.* The Israelites had representations of angels. Thus the two cherubims on the Ark.—*Exodus 25: 18-20*. The angels are always represented with *wings*. The wings signify that God makes use of the angels as messengers to reveal his counsels to man, and that they execute quickly and with all readiness the commissions received from God. They are often represented in white flowing garments and a golden girdle, whereby their angelic purity and celestial love are signified. Various emblems are employed to represent their participation in the works of God, *e. g.*, the sword to express the judgment which according to the will of God, they execute on sinners; the cross and other instruments of the passion, to signify that they were especially active in the passion and death of Christ and in the work of our Redemption; musical instruments, indicative of the praises which they ever give to God; censers, to indicate that they bring the prayers of the faithful before the throne of God and that they themselves adore him most profoundly. The *Seraphim* are represented with six wings, two downward, two upward and two extended as in the act of flying. The Cherubim, on the contrary, are represented only as heads, with two wings; and all other angels, with two wings, and youthful figures. The three angels which in the Sacred Scripture are called *Michael*, *Gabriel* and *Raphael*, are represented in a manner corresponding to their office. *Michael* treads the dragon under foot and draws the sword against him or transfixes him with a lance, whereby his combat and victory over the devil and his associates are indicated. He also holds a pair of scales, in one of which there is a soul, and in the other the devil with a millstone. This expresses that St. Michael is especially a patron of the dying, and protects them against the snares of the wicked one; therefore the Church recommends the dying to his protection. *Gabriel* wears a sacerdotal vestment, and holds a lily in his hand, because he brought the message to the Blessed Virgin that God had chosen her as the mother of his Son, our Redeemer and High Priest. *Raphael* is represented as a pilgrim, with a staff and a gourd flask, because he accompanied young Tobias on his journey to Galbalus.

3. *Of the saints.*

(a.) *Saints of the Old Testament.* *Adam and Eve*. They are generally represented partly nude, to signify the state of innocence

and holiness in which God created them. *The Patriarchs*, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and especially Melchisedech, who is represented with three pieces of bread on a paten, and with a chalice in his hands, and robed like a priest, in order to depict him as the type of the High Priest, Jesus Christ. *Moses and the Prophets.* Moses is portrayed with rays of light which stream from his head, and with the two tablets of the law; because when coming down from Mount Sinai rays of light came forth from his head, so that the Israelites could not look upon his face, and because he had received from God the two tablets with the ten commandments. Moses and the prophets have their proper symbols, which have their origin in the Sacred Scripture, or are attributed to them by tradition. Thus Eliseus is represented with a double-headed eagle which signifies the twofold spirit of Elias for which Eliseus prayed.—*IV. Kings 2: 9*. Isaias has a saw in his hand, because, according to tradition, his body was sawn in two. A peculiarity of the saints of the Old Testament is that they have no nimbus or halo, whilst it is not wanting to a single one of the saints of the New Testament. The reason is because the saints of the Old Law could not attain to perfect holiness and felicity, heaven being as yet closed against them. St. John the Baptist is the only one who has a halo, because he was a saint of the New, as well as of the Old Testament.

(b.) *Saints of the New Testament.* *The four Evangelists* are represented with the emblems taken from the prophet Ezechiel (*1: 10*). St. Matthew has beside him a winged human figure, because his gospel begins with the book of genealogy, or the human descent of Christ; *St. Mark* has a lion, because his gospel begins with St. John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the desert; *St. Luke* has an ox for sacrifice, because his gospel begins with the sacrifice of Zachary; and *St. John* has an eagle because, eagle-like, he soars aloft to the highest heavens and begins with the Divinity of Christ. These four emblems assigned to the Evangelists are very ancient and were already known in the time of St. Jerome. The *Apostles*, whose portraiture is regulated in accordance with the mission given them by Christ.—*Matt. 10: 9*, and *Luke 9: 3*. They accordingly have a girdle about their loins, a long tunic without sleeves, a mantle and sandals. By the sandals they are distinguished from the Prophets of the Old Law, who are always represented with shoes, because they announced the word of God only in the land of the Jews, but these Apostles were to announce it throughout the whole world. Besides their dress, each Apostle has a distinguishing sign, which is most frequently the instrument of his martyrdom. The *Martyrs* have a palm or a standard as a sign of the struggle which they endured, and of the victory which they won. They have also

particular signs which refer to their lives, their position in life, and their torture. The *Confessors*, that is, those saints who are not martyrs, are clothed according to their station in life, and have moreover distinguishing signs which are taken from the history of their life, in order the better to distinguish them from other saints of the same station. The *Virgins*, finally, often have a lily as emblem of their undefiled purity; or a lamp, which refers to the burning lamp of the prudent virgins; sometimes also a bridal wreath around their forehead, which singles them out as brides of Christ. Besides these general marks, they, like the other saints, have also particular and special ones.

PERORATION.

As you perceive, all that you notice in the images and pictures of the saints affords instruction and edification. Turn your eyes often to these objects; reflect on the truths and lessons which they represent, and let them animate you to a pious, Christian life. In this manner the representations of God and of the saints will be to you preachers, whose silent teachings will increase your faith, strengthen your hope, inflame your charity, and conduct you on the road by which you will safely arrive at your journey's end. Amen.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

COINS A FIGURE OF GOOD WORKS.

Show me the coin of the tribute.—Matt. 22: 19.

We read in the gospel of to-day that our divine Lord commanded the ambassadors of the Pharisees to show him a coin of the tribute. Christ will repeat this command to us when we shall appear before his tribunal. "Show me," he will say, "the coin of the tribute." Blessed are we if we shall be able to obey his command; he will then admit us into his kingdom. But woe to us if we cannot show the desired coin; the sentence of condemnation will be passed upon us. But what coin is it that the divine Judge will ask of us? It is not coin of gold or silver; the coin that God

demands of us is good works; these we must show him, that we may be able to stand before him in judgment. I shall speak to you to-day of good works and bring them before your eyes under the figure of coins, for *coins are a figure of good works*:

- I. As regards their necessity;
- II. As regards their quality.

PART I.

Coins are necessary—

1. *To pay taxes and dues.*

(a.) There are different kinds of taxes and dues, such as taxes on real estate, income tax, state, county, city, school and poor taxes. These taxes are levied by law, and are necessary, that the various requirements of the state, city, borough, or county may be complied with. Every individual who has an income must pay taxes; and if he should refuse to comply with this duty, he would be compelled to pay them, or his property would be sold to make up the amount. But to pay taxes and dues, money is necessary, *i. e.*, various coins, namely gold, silver, nickel and copper coins, or bank-notes exchangeable for coin.

(b.) As money is necessary for the payment of taxes, so good works are necessary for the temporal and eternal welfare of man. Let us consider this truth in a few examples. In the Sacred Scripture works of mercy and charity are especially recommended. How much good is done by the practice of these works, and how much misery removed, or at least alleviated and mitigated! Let us suppose that nobody would feed the hungry, clothe the naked, harbor the harborless, visit the sick, or bury the dead; how ill it would fare with human society! how many unfortunate wretches would perish in their misery! Suppose no one would do a work of mercy, instruct the ignorant, comfort the afflicted, correct the erring; in a word, that no one would care for the spiritual welfare of men, what would be the result? How many would fall into the snares of vice and sin to their temporal and eternal ruin! Suppose it were not the duty of parents to provide for the corporal and spiritual necessities of their children; what would become of the children? Would they not perish in their helplessness, like the children of the Chinese that are cast out into the streets, or exposed in secluded places, where they perish from hunger, or are devoured by wild beasts? Or how would it be possible that without education they could become orderly, well behaved persons? Consider the various Christian virtues, such as

humility, meekness, patience, chastity, temperance; what mischief would spring up in the world if these duties were neglected and only the opposite vices could be practiced? Do you now comprehend how necessary good works are?

2. *To pay for the necessities of life.*

(a.) In order to be able to live we require various things; we need food, for no one can live on air; we need clothes, and a dwelling to protect ourselves against the inclemencies of the weather; in sickness we need a physician, medicine, nursing, and attendance. All these, and many other matters, necessarily require, as you know, money, and much money. We must, as the saying is, always have an open purse, for without money (or credit, which is equivalent to money) you get nothing. But if one has money, plenty of gold and silver or paper-money, one experiences no difficulty, for everything can be obtained for money.

(b.) Just as money is necessary for the present life, so good works are necessary for the future life. Our Lord expressly says: "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*. To do the will of God is neither more nor less than to practice good works. That eternal salvation depends on the practice of good works is evident from the sentence of Christ on the Day of Judgment. In this sentence he declares that only those who have practiced the works of mercy shall enter into life; and that, on the contrary, those who have failed to perform them shall be cast into everlasting fire.—*Matt. 25*. Again, Christ says: "The hour cometh, wherein all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."—*John 5: 28, 29*. And the Apostle says: "God will render to every man according to his works; to them, indeed, who, according to patience in good work, seek glory, and honor, and incorruption, eternal life; but to them that are contentious, and who obey not the truth, but give credit to iniquity, wrath and indignation."—*Rom. 2: 6-8*. It is with heaven as with the necessities of life; in order to buy these, you must have money. In like manner you must have good works, that with them you may buy heaven for yourselves. Money does not fly into your pockets; if you wish to earn it honestly, you must labor and toil. Good works also cost labor; you must mortify yourselves in many ways, and often do violence to yourselves in the exercise of them. But as you dread neither labor nor exertion

when there is any question of acquiring money, so you must also cheerfully undergo those pains and difficulties which are required for the practice of good works, for heaven is worth them all. Hence the Apostle says: "In doing good, let us not fail: for in due time we shall reap, not failing."—*Gal. 6: 9*.

3. *To pay debts.*

(a.) In every community there are people who have debts. But debts must be paid. He who contracts debts, and has not the will to pay them, is no better than a thief. But in order to be able to pay debts, you must have money, not only nickel and copper, but also gold and silver coins. The debtor must be economical and saving, for only in this way will he be able at some future time to liquidate his debts.

(b.) What is said of money debts, holds good also of the debts of sin. We all have these, and even those who are rich in money and land are not excepted. Who is there among us that has not often sinned in thought, word and deed, and by omission of good, and must not strike his breast and confess: Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault? Although the sins themselves, together with their eternal punishment, are forgiven us in the Sacrament of Penance, yet temporal punishment generally remains, which must be fully atoned for either in this world or in purgatory. This is the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Now, what are the coins with which we can pay the debts of our sins in this life? They are good works; especially the three good works, *prayer, fasting and almsdeeds*. Prayer is not only the means for obtaining all goods and graces, but also for the atonement of our sins, and for the extinction of the temporal punishment due to them. The Church has always considered prayer as a means of doing penance; therefore she has at all times prescribed various exercises of prayer for a penance. Even in our days the penances which confessors enjoin upon their penitents chiefly consist in prayers, all holy penitents having practiced prayer with great fervor. David (*Ps. 6: 7*), Mary Magdalen, Thais, Margaret of Cortona, who prayed with the greatest fervor not only by day, but for whole hours together during the night. A particularly effectual means of penance is fasting, which comprises all interior and exterior mortification. In the primitive ages of the Church fasting was often prescribed as a penance. He who had committed a somewhat grievous sin was obliged to fast several days on bread and water and to abstain from all amusement, however lawful and harmless, so long as his penitential time lasted. Even at present the principal object of the forty days' fast, as well as of all fast days and days of abstinence

throughout the year, is atonement for the temporal punishment due to sin. An excellent means of penance is alms. "Alms delivereth from death; and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting."—*Tob. 12: 9*. St. Chrysostom says: "Charity is the friend of God; it easily obtains the grant of graces; it breaks the fetters of sins, dispels darkness, and extinguishes the flames of our transgressions." Provide yourself with these coins; practice with persevering zeal the three good works of prayer, fasting, and alms, and offer up to God all the sufferings and hardships incident to your state of life in the spirit of penance and in all patience, that you may satisfy your temporal punishments as much as possible in this world, and not be required to suffer for them in purgatory.

PART II.

With regard to the quality of coins, there are—

1. *Genuine and counterfeit coins.*

(a.) *Genuine* coins are those issued by lawful authority and which have an intrinsic value, according to the metal of which they are made, and a specific value, according to the standard adopted by the country issuing them. Thus gold and silver coins must not have more alloy than is prescribed by law. *Counterfeit* coins are those which are made by some one who has no authority to coin money, and which have not the standard value which they lawfully should have. There are counterfeit gold coins which are made of copper, or some other base metal, and are only gilt. Of course, only genuine coins are received by the authorities and private persons, and counterfeits, if they are detected, are rejected as valueless.

(b.) As there are genuine and counterfeit coins, so there are genuine and counterfeit good works. Which are genuine good works? They are those which are done with a good intention, or for the honor of God, according to the admonition of the Apostle: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all things for the glory of God."—*I. Cor. 10: 31*. As the beauty of the body chiefly consists in the face, so the beauty of our actions (pleasing God by our actions) consists in our good intention. The purity of intention stamps a merit and establishes a standard value upon every, even the most insignificant, action of our lives, and renders even such actions as are of their own nature indifferent—such as eating, drinking, and sleeping—meritorious for heaven. Hence St. Thomas of Aquin says: "Every

human action that is done with free will can be meritorious, provided it is directed purely and solely to God." On the contrary, if the good intention is wanting to our good works they are counterfeit and valueless, like counterfeit money. The Scribes and Pharisees performed many good works; they prayed, fasted, gave alms; and yet Christ says of them that they had already received their reward. Why? Because their good works were destitute of purity of intention; for the affections of their hearts were not properly regulated; they sought not the honor and glory of God, but their own honor and the applause of men. "Let us," says St. Chrysostom, "make the maxim of St. Paul the rule of our lives: 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all things for the glory of God.' Whether we pray, fast, mourn, forgive, go in or out, buy, sell, talk, or keep silence, and whatever else we do, let us do it for the honor and glory of God; and whatever cannot be done for his honor and glory, let it not be done at all. Wherever we are, and whatever we do, let us carry about with us this maxim as a safe staff, as a shield, and an invaluable treasure, that after having done and said all for the honor of God, we may be honored before God in this life, and in the life to come."

2. *Coins made of precious or of base metal.*

(a.) We have coins of precious metal—namely, gold and silver; and of less precious metal—namely, nickel and copper. Gold has a higher value than silver; a gold coin not quite so large as a quarter in silver, is worth twenty times as much as the quarter. And silver has a higher value than nickel or copper. Purses of the same size filled with coins can vary very much from one another with regard to the value of their contents; in the one there may be more than a thousand dollars; in the other, only about fifty, five, or not more than two dollars, according as they contain gold, silver, nickel, or copper coins.

(b.) There is the same relation with regard to good works. *There are good works which of their own nature are better than others.* These are the spiritual works of mercy, which of their own nature are better and more excellent than the corporal works of mercy. Now if one man performs a corporal, and another a spiritual work of mercy, the work of the one is more pleasing to God and more meritorious than that of the other, even granting that both perform their work in an equally good manner. Again the value and the meritoriousness of the good work is in proportion to the zeal with which it is performed. For instance, if you say the Rosary very devoutly, you have a greater merit before God than if you say it with distractions. Lastly, the

good work is the better and the more meritorious, the less it is influenced by earthly considerations, *therefore the more it is done for God*. If any one engaged in a good work is so disposed that he would do it if no reward at all were to be expected, but *only* for the reason that he knows God has pleasure in the work, he acquires a greater reward than another, who, in the performance of it has *also* himself in view, *e. g.*, in order to obtain a reward for it in heaven, although his action is also pleasing to God and meritorious. You must, therefore, endeavor to perform all good acts as well and perfectly as possible, that they may become the more meritorious for heaven.

3. *Finally, such as are current, or not current.*

(a.) Current coins are those which are received everywhere, at least in the country in which they are coined, and especially at the banks and the state treasury; non-current are those which cannot be circulated under any circumstances. Non-current coins are distinguished from such as are current, because they are counterfeit; and also from such as were formerly received, but were afterwards declared not current by law and withdrawn from circulation.

(b.) Also in this respect good works resemble coins. The current good works are those which are received by God and rewarded by him in heaven. Such good works are those which are performed in a state of grace, and, as I have already remarked, with a good intention. Those who have no mortal sin on their conscience are in a state of grace. That only those who are in a state of grace can perform meritorious works is evident from the fact that only they are united with Jesus by love and possess supernatural life. Hence he says himself: "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. Non-current works are those which are not received by God and rewarded in eternity. To these belong works which are performed in a state of sin. He who has committed a mortal sin resembles a branch which is torn from the tree; he no longer possesses the supernatural life, and therefore no longer can do anything that has a supernatural value, and is rewarded in heaven. No matter what good works may be practiced by those who are in a state of mortal sin, they cannot expect the least reward for them. How deplorable then is the condition of those who live in sin! Non-current good works are also those which, like non-current coins, have lost their supernatural value or merit before God. Those good works are meritorious before God only so long as the man who has done them remains in a

state of grace; if he falls into a mortal sin, he loses all merits until he reconciles himself again with God by true penance and returns to the state of grace. Therefore the Lord himself says by the Prophet: "If the just man turn himself away from his justice, and do iniquity. . . . all his justices which he has done, shall not be remembered." — *Ezech.* 18: 24. How much then must you guard against mortal sin, in order not to lose the merit of your good works! And how speedily ought you to do penance when you have the misfortune to fall into a grievous sin, that you may recover what you lost by your past obedience and acquire further merits for heaven by the practice of good works!

PERORATION.

I conclude with the words of our divine 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." — *Matt.* 6: 20. You labor like men, in order to acquire money, for you need it for defraying various expenses and for your success in the world. Act also like men in the practice of good works, for you wish to be admitted into heaven. But see that your good works resemble good, genuine and current coins. Do all for the honor and glory of God, and out of love for him; put a little more zeal into everything you do, and beware of lukewarmness and carelessness; guard with the greatest care and solicitude against every mortal sin, that you may not lose sanctifying grace and with it all merits, and perhaps even your poor immortal souls. Practice the Christian virtues and good works with a good, pure intention, with fervor and humility, and in a state of grace, for then they are good, genuine gold coins wherewith you will buy heaven for yourselves. Amen.



TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

A FALSE FRIEND IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN AN OPEN ENEMY.

Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth.—Matt. 22: 16.

Is not this the language of a friend? No; it is too honeyed to be true; for in perusing the four gospels I find nothing but slander and abusive expressions on the part of the Pharisees, by means of which they endeavored to lower the honor and estimation in which Christ stood with the people. But to-day they seem totally changed. This is the way of the world, to conceal the real meaning with honeyed words. It says: "Never express your real thoughts. Say one thing and do another." I prefer an open and decided enemy to a false friend. I dislike a man who has honey on his lips and poison in his heart, for we can easily guard against an open enemy, but not against a false friend. The wounds inflicted by an enemy are better than the kiss of a false friend; and the false friendship of him who hates us is more dangerous than the sword of him who publicly persecutes us. Of this I shall speak to you to-day.

A false friend is more dangerous than an open enemy.

1. *This is evident from Holy Scripture.*

(a.) When Jacob with his family was on his way to Canaan, the messengers whom he had sent before him brought word to him, saying: "We came to Esau, thy brother, and behold he cometh with speed to meet thee with four hundred men." Jacob knowing that Esau, although his brother, was his sworn enemy, was greatly afraid, and in his fear prayed to God, saying: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac; O Lord, who saidst to me: Return to thy land, and to the place of thy birth. With my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I return with two companies. Deliver me from the hand of my brother, for I am greatly afraid of him lest perhaps he come and kill the mother with the children." Having finished his prayer, he considered what means he might employ to gain his brother's heart, and to avert his ill-feeling. And he set apart, of the things that he had, presents for his brother Esau, and sent them by the hands of his servants,

saying to the first of them: "If thou meet my brother Esau, and he ask thee: Whose art thou? or whither goest thou, or whose are these before thee? thou shalt answer: Thy servant Jacob's; he hath sent them as a present to my lord Esau . . . for he said: I will appease him with presents . . . perhaps he will be gracious to me." Esau hearing this, was moved to compassion; he banished from his heart the bitter feeling he had entertained against Jacob, and ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissing him, wept. Esau, whom Jacob had deprived of his father's blessing; Esau, who entertained a deadly hatred against Jacob; Esau, who had sworn that he would destroy him, in an instant is changed from an enemy into a friend. Whence this sudden change? Jacob, hearing that Esau was coming with four hundred men to kill him, endeavored to mollify his angry brother with presents. Had Esau concealed his hatred under the cloak of friendship, Jacob would not have thought of appeasing him and sending him presents. Had Esau played the false friend instead of the open enemy, Jacob and all that were with him would probably have lost their lives.—*Gen. 32 and 33.*

(b.) We have an example hereof in Cain and Abel. God accepted the offerings of Abel, but rejected those of Cain, who, seeing this, conceived so great a hatred in his heart against his brother, that he resolved to take his life. He concealed his hatred, however, under the mask of friendship and brotherly affection, saying to him: "Let us go forth abroad." Abel, unsuspecting, consented, but when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother, and slew him.—*Gen. 4.* On comparing the brothers Esau and Jacob with Cain and Abel, I find that in one thing they were alike, and in another they differed. Cain hated his brother Abel; Esau hated his brother Jacob; in this they resemble each other. Cain's hatred was secret. Esau's open and public; herein they differ. Esau was easily reconciled, because he was an open enemy; but Cain, who was a secret enemy, could not rest till he imbued his hands in his brother's blood. There is this difference between open and secret enmity: the more open it is, the easier we may escape it; but the more hidden it is, the more injury it causes.

(c.) There are but few open enemies to be found; but secret enemies are very numerous. In the 22nd chapter of the Third Book of Kings we read that Achab, king of Israel, was preparing an army against the Syrians. Josaphat, king of Juda, voluntarily offered him assistance, for Josaphat thought he had a great friend in Achab; and without being asked, he united his army with that of Achab, and marched against the Syrians. But was Achab a friend of Josaphat? Achab said to Josaphat: "Take

armor, go into the battle and put on thy own garments." These words contain three points; the first two I find natural and just; but the third is rather suspicious: *Take armor*. Achab justly asks this of Josaphat, for as he offered his help it was but right that he should take armor. The second is: *Go into battle*; justice requires that he should not break his word; but the last word, *Put on thy own garments*, I cannot read without suspicion. Do garments gain the victory? Why did Achab insist that Josaphat should put on his own royal garments? The following words make me still more inquisitive: "But the king of Israel changed his dress." Why did Achab change his dress? Why did he not keep on his royal garments? Courtesy, politeness, and humility would not permit Achab to keep on his own royal garments. Josaphat had offered his services to Achab against the Syrians without being asked. Achab wished to show that he appreciated this act of generosity and friendship. If Achab would also go into battle, wearing his royal garments, there would be two kings and the honor of the one would naturally be diminished by that of the other. That this might not happen, Achab changed his dress and left all the honor to Josaphat. But was Achab a sincere friend? The Scripture says that Achab changed his dress; and I say, in changing his dress he changed his mind. Achab was not a friend, but a secret foe. Achab, under the appearance of friendship, told Josaphat to put on his own royal garments, not that he might be honored as king, but that the Syrians might recognize and kill him, which certainly would have occurred had not God protected him and ordained that Achab should be slain by a chance arrow. How many arrows would be required to wound false hearts!

(d.) In the gospel of St. Luke (23: 12) we read: *Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day; for before they were enemies one to another*. How did that happen! What produced in their minds so sudden and so extraordinary a change? Perhaps, the presence of the suffering Redeemer? Pilate was a pagan, who believed Christ to be an innocent man, but not the Son of God. Herod was a Jew, but his belief was according to the perverted prudence of the world; and as Christ did not gratify his curiosity by working a miracle before his eyes, he despised him! But, nevertheless, Herod and Pilate became friends. Pilate, being convinced that Christ was innocent, and having publicly proclaimed this conviction, did not know, especially as the populace demanded his death, whether he should set him at liberty or put him to death. He reasoned somewhat thus: If I set him free, I shall excite the ill-will and hatred of the populace against me. If I condemn him to death, I shall merit the displeasure of Cæsar, because of the unjust sentence. To escape these two dangers,

what does deceitful Pilate do? As if to leave to Herod the honor and power of pronouncing sentence upon Christ, he sent him to Herod, but his intention was to make Herod odious either to the people or to Cæsar. But Herod was as deceitful as Pilate. He neither set Christ at liberty nor did he condemn him, but sent him back to Pilate, thinking within himself: Pilate may burn his fingers, I shall not do it. Thus we see that their friendship consisted in trying to ensnare each other. This is the practice all over the world, not only among Jews and Gentiles, but also among Christians; they outwardly pretend to be reconciled, but inwardly they are not, and only wait for a favorable opportunity to give vent to their feelings.

2. By the *natural law* we are forbidden to *hate any one of our fellow-men*, and *Christ expressly commands us to love our enemies*; but the world teaches and practices another doctrine, as David says: "Who speak peace with their neighbor, but evils are in their hearts."—*Ps. 27: 3*. Such friendship is like *evergreen*, the leaves of which have the shape of a heart; it cleaves to trees, as if it were united with them in love, whilst it sucks the sap out of them and kills them. Such friendship is like the *apple of Sodom*, which is beautiful to look at, but within there is nothing but ashes; it is like a *pile of manure that is covered with snow*; it is like a ditch that is covered with grass and creeping vines and lures the unwary traveller to destruction. St. Chrysostom says: "Friendship is so deceitful that it is often very difficult to distinguish a friend from a deadly foe; hence the greatest security is not to confide in everyone as a friend."

We read in the fourth chapter of the Book of Judges, that Jahel went forth to meet Sisara, who was fleeing from the enemy, and said to him: "Come in to me, my lord; come in, fear not. He went in to her tent, and being covered by her with a cloak, said to her: Give me, I beseech thee, a little water, for I am very thirsty. She opened a bottle of milk, and gave him to drink, and covered him. . . . So Jahel, Haber's wife, took a nail of the tent and taking also a hammer, and going in softly, and with silence, she put the nail upon the temples of his head, and striking it with the hammer, drove it through his brain fast into the ground; and so passing from deep sleep to death, he fainted away and died." *Dalila* flattered Samson and deceived him with honeyed words till he revealed to her wherein his strength was, whereupon he was delivered into the hands of his enemies. *Saul* swore he would persecute David no more, but by his oath he only wished to make David believe himself secure, so that he could fall upon him suddenly. *Absalom* invited his brother Amnon to supper and gave his servants orders to kill him during the supper.

Of all such false friends the wise man says in the Book of Proverbs: "A man that speaketh to his friend with flattering and dissembling words, spreadeth a net for his feet."—29: 5.

3. True friendship has three qualities:

- (a.) *Union of hearts;*
- (b.) *Manifestation of hearts;*
- (c.) *Help in necessities.*

False friendship assumes the appearance of these qualities; but if we open our heart to a false friend and put him in possession of our secrets, what use will he make of them? He will laugh at us as fools because we cannot keep our own counsel: he will abuse our cordiality to our great injury and to his own advantage. A false friend will do all he can to injure us. All I can say is: Do not trust everyone who says that he is your friend. When Christ saw Nathanael he said of him: "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile."—*John* 1: 47. How few are there in the world of whom we can truly say: Behold a friend in whom there is no guile. The number of such sincere friends is known to God alone; we cannot distinguish them, but experience teaches that there are many false friends.

4. "He that hath found a faithful friend, hath found a treasure."—*Ecclus.* 6: 14. It is dangerous and foolish to trust every one. It is very difficult to distinguish a friend from a foe; and yet it is impossible to live without a friend. "Blessed is he that findeth a true friend" (*Ecclus.* 25: 12) to whom he can commit all the secrets of his heart without fear of being betrayed. But where is such a true and faithful friend to be found? In him who said to Moses: I AM WHO AM.—*Exod.* 5: 14. God is our only true friend; and who would not desire his friendship, beyond all possessions, even beyond life itself? Let us put our confidence in him alone, have recourse to him alone in our difficulties and perplexities, and he will be our protector and comforter. We are the friends of God, and he will be our friend if we do what he commands, for he says: "You are my friends, if you do the things that I command you."—*John* 15: 14. Live, then, according to the commandments of God and the precepts of his Church, and you will have God for your friend and a loving, affectionate father; and if God is your friend, you possess all that is worth possessing for time and eternity.

PERORATION.

Do not manifest your heart to every man. Heart and mouth must be one, so that whatever you say must be true; but you need not say everything that is true, nor must you say everything you know. Do not commit the secrets of your heart to everyone, but keep them buried in your own heart, for it is better for you to bury them in your own hearts than to manifest them to a false friend, for if the world uses hypocrisy you must use prudence and precaution. Trust, but know in whom you can trust; for all are not friends, even though they bear us gifts.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

WHEN DO WE RENDER TO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S?

Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and to God the things that are God's.—Matt. 22: 21.

At the conclusion of the gospel of this day, our divine Saviour commands us to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and to God the things that are God's. To give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, is to be good subjects of the temporal government—good citizens. As such we must love our country, willingly pay our taxes, conscientiously observe the existing laws and ordinances, and contribute our share to the common good. But since our final aim is not earth, but heaven, in which after this perishable life we are to enjoy an eternal felicity, we must, in order to attain this end, render to God the things that are God's. Now the question is: *When do we render to God the things that are God's?* I shall answer this question to-day, and say: We render to God the things that are God's when we are good Catholics, and—

- I. *Have a truly Catholic disposition of mind, and*
- II. *Lead a truly Catholic life.*

PART I.

For a truly Catholic disposition of mind, which we ought to have as members of the Catholic Church, there is required:

1. *A willing faith*, that is, we must readily receive and believe all that the Catholic Church proposes to our faith.

(a.) *Reasons.* The Church is our mother; for as children owe their corporal life to their mothers, so we owe to the Church our spiritual life, because she has regenerated us in holy baptism. And as mothers are solicitous for the corporal necessities of their children, so the Church provides for our spiritual necessities, by the preaching of the word of God, by the administration of the sacraments and by obtaining graces for us. And finally, as mothers are anxious to settle their children in this life, so the Church proposes to herself the task of providing for us in the future life, that is, she leads us to heaven. If the Church be our mother, what is more becoming to us than to have a child-like faith in her? This filial faith is most reasonable; for the Church is the infallible teacher of truth. This is evident from the words of Christ: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."—*Matt.* 28: 20. "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever."—*John* 14: 16. The Apostle, therefore, calls her, "The pillar and ground of the truth."—*I. Tim.* 3: 15.

(b.) *Inference.* From this it follows that it is our bounden duty to receive all that the Church proposes to our faith as the word of God, and to hold fast to it, whether we can comprehend it with our reason or not. He who believes merely what he perceives from his reason to be true, in reality has no faith at all, because he makes his faith depend, not on divine revelation, but on his reason. Much less has he a perfect faith, because faith contains truths and mysteries which no man can comprehend from reason alone. Many believe only what pleases their inclinations, and reject what contradicts their propensities and passions, *e. g.*, the eternity of the torments of hell. They want an easy gospel. But will God accommodate his doctrines and commandments to the passions of men? Or is a doctrine of faith and morals wrong because it does not suit the wishes and inclinations of men? Do not suffer yourselves to be blinded and led astray either by bad Catholics or by self-love. When once you know that this or that is a doctrine of the Catholic Church, an article of the faith, believe it, and hold firmly to it, be it never so incomprehensible to your limited understanding and reason, for the mouth of the Church is the mouth of Christ.

2. *A hearty participation in the joys and sorrows of the Church.*

A good Catholic loves his Church as devotedly as ever a child can love its mother; the effect of this love is that he feels what-

ever happens to the Church; that he shares her joys and sufferings: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire?"—*II. Cor.* 11: 29. This is the way for us to sympathize with the Church. He who takes no interest in the Church and is indifferent to her prosperity or adversity, is anything but a good Catholic; for he does not love his Church. He who rejoices at her sufferings and afflictions, and wishes to see her more and more enslaved and persecuted, is no Catholic at all. But since God threatens misery and perdition to those children who behave ill towards their parents (*Deut.* 27: 16; *Prov.* 30: 17), can Catholics who have such an unloving and unfilial disposition towards their mother the Church, expect a better fate?

3. *Zeal for everything that is Catholic.* A good Catholic—

(a.) *Loves and esteems his holy faith above all things*, and therefore he avoids all familiarity with unbelievers. St. John writes: "If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house nor say to him, God speed you. For he that saith unto him: God speed you, communicateth with his wicked works."—*II. John* 1: 10, 11. How severe is this admonition of the Apostle, who was all love for all men! When St. Polycarp, a disciple of St. John, was at Rome, the heretic, Marcian, meeting him one day, asked him if he knew him. Polycarp replied: "I know you; you are the firstborn of Satan." Beware of making friendships with enemies of Catholics, and have no more to do with them than is absolutely necessary; and if by chance you are in their company, be on your guard lest you should appear to give assent to their irreligious expressions and ridicule of doctrines and ordinances of the Church. "He that shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed, when he shall come in his majesty."—*Luke* 9: 26.

(b.) *Promotes the Catholic cause in whatever way he can.* At elections he gives his vote to those who favor the Church and religion; whenever asked he contributes towards good objects according to his ability. He who refuses to make the least sacrifice for the Church and to contribute to charitable purposes is not a good Catholic.

(c.) *Does not keep and read newspapers, books, etc., hostile to the Church.* Those who connive at the enemies of their mother, or assent to the calumnies and insults which are uttered against her—nay, who support with money those men who blaspheme, calumniate, and mortally hate her, are not good children. I leave it to yourselves to judge whether those can be good Catholics, who keep and read newspapers which insult and calumniate their

mother the Church, and support with their money those who write such papers. Can such Catholics hope to be favorably judged by Christ, who loves his Church, and has given his heart's blood for a sacrifice for her?

PART II.

The *Catholic life* must manifest itself—

1. *By diligently frequenting public worship on Sundays and holidays.* To this belongs—

(a.) *Divine worship in the forenoon*, which consists principally in holy mass, according to the precept of the Church: "Thou shalt devoutly hear holy mass on all Sundays and holidays." He who neglects to hear mass on Sundays and holidays commits a grievous sin, because he transgresses in an important matter the second precept of the Church and the third commandment of God. Pious, God-fearing Catholics of all times took this to heart, and went regularly to mass on Sundays and holidays, and could not be kept from it, even if they were obliged to make great sacrifices. In the early ages of the Church it often happened that the faithful were apprehended by the Gentiles at mass and led away to martyrdom, but they would rather suffer prison, torture and death, than miss mass on Sundays and holidays. The same occurred in England when the Catholic religion was proscribed there for three hundred years. Many under great difficulties and dangers made long journeys during the night, in order to be present on Sundays at the sacrifice of the mass in some secluded place. Not a few were discovered, imprisoned, heavily fined, deprived of their property, exiled, and even punished with death. How these examples confound many of us, who have so little devotion in church on Sunday and holidays, and who often miss mass. What an account such persons will have to give to God!

(b.) *Services in the afternoon* are not obligatory like mass; yet no one should carelessly neglect them, for the afternoon is a portion of the Lord's day and should at least be partially devoted to the service of God and the salvation of the soul. If a person cannot assist at the afternoon service, he ought to set aside a certain time for devotion at home.

(c.) *The word of God, or sermons and catechetical instruction.* The hearing of the sermon is required for the worthy celebration of Sundays and holidays, and is more or less necessary for all Christians so that they may be better instructed in religion,

preserved from sin and lukewarmness, and encouraged to persevere in a pious life. "The word of God affords to the soul a manifold and inestimable advantage; for it keeps her from sins, enlightens, warms and strengthens her; it procures healing in the sick, and strength in the healthy state."—*St. Thomas of Villanova*. Listen to the word of God with a heart solicitous for salvation, and not prompted by the wish to be entertained by the flowers of oratory and the graces of diction; pay more attention to the matter than to the manner of the discourse.

2. *By a fervent participation in the devotions of the Church.*

Such devotions are processions, tridiums, jubilees, missions, the forty hours' prayer, May and October devotions and the Stations or Way of the Cross during Lent. Good, pious Catholics diligently attend these devotions, in order to be made partakers of the graces connected with them. He who takes no part in them or even speaks of them perhaps contemptuously gives the world to understand that he is devoid of religious feeling or even of faith, deprives himself of many graces, and it is to be feared that he will come to a bad end.

3. *By the conscientious observance of the precepts of the Church.*

The precepts of the Church are in a certain measure also commandments of God, because God has authorized the Church to make laws, and Christ expressly declares: "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. To disobey the Church is to disobey God. Those Catholics, therefore, who eat meat on Fridays and other days of abstinence, sin not only against the Church, but also against God, and to them apply the words of Christ: "If he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."—*Matt.* 18: 17.

4. *Lastly, by the frequent reception of the holy Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist.*

As the Church commands all those of her children who have arrived at the age of discretion to confess their sins at least once a year, she evidently expresses the wish that they should confess more frequently. And who would not often confess, when he considers that frequent confession is necessary to salvation for many persons, but advantageous and useful for all? Pious Catholics have ever confessed frequently and do so now. Pope Clement VIII. confessed daily; St. Louis, king of France, confessed every Friday; St. Charles Borromeo and St. Francis of

Sales confessed once a week. When such pious and holy men confessed so often, why should not we? And who would delay communion by which so many graces are imparted to us? Why should you not go frequently to confession and communion when you have such a good opportunity on all Sundays and holidays—nay, even on week-days?

PERORATION.

Make the resolution to-day to conduct yourself as becomes good Catholics. Love your Church tenderly, as good children love their mother; believe all that she proposes to your faith; let your hearts throb in sympathy with her joys and sorrows, and be full of zeal for everything that is Catholic. Go to church on Sundays and holidays, in the morning and afternoon, and participate in the usual devotions. Keep the precepts of the Church and receive frequently, and always with a heart well prepared, the Sacrament of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist. By so doing you will render to God what is God's and he will, in return, give you heaven as your reward. Amen.



TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*Phil. 3: 17-21: 4, 1-3.* Brethren: Be followers of me, and observe them who walk so as you have our model. For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping), that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame: who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory, according to the operation whereby also he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Therefore my dearly beloved brethren, and most desired, my joy and my crown: so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beg of Evodia, and I beseech Syntyche to be one of mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, my sincere companion, help those women who have labored with me in the gospel with Clement and the rest of my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life.

I. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

ST. PAUL EXHORTS THE PHILIPPIANS TO IMITATE HIM, AND GIVES THEM SOME SPECIAL PRECEPTS.

In the epistle of this day, which, like that of last Sunday, is taken from the epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians, the Apostle warns them against those false teachers who would unite the Christian religion with Judaism. He calls these false teachers, enemies of the cross of Christ, because they reject the principal and fundamental truth of Christianity—namely, that we owe our Redemption, salvation and eternal happiness to the death of Jesus on the cross—because they would not hear of self-denial, and the mortification of the flesh. They represented the Christian religion as only a sect of Judaism, which was tolerated in the Roman empire, and thus on one side escaped the oppressions

and persecutions which the Christians suffered from the Jews and Gentiles, and on the other hand reaped temporal advantages from their office of preaching. The Apostle opposes to these men his own example and that of all good Christians who do not hesitate to confess themselves Christians publicly before Jew and Gentile, and for Christ's sake to suffer reproach and persecution.

We will consider the contents of this epistle, which may be divided into two parts—

- I. St. Paul exhorts the Philippians to imitate him;
- II. He gives special precepts.

PART I.

1. Brethren, be followers of me, and observe them who walk, so as you have our model.

(a.) The Apostle means to say: Take me and those whose conduct corresponds with mine for your model, and follow us. St. Paul could with justice and truth set himself up as a model for imitation, for he was anxious to make his life conformable to the life of Jesus Christ in all things; therefore he also wrote to the Corinthians: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ."—*I. Cor.* 4: 16. If we consider his zeal in preaching the gospel, his constancy in the endurance of tribulations and persecutions, his fervent love of God and man, his humility and self-denial, his contempt of all temporal goods, in short, whatever virtue we may single out, we see in him the most zealous follower of his Lord and Master, so that he could truly say: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."—*Gal.* 2: 20.

(b.) Oh, that all, especially fathers and mothers and all superiors, could say with St. Paul: *Be followers of me.* Oh, that we might display to our fellow-men and inferiors a good example of the conscientious fulfilment of the duties of our religion and state of life. A good example is accompanied with the most beneficial consequences; it leads the erring back into the right road, confirms the weak, abashes the tepid, converts the sinner, increases zeal for virtue in the good, and urges on the imperfect to strive seriously after perfection. Good example is also a spiritual alms of mercy, because it particularly promotes the salvation of our neighbor, and for this reason has a right and title to the glorious reward which is promised to those who perform the works of mercy. There is, moreover, a strict obligation imposed upon us to give a good example, because Jesus expressly says:

"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. We must be most careful not to give scandal and bad example, remembering the words of Jesus: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea."—*Matt.* 18: 6. Nor must we allow the many bad examples before our eyes to make us swerve from our duty or to separate us from our allegiance to Jesus Christ, but we must be determined to persevere steadily in all that is required even to the end, that we may not be rejected with the many, but be saved with the few.

2. For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping), that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things.

(a.) The Apostle here explains why he so urgently admonishes the Philippians to be followers of him. He speaks of the false teachers who would not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of men, but attributed all salvation to the Mosaic law, and asserted that even in Christianity the whole ceremonial law, such as the law of circumcision, of the Jewish purifications and sacrifices was binding on all who desired to be justified and saved. These false teachers, therefore, were more like Jews than Christians; neither would they hear of the austere moral code of Christ, of abnegation and mortification; and they taught it to be lawful to give full scope to the lusts of the flesh, because all justice and a godly life consisted in the observance of the ceremonial law of Moses. Therefore as their doctrine and life were in direct opposition to Christian faith and morals, St. Paul threatens them with perdition. At the same time he warns the Philippians against these false teachers, and exhorts them not to permit themselves to be seduced and led astray by them, lest they be rejected with them.

(b.) There are many also in our days who resemble these false teachers, and therefore *are enemies of the cross.* They are those whose *god is their belly*; who wish to lead an easy, comfortable life in the world; whose only desire is to eat and drink, to entertain themselves and to indulge the desires of the flesh; also those whose *glory is in their shame*; that is, those who are wicked enough to boast before others of the violation of the commandments of God and his Church, of their contempt of religion and neglect of all religious duties, of the seduction of innocence and of other evil deeds, of which they ought to be ashamed; finally,

those *who mind earthly things*, viz., who attach their hearts to temporal goods, who in everything are governed by self-interest and seek their own advantage, inordinately desire money and property and are so deeply absorbed in worldly affairs that they forget to think of God and the salvation of their souls. Woe to all these; *their end is destruction*. Examine yourselves and reflect seriously whether in any way you may be classified among these enemies of the cross: and if your conscience should reproach you, strive earnestly to bring about a radical amendment so that you may save your souls from destruction.

3. *But our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory, according to the operation whereby also he is able to subdue all things unto himself.* In these words St. Paul shows on what the life of the Philippians must be modeled, and what they may hope for, if they are followers of him.

(a.) *Our conversation is in heaven.* The true Christian looks upon himself as a pilgrim here below, as a stranger, who has no lasting city here, but who seeks one to come, and whilst he walks on earth, with affections raised above earthly things, he thinks of his true home, he loves and desires only heavenly things, and uses earthly things only according to the will of God and as means for the attainment of his chief end. Is this your sentiment and conduct? Do you not cherish an inordinate love for the things of the world? Do you make proper use of all temporal goods? Do you not abuse your body and its senses and members, and your soul and her faculties, to indulge in vices and sins? Cast a searching glance at your past life, and make amends for your previous failings.

(b.) *From whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ.* By this is meant the second coming of Christ, which will take place on the Day of Judgment. "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then will he render to every man according to his works."—*Matt. 16: 27.* With what solicitude should we prepare ourselves for that judgment, in order that it may be favorable to us! If our conscience lays anything to our charge, let us set it in order without delay, since we are never secure against death, and at the judgment immediately after death the same sentence will be passed on us as at the last judgment. Think frequently of this judgment which will decide your doom for all eternity, in order to preserve yourselves from frivolity and sin.

(c.) The Apostle says of Christ, *that he will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory, according to the operation whereby also he is able to subdue all things unto himself.* In these words is expressed the comforting and encouraging fundamental truth that Jesus Christ, by virtue of his Omnipotence, will raise up the bodies of the just at the day of the resurrection and make them like his glorified body. Our present body is subject to many frailties, sicknesses and pains; it is sensual, animal, mortal, and corruptible; but our future body will be like the glorified body of Christ; it will be altogether incapable of suffering, incorruptible and immortal, spiritual, and so beautiful and glorious that all present beauty and glory, in comparison with it, appears like a deformity. We ought to be careful, therefore, to keep our body in honor, to mortify and employ it only for the service of God, that at the resurrection of the dead it may be transformed and glorified. If you have a body full of frailties, become not on that account faint-hearted; only live piously and you will receive a body the more glorious on the day of resurrection.

PART II.

The holy Apostle also gives the Philippians some very good lessons.

1. *My dearly beloved brethren, and most desired, my joy and my crown; so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*

(a.) First of all, mark the affectionate expression which the Apostle uses to manifest his love to the Philippians: he calls them his dearly beloved and most desired brethren, his joy and his crown. The Philippians had manifested special marks of love for St. Paul; he was in prison in Rome, and these affectionate children had sent him their offerings for his comfort; they loved him as affectionate children love their father; they also preserved with all fidelity the holy faith which he had announced to them; and they walked in childlike fear of God. This was the reason why the Apostle loved them, and assured them, in the beautiful epistle which he sent back to them, of his affection and prayers; he calls them his crown, on account of the honor which they caused him, and on account of the reward which he confidently anticipated on account of their conversion. Oh, that the same friendly and affectionate relation existed between every congregation and its priest! Oh, that we priests were actuated with the same zeal, fidelity and devotedness in fulfilling our duties, and lived, as the Apostle did, entirely for our congregations! And, oh, that all members of the congregation would give us their

confidence and love, and permit themselves to be guided by us in all things that concern their salvation!

(b.) The Apostle exhorts the Philippians to *stand fast in the Lord*. He was teaching by his own example, whilst writing to them within the walls of his prison, and begs that they may have strength to persevere even to the end, as he was determined himself to do; for as in all congregations established by the Apostles, so also in that at Philippi were found false teachers who broached various errors against faith and morals, and endeavored to lead the faithful astray. Such false teachers especially were the Jews who had embraced the Christian faith. As already observed, some of them asserted that the old Mosaic law was obligatory on them. St. Paul warns the Philippians against these false teachers and exhorts them to stand firm in the Lord, that is, to remain faithful to the doctrine of Christ as preached to them by him and not to allow themselves to be seduced by any of them. There were great obstacles in the way of the perseverance of Christians in those days; but there are also obstacles now a-days, for there are more teachers at the present moment than in the days of bloody persecution. Some of these throw all faith overboard and deny even the existence of God; others stand up against Christianity and deny the Divinity of Christ and with it all doctrines of the Christian religion, such as the Redemption, holy mass, the holy sacraments. These false teachers and enemies of the faith make use of every weapon for the attainment of their evil ends; they not only speak against the Church in general conversation, but also employ the public press to misrepresent our holy faith, to bring it into disrepute and to disseminate their pernicious errors. The admonition of the Apostle is timely: *Stand fast in the Lord*. Do not suffer yourselves to waver in your faith, nor to be led into error and sin. Shun too intimate intercourse with unbelievers and free-thinkers; neither keep nor read papers or books inimical to your faith and religion, and induce others neither to keep nor read them. Why should you be so foolish as to pay others for defiling what is most sacred to you? Why do you not support Catholic papers and Catholic literature generally?

2. Lastly, the Apostle alludes to particular individuals and gives them good advice.

(a.) *I beg of Evodia, and I beseech Syntyche, to be of one mind in the Lord*. These two women probably were widows, who devoted themselves to the care of the sick and poor, and endeavored, especially among persons of their own sex, to whom among the Greeks and Romans men had but little access, to promote

the introduction of the gospel. These two women do not seem to have been of one mind in their endeavors and labors, a fact which afforded an occasion of scandal in the congregation and injured the good cause which they served. St. Paul exhorts them to be of one mind in the Lord.

Similar to these two women are those who, instead of working harmoniously together in the pursuit of a good object, are at variance with one another and spoil what they have done. How many a nation, how many a community or family, how many a powerful enterprise, from the time of the building of the tower of Babel to the present day, has perished owing to disunion and discord! Oh, that all dissension and discord were far removed from families and communities! Remember that God is a God of peace and acknowledges only the peaceable as his children. Have patience with the frailties of your fellow-men, avoid everything that might disturb peace, and restore it at once when it has been disturbed, for the peacemaker is dear to God.

(b.) *And I entreat thee also, my sincere companion, help those women who have labored with me in the gospel with Clement, and the rest of my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life*. Who this sincere companion is that the Apostle entreats to help those who have labored and suffered with him for the gospel, we cannot positively say. Some think that he refers to the bishop of Philippi; others, to Epaphroditus, whom the Philippians sent to Rome with the offerings for St. Paul, and who brought the letter from him to the Philippians. According to most of the interpreters of the Sacred Scriptures, it was Clement, a disciple of the Apostles, and who subsequently became Pope and governed the Church for ten years (91-101). The Apostle says of him and his other fellow-laborers, that their names are in the book of life, that is, destined for eternal salvation. He could say this with good reason, for on account of their virtue and holiness, and their zeal for the good cause, they justified the hope that they would persevere to the end and be saved.

When the Apostle entreats his companion to interest himself for the women who had assisted him in the preaching of the gospel, that is, to reconcile them to each other, it may serve us as a lesson, that we also should be solicitous to reconcile to one another those who live in dissension, and to restore peace among them. This certainly is a work most acceptable to God, because much evil is thereby prevented or removed and much good done.

PERORATION.

Take to heart the good advice contained in the epistle of to-day, and follow it in your life. "Forecast what may be good not

only before God, but also before men."—*II. Cor. 8: 21.* "Be an example of the faithful, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity," (*I. Tim. 4: 12*), that you may urge them forward in the service of God, and confirm and establish them therein. Do not accommodate yourselves in the huge crowd that goes the way of the flesh, and whose end is destruction, but mortify all sinful lusts and passions; have no inordinate love for anything earthly, but aspire to what is eternal; live in peace with one another, and seek to reconcile those who are at variance. If you do this, you may be confident that your names will be inscribed in indelible characters in the book of life for ever. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt. 9: 18-26.* At that time: As Jesus was speaking to the multitudes, behold a certain ruler came up, and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus, rising up, followed him, with his disciples. And behold, a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only his garment I shall be healed. But Jesus, turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a rout, he said: Give place, the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. And when the multitude was put forth he went in, and took her by the hand. And the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

JESUS HEALING THE SICK AND RAISING THE DEAD.

The whole public life of Jesus consisted in teaching, praying and working miracles. He was constantly going about and teaching everywhere, in cities and in the country, in the temple of Jerusalem, and in the synagogues, on the mountains and by

the lakes, in the presence of a few persons and of great multitudes of people, before the high and the low, before friends and enemies. At the same time he practiced prayer with the greatest fervor. He very often visited the Jewish places of prayer, the temple and the synagogues, there to pray; he prayed in secret and in public, and it frequently happened that, after having labored all day for the salvation of men, in the evening he retired into a place of solitude or to a mountain, and there spent the whole night in watching and praying. That people might believe in him he worked countless miracles; he stilled the storm at sea, he fed several thousand people with a few loaves of bread, he cast out devils, cured sickness of every sort, and raised even the dead to life.

The gospel of this day reports two miracles, which we will make the subject of our meditation. These are—

- I. *The healing of the woman troubled with an issue of blood;*
- II. *The raising to life of the dead girl.*

PART I.

Jesus was on his way, in order, as we shall presently hear, to raise the daughter of Jairus from the dead, when a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood approached him, hoping to obtain from him relief in her sickness. Let us consider—

1. *The healing of this woman.*

(a.) *And behold, a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed.* The Evangelists St. Mark and St. Luke, both of whom relate the history of the miraculous cure of this woman, tell us that she "had suffered many things from many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing the better, but rather worse." Poor woman, she had undergone such long and hard treatment, had spent her entire substance, and all in vain; her malady, instead of being removed, had become chronic, and now she was poor and sick at the same time. What increased her misery still more was, that she was afflicted with a sickness which caused her to be detested by all. For those who were troubled with an issue of blood were, according to the law of Moses, unclean (*Levit. 15: 25*), and as such were to be avoided by all.

Given up by her physicians as an incurable and deserted by all, the poor woman had recourse to Jesus, this great and won-

derful Physician, for she had heard that he had healed many others who were sick like herself, and that there was no malady or sickness which he could not relieve. Full of confidence, she pressed through the crowd by which Jesus was surrounded, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. She did not do as other sufferers did who publicly came to Jesus and asked his help, for her modesty prevented her from disclosing the evil under which she labored. She did not even consider this to be necessary, but believed and trusted that she would be healed if she but touched the hem of his garment.

(b.) *But Jesus, turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter: thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.* St. Mark and St. Luke narrate the healing of the woman more minutely. St. Mark says: "Forthwith the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of the evil." And immediately Jesus knowing within himself the virtue that had proceeded from him, turning to the multitude, said: "Who hath touched my garments?" And his disciples said to him: "Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou: Who hath touched me?" But our Lord insisted that some one had touched him, "and he looked about to see her who had done this." And the woman seeing that she could remain concealed no longer, "fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth."—*Mark 5: 28-33.* Our Blessed Saviour encouraged and comforted the woman, praised her, and gave her the assurance that she had found help on account of her faith.

2. *Let us consider the lessons to be drawn from the narrative of this miraculous healing.*

(a.) Jesus, during his life upon earth, sought his happiness in comforting the afflicted, and helping the suffering. This should be a lesson for us also to practice works of Christian charity and mercy. St. James says: "Religion clean and undefiled before God the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation."—*1: 27.* And Jesus himself says: "Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful."—*Luke 6: 36.* The works of mercy will be especially decisive on the Day of Judgment; he who diligently practices them can hope for a merciful judgment, according to the assurance of Christ: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."—*Matt. 5: 7.*

(b.) The woman was sick twelve years; all the remedies she applied proved fruitless; the sickness had become chronic; instead of improving, she was failing more every day. So there

are people in our days who are languishing for months and years in sickness, need and misery; they try all possible means to have their cross removed, and hope for improvement, but always in vain. What are such persons to do? Should they become impatient, lose courage, become faint-hearted? Ah, no; they must persevere in patience and never cease to say: Lord, thy will be done. Lingering diseases are no evil, but rather a great advantage; for the longer one is obliged to suffer, the more one can atone for one's sins, and the more one can gain merit for heaven.

(c.) The woman in her affliction had sought relief for many years from men, but all in vain; lastly she had recourse to Jesus, and immediately she found the desired help. Many of us resemble this woman. When we are visited by a trouble or illness, we seek help from men, without thinking of God who alone can help. This is not right. You are allowed in sufferings and tribulations to have recourse to men and to make use of natural means, but you must at the same time have recourse to God and ask him to bless those natural remedies and help you. If you have sins upon your conscience, cleanse yourselves from them by a sincere and contrite confession and lead a penitential life. A pure or a penitential life, with fervent prayer and confidence, is the best means of obtaining the Divine assistance in our necessities, whether of soul or body.

(d.) The woman touched the garment of Jesus with confidence and was immediately healed. From this we may learn that it is by no means wrong to venerate the relics of Christ and of the saints, and by doing so to expect various graces and benefits. Relics, for instance, particles of the True Cross on which Christ died, his sacred garments, the nails, the lance that touched his sacred body, as well as the bones of saints, are venerable on account of the intimate relation they bear to Christ and the saints, and at all times have been highly esteemed and venerated by all orthodox Christians. The numerous miracles also which God has wrought through various relics, *e. g.*, through the shadow of St. Peter, the handkerchiefs of St. Paul, the True Cross, the bones of St. Stephen, justify the veneration of relics.

PART II.

The second, a still greater miracle which Jesus, according to the record of the gospel of this day, wrought, was *raising to life the daughter of Jairus.*

1. *A certain ruler came up, and adored him, saying; Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.*

(a.) The man who came to Jesus was a ruler of the synagogue at Capharnaum; he was one of the officers whose duty it was to preserve order during divine service, and his name was *Jairus*. As we perceive from the gospel of St. Mark (5: 23), the girl had not yet expired when the father came to Jesus, though she was at the point of death, but she actually died whilst Jesus was healing the woman who was troubled with the issue of blood, and speaking to her; for some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying: "Thy daughter is dead: Why dost thou trouble the Master any farther?" (Mark 5: 35.) They meant to say: Trouble the Master no farther to come to thy house; it is in vain, for thy daughter is dead. And Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue: "Fear not, only believe." He meant to say: Though your daughter is dead, you must not give up the hope of succor; it is as easy for me to raise the dead to life as to heal the sick. According to St. Luke (8: 42), the dead girl was the only daughter of *Jairus*, and was about twelve years of age.

(b.) The rulers of the synagogues, the Scribes and Pharisees, and in general all the principal Jews were anything but friends and adherents of Christ; they were his avowed enemies, and had no belief in him. Hence the Pharisees also said: "Hath any one of the rulers believed in him, or of the Pharisees?"—*John 7: 48*. Even *Jairus* waited long before he had recourse to Jesus; he came to him and presented his petition only at the last moment when he could count on human help no longer. Here again we see the truth of the adage: "Necessity is the mother of invention." Many persons live in sin and vice for years without a thought of conversion. Now God sends them some affliction, and compels them, as it were, to put a stop to their sinful career and to do penance. Crosses and afflictions are often the only means for the rescue of sinners. Woe to the sinner with whom even this means fails; he is past all hope of recovery.

The ruler of the synagogue adored Jesus. The same Jesus that *Jairus* adored is really and truly present in our churches, in the holy Sacrament of the Altar, under the species of bread. Therefore, as often as you approach the Blessed Eucharist, excite an act of living faith in the Real Presence of your Lord and Redeemer; fall on your knees and adore him most profoundly. Far be it from you to imitate those who, from levity, ignorance, irreligious sentiments, or foolish pride, fail to genuflect, to kneel down, to fold their hands and to pray devoutly before the Blessed Sacrament.

The girl who had died was only twelve years old. No age is secure against death. Death is represented with a scythe, because, like a mower, he mows down the fresh flowers and tender blades as well as the full grown flowers or the old and withered grass. Consider this, you young people, and walk in innocence and the fear of God, that if death should come unexpectedly, he may not overtake you in sin—to your eternal perdition.

2. *And Jesus rising up, followed him with his disciples.* We cannot fail to admire the readiness with which Jesus invariably succored those who appealed to him in their necessities. He does not interrupt the request of the disconsolate father with a single word, and although he was at that moment occupied in teaching, he rose up without delay, in order to raise the dead girl. Learn from this not to allow yourselves to be importuned long before succoring the afflicted and needy, for if you help them with reluctance or delay your help, you grieve them and diminish your own merit, but if you help them quickly and cheerfully, you help them doubly and at the same time double your merits before God.

3. *And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a rout, he said: Give place; for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.*

(a.) It was the custom with the Jews to make mournful music over a corpse; women sighed, wept, moaned and shrieked. They were hired and paid for this, for the purpose of giving expression to the grief and sorrow of the family for its dead member, and also for the purpose of awakening sympathy in those who participated in the obsequies. Jesus ordered these people away, declaring that there was no necessity for bemoaning and bewailing the girl, for she was not dead, but only sleeping. They laughed him to scorn, for they knew that the girl was not sleeping, but really dead. She was indeed dead, but Jesus said that she was only sleeping, since for him all the dead are only sleeping, and he will raise them up again at the last day; and, moreover, it is as easy for him to recall the dead to life as to awaken the sleeping.

(b.) To mourn and weep for the dead is natural and lawful, but beware lest this mourning and weeping exceed due bounds; let it not degenerate into murmuring against God, much less into despair, for this would be unchristian and against the will of God, who is master over life and death, and to whom we must submit with perfect resignation in every trial. Moreover, a

Christian has no reason to mourn immoderately at the departure of his beloved ones, because faith teaches us that we shall meet them again hereafter, and, provided we ourselves live piously, be for ever united with them in heaven. There are also persons whose mourning for a departed person is more fictitious than sincere. In their hearts they rejoice that the dead causes them no longer any trouble and expense, that they receive an inheritance, or step into the place of the departed. This is hypocrisy, and therefore certainly most unbecoming and blameworthy. Jesus says: *The girl is not dead, but sleepeth*; you ought to learn from this to think of death every evening when you go to bed, and to say to yourselves: As I now lie down to sleep, so shall I once, perhaps soon, lie down to die. This thought will so fill you with the fear of God, that you will do nothing sinful during the night; especially guard yourselves against all sins of impurity, whereby God is grievously offended and so many people are lost.

4. *And when the multitude was put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand. And the maid arose.* The Evangelists St. Mark and St. Luke relate this more circumstantially. According to them, Jesus himself having put out the noisy crowd, and allowed no one to remain in the house but the father and the mother of the girl, and Peter and James and John, who were with him, entered in where the dead girl was lying. "And taking the damsel by the hand, he saith to her: *Talitha cumi*, which is, being interpreted: Damsel (I say to thee), arise. And immediately the damsel rose up and walked . . . and he charged them strictly that no man should know it, and commanded that something should be given her to eat."

(a.) *Jesus puts out the noisy crowd.* Hereby it is intimated that the sinner who wishes to be converted must separate himself from his former bad company, and carefully avoid the proximate occasion of sin. So long as he does not do this a radical and lasting conversion cannot be expected. How is it with you? When you are at confession are you earnestly resolved and determined to avoid the proximate occasions of sin, *e. g.*, to give up that sinful connection, to shun those places, entertainments and companions that have frequently been to you the occasion of many temptations and sins?

(b.) *Jesus takes the dead girl by the hand.* This was not necessary in order to raise her to life, but it is necessary at the awakening of the sinner to a supernatural life. Jesus must take the sinner by the hand, *i. e.*, he must give him his grace, without which his conversion would be absolutely impossible. For this reason we invoke the Holy Ghost before every confession, asking

him to enlighten our understanding that we may rightly know our sins, and to move our heart that we duly repent of them, sincerely confess them, and truly amend our life. Do this always with great devotion.

(c.) *Jesus said: Talitha cumi, that is: Damsel, arise.* This should remind us of the great graces which God imparts to many sinners so that at last they raise themselves from the death of sin to the life of grace. Such graces are the violent remorse of conscience which the sinner experiences, sickness and accidents which come upon him, jubilees and missions, during which he is exhorted in the sermons and by the example of the faithful who make use of such graces with fervor, to be converted from his evil ways. Woe to the sinner who, in spite of these appeals, is not roused from his sleep of sin!

(d.) *It is said of the girl that she rose up and walked.* This must also be done at the spiritual rising or conversion. The sinner *must rise up*, that is, he must divert himself from what is earthly to what is heavenly, according to the admonition of the Apostle: "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above: where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth."—*Col. 3: 1, 2.* He must *walk about*, that is, walk in the way of the commandments, and practice virtue and good works. Lastly, he must *eat, i. e.*, receive in holy communion the bread of the strong, in order to gain strength constantly to lead a holy life.

(e.) In commanding the parents of the girl to reveal the miracle to no one, Jesus teaches that we must keep our good works as secret as possible, and never reveal them from ambition or any other dishonorable motives, so that we may not lose the merit of them before God.

PERORATION.

At the conclusion of the gospel we are told: *And the fame hereof went abroad into that all country.* It was humility that made Jesus try to keep his miracles and good works secret; and it was through the zeal of his friends and adherents that the fame thereof went abroad. We must do the same, for it is "honorable to reveal and confess the works of God."—*Tob. 12: 7.* We reveal and confess the works and graces of God, not only in word, but also in deed, edify our fellow-men, especially those our own household, and our inferiors, by a pious life and by letting our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father, who is in heaven. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.—Matt. 9: 18.

Our divine Saviour performed a great miracle in favor of the dead daughter of the ruler of the synagogue by raising her to life again at the request of her father. *He took her by the hand, and the maid arose.* A still greater miracle he will perform on the last day, for he will then raise all men who have died since Adam to the end of the world. By his divine power he will restore all human bodies, whether they have mouldered in the grave, or in whatever manner they have been destroyed and dissolved, and reunite them with their souls, so that they will live once more, never to die again for all eternity.

This important truth shall be the subject of our meditation to-day. I shall speak of the resurrection of the dead, and answer the two following questions:

- I. *Will the dead rise again?*
- II. *If so, how will they rise?*

PART I

As regards the truth that the dead will rise again, we have the evidence—

1. *Of the Sacred Scriptures.*

(a.) *The Old Testament.* Job says (19: 25-27): "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth; and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God; whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another; this my hope is laid up in my bosom." Daniel says: "Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always."—*Daniel 12: 2.* The Machabean brothers and their mother also expressed their belief in the future resurrection at the time of their martyrdom. The second of these brothers said to Antiochus: "Thou, indeed, O most wicked man, destroyest

us out of this present life; but the King of the world will raise us up, who die for his laws, in the resurrection to eternal life." The fourth said: "It is better, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God, to be raised up again by him." And the heroic mother consoled her sons in these words: "The Creator will restore to you again in his mercy both breath and life, as now you despise yourselves for the sake of his laws."—*II. Mach. 7: 9-23.*

(b.) *The New Testament.* Jesus says: "This is the will of the Father who sent me; that of all that he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day. And this is the will of my Father that sent me: that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day."—*John 6: 39, 40.* And again: "Amen, Amen, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of the judgment."—*John 5: 25-29.* The Apostles also taught the resurrection of the dead in the clearest terms, and assert that our bodies will be raised to life again as surely and truly as Christ rose out of the grave. "Knowing that he who raised up Jesus will raise us up as also with Jesus."—*II. Cor. 4: 14.* "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again."—*I. Cor. 15: 13.* And again: "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."—*I. Cor. 15: 22.*

2. *Tradition.*

The Fathers of the Church also frequently express in their writings their belief in the resurrection of the dead, some of them having written long treatises and even whole books on the subject. Thus Justin the Martyr says: "The second advent of Jesus will be when He will come with his angels, to raise the bodies of all the dead, to make the bodies of the good immortal, but to thrust the bodies of the wicked, endowed with their senses, into everlasting fire with the evil spirits."

The belief in the resurrection of the dead was also the reason why the Church preserved and venerated with the greatest solicitude the bones of the holy martyrs, for she honored in them those whom Christ will raise up to life again and make them like his own glorified body. For this reason also the bodies of those who fell asleep in Christ were at all times interred with solemn ceremonies; they were looked upon as temples of God, which God had destroyed only for a time, in order to restore them the more gloriously. Finally, it is for this reason we call

the public burial place God's acre, because the bodies put in the earth are seeds which will revive on the last day, so that, like ripened wheat, they may be gathered into the barns of the heavenly Father; we also call it *a place of rest and peace* because those who are buried there enjoy for a time rest and peace after the pains and struggles of this earthly life, so that on the day of the resurrection they may rise to an eternal triumph.

2. Reason enlightened by faith.

(a.) Man is composed of a body and a soul. By death the body is separated from the soul; the body goes down into the grave, and the soul into eternity. If this separation should last for ever, man would always be imperfect, incomplete, only half as it were, because only one of his constituent parts, his soul, would continue to live. This state evidently would not be appropriate to man, because God created him as a being with body and soul and destined him to be immortal in both. Thus the very nature of man demands that his body should not for ever be a prey to corruption, but that it should be raised up again and be united with the soul, to live together through eternity.

(b.) Because it belongs to the nature of man that body and soul should be united together; there is no doubt that the soul, when separated from the body entertains the wish to be reunited with it. Although she possesses everything in heaven that is required for her happiness, yet she misses something that is near and dear to her—her body. We may assume that God will gratify the desire of the soul, and on that account restore her body and unite it with her for ever.

(c.) Whether man do good or evil, the body is always the instrument. Therefore the justice of God requires that not only the body, but also the soul, be rewarded or punished. But it is certain that neither the body nor the soul is adequately rewarded or punished in this mortal life. History and experience teach us that good people have a hard life here below, whilst the wicked pamper their bodies and enjoy themselves. Examples: Dives and Lazarus, King Herod and St. John the Baptist, Nero on the throne, St. Paul in prison. The Roman emperors and their governors, and the holy martyrs. *There must necessarily be a resurrection of the dead that the body may also receive its due, be it reward or punishment.* Hence, St. Augustine says: "The body, which has cooperated with the soul, must, as a faithful companion, be called to the same participation in glory; and the body, which has taken part in sin and vice, must be reserved to become a partner of ignominy and pain."

(d.) Through the sin of our first parents, which we have all inherited, a twofold death entered into the world: *the death of the soul*, or the loss of sanctifying grace, and *the death of the body*. Christ, the second and the better Adam, became man to repair the evil which the sin of the first Adam had caused; in him "we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace."—*Ephes. 1: 7*. Since through Christ crucified, a perfect and abundant Redemption has been imparted to us, it follows that he has taken the *twofold death* away from us: *the death of the soul*, by redeeming us from sin and eternal damnation, and by recovering for us sanctifying grace; and *the death of the body*, by causing our bodies one day to come forth from the grave alive. The Apostle alludes to this perfect victory of Christ over death when he writes: "When this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"—*I. Cor 15: 54, 55*. That the Redemption of man be perfect, there must be a resurrection of the body.

PART II.

The dead will rise—

1. *With the same body that they had in their earthly life.* Thus teach—

(a.) *The Sacred Scriptures.* Job, in the passage already quoted, says that at his resurrection he shall be clothed again with his skin, and that he himself, and not another, shall see God. From these words it is evident that men will rise with the same body that they had upon earth. This is also evident from the words which the third of the Machabean brothers said to Antiochus. When his tongue was to be cut out, "he quickly put it forth, and courageously stretched out his hands; and said with confidence: These I have from heaven, but for the laws of God I now despise them, because I hope to receive them again from him."—*II. Mach. 7: 10, 11*. Finally, since Christ, as "the first-fruit of them that sleep" (*I. Cor. 15: 20*), is the prototype of our future resurrection, and he rose with the same body that he had in his earthly life, it follows that we shall all rise with our present bodies.

(b.) *The holy fathers.* Eutyches, patriarch of Constantinople, wrote a book in which he asserted that we shall not rise in the same bodies as we now have. But Gregory the Great, in a conversation with him, refuted his assertion, using such striking and forcible arguments, that Eutyches afterwards on his sick bed

publicly confessed his error, took hold of his skin, saying: "I confess that we all shall rise again in this flesh." St. Thomas of Aquin says: "The bodies will rise with all their members, and these will again have the same location. The souls will all re-enter the same bodies, and it would be heretical to assert that the same man does not rise."

(c.) *Reason.* The resurrection, according to its fundamental idea, is nothing else than the restitution of what one has lost. If we were to receive other bodies than those we now have, it would be no resurrection or restoration, but a new creation. It is also very natural that the body which man has in life, should rise, because it is to receive with the soul either reward or punishment; it would therefore entirely contradict the justice of God, if another body should rise.

2. *But immortal.* After the resurrection all men will be immortal in body and soul. The Apostle assures us of this when he says: "It (the body) is sown in corruption; it shall rise in incorruption."—*I. Cor.* 15: 42. The bodies of the risen can die neither a natural nor a violent death; they are subject to no sickness; the elements can no longer injure them; they are invulnerable and inviolable; and proof against fire and sword. This immortality of the body is a reward for the good and a punishment for the wicked.

3. *Finally, if they belong to the elect they will rise with qualities which are for their glory as well as for their felicity.* These qualities are:

(a.) *Impassibility,* which consists in this, that the just, after their resurrection, are absolutely incapable of suffering any painful or even unpleasant sensation in their body. All suffering and pain has disappeared from them for ever. "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.) *Resplendence.* According to the words of the Apostle: "It (the body) is sown in dishonor (in the terrifying form of death), it shall rise in glory."—*I. Cor.* 15: 43. Christ himself speaks of this resplendence, when he says: "Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father."—*Matt.* 13: 43. As a type of this brightness Jesus showed himself upon Mount Thabor, where "his face did shine as the sun; and his garments became white as snow."—*Matt.* 17: 2. The bodies of the saints will be more or less glorious, according to the degree of sanctity they

attained in this life, therefore the Apostle says: "One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars; for star differeth from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead."—*I. Cor.* 15: 41, 42.

(c.) *Agility,* of which the Apostle says: "It is sown in weakness; it shall rise in power" (*I. Cor.* 15: 43); that is, a helpless, weary, languishing body is buried, but a strong, agile body rises. The body in the present life is weak, indolent, and in many respects, a burden to the soul. This imperfect state will cease after the resurrection: the body will become capable of following the soul with the greatest velocity whither she will, and without becoming fatigued, passing with the rapidity of thought from one place to another.

(d.) Finally, *Subtility,* as the Apostle says: "It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body."—*I. Cor.* 15: 44. Our body is animal, because it has functions, eating, drinking, sleeping, etc., in common with animals. It will put off, after its resurrection, that which is animal, and become spiritual; it will, by no means, be changed into a spirit, but will retain its bodily nature; it will be subject to the spirit, free from all weakness and frailty, and ennobled. It will participate in the quality of the soul, which is a spirit, in so far that notwithstanding its expansion it can penetrate even the most solid object. In consequence of this quality the risen can be wherever they like: no wall, no lock, can prevent their entrance; they will make themselves visible suddenly, and suddenly disappear, as Christ did after his resurrection.

PERORATION.

How glorious, how happy will be our lot if we only rise with the just. That this happiness may be our portion, we must now without delay rise spiritually, and forsake sin. Shun, therefore, sin, and lead a good life worthy of our inheritance. Do not make use of the body, with its senses and members, for evil purposes; especially avoid the vice of impurity. Live honestly, decently, and chastely, as becomes Christians, whose bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost. Bear the troubles and hardships of life with patience and resignation to the holy will of God; mortify the sinful desires of the body and subject it to the austerities of penance. These small sacrifices will prepare for your body after the resurrection everlasting joys and delights. Act honestly, fight manfully with courage and confidence in God against all temptations, and persevere in the service of God unto the end, and a happy death, a glorious resurrection, and life everlasting will be your reward. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

CEMETERIES.

Lord, my daughter is even now dead.—Matt. 9: 18.

The gospel of this day speaks of a sick woman and a dead girl. Our Lord performed a great miracle in favor of each; he healed the sick woman the very moment she touched the hem of his garment; and he raised to life the dead daughter of Jairus. To be sick and to die is the lot of all. Some of us have perhaps passed through a lingering sickness and, by the application of various means and the help of God, have recovered our health. But a sickness will at last come, from which we shall never recover—we shall die; and once dead, we may rest assured that neither Christ nor any saint invested with divine power will come to raise us up again. We shall remain dead. After a few hours, indications of corruption will appear in our lifeless body, and after two or three days our funeral will take place, and a grave will be assigned to our body in the cemetery. To-day, sad as the topic is, we shall make a short meditation on cemeteries, and see—

- I. *What names they have;*
- II. *How they are consecrated.*

PART I.

Cemeteries have various names which are worthy of mention, because they are based upon religious ideas of death and remind us of salutary truths. They are called—

1. *Churchyards.* The primitive Christians loved to have their place of repose near the graves of martyrs, chiefly in the hope that the martyrs, as well as the faithful who frequently assembled at their graves, would the more fervently help them by their prayers. Even after the severe persecutions had ceased, and the relics of martyrs were translated into the churches, they continued to bury their dead near the former graves of the martyrs, and when interments were prohibited within the church edifice, except in cases of kings, emperors and bishops, they took place round the church. Thus originated graveyards round churches,

which were in consequence called churchyards. In our days many graveyards, for sanitary reasons, or for want of room, are situated in places distant from the church; but even then they are properly called churchyards, for though separated they still belong to the church and, like churches, are solemnly blessed.

The city of the dead is the domain of the Church, which her motherly hand plants and cultivates. The Church receives man at his entrance into the world, offers him grace and salvation, blots out the guilt of his inheritance by the heavenly power of the sacrament of regeneration, fortifies him with strength in all the trials of life, and teaches him not to fear death, but to look upon it as the messenger of peace, which, after a long and weary journey, leads the soul of the dying into the mansions of bliss. The Catholic Church does not sever the bond by which her children are united with her and with one another, though death inexorably cuts off life's blossoms, and has no regard for the tears and lamentations, the pain and sorrow that it causes. No; the Catholic Church knows not that icy coldness with which others leave the souls of their departed friends to their fate in the kingdom of retribution, but teaches and commands us to believe, that for the spirits of those who have left the stage of this world, there is a place of purification, and that for the warriors, often mortally wounded in the struggle for that which is right, there is an asylum of healing and salvation; and that "it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." Therefore she interests herself for her children by intercessory prayer and the sacrifice of the mass, and affords them a sweeter and more precious solace than any nursing or refreshment can be to the sick on their bed of pain. No holy mass is celebrated in the house of God, no interment made in the churchyard, without a pious memento being carried by angels' hands to the throne of divine love, and the mercy of God invoked for the souls that have fallen asleep in the Lord, thus arousing the Christian feeling to a conscious sense of the brotherly and sisterly union existing between us and the departed. Thus from the house of God flow consolation and hope to the dead, and hence the proximity of the burial place to the church, hence the name "Churchyard" for the city of the dead; hence also for that deeply wounded heart the consolation of knowing that his friends whom death has taken from among the living are under the protection and the loving care of the Church, whose one task and solicitude it is to lead to salvation all who entrust themselves to her.

2. *Cemetery, i. e., a place of rest, a place of sleep, a place of peace.* Peace is the fundamental condition of all happiness and prosperity. Peace is the first and only desire of all good and noble souls. Only wicked men ruthlessly disturb peace and keep up discord and

strife. But though the desire of man's heart for peace is great, where does he find it in life? When and where is he secure from the disturbances by which sweet repose is interrupted? So long as man sojourns upon earth he but seldom finds peace, and has but little security in the possession of it. Whether he dwells in a palace or in a hut, whether he is in affluence or in squalor and rags, those who disturb his peace know when and where to find him, and as often as they are overcome and driven away they return in a new shape, and with increased importunity. Numberless are the disquietudes and anxieties which man must endure before he has fought his fight and finished his course. One man is a constant source of annoyance to another, and a stumbling-block to his fellow-men, whereas a similar destiny should inspire him with love and good will towards all. One strives to build his prosperity upon the ruin of another, and, therefore, is insensible to the wants of his fellow-men. One stands in the way of another in the race for earthly and temporal advantage, and all kinds of artful plans are devised to displace the rival opponent. And although a man may not be obliged, sword in hand, to defend his life and existence against every one in open violence, it being in most cases only a poisonous tongue that robs him of honor and good name, or excites ill-will and suspicion against him, yet how great is the anxiety for prosperity, how hard the labor for the obtaining of the necessaries of daily life! And even when the oppressing weight of care is removed by the special favor of heaven, continual watchfulness is still necessary, to say nothing of the envy and jealousy of our fellow-men, which embitters and nearly spoils all the enjoyment derived from these temporal possessions, and the uncertainty and inconstancy to which all earthly goods are subject. All this change, inconstancy, uncertainty, discord and contradiction ceases in the cemetery. If ever peace is made, it is in the cemetery. Here all enmities are adjusted and reconciled, the sword and the dagger fall from every hand, profound silence reigns supreme, every mouth of slander and calumny is closed, and all grief and sorrow covered by the grave.

Burial places are called places of peace, because those whose bodies are buried there, have left the earth, the battle ground of hostile armies, and because the just among them possess heaven and there enjoy eternal rest. This name also reminds us of the words of the Holy Ghost: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: for their works follow them."—*Apoc.* 14: 13. The Church considers the death of the just as a sleep, which is followed by glorious resurrection and eternal life. "The souls of the just are in the hand of God; and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to

die: and their departure was taken for misery: and their going away from us, for utter destruction: but they are in peace."—*Wisd.* 3: 1-3. If now we preserve peace with God by keeping his commandments; peace with ourselves by keeping a pure conscience; and peace with our neighbor by practicing meekness and patience; then the place where we shall be buried will in truth be to us *a place of peace.*

3. *God's acre.* But the burial place is not only the place of the forgetfulness of all temporal sufferings, where the earthly pilgrim throws off the galling yoke that pressed him on his whole pilgrimage, but also the place of sowing for eternity, and hence the name of God's acre. What is here buried in the grave ceases not to exist. It is true, dissolution takes place in the body of man, but it is the dissolution of the seed, which must be committed to the earth and be dissolved that it may produce fruit. The hand of the Almighty does not permit even the dust of the decayed human body to pass beyond the confines of his power, and according to his unchangeable will, all who have been mowed down by the sickle of death and inhabit the dark dwelling of the grave, will come forth reanimated and renewed. "The hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."—*John* 5: 28, 29. We are not "as others who have no hope."—*I. Thess.* 4: 12. Thus then all whose bodies have been laid to rest are expecting the divine command, by which he who created them will give them new life in the resurrection. The bodies of the departed are committed to the earth that they may return to dust and await the final resurrection. Thus then the fate that awaits them in eternity is not in their hands, but depends upon the decision of his justice. None of those who are interred can go his own way according to his will; none can choose the lot that will fall upon him, none can oppose the will of God. Thus far and no farther go human levity and frivolity; thus far and no farther human disobedience and stubbornness against God's law and ordinance; thus far and no farther human impiety and contempt of God. Here the judge meets him, and here his avenger holds him captive and makes his power and majesty manifest. But also thus far and no farther the dark clouds of doubt pursue the pious faithful soul; thus far and no farther the cross of persecution presses the shoulders of the disciples of Jesus. Here the portals are opened to everlasting knowledge in which we shall all know as we are known; here the gate is reached through which those enter who reap in joy after having sown in tears.

PART II.

In the earliest times the cemeteries as holy places received the blessing of the Church. Thus we read of the burial of king Donald of Scotland, who died in the year 216: "Finally the king, renowned for his religious and worldly deeds, dies after a reign of twenty-one years, and according to Christian custom is buried in a field, which, as is usually done, has been consecrated by many and pious prayers as the burial place of Christians." According to his testimony it was already the general custom in the second and third centuries to consecrate the burial place of Christians.

Let us now consider this blessing and its symbolical significance.

1. On the eve of the dedication, five crosses are erected in the cemetery, of which the middle one is the highest, and the four others about the height of a man. They are so arranged that they make the form of a cross. Before each cross is a stake with three candles. There are two vases in readiness, one for holy water, the other for salt. This is the preparation for the dedication of the cemetery. What does it signify? The crosses indicate that the cemetery is a Christian burial place, for the cross is the symbol of Christianity. Thus the crosses indicate that in the new cemetery only Christians are to find a place of rest, wherefore the Church ordains that pagans and Jews and all who are not Catholics must not be buried there. For he who in life belongs not to her communion, cannot be recognized by her after his death as her child. The cross also indicates that all whose bodies rest there expect their salvation from Christ crucified; they humbly trust in his merits, and, as it were, under the shadow of the cross await the great day of the resurrection.

Five crosses are erected on the place to be blessed, one in the centre, and the others at the four sides. What does this signify? The cross in the centre signifies Christ crucified, round whom we gather in life and death, as sheep round their shepherd. Hence it is an ordinance of the Church that the large churchyard cross should be erected in the centre of the cemetery, and not in any other part of it. The four crosses at the sides of the cemetery remind us of the consoling fact that the doctrine of Christ Crucified is spread to the four corners of the world.

The candles which are put on the stakes and lighted on the day of the dedication, remind us of the truth that we owe the light of the gospel, and especially the happy tidings of our future resurrection, to our divine Saviour, who is the light of the world, the light which the Church wishes to the departed with the words:

"Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them."

2. On the day of dedication the bishop, vested in his pontificals, goes in procession to the place to be dedicated, first to the principal cross in the centre, saying a prayer and the Litany of the Saints, in which he inserts the petition that God will *bless, sanctify, and consecrate* the cemetery, that the human bodies which after having finished their course rest there, may merit, together with their souls, to obtain the joys of life everlasting on the great Day of Judgment. The prayer and the Litany are said before the principal cross, which symbolizes Jesus Christ, because only through his merits can we expect the realization of our prayers.

Then the *bishop blesses water*, intones the "Asperges," and goes through the cemetery from one cross to the other, continually sprinkling the ground with the holy water, the choir in the meantime chanting psalms referring to the dead. Each time he comes to a cross he says a prayer, incenses the cross, takes the three candles from the stakes, and puts them on the cross, one on the top, and the other two on the arms. After a solemn preface he concludes the dedication with the following prayer: "Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, Sanctifier and Restorer of all places, from whom and through whom all benediction descends from heaven upon earth, bless this place, that it may be a place of peace, a sweet refreshment and a place of rest for the dead, whose souls, whilst their bodies are buried here, or are to be buried here, may enjoy the sweetness of thy love and joy and exultation, and remain in the heavenly Jerusalem until, on the great Day of Judgment, they receive again their own bodies out of the graves, and thus hasten with the fruit of good works to meet the Lord, coming to judgment. Through Jesus Christ, etc." Then he gives the blessing to all that are present and returns to the church, where he celebrates mass himself, or it is celebrated by a priest.

The ceremonies are significant and edifying. The holy water, with which the cemetery is sprinkled reminds us of the penance which we must do, if we wish to die happily and obtain salvation. For as water is a means for the purification of the body, so penance is the means for the purification of the soul from the stains of sin. The holy water is also an admonition to us to succor the departed souls; for as water refreshes and cools the thirsty, so we mitigate the sufferings of the poor souls in purgatory by the sacrifice of the mass, by indulgences and works of charity, and procure for them consolation and refreshment. The *bishop puts the lighted candles on the crosses*. This symbolizes the truth that eternal salvation, which is signified by the lights, is based upon the cross, for we can only be saved through Jesus Christ

crucified. St. Augustine very appropriately says: "Before the cross was, there was as yet no ladder to heaven, and therefore, neither Abraham nor Jacob nor any other man could arrive there. Now this ladder is put up, the cross is erected, and the entrance into heaven is open." The incensing is an intimation to us, that as the incense diffuses a pleasant odor and ascends to heaven, so should we by a truly Christian life be a pleasant odor before God and send up pious prayers to him for the departed.

PERORATION.

Having now explained to you the names used for burial places and the ceremonies performed at the dedication thereof, I admonish you always to have a respect for such places. Visit the cemetery frequently, for it is for you a school of wisdom. Here you see better than anywhere else that everything earthly is frail and that death robs man of everything that the world values and loves. Every grave exclaims to you: My turn to-day; yours to-morrow. Be merciful to the departed souls, pray for them daily and have the sacrifice of the mass offered up for them, gain indulgences and give alms, in order to afford them consolation and help. With the continual thought of death in your mind, walk in the fear of God and preserve a pure conscience, that you may depart this life in peace and be called to eternal rest. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

DEATH, A SLEEP.

The girl is not dead, but sleepeth.—Matt. 9: 24.

As St. Matthew, in the gospel of this day and the Evangelists St. Mark (5) and St. Luke (8) relate, one of the rulers of the synagogue, named Jairus, came to Jesus, saying: *Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.* When Jesus came into the house of the ruler, he said: *The girl is not dead, but sleepeth.* Who is right, the ruler, who says: *My daughter is even now dead,* or Jesus, who declares: *The girl is not*

dead, but sleepeth? Both statements are true; there is no contradiction. The girl had really died, and was truly dead; hence those who were present laughed at Jesus when he said: *The girl is not dead, but sleepeth,* for they knew only too well that she was dead. Nevertheless, our Lord could truly say, the girl sleepeth, for he had determined to restore her to life, so that her death lasted no longer than an ordinary sleep. In many respects death resembles sleep, so that it can be called, and it is frequently called, a sleep in a figurative sense. To-day we shall consider death as a sleep, and see—

- I. *How far death can be called a sleep;*
- II. *How we can render death a sweet sleep for ourselves.*

PART I.

1. *Sleep is absolutely necessary for every man.* As we must eat and drink, to be able to live, so must we sleep. If any one is deprived of sleep for any length of time, he becomes fatigued, worn out, and more or less unfit for anything. The saints were not friends of sleep. Many of them, if they had had their own wish would have given up sleep altogether so that they might always pray, meditate and work; but nature claimed her rights, and even they could not entirely dispense with sleep. Thus we read of St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, that he divided the night into three parts; the first of which he devoted to the reciting of a hundred psalms of David, the second, to the recitation of the other fifty psalms and the performance of other religious exercises; and the third he gave to rest, reclining on a stone. Even our Divine Saviour slept, for he was not only God but also man.—*Matt. 8: 24.*

Death also is a necessity of nature since sin has entered into the world. "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.* Man is subject to death, even in his mother's womb, and brings the germ of dissolution with him into the world. No power, no wealth, no science resists death. A mighty king of France once said on his dying bed: "Behold, with all my power I cannot obtain that death should wait for me only one short hour longer." St. Alphonsus says in his book on the preparation for death: "For me who am now writing, and for you who shall read this book, the day and the moment are already appointed when I shall write no more and when you shall read no more."

Death being as necessary as sleep, what is more just than that we should frequently think of death and prepare ourselves for

it with the greatest solicitude? What is more reasonable than that we should not attach our heart to earthly things, which in death we must leave behind? What more salutary than the frequent consideration of 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.

2. *Sleep overpowers man oftentimes quite unexpectedly and against his will.* When St. Paul was preaching at Troas, in an upper chamber, and continued his discourse until midnight, a certain young man named Eutychius, sitting by the window, being oppressed with a heavy sleep, as St. Paul was long preaching, by occasion of his sleep, fell from the third loft, and was taken up dead. But the Apostle raised him to life—*Acts* 20: 7-12. It is well that people now-a-days can hear sermons, seated comfortably, so that those who sleep (and there are many) cannot fall and break their necks or receive some other fatal injury. Such sleepers generally allege as an excuse that they are quite unexpectedly overpowered and go to sleep without being conscious of the fact.

Be this as it may, this much is certain, death overtakes men quite unexpectedly, at a time, too, when they think of anything but death. "Man knoweth not his own end; but as fishes are taken with the hook, and as birds are caught with a snare, so men are taken in the evil time, when it shall suddenly come upon them."—*Eccles.* 9: 12. How unexpectedly death comes, Jesus teaches in the parable of the rich man who had "laid up much goods for many years and wished to rest, eat, drink and make good cheer," but to whom the Lord said: "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee" (*Luke* 12: 16-20); and in the parable of the virgins, of whom the five foolish ones had no oil in their lamps on the arrival of the bridegroom.—*Matt.* 25. And our Lord says: "Watch ye therefore, because ye know not what hour your Lord will come."—*Matt.* 24: 42. And do not history and experience teach us that many men die suddenly, and that death comes frequently as an accident or a surprise?

What follows from this but that we must have death always before our eyes and be ever prepared for it? St. Bernard says: "Death waits for you everywhere, therefore you also must always wait for him." How miserable the man whom death would overtake unprovided and in a state of mortal sin! He would be lost for ever. Reflect well on this and guard against sin; and if you should have the misfortune of falling into a grievous sin, make at once a good confession, lest you die in that state and be for ever lost.

3. *Sleep relieves man of pain, trouble and care.* The sick feel their pains only so long as they are awake; in sleep they have

no painful sensation. In sleep men also rest from the labors of the day. Sleep is a blessed boon for men, for it affords rest and refreshment to the weary laborer; it relieves the afflicted, and makes them forget at least for a few hours whatever is lying heavily upon their heart and makes life bitter. Therefore all long for sleep; the tired laborer wishes for night that he may sleep; the sick man sighs for sleep, and even resorts to artificial means, in order to be able to sleep for a few hours.

Death has the same effect, only in a higher degree. When man draws his last breath and dies, all earthly suffering and woe has for him come to an end for ever. For him there is no more sickness, no more pain, no more tears. Care, fear, anguish, terror and all interior pains, sufferings and anxieties have disappeared; all struggles and temptations have ceased; in a word, death removes from man whatsoever can oppress and torment him in this mortal life.

What has been said holds good, indeed, only of the death of the just man, for he who dies in sin enters into greater suffering, and his soul endures in the place of damnation torments which surpass all conception; and even his body will not always have rest in the grave, but after the resurrection of the flesh it will be reunited with the soul and tormented in the flames of hell. Think of Dives, who, as he said himself, suffered great torments in hell, and could not obtain a drop of water to cool his tongue.—*Luke* 16: 19, *et seq.* Should we not then carefully prepare for a good death? How would it be with us if God should call us this very moment into eternity? Should we die the death of the just? Meditate seriously on these questions.

4. *Sleep does not last always; we wake up and leave our resting place.* When in the evening we lie down, we do so with the intention of rising again in the morning; no one wishes to sleep always. It is the thought that we shall awake again that makes sleep so desirable, and I think everyone would fight against it with all his strength if he had no hope of again awaking.

In this also sleep and death resemble each other; for, like sleep, death lasts only for a time; followed by awakening. Death is not the termination of our life, but only the real beginning thereof; it is the transition into everlasting life. We are Catholics and believe in the resurrection of the body; "we know that he who raised up Christ, will also raise up us with Christ." It is our belief that we shall rise again that makes death appear to us as a sleep and causes us, if we have a good conscience, not to fear death, but to look upon it as a blessing, and exclaim with the Apostle: "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ."—*Phil.* 1: 23. Let us be solicitous for a pious life; then we shall be able to meet death without fear, and welcome it when it comes

as our best friend. But the question arises: *How can we make death a gentle sleep?*

PART II.

1. In order to sleep well *we must first of all be in good health.* The sick often wait in vain for sleep; they cannot, as the saying is, close their eyes all night; or when from sheer fatigue and exhaustion they fall asleep, they are restless, and after short intervals wake up unrefreshed, and often weaker and more worn out than before. How differently do the healthy sleep! Their sleep is quiet and sound, frequently lasts all night and so refreshes and invigorates them that in the morning they feel as if they were just born, and they go cheerfully and happily to the labors of the day.

In order to die a good death, *our soul must be healthy, i. e.,* we must be in a state of grace. "The death of the wicked is very evil."—*Ps.* 33: 22. This utterance of the Psalmist is very true, whether we consider the sinner in death, or after death. What sadness, what despair must seize the sinner when on his death-bed he sees that he must leave behind all that his heart loved and sought so ardently, and that of all his earthly goods and joys nothing remains to him but the grave! What anguish must take hold of him when he looks back upon his past life and sees nothing but levity, forgetfulness of God and his soul, and sins for which he never did true penance; or when he thinks of eternity, which for him can have no other than a wretched issue! Can there be anything worse than the death of the sinner? Follow the sinner into eternity. What has he to expect there? What else but eternal damnation? On the contrary, how enviable is the lot of the just in and after death! They do not grieve that they must die; for they know themselves to be but strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and their conversation is in heaven; they look into the near eternity which has nothing terrible for them, for they have fervently served God and have done penance for their faults and the shortcomings of their life, and they may confidently hope that Jesus will be a merciful Judge to them and admit them to the joys of heaven prepared for them. And heaven with its inexpressible joys, after their departure from this world, will fall to their share, and they will, as our Lord promises, "shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—*Matt.* 13: 43. Should you not, then, be solicitous to lead a pious, mortified life, that you may die a good and happy death?

2. In order to sleep well, *we must work well.* Sleep presupposes fatigue, but one does not become fatigued by idleness and inactivity, but only by an active, industrious life. Hence the adage:

"When the task is done repose is sweet." He who sleeps by day cannot sleep during the night. The indolent do not sleep soundly. He who wishes to find *sweet repose after death*, must work diligently in the service of God and always fulfil the duties of his religion and state of life. The parable of the servants and the talents teaches us this plainly. The master was satisfied only with two of his servants, who had made good use of their talents and had gained something by them, whilst the servant who had left his talent unemployed and buried it in the earth was called an unprofitable servant and cast into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.—*Matt.* 25: 30. If you wish to die a happy death, do not follow the example of the slothful servant, but that of the industrious ones. Discharge conscientiously whatever religion imposes upon you as a duty and labor zealously in your vocation. If your work in the service of God becomes difficult, take courage, and be comforted with the thought: Heaven is worth it all.

3. In order to sleep well *we must take off our clothes.* To sleep with the clothes on is neither appropriate nor healthy. The body does not rest, perspiration cannot properly take place, and the circulation of the blood, as well as respiration, is more or less impeded. Hence it is the custom everywhere to take off the clothes when about to go to bed and to wear only what is necessary for decency's sake. If we wish to fall asleep in peace, we must follow the injunction of St. Paul,—*"put off the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error."*—*Ephes* 4: 22. We all have different evil inclinations, such as pride, avarice, impurity and anger. These evil inclinations are the clothes which we must put off; for unless we suppress and subdue them, they will not only hinder us in the practice of virtue, but they will also lead us into many sins, and consequently it will be owing to them that after our death we shall be deprived of eternal rest for ever, or for a long period, according as the sins which we have committed were mortal or venial. The clothes which must be put off are the bad habits which we have contracted by frequent relapse into the same sins. Thus there are many to whom cursing, swearing, lying, slander, detraction, drunkenness and impurity have become habitual. So long as such sinful habits are not earnestly combated and cast off, a virtuous life and, consequently, a good death, are absolutely impossible. Now, as you put off your clothes daily when you go to bed, in like manner make the putting off of your inordinate inclinations and evil habits your daily business. Examine yourselves and see what sinful inclinations and habits are especially predominant in you, and employ the proper means for gradually eradicating them. The more zealous you are in this respect, and the more

you divest yourselves of everything that is sinful or conducive to sin, the happier will be your death and the sweeter will be your rest after death.

4. Lastly, in order to sleep well, *we must make a good bed*. "As you make your bed, so shall you lie on it." You will not sleep so well on the bare ground or on hard straw as on a soft feather bed. Even in a good bed one cannot lie comfortably unless it is well made. The same may be said of death. If you wish to rest well after death, your bed must be well made in life. What does this mean? It means that you must do good works, for they are a soft bed of down, in which after your death you will enjoy the most sweet repose. Therefore we read in the Apocalypse: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow them."—*Apoc.* 14: 13. Here it is clearly expressed that it is works, that is, *good* works, that prepare eternal rest for the dead. The more zealous we are here in the exercise of Christian virtues and the performance of good works, the better we make our bed for eternity, for "he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings."—*II. Cor.* 9: 6. It is especially the works of mercy that are rewarded in heaven, as is evident from the words: "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.

PERORATION.

We have now seen how far death can be called a sleep, and what we have to do that death may be a sweet sleep to us. We do not fear sleep; nor need we fear death, if we do what is required for a good one. First of all, let us be solicitous not to contaminate our conscience with sins, for it is only these that bring about an unhappy death. Let us devote the days of our life to the service of God, and conscientiously fulfil the duties of our religion and state of life, that one day God may praise us as his good and faithful servants. But let us also earnestly endeavor to mortify our evil inclinations and to put off all sinful habits, and let us employ the time which God in his mercy may yet grant us to live, for the practice of virtue. These are the means by the application of which we can make death easy, and convert it into that gentle sleep which will be followed by a blessed awakening in heaven. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

WHEN MUST WE THINK OF DEATH?

Lord, my daughter is even now dead.—Matt. 9: 18.

What Jairus said of his daughter: *My daughter is even now dead*, sooner or later will be said of us all. They will say this or that one is dead. A day and an hour will come when we shall cease to breathe, our eyes will close, our ears will no longer hear the lamentations of our friends, our hands and feet will grow cold, our heart will cease to beat, and our body will lie there motionless, its soul departed, like a discarded garment whose owner will use it no more. Death is certain to all, for "it is appointed unto men once to die."—*Heb.* 9: 27. In all other things there is some kind of uncertainty on account of this or that circumstance. Thus we say, for instance: Perhaps I shall gain this lawsuit; perhaps I shall recover from this sickness; but with regard to death there is no "*perhaps*." Observe the strictest order of life, employ the most skilful physicians, eat the most wholesome and nourishing food—you must die, for "it is appointed unto men once to die." All, without exception, being subject to the law of death, it is certainly reasonable to think frequently of death, that we may prepare ourselves properly for the greatest event of our life. The wise man exhorts us to do so in these words; "In all thy works remember thy last end; and thou shalt never sin."—*Ecclus.* 7: 40. I would also urge this subject upon your attention to-day, and for this purpose shall answer for you the question—

When must we think of death?

When the cook goes to the fowl-house to take out a hen to kill, what a noise there is among the hens! As if they knew that they were going to be killed, they cackle with all their might, fly about, hide in the corners and crouch on the ground when they can no longer escape. But the cook has scarcely left the coop with the hen, when all noise and turmoil is at an end, the hens are as merry as if nothing had occurred. They do not think that in a short time the same fate will overtake them. My brethren, do we not resemble these thoughtless hens? When we see an intimate friend die, death comes vividly before our eyes,

and we say: All is vanity; we are all mortal. But in a few days we are as light-hearted as before, and the thought of death has no more room in our heart. The consequence is that we live as if we should never die. We must, therefore, frequently renew the remembrance of death, especially—

(a.) *In the morning.* When you rise in the morning, you do not know whether you will be living in the evening. Thousands have risen in the best of health in the morning, and before sunset they were corpses. This was the fate of Abel, the first victim of death. Abimelech fared in the same way: "A certain woman casting a piece of a millstone from above, dashed it against the head of Abimelech, and broke his skull."—*Judges* 9: 53. Heli, the high-priest, and his two sons, died suddenly the same day—*I. Kings* 4: 4, *et seq.* Absalom shared the same fate.—*II. Kings* 18: 14. On the 15th day of August, 1842, Father Papillon was preaching a sermon in the presence of Prince Polignac and a vast audience in the chapel of the French embassy in London. He was in the midst of his discourse, and said: "How precious is time, for we never know at what moment the Almighty will summon us before his dread tribunal, there to give an account of all our actions." These were the last words he ever uttered. No sooner had he finished this sentence than those who were present noticed his color change; they ran up to the pulpit to help him, but it was too late, the vital spark had fled, and the venerable priest was a lifeless corpse. Similar examples must certainly be known to you all from experience. You remember that these or those, contrary to all expectations, were suddenly snatched away by death. Do we not read almost daily in the public press of shipwrecks at sea, collisions on railroads, explosions in mines, in which hundreds of persons are suddenly and without a moment's warning hurled into eternity before the judgment-seat of God? May not what has happened to thousands of others also happen to you one of these days? Is it not possible that you may rise one morning, but when the evening comes you will not lie down, because, during the course of the day, death will have overtaken you, and you will for ever be saved the trouble of lying down? Since you are not secure one moment against death, is it not right that every morning when you rise you should think of death, and earnestly beg God to allow your soul, if you should die during the day, to depart in peace?

(b.) *In the evening.* Night is nobody's friend. In the dark night when the streets and roads are silent, and all good people sleep, thieves leave their lurking-places and ply their trade, prowl about, break into houses, and carry away whatever they can lay their hands on. In like manner, death. At night he enters into

cities and villages and snatches his prey, now here, now there. It was in the darkness of night that the destroying angel entered into the houses of the Egyptians and snatched away the first-born. It was in the darkness of night that the heroic Judith cut off the head of the drunken Holofernes. It was in the darkness of night that the soul of that rich man was demanded, who shortly before going to bed had said: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer."—*Luke* 12: 20. Experience also teaches that more people die in the night than in the day-time. It is perhaps for this reason that our Blessed Saviour compares death to the bridegroom, who did not come in broad daylight, but at midnight, to take the virgins to the marriage feast; and who says in the Apocalypse (16: 15): "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watched and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." It is, at any rate, possible that some of us must in the night make that journey, on which everything depends. Consider this and never go to bed without a serious thought of death. When you put off your clothes, say: "Lord, I am putting off my clothes, and I am now reminded that I must soon lie in the grave, cold and stiff, the food of worms." And when you awake during the night, beware of indulging in evil thoughts, but think of your grave, and say a "Hail Mary" for a happy death.

(c.) *In all temptations and occasions of sin.* Our life upon earth is a continual struggle, a warfare; and scarcely a day passes in which we are not tempted by Satan, the world, or concupiscence. Whether we are alone or in company, at work or at rest, we are ever exposed to temptations, and even whilst at prayer we are not secure against their attacks. And what terrible devastations do not these temptations cause! Examples from the Sacred Scripture: Cain, who slew his own brother; the two wicked elders who tried to seduce the chaste Susanna; David, who loaded his conscience with the double crime of murder and adultery; Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his Lord and Master. Whence these crimes? From temptations which were not resisted. And do we not see with our own eyes, that those, in whose virtue we had the most implicit confidence, stagger and fall? Must not each one of us acknowledge that he has yielded to temptation and sinned?

The same may be said of occasions of sin. Numberless are the people who on such occasions have forgotten God and his holy law, and sinned grievously. What induced Eve to transgress the commandment of God, if not that she approached the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and entered into a conversation with the serpent? In other words, she did not avoid the dangerous occasion. Where did Peter thrice deny his Lord and Master?

Where, but in bad company, into which he had imprudently gone. Jacob, called the Penitent, had lived in the desert for forty years in the greatest austerity, and reached so high a degree of sanctity that God imparted to him the power of working miracles. It happened one day that a young woman came to him with the very good intention of being instructed by him in virtue and piety. Jacob was imprudent enough to form a close friendship with her without, however, meaning or intending anything wrong. But opportunity, the adage says, makes thieves. What had begun in the spirit ended in the flesh and they sinned grievously. And as one sin draws another after it, so the first sin became the occasion of a second, even a greater one. Fearing to be discovered, he killed the wretched woman. He would certainly have perished for ever had not God in consideration of his previous holiness granted him an extraordinary grace, and he repented. How true is what Pope Innocent says: "It is difficult to be in a fire and not burn; but it is equally difficult to seek the occasion of sin, and not sin." How many may there be among us who must acknowledge that, owing to dangerous occasions, they have often grievously offended God?

Now what are the means we must employ to preserve ourselves from sin in the midst of so many temptations and occasions? Such means are *watchfulness* and *prayer*, but especially the remembrance of death. "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."—*Ecclus. 7: 40*. How would it be possible to sin, if we but said to ourselves: I must die; and I know neither *when*, *how*, nor *where*: I only know that if I die in mortal sin I am lost for ever. This thought has been to thousands a shield from which all the darts of the tempter have rebounded. *Blessed Thomas More*, the Chancellor of England, was in prison; his death on the block was in prospect and certain, unless he would renounce his allegiance to the Catholic Church and accommodate himself to the will of the apostate Henry VIII. His wife visited him in the prison and prayed and conjured him with many tears to obey the king and to renounce the Catholic faith. Thomas looked at his wife earnestly and said: "Tell me, how long shall I live if I do the will of the king and offend God?" "O surely twenty years," was the reply. "O you foolish woman," he replied, "for the sake of twenty years to die miserably and plunge myself into the everlasting abyss? No, no; I would rather die than displease God. I will rather die the temporal than the eternal death." Thus spoke that great and good man, and thus did he die, sacrificing his life for the holy Catholic faith. Take an example from this heroic champion for the holy faith, and descend in thought into the grave, that you may turn away your eyes from vanity and never offend God.

(d.) *Very often in life.* He who knows that he is obliged to make a long journey that is connected with many dangers, certainly thinks often of it; whether he works or rests, prays or plays, his journey will always recur to his mind. We all have a long and dangerous journey before us, the journey into eternity, from which it is impossible to return. And how can we be so forgetful as not to think of this journey? We know with absolute certainty that we shall be called from the world, and should we not frequently bring to our mind the words of the Lord? "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return."—*Gen. 3: 19*. All persons solicitous for their salvation have frequently made death the subject of their thoughts. The Emperor Maximilian had his coffin made four years before his death. He kept it in his room; and when he traveled he had it brought with him, in order by the sight of it to be reminded of death. When the Carthusians meet they salute one another with these words: *Memento mori*—"remember that thou must die." Do you also frequently think of death? You have many opportunities for doing so. You see a funeral procession; what is more natural than to think: Soon I shall be carried to the grave. You see this one, or that one taken sick, and dying. Ought you not to think: My turn will soon come, and they will say of me: He is dead. You notice that everything in nature fades and withers and dies; should you not think: My life also is short and fleeting; only a little while and I shall be no more. When you hear the clock strike, will you not think of your dying hour and say: Perhaps I shall die at the same hour that has just struck, and appear before the judgment-seat of God. These frequent thoughts of death will by no means make you sad and melancholy, but rather will be to you a source of comfort and consolation both in life and death, for they are one of the most effectual means for the preservation of a good conscience; and a good conscience is like a continual feast.—*Prov. 15: 15*.

PERORATION.

Love to think of death, especially in the morning when you rise; in the evening when you lie down to rest; in the course of the day; in temptations and occasions of sin; and frequently during life. Follow the admonition of St. Bernard and often ask yourselves: If I were to die now, should I be prepared? Do now without delay and with persevering zeal what on your dying bed you will wish you had done, and walk in the fear of God, that you may obtain the greatest, most desirable and necessary of all graces—the grace of a happy death. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

THE DEATH OF THE JUST MAN

Lord, my daughter is even now dead.—Matt. 9: 18.

Another Ecclesiastical year is fast drawing to a close, for in eight days we shall celebrate the last Sunday after Pentecost, when the Church closes her year. Nothing certainly is more necessary and salutary than that we should often think of the end of life, *i. e.*, death. For this reason the gospel of this day brings before our eyes a dead person, the daughter of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue at Capharnaum. Everything depends on our dying well. If we are found in a state of grace at our last hour, all will be for our peace, we shall die a good death; all earthly suffering will be ended for us, heaven with its inexpressible joys will be opened to us, and our lot will be for ever with the saints. But only the just die a good death; o them alone the words of the Apocalypse are applicable (14: 3): "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: for their works follow them."

Let us to-day consider the just man on his death-bed, and see how blessed his death is—

- I. On account of what he loses;
- II. On account of what he finds.

PART I.

What does the just man lose when he dies?

1. *Everything that the world has, and gives, such as honors, dignities, money, real estate, pleasures, and enjoyments.* Let a man be what he may according to station, emperor, king, prince, minister of state, merchant, farmer, or laborer—after his death he is no longer what he was in life; with the last breath all difference of station ceases, and the mightiest autocrat is no more than the humble laborer in his hut. Death places all on a common level, never discriminates, but makes all alike. Diogenes was one day standing in the presence of Alexander the Great, and pretended to be very carefully looking for something among dead men's

skulls. "What are you searching for so diligently?" inquired the king. "I am seeking," said he, "the skull of your father, Philip, and I cannot distinguish it from other skulls. If you can do so, pray show it to me." As honors and dignities fade into nothingness, so also money and real estate disappear in death. If you should possess the most elegant mansion, the best and largest tract of land, and money by millions, and be engaged in a most lucrative business, you cannot take a cent's worth of all these goods with you into eternity, "for when he (the rich man) shall die he shall take nothing away; nor shall his glory descend with him."—*Ps.* 48: 18. The same may be said of earthly pleasures and joys: with death they dissolve like soap-bubbles and even the body that enjoyed them falls into dust.

Should the just man grieve over this loss when he dies? Certainly, if, like the worldling, he loved temporal goods inordinately and placed his felicity in their use; but as he values the goods of this world lightly and makes use of them only in so far as they are necessary and expedient for the obtaining of his purpose, he is not the least afflicted at their loss; he resembles the sick man who puts medicine aside or pours it out when he needs it no longer for his recovery. His sentiment agrees with that of the Apostle: "Indeed, 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.

That you may die easily and quietly, follow the admonition of the Apostle when he writes: "Brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that they also who have wives, be as if they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use the world, as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away."—*I. Cor.* 7: 29-31. In order to preserve yourselves from all inordinate and sinful worldly love, frequently remember the words of Christ: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?"—*Matt.* 16: 26.

2. What else does he lose? *A life full of dangers to salvation.* To how many and to what great dangers are ships exposed on the ocean! How many of them are wrecked every year! But far greater dangers threaten our salvation here below. The devil, the world, and the flesh prepare countless temptations for man, and labor indefatigably for his ruin. And alas! often do they succeed in their projects and bring about the fall of many who even for years had served God with the greatest fervor. Examples: David, Solomon, Peter, Tertullian, Origen. Even the loftiest virtue is not secure against a fall; nothing, therefore,

remains for us but that we work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

Why should a pious Catholic be grieved when he is about to leave a world where he is in great danger of losing God's grace and his eternal salvation? No; he will not grieve but rather rejoice that the time is near when all struggles and dangers cease and the salvation of his soul is secured for ever.

3. *He will lose a life of tribulations and sufferings.* Our life upon earth may be compared to a cemetery, in which one cross follows after the other; and all men, whoever they may be, more or less experience this truth of the divine utterance: "Great labor is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb, until the day of their burial into the mother of all."—*Ecclus.* 40: 1. It is especially the pious that are frequently visited with sufferings. God himself tries their virtue in many ways, to purify them more and more from the stains of sin, to sanctify them and to increase their merits for heaven. It also often happens that they are misrepresented by the world, despised, calumniated, and overwhelmed with abuse of every kind, for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution."—*II. Tim.* 3: 12. Examples: the Apostles, and especially St. Paul; the Christians of the first three centuries, of whom millions were martyred most cruelly. The Catholics of Ireland and down-trodden Poland.

Shall the just man grieve when he is near his end and sees that he must die? Certainly not; on the contrary, he will rejoice, for he will now be released from all his sufferings and tribulations; "and God shall wipe away all tears from his 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. A forester was one day wending his solitary way through the woods when all at once he was startled by a lovely song in the underbrush hard by. He approached, and saw a man covered with ulcers and sores from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, and near death. Full of astonishment, he asked him how he could sing in such a condition. "Why should I not sing?" replied the dying man. "Behold, between me and God there is nothing but the wall of my body, and now I see that this wall is ready to fall, and that I shall soon be delivered from my long and hard captivity; and this is the reason why I sing and am joyful."

Thus the just rejoice when they die, because in death they lose nothing but a miserable life connected with countless dangers and trials.

PART II.

What do the just find when they die? They find—

1. *Judgment.* Thus the Apostle says: "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment."—*Heb.* 9: 27. This judgment will, indeed, be very strict, for it will extend itself over our whole life and over everything that we have done, from the first moment of our awakening reason to our last breath. We must give an account of all our thoughts, words, works, and omissions. There will be no action in our life that will not be most severely scrutinized and adjudged. We must give an account of all the graces and opportunities which were given us for our salvation, of all interior inspirations, of every salutary admonition, of every confession and communion. Even with regard to our good works, we shall be examined as to whether we performed them with a good intention and with due fervor.

But those *who pass their life in innocence* can calmly await this account. What consolation will it be for them if on their death-bed they can say: I do not know that I have ever committed a mortal sin in my life; whenever I had a bad thought I banished it at once; I always kept away from places where I might have offended God. Surely, such blessed souls have no reason to fear the judgment, for "if our heart do not reprehend us, we have confidence towards God."—*I. John* 3: 21. Therefore, St. Hilarion, when on his death-bed the fear of judgment was presenting itself to his mind, said: "Depart, my soul; why dost thou fear? Thou hast served God seventy years, and thou fearest death!" And thus he died in the joyful hope that God would be to him a gracious judge.

Those also *who have done penance for their sins need not fear the judgment.* They may have sinned much and grievously, but they have afterwards sincerely repented and by penance recovered God's grace and friendship. Since from that time they served God zealously, performed various penitential works, frequently received the sacraments and were anxious to gain many indulgences, they have redeemed their temporal punishment, if not altogether, at least partially, and acquired many merits for heaven. Such penitents have therefore no reason on their death-bed to fear judgment, for to them the consoling words of the Lord are applicable: "If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, he shall live and shall not die."—*Ezech.* 18: 21. What an encouragement for you, unhappy souls, who now languish in the slavery of sin, that at least now, at the close of the Ecclesiastical Year, you can reconcile yourselves to God by a sincere confession, in order that finally you may be able with confidence to appear before his tribunal.

2. *Eternal salvation in heaven.* They find—

(a.) *The Blessed Trinity*, whose vision they will enjoy for ever according to the words of Christ: "Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God."—*Matt.* 5: 8. If Peter, who saw but a few rays of the Divinity of Jesus, was beside himself and full of rapture exclaimed: "Lord, it is good for us to be here," what beatitude will it be for the elect in heaven to whom it is given to see God in His infinite glory?

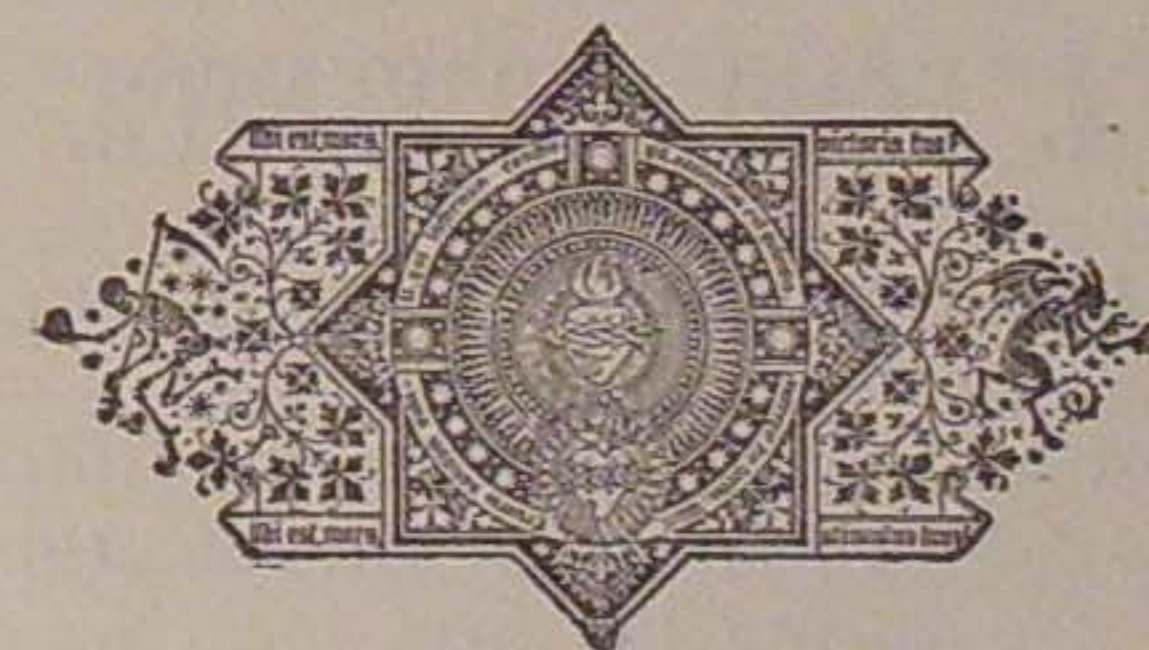
(b.) *Mary, the Mother of God; the Angels and Saints, and especially many relatives and acquaintances.* Oh, with what joy will they not be saluted at their entrance into heaven by the Blessed, with what love will they not be embraced! And how unspeakably happy will they not esteem themselves, for now they can live in the company of the angels and saints, who love them and live with them in undisturbed peace!

(c.) *Inexpressible joys.* All the pleasures and joys of this world, in comparison with those of heaven, are not so much as a drop of water compared with the ocean. "The felicity of heaven can be acquired, but never estimated; it can be merited, but not described."—*St. Aug.* St. Paul 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. And these heavenly joys last *for ever*. Hundreds and thousands and millions of years may roll around, the joys of the elect in heaven continue without the least interruption and last throughout the countless cycles of eternity. Oh, how consoling for the blessed inhabitants of heaven must be the thought that the felicity which they enjoy is secure for all eternity!

Should not the just man, who can confidently hope for this felicity, expect death with joy and welcome him as his best friend? Will he not say with the Apostle: "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ?"—*Phil.* 1: 23. We need not wonder that the saints rejoiced when they were about to die. When the Ruthenian Cardinal was about to die for the faith, he put on his best clothes, saying he was going to a marriage feast. Having arrived at the place of execution, he threw away his cane, saying: "Feet, go quickly, we are not far from paradise." And before he died he intoned the "Te Deum," giving thanks to God for vouchsafing him the grace of dying a martyr for the holy faith. Francis Suarez of the Society of Jesus, who labored so much for the salvation of souls, at the same time leading a most holy life himself, felt so great a consolation on his death-bed, that a few-moments before he breathed his last, he exclaimed: "I did not think that it was so sweet to die."

PERORATION.

Thus then do pious Catholics die. To them the words of the Holy Ghost apply: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Yes, they are blessed, whether we look at what they lose, or at what they find. You all must certainly wish to have a holy and happy end, to die a good death. Well then, lead a good life; for a good life is inevitably followed by a good death. Do what is required for a good death. Guard against every injustice and sin; and if you have sinned, bring forth fruits worthy of penance. Stand firm in the Lord, cling to the Catholic faith, and serve God with immutable fidelity all the days of your lives, and then you may confidently hope that your last hour will be the happiest of your whole life, for you will die the death of the just. Amen.





LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE.—*Col. 1: 9-14.* Brethren: We cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: that you may walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing: being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God: strengthened with all might according to the power of his glory, in all patience and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins.

I. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING.

As is the case on the fifth Sunday after Epiphany, the lesson for the last Sunday after Pentecost is a selection from the epistle which St. Paul wrote during his first imprisonment in Rome to the Christians at Colossa, a city in Asia Minor. The Apostle had nothing so much at heart as the propagation of the Christian religion, the preservation of it in the converted congregations, and the eternal salvation of souls. And in the midst of his great sufferings and persecutions nothing could give him greater consolation than to hear that Christianity had been received in places which he himself had not visited. He was, therefore, much rejoiced at the good tidings that also in Colossa a Christian congregation had been formed, and had become noted for its faith and morality. But since here, as elsewhere, false teachers appeared, and the Christians were in danger of being seduced by them, he cautions them against them, and exhorts them to cling to the true doctrine of Jesus Christ which had been preached to

them by apostolic men. In the epistle of this day the Apostle shows us—

- I. *What we must pray for;*
- II. *What we must give thanks for.*

PART I.

1. *We cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*

(a.) *For the knowledge of the will of God.* To do the will of God is our strict duty, for God is our Creator, Lord, and Father, to whom as his creatures, subjects and children, we owe subjection and obedience. Only by fulfilling his will can we please him and have a claim to eternal salvation. But for the faithful performance of the will of God it is necessary above all things that we should know it, for without this knowledge it is evidently impossible to do it. We have, indeed, various means by which we arrive at the knowledge of the divine will, such as conscience, which tells us what is right or wrong; sermons and catechetical instructions, by which we are taught what we must believe and do; religious books, which enlighten us in everything pertaining to our salvation; good examples, which guide us in a practical way to a life pleasing to God. All these means, however, are not of themselves sufficient to lead us to the true knowledge of the divine will; for this we need a special, supernatural grace to enlighten us and incline us to receive with a believing heart the knowledge of what is the will of God. Without this grace, even miracles could not convince us of what we must believe and do. But that God may give us the grace necessary for the knowledge of his will, we must ask him for it, for, as faith teaches us, prayer is the most necessary means for the obtaining of all graces.

(b.) *For wisdom, and spiritual understanding.* This wisdom and spiritual understanding consist in this, that we distinguish the good from the bad, the true from the false, the useful from the dangerous, and in every situation of life choose that which is for the honor of God and for the salvation of our soul; that we do not suffer ourselves to be captivated by the maxims of the world and the spirit of the times and to be led into evil; and that we prefer the eternal to the temporal, and employ temporal goods only as a means for the obtaining of our eternal end. The children of the world have neither sense nor understanding for this wisdom; their whole aim and object is temporal goods, money, lands, honor, reputation, joys and amuse-

ments; eternal goods are of secondary importance. Every means that appears to them suitable for the gratification of their passions is considered lawful and good; they esteem human favor higher than God's pleasure, and to desires of the flesh they immolate soul and salvation. What blindness! To guard yourselves against such a fatal delusion, and come to the knowledge of all that conduces to your salvation, you must pray with fervor and devotion, according to the admonition of the Apostle: "If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."—*James 1: 5.*

2. *That you may walk worthy of God, in all thing pleasing; being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.* The mere knowledge of the will of God, and all insight and wisdom would profit us nothing, but only render us the more guilty before him, if we failed to regulate our life accordingly. For this reason we must pray—

(a.) *That we may walk worthy of God.* We do this when we love him with our whole heart, joyfully keep his commandments, and cheerfully submit ourselves to him in all the circumstances of life: when we serve him according to the example of Christ, have him before our eyes in all our actions, and even when we are alone or in secret allow ourselves nothing that is displeasing to him.

(b.) *In all things pleasing.* We must be more solicitous for the approbation of God than for human praise and the applause of the world. Whether we pray or work, speak or keep silence, do a good work or avoid a sin, we must do all things with the intention of pleasing God. If we should have another intention, *e. g.*, to please men, we should act contrary to our destiny, for God has created us to serve and glorify him; and we should merit his displeasure, hence the Apostle says: "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."—*Gal. 1: 10.*

(c.) *Being fruitful in every good work.* It is not enough that we study and practice only one virtue, and neglect the others; that we now and then perform a good work, and again commit many sins. If that were sufficient for salvation, there would be no reprobate, for even the most irreligious man occasionally does a good work. If we desire to please God and save our souls, we must avoid all evil, and diligently avail ourselves of all opportunities for doing good; at all events, we must do the good that is commanded. As the avaricious endeavor to become rich in money and earthly goods, so the good Christian seeks to become rich in virtue and good works.

(d.) *Increasing in the knowledge of God.* Increase in the knowledge of God is in proportion to the fruitfulness of good works. The more good we do, and the more we increase in virtue and holiness, the more perfect will our knowledge of God become, as Christ intimates in these words: "If any man will do the will of him (God), he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."—*John 7: 17.* And again, the better we know God and the doctrines and truths of our holy religion, the more we shall feel ourselves encouraged to live piously and to practice good works. Almost all the disorders discernible in the lives of men originate from the want of a true knowledge of God and the doctrines and regulations of our holy religion. Let us therefore unceasingly pray not only for a life pleasing to God and fruitful in good works, but also for the increase of the knowledge of God and our holy religion.

3. *Strengthened with all might, according to the power of his glory, in all patience and long-suffering with joy.*

(a.) *Strengthened with all might, according to the power of his glory.* This means: Because with our natural faculties we can do nothing in matters of salvation, we must ask God to strengthen us with his glorious, omnipotent power, and enable us to labor meritoriously for heaven and to acquire still greater virtue and perfection. Let us therefore never omit in the morning when we rise to turn our thoughts to God, and to ask him to assist us by his grace, that we may zealously serve him during the day and acquire many merits for heaven.

(b.) *In all patience and long-suffering with joy.* So long as we live we must endure various sufferings, tribulations, and things dangerous to salvation. We are weak and frail and very prone to evil, and in spite of our good intentions, often renewed, we commit the old faults over and over again; and from without we are tempted in various ways and allured to evil. What then is more necessary than patience, that we may courageously persevere in good and faithfully serve God in all the circumstances of life? We must therefore not omit to pray to God for courage and strength to bear the trials and hardships of life not only with patience but also with joy, and to follow Christ, who for the love of us carried his cross with joy. In all our necessities, sufferings and temptations, who is our refuge, our strength, our consolation and help, but the Lord our God?

These are the graces for which we must ask God, and for which we have perhaps heretofore not asked with sufficient fervor. Let us learn now for what we must return thanks to God.

PART II.

Giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light. By lot of the saints in light, we must understand Christianity with all its advantages, or the Church of Christ on earth and in heaven. When the Apostle says that God has made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light, he means to say: God has called us to partake of Christianity and of all the advantages and graces connected with it here and hereafter. Let us reflect on the grace which God has bestowed upon us thereby. The Church established by Christ is the only saving institution for man; he who does not belong to it, at least in will, must perish, as the people in Noe's time, who were not in the ark, perished. While so many millions of men are born, live and die outside the pale of the Church and perish eternally, a few hours after our birth God cleansed us in the waters of regeneration, sanctified and made us members of the only saving Church. How have we deserved such graces? And let us consider how many graces are imparted to us from our birth to the hour of our departure into eternity; let us think of the word of God, which is so often preached to us, of the sacrifice of the mass, which our priests offer up daily for us on thousands of altars, of the holy sacraments, especially of penance and the Blessed Eucharist in which we receive so many graces, of the indulgences, which enable us in so easy a manner to blot out the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven, of the holy times and festivals which raise our hearts heavenward and secure for us the merits of Christ. Have we not many reasons to thank God unceasingly for these graces? Should we not cry out with the Psalmist: "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that he hath rendered to me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord."—*Ps.* 115: 3, 4. Shall we not manifest our gratitude towards God for our call to the Church, by employing the graces which he so frequently gives us for the salvation of our soul?

2. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.* With these words the Apostle explains at greater length the blessings of Christianity and renders some of them more conspicuous.

(a.) *The delivery from the power of darkness, i. e., from the power of the devil and his works of error and sin.* So long as man does not belong to the Church he languishes in the bondage of Satan; he is destitute of the right knowledge of God and of the true saving faith; he is not yet justified, but is still in the bondage of

sin. How miserable is man in this state? Can there be anything more sad and wretched than to have no knowledge of God and his holy revelation, to be in total ignorance of the fate of man after his death, to live in sin and to have no means of escaping from it, and hereafter to be rejected for ever? And this would have been the fate of us all, had not God in his infinite mercy delivered us from the power of darkness.

Oh, let us often reflect on this, and give thanks to God for the grace of our Redemption. Let us carefully shun sin, that we may not relapse into the slavery in which we had the misfortune to be born, and endeavor to deliver from perdition those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, the unbelievers and heretics, by prayer, good example and contributions to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

(b.) *The translation into the kingdom of the Son of his love, i. e., into the Church established by his beloved Son, Jesus Christ.* God, in his infinite mercy, has not only delivered us from the greatest of all evils, the servitude of the devil, but has also bestowed on us the exceedingly great grace of being translated into the Church of Christ, in which alone we can work out our salvation. Here we have everything that is necessary for our salvation. The holy faith, which is preached to us pure and unadulterated, the ten commandments, which, in order to please God, we must keep; and the means of grace, which our Saviour has ordained for our purification and sanctification. How grateful should we be to God for these blessings and graces! How zealously should we avail ourselves of them for our salvation! Let us not forget that much will be required of him to whom much has been given, and that we Catholics must give a far more rigorous account on the Day of Judgment than Gentiles, Jews, unbelievers and heretics, because we have so many more graces than they.

(c.) *Redemption through his blood, the remission of sins.* In these words the great truth is expressed that we owe our delivery from the power of Satan and the remission of our sins to the precious blood of Jesus Christ, which he shed for us on the cross. Here the infinite love of God the Father manifests itself, who gave "his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."—*John* 3: 16. Where is there a father on earth, whose love goes so far as to sacrifice his only son for his worst enemy? Here is also manifested the infinite mercy of Jesus Christ, who, for the love of us endured sufferings and death—death on the ignominious gibbet of the cross—shedding for us the last drop of his precious blood in order to redeem and save our immortal souls. Oh, should we

not give thanks to a God who is all love and mercy? Should we not love him with our whole heart? Should we not deem ourselves happy to be able to serve him? Should we not esteem above all things the grace of our Redemption, and strive to apply to ourselves the fruits thereof?

PERORATION.

This being the last Sunday of the Ecclesiastical Year, I now conclude my explanations of the epistles of the Sundays. Oh, would that the truths, lessons, and admonitions which are contained in these epistles, and which during the course of the past year I have to the best of my poor ability attempted to bring home to your hearts, yield fruit a hundred-fold for eternal life! Since the epistles which the Apostles wrote by the assistance and inspiration of the Holy Ghost contain the word of God, as well as the gospels, equal honor is due to both; do not omit then to read them on Sundays and holidays together with the gospels. Frequently recall to your mind the good lessons which in the explanation of them have been given to you, and resolve to regulate your life according to them. By so doing, you will belong to the number of those of whom Christ says: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it."—*Luke 11: 28*. Amen.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt. 24: 15-35*. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: When you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth, let him understand: then they that are in Judea let them flee to the mountains. And he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat. And woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days. But pray that your flight be not in the winter or on the Sabbath. For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened. Then, if any man shall say to you: Lo, here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs and false pro-

phets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold, I have told it to you beforehand. If therefore they shall say to you: Behold, he is in the desert; go ye not out: Behold, he is in the closets; believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together. And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be moved. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn: and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And he shall send his angels with a trumpet, and a great voice: and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the uttermost bounds of them. And from the fig-tree learn a parable: when the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So also you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. Amen, I say to you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done. **Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass.**

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, AND THE END OF THE WORLD.

The gospel read in the mass of this day speaks of two prophecies of our Saviour, one of which was fulfilled more than eighteen hundred years ago, and the other will be fulfilled after the lapse of a period known to God alone. The first of these prophecies concerns the destruction of Jerusalem and the kingdom of the Jews; and this is an historical fact. Jerusalem, that renowned, powerful and populous city, together with its temple, was totally destroyed, and levelled with the ground, and more than a million of Jews lost their lives through hunger, pestilence, and the sword of the enemy; those who were spared were scattered all over the world, and their descendants are to this very day without temple or sacrifice, without king or country. The second prophecy of our Lord refers to the end of the world. I must remark here that these two prophecies are not strictly limited, but are interwoven in many ways, so that what is said of the destruction of Jerusalem may be said of the end of the world, and *vice versa*. We shall to-day briefly consider both prophecies of our Lord.

- I. *The prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.*
 II. *The prophecy concerning the end of the world.*

PART I.

I shall here explain the first part of the prophecy of Christ, which especially refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, and draw from it some very important lessons.

1. *Explanation of the prophecy.*

(a.) *When you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth let him understand: then they that are in Judea let them flee to the mountains.* The prophet Daniel, who lived five hundred years before Christ, prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem—*Dan. 9: 26, 27.* Christ refers to this prophecy in the gospel of to-day. By the *abomination of desolation*, we understand the terrible things which happened during the siege of the city of Jerusalem, viz., robberies, the shedding of blood, and various awful crimes by which the temple was profaned by the rebellious Jews; the idols which the Gentiles erected in the sight of Jerusalem, and the vices and crimes perpetrated both by Jews and Gentiles. When the Christians should see these abominations, they would know that the destruction of Jerusalem was nigh, and they were to flee into the mountainous regions in order to be secure there from the Roman army. This they did, according to the account of Church historians; they fled to Pella in the mountainous Galaad and into other mountainous regions, and thus saved their lives.

(b.) *And he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house; and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat.* The roofs of houses in the East were flat and surrounded by a railing; and as there was a stair-case leading to them from the outside, it was not necessary, in order to descend, to go into the house. When our Lord says that those who are on the house-top should not come down to take anything out of the house, and that those who are in the field should not go back, he wishes the Christians to flee speedily that they may not fall into the hands of the enemy.

(c.) *And he cries out: Woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days, because they are not in a condition to flee quickly; again, he says they should pray that their flight be not in the winter, because at that time the inclement weather and the*

bad roads would render flight difficult; and *not on the Sabbath*, because on the Sabbath-day the Jews were allowed to go the distance only of a thousand paces; therefore they could not flee far enough to escape the enemy.

(d.) Christ then speaks of a tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be, and says that if the days of tribulation had not been shortened, no man could escape with his life; but that for the sake of the elect those days would be shortened. The tribulation of the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem and its destruction were truly great beyond measure. The Jewish historian, Josephus, says: "Never did any city suffer so much; never from the beginning of the world was a generation so fruitful in crimes." By the order of Titus, five hundred Jews were daily crucified publicly in the sight of all the city. The famine was so great that the besieged were reduced to eat hay and straw, the very leather of their shoes, and the most disgusting things, and even human flesh. Six hundred thousand bodies of those who died of hunger and pestilence were cast into the trenches. When Titus saw the great multitude of corpses, he raised his hand towards heaven and exclaimed: "I am innocent of this tribulation; it is not my work, but the judgment of God." At the taking of the city so many Jews were cut down that the blood flowed in torrents in the streets and public squares. If God had not for the sake of the Christians who lived among them shortened the days of this terrible tribulation, they all would have perished together.

What our Lord says here has far more reference to the end of the world; for the tribulations which at that time will come upon men will be far greater than those at the siege and destruction of Jerusalem; but God will also shorten those tribulations for the sake of the pious Christians who will be living at that time.

2. *Lessons.*

(a.) By the *abomination of desolation*, we can understand, in a spiritual sense, every *mortal sin*; for mortal sin is such an abomination in the eyes of God that those who die contaminated with it are rejected for ever from his presence. It is also mortal sin that so disfigures the soul, this most glorious creation of God, that nothing hideous upon earth can be compared with it. If we could see with our bodily eyes a soul defiled by mortal sin we should be so terrified that we should fall lifeless to the ground. Mortal sin also works an awful devastation in the soul, for it destroys in it the supernatural image of God, robs it of sanctifying grace, the filial relation to God, and the inheritance of heaven, and delivers it as a slave to the devil and to eternal

damnation. Can there be anything more terrible imagined than mortal sin? How blinded then must those be who commit mortal sin without scruple, who live in it for months and years, and who do not make use of so many and such easy means by which they can free themselves from their misery of sin! Oh, never forget that mortal sin is the greatest of all evils, and shun it more than death. And if you should ever have the misfortune to fall into mortal sin, cleanse your conscience without delay by a good confession and place yourselves again in a state of grace.

(b.) In order to escape the abomination of desolation, Christ advises *flight*. We must shun everything that is to us a proximate occasion of sin, for only in this way can we preserve ourselves from sin and save our souls. Avoid all intimate familiarity with bad people, and especially amorous relations with persons of the opposite sex, and keep away from those places where you run the danger of offending God. Not to avoid the proximate occasion of sin, and in this way to be willing to sin, is to tempt God. If it seems hard to avoid the proximate occasion of sin, think of the words of Christ: "If thy hand, or thy foot, scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to go into life maimed or lame, than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee having one eye to enter into life, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire."—*Matt.* 18: 8, 9.

(c.) Christ says: *Woe to them that are with child, and that give suck*. In a spiritual sense they are those who often make good resolutions but never execute them. How many are there, who in their confessions and on other occasions promise everything good, but never keep their word! How often when they make a good purpose of amendment do they say: "I earnestly resolve to amend my life and never more to offend God;" and yet they always commit their former sins again. Know, then, that such resolutions made but not kept lead not to heaven but to hell. An old proverb says: "Hell is paved with good intentions," meaning resolutions that are not kept. Not only make good resolutions, but also keep them; and to do this, ask God to give you his grace, and often renew your resolutions, especially in time of temptation.

(d.) Our divine Saviour admonishes his hearers to *pray that their flight may not be in the winter, or on the Sabbath*. In a spiritual sense we are admonished in these words not to defer the business of salvation to the future, to the leisure of old age. For, first, it is uncertain that we shall arrive at that old age for which we so

fondly hope; many are snatched away in the vigour of manhood; and again, old age is ill-fitted for penance and amendment, on account of our inveterate evil habits, and the decay of the powers and faculties of both body and soul. Take to heart the advice of the Holy Ghost. "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: 9. Let us beware of spending our life in luxury and idleness; there is no sabbath in this life for us, nor time for rest, but working days, in which we must labor for the honor of God, the salvation of our own soul, and the good of our fellow-men. Let us look for rest only in heaven.

(e.) Christ speaks of a *great tribulation*, which shall come upon Jerusalem. Tepid, slothful, lukewarm persons who put off the business of their salvation to a time when they can no longer attend to it, must expect this. In the struggle of death the body will be in great tribulation; and the soul will be tormented by the stings of conscience. By the dim light of the blessed candle you will see more clearly than by the bright light of the sun, for then the world will no longer blind you, and your passions will be silent. Then you will perceive what an evil it is to live heedlessly in sin, to love the world, to neglect the duties of religion and your station in life, and to be unconcerned about the salvation of your soul; then you will see yourself defiled by a multitude of sins, which before you took no notice of; then you will find that even your virtues and good works are not without defects and imperfections. How great will your tribulation then be! In order to avert this tribulation do now what on your death-bed you wish you had done. Take death for your adviser and follow its direction.

(f.) When our divine Saviour says that the days of tribulation shall be shortened *for the sake of the elect*, we perceive that God, for the sake of the just, will be gracious even to sinners, and avert punishment from them, or mitigate it. Proofs of this truth are: Moses, at whose intercession God very often withdrew the threatened punishment from the Israelites in the desert; Abraham, who prevailed so much with God, that he would have spared Sodom if ten just men had been found in the city. Even in these days it is the just, for whose sake God is gracious and merciful to sinful humanity and does not punish it as it deserves. How wrongly do unbelievers and sinners act who ridicule pious Catholics. They are the enemies of those to whom they owe perhaps their life and prosperity.

Let us now consider *the prophecy of Christ concerning the end of the world*, and draw from it some good lessons.

PART II.

1. *Explanation of the prophecy.*

(a.) Jesus warns his followers against men *who pretend to be Christ, and against false prophets*, and says of them that they will do great signs and wonders, so that, if possible, even the elect will be deceived. There were false prophets and especially men who pretended to be Christ at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus we read in the Acts (5: 36, 37, & 8: 9), that a certain Theodas, then Judas, a Galilean, and after him Simon, who called himself the Power of God, and after him again an Egyptian who invaded Judea with four thousand highwaymen (*Acts 21: 38*), all desired to be looked upon as the Messiah: The prophecy of Christ concerning the false Christs and false prophets refers, however, properly speaking, to the time when the end of the world will come. At that time *Antichrist*, a lying prophet, will appear, whom St. Paul calls "the man of sin, who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God."—*II. Thess. 2: 3, et seq.* The signs and wonders performed by Antichrist and his adherents will not be real, but only apparent wonders, and will be effected by the agency of the devil, who possesses not only great powers, but also great knowledge, and thus is able to do many things that have a resemblance to a true miracle performed by God. Examples are the Egyptian sorcerers, who imitated several miracles wrought by Moses.—*Ex. 7: 12; 8: 7; Simon the Magician (Acts 8: 9-11)*, who by his magic arts blinded many. It is related of him that he pretended to be Christ and tried to ascend on high, but that at the prayer of SS. Peter and Paul he fell down and was killed.

(b.) When our divine Saviour says that *as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be*, he refers to his sudden and visible coming at the Day of Judgment. The meaning is: When the Son of Man comes to judge the living and the dead, he will not, like the false prophets, be in a secluded place where only a few can see him, so that there could be a doubt of his advent and existence, but he will come like a flash of lightning, which all of a sudden bursts forth from the clouds and is seen far and near and by the whole world.

(c.) *Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together.* According to the explanation of many interpreters of the Sacred Scripture, this expression, *the eagles*, is

equivalent to *vultures*, carnivorous birds that gather about a dead body. The sense is: As vultures congregate about a dead body, so, after the fall of Antichrist, Jesus Christ shall come with his judgments upon the corrupted and apostatized world and deliver it to eternal perdition.

(d.) *Christ announces the end of the world, and his coming to judge it; saying that immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; and the stars shall fall from heaven.* The sign of the Son of Man, which will appear in heaven, is the holy cross, which will shine with inexpressible splendor high in the air; the tribes of the earth are the wicked, who, at the sight of the cross, will, full of terror and consternation, break out into lamentations. Their terror will be increased when immediately afterwards they see Jesus Christ coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty to hold the Last Judgment.

(e.) And he will send his angels with the trumpet, and a great voice; and they will gather together in one place all mankind; and then the judgment will be held.

(f.) By the parable of the fig-tree, Christ means to say that as we know that summer is nigh when the fig-tree shoots forth its tender branches, so by the appearance of Antichrist, and other signs which he foretold, we can know that the end of the world and the Last Judgment are nigh. The words: *This generation shall not pass, till all these things be done*, refer in the first place, to the destruction of Jerusalem, which many of the Jews to whom he foretold it lived to see, and in a remote sense also to the end of the world, because when it takes place many men will still be living. Finally, our Lord gives the assurance that heaven and earth shall pass, *i. e.*, be changed into a new heaven and a new earth, but that his words remain unchangeable and will certainly be fulfilled.

2. *Lessons.*

(a.) Antichrist has forerunners at all times; in the past and also in our day. They are particularly those who make it their principal task to destroy the holy faith and to substitute infidelity in its stead. They pursue this end by word of mouth and by their writings, and no means are too wicked for them, if they only suit the purpose. They never cease to calumniate the Catholic Church, her doctrines, her precepts and her ordinances, and to invent all kinds of lies against her, in order to render her suspicious and odious. Be not deceived by them. Look upon every

one who teaches or wishes anything contrary to the doctrine of the Catholic Church—the pillar and ground of truth—as a forerunner of Antichrist, and have nothing to do with him. Be also on your guard against men who attempt to lead you into various sins, such as impurity, injustice, drunkenness, gambling, omission of prayer, neglect of confession and communion. These also do the work of the devil; you must give no ear to their flatteries and seductive discourses.

(b.) The coming of Christ at the Last Judgment will be *sudden*, like lightning. Let us consider that the coming of Jesus Christ at our particular judgment will also be unexpected; this will take place immediately after our death, as he himself says: "Behold, I come as a thief."—*Apoc.* 16: 15. Let us always be prepared for death and never remain in a state in which we should not wish to die. Consider that it is generally sinners that death overtakes, and hurries before the judgment-seat of God in the midst of their wicked career. To them the words of the Apostle apply: "When they shall say, peace and security, then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as the pains upon her with child; and they shall not escape."—*I. Thess.* 5: 3. Your greatest and only care should be to live in a state of grace.

(c.) When Christ says: *Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together*, among other things he brings before us the truth that the judgment of God will come when the measure of sin is full. It was so with the Jews; when the measure of their sin was full they perished together with their city. The same lot will fall upon all sinners. God frequently tolerates sinners for a long time, and he sees how they heap sin upon sin. But when the measure of their sin is full he cries out to them, as it were, from heaven: "Thus far, and no farther!" He snatches them from the earth and delivers them to everlasting fire. Be not heedless; live not in sin for months and years, for nothing is so dangerous as this, since no one knows when the time of grace will be over and the measure of sin be full.

(d.) At the coming of Christ the sign of the holy cross will appear in heaven, as the Church says, in the canonical hours: "This sign of the cross will be in heaven when the Lord shall come to judge." At the sight of this sign the wicked will lament and be terrified, for they know that the cross will bring them woe and damnation, but the good will rejoice and find great consolation, for in the cross they recognize the sign of salvation. The admonition of Christ: "Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me," seems very hard to many; but much harder will be the rebuke: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting

fire!" Those who now hear with joy the word of the cross and follow it, will then have no fear of hearing that awful sentence. For when our Lord comes this sign will appear in the clouds, and then all who were subject to the cross, and during their life made themselves conformable to Christ, will go to him with great confidence.

(e.) Heaven and earth, that is, the whole visible creation, will pass away and, like the human body, yield to death and decay, in order to pass over into a new and better state. Do not attach your hearts to these perishable, frail things of the world, have no inordinate desire for anything earthly, and be not so foolish as to lose heaven and to deserve hell for the sake of vain and fleeting earthly enjoyments. When you have a carnal temptation, say to yourselves, "The joys of earth are brief, the fires of hell are eternal." Frequently meditate on heaven with its unspeakable felicity, and say with St. Ignatius: "How contemptible is the earth to me when I contemplate heaven!"

PERORATION.

These are the truths and the lessons which you must ever follow and often consider. As to-day we celebrate the last Sunday of the Ecclesiastical year, thank God for all the graces and blessings which he has bestowed upon you; be sorry for all your sins and faults and the bad use which you have made of the graces given to you, and resolve to spend the last eight days of the Ecclesiastical Year in a penitential spirit. Promise our Lord that if he permits you to live till then, you will spend the new year in zeal for his honor, that you will strive to amend your faults, and to labor for your perfection, so that you may meet death and judgment with tranquillity and in the blessed confidence that you can render a good account of your stewardship. Amen.



LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

HOW JESUS CHRIST WILL HOLD THE LAST JUDGMENT.

They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.—Matt. 24: 30.

To-day, on the last Sunday of the Ecclesiastical Year, the Church directs our attention to the end of the world and the Last Judgment. From eternity God has appointed the day and the hour when the world, with everything in it, will come to an end. The gospel of this day says: *The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; and the stars shall fall from heaven; and the powers of the heavens shall be moved.* And immediately after, the Son of God will come from heaven with great power and majesty to hold the Last Judgment. When all men shall have risen from the dead at the sound of the trumpet, they shall be gathered around Christ in the valley of Josaphat, in order to be judged by him. I shall speak to you to-day of this judgment by answering the following question: *How will Jesus Christ hold the Last Judgment?* He will—

- I. *Examine the lives of men most rigorously;*
- II. *Bring all secret things to light;*
- III. *Pronounce sentence upon the good and the bad.*

PART I.

Jesus Christ will most rigorously examine the lives of men. This examination will extend—

1. *To thoughts.* Jesus, the omniscient Judge, will examine all the thoughts, representations, inclinations, wishes and desires which a man has had during his whole life. This cannot be doubted in the least, for the Holy Ghost says it in plain and direct words in the Book of Wisdom (1: 9): "Inquisition shall be made into the thoughts of the ungodly; and the hearing of his words shall come to God." O what a number of sins will appear at this inquisition? How will men who pay no attention now to their interior, be amazed, when all at once, all that passed in their hearts will appear plainly before their eyes! "Crimes

without number," says St. Bernard, "of which we never thought we had rendered ourselves guilty, we shall see break forth from the heart as from an ambush. We shall be shown to ourselves such as we really are; we must descend into our hearts, into which we were never wont to descend; a sudden light will light up the abyss; this secret place of malice, this workshop of Satan, will be opened." Then it will come to pass that many men, on account of the sins of their hearts, on account of their bad thoughts and desires will not be able to bear the examination and will be rejected. How carefully, then, should you keep watch over all your thoughts and desires, in order to suppress and banish those that are sinful!

2. *To words.* Christ emphatically assures us of this, when he says: "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it on the Day of Judgment."—*Matt. 12: 36.* The divine Judge will then subject to the most severe scrutiny all the words which we have spoken, written, voluntarily heard or read, from the first moment we arrived at the age of discretion to our last breath; he will judge us in reference to all good, bad, indifferent and useless words, all lies, detractions and calumnies, curses and blasphemies, all obscene songs, etc. Great God, what an account! How many men will be rejected owing to the sins of the tongue! How watchful, therefore, ought we to be of our tongue, that it may not be the cause of our damnation!

3. *To works,* whether they were done publicly or secretly, alone or with others, by day or by night, in youth, manhood, or old age. Whatever we have seen, heard, or touched, in a word, whatever we have done with the senses, will be scrutinized, all the employments of our body and its members must be accounted for. In like manner our business, occupations, labors, trade, our amusements and enjoyments, visits, company, games, our walking and standing, our sitting and lying down—each and all will be most minutely scrutinized. "All things that are done God will bring into judgment for every error, whether it be good or evil."—*Eccles. 12: 14.* Oh, that we would remember that we must give an account of everything, and that heaven and hell are at stake; oh, that we would guard against every sinful action!

4. *To the consequences of our words and actions.* Almost every word or action is a seed from which springs forth wheat or cockle. St. Peter preached, and three thousand Jews were converted; Arius preached and millions of orthodox Christians lost the true faith and perished. What consequences! It often hap-

pens that one sin, *e. g.*, an unchaste word, is the cause of many thousand sins! How often does it happen that those who scandalized and corrupted others have long rotted in the grave, but yet the sins to which they have given occasion are still committed. Examples from history and life. What an account it will be when God pronounces judgment on the consequences of sin! We should therefore avoid nothing so much as scandal and corruption.

5. *To the duties of our station in life.* We all, whoever and whatever we may be, superiors or subjects, peasants, mechanics, merchants, single or married, rich or poor, healthy or sick, high or low, have particular duties to perform, concerning which we must give an account. On the fulfilment of these duties also depends our salvation. Example: Heli, who on account of his neglect of the duty of his station was punished with sudden death, and probably with the loss of eternal salvation. Should not everyone, considering this, fulfil the duties of his station with the greatest conscientiousness?

6. *To the graces received for our salvation.* Every illumination of the understanding, every motion of the will, every inspiration to virtue, every good example that we have before our eyes, every salutary admonition given to us, every sermon, every spiritual reading, each reception of the sacraments, every mass at which we assist, all holy seasons and feasts we live to celebrate, all the misfortunes, sufferings and sicknesses which God sends us, all these things the eternal Judge will place before our eyes and call us to account for them. How then will those fare, who leave so many graces and means of salvation unemployed, or abuse them to sin? Reflect seriously how you have heretofore behaved in regard to these graces, and amend what is to be amended, that you may be able to stand before God in judgment.

7. *To the time of our life,* which in reality is nothing else than a continual grace for our salvation. There is not an hour that God does not claim for his own, there is not a day over which he has resigned his sovereignty; therefore, we shall have to give an account of every single minute of our lives. How will those fare who waste their precious time in idleness, in amusement, or, what is still worse, in vices and sins, or who devote their whole life to the pursuit of temporal goods, and neglect the business of their salvation? Reflect on these questions and do not forget that eternal salvation depends on the right use of time.

8. *To the exercises of virtue and good works.* It is not enough that we do good; we must also do it in the right manner. If you

practice virtue and good works, but not on account of God, for his honor, and for the love of him, but for ambition, self-gratification, or to gain the praise and applause of men, you have, as Christ says of the Pharisees, already received your reward. Nay, if you do good, but do it carelessly and render yourselves guilty of various faults, you can not only expect no reward, but must rather expect punishment from God. Examine yourselves here as to how you have heretofore prayed, labored, heard mass and sermons, how you have confessed, received communion, and behaved in difficulties and afflictions.

Oh, how vast in extent will be the account which we must give on the Day of Judgment! Have we not reason to pray with David: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight no man living shall be justified?"—*Ps. 142: 2.*

PART II.

Jesus Christ will bring all secret things to light.

1. In the darkness of night we do not see many things at all, and many appear to us otherwise than they really are. But when the sun rises thousands of objects appear which were before invisible, and all that is beautiful or ugly exhibits itself in its proper shape and form. It is so with the actions of men. Here upon earth, much of what man does remains necessarily hidden; no one knows what passes within him, what he thinks, wishes, and intends; he does not perfectly know even himself. But on the day of the Last Judgment, when Jesus Christ, the Sun of Justice and the Light of the world, appears, all secret things will come to light and everything will exhibit itself as it is in reality. The Judge will publicly pronounce sentence, and therefore all the thoughts, words, and works of men must be revealed, that everyone may be convinced of his justice and confess: "Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgment is right."—*Ps. 118: 137.* "There is nothing hid," says Christ, "which shall not be made manifest: neither was it made secret, but that it may come abroad."—*Mark 4: 22.*

2. *Consequences of this revelation.*

(a.) *For the sinner.* What confusion, what shame for the sinner, when suddenly all the secrets of his cunning and malice are unveiled, and his vices and iniquities appear in all their hideousness! If now, in the presence of all, you were obliged to confess and reveal with a loud voice all the evil you have done in thought, word, and deed, what would be your feelings? But what would

this revelation and confession be in comparison with that which will take place on the Day of Judgment, before the whole world, before all angels and men, and before the devils themselves. Need we wonder that sinners at the publication of their crimes will cry out full of despair: "Ye mountains, fall upon us; ye hills, cover us!" "More terrible than hell itself," says St. Basil, "will be the confusion and shame of the wicked, with which they will be filled by the revelation of their most secret crimes. More awful than everlasting darkness, and more bitter than the everlasting flames will be this shame when all their hidden evil shall come to light."

(b.) *For the just man.* Who is able to describe the consolation and joy of the just, when all the good they have thought, spoken, and done is all at once displayed in all its beauty before the gaze of an admiring world! They shall stand there, crowned with honor and glory, and overflowing with happiness they will with a loud voice praise God, who thus glorifies them. It is true, their sins also will be revealed, but this revelation will not be to their disgrace, but to their glorification, on account of the penance which they have done for them. These sins can be compared to the wounds which a soldier has received in battle, which are not to his shame, but to his honor and praise.

PART III.

Jesus Christ will pronounce sentence upon the good and the wicked.

Upon the good. He will say to them: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you clothed me; sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me."—*Matt.* 25: 34-36.

(a.) *Come.* Our divine Saviour uses this word to remind us of that first call, when he invited us to follow him, saying: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart."—*Matt.* 11: 28, 29. Because the elect so readily followed this call, he now uses a similar one and invites them to come to him, in order to reward them for their obedience. How the just will exult when they hear his "Come!" Let us now follow our Lord, when he says, "Come, go into my vineyard and labor," that on the Day of Judgment we may have

the happiness of hearing out of his mouth this second "Come," and the command to "enter into the joy of the Lord."

(b.) *Ye blessed of my Father.* With these words Christ signifies the graces and blessings which the elect have received from their heavenly Father on account of his merits, and shall receive for all eternity. When they hear these words, full of joy they will exclaim with the Apostle: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ; as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world."—*Ephes.* 1: 3, 4.

(c.) *Possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* This kingdom for which the just have labored so much and so hard, endured so many sufferings, undergone so many mortifications and privations, and which now they are going to possess, is the kingdom of eternal beatitude in heaven. And God has prepared this kingdom for them, not at their birth, or at their death, but from the foundation of the world—nay, from eternity, because he has foreseen that they would diligently employ the graces necessary for salvation and persevere in his service to the end.

(d.) *For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat, etc.* With these words Christ announces that he will receive the works of mercy and charity which we do to our fellow-men as if we had done them to him. "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. It is not, however, said here that only works of charity receive the heavenly reward; they stand for all good works and for the observance of the whole Christian law, because the love of our neighbor includes the love of God, and because this twofold love is the fulfilling of the law. Therefore, all who serve God faithfully during life, will hear on the Day of Judgment the consoling words: "Come, ye blessed," etc.

2. *Upon the wicked.* He will say to them: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me not in; naked, and you covered me not; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me."—*Matt.* 25: 41, 42.

(a.) *Depart from me.* King Philip of Spain once saw two courtiers misbehaving in the church, and on his return to his apartments he said to them: "You two must never appear again in my presence; you are banished from my court for life." These words

of their angry sovereign so terrified them that one of them died of apoplexy and the other became an idiot. What terror will seize the damned, when Christ in his anger shall say to them, in a voice of thunder: "Depart from me; you shall never for all eternity be with me in heaven."

(b.) *You cursed.* You have not willed the blessing, bear now the curse of the Triune God, of your guardian angel, your patron saint, your pastors, your parents and friends and of all the damned, whose number you have increased by your scandals and bad examples.

(c.) *Into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.* Fire will be the portion of the damned, that element which pains most terribly, the fire of hell, compared with which every other fire is only like a painted fire, the fire prepared by God's vengeance for the devil and his angels, the apostate spirits, which without intermission will burn for ever and ever. Oh, the unhappy damned! it would have been a thousand times better for them never to have been born.

(d.) *For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat, etc.* When those who omitted the good which they ought to have done are condemned, what will become of those who do evil, heap sin upon sin, and live and die in impenitence!

Immediately after Christ has pronounced sentence upon the good and the bad, it will be carried out. They "shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just, into life everlasting."—*Matt. 25: 46.*

PERORATION.

This is the Last Judgment, which awaits you and me and every one of us, and which will decide our doom for all eternity. Let us frequently think of it, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling, that we may not be classed with the reprobate, but with the elect, and may be called to the kingdom of heaven, which has been prepared for us from the foundation of the world. Amen.



LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

PROCESSIONS.

He shall send his angels with a trumpet, and a great voice; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the uttermost bounds of them.—Matt. 24: 31.

The gospel of this day speaks of the great solemn processions which will take place at the end of the world, immediately before the Last Judgment, for we read there: *He (Jesus Christ) shall send his angels with a trumpet, and a great voice; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the uttermost bounds of them.* Therefore, when our divine Saviour appears upon earth at the Day of Judgment, the risen just from all parts of the world, attended by angels, will hasten to him and gather around him in a way similar to that in which the faithful in Rogation Week, or on the feast of Corpus Christi, or at the Forty Hours' Devotion gather around Jesus present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. Oh, that we would always attend our processions in the spirit of penance and with fervent devotion that we might have the happiness of participating in the last procession of the saints, who on the Day of Judgment will gather around Jesus and with him enter into heaven!

I shall speak to you to-day of processions, and show you that they are—

- I. *A very venerable, and,*
- II. *A very salutary devotion.*

PART I.

Processions are a *very venerable devotion.* We are convinced of this on account of—

- I. *Their age.* We find processions—

(a.) *In the Old Testament.* The Israelites made solemn processions around Jericho for seven days, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant. This was a procession that had a wonderful termination, for after being made the seventh time the walls of

the city fell down and the Israelites took it. (*Jos.* 6.) In the second Book of Kings (*II. Kings* 6.) we read that King David caused the ark of the covenant to be carried in solemn procession to Jerusalem. A still more solemn procession took place after the building of the temple there. The priests carried the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the covenant, and all the vessels of the sanctuary that were in the tabernacle; King Solomon and all the multitude of Israel went with him before the ark; and they sacrificed sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered, and the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord into its place.—*III. Kings* 8: 1-6. The triumphal entry of Jesus before his passion was a procession, and, indeed, a very solemn one.—*Matt.* 21: 7-9.

(b.) *In the New Testament.* In the first three centuries, during the time of the bloody persecution, there were processions. When in the year 220 the body of the martyr St. Boniface of Tarsus was brought to Rome, many ecclesiastics and lay-people went to meet it, singing hymns in order to receive and bring it into the place appointed for it. When afterwards the Church obtained liberty, and could publicly celebrate her divine offices, processions became more general. Thus St. Chrysostom, in a sermon mentions processions which were held on account of continuously wet weather, and were attended by a great multitude of people chanting the Litany. Of the same Chrysostom the Church historians Socrates and Sozomenus narrate that to neutralize the public processions of the Arians, which were made with songs of praise, and which earned great applause, he also instituted solemn processions, at which the Catholics sang hymns, and torchlights and silver crosses were borne in front. Not only the common people participated in these processions, but even emperors and kings. Thus the Church historian Rufinus relates that at the request of the Emperor Theodosius, when about to go to war, a procession was made through the principal streets, which the emperor himself attended in a penitential garment. Nicephorus reports the same of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger.

Processions are therefore of very ancient date, even older than Christianity, and therefore venerable.

1. *Their object.* They are made—

(a.) *In order to praise God openly and to change the earth into a holy temple.* The whole world is a house of God, for God is everywhere. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I descend into hell, thou art present. If I take my wings early

in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me; and thy right hand shall hold me."—*Ps.* 138: 7-10. From this the duty arises for us everywhere to adore and praise God. We do this in processions—

(b.) *In order everywhere to admire the goodness and glory of God and to give him thanks.* The places where God gives us his graces are chiefly, indeed, our churches. How many graces do we receive in them; God, however, shows himself also outside of them as our loving Father, and the giver of every blessing and grace. Everything upon earth bears testimony to his goodness. The fields, the gardens, the meadows, the trees, shrubs, springs, brooks, rivers, birds, beasts, in short, all creatures, whether animate or inanimate, point to God, from whom every good gift comes, and remind us of his fatherly hand, which daily and hourly gives benefits of every sort. Are we not then right in making processions and praising God in the open air?

(c.) *In order to purify and to sanctify nature profaned by sin.* Who can count the sins committed in the fields and meadows, in public and in lonely places! How many curses and blasphemies are uttered, how many sins of impurity committed in thoughts, looks, words and works! How often do valleys and hills resound with oaths and imprecations, quarrels and dissensions; how often does not the earth drink in the blood of the murdered! Is it not right then to hold processions, in order to make some reparation for the insults offered to God and to draw down by our prayers his blessing upon our fields?

Lastly, to give testimony to the truth that *everything depends upon the blessing of God.* The farmer tills and cultivates his fields; more he cannot do. It is God who makes the seed come up, grow and ripen; he must give rain and sunshine at the right time, he must keep away hail, frost, and inundations, that our labor may be rewarded with a plentiful harvest. Therefore the Apostle says: "Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."—*I. Cor.* 3: 7. Now when we go around the fields in processions we beg God to bless them, and thereby we give God the honor, and acknowledge that of ourselves, as of ourselves, we can do nothing; and we beg of his fatherly goodness growth, protection and blessing for all that we have sown and planted.

Processions are therefore venerable, not only on account of their age, but also on account of their object.

PART II

Processions are also a very salutary devotion—

1. *Because they remind us of various wholesome truths.* Let us consider the way in which they are made.

(a.) All processions proceed from the church, that is, from the altar, as the starting point. What does this signify? On the altar the sacrifice of the mass is offered, which is the centre of our worship, and from which all prayer and all that we do in the processions has its value and virtue.

(b.) At the head of the processions is the *cross*; it opens the processions. The cross signifies that we are assembled as Christians in the name of Christ crucified, for in his name we begin, continue and finish all our prayers and labors, as the Apostle admonishes us: "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Col. 3: 17*); moreover, Christ crucified is our leader, whom we follow, as he says himself: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (*Matt. 16: 24*); finally, whatever we ask of God the Father we expect to obtain through the merits of Jesus Christ, according to his own words: "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you."—*John 16: 23*.

(c.) The banners which are carried in processions are emblematic of Christ's victory over death and hell, and of the triumph of his religion over the pagan world. (History of the victory of Constantine over Maxentius.) The red and the white banners indicate that we must walk in all innocence under the banner of Christ, and fight unto death against the visible and invisible enemies of our salvation, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and be as ready as were the martyrs to give our life's blood for our faith; the blue banners indicate that we must walk in the way of mortification and self-denial, with humble and penitent sentiments for our sins. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith."—*I. John 5: 4*.

(d.) The lights which are carried in processions refer to Jesus Christ, the light of the world, and admonish us, like the prudent virgins, to be watchful and to make provision so that at the coming of the divine bridegroom we may meet him with the burning lamps of charity and good works. They also remind us of the duty of letting our light so shine before men that they

may see our good works and glorify our Father, who is in heaven.—*Matt. 5: 16*.

(e.) The images of Mary and of the saints in processions are, according to St. Bernard, an admonition to us to imitate the Blessed Virgin and the saints; at the same time they remind us of the truth that we are in intimate communion with the saints, and, like them, must courageously fight against the world, the flesh and the devil, in order to receive with them the crown of victory in heaven.

(f.) The tolling of the bell at processions reminds us of the prayer used at the blessing of bells. "When the sons of Christians hear the sound of the bells may the fervor of devotion grow in them, and the choir of angels be invited."

(g.) Significant is the *order in which the procession is made*. The *children* open the procession, and go immediately after the cross. St. Bernard says of this: "The nearest to Jesus and to the heavenly country are the humble, the innocent, the children." Christ himself says: "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such."—*Matt. 19: 14*. And again: "Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt. 18: 3*. We must think of these words when we see the children at the head of the procession, and make good resolutions. Then follow the young men and young maidens; they have the preference over the married, because the virginal state is more perfect than the married.—*I. Cor. 7: 38*. After this follow the clergy, who form the centre of the procession, whereby they are reminded of two important duties, *the duty of watchfulness*, and *the duty of good example*. They have those who precede them before their eyes, and this indicates that they must have a watchful eye upon those whose souls are intrusted to their care, according to the admonition of St. Paul: "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the Church of God."—*Acts 20: 28*. Those who follow the clergy can look at them and observe them, and this is an admonition to them that they ought to shine before all the faithful with a good example, as St. Paul says to his disciple Timothy: "Be thou an example of the faithful, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity."—*I. Tim. 4: 12*. The clergy are followed by the temporal authorities. The honor due to these persons is the reason why this order is observed, but it also indicates that as they are placed the nearest to the clergy, they should also be near them in disposition and live in peace with them and the Church. Then come the rest of the congre-

gation, first the men, then the women, because men in the Church and in civil life have precedence over women. They march in double file, and this is done not only on account of order, but also because it reminds us of the admonition of St. Bernard, "that on our way to heaven we must live in peace and concord one with another."

2. *Because they are a very effectual means for the obtaining of divine help and grace.* Proofs are—

(a.) *The Sacred Scriptures.* "If two of you shall consent upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father, who is in heaven.—*Matt.* 18: 19. What a powerful incentive to fervor in prayer for the faithful and what virtue must there be in the prayers at processions, when not only two, but even hundreds and thousands of the faithful, and among them so many innocent and pious persons, praise God aloud and cry to him for help and mercy! "When God refuses nothing to so few," says St. Chrysostom, "what will he be able to refuse to the whole assembly—to the whole Church?"

(b.) *History.* When the bodies of SS. Gervase and Protase were exhumed and exposed to the veneration of the faithful in the cathedral of Milan, a solemn procession was instituted, which was attended by an almost countless multitude. Great miracles were wrought and many who had been afflicted with various diseases were instantly cured. Among others a certain Severus, a citizen of Milan, who had been blind for many years, obtained his sight. Saints Ambrose, Augustine, and Prosper give testimony of these miracles.

(c.) *Experience.* In continuously wet weather, or during a prolonged drought, we usually have recourse to special public prayers and processions. And how often does it happen that after such devotions favorable weather follows?

PERORATION.

Processions, as we have heard, are venerable and salutary devotions. Honor them and take part in them. Glorify God and give him thanks for all his graces and blessings. Profess your faith before the whole world, and resolve always to follow Christ crucified on the way of the cross by leading a penitential and mortified life; beg the forgiveness of your sins, and resolve henceforth to serve him with all fidelity. This is the profitable way of attending processions, and it will inspire us with the hope that on the last day we may be found worthy to take part in that solemn procession, which Jesus Christ will lead from earth to heaven with his angels and saints. Amen.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION A FIGURE OF SIN.

When you shall see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place; . . . then they that are in Judea let them flee to the mountains.—Matt. 24: 15, 16.

Our Blessed Lord had reason to speak of an abomination of desolation which the Jews were to see in thirty-seven years. What was done at Jerusalem and in the temple after the lapse of this time was really abominable. A wicked class of Jews occupied the temple and perpetrated there the most awful iniquities; in the holy place, where sacrifice and prayer used to be offered to God, wild shouts of war, the din of arms, the groans of the wounded and dying were heard; in place of the blood of victims human blood was seen flowing. During the terrible siege of almost six months, hunger and pestilence raged in Jerusalem, and snatched away great numbers of people, and many lost their lives by the sword of the enemy. Finally the Romans stormed the city, took it, and totally destroyed it together with the temple. This is the abomination of desolation of which Christ speaks in the gospel of to-day. But there is an abomination of desolation which is far more terrible than that in Jerusalem, and this is sin. And of this abomination I shall speak to-day. I say: *The abomination of desolation is a figure of sin* whether we consider—

- I. *The perdition which sin brings on man, or*
- II. *The means of preservation which we must use against it.*

PART I.

The abomination of desolation comprises particularly—

- I. *The countless victims which death demanded during the siege of Jerusalem.* During this memorable siege five hundred Jews were daily crucified, till at last there remained no more wood for making crosses, neither was there room for the many captured Jews who were waiting to be crucified. Those in Jerusalem were obliged to see this terrible spectacle of their crucified brethren. What must have been their feelings at this horrible sight! After

the Romans surrounded the city with a wall and cut off all supplies from the Jews who were in it, the number of whom may have amounted to three millions of people, a terrible famine soon broke out, to which were added plagues and sicknesses. Countless people died of these two evils. Manæus, who had one city-gate to guard, reported to Titus, that through his gate alone one hundred and fifteen thousand bodies had been brought out from April 14th to July 1st. Other respectable Jews who had gone over to the Romans said that six hundred thousand bodies had been cast out at the gates and over the walls of the city, not counting those that were piled up in the houses like pyres. When finally the Romans took the city by storm, they cut down all they met, sparing neither age nor sex. The number of those who perished during the siege and the storming of the city must have amounted to no less than eleven hundred thousand.

In this abomination of desolation we have a figure of sin. He who commits a mortal sin at once loses supernatural life and sanctifying grace, of which the supernatural life consists. This is a dogma of the Church: "If any one does not confess that the first man, Adam, when he transgressed the commandment of God in paradise, immediately lost the holiness and justice whereir he had been constituted, let him be anathema.—*Con. Trident. Sess. 5: 1*. What is said here of the sin of the first man, holds good of every mortal sin. Of such a sin it is said in the Sacred Scripture: "Sin, when it is completed, begetteth death.—*James 1: 15*: Of a man who has a grievous sin on his conscience it is said: "Thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead."—*Apoc. 3: 1*. St. Augustine says: "There is a death of the body, and a death of the soul. The soul can die, and yet cannot die. She cannot die, because she never loses her consciousness; she can die, if she loses God. For as the soul is the life of the body, so God is the life of the soul. If the body dies when the soul leaves it, so the soul dies when God leaves her;" she has now only the natural, not the supernatural, life. Since by means of sanctifying grace God dwells in the soul, with the loss of this grace he departs from her and leaves her in the state of death.

How miserable is man in this state! He robs himself—

(a.) *Of the love of God.* God, full of detestation, turns away and withdraws from him his favor and friendship, for, being infinitely holy, he must hate and detest everything bad. If it is generally looked upon as a great evil for any one to lose the favor of his sovereign and to merit his displeasure, what an inexpressible evil must it be to lose the love of God and to merit his ill-will! Can there be anything more terrible than to be obliged to say to one's self: God not only does not love me, but he also

turns his face away from me in disgust, I can no longer appear before his face?

(b.) *Of all merits of past obedience.* "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*. Suppose a man has fervently served God for a number of years and acquired a great many merits, he loses all of them the very moment he commits a mortal sin. Is not this a deplorable loss?

(c.) *Of the capability of acquiring new merits by his good works.* As impossible as it is for a branch cut off from the vine to yield fruit, so is it impossible for a man who is separated from Christ by a mortal sin to produce fruits for eternal life; let him do all possible good works, he must not expect any reward for them in heaven.—*John 15: 6*. When many a sick man complains that he can earn nothing, should not the sinner complain and lament that he can gain no merit for heaven?

(d.) *And he becomes guilty of erecting idols in the face of the city.* The emperor Caligula (A. D. 37-41) wished to have his statue placed in the temple of Jerusalem and adored with divine honors. Shortly after, several synagogues were destroyed and some converted into pagan temples and the statue of the emperor placed in them for adoration. When the Roman armies besieged Jerusalem, they planted their eagles and the images of their gods and goddesses round the city and offered up sacrifices and prayers before them. To the Jews, who adored only the true God and detested the idolatry of the Romans and other pagans above all things, the sight of these idols and the veneration paid to them was the most horrible abomination, and nothing was so painful to them as to witness it.

These abominable idolatries of the pagans are also a figure of sin. Sin comprises as it were the abomination of idolatry or the worship of idols; for he who commits a grievous sin turns from God and refuses the homage of love and obedience due to him; he turns to the object of his inordinate inclination and venerates it. Hence St. Augustine says: "Not only he who adores false gods, but also he who obeys his inclinations rather than God, does wrong. That which each one wishes and loves is his god." As often, therefore, as you commit a mortal sin, you do what the blind heathens did, who in place of the true God adored idols and in them the devil. This idolatry, however, is far more sinful than that of the heathens, because you do not, as they did, deserve excuse on account of ignorance. From sin, then, originate several passions, and these, as often as they are gratified, are nothing else but a most sinful idolatry. Such an idolatry is

pride, for the proud man does not properly adore God, but himself, claiming the honor due to God for himself. Such idolatry is avarice, for the avaricious sacrifice duty and conscience, justice and mercy, to their passions; therefore St. Paul absolutely calls them idolaters.—*Ephes.* 5: 5. Under the head of idolatry may also be classed gluttony and impurity, for those who yield to these vices have their belly for their god.—*Phil.* 3: 19. In a word, all evil passions are idols; and he who permits himself to be governed by them is an idolater, because he serves them and not God. How many idolaters are there among Catholics, and how many Catholics will be lost on account of their idolatry, like the idolatrous pagans?

2. *The profanation of the temple.* The leaders in Jerusalem were divided into two furious factions. The one which called itself zealots for the law occupied the temple, fortified themselves there against their opponents, and perpetrated within its walls and courts horrible abominations. A fierce and bitter struggle ensued in the Holy of Holies: Jew killed Jew, blood flowed in streams, and the bodies of the slain were lying in great heaps in the sacred building. This was an abomination of desolation such as was never before seen. The Christians seeing this abomination understood from the prophecy of Christ that the destruction of Jerusalem was nigh; they therefore fled to Pella and other places on the mountains and saved their lives.

Here again you have a true figure of sin. As the temple of Jerusalem was desecrated and profaned by the iniquities of the Jews, so sin desecrates and profanes the body and the soul of man. Is it not a desecration and profanation of the body to employ its senses and members, eyes, ears, tongue, hands, and feet for sinful purposes such as pride, impurity, theft, rapine and murder, seeing that they ought to serve the soul as instruments to enable it to practice Christian virtues and good works? Is it not a desecration and profanation of the soul to abuse her powers and faculties, such as the understanding, will and memory, to the offense of God and the service of sin? And what have those to expect who desecrate and profane body and soul by their sins and vices? What else than their destruction like the Jews who desecrated and profaned the temple.

The abomination of desolation appears to us also as a figure of sin when we consider the means of preservation against it.

PART II.

To preserve ourselves from the moral abomination of desolation, from sin, we must employ the same means that Christ advised the Christians to employ, in order to escape the abomina-

tion of desolation in Jerusalem. When you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place—

1. *They that are in Judea let them flee to the mountains.* According to this direction of our Lord the faithful should rescue themselves from perdition by flight into the mountains; they should, in order not to fall into the hands of the hostile army, which would overflow the land like a deluge, seek their safety by flight from Jerusalem, which was doomed to destruction. There can be no doubt that they did so. When they witnessed the signs given by Christ of the near destruction of Jerusalem they left the city and the flat country and repaired into the mountains and thus saved their lives. Flight is also for us one of the most necessary means of preservation from sin.

(a.) We must shun *the proximate occasion of sin, i. e.,* we must avoid everything by which we were usually induced to sin, for if we do not shun the occasion, in all probability we shall be induced to sin. Such proximate occasions of sin are keeping company with persons of the opposite sex, living with irreligious and immoral persons, or being on terms of familiarity with them, participation in amusements dangerous to good morals, etc. He who does not shun the proximate occasion of sin when he can, has not the intention of avoiding sin, and **will certainly fall into it**, for "he that loveth danger shall perish in it."—*Eccclus.* 3: 27. Man of himself being weak and prone to evil, how can he persevere in good, if he imprudently exposes himself to occasions which violently entice him to sin? When pillars of virtue such as David and Peter fell owing to the proximate occasion, will not you, weak reeds that you are, fall on such occasions? The downfall of these men made even the saints tremble, and must you not be blind if you imprudently expose yourselves to the occasions of sin? Are you stronger than David, holier than Peter, or wiser than Solomon?

(b.) *We must flee into the mountains.* We do this when in interior and exterior temptations and inclinations to sin we at once raise our hearts to God, place ourselves in his presence, and call upon him for help. Joseph of Egypt and the chaste Susanna did this, and they both overcame their temptations and preserved their innocence. Therefore when you are tempted to any sin turn to God without delay, implore his protection, ask for his grace, and say with all the determination you are capable of: "My God, I will die rather than sin."

2. *And he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of the house: and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat.* In these words Christ advises—

(a.) *A speedy flight.* Those who are on the house-tops and in the fields are not to return into the house, but to flee in order to escape perdition. In like manner you must leave all that is a proximate occasion of sin to you in haste, without deliberating and procrastinating, in order to preserve yourself against sin. Every delay increases the danger, because on the one hand the temptation becomes stronger, and on the other hand the will to resistance grows weaker. And why should you delay to do that which is absolutely necessary to your salvation?

(b.) *A flight involving sacrifices.* The faithful were to leave house and home, relinquish their possessions and even give up their necessary apparel in order to save their lives. In like manner you must make a sacrifice of what is most near and dear to you, in order to save your soul. "If thy hand, or thy foot, scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to go into life maimed, or lame, than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire."—*Matt.* 18: 8.

3. *Woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days. But pray that your flight be not in the winter or on the Sabbath.* Christ speaks here of the obstacles to a speedy flight, and pronounces woe upon those that are with child, and that give suck in those days, because they cannot flee quickly, and consequently cannot save their lives; he also admonishes the faithful to pray that their flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath, because it is difficult to travel in winter on account of the bad weather and bad roads, and because the Jews were not allowed on the Sabbath to make a journey of more than a thousand paces.

There are many obstacles which we must overcome, in order to preserve ourselves from sin. Such obstacles are: *Concupiscence*, of which St. James says: "Every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured" (*James* 1: 14); *the world with its evil maxims, scandals, and bad examples*, as St. John writes: "All that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life" (*I. John* 2: 16); *the devil*, who according to St. Peter, "as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour" (*I. Pet.* 5: 8); *bad habits and passions*, which are contracted by frequent relapses into sin. What must we do in order to surmount these obstacles? Christ tells us, when he says, "Pray." Prayer is the most necessary and effectual means for preservation against sin, for if we pray with fervor and confidence we receive the grace of God, which enables us to overcome the most violent temptation. Therefore, our Lord says: "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." St. Lawrence Justinian writes: "By

prayer we build for ourselves a strong tower in which we are safe against all the assaults and against all the power of our enemies."

4. *Then if any man shall say to you: Lo, here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets.* At the time of the destruction of Jerusalem many false teachers arose, who either pretended to be the Messias themselves, or claimed this title for some other impostor and thus seduced the people. Even when Jerusalem was being besieged by the Roman army, these impostors assured the Jews that God would protect the city and the temple. Christ warns his own against these false prophets, and admonishes them to give no ear to them, for at the destruction of Jerusalem they would meet their death.

There are also false prophets in our days, and these are men who preach infidelity by word and writings, propagate heretical doctrines and false principles, reject the Church, her doctrine and her commandments and represent many things as good and lawful which are wrong and sinful, such as impurity, cheating, injustice, suicide, neglect of religious duties, etc. What is more necessary in order to preserve yourselves against error and sin than that you reject such false prophets with horror and detestation and give no heed to them, according to St. John: "If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you. For he that saith unto him: God speed you, communicateth with his wicked works."—*II. John* 10: 12.

PERORATION.

You are now acquainted with the means which you must employ to preserve yourselves from the moral abomination of desolation, which is sin. Use them diligently. Shun as much as possible all that is the proximate occasion of sin to you. In every temptation think of the omnipresent God, and say with Joseph: "How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?"—*Gen.* 39: 9. If it appears difficult to you to give up the proximate occasion of sin, or to resist a temptation, reflect that the pleasure is of short duration, but that the burning lasts for ever. Because you are weak of yourselves have recourse to prayer in every temptation that you may gain strength for the victory. Walk prudently and circumspectly, and beware lest you fall into the snares of the enemies of your soul. "Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man."—*Luke* 21: 36. Amen.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

OUR DEATH IS FOR US THE END OF THE WORLD, AND THE
LAST JUDGMENT.

*They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with
much power and majesty.—Matt. 24: 50.*

Our Blessed Lord, in the gospel of this day, prophesies the end of the world, and the Last Judgment. The universe, as it now exists, will not last for ever; sooner or later it will come to an end. Then will be the Judgment. Jesus Christ will come down from heaven, not weak and humble as before, but with great power and majesty, to judge the living and the dead. When the end of the world and the Last Judgment will take place, no one knows; for God has not revealed it to us. But though these two events may take place after a long period of time, they will certainly occur; our divine Saviour vouches for this truth when at the end of this day's gospel he says: *Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass.*

In a certain sense, however, we can say that the end of the world, and the Last Judgment will come after a few years. How so? I shall answer this question by explaining to you that our death is for us—

- I. The end of the world;
- II. The Last Judgment.

PART I.

The events which precede and accompany the end of the world occur in a certain sense at our death; we can therefore justly say that it is the end of the world for us when we die. Let us consider these events a little more closely.

1. *Great tribulations* will precede the end of the world, as Christ plainly says in the gospel of to-day: *There shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be.* Wherein do these tribulations consist? In evils and calamities of every description Plagues and sicknesses will break out and snatch away people without number; wars will rage in which blood will flow in streams;

and all nature will be confused and bring unspeakable woes upon men. The tribulations of those days will be so great that if, as our Lord says, they were not shortened no flesh would be saved.

The like will happen when we die. Look at a man whom death has pointed out as a victim; how he is distressed on all sides! He lies upon a bed of pain, and finds rest neither by day nor by night. No food, no drink refreshes him; sleep is banished; he feels nothing but aching pain; he is so faint that he can hardly move a hand, all his senses are weakened, all his strength fails. And when he is in his agony how short and heavy his breathing, how distorted his features till the last spark of life is extinguished in him! Are not these tribulations, such as have never come upon him? And if the dying man was a worldly man, who never cared for God and eternity, how terrible must his last hours be! His heart was bent upon temporal goods, the world was his good; now he sees and feels that he must leave, and leave for ever, house and home, honors and dignities, joys and pleasures, friends and relations, in a word, all; what a painful and bitter separation! And what anguish must seize him when he remembers the sins which in his life he has piled up mountains high, the many graces which he has received for his salvation, but squandered and abused, the many opportunities he has thrown away, and, finally, eternity which cannot but have an unfavorable issue. *Antiochus.—I. Mach. 6: 8-16.*

2. *Before the end of the world Antichrist will come and do immense mischief upon earth.* "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets; and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect." St. Paul also speaks of Antichrist, and calls him "the man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God."—*II. Thess. 2; 4.* Antichrist will have many adherents; for he will teach what flatters the passions, and will perform apparent miracles by the help of the devil; but against those who do not acknowledge him as the Messiah and serve him, he will raise a persecution, which in cruelty will far surpass those of the first three centuries of Christianity. The defection from the Christian faith will be very great.

The devil, that determined adversary of Christ and man, will prepare for the dying similar distresses and dangers to salvation. "This terrible enemy," says St. Alphonsus Liguori, "puts forth all his energy in order to destroy the soul that is about to depart from this life." He knows that he has but a short time to gain the soul, and that if he loses her, he has lost her for ever.—*Apoc. 12: 12.* Therefore he assails the dying with all possible temptations. He entices them to presumption, and suggests to them that they will

not die yet, that they need not do penance yet, that they have nothing to fear from God, who is all merciful; or he drives them to despair and suggests to them that the time for penance and conversion is over for them, that God will pardon them no more, that they belong already to the number of the damned; or he harasses them with doubts regarding faith, tempts them to pusillanimity, impurity, blasphemy, and attacks the soul on the side that is the weakest. Example: St. Andrew Avellino underwent so terrible a struggle with hell in his dying hour that all who were present were seized with fear. For they saw that his face was distorted, and assumed a leaden color; he trembled all over his body; he gnashed his teeth, and shed copious tears. His aspect moved the bystanders to tears, they redoubled their prayers, and trembled for themselves when they saw a saint die in this manner. Only one circumstance consoled them; he frequently turned his eyes to the image of the Blessed Virgin, as if he called upon her for relief, whereupon they remembered that he had often said during life that Mary would be his refuge in his dying hour. Finally it pleased God to end this conflict by a signal victory. The storm subsided and his countenance resumed its former cheerfulness and serenity. Calmly he fixed his eyes upon the image of Mary, inclined his head in token of gratitude and expired calmly. Here we see what exertions the devil makes to plunge the soul of the dying into perdition, but God assists those who have faithfully served him, and Mary takes those who have been devout to her under her particular protection and procures for them the victory in the battle with Satan.

3. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, *the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be moved.* These are the events accompanying the end of the world. The whole firmament will tremble, all the heavenly bodies will leave their accustomed orbits and collide with one another with a terrible crash; the sun, the moon, and the stars will lose their brightness and cease to give light to the world, and dense darkness will cover the whole earth. Fire will fall from heaven and issue out of the bowels of the earth and consume everything that has life and breath. "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief, in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence; and the elements shall be melted with heat; and the earth, and the works that are in it, shall be burnt up."—*II. Peter 3: 10.*

What will happen at the end of the world will also take place at the end of each individual man. When he lies there cold and stiff, no sun shines for him; the moon has lost her light for him; he sees no longer the stars in heaven; for him the end of the world has come; all that the earth has and gives he can now no longer

possess, no longer enjoy. If he was rich and had beautiful houses, large tracts of land, a lucrative business, much money, now he has none of all these things any more; only the grave remains for him. If he had a good time and enjoyed many pleasures, now all that delights and rejoices the human heart has come to an end for him; only the grave remains for him. If he held an elevated position in society, if he enjoyed a great reputation among men, all is gone, only the grave remains for him. Saladin II., who had conquered many kingdoms in Asia, on his death-bed ordered that his shroud be fastened to a lance and carried before the funeral procession, and that a herald should proclaim: "This is all that Saladin takes with him into the grave." Yes, yes, "When man shall die, he shall take nothing away, nor shall his glory descend with him."—*Ps. 48: 18.*

PART II.

As soon as the soul has departed from the body, she will be hurried before the tribunal of God: "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment."—*Heb. 9: 27.* This particular judgment in reality is the same as the one at the end of the world, for at one as well as at the other there is—

1. *The same Judge.* The judge at the Last Judgment will be Jesus Christ, as he says himself: "When the Son of Man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before him; and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats."—*Matt. 25: 31, 32.* It will also be Jesus Christ before whose tribunal we must appear after our departure, for "neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son."—*John 5: 22.*

We might suppose that as Jesus is our judge we need not fear the judgment, for he is all love and mercy, and did not come to judge but to save the world. But not so; as judge, Jesus Christ will exercise only his justice, and the more mercy and love he has shown to men during life, the more rigorously will he deal with them if they did not serve him. Joab, king David's general, had once through his intercession obtained for Absalom the forgiveness of his father, but when he sinned against his father the second time Joab became his implacable foe, and with cool deliberation transfixed him with three lances. How will Christ act towards those to whom he gives so many graces in life, but who squander them and die in impenitence? Will he be gracious to them again? No. For then he will know only justice, but no mercy. "This judge," says St. Bernard, "can be captivated by

no friendliness, be moved by no compassion, be bribed by no money, and pacified by no satisfaction." Saul, on his way to Damascus, fell to the ground when he heard a voice saying to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" All strength left him; and when his eyes were opened he saw nothing, and for three days he was without sight and could neither eat or drink. Now, judge for yourselves what terror will seize the sinner before the judgment-seat when Christ exclaims: "I am Jesus, whom you have persecuted, nay, crucified by your sinful life. I have done and suffered so much for you, I have given you numberless graces and loved you more than a mother loves her only child, and you have never served nor glorified me; you have never loved me, you have resisted my will, withstood your conscience and reason, despised my blood, and thrown away your own happiness." Ah, how will the sinner tremble when Jesus speaks to him in these reproachful tones! But what consolation for the soul that loves God, when Jesus, full of tenderness and affection, turns to her and says: "I am Jesus, thy bridegroom, thy rewarder; because thou hast served me faithfully on earth I will give to thee heaven as recompense."

2. *The same examination.* The examination at the Last Judgment will extend itself to all that we have done, spoken, thought, wished or desired during life, be it good or evil; all things will be inspected from every side, so that each one will recognize whether or in what degree he deserves praise or blame, reward or punishment. "There nothing is covered that shall not be revealed; nor hid that shall not be known."—*Matt. 10: 26.*

The examination is conducted in the same way at the particular judgment, with this difference only that the whole transaction is *secret* between Jesus and the soul, whereas at the Last Judgment it is public, in the face of the whole world. As soon as the departed soul is before Jesus, her whole life is subjected to the most strict investigation. Numberless are our thoughts, wishes and desires; the eternal Judge will scrutinize them all, whether good or bad, and bring them to the light of day. Countless are the words we speak, all will be examined, even the most insignificant. Numberless are our works; these also will be subjected to the most minute scrutiny. Yes, this examination will refer also to all the graces that we have received for our salvation, to all the opportunities that are given us for doing good, to all the duties of religion and our station, to all our exercises of virtue and good works; whether we have done them fervently or carelessly, for the honor of God or from some other motive. What a rigorous examination! How much reason have we to be alarmed and to say with David: "O Lord, enter not into the judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight no man living shall be justified."—

Ps. 142: 2. How earnestly should we endeavor to repair our sins by a penitential life and henceforth to serve God with fervor, that we may be able to stand the judgment!

The same sentence. At the Last Judgment Christ will first turn to the good, and say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then he will turn to the wicked and say: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels."—*Matt. 25: 34, 41.* As soon as these sentences are pronounced, they will be carried out; the just will go into life everlasting, and the wicked into everlasting punishment.

The same will be done at the particular judgment. If the soul be found perfectly just by the judge, he will lovingly turn to her and say: "Come, thou blessed soul, possess the kingdom prepared for thee from the foundation of the world." Who can describe the delight of the soul on hearing these words! How great will be her joy, when she knows her salvation to be secured! With what exultation will she, accompanied by Christ and his angels, enter into the heavenly Jerusalem! And if, on account of some lesser stains, she should be sent into purgatory, she will not despond on that account, for she knows that she will remain only a short time in this place of purification, and then be admitted into heaven. What terror and consternation, on the contrary, will take hold of the sinner, when the divine Judge, full of wrath, turns to him and says: "Depart from me, thou cursed soul, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." This sentence is irrevocable and is immediately carried out; the damned sinner is plunged into the fiery jaws of the pool of hell and will be tormented there for ever and ever.

PERORATION.

Fifty years hence few, if any, of us here present will be alive; I cannot promise that there will be even one. Aye, we may assume for certain that some of us within less than a year will be no more among the living. But when we die, it will be for us the end of the world and the Last Judgment, as we have seen. Reflect seriously on this important truth, and make on this day, the last of the Ecclesiastical Year, holy resolutions to set the affairs of your conscience in order and to make provision for a good death. Purify your conscience from all sins by a good confession and devote the remainder of your life to the service of God and the salvation of your soul. If you do this, death and judgment will have no terror for you; Jesus Christ will be a gracious judge to you and will call you to the joys of heaven. Amen.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

WHAT WE MUST DO IN ORDER TO BE PREPARED FOR THE LAST JUDGMENT.

They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.—Matt. 24: 30.

As our holy faith teaches us, Jesus Christ will come again at the end of the world to judge the living and the dead. All men that have ever lived will rise out of their graves at the sound of the trumpet of the angels and be gathered together before Jesus Christ that they may be judged, as once before secretly, so now publicly, before the face of heaven and earth. Many, very many, will not have a favorable judgment, as is evident from the words of Christ: "Many are called, but few chosen."—*Matt. 20: 16*. The reason why the great majority of mankind will hear the sentence of condemnation is not to be attributed to God, who wills all men to be saved (*I. Tim. 2: 4*), but to men themselves, who will not do what is necessary for obtaining salvation; that is, they do not all believe, keep the commandments and use the means of grace. The question now is, what must we do in order to obtain a favorable judgment? This question shall occupy our attention to-day. That we may be able to obtain a favorable judgment, we must—

- I. *Set our conscience in order;*
- II. *Keep our conscience in order.*

PART I.

To set our conscience in order, it is necessary—

1. *To make a good confession, i. e.—*

(a.) *A general confession.* Many nominal Catholics live for years in entire forgetfulness of God and add sin to sin. In order to set their disordered conscience in order, they must make a general confession, or a confession of the whole of their past life. Such a confession is especially necessary for those who have not been conscientious in their confessions, and, for this reason, soon again relapse into their former sinful life; it is

justly to be feared that such persons have confessed invalidly for the want of contrition and a firm purpose of amendment. It often happens that Catholics do not examine their conscience strictly enough, and, consequently they accuse themselves of their sins, their quality and number, very imperfectly; or from fear or shame they conceal something which they ought to confess; these also must make a general confession because their confessions are invalid. Generally speaking, it is advisable for all, even for those who have not led a disordered life, to make a general confession, for after all it is possible that one or the other of their past confessions was essentially faulty, and this must be put right; or this or that in their past life, to the knowledge of which they come by a general confession, must be rectified. St. Leonard of Port Maurice, remarks that many intended to make a general confession from devotion, not from necessity, but when, in the course of it, they were carefully examined and questioned, they perceived that a general confession was not only useful but also necessary for them, and that without such a confession they could not have died a good death.

(b.) *Without delay.* As with the business of salvation, so we must not defer the general confession to the distant, uncertain future. No one knows whether he may not be so situated that the making of a general confession will be impossible for him. Much less ought such a confession to be deferred to the death-bed, for it often occurs that a person can hardly make an ordinary, much less a general confession. Hence at all times Catholics who were solicitous for their eternal salvation, made their general confession in good time. A Spanish nobleman came one day to a missionary, requesting him to hear his general confession. To the question, why he wished to make one then he replied: "Ah, must I not die! But if I wait till that time the thought of my wife and children, fear, the vehemence of the sickness will prevent me from being calm and deliberate; how great, therefore, would be my imprudence, if I should put off this business to such an inopportune time and under so many difficulties." And he would not defer his general confession for a single day. You should also make a general confession as soon as possible, especially when you change your state of life, or at the time of a jubilee or mission, for these are the most appropriate times for it, provided you are really resolved to amend your life.

2. *And do all that is required for a true repentance.* Therefore we must—

(a.) *Restore the goods of others, which we may have acquired unjustly, and repair the damage we have done.* He who does not

comply with this duty confesses in vain; he remains in sin and will perish. On account of the omission of this duty very many will be condemned to hell by the divine Judge, for it is only too true that injustices of every description overflow the land, very few of which are ever repaired. As cooked meat is not brought back to the butcher, so stolen goods are hardly ever returned to the right owner.

(b.) *Repair the injury which we have done to our neighbor as regards his honor, his good name or his salvation, so far as we can.* He who has without necessity revealed the faults of his neighbor or has injured his character must endeavor to wipe out the evil impression produced by his bad report, and therefore he must excuse him and praise his good qualities; but he who has slandered his neighbor, *e. g.*, spoken ill of him, must retract and publicly acknowledge that he has wronged him. This retraction, as a rule, is as necessary as the restitution of stolen goods, and he who will not do it can no more obtain of God the pardon of his sins, than can cheats and thieves who make no restitution.

This is particularly true of those who give scandal and who have led others into sin. He who has incited one to a sin, *e. g.*, impurity, must strive to bring him back to the path of virtue by instruction and admonition, by prayer and good example. St. Margaret of Cortona appeared on a certain holiday in a penitential garment and a rope around her neck at the door of the church, and with many tears asked the pardon of all that entered for the scandal she had given them by her notorious life.

(c.) *Give up enmities and sincerely reconcile ourselves with our neighbor, for without such a reconciliation no forgiveness of sin can be expected, as Christ emphatically declares: "If you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offenses."—Matt. 6: 15.*

(d.) *Avoid the proximate occasion of sin.* Those who will not resolve to do this, are still destitute of the true penitential spirit and the earnest resolution to amend their life. Hence St. Augustine says: "He who will not flee when in danger (of sin) has the will to perish." Examples: St. Peter, St. Mary Magdalen. He who is really in earnest with his penance gives up his sinful familiarity, frequents no longer those places where he has formerly sinned by drunkenness, gambling, impurity, and avoids the proximate occasions of sin.

Thus you must set your conscience in order by a thorough confession and the execution of all that is required for true repentance, that you may be prepared for the judgment. And after having set your conscience in order, you must keep it in order.

PART II.

To keep your conscience in order, you must—

1. *Pray.* That the judgment may have a good issue, we must persevere in grace to the end, for only "he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."—*Matt. 10: 22.* But in order to persevere in grace unto the end we need special help from God, for the enemies of our soul are too numerous and powerful, and being so weak we are not always able to resist temptations and preserve ourselves from grievous sins. This is an article of the faith, for the Council of Trent expressly teaches that "if any one saith that the justified are able to persevere without the special help of God in justice received, let him be anathema."—*6 Sess. can. 22.* But God gives this special help generally only to those who ask for it. Therefore St. Augustine says: "It is known that God gives some graces to those who do not ask him, *e. g.*, the beginning of faith, but keeps other graces in readiness only for those who ask him, *e. g.*, the gift of final perseverance." From this it follows that only those obtain salvation who pray, and those are lost who do not pray. Hence St. Alphonsus says: "The damned in hell have been damned because they have not prayed; if they had prayed they would not have been damned. All the saints, on the contrary, have been saved because they prayed; and if they had not prayed, they would not have been saved." Who then would not pray with fervor, since so much depends on prayer?

2. *Spiritual reading.* St. Augustine says that good religious books are letters which God sends us, and in which he warns us against danger, shows us the way of salvation, exhorts us to the patient endurance of all tribulations, enlightens us, and leads us to his divine love. Love to read good religious books, especially on Sundays and holidays, that you may learn to live piously and find grace before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ.

3. *The frequent reception of the holy Sacrament of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist.*

(a.) The Sacrament of Penance has two effects; it cleanses from sin and has the power to heal the wounds that sin has made, or to prevent them, and to preserve us against them. As often as you make a humble and sincere confession you are cleansed from all your sins, both mortal and venial; and at the same time you also receive special graces by which you are strengthened and preserved from relapse into sin. "Confession," says St. Augustine, "is the salvation of the soul, the destruction of vices,

and the victory over hell; it shuts the gates of hell, and opens the portal of heaven."

(*δ.*) Still more powerful and blessed are the effects of *holy communion*. It is, as the Council of Trent teaches: *An antidote whereby we are freed from daily faults and preserved from mortal sins.*—*Session 13, ch. 2.*

Holy communion, according to the testimony of St. Thomas of Aquin, affords us extraordinary power and strength to overcome all the assaults of Satan, and to persevere in good. Moreover, it affords us great peace of soul, arouses in us the spirit of devotion, strengthens in us all good, and imparts to us the graces most effectual for Christian perfection. Consider what St. Francis of Sales says: Two kinds of people need frequent (confession and) communion, the perfect and the imperfect; the perfect, in order to keep themselves in their perfection; the imperfect, that they may attain perfection; the strong, in order not to become weak, and the weak, in order to become strong; the sick, in order to recover health, and the healthy, in order not to get sick.

4. *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.* By devotion to the saints we can obtain many graces, for on account of their virtue and sanctity they are in great favor with God, and are his friends, on which account he hears their intercessory prayers. But we may promise to ourselves still greater graces from our devotion to Mary because she is not only a servant of God, but also the Mother of God. How could we believe that God, who so graciously hears the saints, his servants, would refuse to hear the prayer of Mary, his Mother, when she prays to him for us? "No," says St. Anthony, "the prayer of Mary being the prayer of a mother, has the virtue of a command, and for this reason it is impossible that she should not be heard when she prays." Add to this that Mary is also our Mother, who affectionately loves us, and therefore is ever ready to obtain for us all the graces that we need for salvation. "Peruse," says St. Bernard, "the whole Bible history, and if you find in Mary the least appearance of hard-heartedness, or the least sign of ill-will or severity, you may be doubtful of her favor and she may awaken fear in you. But if, on the contrary, you find in her a Mother's heart, full of compassion, goodness and mercy, as you will find, give thanks to him who in his great compassion gave you a mediatrix whom you need not fear to approach." St. Alphonsus, that great lover and admirer of Mary, exhorts us to have perfect confidence in her and invoke her intercession in all our necessities, for, he says, she is as tender as the best mother, and full of grace and mercy. St. Thomas of Aquin, that great light of the Church, shortly before

his death testified that he had never asked anything of God through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and was refused.

PERORATION.

You now know what you must do, that you may be prepared to face the judgment. You must set your conscience in order by making a thorough confession of your sins, and you must fulfil all the conditions necessary to ensure true penance. You must keep your conscience in order, and therefore fervently practice prayer, read spiritual books, frequently go to confession and communion, and have a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Consider that your doom for all eternity will be decided before the judgment-seat of God, and therefore let it be your only care and business to prepare yourselves well for the Day of Judgment. If you have anything on your conscience that you cannot well give an account of, rectify it without delay, walk in the fear of God and live as if the judgment were to take place to-day; **then you need not fear when the Day of Wrath shall come Amen.**

