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differences appear to be typographical errors not detected in
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End of Transcriber's notes.]
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SERMONS.
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Sermons,
Preached At The
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New York,
During the Year 1861.

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PREFACE.

Some of those friends who listened to the sermons contained in this volume have expressed a desire to see them in print, and thought they would do good. This friendly counsel has not been acted upon without hesitation. The great scarcity of Catholic sermons in English would seem to afford motive enough for publishing, though it is feared that these may fall too far below the standard. Certainly, they make no pretence to brilliant passages of imagination, flowers of style, or appeals to popular enthusiasm;
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these not comporting with the serious and earnest work in which we are engaged. But we trust that they will be found plain, simple, and direct, and that there may be those among our Catholic brethren who will derive an appreciable benefit from their perusal--some clearer view of Christian doctrine or moral duty, some thought to touch the heart, and draw it upward to God. If so, our purpose will have been accomplished. With so much of explanation we send out these few sermons into the world; doubting, somewhat, if all who heard them when they came living and warm from the preacher's lips, and listened with interest then, will prize them now as they lie cold and uncolored on the paper.

St. Paul's. 59th Street, Dec. 1. 1861.
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SERMON I.

The Earnest Man.

A Sermon For The Commemoration Of St. Paul, Apostle.

(From the Epistle, Gal. i., 11-23.)

I have read the Epistle for the day, rather than the Gospel, because it contains a brief but characteristic sketch of the great Apostle, drawn by his own hand. How strange is the history of this man! We have here the Church's most bitter persecutor converted into the most zealous and successful of all the Apostles. At first we discover a careful and devoted student of the Jewish law; afterward he stands forth the most learned and eloquent expounder of the Christian Gospel.
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We see him in his youth a witness of St. Stephen's martyrdom, standing by to hold the garments of those who stoned him to death, sternly and pitilessly looking on; and again in his old age we find him lying lifeless on the Ostian road, outside the walls of Rome, a headless trunk, a martyr in the same cause for which St. Stephen died. We see him at first "_ravaging the Church, entering into houses, and hauling away men and women, and committing them to prison,_" and shortly afterward we hear the wondering Christians whisper to each other: "_He that persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith_." In the beginning, foremost of all the Jews was he in that terrible energy which they put forth to destroy the Church; and afterward foremost among the Apostles, he was able to say with truth: "_I have labored more abundantly than they all_." In fine, one trait of character distinguished this great Apostle at all times,

both before and after his conversion. He was always an earnest man. It is worth our while this morning to study his character well, for--from the bottom of my soul I do believe it--a few such earnest Christians in our day would be enough to move the world. {11}

Let us look at him first during the early part of his career, and see how this earnestness of character displays itself in one whose mind is misguided, by religious error. In the first place, then, St. Paul before his conversion was distinguished by an earnest and ardent love of truth, and consequently, a strong attachment to what he deemed to be the truth. I have already read to you in the Epistle what he says of his own early life: "_I made progress in the Jews' religion above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers._" This earnestness of his sprang from a deep love of truth, and it made him what he afterward became, the foremost champion of the true faith. The human mind is created for truth, is naturally attracted to the truth when fairly presented, and if not led away by a corrupted heart, embraces it with joy. Truth comes readily to those that love it, and therefore there is, after all, nothing unnatural in this conversion of a Hebrew zealot into a Christian evangelist; for if he loved error at first, it was only because in good faith he mistook it for the truth, and if he hated the truth, it was only because he did not see it in its true colors, but misrepresented and perverted. {12}

These men who are zealous, honestly zealous, in error, are the very men to embrace the truth; and, on the contrary, they who stand perfectly indifferent between contradictory creeds, are the least open to conviction. Both reason and experience teach this. Nothing is more common in our day than a class of men who look with perfect[ly] good nature upon every form of religious doctrine, except perhaps that particular one in which they themselves were reared, and which is supposed therefore to have some practical claim upon them. Did you ever know one of these "liberal fellows," so called, to be come Catholic? I mean these men who, having no religious faith to love, can have no error to hate. I mean, for example, these nominal Protestants who, when in your presence, turn into ridicule every Protestant form of religion, without believing a word of yours; one of these good-natured fellows that think the Catholic religion is quite as good as any, in some respects the best of any, since it is the farthest out of their way. {13}

Take, for instance, one of these liberal politicians that you always see at the public dinner on Patrick's day; that will subscribe cordially to a Catholic charity, if you ask him, but comes back to remind you of it on election day. Did you ever know a man of this stamp to become Catholic? No, indeed; divine truth has attractions only for earnest souls. A _hickory_ Protestant is as poor a thing as a _hickory_ Catholic. Such a man has two fundamental axioms to get by heart, before religious truth can take possession of his soul; first, that there is such a thing as truth, and next, that his mind was made

for it, and needs it. Oh! it is sad to see a man in ignorance of the way of salvation,--sadder still to see him blindly prejudiced against it; but the saddest, most ignoble, and most hopeless of all conditions, is to be indifferent to it.

St. Paul was another type of man. He was an earnest one. He believed the Jewish religion to be the true and only true one, and therefore he loved it with all his soul, and was zealous for it. When the scales fell from his eyes, and the Christian faith was revealed to him in all its truth and beauty, he embraced it, and clung to it, and abandoned himself to it, with all the energies of that same earnest soul.

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Had he been a "liberal" Jew, we should have far more reason to wonder at his conversion; it is still less probable that God would have selected him for the Apostle of the Gentiles.

An earnest lover of truth, even before his conversion, it followed as a natural consequence, that St. Paul hated error; and for this reason he opposed the Christian religion with all his might, and with his whole soul, because he believed it to be false and dangerous. "_You have heard_," said he, writing to the Christians of Galatia, "_of my conversation in time past in the Jews religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and laid it waste._" But he tells us elsewhere: "_I obtained mercy of God, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief_." In the same proportion that the earnest man loves what is good and true, he hates what is false and evil, or what he thinks so, and opposes it too. St. Paul opposed the Christian faith with all his power, because he believed it to be false. He was wrong there: it was an error of judgment.

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He persecuted it too violently, "beyond measure," forgetting the rules of charity. There he was wrong again; it was an error of the heart. But in all this he was in earnest, hating false doctrine; and there he was right. I do not sympathize with his delusion, but I love him for his earnestness.

Oh! how many such men may there not be in this country of ours, that we rank among our bitterest foes!--men who honestly oppose our holy religion, not for what it really is, but what they think it to be. Could we open that sealed and sacred register of the divine counsels, wherein the fortunes of mankind are written, with what delight should we read there the names of many of our bitterest opponents who are destined to kneel and worship with us yet, as others, thank God, have done already! Why not? I do from my heart believe that many of these make war upon us only from mistake of judgment. They know our doctrines only by false report. They judge of our morals only by such Catholics as are either the most ignorant of their own religion, or else entirely false to the teachings of their Church, and strangers to her sacraments, although some of these may be loud enough at times in proclaiming a faith they have not, to further some political pretension, or sanctify some ungodly trade.

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Under such circumstances it is not strange that many earnest men should set their faces against us. Could they cease to hate our

religion, while they believe it to be false? Can they sympathize with us, while they believe us to be corrupted by it? Oh! God, send these men into thy fold! Take off the scales from their eyes, and send them to us. We need earnest men amongst us. The half-hearted, indifferent Protestant who calls himself a liberal, we do not hope for. We have too many such already; we could spare them by the thousand, for they neither save their own souls, nor bring credit to thy cause. But send us earnest men like St. Paul, who know how to hate error, because they love the truth!

If, even when groping in the darkness of Judaism, St. Paul was so honest-hearted and earnest, we shall not find him otherwise when enlightened by the grace of Jesus Christ, and enlisted in his holy cause. He had before him two great enterprises, which require not only large grace from God, but all one's manhood and energy to carry on well.

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He had his own soul to sanctify and save, and he had an Apostle's work to do. He set about both like a man in earnest, with that deliberate, deep and concentrated enthusiasm which is not wont to fail. Let us see first what care he took of his own salvation. Would you believe it, my brethren, that St. Paul--after all that wonderful life of toil and privation in the cause of Christ, after his many voyages and frequent shipwrecks, imprisoned often, and dragged before different tribunals, after being scourged five times by the Jews and three times by the Romans, stoned by the mob in the streets and left for dead, wandering about without any fixed home, and often famishing for food and drink, and faint for want of sleep--would you believe, I say, that he yet trembled for fear of being damned? He was afraid lest that poor, emaciated body of his might rebel against the spirit, and drag him into some grievous sin. "_Oh! wretched man that I am!_" was his mournful cry, "_who shall deliver me from this body of death?_" For this reason he scourged himself. "_Therefore I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate_."

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This is being in earnest. I think, my brethren, our bodies are as dangerous to us, as St. Paul's was to him. Are we as much in earnest to guard against a fall? Gluttony, drunkenness, impurity, idleness and effeminacy--these sensual sins are generated in the body. We may not, all of us, be guilty of them, not grossly guilty; but we are none of us quite safe against them. What means do we employ to subjugate our bodies, or was St. Paul less safe than we?

According to the idea of this great Apostle, the way to heaven is a constant and difficult warfare. Nothing in language can be more striking and vivid than his description of an earnest Christian struggling to make sure his salvation. He compares him to wrestlers, boxers, and runners in the public games. Have you ever seen two strong men wrestling? How their muscles harden into knots, and their veins swell full as if they would burst! How all their energies are engaged! How wary they are to guard against a fall, and how quick to seize upon any advantage! Imagine them to

be real enemies wrestling for life, and then you have an image of the actual contest of an earnest Christian struggling for salvation with the enemies of his soul.
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"_Brethren_," says St. Paul, and I seem to hear those deep tones giving counsel like a friendly voice at the beginning of a deadly fray, "_Brethren, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the snares of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world of darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places_." Tell me, my brethren, is this your idea of the Christian warfare? Is it with this terrible earnestness you struggle to work out your salvation, or do you make a pastime of it?
He compares us Christians to professional racers. "_Know you not that they who run in the race all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may win_." For my part, he adds, "_I so run as not at an uncertainty_," not as if I had lost sight of the mark, and were only half conscious of what I were about, but "_forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching myself forward to those that are before me, I pursue towards the mark, for the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus_." Is this the earnest way we follow out our vocation? Are we thus determined to win?
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The Christian warfare requires careful preparation, drill and discipline. In respect to this, St. Paul compares us to professional boxers, and his description shows that these gladiators of the olden time took as much pride in their art, as our modern gentlemen of the prize ring. "_Every one that struggles in a combat, abstains from every indulgence; they, indeed, that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible_." How earnest are these miserable prize-fighters after their belt, and their stakes! How patiently they submit to all the rules of their training-master during their long and painful course of training! What abstinence from food, from indulgence in drink, and all luxurious living, in order to reduce their bodies to the most athletic proportions! What long walks under heavy weights! What fatiguing exercises to harden their muscles! Oh! that we were half as earnest, with heaven for a prize, and all our eternity at stake! We should be sure of victory then.
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St. Paul was in earnest. "_I so fight_," said he, "_as not having to beat the air, but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate_."
We have seen now, how, after his conversion, St. Paul set about the first great business before him--his own salvation. Let us look at him now as an Apostle, engaged in gaining souls to God, and in guarding the flock of Christ intrusted to him. Ah! my dear brethren, here must I be brief. I dare not make any further demands upon your patience. And, besides, who can draw the

lineaments of that great Apostle, or paint him in colors worthy of his character? What memory can trace out those long and frequent journeys, with the incessant fatigue of preaching, disputing, and writing, with the "care of all the churches" upon his hands. And yet, not to burden his brethren, he maintained himself in good part by manual labor. What language is gentle enough, and warm enough, to represent that tender and sensitive heart that throbbed in sympathy with all the joys and woes of the Church, and burned with every scandal?
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"_Who is weak,_" said he, "_and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I do not burn?_" Who can estimate the depth and fulness of that fraternal love, which made him willing to part even with his own hopes of heaven, so it could be done without offence to God, in order to save his brethren? "_My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Ghost that I have great sadness, and continual sorrow in my heart, for I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ for my brethren_." This is the nearest approach to the love of the Saviour for us, who bore our sins upon the bitter cross, who died that we might live, becoming an anathema for his brethren. Oh! holy zeal for souls! how beautiful it shows in the person of an Apostle like St. Paul! And what an example it is for those of us who are in the sacred ministry. We, too, have a share in his Apostleship; we are charged with the preaching of the Gospel, and the gathering in of souls. We have pledged ourselves to this holy work of duty and charity. Woe to such among us as are not in earnest! Joy to him who, when his Lord comes, shall be able to give a good account of his stewardship!
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But you, my dear brethren, have also something to learn from this burning zeal of St. Paul's. You have all something to do with the advancement of your Master's kingdom, and the salvation of souls. When God created the human race, so we read in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, he made each man responsible, in some measure, for the welfare of his fellows: "_Mandavit illis unicuique de proximo suo_." and there is still a closer and dearer bond which embraces all the members of the great Catholic Church, and holds each one pledged to labor for the salvation of all. Ah! brethren, do not say with the murderer Cain: "_Am I my brother's keeper?_" What have I to do with the sanctification or ruin of souls? No! no! but take to heart your Master's cause. He came into the world to save sinners. Teach your heart to throb in sympathy with his, until you can say with St. Paul: "_Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is scandalized, and I do not burn?_" This is to love our Lord in earnest. This is the communion of saints.
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We have traced this distinguishing characteristic of the great apostle--this earnestness of his--through his entire career. It only remains now to witness the close of that career. St. Paul died like a man who had lived in earnest, and for whom therefore death has no terrors, "_For me to live,_" said he, "_is Christ, to die is gain_." Is it possible that any fear of

death, any doubt of his salvation could cloud the spirit of such a man in the closing scene of his career? Listen to his parting song of triumph! It comes from his prison at Rome, just upon the eve of his martyrdom. He has still before his mind's eye the combatants and runners in the public games. "_The time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. For the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just Judge will render to me at that day_."

Could we say as much, my brethren, if our time were come? Could we claim as manfully to have fought a good fight? Could we claim our reward as confidently? No? Then, alas, we have not been so much in earnest. We have been playing with our salvation, not wrestling for it; we have not been fighting for our faith with the world and Satan, but compromising; we have been resting not running; and if so, what hope have we to reach that crown?

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Oh, let us bestir ourselves! Let us live like men awake; so let us think, so speak, so act, so move, through this brief but solemn crisis of life, that all who see us may know that, like St. Paul, we are in earnest.

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Sermon II.

Unworthy Communion.

"He that eateth and drinketh unworthily,
eateth and drinketh judgment to himself,
not discerning the Body of the Lord."
--1 Cor. xi., 29.
(From the Epistle for Thursday in Holy Week.)

It is customary at certain seasons of the year, for separated members of a family to meet and dine together, as a means of cherishing that affection for one another which we look for among relations. Thanksgiving Day and Christmas are occasions of this kind. The Catholic Church, too, is a great family, and the Paschal Season is such a time with her. She calls her children around her altars, to receive the Body and Blood of her Lord, who is the blessed bond of their union, and of their love.

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But as in the parable of the rich man's supper there was found one at the table who had not on the wedding garment, and was cast out; therefore the Church warns us at this season, to prepare for the Paschal Feast, that we may not be found unworthy. And to the same end she calls upon us to keep this season of penance, beforehand. In the Church's name, then, and in charity to yourselves, my dear brethren, I am going to lift up my voice this morning, against unworthy communions.

But first, I must tell you, that I do not mean unworthy, in the sense of communions made without profit: as for example, when one makes but little preparation beforehand, and thinks little of what he is doing at the moment, and makes but the poorest sort of thanksgiving afterward. No; compared with such as I mean, these communions are precious and holy. They do but little good to those who make them, it is true; and give but poor honor to God;

but at least they are made in the state of grace. By an unworthy communion, I mean one that is made in known mortal sin. I mean a sacrilegious communion.
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I shall speak, then,--
  1. Of communion in itself.
  2. Of unworthy communions.
  3. Of those who are guilty of them.
I.--_What is Communion?_
It is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, given to us as food for the sanctification of our souls and bodies. "_He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day._" [Footnote 1]
    [Footnote 1: St. John, vi., 55.]
What is Holy Communion? It is to receive the best of friends, who comes to advise us, to cheer and to encourage us. A friend who has power to protect us. Who loves to dwell in our hearts as in a castle, where He may fight for us against the enemies of our soul.
What is Holy Communion? It is a pledge of Heaven, and a foretaste of it. Union with God by a perfect love, will be our happiness for all eternity, and this is begun on earth in Holy Communion. As St. Peter says, it is to be made "partakers of the Divine nature." [Footnote 2]
    [Footnote 2: 2 Peter i., 4.]
What is Holy Communion? It is the parting gift of one who loves us better than our mother. He chose the time when He was about to leave us, to give it an additional value.
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He made it the memorial of His Passion. As in times past, He had given the rainbow as a perpetual remembrance of His mercy, so He willed that the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood, should be a perpetual remembrance of the redemption of the Cross, "_Do this in remembrance of Me_."
What is Holy Communion? It is the best of all the good gifts of our good God.
II.--_What then is it to receive this Holy Communion unworthily?_ It is to be grievously wanting in reverence to the holiest of all holy things. When you see a person put a thing to an improper use, what do you say? Why, that is too bad; you say. Why, you must be out of your head. Suppose you saw a girl in service, scrubbing the floor with a beautiful camel's-hair shawl, what would you say? Suppose you saw me filling the water stoups at the door, and for that purpose dipping out the holy water, from a pail, with the very chalice I had just used in Mass, what would you say? Why, you would exclaim, how very shocking! what an irreverent Priest!
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Now why would you say this? Because when God made your soul, He put into it a reverence for certain things, above others. But what does an unworthy communion do? It does this. It takes the Blood of Christ, and pours it down a sink that is more loathsome than a city sewer, for what is so loathsome to God, as a soul in mortal sin? Corruption of matter is good, for God made it, but

moral corruption is an abomination to Him.
This one does who conceals a mortal sin in confession.
What is an Unworthy Communion? It is to crucify Jesus over again. What does St. Paul say? "_They who have tasted of the Heavenly Gift and are fallen away, crucify to themselves the Son of God, and make a mockery of Him._" Now, which is worse, to leave off keeping a man's company, or to play the false friend with him? But this a man does who receives Holy Communion unworthily. The spirit of his act is as if he went up to the throne of God, and caught hold of those Blessed Hands and Feet, and said, "come down to earth and be tormented once more." He would pull off the crown of glory from that Blessed Head, and press down again upon that Brow the crown of thorns.
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Nay, it does even worse than crucify Jesus over again. His first crucifixion was a willing one. It was His own love that was the real executioner; but now He is dragged against His will. This is what a man does who gets his absolution on the strength of some promise which he does not intend to keep.
What is an Unworthy Communion? It is to eat and drink one's own damnation. What does St. Paul say again? "_He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself_." The wood of the cross drank in the Blood of Christ, and was sanctified; and here is a soul that has drunk it in, and is damned. The Centurion was sprinkled with it, as he was piercing the side of Christ with a spear, and it made a Saint of him; but here is a Christian soul, that is damned for being bathed with it. It cleansed the robber's conscience who was hanging beside his Lord, and pleaded mercy for him; but on this soul it cries for vengeance, like the blood of Abel, against another Cain.
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"_Better_," said our Lord, "_had it been for that man, if he had not been born;_" but now, he has anticipated the Day of Judgment upon himself. This a man does who gets his absolution upon the promise of breaking off from a bad companion, which promise he does not mean to keep. I repeat, then, they make unworthy, sacrilegious communions, for instance,
1. Who conceal mortal sins in confession.
2. Who get their absolution on the strength of their promising what they do not intend to perform.
But what am I saying? Surely no one before me has been guilty of this! Well, God only knows. It has been done elsewhere, and may have been done here, for alas, unworthy communions are not such very uncommon things. In case it has been so, I wish to strike terror into such consciences, and to bring them to penance. I wish to prevent such a misfortune, in the parish of St. Paul's, as one coming to the Paschal Feast of the Lamb without his wedding garment.
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III. _Who has done this?_
As our Lord sat at the table with His Apostles, at the Last Supper, he said sadly, "_One of you shall betray Me._" Each in turn, asked Him eagerly and earnestly, "_Lord, is it I?_"

No, Peter, I foresee that you will deny that you know Me. That you will even swear that you do not. That you will even do this several times; but no, it is not you who will betray Me.
"_Lord, is it I?_" No, Thomas. You will run away for fear at my death, though you said you would die with Me. You will not believe My word that I am risen, and that I am your Lord, until you put your hand in the prints of the nails; but no, it is not you who will betray Me.
"_Lord, is it I?_" No, John. You shall be beside Me at the Cross. I mean that you shall have the charge of my mother; oh, no, I do not mean you!
"_Lord, is it I?_" Thou hast said it, Judas. I made you an Apostle, a pillar of my Church. I called you out of the world, and took you to my bosom, as a dear friend. You have gone in and out, and eaten and drunk with Me. Nay, you have just received My Body and Blood, and all the while you hold the thirty pieces of silver for which you have betrayed Me.
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Now, then, I think I hear you say to me: Father, have I then done this horrible thing? _Is it I? Is it I?_ No, my good man. You have enjoyed for years your ill-got gains, but your health has gone now. Declining years have come upon you, and you are poor; you can never restore them again. Your communions are not unworthy for this. But as for you, young man, why have you presumed to come to the altar? Where are those thirty pieces of silver for which you sold your soul? You promised in confession that you would restore them, but why? that you might get your Easter Communion. In your heart you said, Perhaps I will, some day, and all the while, you knew that no absolution is valid without the will to restore, or actual restitution when one is able; and you _were_ able.
Father, is it I? No, poor fellow. You forgot to mention in your last confession, a very grievous sin, and only remembered it just after you had left the altar. Do not be troubled. You tried your best to examine your conscience, but this escaped your memory.
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It was forgiven with the rest. But what have you to say for yourself, O drunkard? You did not leave out one of your many nights of debauch; but what of that solemn promise to keep from liquor for so long a time, which you have already so often broken, as you had no intention of keeping it? You have drunk in damnation with your liquor, and deeper damnation with your communion.
Father, is it I? No, poor girl. You should have known better than to have trusted yourself to a deceiver with his jewels and wine; but you have done penance. Your sobs in the confessional have spoken for you. Your communion, though so soon after your confession, was good. But what have you to say for yourself, O adulterer, and adulteress? You, O adulterer; you found a home where there were smiles, and fondness, and peace; and what have you done? You have made it a home of jealousy and strife. You have put estrangement between two hearts whom God joined together, and said, "let no man put asunder." You have

robbed a fellow man of one of his most sacred rights given him in the face of the Church.
{36}
And you, O adulteress, why have you come here? Our Lord said to Judas, "_Friend, why hast thou come? dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?_" You knelt here at the altar-rail, and as the Priest said to you, "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto everlasting life," you put up your lips, and said, like Judas, Hail Master! and you kissed our Lord. Oh! where was the Angel of the Blessed Sacrament then? An Angel was placed at the gate of Eden with a flaming sword to keep guard over the Tree of Life. Oh! where, I ask, was the Angel of the Blessed Sacrament? Where was His guardian who said of Himself, "_I am the bread that cometh down from Heaven, of which whosoever eateth, he shall live forever!_" Preserve thy soul unto everlasting life, indeed! It has prepared you for the everlasting burnings; for the flames that shall never be quenched. You went to confession, you say! Yes, I know you did, and you concealed your sins of shame. You have added to these one of sacrilege. And you, O slanderer, who have robbed your neighbor of his character, by your lies and calumnies which you have never told in confession, or if you have, which you never intend to repair at the price of your own dishonor!
{37}
You have been drinking in your own judgment with the Blood of Jesus. Jesus, judgment! Jesus, damnation! Why St. Bernard said, the very name of Jesus "was music in his ear, honey in his mouth, and joy to his heart." Jesus, damnation! Why St. Gabriel said "_He shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins._" O cruel perversion of sin! to turn sweetness into bitterness! But what does God say of such as these? "_When you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away My eyes from you and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear for your hands are full of blood_." [Footnote 3]

[Footnote 3: Isaias i., 15.]

Let me tell you a fact that a Jesuit told to one of our Fathers. A young man in the neighborhood where he lived, was heir to a large estate, which he was to receive at twenty-one years of age, on the condition that at that time he frequented the Sacraments. He turned out to be very wild and given up to sin. Near the end of his twentieth year, he was reminded of the danger of his losing the estate.
{38}
Never fear, said he, I'll easily manage that, and at once he began to lead outwardly a very correct life. He was now seen at Mass. He kept out of society, and public places of amusement. Within a short time before his birthday, he went to confession; and the morning came, when he was seen to go up to the altar-rail for communion. The Priest placed the Blessed Sacrament on his tongue, and had turned back to the altar, when he heard a frightful shriek, and the words "My tongue! my tongue! it has burned my tongue!" When the Priest returned to him, he said, "Oh Father, forgive me, my confession was bad, I had been in the secret commission of mortal sins which I purposely concealed. I

had no wish to forsake them, but only to secure my property; oh Father, I repent, absolve me before I die!" The Priest took the Blessed Sacrament from his tongue, and with much difficulty consoled him with the promise of pardon. He made a good communion soon after, and was put in possession of his estate, which he sold, and gave to the poor, and in penance for his sins, doomed his false tongue thenceforward to perpetual silence.
{39}
Tremble, then, dear brethren, at the thought of so grievous a sin. For such as are guilty of it, there is but one thing to be done. Come back to God with sorrow, now in this time of penance, for, "_thus saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson they shall be as white as wool_." [Footnote 4]

[Footnote 4: Isaias 1, 13.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Isaias i., 18.]

Confess your sacrilegious communions. Go and repair the scandal you have given. Restore the goods you have stolen. Abandon the companions of your guilt. Do this, and there will be joy before the Angels of God, and with the Priests to whom you may confide your conscience. If, in spite of all I have said, you live on with the guilt of an unworthy communion, eternal woe will be your portion; from which may God in His mercy deliver you, and all of us. AMEN.

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Sermon III.

Christ's Resurrection The Foundation Of Our Faith.

"And when the Sabbath was past,
Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome,
brought sweet spices."
--Mark xvi., 1.

(From the Gospel for Easter Sunday.)

On this day, the bosom of the whole Church swells with exultation. After the penance of Lent, after the mourning of Holy Week, the countless disciples of the crucified and risen Saviour, take up and echo through the whole earth the joyful cry--Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. For this is the day on which Jesus Christ, bursting the bonds of the sepulchre, triumphed over death.
{41}
This is the day which, more than any other, enlivens our faith, strengthens our hope of eternal salvation, and causes our hearts to bound with spiritual joy. Even the coldest and most indifferent Christian feels his bosom warm with some faint sentiment, at least, of devotion on this day, and remembers with pride that he bears the name and professes the faith of Jesus Christ. This is right and proper. For all the doctrines of our religion are centred in the resurrection. All our hopes are based upon it. The Resurrection is the grand Fact of Christianity. It is the proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ; it is the seal of God which makes the documents of our faith authentic; it is the cause and the pledge of our final resurrection and eternal happiness. This accounts for the joy which swells every true

Christian bosom, on this day. For, my dear brethren and I beg you to note it well--the source of our hope and of our joy is in our faith. It is the certainty of faith which banishes all doubt, wavering, hesitation and gloom from the heart of a sincere and fervent Catholic. The faith of the Resurrection must be firmly planted in our minds, if we would have the hope of the Resurrection, and the joy which springs from this hope, bright and glowing in our hearts.

{42}

Let me therefore ask your attention this morning, while I endeavor to show you what a firm and and immovable foundation we have for our faith, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And in doing so, I will endeavor to establish these three points:

First.--That Jesus Christ appealed to his future resurrection, while he was yet alive, as the proof of his Divinity.

Second.--That He actually raised himself from the dead, as he had predicted, and,

Third.--That the Resurrection of Christ proves his Deity, and with it, the entire Catholic faith.

May the grace of the risen Saviour increase our faith, through the intercession of Mary, whose faith never wavered for an instant, even beneath the Cross of her Son!

I.

Jesus Christ asserted frequently and clearly to the Jews, that he was God, and required them to believe him. So his disciples understood him, who believed; so the Jews understood him, who did not believe, but accused him of blasphemy and condemned him to death.

{43}

The great sign, the miracle, the proof, to which he appealed to justify this declaration, was his resurrection on the third day after his death. He declared himself to be the proper and only begotten Son of God. He that does not believe this, he says, "_is already judged, because he believeth not in the Name of the only-begotten Son of God._" [Footnote 5]

[Footnote 5: John iii., 17.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is John iii., 18.]

This title of only-begotten which he gives himself, shows that he does not merely claim to be a child of God by grace and adoption, but by nature. This nature he declares positively is not his human nature, but distinct from it, that it came from heaven, and was in heaven as well as on earth. "_No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven_." [Footnote 6]

[Footnote 6: John iii., 13.]

He confesses that he is man; but asserts that he is more than man, that he came from heaven. He asserts also that this superior nature which is joined with his humanity is eternal. "_Before Abraham was--I am_." [Footnote 7]

[Footnote 7: John viii., 58.]

Not I was; but _I am_, the word by which God made known his eternity to Moses. And finally he declares that this super-human and eternal nature is identical with that of his Father, is the

Divine nature itself. "_I and my Father are one_." [Footnote 8]

[Footnote 8: John x., 38.]

{44}

His disciples who believed in him, understood him to teach his divinity. "_My Lord and my God_." [Footnote 9] was the expression of the faith of Thomas. "The Word was God," [Footnote 10] that of John.

[Footnote 9: John xx., 28.]

[Footnote 10: John i., 1.]

So the Jews understood him, who did not believe. "_The Jews answered him: for a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man_, MAKEST THYSELF GOD!" [Footnote 11]

[Footnote 11: John x., 33.]

The Jews understood then perfectly well, that in calling himself the true, proper, and only Son of God, the Christ and Saviour of the world; and in working miracles, forgiving sins, and preaching salvation, in his own name, and by his own authority, and not as a mere prophet--he asserted his own true and proper divinity, and made himself God.

{45}

In support of this claim, Jesus Christ repeatedly appealed to his resurrection. He foretold his death; and declared that he would show himself to be the true Son of God the Father, having the same divine nature and the same divine power with him; by raising himself from the dead on the third day. "_The Son of Man shall be in the heart of the earth, three days and three nights._" [Footnote 12]

[Footnote 12: Matt, xii., 40.]

This was said to the Scribes and Pharisees who wished him to give them a sign which should prove him to be the true Christ. When he drove out the men who were trafficking in the courts of the Temple, the Jews said to him: "_What sign dost thou show unto us, seeing thou dost these things? Jesus answered and said unto them: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spoke of the temple of his body_." [Footnote 13] It is remarkable that he does not declare that he will be raised to life by his Father, but by himself. "_I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of my self, and I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again_." [Footnote 14]

[Footnote 13: John ii., 18-21.]

[Footnote 14: John x.. 17-18.]

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These are only samples of the frequent and public declarations made by our Lord to the same effect. And it was so well known among the Jews that he had staked his entire cause on his resurrection, that they came to Pilate, immediately after his crucifixion, and said to him: "_Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day._" [Footnote 15]

[Footnote 15: Matt. xxvii., 63-64.]

Here, then, is the grand test of the truth of Christ's

doctrine--the grand sign of his divinity; the public challenge which he gives to all his enemies. We have it on the testimony of the most desperate haters of his name and doctrine; the very men who nailed him to the Cross. They were resolved to prove his prediction false, to show that he could not, and would not, rise again, and thus to manifest him to the world as a seducer. At the sepulchre of Jesus Christ, then, is the trial of strength between them. The dead body of Jesus is on one side; the Jewish rulers, the Roman governor, and a strong watch of soldiers on the other. And Jesus Christ overcame; he actually did rise, as he had foretold: "_resurrexit sicut dixit;_" and all their precautions only served to furnish so many brilliant testimonies to the fact, that he had fulfilled his word.
{47}

II.

Picture to yourselves, if you can, the scenes of those three memorable days! The Sun of Justice, the Light of the World, has gone down in darkness. Jesus Christ is dead; he is buried, and a great stone is rolled to the door of the sepulchre. The disciples are scattered here and there, buried in the most profound and bitter disappointment, consternation and grief. The multitudes have fled hastily from Mount Calvary, some beating their breasts with contrition, some blaspheming, but all in terror. The heavens are overclouded and black, the thunder moans, and an earthquake shakes the earth. The frightened inhabitants of Jerusalem, as they return to their homes, are met in the streets by the pale corpses of the dead, who have left their graves, and are wandering about among the living. In the temple, those wicked and unworthy priests are startled at the sudden tearing, by an invisible hand, of the thick and heavy veil which hangs before the Holy of Holies. An ominous stillness sinks over the city of Jerusalem after that dreadful, tragical day. It is the eve of the greatest Sabbath of the year.
{48}
The Sabbath morning dawns once more; all is apparently quiet, and God does not appear, to take sudden vengeance on his guilty people. Annas and Caiphas, and those other wicked priests who have sacrificed the Lamb of God, with their souls all black and turbid with remorse, but with a grim and diabolical exultation in the success of their horrid work, prepare themselves in splendid vestments for the sacrifices and the ceremonies of the day. The countless multitudes of Jews, gathered together from every part of the world to keep the Passover, crowd the vast courts of the temple. The disciples remain shut up, in silence and in fear. The Roman soldiers guard the shut and sealed sepulchre of Jesus. The day passes and the night, and nothing occurs. The first streaks of the dawn begin to appear in the sky on Sunday morning. The disciples have forgotten the promise of their Master to rise on the third day, and have lost heart entirely. Mary Magdalene, and the other pious women, have planned to steal out early to visit his tomb, and to bring their spices, and perfumes, and fresh flowers, to cast upon his dead body.
{49}
They set forth together; while still in the distance, they are

frightened by the sight of torches and armed men in the garden. They have not courage to go on; and they remember that a great stone is at the door of the sepulchre, which will hinder their entrance. Only the courageous and loving Mary Magdalene has the hardihood to press forward at all risks, leaving the others hovering about in the neighborhood of the garden. As she approaches the sepulchre, she sees the stone rolled away to one side; she pays no attention to the soldiers who are lying on the ground, apparently stunned and insensible, but goes in, and the body of Jesus Christ is not there; his grave-clothes are lying in the spot where his body was placed, and an angel is watching the empty sepulchre. Bewildered and surprised, and occupied only with the thought that the body is gone, she runs hastily back to the place where John and other apostles are staying, tells them in breathless haste what she has seen, and without waiting for a reply, returns as speedily as possible to the sepulchre.
{50}
Meanwhile, during Magdalene's absence, the other women observing that the soldiers have left the gar-den, come also to the sepulchre, see the stone rolled away, go in, and find two angels sitting, one at the head, the other at the foot of the place where Christ was laid. The angels tell them that Christ is risen, and bid them go announce it to his disciples, and direct them to meet him in Galilee, as he had commanded them before his death. They now leave the garden to return to the city, and Magdalene arrives once more, and while these things are happening the sun has risen, the sun of the first Easter Sunday, the type of the Risen Sun of Justice. Mary Magdalene goes into the sepulchre again, and begins to weep, still too much occupied with the thought that the body of Christ is gone, to reflect on any thing else. She sees the angels; but to the questions: "_Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?_" she answers distractedly, "_They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him_." She turns around, and sees the figure of a man, whom she takes to be the gardener, and asks him where they have taken the body of Jesus. The well-known voice exclaims: "Mary!" She suddenly recognizes the Lord, and utters a cry of joy: "Oh, my Master!"
{51}
She tries to clasp him by the feet, but he forbids her, and bids her go, announce his resurrection to the disciples. She sets off immediately, and in a few moments Peter and John arrive, visit the sepulchre, and see that the body is not there. They also return to the city. Immediately after his interview with Mary Magdalene, the Lord appears also to her companions, while they are returning to their homes. He was also seen by Peter some time during the day. Toward evening he joins two of the disciples, who were going to Emmaus, a small village near Jerusalem, and explains to them the prophecies of the Scripture concerning himself, but is not recognized by them, until he blesses bread and gives it to them, and then disappears from view. So the day passes. First one arrives at the coenaculum, and relates his story, then another, then others; the day passes in comparing these different accounts, in conversing together, in expectation

of what is going to happen. When night draws on, the apostles and disciples are gathered together for prayer; the two from Emmaus come in just then, and relate their interview with the Lord, when suddenly he appears among them, and says: "_Peace be unto you._" So passes this day.
{52}
The four Evangelists give no regular and methodical account of it. All these occurrences are related by some one or more of them; and I have strung them together in an order in which they might have happened, and which reconciles all the accounts with each other.
Such is the narrative of the Gospel. Is it true? Did these things really happen? In regard to one fact, Christians, Jews and Romans were agreed. The body of Jesus Christ was removed from a closed and sealed tomb, guarded by Roman soldiers, by early dawn on the morning of Easter Sunday. It was removed either by Divine power, or by human ingenuity. The rulers of the Jews circulated the report, which they have repeated to this day, that his disciples came and stole him away, while the guard was sleeping. "What!" exclaims St. Augustine, "you will prove your cause by sleeping witnesses?" If they were asleep, they knew nothing of the way by which the body disappeared. And if they were awake to see the disciples steal it, why did they not kill them on the spot.
{53}
The guard were sleeping! A guard of Roman soldiers. Who can believe that? For a Roman soldier to sleep at his post was an extraordinary and most disgraceful thing, and here we have a whole band of them, with an officer at their head--sleeping. The punishment was death. In this case especially, no mercy could have been expected, where both Roman and Jewish rulers were so deeply interested in putting an end to the religion of Christ. How did they dare confess their sleeping, unless they were in connivance with the authorities, and bribed to repeat this story. Why was no trial held? Why were not these soldiers examined before a tribunal? Why was no search made for the body of Jesus, and for his disciples? Why is the whole matter hushed up by common consent between Pilate and Caiphas? There is only one possible supposition. And that is: that the soldiers saw the resurrection of the Lord--that they related it to their rulers, and that by bribes and threats their testimony was suppressed. I will not pause to accumulate arguments.
{54}
I will not speak of the impossibility that Jesus Christ should be able to predict that his disciples would attempt such an incredible task as the removal of his body, and succeed in it. I will not speak of their timidity, and their perfect want of all plan of action, all means of carrying out any project whatever; of their complete perplexity and helplessness; and of the utter madness of sacrificing all their worldly goods and their lives, to carry out a manifest imposture. These things are so plain, that reasoning only seems to weaken the effect with which they strike conviction to the mind at the first statement.
I return to this simple fact, that the tale circulated by the soldiers, in common with Pilate and the Jewish rulers, is a

complete and irresistible proof of the Resurrection. And there are evidences in abundance that it was so regarded at the time, that this incredible tale was only believed by the most stupid and besotted portion of the populace, and by those who knew nothing of the matter, except what they heard by vague rumors. We have the testimony of Tertullian that even Pilate was convinced of the truth of the resurrection, "Ea omnia super Christo Pilatus, et ipse pro conscientia sua jam Christianus, Tiberio renuntiavit." [Footnote 16]

[Footnote 16: Apol., c. 21.]

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Josephus, the Jewish historian, says of Christ, that "he appeared to them alive again, the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold." [Footnote 17]

[Footnote 17: Antiq., Lib. xviii., c. 3.]

Justin Martyr, a most learned Jew, and an eminent philosopher of the second century, who became a Christian, does not fear to assert boldly to the Jews: "You know that Jesus was risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, as the prophecies did foretell was to happen." [Footnote 18]

[Footnote 18: Dial. cum. Tryph., p. 230.]

The fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was so evident, that it paralyzed for a time the efforts of the Jewish rulers to suppress his doctrine. And months elapsed, during which this doctrine made the most astonishing progress, before they dared to put a disciple of Christ to death. It was the manifest fact of the resurrection which caused the sudden and continuous growth and propagation of the Christian Church. Jesus Christ was far more powerful after his death than during his life. Not only did several thousand of the most sincere and pious among the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea, and of the strangers who had come to celebrate the Passover, embrace Christianity, but "_a great multitude of the priests also were obedient to the faith._" [Footnote 19]

[Footnote 19: Acts i.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Acts vi. 7.]

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Nicodemus, one of the most distinguished Doctors of the Law, and Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy and powerful Jew, and a member of the grand council, who had previously been timid, and had abstained from attaching themselves openly to Christ, came out now publicly and announced themselves Christians. The centurion, or Roman officer, who commanded the soldiers by whom Christ was crucified, with the soldier who pierced the side of our Lord, and several other soldiers, were converted. The tremendous impression made by the resurrection of Christ on the whole Jewish nation, was the cause which gave the impetus to this movement. And it was the resurrection to which the apostles constantly appealed in proof of the divine character of Jesus Christ, and the truth of his doctrine.

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III.

Thus did Jesus Christ, by raising himself from the dead, as he had foretold, redeem his pledge, and prove himself to be God.

Therefore the Scripture frequently speaks as if Jesus Christ were made the Son of God by his resurrection. "He was," says St. Paul, "_predestinated the Son of God in power, by the resurrection from the dead._" [Footnote 20]

[Footnote 20: Romans i., 4.]

That is, as St. Ambrose explains it--"He, whose deity was concealed in the incarnation, was predestinated to declare and manifest himself as the Son of God by his resurrection." During his life, he declared himself to be God, and promised to raise himself from the dead on the third day after his death, as a proof of his divinity. He did rise from the dead; and the resurrection is thus the grand proof of the central doctrine of the Catholic faith, the divinity of Christ, and not only of that, but also of every other doctrine connected with it and springing from it--of the Catholic faith complete and entire. It proves not merely the divinity of Christ, but the divinity of his words and of his acts. His words are words of divine truth; his acts are acts of divine power. The same Jesus who raised himself from the dead, said, "_This is my body--This is my Blood;_" and if we believe that he is truly God, we must believe that the Holy Eucharist is indeed his flesh and blood.

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The same Jesus who proved his divine power by raising himself from the dead, transferred and delegated his power to St. Peter and his successors, when he said--"_Thou art Peter, and on this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven_." It is in the Catholic Church that the testimony to the resurrection, commenced by the first apostles, is continued and passed down from age to age, by the unbroken succession of popes and bishops. The apostles were the witnesses of the resurrection. When the new apostle was to be appointed in the place of Judas, St. Peter said--"_One of these must be made a witness with us of his resurrection_." [Footnote 21]

[Footnote 21: Acts i., 22.]

The Catholic priesthood, as it were, joining hands with each other, run back in an unbroken line to the first fathers and founders of their glorious order, who saw the risen Saviour, and clasped the hands nailed to the cross.

{59}

Down this line has passed the uninterrupted, unbroken testimony to the resurrection. This day itself, the festival, Easter, is a grand monument of the resurrection. Every year, from this day back to the day on which Christ rose from the dead, the whole Christian Church has celebrated the resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday. Thus we all join hands with our predecessors in past ages, until the long chain terminates in the little church of the disciples, gathered together in the coenaculum, to whom Christ appeared and said--"Peace be to you." And as we celebrate these joyous festivities, which carry us back to the very days of our Lord and his apostles, an electric shock of faith startles and reanimates our souls. Yes; this is the day of faith. It is

the special festival of faith. The resurrection confirmed and renewed the wavering, sinking faith of the disciples. "_The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared unto Simon._" These words show how those fainting and almost despairing hearts revived on that day. Oh! wretched and miserable men, such as Pilate and Caiphas, and the besotted multitude, who did not, would not believe--or at least would not act on their convictions, and confess the truth!

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Equally unhappy are those now, who have no faith; who do not believe in the Son of God; who do not await the resurrection of the dead; who believe in nothing, but pass their lives in miserable and endless doubting and unbelief.

Equally unhappy are those who, though enlightened once in baptism, and brought up from childhood in the Catholic faith, are weak, wavering and hesitating in their faith; who neither believe or disbelieve; who dare not renounce their religion, and yet will not adhere to it firmly and profess it openly; but hang, as it were, in the outskirts of faith, and around the courts of the temple of Divine Truth.

Equally unhappy are those who, believing firmly, deny their faith by their acts, and disobey the Lord whom they acknowledge to be their true God and their final Judge; who, on the day when Christ is risen from the dead, lie buried in the grave of mortal sin; who have no part in his life and grace, and have not received his Paschal sacraments.

{61}

But blessed are they who believe; whose hearts are full of faith, and whose works correspond with that faith;--into whose bosoms the Paschal joy has entered by the devout reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, and who can look forward with hope to the day of the general resurrection from the dead. For all such good Christians, this is the brightest, the happiest, the most glorious day of the whole year. All things sympathize with the joy of the risen Saviour. The earth breaks the icy bonds of winter, and starting from the state of lifelessness, awakes to new life and growth and freshness. The spring begins to appear, and the signs of approaching warmth and of the time of buds and blossoms and green foliage show themselves. The Church puts on her festal attire and sends up her joyous hymns, and solemnizes her splendid ceremonies. The faithful everywhere, leave their sins, do penance for their misdeeds, weep at the foot of the cross, reconcile themselves with God, and come with purified hearts to partake of the Paschal Lamb--the flesh and blood of the Divine Jesus, in the blessed Sacrament of the altar.

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And while we go back in our thoughts to that day on which Christ arose, the first-begotten from the dead, all these external signs and ceremonies point also forward to that last Easter Sunday--that day of the resurrection of all mankind. The change and renovation of the earth in the season of spring, and the resurrection of souls by the Paschal sacraments, and the solemn celebration of Christ's resurrection, these are all types of that

glorious morning when the redeemed human race shall start from its tomb; when the old things shall pass away, and all things, the heaven and the earth, and all things that are in them, shall be made anew. When the obscurity of faith shall give place to the light of glory, and the hope of salvation shall be changed into the beatific vision of God.
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Sermon IV.

Giving Testimony.

"You shall give testimony of me."

--John xv., 27.

(From the Gospel for the 6th Sunday after Pentecost.)

These words were spoken by our Lord to his disciples, before his departure from this world. He had chosen them from the beginning, and imparted to them a full knowledge of the truth, that they might bear testimony to it. "_All things whatsoever I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."--"I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain._" [Footnote 22]

[Footnote 22: John xv., 15, 16.]

{64}

The disciples did give testimony. They labored in season and out of season in spreading the truths which they had learned from the lips of our Saviour. "_Their sound went over all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world._" [Footnote 23]

[Footnote 23: Rom. x., 18.]

Their testimony was not only in sound and words: their lives testified to the truth which they preached. They suffered persecution, poverty, imprisonment, and sealed their testimony to the truth with their blood, by willingly laying down their lives for it. These disciples were true to Christ. Their testimony was faithful, loyal, heroic. We, too, are disciples of Christ, and have our testimony to give; and I propose to show in the first place, what are our obligations to give this testimony of Christ; and in the second place, who are those who fail in their obligations to give this testimony.

What are our obligations to give testimony of Christ? There are many Christians who seem to think that they are at liberty to choose what course of life they please, that they can live as they like; that whether they attend to their religious duties or neglect them, whether they are patterns of Christian virtue or scandals to their faith, is nobody's business.
{65}

This opinion is false, most false, because all Christians are under a lasting obligation to Christ to lead a Christian life. Christ is our Lord and Master, and as such has a complete right of control over all our actions. There can be no dispute about this. "_You call me Master and Lord._" says he; "_You say well, for so I am._" [Footnote 24]

[Footnote 24: 1 John xiii., 13.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is John xiii., 13. (Gospel, not epistle.)]

Christ is not only our Master and Lord, but also our Creator, "_for by Him all things were made that are made_." His

dominion over us is therefore absolute and supreme. In His presence we are simply subjects, and have only duties to fulfil. Christ as Man has the full right of purchase over us. He can claim of us all our actions, for he redeemed us from the captivity and slavery of sin. "_Knowing that you were not redeemed_," says the Apostle Peter to the faithful, "_with corruptible gold or silver from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ_." [Footnote 25]

[Footnote 25: 1 Peter i., 18, 19.]

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Can any one who listens to these words be so destitute of intelligence and faith as to entertain the idea, for a moment, that God created us and became man and died for us, only to leave us at liberty to live as we please, and to sin as much and as often as we like? No; says the Apostle Paul, "_Christ died for all._" And why? Listen, faithless Christian: "_That they also who live may not live to themselves, but to Him who died for them, and rose again._" [Footnote 26]

[Footnote 26: 1 Cor. v., 15.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is 2 Cor. v., 15.]

What is it to live to Christ? To live to Christ is, to live to please Him; it is to follow in His footsteps and copy in our lives His virtues. This is made clear from what the same Apostle says in another place, on the same subject: "_Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people, acceptable, pursuing good works_." [Footnote 27]

[Footnote 27: 2 Titus ii., 14.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is: Titus ii., 14.]

A Christian, then, is one who lives to Christ by keeping free from all iniquity and pursuing good works. This is the testimony that Christ requires of us, and which we are bound to give by every sacred obligation which binds us to Him as our Creator and Redeemer.

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Another reason why we are under obligation to give testimony of Christ by leading an exemplary life, is that Christ came into the world not only to be our Redeemer, but also our Model. Hear him: "_You call me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am, ... and if I, then, being your Lord and Master have given you an example, as I have done to you, so you do also_." [Footnote 28]

[Footnote 28: St. John xiii. 13, 14, 15.]

For is there any one so uninstructed as not to know that it was wholly unnecessary for Jesus Christ to practise on his own account, humiliations, poverty, obedience, self-denial, meekness, and embrace the sufferings and bitter death of the cross. He practised these virtues in order to induce us to practise them, for these were due to us as punishment for our sins, and necessary for us as preservatives against our vices. God became man to teach men by example how they ought to live. "_Christ suffered for us,_" says the apostle St. Peter, "_leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps_." [Footnote 29]

[Footnote 29: 1 Peter ii., 21.]

He then is false and faithless to his obligations, who claims the name of a Christian, and does not follow in Christ's footsteps. No Christian, then, has the right to live as he likes, but is bound to live as Christ likes.

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The Holy Church too, has a right to exact from us the obligation to lead an exemplary life. For as in a flock of pigeons, on seeing one fly all the others follow, so it is in the society of the Church, the good example of one member encourages and edifies the whole body. That you may understand the watchfulness and jealousy of our Lord over his flock, listen to his own language: "_He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea. ... Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh._" [Footnote 30]

[Footnote 30: Matt, xviii., 6. 7.]

The Church has not only the right to claim from us to follow in Christ's footsteps for the sake of believers, but also for the unbeliever. According to the words of Christ: "_Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven_." [Footnote 31]

[Footnote 31: Matt, v., 16.]

It is more by the testimony of a good example than by miracles, that unbelievers are brought to the light of truth. This is illustrated by the example of the martyr St. Lucien.

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It is related of him by Surius, that he led many unbelievers to the knowledge of the truth and to embrace the Catholic faith, by the modesty of his life and his exemplary conduct. So powerful was the influence of his example, that the Emperor Maximilian, when seated upon his throne and about to condemn him to death, commanded that he should be kept out of his view, behind a veil, lest even the mere sight of the saint should change him into a Christian. Is it not then with good reason St. John Chrysostom says: "There would be no heathens were we such Christians as we ought to be. ... Paul was but a man, yet how many did he draw after him! If we were all such as he, how many worlds might we have drawn to us!" [Footnote 32]

[Footnote 32: 1 Tim. Hom, x.]

How was it St. Paul attracted so many to Christ? He tells us himself, in these words: "_Give no offence to the Jews, nor to the gentiles, nor to the church of God; as I also please all men in all things, not seeking that which is profitable to myself, but to many; that they may be saved._" [Footnote 33]

[Footnote 33: 1 Cor. x., 31, 32.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is: 1 Cor. x., 32-33.]

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It is clear, then, beyond all dispute, that every one who claims the name of a Christian is bound by a lasting and sacred obligation to give testimony to Christ by following in his footsteps, and consequently those who fail are guilty of robbing their Lord and Master of his rights, and are no true Catholics, but traitors to the faith.

Who are they who fail to give this testimony of Christ? I will tell you.

You will find many who were born of Catholic parents, were baptized in the faith when young, and yet never acknowledging the faith of their fathers, and of their baptism. They are not open apostates, they neither attack their faith, nor defend it when attacked. You might know them for years and not dream that they were Catholics. It is hard to tell what they really are. They are not Protestants, nor Jews, nor Turks, for these have religious convictions, and do not deny them, but the men I speak of either have no religious convictions, or want the manliness to acknowledge them. They do not like to be known as Catholics, and yet they identify themselves publicly with free-masons, odd-fellows, and similar secret societies.

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Another class consists of those who confess themselves Catholics, but never, or very rarely, enter the Church. They take offence at the slightest irregularity, whether it be in the priesthood, or the preaching, or in the manner of conducting public worship; and under some such pretext they excuse their grievous neglect of worship, and their profound indifference to all the sacred duties of religion. These claim the name of Catholic, and their conduct is that of an infidel.

A third class is composed of those who now and then on occasion of a jubilee or a mission, or some similar event, come to Church, and perhaps receive the holy sacraments. Their religion is like a fire in the straw, it soon dies out. Talk to these men of their business, and they will tell you that a man who does not watch and pay constant attention to it, will soon find himself bankrupt. Speak to them of the affairs of the nation, and they will tell you that the country is going to ruin, because its citizens neglect to attend political meetings and fail to approach the polls at election times. On business, or politics, on almost every thing but their religion, they reason correctly, and act like sensible men; on their duties to God and the affairs of their soul they appear to be as destitute of reason as they are of loyalty. Money is their God, and their religion is politics.

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The fourth class is made up of the rank and file of sinners--cursors, drunkards, and the army of grog-shop keepers. These latter, under the pretext of making a living, spread more misery, wretchedness, and crime among our people, than all the plagues of Egypt brought upon the inhabitants of that land. The source of nine-tenths of the scandal to our holy religion is in the grog-shops; and to make the scandal of their vile and unlawful traffic more conspicuous, they congregate by preference in the neighborhood of a Church, justifying the well-known proverb:

"Where God erects a house of prayer,
Satan must have a chapel there."

The grog-shop keepers are the worst enemies of our holy religion in this country, for they not only occasion the destruction of a vast number of Catholics, but by the disgust which their bad

example creates, they offer the greatest hindrances to the conversion of non-catholics.
{73}
These are some out of the great number of those who fail to give testimony of Christ; for we have not the time to enumerate all. Now, what is very strange, and yet characteristic of all these, they appear to live as though they were unconscious of their obligations, and of the guilt which they incur. They seem to think that if they are allowed to assume the name of a Christian or Catholic, they are safe. Well then, asks one, why not exclude them from the Church altogether, so that the whole world can see what they are? This is the way we do away with unprofitable subjects in other institutions. Take, for example, a railroad corporation. Sometimes a company of this kind starts with great prospects. The number who travel on the road is prodigious. The stockholders congratulate themselves on a heavy dividend; when to their wonder, on reckoning up their accounts, they find the company running fast into bankruptcy. Investigations are made, and it is discovered that a large number of the passengers have been paying no fare, riding as "dead-heads." These being struck off, the corporation begins to prosper again. Not so with the holy Church. She is in this respect unlike all other institutions. She is likened by her Founder to a field of wheat, in which the enemy had sown cockle.
{74}
And when one of the servants said to the master: "_Wilt thou that we go to gather it up? and he said, no; lest while you gather up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Let both grow until the harvest; and in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn; but gather the wheat into my barn._" [Footnote 34]

[Footnote 34: Matt, xiii., 28-30.]

The time to cut off the faithless children, the "dead-heads" of the Church, is not now, but "in the harvest time," the day of general reckoning, when our Lord shall appear in power and majesty to judge the world. Then he will say to these: "I am your Lord and Master, why have you not obeyed me?" He will show them his wounds, and say: "Behold the price I paid to redeem you from sin! What right had you to refuse my service? I came upon earth to give an example that you might follow my steps, and you turned your back upon me! You were a scandal to the Church, and a stumbling-block in the way of others. You refused to give testimony to my mercy, now you shall give testimony to my sovereign justice. Gather up this cockle, these faithless, false, treacherous disciples," he will say to his servants, "and let their portion be in the pool which burns with fire and brimstone." [Footnote 35]

[Footnote 35: Apoc. xxi., 8.]

{75}
Could but our voice reach the ears, and our entreaties penetrate the hearts of these guilty Catholics, we would lift it up and cry out to them: Do penance speedily! Repair by a good example the evil which your bad example has caused to your neighbor. Strive

to gain more souls to Christ than your wicked life has lost to him heretofore. Let your good works shine out the more, so that like the servant of the eleventh hour, you may obtain the full wages of eternal life.

As for you, dearest brethren, who have manfully withstood until now all temptations to be disloyal to your faith, whose lives, full of good works, have borne noble testimony to Christ, lift up your eyes and hearts to heaven at this season of our Lord's ascension. "_I go,_" he says, "_to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and will take you to myself; that where I am, you may be also_." [Footnote 36]

[Footnote 36: John xiv., 2, 3.]

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Sermon V.

Spiritual Death.

"Behold! a dead man was carried out."

--St. Luke vii., 12.

(From the Gospel of the 15th Sunday after Pentecost.)

What a touching occasion was this, in which our Blessed Lord was pleased to manifest his power, and perform one of his many acts of infinite mercy; an act, which like all his miracles, was not only full of loving-kindness to those for whom it was performed, but also replete with spiritual instruction for all.

A widow is bereaved of her only consolation, a son, in whom were centred all her hopes, in whose happiness all her own was bound up; the pride of her eyes, her joy in adversity, and the sunshine to her poor heart in the cloudy days of sorrow.

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Perhaps, too, he was her only support; his the arm which labored for their daily bread, and she looked forward to the time when age and gray hairs should bring infirmity, and her enfeebled body tremble on the verge of the grave; then would he be the light to her dimmed eyes, and a guide to her tottering steps.

And now, alas! he is gone! Is the world all dead? Is it always night? Do the birds sing no more? Are the earth and sky all wrapped in a great, gloomy mantle of grief? Where is her heart, does it beat no more? Ah! so it is indeed to her.

How she watched him in the long hours of his racking pains, his burning fever. At times he did not know her; _her_, his own dear mother. Oh! how she prayed for him. Oftentimes, as he lay upon his dying bed unconscious, she would kneel down beside him, and take his thin wasted hand in hers, and lift up her streaming eyes to God, the Father of the fatherless, and pour forth her soul in an agony of supplication, beseeching Him to spare her only son, her life, her all.

{78}

In vain. That hand grows cold within her grasp; those eyes, which erewhile were so full of expression, have assumed a dull glassy unmeaning stare, there is one shuddering convulsion, the breathing ceases, his jaw drops, and she is a broken-hearted, childless widow. That body, once so cherished and tenderly cared for, must soon be removed far away out of sight, and now, amid the lamentations of a sympathizing multitude, they carry it to

the grave. She feels her loss so keenly that the very carriers of the bier seem to her to be heartless and unfeeling. Thus the scene in the Gospel opens: "_Behold, a dead man is carried out_." I know that poor widow. I have seen that dead man, her only son, the cherished idol of her heart, many a time. I know well those bearers, and they are assuredly most heartless and unfeeling. I have seen the Lord stop them on their way, as they carried him to the portals of death and hell.

Would you know who they are? Sinner! offspring of Holy Mother Church, part and parcel of her own life, who by sin hast lost the life of grace; it is thou! Behold thou art the dead man who is carried out. Contemplate thyself as in a mirror in this example from the Holy Gospel.

{79}

The Church has done for you all, aye, and more than this poor widow did, or could do, for her only son.

She has given you a noble birth in Jesus Christ. She nourished you, watched over, and cared for you, in your infancy. She flattered herself, poor mother, that you would do honor to her one day; she looked forward to the time when you would become her support. She was so bound up in you, that she often exclaimed with a truth, "Why do I live if it be not for my child?" Her very occupation, her unceasing labors were for you. How proud she was to see you increasing in grace with God and men, your manly soul strong in virtue; your conscience bright and fair to look upon as the face of an angel, thrilling her maternal heart with gladness, as she beheld reflected there the lineaments of the sacred countenance of her Divine Spouse.

Alas! that any thing so bright? and beautiful should ever know decay or death!

Hear the sad story. Disease came. Sin entered into your soul, as does the insidious pestilence into the very marrow of the bones. And now the frightened mother looks with dismay upon your changed features.

{80}

You are becoming emaciated, your soul, starving in sickness, is no longer cheerful with the love of God. Although so haggard and so woebegone, there is yet the hectic flush of the fever of passion. At times in the height of that fever your mind wanders: you do not know her, _her!_ your own dear mother? So low has sin brought you, so far has sin abased you, that you have forgotten your noble descent and your glorious destiny. The crime of disobedience to the law of God has done its work, and that soul which once walked so proudly erect now lies completely prostrated.

Oh! how that Mother Church prays for you! With outstretched arms to heaven she implores the divine mercy. "_Spare, O Lord, spare thy people, and give not thine heritage to reproach_." Leave me not alone without this only son of my heart, for whom Christ died! But you are in your agony now, and hear nothing. You are not moved to tears, as you would be, if you could but hear those agonizing prayers.

{81}

You lie indifferent to all around, while the disease fastens upon

your very vitals: one sin after another, one temptation given way to after another, until the life-blood of your soul has frozen in its channels: and before your weeping, inconsolable mother, the Church--before God, and in sight of His holy Angels and Saints, you are dead! dead!! dead!!!

Like the fruitless church of Sardis, in the Apocalypse: "_Thou hast a name that thou livest, but art dead_." [Footnote 37]

[Footnote 37: Apoc. iii., 1.]

What are the signs, my brethren, by which you would pronounce a man dead? Surely, that he has no longer the use of any of his senses; that he can neither see, hear, taste, touch nor smell. If nothing remained to him but faint breathing, and a fluttering, feeble pulse, you would already weep for him as lost to you, and consider it only as the matter of a few moments to draw the sheet over his face, and prepare his shroud.

Now this is just the deplorable state of a man in mortal sin. {82}

Let me illustrate this. If you saw a person walking upon a railroad track, and the train came thundering along directly in front of him, and yet he proceeded on his way, totally unmindful of your shouts and warnings of danger, you would throw up your hands and exclaim: "Ah! God have mercy on him, poor man; he must be totally blind and deaf--he is as good as dead." And so he is in effect; for the train passes over him, and scatters his mangled body hither and thither. Of what use to him was his power of motion? He had the name of a living man, and is dead. So death is coming upon you, sinner, sudden and destructive. How many sermons have you not heard upon that awful subject? How many warnings have you not had in the deaths, ever unlocked for, alas! too often unprovided for, among your friends, acquaintances, and in the very bosom of your family. You hear not, you see not; no warning will turn you from your fatal track. You are as good as dead.

If you saw a young girl walking to the brink of one of those dreadful precipices formed by the lofty palisades on the North River, and, despite the cries of her friends, she continued her walk, gazing up at the sky, would you not say: "Ah! poor thing, she must be killed; she is as good as dead." {83}

Oh, young woman, you are walking upon the brink of a precipice, by your dangerous familiarities, your late hours, your improper company-keeping; and despite the cries of your father, your mother, the pleadings of your friends, and the warning voice of your confessor, your heedlessness in sin will destroy you, body and soul, and you must lose reputation, honor, salvation, eternity. Deaf to the voice of God, you are as good as dead. Jesus daily prepares his divine banquet for you; but, alas! you have lost your spiritual taste for that heavenly food, and there is no life in you--you are dead; according to the words of the divine Saviour: "_Amen, Amen. I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you_." [Footnote 38]

[Footnote 38: St. John vi., 54.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is: St. John vi., 53.]

The Lord strikes you with afflictions of various kinds: disease, loss of friends, misfortune in your business. He sends his angel of death to your very doors; but you are insensible to his chastisements: they affect you no more than if you were a statue of marble. Is not this to be indeed dead?
{84}
"_You have put on malediction as a vestment, and it has entered like water into your veins, and as oil into your bones_."
[Footnote 39]

[Footnote 39: Psalms cviii., 18.]

[Transcriber's note: Psalms cviii ends at verse 14.]

Yes; corruption has commenced; you have become offensive as a corpse, of bad odor, and scandalous to the Christian community. The finger is pointed at you, your bad life is every where spoken of, but you do not believe it; like a corpse, you are not sensible of the disgust you excite. As the sister of Lazarus said to the Lord: "_It is now four days since he died, and already he stinketh_." Four days! Why, it is four months--four years--forty years, since _you_ died--since you committed mortal sin, and continued in it, oh! unrepentant sinner; and you have become insupportable. You have reaped the blasting curse you sowed: "_For he that soweth in the flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption_," the words of this day's Epistle.
[Footnote 40]

[Footnote 40: Gal. vi., 8.]

Your dead soul is in the hands of the bearers, your companions in sin, your fellow cursers and blasphemers. The grog-shop keepers have got hold of you, and every step is a closer approach to the tomb, the gates of hell, the last home of fornicators, liars, and drunkards.
{85}
How insensible you lie in their hands! The multitude may weep, in company with your poor mother, piercing cries and sobs which are heard throughout heaven and hell, but make no impression on your dull ears. No! there is no sound [that] can wake you now, but the voice of Jesus Christ, or the last trump which will summon your guilty soul to judgment.

Will that voice of Jesus Christ be heard? I know not. Will the Lord be moved to pity toward his weeping Church? I know not. Will he touch the bier upon which you are stretched stark dead, and command those companions of yours in sin to stop? I know not. Will Jesus arrest the steps of that infamous woman, of those debased, pitiless, heartless, unfeeling dram-sellers? (Did I not say that the widow was right--that they are heartless and unfeeling?) I know not. What I do know is that, if Jesus is not moved to pity, if he does not strike fear into the heart of that young man or woman, your companion in sin, if the arm of the vengeance of Christ does not fall upon that grog-shop keeper,--no other sound will waken you, so dead in sin, but that one upon the Last Day, which rather than to hear, it were better for you to sleep in eternal oblivion.
{86}
"Ah! father," you say, "that's dreadful doctrine." Yes; and there is something more dreadful about it. It is true. What saith the

Apostle? "_It is impossible for those who were once illuminated and have tasted the heavenly gift, and are fallen away, to be renewed again to penance, crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making him a mockery._" [Footnote 41]

[Footnote 41: Heb. vi., 4-6.]

What does this mean but that, when one has fallen away into mortal sin, it is as impossible for him to do any thing toward the salvation of his soul, as it is for a dead man to raise himself to life. Lay it to heart--a most important truth--that Almighty God owes you nothing; is not bound, nor has he promised, to give you grace beyond a certain degree; while he has most emphatically warned the sinner that the time will come, and who knows--oh! dreadful thought--but that it has already arrived for you, when he will withdraw his countenance from you, and leave you to the fate you have chosen, and so justly merited. Every child has amused himself on the banks of the river or brook, watching the eddies caused by the meeting of contrary currents, and observing how the brown leaves which have fallen from the trees into the stream are suddenly caught in the circling current and whirled about, approaching at each revolution nearer the centre of it.

{87}

Now, we are told by travellers, that in the vast ocean there are powerful and dangerous eddies of this sort, called whirlpools; and that large ships, if allowed to sail within their influence, are drawn in, and carried round and round, no longer obedient to the sails or rudder, and at last are completely swallowed up in the yawning vortex of whirling waters.

Oh! unrepentant sinner: you are the brown leaf, fallen from the tree of life into the water of iniquity. You are the ship which has lost its compass, and strayed within reach of the dizzy whirlpool. God stood upon the calm open sea, and each time that you came around he warned you of your danger. He did more; he sent strong and sufficient breezes of his holy grace; if you had taken advantage of them in trimming the sails, and putting up the helm, you might have escaped.

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How many times did he not thus attempt your rescue: but you heeded him not. There was even something pleasant and intoxicating to be thus carried along in the powerful stream; and now you go faster and faster, nearer and nearer, until the yawning abyss opens upon your gaze, and you send forth a shriek for help, a cry of despair. But you are so dizzy that you cannot descry the form of God upon the sea. It is well; it would double your agony to see him now, for he has turned his back upon you; or worse, is mocking you, and laughs you to scorn. "_Because I called and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded. You have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when your fear cometh. When sudden calamity shall fall on you, and destruction as a tempest shall be at hand; when tribulation and distress shall come upon you; then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear_." [Footnote 42]

[Footnote 42: Prov. i., 24-28.]

{89}
There is no help for you now. Your cries of distress, and prayers and entreaties are drowned in the thundering din of the rushing waters: as our Lord prophesied. "_Upon the earth distress of nations, men withering away for fear, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea, and of the waves_." [Footnote 43]

[Footnote 43: St. Luke xxi., 25.]

What is that which is glimmering white like a sail upon the waves? Can it be a friendly ship coming to your rescue? Hark! Tramp, tramp, over land, over sea. Why does that sound send a shuddering thrill of horror through every nerve? 'Tis no sail. 'Tis a pale horse, and he that rideth thereon is Death. Tramp! tramp! over land, over sea! Oh! woe betide thee, wretched sinner; thine hour is come. One last cry, and the waters of iniquity have closed over you forever! Oh, God! have mercy on poor sinful men, and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out their iniquities. If thy people Israel shall have sinned against thee, and thou in thine anger hast delivered them up into the hands of their enemies, and they return to thee with all their heart, and confessing to thy name shall come, and pray, and make supplication to thee, then hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling place, their prayers; and forgive thy people, and have compassion upon them, and help thy servants whom thou hast redeemed by thy precious blood.

{90}

What answer dost thou make, O dearest Lord?--"_He that heareth you heareth me_." [Footnote 44]

[Footnote 44: St. Luke x., 16.]

Thy words, O Jesus, are truth and life. Thou hast commanded thy priests, the ministers of thy word, to speak in thy name; to stand in the path of sinners on the way to destruction, and make thy voice to be heard, ("_Arise! thou that sleepest, and awake from the dead!_") as thou didst to the only son of the widow of Nain. "_Be not deceived,_" says the holy Apostle in the Epistle of this day. "_God is not mocked._" "_He that despiseth you despiseth me_." [Footnote 45]

[Footnote 45: St. Luke x., 16.]

In the name of God, then, obedient to the charge which I, although unworthy, have received from the Lord Jesus, I say unto you, arise! Arise from those disastrous habits of sin, which are dragging you down to death and hell. Abandon, once for all, those horrid haunts of vice and immorality. Put away all those obscenities, evil speakings, and cursings, from your lips; of the which I tell you, as has been already foretold you, that they who do such things, shall not obtain the kingdom of God. Young man, I say unto thee, arise!

{91}

Oh! wretched parents, whose miserable home is a very school of Satan to your hapless children; whose daily lives are as an open book before their eyes, every leaf of which is blotted and blurred with drunkenness and disorder--I say unto you, oh, wicked father, oh, slothful mother, arise! You, young woman, over whose head ruin and shame are hanging, arise! send that young man away to-night.

You who have dealt out disgrace, dirt, delirium tremens, ruin, and the wrath of God, by the measure, to your poor fellow sinner, and upon whose guilty head will fall a double weight of woe--I say unto _you_, arise! turn to the Lord, and perhaps he will have mercy upon you. Do penance, do penance! and think not to say within your hearts: We have Abraham for our father; we have the Church for our mother--she will watch over us Catholics, and before it is too late, snatch us from the jaws of hell. I say unto you, sinner, you are deceiving yourself with a lie, and your supine indifference proves you to be of that un-happy number described in Holy Writ, who resisted so long to the Divine call, that, hardened in iniquity, God gave them over to believe a lie.
{92}
Thus, instead of your faith saving you, it will only be a surer cause of your damnation. Oh! you hope in the mercy of God. Poor soul! God, notwithstanding his mercy, permitted you to fall into your present deplorable state. Why shall he not permit you to fall into eternal death, which, howsoever terrible and hopeless, is not so bad, so evil after all, as your spiritual death: for so say the Doctors of Holy Church. "The punishment of sin is less than the guilt."
Between spiritual and eternal death there is but a step--taken every day by one or another in this sinful world--and that is the death of the body; and if it happens to you to-day, without doubt, without remedy or resource, you will find yourself eternally lost; which may God avert from every one of you. Amen.

{93}

Sermon VI.

The Love Of God.

"And one of them, a doctor of the law, asked him, tempting him: Master, which is the great commandment of the law? Jesus said to him: Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind."
--St. Matt, xxii., 35-37.
(From the Gospel for the 17th Sunday after Pentecost.)

This doctor of the law had no good motive in asking his question. He was full of malice, and desired, not to learn any thing good himself, but to entrap our Lord. But God knows how to draw good out of evil. Though the lawyers intention was bad, his question was a good one; the very best question that he could have asked, and the answer to it one of vast importance to us, involving all our interests for eternity.
{94}
Let us to-day consider well the meaning of the answer given by our Blessed Saviour in the words of the text. In the first place, what does he mean by the love of God? and in the second, what degree of this love must we practise?
What is the love of God, or in what does it consist? Many have a false idea of it. They think it is exactly the same as earthly love, the love of relations or friends. They know what that kind of love is. They exercise it without difficulty. Why? because it is spontaneous; it is a flowing out of the heart, an emotion or feeling. They cannot _feel_ the same love for God as for

their friends, and therefore they conclude it is of no use to try to love God. They make a great mistake. God is a pure spirit, not to be seen, heard, or taken notice of by the senses, and therefore, in the very nature of things, He cannot always be loved with that same emotion or feeling that springs up in our hearts, without effort, toward our neighbors and friends of flesh and blood. Indeed God, considered as an infinite being, with all his vast and unlimited perfections, seems in some way separated from us and our thoughts, which makes a difficulty in feeling emotions of love to Him.
{95}
The essence of the love of God is not in emotion or feeling, but in our reason and will. Faith reveals Him to us, and we acknowledge Him with our reason to be infinitely wise and infinitely good, and worthy of all our love. The true love of God consists, then, in acknowledging Him with our reason to be what He is, and in the will to do that which is pleasing to Him. The other kind of love--of feeling--may accompany this true love of God or it may not. It is of no consequence whether it does or not. We have no right to expect it, for God will grant it just as far as He sees good for us and no farther. It will come, generally, as the result of habits of virtue, of a long course of action, in imitation of His holy perfections. We must learn to know Him and prize Him in order to feel love for Him.
That this is the true idea of the love of God is clear from the Holy Scriptures. In the Gospel of St. John it is thus described: "_For this is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments_." It is not said: The love of God is in a delightful feeling that possesses one without any effort on his part.
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That would be very pleasant and very easy. No; that is not said. But the meaning of what is said is, that the love of God is in the will and determination to keep his commandments. In another place it is said in plain terms: "_He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me_." As much as to say: If your mind and will are directed to me in such a way that you keep my commandments, don't be worried or afraid, you do most truly love me. Now this ought to console any one who really and truly wants to love God, for we see that it lies in his power to do so. He need not go into raptures of fervor. He need not fly in the air in an ecstasy. He need not see visions or work wonders. He need not practise extra ordinary fasting or austerity, or spend whole nights in prayer. He need only have a determination, let him feel well or ill, that he will honestly and sincerely act so as to be agreeable to God, and he loves Him. Let him go on acting in that way and he will soon love Him exceedingly, far more than any thing in this world.
{97}
Another argument that proves conclusively that this is the true love of God, comes from this very command of our Lord Jesus Christ: "_Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind_." The love of God is commanded. Now God commands nothing impossible,

nothing, in short, which is very difficult to set about. As he is a God of infinite goodness and love, the bare idea of such a thing is wholly repugnant to right reason and common sense. If He had commanded us to exercise a sensible love--one of feeling--we might justly complain and say: I cannot fulfil it; that is a thing beyond my control. We have to set about a practical love--keeping his commandments, that is a business we can give our mind and attention to, as we would to farming, building, doctoring, or any other business. If a man will set about the business of practically acting according to the will of God, he will add every day to his stock of love and to his merit in heaven. This is a rich mine; it is inexhaustible; out of this mine is drawn the pure gold of charity to God, richer and more abundant than all the mines of California or Australia.
{98}
But what degree of this love must we exercise in order to obtain everlasting life? A high degree of it: not a low measure of it, but a large and liberal one if we would make our calling and election sure. Our Lord's answer to the question indicates that beyond mistake: "_Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy mind_." That sounds strong; that sounds hard; words could hardly be put together to convey a stronger meaning. It would seem to mean that all our thoughts and desires and actions should be engrossed and taken up with God and eternity, so as to leave room for nothing else. This would indeed be hard, and it would be absurd, considering the order of things which God has established in the world. God created us to live in society and the most of us for society, to play our part in it, to bring up families of children--to put bread and butter in their mouths, and clothes on their backs. We cannot then abandon the world, and we must devote our attention to its affairs: we must give a reasonable attention to do them well, for the advantage of ourselves and those connected with us. What is the meaning, then, of loving with one's whole heart and soul and mind?
{99}
We must have our will and determination directed in the first place to God and to keeping his commandments, leaving every thing else to the second place. A man must be determined to keep God's commandments in spite of every obstacle, in spite of every temptation. He must be determined to keep them all, that is, at least, to avoid every mortal sin. He must be determined not only for the present, but so long as the breath is in his body. If he falls short of this, he does not love God with all his heart and soul and mind; he does not do what is necessary to obtain everlasting life, and he will not obtain it.
It is required by God, as an essential condition to our salvation, that we should be habitually in the determination to keep free from every mortal sin. What can be more just? We acknowledge him as our Creator, and as infinitely wise and infinitely good. He is rightly our sovereign Lord and Master, and can command what he chooses--there is an equal obligation on our part to obey him. Is it asking much, that we shall be habitually obedient? Any thing short of this he could not require--we could

not expect. Is it for Him to be dependent upon our moods and humors, finding us true to-day and false to-morrow?
{100}
Oh! you say, is that all that is required of us to insure our salvation--to keep clear of mortal sin? That is nothing new; we knew that all along; to go that far is not much; we can do that easily enough. Can you, indeed? Perhaps it is easy enough to avoid mortal sin for a time, when there is fervor, or particular grace, or little temptation; but is it easy to do so for one's whole life? Is it easy to do so when one's fervor is worn off, and distractions of all kinds occupy the mind, and when in this state strong temptations beset one? Who ever says this, shows that he has little knowledge of himself, and little experience in affairs of the soul. You may avoid sin a little while, but you will fall, as sure as you live, if your mind is not set against sin, actively and habitually, so as to turn away from it with horror in the moment of temptation. No; in order not to fall, our whole life must be directed toward God. The eternal truths, heaven, hell, death, judgment, must pass frequently through our minds and take up our thoughts. In the words of Scripture, we must keep our lamps trimmed, and well supplied with oil, lest they go out.
{101}
Our souls must be trimmed with holy meditations, and the oil of good works supplied in abundance must keep the flame of love to God burning brightly in our hearts, or else it will go out. It will fade away gradually for want of nourishment, until it is gone. We cannot keep clear even of mortal sin, unless we are thoroughly in earnest about it, and make a business of it. When our Lord says, "Love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul, and thy whole mind," He means to say: Put your heart and soul in the business of your salvation. Make a sure thing of it by the energy and determination you apply to it. "_The children of this world are wiser,_" says the Lord, "_than the children of light_." All their prudence and skill is laid out to succeed in their business, to scrape together what they consider desirable for this life. If any thing like the same prudence and skill were exercised in serving God, salvation would be an easy thing. If you want to be saved, you must put your souls in it. You all know what the meaning of putting your souls in a thing is.
{102}
It is a saying used every day. 'His soul is in his business; his soul is in study; her soul is in fashion, in her family. How the poor girl at service, when she wants to please her mistress, puts her soul in her work! What delight she takes in having every thing clean and in order! When she gets a compliment for her skill or industry, what heartfelt pleasure it gives her! Her continual study is to please in every way. How the young man puts his soul in pleasure sometimes! Every cent he can earn is spent in the saloon, the circus, the theatre. Let him earn a little money, he breaks off work until it is all squandered. Sundays, holidays, all are consumed in his darling occupations of drinking and making merry. In his pursuit of pleasure, God, reputation,

health, must all give way. Nothing is allowed to put any obstacle in his headlong career. So it is with the covetous man. Money is his sole delight. His heart is satisfied with the pleasure of hoarding it, the pleasure of getting more and more. He has more than he knows what to do with: that makes no difference. He wants still more. He has nothing to give away. He can't afford this, he can't afford that.
{103}
He has no time for amusement; business, mortgages, interest, that's all the amusement he cares for. Anxious and fretful for little losses, he wears out his life, and leaves his property for somebody else to spend, perhaps to be a curse to some worthless relation. He has put his soul in his money-bags.
We see people every day whose souls are so taken up with the world, that they can't even give a thought to any thing that lies beyond it. They verify the words of Scripture: "_Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die_." that is, they would be glad to persuade themselves, if they could, that they have no souls, and are determined to act practically on these suppositions. Now, in the same way that these poor miserable creatures put their souls in business, pleasure, love of money, or worldly ease and comfort, put yours in the business of your salvation. Make it your study to please God. Don't say: how little can I do and get off with it? but, how much can I do? What opportunity, what golden opportunity offers, to do something to please God?
{104}
Ah! there are plenty of opportunities for all who wish to avail themselves of them. The poor man can strive to do his duty, by honest industry supporting his family, setting them a good example. He has a good deal to put up with, in the shape of poverty, sickness, cold, hunger, and fatigue. He can love God with his whole soul, by putting up with these things patiently. These things are his money, with which he may be sure of purchasing the kingdom of heaven.
The rich man, if his soul is in his salvation, considers himself as God's trustee, not to dispose of the wealth God allots him as he pleases, but to advance His kingdom and the salvation of souls. He does not care so much for pampering his body, making a show, or heaping up riches for his heirs, but is satisfied with a competence and means enough to live according to his station; the rest he spends in promoting true and deserving objects of charity. He likes to imitate Jesus Christ in helping the poor and the sick, keeping a free bed in the hospital, sustaining institutions for the relief of orphans, the insane, and all who need it. He likes to help a deserving young man, when he finds one of the sort, to become a priest in the church of God.
{105}
He doesn't consider it entirely the business of the priest to build churches, wearing himself out to collect the means, and that from the hard earnings of the poor, but steps forth promptly, and takes his full share of the expense and the labor at tending such enterprises. When he finds a hard-working priest, zealous for souls, he will stand by him and work with him, only

too thankful to get a chance to do something.
In short, if we would make eternal life secure, we must have a spirit of self-sacrifice and devotedness, such as led the holy Martyrs to lay down their lives for the faith--such at least in kind, if not in measure.
Oh! my brethren, how happy is the man who cherishes such a principle in his heart. He is not divided and torn asunder by a continual strife between good and evil. He is not a double dealer. He is not striving to serve two masters. God reigns in his heart, and peace prevails in it. Loss of property cannot take it away, for property is not the main thing in his soul. Neither can loss of friends. He has long been sensible that God is the only true unchangeable friend. Death cannot disturb it--for he is at peace with God, and doesn't fear death.
{106}
Oh! why have we not all this spirit? We acknowledge how beautiful it is. We cannot but regret if we have it not. Let us then try for it. Let us begin to-day--by forming a deep and strong resolution that we will not live for the world, or the things of the world, but seek God first of all. That we will really love Him with our whole heart, and that this shall be the business of our lives. Then shall be true of us what is said by the holy Psalmist: "_Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence. But his will is in the law of the Lord and on his law he shall meditate day and night. And he shall be like the tree that is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season, and his leaf shall not fall off, and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper_." Then all shall prosper with us here below, for all things shall speed our way to that world above, where, without effort, in a perfect manner, to our unbounded joy, we shall love God with our whole heart and soul, and mind, and strength.

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Sermon VII.

Keeping The Law Not Impossible.

"I can do all things in Him who strengthened me."
Phil, vi., 13.

If I am not mistaken, a very great number of the sins that men commit, are committed through hopelessness. The pleasures of sin are by no means unmixed. Indeed, sin is a hard master; and all who practice it find it so. I never met a man who said it was a good thing, or that it made him happy. On the contrary, all lament it, and say that it makes them miserable. Why then, do they commit it? Very often, I am persuaded, because they think they have no power to resist it. They feel in themselves strong passions; they have yielded to them in times past, they see that others yield to them, and so they come to think it impossible not to yield to them.
{108}
The law of God is too difficult, they say. It is impossible to keep it. It may do for priests or nuns who are cut off from the world, or for women, or for the old, or for children, but for us

who mix in the world, whose blood is warm, and whose passions are strong, it is too high and pure. It is all very well to talk about; it is all very well to hold up a high standard to us, but you must not expect us to attain it. The utmost that you can expect of us is to stop sinning, now and then, and make the proper acknowledgments to God by going to confession, but actually to try not to sin, to keep on endeavoring not to sin at any time, or under any circumstances, that is impossible, or at least so extremely difficult that, practically speaking, it is impossible. Are there none of you, my brethren, who recognize this as the secret language of your hearts? Is there not an impression in your minds that the law of God is too strict? or at least that it is too strict for you, and that you cannot keep it? If so, do not harbor it. It is a fatal error. No: it is not impossible to keep God's law. It is not impossible to keep from mortal sin.

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It is, I admit, impossible to keep from every venial sin, though even here we can do a great deal if we try. Such is the frailty of human nature that even the best men as time goes on fall into some slight faults, only the blessed Virgin having been able, as we believe, to pass a whole life without even in the smallest thing offending God. But it is possible for all of us to keep from mortal sin, at all times and under all circumstances. This, I think, you will acknowledge when you consider the character of God, the nature of God's law, and the power of God's grace which is promised to us.

I say the character of God is a pledge of our ability to keep from mortal sin. God requires us to be free from mortal sin, and He requires it under the severest penalties, and therefore it must be possible for us. You may say, "God requires us to be free from venial sin too, and yet you have just said we cannot avoid every venial sin." But the case is far different. A venial sin does not separate us from God, and does not receive extreme punishment from Him--nay, those venial sins which even good men commit, and which are only in small part voluntary, are very easily forgiven--but a mortal sin cuts us off entirely from God, and deserves eternal punishment.

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You know, one mortal sin is enough to damn a man--one single sin of drunkenness, for instance, or impurity; a cherished hatred, a false oath, or an act of grave injustice. One such sin is sufficient to sink a man in hell, and although we know very little in particular of the torments of hell, we have every reason to believe that they are most bitter, and we know that they are eternal. Now can it be thought that a being of justice and goodness, as we know God to be, would inflict so extreme a punishment for an offence which was unavoidable, or could only be avoided with the utmost difficulty? Holy Scripture sends us to an earthly parent for an example of that tenderness and affection which we are to expect from our Heavenly Father. "_If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him_." [Footnote 46]

[Footnote 46: St. Matt, vii., 11.]

What would be thought of an earthly father who laid upon his son a command which it was all but impossible for him to comply with, and then punished him with the utmost rigor for not fulfilling it?

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You would not call that man a father, but a tyrant; a tyrant like Pharaoh, who would not give straw to the children of Israel, and yet set taskmasters over them to exact of them the full measure of bricks as when straw had been given them. Why, if you were going along the street and saw a man whipping unmercifully an over-loaded horse, you would not bear it patiently. And would you attribute conduct so disgraceful among men to our Father in heaven? God forbid! Far be such a thought from us! It is not so. We must not think it. At least we cannot think it as long as we remain Catholics, for when the earlier Protestants proclaimed the shocking doctrine that though God punished men for disobeying his law, man was really unable to obey it, the Church branded the doctrine as a heresy to be abhorred of all men, as most false in itself, and most injurious to God. No; God loves his creatures far more than we conceive of. He does not desire the death of a sinner. He wills truly the salvation of all men. His goodness and mercy, his truth and justice, are all so many infallible guarantees of our ability to keep his law.

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He would not have given us his law unless He had meant us to keep it. He would not punish us so severely for breaking it, unless our breaking it was an act of deliberate, wilful, determined rebellion.

But there is another source from which I draw the conclusion that it is possible to keep the law of God--from the nature of the law itself. The law of God is of such a nature that, for the most part, in order to commit mortal sin, it is necessary to do or to leave undone some external act, which of its own nature it is entirely in our power to do or not to do. For instance, the law says, "_Thou shall not steal:_" now to steal you have got to put your hand into your neighbor's pocket. The law says: "_Thou shalt do no murder;_" to murder you must stretch out your hand against your neighbor's life. Nay, it requires ordinarily several external actions before a mortal sin is consummated. Thus the thief has his precautions to take, and his plans to lay. The drunkard has to seek the occasion. He seeks the grog-shop. Every step he takes is a separate act. When he gets there it is not the first glass that makes him drunk.

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He drinks again and again, and it is only after all these different and repeated actions that he falls into the mortal sin of drunkeness. Now here you see are external acts--acts in which the hand, the foot, the lips are concerned, and which, therefore, it is perfectly in our power to do or to let alone. This requires no proof, but admits of a striking illustration. You have heard of the great sufferings of the martyrs; how some of them were stoned to death, others flayed alive, others crucified, others torn to pieces by wild beasts, others burned to death. Now what was it all about? You answer, They suffered because they would

not deny Christ. Very well; but how were they required to deny Christ? What was it they were required to do? I will tell you. Sometimes they were required to take a few grains of incense and throw it on the altar of Jupiter; that would have been enough to have saved them from their sufferings. They need not have said, I renounce Christ; only to have taken the incense would have been sufficient. Sometimes they were required to tread on the Cross. Sometimes to swear by the genius of the Roman emperor; that was all. And the fire was kindled to make them do these things; but they would not.
{114}
The flames leaped upon them, but not a foot would they lift from the ground. Their hands were burnt to the bone, but no incense would they touch. The marrow of their bones melted in the heat, and forced from them a cry of agony, but the name of the emperor's tutelary genius did not pass their lips. Now will you tell me that you can not help doing what the martyrs would not do to save them from death? They had a fire before them and a scourge behind them, and they refused; and you say you cannot help yourself when you are under no external violence whatever! They died rather than lift a hand to do a forbidden thing; have you not the same power over your hand that they had? They died rather than utter a sinful word; have you not as much power over your tongue as they? Indeed you have, for you control both one and the other whenever you will. I say there is no sinner whose conduct does not show that his actions are perfectly in his own power. The thief waits for the night to carry on his trade; during the day he is honest enough. The greatest libertine knows how to behave himself in the presence of a high-born and virtuous female.
{115}
And even that vice which men say it is most difficult of all to restrain when once the habit is formed--profane swearing--you know how to restrain it when you will, for even the heaviest curser and swearer ceases from his oaths before the priest, or any other friend whom he greatly respects. Now, if you can stop cursing before the priest, why can you not before your wife and children? If you can be chaste in the presence of a virtuous female, why can you not be chaste everywhere? If you can be honest when the eye of man is on you, why can you not be honest when no eye sees you but that of God?
But some one may say, there is a class of sins to which the remarks you have made do not apply, that is, sins of thought. You must admit that they are of such a nature that it is all but impossible not to commit them. No, I do not admit it. I acknowledge that sins of thought are more difficult to guard against than sins of action; but I do not acknowledge that it is impossible to guard against them. To prove this I have only to remind you that an evil thought is no sin until we give _consent_ to it.
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To keep always free from evil thoughts may be impossible, because the imagination is in its nature so volatile, that but few men have it in control; but though it be not possible to restrain the

imagination, it is always possible to restrain the will. In order for the will to consent to evil it is necessary both to _know_ and to _choose_, and therefore from the nature of the thing one can never fall into sin either inevitably or unawares. And besides, the will has a powerful ally in the conscience, whose province it is to keep us from sin and to reproach us when we do sin--so that it is scarcely possible, for one who habitually tries to keep free from mortal sin, to fall into it without his conscience giving a distinct and unmistakable report. And this is so certain that spiritual writers say that a person of good life and tender conscience, who is distressed with the uncertainty whether or no he has given consent to an evil temptation, ought to banish that anxiety altogether and to be sure that he has not consented. But suppose these evil temptations are importunate, and remain in the soul even when we resist them, and try to turn from them? No matter. They do not become sins on that account; nay, they become the occasion of acts of great virtue.

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It is related in the life of St. Catherine of Sienna that on one occasion that pure virgin's soul was assailed by the most horrible temptations of the devil. They lasted for a long time, and after the conflict our Saviour appeared to her with a serene countenance. "O my Divine Spouse," she said, "Where wast thou when I was enduring these conflicts?" "In thy soul," he replied. "What, with all these filthy abominations?" "Yes, they were displeasing and painful to thee; this therefore was thy merit, and thy victory was owing to my presence." So that we see even here where the danger is greatest, the law of God exacts of us nothing but what in its own nature is in our power to do or not to do.

But if you wish another proof of your ability to keep God's law, I allege the _power of his grace_. I can imagine an objector saying: You have not touched the real difficulty after all. The difficulty is not on God's side; no doubt He is good and holy. Neither are the requirements of his law so very hard. The difficulty is in us. We are fallen by nature. We have sinned after baptism.

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We are so weak, so frail, that to us continued observance of the divine commandments is impossible. No, my brethren, neither is this true. It is not true from the mouth of any man; least of all from the mouth of a Christian. "_No temptation_," says the Apostle, "_hath taken hold of you but such as is human. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will also with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it_." [Footnote 47]

[Footnote 47: 1 Cor. x., 13.]

The weakest and frailest are strong enough with God's grace, and this grace He is ready to give to those that need it. At all times and in all places He has been ready to give his grace to them that need it, but especially is this true under the gospel. The Holy Scriptures make this the distinguishing characteristic of the times of the gospel that they shall abound in grace.

"_Take courage, and fear not_," the prophet says, in anticipation of the time when Christ should come in the flesh, "_Behold God will come and save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free; for waters are broken out of the desert, and streams in the wilderness. And that which was dry land shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water_." [Footnote 48]

[Footnote 48: Is. xxxv., 4-7.]

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Such was the promise, hundreds of years before Christ, of a time of peace, of happiness and grace; and when our Lord was come, He published that the good time had indeed arrived: "_The spirit of the Lord hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart. To preach deliverance to the captive, and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord_." Yes, the great time has come; the cool of the day; the evening of the world; the time when labor is light and reward abundant. Oh, my brethren, you know not what a privilege it is to be a Christian! You enter a church. You see a priest in his confessional. A penitent is kneeling at his feet. The sight makes but little impression on you, for you are accustomed to it, but this is that "_fountain_" promised by the prophet "_to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the washing of the sinner;_" a fountain that flows from the Saviour's side, and not only cleanses, but strengthens and makes alive.

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You pass an altar. The priest is giving communion. Stop! it is the Lord himself! the bread of angels! the wine of virgins! the food "_whereof if a man eat he shall live forever_." And not only in the Church do you find grace. It follows you home. You shut your door behind you, and your Father in heaven waits to hear and grant your prayer. Nay, at all times God is with you, for you are the temple of God, and He sits on the throne of your heart to scatter his grace on you when ever and wherever you ask Him. Do not say, then, Christian, that you are unable to do what God requires of you. It is a sin of black ingratitude to say so. Even if it were impossible for others to keep the law of God, it is not for you. He hath not done to every nation as he hath done to you. When the patriarch Jacob was dying, he blessed all his children, but his richest blessing was for Joseph. So God has blessed all the children of his hand, but you, Christian, are the Joseph whom He hath loved more than all his other sons. To others He hath given of "_the dew of heaven,_" and "_the fatness of the earth,_" but you "_He hath blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ._"

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Away, then, with the notion, that obedience to the commandments of God is impracticable. A notion dishonorable to God and to ourselves. It is possible to keep free from mortal sin--for all--at all times, under all temptations. Nay, I will say more. It is on the whole, easier to live a life of Christian obedience,

than a life of sin. I say on the whole, for I do not deny that here and there in particular cases, it is harder to do right than wrong, but taking life all through, one who restrains his passions will have less trouble than one who indulges them. Heroic actions are not required of us every day. In order to be a Christian, it is not necessary to be always high-strung and enthusiastic. It is not necessary to be a devotee, to adopt set and precise ways, to take up with hypocrisy and cant--in a word, to be unmanly. It is just, for the most part, the most matter of fact, the most practical, the most simple and straight-forward thing in the world. It is to be a man of principle. It is to have a serious, abiding purpose to do our duty.
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It is to be full of courage; not the courage of the braggart, but the courage of the soldier--the courage that thrives under opposition, and survives defeat, the courage that takes the means to secure success--vigilance, humility, steadfastness and prayer. Before this, all difficulties vanish, and this is what we want most of all. It is amazing how little courage there is in the world. We are like the servant of Eliseus, the prophet, who, when he awoke in the morning, and saw the great army that had been sent by the King of Syria to take his master, said, "_Alas, alas, alas, my lord; what shall we do!_" But Eliseus showed him another army--the army of angels ranged on the mountain, with chariots of fire and horses of fire, ready to fight for the servants of God, and he said, "_Fear not: for there are more with us than with them._" [Footnote 49]

[Footnote 49: 4 Kings, vi., 15-17.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is 2 Kings, vi., 15-17.]

Why should we fear? Christianity is no new thing. The path of Christian obedience is not an untried path. Thousands have trod it and are now enjoying their reward. God, and the angels, and the saints, are on our side. And there are multitudes of faithful souls in the world who are fighting the good fight, and keeping their souls unsullied.
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We cannot distinguish them now, but one day we shall know them. Oh! let us join them. Yes, we will make our resolution now. Others may guide themselves by pleasure or expediency; we will adopt the language of the Psalmist: "_Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths_." [Footnote 50]

[Footnote 50: Psalm cxviii., 105.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Psalm cxix., 105.]

We will be Christians not in name, but in deed. Not for a time only, but always. One thought shall cheer us in sadness and nerve us in weakness, "_I have sworn and am determined to keep the judgments of thy justice_."

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Sermon VIII.

The Two Standards.

"No man can serve two masters."
--St. Matt., vi. 24.

(From the Gospel of the 14th Sunday after Pentecost.)

There are two hostile camps pitched on the surface of the earth, and two great armies engaged in warfare against each other. The chiefs of these two armies are Jesus Christ and Satan, The war between them is not a new one. It began in heaven, when Lucifer and his companions rebelled against God. It broke out in a more deadly and decisive manner, when Jesus Christ erected his standard on Mt. Calvary, and from his Cross triumphed over the devil, while Satan, enraged at his defeat, summoned all his forces from earth and hell to an eternal war against the Cross.

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This is a war in which every one must take part. Here no one can remain neutral; either for the Cross or against it--a soldier of Christ or a servant of the devil. You must choose your side. Which, then, do you take? Will you have Christ or Lucifer for your king? In the name of Jesus Christ, I call on you to renounce the infamous service of the devil for ever, and enroll yourself under the standard of the Cross, and I promise to give you good reasons for doing so. Listen, then, and make your decision. If the devil has the best claim, and offers the highest price, then follow him, and take his lot in this world and in eternity. But consider well what you have to look for, beforehand. If Jesus Christ is your rightful Lord, and heaven is worth having, then come out boldly on his side, and renounce the devil once for all. You cannot serve both, you must serve one; and the one whom you serve on this earth, will have possession of you for all eternity.

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Survey, then, the two camps, the two standards, the two kings. On Mount Calvary see the Cross, the standard of salvation, rising above the camp of Jesus Christ. Look on the King who rules in this camp! Regard his features: they are full of majesty and humility, of power and of love, of authority and of compassion. Around Him the Blessed Virgin, the apostles, martyrs and confessors, all the saints and all the righteous, are grouped; and from his Cross He sends out his messengers into all the world, inviting all men to share his humility, self-denial, and suffering in this world, and his everlasting kingdom in the next. Now turn your eyes toward the other camp. It lies near the city of Babylon, the city of this world, a city of idolatry, sensuality, and worldly pomp. In the midst of it, Satan is seated on a high and burning throne, his features full of melancholy, pride and cruelty, surrounded by his demons, his false priests, and the multitude of his worshippers. He also sends his messengers through the earth, offering honors, pleasures, and riches here, and the fire of hell hereafter, to those who enlist in his service.

Unhappy man! soldier of Christ by baptism! have these ministers of Satan persuaded you to renounce your lawful standard, and enlist under that of the devil?

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Have you been persuaded by some worldly bribe, some passing pleasure, to renounce God and heaven, and to receive the black brand of mortal sin in your soul, the mark of your allegiance to

the devil? What have you done? What master is this, to whom you have sold yourself? What have you to expect in his service? Listen to me, and I will prove to you that you have sold yourself to a detestable tyrant and usurper; that you have cast in your lot with a desperate cause, and that everlasting ruin is the only wages you will ever get.

Satan is a detestable usurper. What right has he to reign in this world? What right has he to your soul, or to your service? Did he create the world, or make you? Has he conferred any benefit on the human race, that he is entitled to the gratitude and obedience of men? He is a miserable rebel against God, an outcast from heaven, the great enemy of mankind. He is the author of sin, misery, and death. He became master of your soul by mortal sin. He seduced you to offend God by lying promises, and treacherously got possession of your heart. Is he not then a usurper?

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He is also a cruel tyrant. Satan tyrannizes over the soul which is subject to him, by making it a slave to its passions. He makes it sweat and toil like a negro slave, fast, and watch, and deny itself, like a hermit, in the service of these cruel taskmasters. One he forces to labor night and day for a lifetime, to scrape up a little money which he has no time to enjoy. Another he compels to sacrifice health, reputation, and fortune, to the gratification of lust. A third he turns into a beast by drunkenness. He tyrannizes over his subjects, also, by continual and insupportable torments of conscience. They have none of that peace and tranquillity which the servants of God enjoy, but a horrible foretaste of the pains of hell, in the incessant gnawings of a guilty conscience, and the continual fear of eternal damnation.

The service of Satan is odious, on account of the companions with whom you must associate. You become the associate of demons, murderers, thieves, harlots, drunkards, and villains of every hue. The promises which the devil holds out to you are all false, and his words all delusive. He holds out to you an illusory hope of liberty and happiness, and deceives you with glittering but unreal pictures of future enjoyment.

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For these you renounce Christian self-denial; for these you throw down the Cross of Christ, abandon the straight and narrow way, and sacrifice your hopes of heaven. But the devil will disappoint you. The pleasure he will give you will leave behind in your heart only bitterness and disgust. You will have to endure in his service labors and sufferings more than enough to make you a saint, if you performed them for God. You threw down the cross which God placed on your shoulders. It was a light cross, and was exactly measured for your size and strength. It was a cross full of blessings and graces, and if you had carried it courageously up the narrow way of life, after a time it would have supported you, and you would have been borne up by it to the gate of heaven. But you threw it down, because it was too heavy and galling, and turned from the steep path of virtue to the downward, flowery road of sin. Immediately the devil came up behind you, and fastened on your back an immense cross of rough,

unhewn timber.
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Loaded with this devil's cross, you are stumbling along the way of perdition toward the mouth of hell, into which you will fall at death, with the heavy burden of your sins on your back to press you down, and crush you forever beneath its weight. Such is the hard and bitter slavery to which you have bound yourself under this detestable tyrant.
Moreover, his cause is a desperate one. A certain and ignominious defeat, from which he will never more arise, awaits him. He has already been conquered. Jesus Christ met him once in single combat in the desert, and put him to an ignominious flight. Afterwards, on the cross, He gained a still more signal and decisive victory over him, and made him serve by his own plan for our Lord's destruction, as an instrument for accomplishing our salvation. The Blessed Virgin has trampled on the head of this malicious serpent. All the saints and martyrs have triumphed over him, and the weakest Christian child can put him to flight, by resisting his temptations--by breathing a little prayer, or by making the sign of the cross. He is a weak and miserable coward. His cause is already desperate and lost. And although God allows him a certain liberty to tempt and trouble the world for a short time, the day of judgment is fast approaching, in which Jesus Christ will put him to shame before the whole universe, and cast him, together with all those who follow his standard, into the burning abyss of hell.
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Such is a true picture of Lucifer, of his services, and of the reward which awaits his followers. Are you not ashamed, then, O false Christian! to have renounced your allegiance to your rightful Lord, for the service of such a master, who trembles at the very name of Jesus Christ?
In the churches of the middle ages the statue of the martyr St. Christopher was frequently sculptured, carrying, in accordance with his name which signifies Christ-bearer, the infant Jesus on his shoulder. As his real history was unknown, the poetic fancy of that period invented several beautiful legends about it, of which the following is one:
"A heathen youth of gigantic size and strength determined to seek out the strongest man in the world, and serve him. After many inquiries, he engaged himself to a Christian prince, who was famous for prowess and warlike achievements.
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He served him contentedly for a while, but at length, observing that he often made the sign of the cross, he asked him the meaning of his doing so. The prince told him it was to keep off the devil. The youth asked him who the devil was, and if he was afraid of him. He told him that the devil was a wicked being, more powerful than any man, and that he feared him greatly. If that is the case, said the youth, I will serve you no longer, but I will serve the devil, because he is the strongest. Immediately he set out to seek for him, and passing through a forest was accosted by a dark-looking personage who asked him what he was looking for, and on receiving his his answer, replied: I am the

devil you are seeking, follow me if you wish to enter my service. So saying, he went on, followed by the youth, toward a certain city. As they drew near the city, the devil turned aside from the highway, and took a bye-road which was much more circuitous. The youth asked him why he did not keep the high-road. Do you not see, said the devil, that crucifix? I do not wish to pass it. 'What is a crucifix?' said the youth. 'The image of my greatest enemy, who once conquered me' replied the devil.
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Farewell, said the youth; if you are afraid of Him who hangs on that cross, I shall leave you, and serve Him, because he is stronger than you. So saying, he went in search of Jesus Christ, and having stopped at a monastery, and asked the way to find Him, was instructed, baptized by the name of Christopher, and became a martyr."
Now, dear Christian, you are a Christopher, a Christ-bearer, for you have the image of Christ stamped in your soul in baptism. You are bound to serve the most powerful, and not only the most powerful, but the best master; the one who has the best right to your services, whose service is the most honorable, whose rewards are the greatest, and whose final victory is certain. Listen to me now, and I will show you that this Prince is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our lawful King.
I. By hereditary right. He is the Son of God. In his divine nature He is equal to his Father, and equally with Him the Creator of all things, and therefore our sovereign Lord. In his human nature, He is the first begotten Son of his Father, the heir of all things, in a special sense, the chief of the human race.
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II. By purchase. By Adam's sin, the special gifts which God had given to him and his posterity--integrity of nature, sanctifying grace, paradise and the title to heaven--were forfeited. Mankind fell from a free to a servile condition. Jesus Christ, by a compact with the eternal Father, and by pledging His life for us, has purchased his right over us.
III. By redemption. He has redeemed us by his blood, from exile and slavery, and restored to us our forfeited inheritance of grace and eternal life.
IV. By conquest. When the whole world was subject to the usurped tyranny of Satan, He made war on him, conquered him, and wrested our souls from his possession. As subjects of a conquered empire, we are therefore subject to the dominion of our conqueror.
V. By our own election. We have freely chosen his service, when we were confirmed and ratified our baptismal vows, and a thousand times we have offered ourselves to his service, and sworn allegiance to Him.
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His service is glorious. Because He is the greatest and wisest of all princes; because angels and saints are our companions; because his service consists in performing great and heroic actions, warring against vice, overcoming self, practising virtue, doing good, and conquering the world, the flesh and the devil. It is happy and delightful, because of peace of

conscience, the friendship of God, and the consolations of divine grace. These are a sort of bounty or earnest-money given now; but the real reward is eternal life, to be given hereafter.

Jesus Christ is certain to obtain the victory and to triumph gloriously over all his enemies--over treacherous and cowardly followers within his own camp, that is, bad Christians who preserve the faith but live and die in sin; over all those who are nominally his followers, but who really are fighting under the devil's standard, that is heretics, and schismatics; over infidels, his open enemies among men; over Satan and hell.

Here now are the two chiefs. There are the two standards. This is the war in which every one of you is engaged, on one side or the other? Which side is it? Under what banner have you till now been ranged? Do you belong to the party of Jesus Christ or that of the devil?

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Do you reply, I am a baptized Christian, marked with the sign of the cross, and a member of the Catholic Church, and therefore a servant of Jesus Christ? It is true you are a soldier regularly enlisted and sworn into Christ's army, and wearing his uniform. But the question is, are you a true-hearted, obedient and brave soldier of Jesus Christ, or are you a traitor in the camp, a servant of the devil in the guise of a Christian? Let us see. You call yourself a soldier of Jesus Christ. What are you doing then with the devil's bounty? The devil's bounty is a license to steal, cheat and swindle. What is that pile of bank-notes pilfered from your employer, you dishonest clerk? What is that heap of gold, you bribed judge, you corrupt legislator, you dishonest official, you swindling speculator in government contracts, in public distresses and private miseries? Jesus Christ will tolerate no thieves in his camp. If you are one of these unjust, dishonest, avaricious, overreaching robbers of your neighbors goods, standing ready to sell your voice, your pen, your vote, your oath, your conscience, your country, your faith, your soul, your God Himself, for gold, then you have touched the devil's bounty, you are his servant, and a traitor to your colors.

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You are a soldier of Jesus Christ, are you? But you have been caught drinking the devil's treat. There, where his sergeants recruit for hell, in those grog-shops whose flaming signs and glaring windows tempt the fool and the unwary; where misery, beggary, despair and death are dealt out to wretched fathers, brutal husbands, ragged, bloated women who are wives and mothers; there you have drained the cup of drunkenness, the pledge of friendship with Satan and all the company of hell.

You are a Christian soldier, are you? But I hear on your lips the devil's passwords, those curses and oaths, those obscene words and profane jests which show that you belong to the devil's camp. Your cursing tongue has betrayed you, false deserter, your speech is the speech of hell, and your presence among the faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ is an offence and a scandal not to be borne by those who have any zeal for the honor of their Lord.

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You a Christian soldier?--and flaunting on the devil's parade-ground, the theatre, the ballroom where the lascivious waltz goes on, the midnight revel of thoughtless and giddy young people, flushed with wine, intoxicated with excitment, whirled away by the tide of passion, where they know not and care not, until at length remorse, disgrace and ruin tell them where, but too late to save them. These are the pomps of the devil which you renounced and foreswore at your baptism. If you take them up again, you are an outcast from Jesus Christ, and a servant of the devil.

You dare to call yourself a Christian, and all the while you are living on the devil's pay, feeding on sensuality, plunged overhead in impurity, the miserable, beastly reward that the devil gives to his followers. By the law of Moses, those who committed such crimes were to be stoned to death without the camp. Is the camp of Jesus Christ less holy, think you, that an impure man or woman can be tolerated within its sacred precincts?

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You pretend to wear the livery of Jesus Christ. What, then, is that badge, what are those insignia you are wearing? They tell that you belong to some secret society, that you have defied the law of the Church, and braved her excommunication. You are then shut out from the sacraments, and not only are you no soldier of Jesus Christ, but you belong to the devil's own body-guard.

Tell me, you pretended soldier of Jesus Christ, where are you on your King's parade days, his Sundays and Festivals, when he requires his servants on earth and his angels in heaven to present themselves in review before him? Where are you during the holy solemnity of the Mass? Absent; your place vacant, and you asleep, or lounging, or doing the devil's work. At the Easter Communion, where are you? You are not to be found, or still worse, you present yourself without that rich and ornamental dress of sanctifying grace, which your king requires, under pain of death. Blush to call yourself a soldier of Jesus Christ, for if you are one, you are a delinquent and a faithless one.

You profess yourself so loudly a Christian soldier, what then are you straggling for, behind your column? Jesus Christ allows no stragglers in his army, and the enemy has ambuscades everywhere to cut them off.

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These are those heretical churches into which you stray, in ignorance or neglect of Catholic order and discipline. Hasten out of these ambuscades of error, delusion and eternal death. Rejoin your column quickly, and keep within the serried ranks of the Catholic host, or you are lost.

My brave and vaunting Christian warrior, how do your professions of fidelity and courage comport with your conduct when put on guard at night? How have you conducted yourself in temptation? Have you not committed mortal sin, and then given as an excuse that you were tempted by the devil, or overcome by your passions? Have you not said that you could not help cursing when you were angry, drinking when you were urged, giving way to impure inclinations when you were assaulted by them, that you could not keep from mortal sin, because you are so weak? These excuses make

you more guilty. They show that you have slept on your post, or kept a careless watch on the enemy, or yielded yourself a prisoner, when you should have fought manfully. It is your very profession as a soldier of Jesus Christ to fight with the world, the flesh and the devil, and you cannot be surprised or vanquished without your own fault.
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To say that you must sin because the devil tempts you, or that you cannot resist your evil inclinations, is to confess your own shame, and to make it plain, that you are a coward, unworthy of the glorious name of a soldier of Jesus Christ.
I call upon you, then, unworthy and unfaithful followers of Jesus Christ, to renounce your secret and treasonable dealings with the enemy, to cease to act like traitors or poltroons, and to rally again around the standard of salvation. No matter what mortal sin you have on your soul, it is a bond which links you with the devil, with his desperate cause and his eternal ruin. In spite of your name of Christian, your badge of soldier, and your military oath, you are a servant of Satan, and the Lord will one day cast you out among his open enemies. In God's name, then, no more double dealing. Choose your side! If you wish for despair, and have chosen eternal perdition, then Satan is your master, and you can follow him if you choose. But if Jesus Christ is your king, his service your choice, and his rewards your desire, come to his standard, and flinch no more.
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See! the war is raging all around you, in which you must take part, on one side or the other. The banners are flying, the trumpets are sounding, the soldiers of Christ are winning eternal renown and pressing on to battle. Our glorious King is at the head of his chosen band leading the way to victory, which is already waving its wings above the unconquerable standard of salvation. The shouts of conquest are heard in the distance, and the foremost ranks are pressing in as victors through the gates of heaven. Shall we stand here like cowards, hugging the ignominious chains of mortal sin? Far be the thought from every Christian breast! The voice of our Leader is calling us. Forward! then. Onward! let us share in the glorious conflict, that we may share in the triumph, and partake in the everlasting peace that is to follow.

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Sermon IX.

The Epiphany.

"They found the Child with Mary his mother."
St. Matt, ii., 2.
(From the Gospel for the Day).

The Feast of the Epiphany, my dear brethren, is as it were a second Christmas. Christmas Day is a feast which all Christians hold in common, whether of Jewish or Gentile blood. If either had more claim than the other, it would seem to belong rather to those who are of Jewish origin; for, "_to you is born this day a Saviour in the City of David_" was the announcement made by the angels to the Jewish shepherds. But this feast of to-day is

peculiarly ours. This is the great Gentile-Christian feast.
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The motto which we put up over our altar on Christmas eve, and which still hangs there, "_Christus natus est nobis_," "Christ is born for us," is especially appropriate to-day.
There is, however, still another distinct class of persons to whom this day ought to be especially dear. You, my dear brethren, who had not the greater privilege of belonging to the Holy Catholic Church from your infancy, but whom God in his mercy brought into it in after years, this is your feast. You have an interest in these Gentile converts, your ancestors in the faith, whom the Church commemorates to-day, which they have not who never knew any other creed. What I propose this morning, is,
1. To give you a sketch of the history of today's feast; and
2. To show you how these Gentile converts are models of men truly converted to God.

I. History Of The Feast.

Whilst angels were telling to the shepherds of Judea, as they kept watch over their flocks on Christmas eve, of the glad tidings of the birth of the Redeemer of the world in Bethlehem, a strange apparition aroused the inhabitants of a great city in the far distant east.
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They were awakened from their sleep, and the windows, doors, and streets were thronged to look at a bright star, which hung in the sky, just over the city.
You remember, I dare say, what a stir was made in this country and elsewhere, a few years since, by the unexpected appearance of that beautiful comet. How groups were to be seen standing about every evening, both in and out of doors, with telescope or the naked eye, gazing at it, and expressing to one another their wonder and delight. Well, some such feeling as this, mingled with a certain religious awe, must have taken hold of this people of the east on that night. How brilliant! what can it be? what can it mean? how close to us! who will tell us something about it? Exclamations such as these, were heard on all sides, from the lips of rich and poor alike. Now there were men in that kingdom who might naturally be supposed to know something about it, for they had made the science of the stars, in their supposed connection with human action, or astrology, a special branch of study.
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They were men of education. They were high in civil station too, and filled such offices as magistrate, and governor, and even that of a sort of petty sovereign. They were called Magi. They were in their own country what the Mandarin is in China; what the Brahmin is in India. But how can they know any thing of a star so unusual in its appearance as this? There were two sources through which a certain prophecy connected with the appearance of a star might have reached them.
1. Fifteen hundred years before, a prophet or diviner, whatever his office may have been, whose name was Balaam, had uttered a most remarkable prophecy. It was as follows: "_I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not near. A star shall rise

out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel_." If Balaam was a fellow-countryman of these Magi, as some learned writers have supposed, then they could hardly have been ignorant of this prophecy.
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2. One thousand years after that again, the Jews were carried away in captivity to the city of Babylon, and dispersed themselves through that region of country. It is natural to suppose that in this way their traditions and sacred writings became publicly known. In that case, these men of science could hardly have failed to notice the fact of Balaam's prophecy being found in the Jewish book of Numbers. They would moreover find, in the course of that familiar intercourse which was now established between the people of both nations, that the Jews had always considered this prophecy as having reference to the promised Messias, or future Ruler of their people.
Whatever may be the fact as to their having any information at all, or the particular sources through which it came, or whether their wills were moved directly by inspiration from God, certain it is that these holy kings did recognize in that star their guide to the newly-born king of the Jews. Among the historical records of God's dealing with the Jewish people, they perhaps remembered how He had led them through the wilderness under the guidance of a pillar of fire, and consequently were more willing to trust themselves to a guide of a similar kind.
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Difficulties now sprang up on every side. It was no easy thing to make up their minds to leave their kingdoms (or whatever was the peculiar nature of their charge), in the hands of others, who might usurp their authority in their absence. Travelling over the deserts to the westward was most tedious, and attended with much danger. And after all might not this vision be a delusion? Such were some of the trials their faith had to surmount, and it did surmount them. I will not say more of their journey, than that they were faithful to their guide. They halted when it stood still, they continued their march when it led the way. Here are they now within a short march of the city of Jerusalem. The morning light is breaking, and word is passed to harness the camels, and to fold up the tents. The encampment is alive with joy, at the prospect of the speedy and successful termination of their undertaking, when a cry of distress is heard; "the star!--where is the star? it is gone! what shall we do?" Let us try to conceive what their distress must have been.
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You know that in some parts of our country there are great caves underground, into which one can penetrate bypaths winding hither and thither to the distance of twenty, thirty, or even forty miles from the entrance; as for example, the great Mammoth cave of Kentucky. Of course, the darkness there is absolute. Perhaps you may remember having seen an account given by one of a party of persons whose only light had gone out on an excursion of this kind. He tried to describe the horror that he and his companions felt when they found themselves in such total darkness, and, unless relieved by persons outside, in the face of certain death.

To move, even for a few feet, might, for all they knew, be sudden destruction. To remain where they were was certain death by starvation. Now some such feelings as these must have overwhelmed our travellers from the east when they lost the star. Their guide was gone; they were in a strange and, it might prove, an enemy's land, especially as they had come in search of a rival to him who was sitting on the throne of Judea. What should they do? They determined to enter the city, to go to the king himself and fearlessly demand to know from him "_where is he who is born king of the Jews; for we have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him?_"
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King Herod called in the priests from the temple; the Scriptures were brought, the prophecies were examined; and Bethlehem was found to be the favored spot. "_Thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda for out of thee shall come the ruler who shall rule my people Israel_." They do not stay to be entertained with banquetings, or with what is curious or interesting in this great city, but they resume their journey, when lo! their beautiful guide appears before them once more. Oh! what joy it must have been to them to see it again. I dare say they thought it a hundredfold brighter than before, as they gazed up at it with their cheerful faces. ... At last it stops just over a poor shed on a hillside. This the birth-place of the king of the Jews!! Impossible. They look up at the star. There it stands motionless. They dismount with their presents, and pass through the rude entrance. A wonderful light fills the lowly place, and they see a young woman sitting upon some straw on the ground, a beautiful infant on her lap, and one who seems to be her husband, at her side. That same faith which had led them so far, made them bend the knee in adoration. "_They had found the child with Mary his mother_."
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Such, my dear brethren, is the sketch I promised you of this most interesting history of today's feast. To me, I must confess it has a peculiar charm and beauty. Now, what holy lesson shall we try to learn from it?

II. These Magi Are Models To Us Of Men Truly Converted To God. 1. _In their prompt obedience to his inspirations_. That star was a call from God. He asked a great deal from them. Luxuries, comforts, country, kingdom, home, all must be, for the time at least, abandoned. It would seem so easy for them to have said, as we say now-a-days, I can arrange to go in a few months time,--but _at once_, this is quite impossible. But there stood their bright guide, a rebuke to any such thoughts, and in setting out at once, in obedience to this call from God, these holy men teach us a most wholesome lesson. How often has God not called us, either from some path of sin which we were following, or to a closer union with Himself?
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At one time He has spoken to us plainly, by some word in a sermon or book, at another, by some secret fear or inspiration! We answer, "to-morrow, to-morrow," and that morrow never comes. That to-morrow is the devil's light, a very "Will o' the wisp," which

leads us on and on to danger and destruction. Oh! let us in [the] future be on the watch for these secret whisperings of grace to our souls, and let us learn to be prompt in corresponding with them.

2. _In their courage_. When these holy men had promptly set about obeying the will of God, their difficulties had only just begun. They would soon have become disheartened but for the supernatural courage that sustained them. Their attendants and servants, not having their Master's faith, magnified every difficulty as it arose. The oppressive heat by day, the cold at night, the length and wearisomeness of the way, the danger of murder and robbery, all these afforded them subjects for continual murmuring. But now, to crown all, the star has disappeared, and they clamor loudly to be allowed to return back in haste to their homes. But no; a courageous faith supported these royal pilgrims, and God rewarded it, by their finding, at last, the object of their search, "the Child with Mary his Mother."

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How is it, my dear brethren, with us on the way of life? Is it not too common to hear such language as this: 'I have such an unfortunate temper;' or, 'I have such disagreeable neighbors;' or, 'I have such an unmanageable family;' or, 'I am thrown with such reckless companions;' or, 'I have no comfort in my prayers;' and 'There is no use in trying to be good; I would give any thing if I only could be good; I am sure it is the only way to be really happy, but somehow or other I cannot get good.' Oh! poor cowardly souls that we are! Did I not say truly, that in these Magi we should find an occasion of confusion to ourselves, as well as true models of courageous perseverance under difficulties however great or peculiar? Dear brethren, begin again this morning your journey of life, in the spirit of these holy converts. Be faithful to the light that God never fails to give you, through your directors and confessors, through good books and by holy inspirations, and joy and consolation will come all in good time.

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The only way that will surely, safely, and speedily bring us to our Lord, is the way of the Cross. Surely it is worth the venture, worth the toil, if only we find at last, as we shall, "that Child with Mary his Mother."

3. _In their offerings_. It is a beautiful custom among the nations of the East, that they never go into the presence of their sovereign without some offering. Behold these holy men, as they bow down within the entrance of that poor lodge, and hold out in their hands the gold, the frankincense and the myrrh which they have brought so far, in honor of their newly found Sovereign, the infant king of the Jews! Let us kneel in spirit with them. We have here, our Bethlehem. The infant Jesus is within this little Tabernacle. There, above the altar rail, the still light is burning, which is the silent monitor to our faith, that Jesus is here. The world would have found it hard to adore the infant Saviour, with those three kings, in so lowly a place; and the world finds it too hard now, to kneel with us, in a

Catholic church, before the blessed Sacrament. These holy men did not find it hard, nor do we, for they and we have the same blessed, gift of faith.
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They offer gold--You have none! Oh yes, you have. Put your ten-penny, five-penny, and three-penny pieces, put your pennies too, into the offertory, with a pure intention, or bestow an alms on the poor outside, in the name of Jesus, and they will be changed into the purest gold. Love is a far more acceptable offering to God than gold. He has no need of your money; for, as the Psalmist says, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." One thing alone you have it in your power to keep from Him, and he deigns to ask you for it. It is your heart. It is your love and your service.
They offer incense--You have none! Oh yes, you have. What does holy king David say? "_O Lord, direct my prayer as incense in thy sight._" Prayer is the blessed incense that is incessantly streaming up before God. This it is that restrains the arm of his anger, and brings down blessings like showers of rain. There is one prayer above all others which in a special manner is doing this. It is the Holy Mass. Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice asks himself, why it is that God does not nowadays visit nations with such terrible and unmistakable judgments as He did the Jews, and the nations round about them?
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Then he makes answer to himself, it is because of the all-powerful intercession of the Holy Mass. As that pure and holy sacrifice ascends up like clouds of incense, from ten thousand altars, all over the world, God is disarmed of his anger. A wicked world is spared too, for the sake of what those little tabernacles contain, on the altars of Catholic churches.
Hear mass, then, on a week day, or make a visit of a few minutes to the Blessed Sacrament, and you have the most fragrant incense to offer to God.
They offer myrrh--You have none! Oh yes. Myrrh preserves from corruption. This was among the spices that the holy women brought on Easter morning to embalm our Lord's body. Well, there is something that preserves our souls, as myrrh and spices preserve our bodies. This is self-denial. Self-gratification is the corruption both of soul and body. Look around at the army of drunkards, and seekers of forbidden pleasures, and you will have abundant proof of the corruption of the body, and of the soul too, though not in the awfulness of its corruption, as God sees it.
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Well, restrain your tongue; restrain your eye; restrain your appetite; and offer this to God in penance for your sins, in union with that sublime act of self-denial on the Cross, and you will offer to your Saviour as pleasing an offering as these holy Magi.
My brethren, we are all on the road to another, the true Bethlehem. We, too, are going in search of Jesus and Mary. Our Bethlehem is heaven. Our glorious, supernatural, infallible guide, is the Holy Catholic Church. We have met with trials; we shall meet with more. Perhaps, thus far, we have only passed

through a sort of preparatory state, which shall enable us to bear up under the real sacrifices that we shall be called upon to make in time to come. Nothing will sustain us under these, but implicit faith in our Guide, and an unshaken fidelity to her. Be loyal to her then. Show your love for God, by your obedience to her. Cling to her side, and she will lead you to that Bethlehem above, where it may be said of you also,--

"They found the Child with Mary his Mother."

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Sermon X.

Renunciation.

"And after six days, Jesus taketh unto him
Peter and James and John his brother,
and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart.
And he was transfigured before them.
And his face did shine as the sun,
and his garments became white as snow."
--St. Matt, xvii., 12.
(From the Gospel for the Transfiguration).

A wise general, in order to excite the ardor of his soldiers, and to render them forgetful of the dangers to which they are exposed, pictures to them on the eve of battle the spoils and glory to be acquired, if they fight bravely. In like manner, our Lord, in order to cheer up and console his disciples, who began to be dismayed at the prospect of that death He was about to suffer, imparted to them a foretaste of the joys of paradise, and a "vision" of the splendor of his divinity.

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"_He was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun; and his garments became white as snow._" Peter, as soon as he recovered from his ecstasy of delight, exclaimed: "_Lord, It is good for us to be here_."

But, to prepare His disciples for this anticipation of heaven, He brought them into a high mountain apart; indicating thereby that such privileges can only be obtained by separation from the world in solitude. This is not only true relative to these high and special favors, but equally true in order to persevere in the practice of a Christian life. Separation from the world is an indispensable duty of a Christian. This truth, so plain in Holy Writ, is nevertheless liable to be misconceived, for which reason we must make the following distinction:

There is a world we are not required as Christians to separate from. There is a world we are under the strictest obligations to separate from.

The condemnation of the world by our Lord and his apostles is too plain and frequent not to have met the eye of any one who has the slightest acquaintance with the New Testament.

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"_You are from beneath,_" said the Saviour to the Jews, "_I am from above. You are of this world: I am not of this world_," [Footnote 51] "_Love not the world,_" says the beloved disciple and apostle, "_nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world the charity of the Father is not

in him._" [Footnote 52] St. Paul, teaching the Romans, says: "_Be not conformed to the world._" [Footnote 53] "_The friendship of the world,_" says St. James, "_is enmity with God._" [Footnote 54] "_The whole world_," says St. John, "_is seated in wickedness._" [Footnote 55]

[Footnote 51: St. John viii., 23.]

[Footnote 52: 1 John ii., 15.]

[Footnote 53: Romans xii., 2.]

[Footnote 54: St. James iv., 4.]

[Footnote 55: 1 John v., 19.]

These declarations of the sacred Scriptures are plain and to the point. To be a disciple of Christ is to have nothing to do with the world. If any further proof were needed of so plain a fact, we may find it in the baptismal service, where the catechumen is engaged by the most solemn promises to turn his back upon the world. But what this world is, that we are so strictly engaged to renounce, is not at first sight so clear.

Is it the visible world, called nature, so full of instruction and rich in beauty, that we are to turn our backs upon?

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Are we called upon in our character as Christians to close our eyes to the flowers, the mountains, the rivers, the glowing sunsets, and the stars of heaven? Are we bound to shut our ears to the murmuring winds, the music of the rivulet, and the songs of the birds? Are we to be counted Christians on the condition only of our shutting out from our senses that beauty, which surrounds us on all hands, of the visible world? What is there profane in nature when Holy Writ assures us that, "The Lord is holy in all his works." [Footnote 56] and that "_all things serve Him?_" [Footnote 57]

[Footnote 56: Psalm cxliv., 13.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Psalm cxlv., 13.]

[Footnote 57: Psalm cxviii., 91.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Psalm cxix., 91.]

The royal prophet David was accustomed to open all the avenues of his soul to the beauty of nature, and, filled with admiration, he seems hardly able to contain his praise of Him by whom all things were made. "_O Lord our Lord, how admirable_," he exclaims, "_is thy name in the whole earth_." [Footnote 58] "_How great are thy works, O Lord! thou hast made all things in wisdom; the earth is filled with thy riches._" [Footnote 59]

[Footnote 58: Psalm viii., 2.]

[Footnote 59: Psalm ciii., 24.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Psalm civ., 24.]

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Our blessed Saviour himself chose to convey the great truths of his gospel by illustrations drawn from the visible creation. He calls our attention at one time to "the birds of the air," at another, it is to the golden "harvests," and then it is to "the lilies of the fields." He seems to have looked with an attentive and friendly eye upon the attractions of nature.

"_Consider_," He says, "_the lilies of the fields, how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. And yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory, was arrayed like one

of these._" [Footnote 60]

[Footnote 60: St. Matt, vi., 28-29.]

Commenting on this passage of Holy Scripture, St. John Chrysostom asks: "Wherefore did God make the lilies so beautiful? That He might display," he answers, "the wisdom and excellency of his power, that from every thing we might learn his glory." For not "_the heavens only declare the glory of God._" [Footnote 61] but the earth too; and this David declared when he said: "_Praise the Lord, ye fruitful trees, and all the cedars_." [Footnote 62]

[Footnote 61: Psalm xix., 1.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Psalm xix., 2.]

[Footnote 62: Psalm cxlviii., 4.]

[Transcriber's note: The phrase "Praise the Lord" is from verse 7 and "fruit trees and all cedars" is from verse 9.]

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It could be no part of the visible creation that the Gospel had in view, when it declared that the friendship of the world is enmity with God; for we hear the same voice speak to us from nature, which speaks to us in divine revelation.

What was it then? Was it the world of art, science, and literature? Have not beauty, knowledge, and genius one and the same fountain source with religion? Whence spring the noble achievements of art, science, and literature, if not from gifts, which like "_every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights_." [Footnote 63]

[Footnote 63: St. James i., 17.]

Is not the true aim of art in all its creations to aid religion in bringing men to the contemplation of the first Fair, the first True, and the first Good? Can science find a greater sphere than to show how all things are, and move, and exist in their primal cause, God? Can literature be devoted to more worthy ends than to make those virtues attractive which religion commands? True religion recognizes in art, in science, and in literature, her natural allies, while they in turn find in her bosom loftier and wider spheres to stimulate human exertion. These, then, are not of that world which Holy Writ condemns as at enmity with God.

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Are we to find the world, which we as Christians are to renounce, in the ties of the family, in relationships and friends, in neighborhood and the common pursuits of life? All these conditions of life our Saviour sanctified either in his own person, or by his express approbation, or by his presence. The basis of all these relations of human life is that of marriage, and this natural tie, He not only sanctioned, but raised it up to a holy sacrament of his religion. It is a false idea of the Christian religion, and one which is most injurious, to imagine that it requires of us to stifle all natural affections, and to escape from society, in order to lead a Christian life. It teaches that the way of salvation, and the high roads to sanctity, are chiefly through the fulfilment of the common duties of every day life. "_For God created all things,_" says Holy Writ, "_that they might be: and he made the nations of the earth for health: and there is no poison of destruction in them,

nor kingdom of hell upon earth._" [Footnote 64]

[Footnote 64: Wisdom i., 14.]

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The world made up of human relationships and the common pursuits of life, called society, is not at enmity with God. Nature art, science, human society, are not opposed to Christianity, nor contrary to Christian perfection. Many Christians have become great saints surrounded only by the scenery of nature; others while cultivating the arts and sciences; others again have reached an eminent degree of perfection while fulfilling their common every day duties. For the visible creation is good, and there is nothing in man's nature incompatible with the absolute perfections of God, as is proved in the fact that our Saviour was in all respects in his humanity a man, and at the same time truly God. "_All things,_" says Holy Scripture, "_cooperate for good to those who love God._" The true Christian Church incorporates and consecrates nature and art in her worship--she appeals to the whole nature of every man, and opens a way to heaven for men of all classes, and in every condition of society. The task was left to the sects which sprung from the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, to exclude nature and art from Christian worship, to divorce faith and science, to degrade the sacrament of matrimony to a mere civil contract, and to teach men that they were wholly depraved.

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The authors of this revolution in Christianity, seemed to take delight in parcelling the realm of Christian truth into wrangling creeds, and in rendering Christian worship rigid, gloomy and repulsive. And in this they found freedom, progress, and the light of the pure gospel!

How narrow and grovelling are the minds which never rise to the contemplation of that unity which reconciles all truths, all beauties, and all goodness! Will that day ever dawn when Christianity will find a people sufficiently great to grant to its divine truths fair play with their intelligence, and a full sway to her influence over their whole lives?--when men of genius, of science and of learning will understand that the true end of all knowing, all loving and all doing is the same as that of religion, to render the souls of men more like their Creator, and to aid others in this divine work?

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Where then is the world which, as Christians, we are called upon to separate from? There is a world which God made for the use of man. He made it good, and good it remains while rightly used. There is another world which man has made, and it is framed out of the abuse of the creatures of God's world.

The whole difficulty lies in the fact that men generally do not consider the things of creation rightly, or use them properly; and the great world around us consists in the main of those who thus misunderstand God's world, and live by the abuse and perversion of it, led on by their inordinate desires. This is "the world seated in wickedness," on which we must turn our backs, for to be a friend of it, is to be an enemy of God. A few illustrations will make this point plain.

How few there are who look upon nature in that light in which she was intended to be seen by her Creator. Seen in this light, the whole visible world of nature raises up our thoughts and affection to our common Creator. For nature has ever been true and loyal to her Author. The Psalmist only gives expression to the natural and spontaneous impulses of the soul when in beholding the visible world, he exclaims: "_O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is thy name in the whole earth_." How few in looking upon nature, raise up their thoughts to nature's God.
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They do not go beyond, but stop with what they see. To them, nature is the highest and most complete expression of strength, beauty, and truth. Nature is fair, but how much fairer is He who made nature what she is! They forget the King in their blind admiration of his vestments. They become the servants and slaves of nature, instead of being her master and high-priest. Their worship of nature excludes her Creator and Lord, and they become like the heathen idolaters of whom the Apostle speaks: "_They worshipped the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever_." [Footnote 65]

[Footnote 65: Rom. i., 25.]

What do we find for the most part in the world of art? Do we see artists who are conscious of the great purposes of their noble vocation? Do they aim by the creations of their genius to raise less gifted minds to gaze upon the archetype of all beauty, truth, and goodness? Do they strive so to embody what is noblest and best in man's nature as to captivate his imagination, and enkindle an enthusiasm for its imitation?
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There are a few such; a few who are men, no less than artists, and who regard their vocation as something akin to what is sacred, and would look upon it as desecration to employ their gifts in such way us to lead men aside from the realization of the great end of their existence. But the many study to clothe with forms of borrowed beauty the expressions which spring from the lowest passions of their nature. The lessons which their productions teach, were they interpreted and expressed in words, would shock the unvitiated feelings of the heart, causing the innocent cheek to blush with shame. Quoting with sophistical blindness the text, "_To the pure all things are pure_," they imagine they are justified in violating every rule of Christian decency, every feeling of modesty, and every maxim of morality. Under the pretext of being true to nature, they misrepresent nature, by presenting what is lowest in man, and that in its exaggerated and depraved developments, and thereby add excitement to his already inordinate appetites and aid powerfully to his further degradation. Art, instead of being an angel pointing with its fore-finger to heaven, showing man the way to his destiny, and aiding him to its attainment, is turned into a Siren, enticing men to sin and destruction.
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In the world of science and literature, the same thing takes place. It would appear that the aim of most men devoted to science is, in a great measure, to undermine the basis of

religious conviction in the soul, instead of adding to its strength and support. What is more reasonable than to suppose that the sentiments of religion should increase in proportion to the acquisition of the knowledge of truth, for the end of all knowledge of truth is God. And yet, if you select from almost any branch of science, those who are pre-eminent, you will, in all probability, find that those who believe in Christianity and practise its precepts, are in the minority, a very small minority. What a strange perversion of the gift of intelligence to study the works of creation, in order to overturn the Revelation of the Creator!

Popular literature is of the same stamp. It would be high praise to say of a popular author that his writings contain nothing contrary to morals or religion. It would seem to be the aim of some to substitute vice for virtue, and so to cloak passion with the garb of innocence as to make obedience to them an act of religion.

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Familiarity with our popular literature would be a sad preparation for the reception of religious impressions, or for the practice of virtue. Briefly, in art, in science, and literature, there reigns for the greater part, an indifference to Christianity, the spirit of paganism, and a practical atheism.

Let us now look about ourselves in society. Here is a man possessed with the desire for distinction and places of honor. His thoughts by day, and his dreams at night, are set upon them. He is a lawyer, and aims at being at the head of the bar, or at becoming a judge. He is a politician, he seeks to be an alderman, or a state senator, or a congressman. He knows not but one day he may be the president of the United States. Does he seek these by legitimate means? Not at all. To gain popularity he sacrifices all self-respect, and bribery is connived at to obtain votes. If his religion is likely to aid his efforts, he _uses_ it; you will find him in church, and he gives liberally about election times to its charitable institutions.

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Should his religion stand in his way, he ceases to practice its duties. Should it serve his purpose, he becomes a free-mason, or an odd fellow, or a member of some other secret society.

Another is driven on by an inordinate desire for riches. Not content with the rewards of an honest trade, or a respectable business, he must make money easier and faster. He starts a saloon or a liquor store, and to conceal the low and disgraceful character of his traffic, he places on his house a sign in large letters, "Bonded Warehouse," "Rectifying Distillery," "Importer of Foreign Liquors," or some other like falsehood. His foreign and domestic wines and liquors, are made of bad spirits, some coloring matter and essences, with fusil oil; and these he deals out for genuine, making from two to three hundred per cent. profit. Under the plea of providing for a family, and it may be that he has neither chick nor child, he opens in the city several such--Rectifying Distilleries!! What does this man care about the scandal which he is the occasion of to his religion, or the poverty and wretchedness he spreads abroad in his neighborhood,

or the number of souls which he sends to an untimely and unprepared grave, caused by his poisonous stuffs, so that he gain wealth without effort and rapidly.
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Another, a young man who is bent upon seeking pleasure. He frequents low theatres, ball-rooms, and bar-rooms. He meets companions, he gambles, and occasionally he puts his hand in the till of his employer's drawer, or he forges his paper. The effects of late hours, intoxication and debauchery, by and by, show themselves on his face, a faint picture of the corruption which these vices have produced in his heart. He ends his life as an uncurable in a public hospital; or detected, he spends his time and dies in a penitentiary.
Here is a girl whose mind and imagination are filled with parties of pleasure, and forbidden friendships, gathered for the most part from reading popular literature and infectious novels. Her prayers are forgotten, the sacraments neglected, and she dreams of amusements and romantic attachments. Dress, tone of voice, every step and movement of her person betray the inordinate passions which have taken possession, and reign now in her bosom. To fill up the sketch, all that is now needed is time and opportunity, to complete her ruin, and make her a public shame.
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From these illustrations it is easily seen which world it is that, as followers of Christ, we are to separate from. It is this world fabricated of error, of the abuse of created things, and engendered of inordinate desires. This is the world of which the Apostle speaks when he says: "_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: for all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father but of the world_." [Footnote 66]

[Footnote 66: 1 John ii., 15-16.]

There is then a world which is formed of the things which God has made, and the right use of these things by us; and this is an innocent and righteous world, of which it is said: "_God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself_." [Footnote 67]

[Footnote 67: 2 Cor. v., 9.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is 2 Cor. v., 19.]

There is a world which is made up of error, and the abuse men make of created things; and this is the wicked and ungodly world condemned in Holy Scripture.
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On the one let us look with interest and delight, and from the other let us separate and stand far apart, as did our blessed Lord and his Saints, giving heed to the advice of St. Augustine: "Let the spirit of God be in thee," he says, "that thou mayest see that all these created things are good; but woe to thee if thou love the things made, and forsake the Maker of them! Fair are they to thee; but how much fairer He that formed them!"

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Sermon XI.

The Afflictions Of The Just.

"Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, because your reward is very great in heaven; for so they persecuted the Prophets that were before you."

--St. Matt, v., 11, 12.

(From the Gospel for All Saints' Day.)

I am about to preach you an old sermon this morning; but I doubt not, my dear friends, you will find it all the better for being old, and quite appropriate, moreover, to this day's feast, for it will carry us back to the earlier ages of Christianity, when living saints were more abundant than now.

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In a vast desert of Palestine, which lay near the boundaries of Arabia, there dwelt, during the fourth century of the Christian era, a number of devout hermits, who, after a life of great innocence and saintly virtue, were cruelly massacred by the Saracens. Some of their brethren, deeply afflicted and scandalized by this outrage, began to ask themselves, how it was possible that God should permit such holy men to perish by the hand of these wicked infidels. In their perplexity, they deputed several of their number to visit and consult an aged Egyptian hermit who, on account of the great veneration in which he was held, and the number of disciples gathered around him, was called the Abba, or Abbot Theodore. These came to him with their sad story, and besought him to explain why God should permit such holy men to perish so miserably, and how he could consent to the triumph of these cruel barbarians over his saints.

I invite your particular attention, my brethren, to his answer; for perhaps you have asked similar questions yourselves. In the various wars in which nations have engaged, and even in those where the interests of religion seemed most involved, we do not see that victory has always perched upon those banners which the prayers of God's people have blessed.

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So it has been throughout the history of the Church, and especially during the past three centuries. Who can recount the calamities which from year to year have fallen upon the children of the faith? The soul grows sick to read of kingdoms wrested by violence into schism and heresy, the burnings of monasteries and convents, or their confiscation to the state, the persecution of the Catholic clergy, the oppression of the laity. And especially when we turn our thoughts to Ireland, poor, faithful, down trodden Ireland--is it not wonderful that every thing seems to turn out to her disadvantage, and to the prosperity of her oppressors? Have you not sometimes been tempted to exclaim: "Has God forgotten Ireland? Has she clung to her faith so long in vain, amid poverty, oppression and bloodshed? Has heaven no favors for her? Why does not God give victory always to the just cause?" Or, perhaps, you have noticed in your own neighborhood, how often the most faithful servants of God have been visited by heavy afflictions, long sickness, loss of property, death of children and other dear friends, while others, destitute of

faith, piety, and of all virtuous principle, seem to prosper on every hand.
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And perhaps, seeing this, the thought arises in your mind: "Does not God take notice of these things? Has He no chastisement for the wicked, no sympathy for the good? Why does He not take part with his own, and make them prosper most?" All these murmurings are like those of the good anchorites who visited Abbot Theodore, and his answer to their questions will answer yours.

(_Prelude of Abbot Theodore_.)--"These questions, my brethren," said he, "only astonish those who, having little faith and little light, think that the saints ought to receive their recompense in this life, while God reserves it for them in the other. But we have far different thoughts. If our hopes in Christ were only for the present life, we should be, as St. Paul tells us, the most miserable among men, having no recompense in this world, and losing heaven also by our want of faith. We ought to guard our minds against this error, for it would leave us without hope or courage in the moment of temptation, fill us with distrust of God, and so bring us into sin, and to our ruin."

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After this short prelude, he goes on to show that God neither sends nor permits any real evil to those that love Him, but that, on the contrary, all things contribute to the welfare of the just. And this is his argument:

I. God Neither Sends Nor Permits Any Real Evil, &c.

"Every thing in this world," said the good abbot, "is either good, or bad, or indifferent. There is nothing really good but virtue, which conducts us to God. There is nothing really bad but sin, which separates us from God. In different things are such as hold a middle place between good and evil, and may pass into one or the other, according to the disposition of him that uses them. Such are riches, honor, health, beauty, life, death, sickness, poverty, injuries, insults, &c."

"This distinction laid, let us see whether God has ever sent any real evil to his saints, or permitted any one to do them a real injury. That is something that we shall never be able to make out. For no one is able to make a man fall into sin, who is unwilling and resists, but only those who consent to it, and give admittance to it, by the effeminacy of their hearts, and the depravity of their will.

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The demon employed every possible artifice against holy Job to make him murmur against God; but in spite of all the afflictions which he heaped upon him, body and soul, he could not provoke him so far as to sin even with his lips, and thus fall into the only real evil he had to fear. We must not think, therefore, that the ill turns which our enemies or other persons sometimes do us are really evils, but they belong rather to the class of indifferent things. To be sure, they may think to have done us harm, and rejoice at it; but the harm does not depend upon what they may think, so long as we do not count it for such. For example: a good man is put to death,

without any just cause or provocation. Now, we must not suppose that any thing really evil in itself has happened to him, but simply something which is either good or evil, according to circumstances. For, in truth, death, which is commonly counted to be an evil, comes with a blessing to the just man, for it delivers him from all the afflictions of this life. Thus death is no harm to him; and although the malice of his enemies anticipates the order of nature by leading him to a sudden death, the good man thereby only pays a little sooner a debt which he had to pay in any case, and he goes to receive an eternal crown, as the reward of his sufferings and death."

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Upon this, one of the party named Germanns, raised a difficulty. "In that case," said he, "we should have no reason to blame the murderer, since he does no harm to the one he kills, but only speeds him the sooner on to his salvation." "We are speaking of things as they are in themselves," said Abbot Theodore, "and not of the intention of those who do them. The patience and virtue of the just man in his sufferings and death, is a crown to himself, but no justification of his persecutor. The latter will be punished for his cruelty, and for the evil which he intended to do, while the good man has in reality suffered no harm, but by his patience has changed into a blessing the evil which was devised against him. For example: the wonderful patience of Job was of no service to Satan, but it was of inestimable value to Job himself, who endured his trials with so much courage and resignation.

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So Judas is none the less subjected to eternal torments, because his treason contributed to the salvation of men; for in the eye of divine justice, an action is not so much to be judged by its results, as by the intention of the person who did it."

These high, and holy maxims of Christian philosophy being thus firmly established, our good hermit, growing warm with his subject, begins to rise to still loftier and more beautiful conceptions, like a bee coming out from its search in the flower, and shaking the golden pollen from its wings.

II. All Things Contribute To The Welfare Of The Just.

"We say of some men that they are born to good luck, and that every thing they put their hands to turns out well. We deceive ourselves when we say this; it is only true of the Saints, and in a spiritual sense. '_We know_,' says St. Paul, '_that all things work together for good to them that love God_.' [Footnote 68]

[Footnote 68: Rom. viii., 28.]

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Wonderful truth! Beautiful truth! And the Prophet David says the same thing of every man whose will is in the Law of God: _All, whatsoever he shall do, shall prosper._ [Footnote 69]

[Footnote 69: Ps. i., 3.]

Now, when the Apostle says that '_all things work together for good_,' he means not only prosperity, but also what is

called adversity. And why? Why, because those who truly and perfectly love God remain unchanged in all the vicissitudes of life. They have but one end in view--eternal life, and only one means to attain to it, namely, to do the will of God. This they can do in all weathers, in rain or sunshine. Indeed, like the stormy petrel, they gather most in stormy weather. For what reflecting Christian does not know the sweet uses of adversity, which, by severing the hopes that bound us to the earth, and opening our eyes to the fact that we are but pilgrims here, with a right of passage only, teach us to fix our hopes on heaven alone, and labor to build up our fortunes there? The great Apostle, who himself had passed through the various paths of adversity, teaches us how to turn all the vicissitudes of life, both its joys and sorrows, into golden occasions of merit, fighting our way onward to heaven, as he says, '_with the strength which God gives us, by the arms of justice, on the right hand and on the left;_' that is, as he goes on to explain, '_through honor and dishonor, through infamy and good name, as dying and behold we live, as sorrowful and yet always rejoicing, as having nothing and yet possessing all things?_' [Footnote 70]

[Footnote 70: 2 Cor. vi., 8-10]

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"All therefore, that passes for prosperity, and is consequently _on the right hand_, such as glory, and good reputation, and success in temporal affairs, and all that passes for adversity, and thus, according to the language of St. Paul, is _on the left hand_, such as disgrace and evil report, and temporal disappointment;--all to the perfect Christian serve alike for arms of justice, holy weapons to win his crown with, because he receives every thing that comes with the same great heart, and allows himself to be cast down by nothing. And therefore the Prophet says of him: '_The holy man continues in wisdom like the sun_.'[Footnote 71]

[Footnote 71: Ecclus. xxvii. 12.]

[Transcriber's note: Ecclesiastes ends at chapter 12. Text is similar to Sirach xxvii. 11.]

But for those who change every moment, and show different humors and different dispositions of heart, according to the different chances and changes of life--let them listen to these words of the same Prophet, which were spoken for their especial benefit: _The fool changes like the moon.'_ [Footnote 72]

[Footnote 72: Ecclus. xxvii. 12.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB citation is Sirach xxvii. 11; "the godless man, like the moon, is inconstant."]

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And, therefore, every thing turns to evil for them, according to the proverb: '_Every thing to the foolish man is contrary_,' [Footnote 73] because he does not improve in prosperity, nor correct his ways in adversity. It will not do for the Christian to be like wax, which takes any form that may be impressed upon it; but like a diamond seal, he should keep unchangeably the form impressed upon his heart by the hand of God, showing no change in the different events of life.

[Footnote 73: Prov. xiv. 7. So in the lxx.]

"In Holy Scripture [Footnote 74] we read of one Aod, a great warrior, and a leader of the Israelites, who was what is called an _ambidexter_, that is, he could use the left hand as well as the right. This man," said Abbot Theodore, "is a type of the perfect Christian, who is always an ambidexter, making use of both prosperity and adversity to advance the salvation of his soul, and increase his merits, fighting the good fight of faith, '_with the arms of justice, on the right hand and on the left_.'

[Footnote 74: Judges ii.]

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It is the duty of us all to exercise ourselves in the use of this holy armor, that we may, like Aod, be dexterous warriors, able to carry our swords in either hand, and meet our foes on whatever side they may advance, temperate in prosperity, patient in adversity, never fainting, always rejoicing, seeking for nothing, hoping for nothing, knowing nothing in this world but "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," and thus, by this blessed alchemy of the Saints, turning all things into gold.

"You see, therefore, my dear friends," so concluded the good hermit, "that we have no occasion to deplore the death of these saintly solitaries, as if they had suffered some great misfortune, or as if their enemies had triumphed over them; and still less have we any right to complain of God, as if He had forsaken or forgotten his own. On the contrary, they have gone to their rest, like the laboring man at night-fall; they have been shaken from the tree where they grew, like ripe figs in the harvest time, and their Divine Master has gathered them in. Their death was cruel and miserable in the eyes of man, but precious in the sight of God, for so the Psalmist tells us: '_Precious in the sight of God is the death of his Saints_.' [Footnote 75]

[Footnote 75: Psalm cxv., 15.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Psalm cxvi., 15.]

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Do not believe that, even if it were left to their choice, they would wish to come back again to this world, to live longer in it, nor would they choose any other death than that by which they have quitted it. Indeed there was little room for choice in the matter, since, as the Apostle says, '_for them to live was Christ and to die was gain_,' [Footnote 76] it being the privilege of the Saints to prosper in all that befalls them."

[Footnote 76: Phil, i., 21.]

[Transcriber's note: Similarly, Phil., 1., 23,
"I long to depart this life and be with Christ,
(for) that is far better."]

See! my dear brethren, it is not I that have been speaking to you, but an ancient Father of the desert. I have preached to you an old sermon, and well nigh word for word as it was spoken fifteen hundred years ago in the Egyptian wilderness. I have done so purposely, in order that you may take notice that the Christians of those early times were subject to disasters and afflictions as you are now, and tried by the same temptations. You see also what kind of consolation they found in their

religion, what kind of counsel they received from their spiritual advisers, and how they turned their sorrows and adversities to good account.
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Their time of trial was over long ago; and now they are happy. No doubt, they look back with pleasure upon those very sorrows, as belonging to the sweetest and holiest days of their pilgrimage on earth--days of patient resignation, and childlike trust, and Christian courage--days when they wept much, but prayed all the more--days when the current of earthly joys was at its lowest ebb-tide, but the waters of heavenly grace were at their fullest flood-tide, and therefore, days of golden gain. Oh! let it be so with you, my brethren, in your afflictions! What would you have? The Christians of other ages have journeyed on cheerfully toward heaven bearing their cross. Would you ride thither at your ease? Would you wear your crown without winning it? Would you be saved by the sufferings of Christ, and refuse to take your share of suffering? No! arm yourselves with Christian fortitude. Meet adversities patiently, manfully, trustfully, as these good Christians did of old. Be like them in the trials of this world, and then, like them too in the recompense of the other, "_your sorrows shall be turned into joy_," and your joy will be all the greater for the sorrows you have endured.

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Sermon XII.
False Maxims.

"Lord, that I may see."
--St. Luke xviii., 41.
(From the Gospel for Quinquagesima Sunday.)

Blindness is a very common thing, if we may judge by the many false maxims afloat. We find them everywhere and in every thing, in politics, in business, in the government of children, in religion. Wherever they are, they are pernicious and destructive. In business they lead to bankruptcy and ruin; in politics to disunion, revolution and anarchy; in the government of families to dissipation and worthlessness. But of all false maxims, the most pernicious and destructive are those relating to religion: because they involve the loss of the soul, of all our interests, hopes, and happiness in one great ruin.
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There are many such. One will say: "It's no matter what a man's faith may be. All religions are alike, they are different roads that lead to the same end. Let a man only act right, and he can throw all creeds over board; whether Jew, Turk, Heathen, Protestant or Catholic, it makes no difference." A man who speaks thus is no Catholic, nor is he ever like to be. He has put out the light of Jesus Christ, who holds up to us "one faith, one Lord, one baptism," and gropes along to his ruin in a darkness of his own creation. But I don't mean to speak of such. I would rather speak of the false maxims of certain Catholics by which they persuade themselves that all will be right, though the Lord and Savior says that all is wrong, and so rush blindly to their ruin.

One of the first of these maxims is this: _Because I'm a Catholic I shall be sure to get to heaven_. Where did such a notion come from? You are sure of heaven only on condition of behaving yourself as you ought.
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If you have a ticket on the cars and misbehave, you are put off at the first station; so what ever rights you have to heaven in virtue of being a Catholic are forfeited when you cease to live as a Catholic ought to live. If you sin, your being a Catholic won't hinder you from losing all the privileges of your baptism. Where did you get the notion that it's enough to be a Catholic without being a practical one? Was it from the Church of God? The very first word addressed you by her, was in your baptism, when you were asked: "What dost thou ask of the Church of God?" The answer was: "Faith." "What does faith bring thee to?" was the next question. The reply was: "Eternal life." Then spoke out the Church right solemnly: "If thou wilt enter into life _keep the commandments_." Keeping the commandments is here the plain condition for obtaining eternal life, and nothing else. That's what the Lord himself said to the young man who asked the question: "What shall I do that I may have everlasting life?" His reply was in the very same words: "_Keep the commandments_." [Footnote 77]

[Footnote 77: St. Matt, xix., 16, 17.]

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To whom is that addressed? To Catholics. Who says it? The God of heaven and earth. Do you believe Him? If you do, you must give up the idea of being saved merely because you are a Catholic, but expect salvation by being a good one, and keeping the commandments. What's more, the Divine Scriptures expressly state that it is not enough to profess the faith without good works. "_Know ye not that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God. Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor idolaters, nor the effeminate, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, shall possess the kingdom of God_." [Footnote 78]

[Footnote 78: 1 Cor. vi., 9, 10.]

Who are addressed? Heathens? No; they are Catholics; the Corinthians who had been baptized and received the sacraments. Under what figure is the Church of God represented in Scripture? As a net that contains fish both good and bad. Yes, they are not all good fish that are in the net; there are bad ones. What is said of these bad ones? That at the last day they shall be sorted out and given to the fire. The Church is compared to a field sown with good grain and overrun with tares. Are the tares rooted up in this world?
{194}
No, they grow together with the wheat until the harvest; that is, until the judgment at the end of the world: then comes the division, and the burning of the tares. Listen to the explanation of the Lord: "_So shall it be at the end of the world. The Angels shall go out and shall separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth_." [Footnote 79]

[Footnote 79: St. Matt, xiii., 49.]

If you are acting on any such maxim you have blinded yourself, you have put out the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and walk in a way of your own devising, to your eternal destruction. Another false principle of a great many is this: _Because they don't lead what they call very bad lives, they cannot, as they imagine, be among the damned:_ In other words, they don't and won't believe that one mortal sin is the death of the soul. Where did this notion come from? From the Church? I would like to know where. What Apostles, Doctors of the Church, Pontiffs, Priests, or Laymen, that ever wrote on the matter, ever broached such an idea?
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For eighteen hundred long years the Church, we may say, has done nothing else but repeat over and over that one mortal sin will damn the soul. Did any Priest ever preach to the contrary? I never heard one do so; I never heard of one who had done so. And yet, Catholic people do sometimes get this folly into their minds. An old man, quite a respectable one too, came to me not long ago: "Father, I have a temptation on a point of faith." "What is it?" "I can't believe that one mortal sin will damn the soul. I heard the Missionary say so in his sermon, but I didn't believe him. I think I have heard the contrary from other Priests." I said to him: "My friend, I cannot believe you ever did. It's a notion you've picked up from another quarter." Why, what do we mean when we speak of mortal sin? The very word mortal means deadly. Don't you see, the very definition of mortal sin, is a sin that grievously offends God and brings with it the death of the soul? It is deliberately rejecting God with your eyes wide open. Once is enough. Spit in a man's face once, you need not do it a second time. Play the hypocrite with him once, he won't trust you again.
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Renounce his friendship once, and friendship is over. Your friend will forgive you many little offences, but trample once on some right, on some feeling which he holds dear and sacred, and once is enough. How many times must you spit in God's face, play the hypocrite with Him, turn your back on Him, trample on His most sacred commandments, before you expect Him to be angry? One mortal sin is enough because it is mortal. Many don't and won't believe this. Hear what they say: "I'm a good one to attend mass. I don't miss it of my own fault more than five or six times a year." "Do you ever get drunk?" "Oh, not a great deal, only a reasonable share, now and again, a few times in the course of the year;" and so on of other things. The devil has blinded them. They are travelling along with the great crowd, singing and laughing, down the broad road that leads to the pit of hell. Listen to what the Scriptures say: "_Be converted and do penance for all your iniquities, and iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions by which you have transgressed, and make to yourself a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will you die, O house of Israel_." [Footnote 80] That's it. "All" is the word. Nothing short of this will save from ruin.

[Footnote 80: Ezechiel xviii., 30, 31.]

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Another false maxim: _That we shall be saved by the sacraments, no matter how we receive them._ A great many have evidently some such principle lurking in their minds. The way they make confession shows it. The only idea with them seems to be to wipe off old scores and to be at more liberty to begin afresh. The load of sin gets heavy; it begins to press upon the conscience; it makes one uneasy. What's to be done to get rid of it? Pitch it off upon the Priest's back. Then he will become responsible; they need give themselves no farther trouble about it. They have brought the same load of mortal sin now for many years, perhaps every half-year, and, what's more, they really expect to do the same until their death. Some come concealing their sins time and again. If an absolution can be got out of the Priest, it makes no matter how. It is the absolution they want; all the same to them whether God sanctions it or not. So when the Priest refuses, seeing that they are not prepared, they beg for it.
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"Oh Father, do give me the absolution!" "You are not fit for it." "Oh, but you can give it if you please," they say. Sometimes they threaten, "If I'm not absolved, I won't come again." Sometimes they plead occupation: "If I go away without absolution, I cannot come again without great inconvenience;" as if their convenience should entitle them to absolution, without penitence, and the purpose of amendment.
This is indeed taking out of the sacraments all their life and spirit, and reducing them to a mere form. This is what our Lord called the religion of the Scribes and Pharisees, who made clean the outside of the platter, but left the inside greasy and filthy. These go through the form of confession, merely keeping up an outside appearance of piety, but their hearts are full of rottenness and filth. Does the Church teach any such thing? No, far from it. She teaches that the indispensable condition of forgiveness is a true, heartfelt sorrow for every mortal sin, with a firm, unflinching determination to avoid every such sin for the rest of one's life.
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She is the _Holy_ Catholic Church, and her teaching is as pure as the sunlight on this point; it is clearly laid down in all her catechisms and instructions, so that no one need make any mistake about it. Nevertheless the Lord foresaw that many would blind themselves in spite of all this. He represents them standing at the judgment and saying: "_Lord, have we not eaten and drunk at thy table?_" [Footnote 81]

[Footnote 81: St. Luke xiii., 26.]

Yes, we received the sacraments; certainly there can't be any mistake, it must be all right. What is the answer? "_Depart from me, workers of iniquity, I know not whence ye are_." [Footnote 82]

[Footnote 82: St. Luke xiii., 27.]

Sacraments received wrongfully work out, not the salvation, but the damnation of the soul. So St. Paul speaks of those who, through their sins, did not discern the Lord's body, being weak and sickly--speaks also of eating and drinking judgment to one's

self.
If this last is a false and fatal error, how much more horrible is it when it assumes a new shape and comes out in this form: _Oh, I will live as I please, and the last sacraments will make it all right. I'll send for the priest before I die_. Judas when finishing his act of perfidy, kissed the Saviour whom he had deliberately and wantonly betrayed.
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So these desert and betray Christ and his holy religion, and then go to make it up with a last kiss; a kiss full of hypocrisy and only given through a dire necessity that presses them. Is any hope held out in Scripture for the victims of such delusions? "_If ye live according to the flesh ye shall die_."
[Footnote 83]
[Footnote 83: Rom. viii., 13.]
"_What a man soweth that shall he reap_." [Footnote 84]
[Footnote 84: Gal. vi., 7.]
"_Ye shall cry unto me Lord, but the Lord will, not hear you_." "Ye shall seek me and ye shall not find me; ye shall die in your sins." [Footnote 85]
[Footnote 85: St. John viii., 21.]
Small comfort this to those who are cheating themselves with the idea of sending for the priest, and receiving the sacraments on their death-beds. Priests and sacraments, if they do receive them (which is a thing extremely doubtful), will do no good without contrition, and who will answer for the contrition of one who has persisted in outraging God through a whole life, and who, now that death stares him in the face, and in the midst of pain and fever and stupor, must set the accounts of conscience in order. The whole demeanor of such persons shows, only too frequently, how little they realize their condition, and what a wretched reliance death-bed repentance is, for the salvation of the soul.
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Such are some of the false maxims that put out the eyes of the soul. Whence do they spring? From an evil and perverse heart. A man given up to sin must justify himself in some way or other. He therefore makes light of sin--seeks to persuade himself that its consequences are not so dreadful--that after all, when it comes to the very point, God will not allow these consequences to fall upon him. They say a drowning man will catch at a straw. So these persons, though they know the truth, catch at every straw that holds out the least prospect of safety--every flimsy pretense that holds out encouragement for a life of sin; every false maxim that holds out a ground of hope. They call such things up on every occasion to fortify their own minds. They repeat them over to their friends, as if by hearing them a number of times they might seem to have more foundation in them. They like to hear others say such things; it gives them a wonderful encouragement to go on. So the blind lead the blind. At last this false reasoning gets to be so habitual that they fall back upon it whenever conscience begins to speak to their hearts.
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As to turning to God and quitting sin, that they won't think of even for a moment; so, in the words of Scripture, "_a strong

delusion is sent upon them to believe a lie_." It is sent upon them, in the sense that they have drawn it on themselves. To be sure, they don't really believe it, but they wish to believe it, try to believe it, and fancy that they do believe it. Indeed, in practice they may be said to believe, inasmuch as they have made up their minds to act upon it. What a miserable state to be in is this! Self-satisfied and self-blindfolded, to be drifting down into hell, in a dream of careless and stupid indifference! The poor blind man cried out with all his might, "_Lord! that I may see!_" The loss of bodily sight is indeed a great calamity, a thing to be keenly felt. The bare possibility of being restored to sight, should be enough to make one cry out, with his whole soul, 'Lord, Lord, that I may receive my sight!'
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How much more deplorable when the eyes of the soul are put out! How much more occasion to cry out in agony of spirit to Jesus the true light, that enlightens every man that cometh into the world--'Lord! that I may see! that I may understand the things that belong to my peace; that I may arouse from my stupidity, throw away all false delusions, and square myself by the maxims of the Gospel, opening my eyes to those eternal truths revealed by a God who can neither deceive nor be deceived!
Oh sinner! oh careless, indifferent Christian! if you have the least desire to make your hope of heaven a sure hope, one that shall not be confounded, cry with the blind man to Jesus, "_Lord, that I may see!_" Cry aloud, repeat that cry, until Jesus shall turn to you, and grant your request. Show that you are in earnest by taking the means to get your soul enlightened. Go and hear the word of God preached on the Sundays. Don't do as so many do, that go to Low Mass, early, and hear no sermon from one month to another. Make a practice to go to High Mass, where Jesus Christ, in the person of his priest, stands on purpose to give you light. How can you expect light when you close your eyes? How will the truths of the Gospel reach your heart and make an impression there, if you never listen to them?
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Preaching is the appointed means of receiving the truth. "_Faith cometh by hearing!_" says the Holy Ghost. [Footnote 86]

[Footnote 86: Rom. x., 17.]

Imitate the blind man. He found out where Jesus was expected to come by; he went there. Do likewise. Go where Jesus is, to the Church; cry to Him; listen to Him; when He speaks through his holy Gospels; read them, and hear them explained by the living voice of his representative, the Priest. Then you will have light; you will have it abundantly, to your great joy and consolation.
The promise is sure; there can be no failure. "_If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly and upbraideih not, and it shall be given him_." [Footnote 87]

[Footnote 87: St. James i., 5.]

Ask for it, and you shall receive it. What is it? The light that shall direct our feet in the way of peace, and carry us through safely to the light of glory in heaven. The light of Christ,

"_in which the Priest from on high hath visited us, to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet in the way of peace_." [Footnote 88]

[Footnote 88: St. Luke i., 78.]

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Sermon XIII.

Mary's Destiny A Type Of Ours.

"Mary hath chosen the best part,
which shall not be taken away from her."
--St. Luke x., 42.
(From the Gospel for the Assumption.)

To-day is the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To-day she entered into the enjoyment of heaven. The trials and troubles of life are over. The time of banishment is ended. She closes her eyes on this world and opens them to the vision of God. She is exalted to-day above the choirs of angels to the heavenly kingdom, and takes her seat at the right hand of her Son. I do not mean to attempt any description of her glory in heaven. I am sure whatever I could say would fall far short, not only of the reality, but of your own glowing thoughts about her.

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Who is there that needs to be told that the Blessed Virgin is splendid in sanctity, dazzling in beauty, and exalted in power? But, my brethren, it is possible to contemplate the Blessed Virgin in such a way as to put her at too great a distance from us. It is possible to conceive of her glory in heaven as flowing entirely from her dignity as Mother of God, and therefore to suppose it altogether unattainable by us; and as a consequence of this, to regard her with feelings full of admiration indeed, but almost as deficient in sympathy as if she were of an other nature from us. Now this is to rob ourselves of so ennobling and encouraging a part of our privilege as Christians, and at the same time to take away from our devotion to the Blessed Virgin an element so useful and important, that I have determined, on this her glorious Feast, to remind you that our destiny and the destiny of Mary are substantially the same.

And the first proof I offer of this is, that the glory of the Blessed Virgin in heaven is not owing to her character as Mother of God, but to her correspondence to grace--to her good works--to her love of God--in a word, to her fidelity as a Christian.

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This is certain, for it is the Catholic doctrine that the Blessed Virgin, like every other saint, gained heaven only as the reward of merit. Now she could not merit it by becoming the Mother of God. Her being the Mother of God is indeed a most august dignity, but there is no merit in it. It is a dignity conferred on her by the absolute decree of God, just as He resolved to confer angelic nature on angels, or human nature on men. It is no doubt a great happiness and glory for us to be men, and not brutes, but there is no merit in it; so there is honor but no merit in the Blessed Virgin's being the Mother of God. Now if she did not merit heaven by becoming the Mother of God, how did she merit it? for it is of faith that heaven is the reward of merit. I answer, by her life

on earth. It was not as the Mother of God that she won heaven, but as Mary, the daughter of Joachim, the wife of Joseph, the mother of Jesus. It is impossible to read the Gospels without seeing how careful our Lord was to make us understand this. He seems to have been afraid, all along, that the splendor of that character of Mother of God would eclipse the woman and the saint.
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Thus once when He was preaching, a woman in the crowd, hearing his words of wisdom, and, perhaps, piercing the veil of his humanity, and thinking what a blessed thing it must be to be the mother of such a son, exclaimed: "_Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck,_" [Footnote 89] but He answered immediately: "_Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it_."

[Footnote 89: St. Luke xi., 27-28.]

No one doubts that the Blessed Virgin did hear the Word of God, and keep it. So our Lord's words are as much as to say: 'You praise my mother for being my mother; what I praise her for is her sanctity.' In the same way, when they came to Him on another occasion, when there was a great throng about Him, and said: "_Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee_," He answered: "_Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said: Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother_." [Footnote 90]

[Footnote 90: St. Matt, xii., 48-50.]

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External advantages, however great, even to be related to the Son of God, are as nothing in his sight, compared to that in which all may have a part--obedience to his Father's will. Perhaps, also, this is the explanation of his language at the marriage of Cana in Galilee. When the wine failed, and his mother came to Him and asked Him to exert his Divine power to supply the want, He said: "_Woman, what hast thou to do with me? My time is not yet come_." [Footnote 91]

[Footnote 91: St. John, ii., 4.
(Archbishop Kenrick's Translation.)]

He does not allow her request on the score of her maternal authority, but what He refuses on this ground He grants to her virtue and holiness, for He immediately proceeds to perform the miracle she had asked for, though, as He said, his time was not yet come. So, too, on the cross He commends the Blessed Virgin to St. John's care, not under the high title of Mother, but the lowly one of Woman. "_Woman, behold thy son._" [Footnote 92]

[Footnote 92: St. John xix., 26.]

Now why was this? Did not our Lord love his Mother? Was He not disposed to be obedient to her as his mother? Certainly; but it was for our sakes He spoke thus.
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In private, at Nazareth, we are told, he was "subject to her," but on these great public occasions, when crowds were gathered around Him to hear Him preach, when He hung on the Cross, and a world was looking on, He put out of view her maternal grandeur,

in compassion to us, lest there should be too great a distance between her and us, and we should lose the force of her example. He wished us to understand that Mary, high as she was, was a woman, and in the same order of grace and Providence with us. We might have said Oh, the Blessed Virgin obtains what she asks for on easy terms. She has but to ask and it is done. She enters heaven as the son of a nobleman comes into his father's estate, by the mere title of blood and lineage. But no: our Saviour says: "_To sit on my right hand is not mine to give you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father_." [Footnote 93]

[Footnote 93: St. Matt, xx., 23.]

It is not a matter of favor and arbitrary appointment; not even my Mother gains her glory in that way. She must comply with the terms on which my Father promises heaven to men, and therefore the Church applies to her words spoken of another Mary: "_Mary hath chosen the best part; therefore it shall not be taken away from her_."

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Oh, blessed truth! Mary is one of us. Her destiny, high as it is, is a human destiny. And she reached it in a human fashion. She built that splendid throne of hers in heaven with care and labor while she was on the earth. She laid the foundation of it in her childhood, when her feet trod the Temple aisles. She reared its pillars, when with faith, purity and obedience unequalled, she received the message of the Archangel. And her daily life at Bethlehem, Egypt, and Nazareth, her holy, loving ways with Joseph, and with Jesus, her perfect fulfilment of God's law, her interior fervent acts of prayer, covered it with gold and ivory. Then, when the blind world was going on its way of folly; while one King Herod was deluging villages in blood, and another steeping his soul in the guilt of incest, and of the blood of the Son of God; while the multitude were doubting, and Scribes and Pharisees disputing about Christ, the lowly Jewish maiden, with no other secret but love and prayer, was preparing for herself that bright mansion in Heaven wherein she now dwells, rejoicing eternally with her Son.

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Oh happy news! One, at least, of our race has perfectly fulfilled her destiny. Here we can gain some idea of what God created us for. Here is the destiny that awaits man when original sin does not mar it; when co-operation with grace and unswerving perseverance secure it. The Jews were proud of Judith. They said: "_Thou art the glory of Jerusalem; thou art the joy of Israel; thou art the honor of our people_." So we may say of Mary: 'O Mary, thou art the pride of our race. In thee the design of God in our creation has been perfectly attained. In thee the redemption of Christ has had its perfect fruit. Mankind conceives new hopes from thy success. Christ, indeed, has entered into glory; but Christ was God. Mary is purely human, and Mary has succeeded. Why tarry we here in the bondage of Egypt? Mary has crossed the Red Sea, and has taken a timbrel in her hand and sings her thanksgiving unto God. True it is that she is fleet of foot, and we are halt and weak; but even she needed the grace of God, and the same grace is offered to us, that we may run and not

faint. Listen to her song of triumph.
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She does not set herself above us, but claims kindred with us, and bids us hope for the same grace which she has received. "_My soul doth magnify the Lord, for he hath exalted the humble, and hath filled the hungry with good things. And his mercy is from generation to generation to them that fear him_."
Another proof that the destiny of the Blessed Virgin is substantially the same with ours, is the fact that, in Scripture the same expressions are used to describe her glory and ours. Sometimes those who are not Catholics when they hear what high words we use of the Blessed Virgin, are scandalized; but we use almost no words of the Blessed Virgin that may not, in their measure, be applied to other Saints. It is true that the Blessed Virgin has some gifts and graces in which she stands alone--as her character of Mother of God, and her Immaculate Conception--but, as I said before, these are dignities and ornaments conferred on her, and are not the source of her essential happiness in Heaven. In other respects, her glory is shared by all the Saints. Thus, Mary is called "Queen of Heaven;" but are not all the blessed called in Holy Scripture, "_kings and priests unto God_?" [Footnote 94]

[Footnote 94: Apoc. i., 6.]

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Is she said to sit at the "King's right hand?" and are not we too promised a place at his right hand, and to "_sit on thrones?_" [Footnote 95]

[Footnote 95: Apoc. iii., 21.]

Is she called the "Morning Star?" and does not St. Paul, speaking of all the Saints, say, "_star differeth from star in glory_." [Footnote 96]

[Footnote 96: 1 Cor. xv., 41.]

Is she called a "Mediatrix of Prayer?" and is it not said of every just man, that his "_continual prayer availeth much?_" [Footnote 97]

[Footnote 97: St. James v., 16.]

Is she called "The Spouse of God?" and does not the Almighty, addressing every faithful soul, say, "_My love, my dove, my undefiled?_" [Footnote 98]

[Footnote 98: Can. v., 2.]

Is she called the "Daughter of the Most High?" and are not we too called the "_Sons of God?_" [Footnote 99]

[Footnote 99: 1 St. John iii., 2.]

The glory of the Blessed Virgin, then, differs from that of the other Saints in degree, but not in kind. She is not separated from them, but is one of them. She goes before them. She is the most perfect of them. But she is one of them. And for this reason, the glory of the Blessed Virgin gives us the best conception of the magnificence of our destiny. When a botanist wishes to describe a flower, he selects the most perfect specimen.
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When an anatomist draws a model of the human frame, he makes it

faultless. So we, to gain the truest idea of our destiny, must lift up our eyes to the Blessed Virgin on her heavenly throne, and say: Oh! my soul, see for what thou art created. Think of this my brethren, as often as you kneel before her image, or meditate on her greatness. You cannot be what she is, but you can be like her. She is a creature like you. She is a human being like you. She is a Christian like you. And her joy, her beauty, her glory, her wealth, her knowledge, her power--nay, even the mighty efficacy of her intercession--are only what, in their measure, God offers to you. "_Glory, honor and peace to_ EVERY ONE _that worketh good for there is no respect of persons with God_." [Footnote 100]

[Footnote 100: Rom. ii., 10.]

If these things be so, what greatness it gives to human life. Perhaps, if you had lived in the times of the Blessed Virgin Mary, you would never have noticed her; or if you had known her by sight, what would she have seemed to you but a good little Jewish girl, lowly and retiring in her manners and appearance? {216}

or, later in life, a poor young woman thrust away, with her husband, from a crowded inn, or fleeing by night with an infant child? or, still later, the mother of a condemned malefactor, watching his sufferings in the crowd. Herod did not know her, and the nobles of Jerusalem were ignorant of her. She was not one of the friends of the Queen's dancing daughters. Even the rustics of the village of Bethlehem looked down on her. She carried no servants about with her, and had no palace to live in. But Faith tells us of angel visits, of union with God, of heavenly goodness, and an immortal crown. So, in like manner, how our life becomes grand and dignified when it is lighted up by faith! You know there are porcelain pictures, which in the hand are rough and unmeaning, but held up to the light reveal the most beautiful scenes and figures; so our common ordinary life, rough and unmeaning as it often seems, when enlightened by faith becomes all divine. There is a little girl who learns her lessons and obeys her parents, and tells the truth, and shuns every thing that is wicked; why, as that little girl kneels down to pray, I see a bright angel drawing near to her, and he smiles on her and says: "_Hail! Blessed art thou: the Lord is with thee._" {217}

That young man who, by a sincere conversion, has thrown off the slavery of sin, and regained once more the grace of God--what is his heart but another cave of Bethlehem, in which Christ is born, and around which angels sing: "_Glory to God in the highest; on earth, peace to men of good will_." That Christian family, where daily prayers are offered, and instruction and good example are given, and mutual fidelity is observed between the members--what is it but the Holy House of Nazareth?--the House of Jesus? Yes, good Christian, do not be cast down because you are poor, or because you suffer, or because your opportunities of doing good are limited; live the life of a Christian, and you are living Mary's life on earth. We have not, indeed, Mary's perfect sinlessness, but we have the graces of baptism, by which we may vanquish sin. We have not, as she had, the visible presence of

our Lord, but we have Him invisibly in our hearts, and sacramentally in the Holy Communion. We are not "full of grace," as she was, but we have grace without limit promised to us in answer to prayer.
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Let us assert the privileges of our birth-right. We belong to the new creation. Angels claim kindred with us. God is our father. Heaven is our home. We are the children of the Saints--yes, of her who is the greatest of the Saints. Let us follow her footsteps, that one day we may come to our Assumption, the glory of which surpassed even the power of St. John to utter. "_Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is_." [Footnote 101]

[Footnote 101: 1 John iii., 2.]

Every thing depends on our co-operating with grace. How did the Blessed Virgin arrive at such glory? By corresponding to every grace. See her at her Annunciation. The Angel comes and tells her of the grace God has prepared for her. If she had not believed, if she had not assented, what would have come of it? Why, she would have lost for all eternity the glory attached to that grace. But she did not refuse. She was ready for the grace when it was offered.
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She said "_Fiat_," "_Be it done to me according to thy word_." Oh, how much hung on that _Fiat!_ an eternal glory in Heaven. So it is with us. There are moments in our lives big with the issues of our future. God's purposes concerning the soul have a certain order. He gives one grace; if we correspond to that He gives another; if we do not correspond we lose those that depended on it; some times, even, we lose our salvation altogether. This is the key of your destiny--fidelity to grace. You have an inspiration from God: He speaks to your soul. Oh, listen to Him, and obey Him! To one He says: Abandon, O, sinner, your evil life, and turn to Me with all your heart. "_Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation!_" To another, who is already in his grace, He sends inspirations to a more perfect life, a life of higher prayer and more uninterrupted recollection. Another, by the sweet attractions of his grace, He draws away from home and kindred to serve Him as a Sister of Charity by the bed of suffering; or as a nun, to live with Him in stillness and contemplation; or as a priest to win souls for heaven. Oh, speak the word that Mary spoke: "_Be it done to me according to thy word_."
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Are you in sin? Convert without delay. Are you leading a tepid, imperfect life? Gird your loins to watchfulness and prayer. Do you feel in yourselves a vocation to a religious or sacerdotal life? Rise up and obey without delay. To-morrow may be too late. The grace may be forfeited forever. Why stand we all the day idle? Heaven is filling up. Each generation sends a new company to the heavenly host. Time is going. The great business of life remains unaccomplished. By our baptism we have been made children

of God and heirs of heaven. Labor we, therefore, to enter into that rest. Mary, dear Mother, lift up thy voice for us in heaven, that we, following thy footsteps, may one day share thy glory, and with thee praise forever God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; Amen.

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Sermon XIV.

Mortal Sin Exemplified In The History Of Judas.

"Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed."
--Matt, xxvi., 24.
(A Sermon for Passion Week.)

There are some men whose crimes have made them objects of universal and eternal infamy and execration. One of these is Judas Iscariot, whose very name is a bye-word among men. Most persons seem to think that he was quite a different being from ordinary men, and was naturally a kind of evil monster, without any thing human in him. This is a mistaken opinion. There is not so great a difference between these extraordinary sinners and ordinary ones as is commonly supposed.

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There are a great many who have an equal degree of malice, but who have no such opportunity to show it. There are others who would become equally bad under equal temptations, but whose evil tendencies are kept under by favorable circumstances, and the absence of great inducements to wickedness. It is not probable that Judas was much worse than the common run of wilful and malicious sinners, until, by a just judgment and a dreadful calamity, he fell into the occasion of committing a crime, the greatest which ever has been or can be committed by man.

In his case, the malice that is in mortal sin is only more perfectly exhibited than in others that are less heinous. The treason of Judas is an example, first, of the evil of mortal sin as an offence against God; and, second, as the ruin of the soul.

I.

The treason of Judas is an example of the evil of mortal sin, considered as an offence against God. The gist of the offence in mortal sin lies in the turning from God to the creature.

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It is a renunciation of God's friendship, a desertion of his service, a discarding of his authority, for the sake of some created good which we cannot obtain without this complete desertion from God. No one ever did this, or had the chance to do it, so plainly and visibly as Judas. He was in personal and immediate attendance upon our Lord, who is God in human nature. He was the friend, the servant and the companion of the Lord in his visible and human life. He deserted and betrayed Him for a little money, for the favor of the Jewish rulers, for the sake of a more free and self-indulgent life, and to get rid of a cross he was tired of carrying. What can be a more perfect illustration of mortal sin? You have done the same, my friend, when you have denied your faith for the sake of a genteel marriage; when you have gone to a fashionable Protestant church for the sake of improving your business; when you have dropped confession for the

sake of indulging with less restraint in worldly dissipation. You need not reproach Judas, for all you say against him rebounds upon yourself, and by your own mouth shall you be condemned, oh, wicked servant!

The offence of Judas was heightened by the lowness of his origin, compared with the dignity of Jesus Christ.

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He was a poor young man, without family, rank, or other claim on the notice of our Lord. He chose him as one of his disciples, and destined him to be one of his twelve apostles, a sharer in the glory of St. Peter and St. Paul. For such an one to betray the Master who had raised him from a station so humble to a rank so exalted was a double crime. But it is just what every sinner does. We have fallen by the sin of Adam into a low condition. Destitute of the nobility of sanctifying grace, devoid of all supernatural merit, without any claim on heaven, we have been raised to the rank of children of God, as a boon of pure mercy, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, if we then sin against God, in what respect are we better than Judas?

There was not only a great indignity in his conduct toward our Lord, but an equally great ingratitude. He owed to our Lord not only respect and obedience on account of his character and authority, but personal affection and gratitude on account of his goodness and kindness to him. He betrayed a friend as well as deserted a master.

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Oh, baseness without a parallel! But beware, lest in saying this you reproach yourself. Whenever you sin mortally you are guilty of the same ingratitude toward Jesus Christ. He has been good to you, too, and you owe Him love and gratitude. But you repay his favors with outrages and offences.

To crown all, Judas delivered up his Master to an ignominious death, and imbrued his hands in the blood not only of an innocent man, but of a friend, a benefactor, nay, more, in the blood of his Lord and Redeemer. This was a new and unheard of crime. Men had heard before of fratricide, of parricide, of regicide, but they had yet to learn of that which included all these and more, of Deicide. Strictly speaking, this crime of Deicide can never be repeated. The Son of God gave to wicked men the chance of putting Him to death, once, and only once. But every one who commits mortal sin, is guilty of a crime which partakes of the nature of the crime of Judas. Sin was the cause of the death of Jesus Christ. He died for every sinner and for every sin. Whoever commits sin, then, consents to that which caused the death of our Blessed Lord, makes common cause with his murderers, and thus becomes accessory to his death.

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II.

The treason of Judas is also an example of the way in which a sinner ruins himself.

It is probable that Judas was once a faithful disciple. He had a vocation from the Lord Himself, to leave the world and follow Him. God calls to his service only those who are well disposed and fit for it, and we may, therefore, believe that Judas was at

least sincere and piously inclined, before the Lord called him. He believed in our Lord's teaching, when he heard Him preach; he followed Him with constancy for a length of time; and obeyed the inward grace and outward call by which He invited him to become his disciple. As a disciple he must have been faithful, and must have shown himself worthy of a higher grace. For the Lord, who knew his heart, and always chooses fit instruments for his purposes, gave him a vocation to become a Priest, and not only that, but a Bishop and an Apostle. With this vocation He gave him all the special gifts and graces necessary to prepare him for the apostolic ministry, to make him a worthy companion of St. Peter and St. John, and to enable him to win like them, the gratitude and veneration of the world, and a glorious crown in heaven.
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He preached and wrought miracles like the others, and very likely was for a time not only without grievous sin, but really fervent and holy. Reason and experience teach us that he could not have changed all at once from a fervent apostle to a faithless apostate, ready to betray his Lord for money. He must have changed gradually. He relaxed by degrees in fervor, he neglected little things, and did not profit by the admonitions which the Lord gave him from time to time. Thus he went on from bad to worse, growing more indifferent and hardened every day, heaping up venial sins continually, and disposing himself for those that were more grievous. He became unkind and quarrelsome with his fellow disciples, dishonest in the use of the common purse which was intrusted to his care, harsh and repulsive toward the poor people who came to hear the preaching of his Master, and to recommend their wants to his mercy.
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So he lost the grace of God, fell, we know not where or how, into mortal sin, and became an alien in heart from Jesus Christ, though still in name and appearance his disciple. By degrees he began to despise his Master, to sicken of his service, to disbelieve his words. He was already a slave of Satan, having lost sanctifying grace, and, it may be, faith also. When Satan suggested to him to abandon his Master, to betray him for money, and then to go away and live as he pleased, he dallied with the temptation, deliberated, and at length consented. The devil then took complete possession of him, drove him on, and wove a chain of circumstances around him that hurried him forward to the execution of his treacherous intentions. What follows we all know. Having put the seal on his own guilt and perdition by a sacrilegious communion, he delivered over the Lord to death. His crime being now consummated, the diabolical spell that had been around him was broken, despair seized on his soul, he hanged himself and went "to his own place," bequeathing the memory of his infamous treason to the execration of all future generations.
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This is the history of many a one, besides Judas. For instance, take this from the life of St. Francis of Assisi. [Footnote 102]

[Footnote 102: F. Challipe's Life, vol. i.. p. 91.]

"A sixth disciple, named John, and surnamed de Capella, began well, and finished ill. He was charged with distributing among

his brethren the alms that had been contributed, and took on himself voluntarily the office of procuring all that was wanting for the community. But, by degrees, he became attached to temporal things, went abroad too much, and relaxed extremely in the observance of regular discipline. The holy Founder, after giving him a number of severe reprimands in vain, threatened him with a frightful malady and a miserable death, as the punishment of his indocility. In fact, this bad religious was smitten with a horrible leprosy, which he had not the patience to bear. He abandoned his companions, the poor of Jesus Christ, and giving himself up to despair, hanged himself, like Judas." This example is no doubt an unusual one, in this respect, that the penalty of this unhappy man's sinful life was more striking and visible than is commonly the case.
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But it is essentially like thousands of examples everywhere, and in every-day life, in which the origin, progress and end of sin are really the same, though more secret and hidden. So the careless Christian begins his downward career, by a negligence which goes from bad to worse, from small things to those of greater and greater moment, until all fervor is lost, and his conscience falls into a deadly slumber. Then come grievous sins; singly at first, but afterward in quick succession. This stage of the disease lapses at last into the state of obduracy and final impenitence. Sacrilege is very commonly mixed up with it, more or less, as the religions, ecclesiastical or secular condition of the person, or his peculiar character and circumstances, may in a greater or lesser degree expose him to the occasion of profaning sacraments. He may be hurried along into an open, and perhaps, from his station and antecedents, a very scandalous apostacy from the faith, and thus become a declared traitor to his allegiance to Jesus Christ and the Church. He may fill up the measure of his wickedness in some other way; but it ends the same, in self-destruction: not by suicide, but by the gradual and sure destruction of conscience, and of moral and spiritual vitality, ending in a spiritual and eternal death which knows no resurrection forever.
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So he goes "to his Own place," to the place he has prepared for himself, the place he has merited, the place that suits his moral condition, the place assigned to him as his eternal abode by the unerring justice of God.
This is the sinner's progress in following the footsteps of Judas. Negligence, habitual sin, contempt of divine warnings, sacrilege, obduracy, abandonment of God, despair, eternal death. At every stage it becomes harder to go back. Stop, then, where you are; or better still, if it is not too late, beware of taking the first step. If you have not yet gone very far in the downward path, and are only beginning to be negligent, take warning by the example of Judas, and correct that negligence at once, or else it may lead to the most fatal consequences. "_He that despiseth small things, shall perish by little and little_." It is easier to preserve yourself from a great fall, by diligence and care, than it will be to remedy the hurts you will receive by

falling, and to regain the height on which you are now standing.
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You can never tell whither any sin will lead you. You can never calculate the consequences of yielding to any temptation. Venial sins, even, may become the principle of great and fatal disorders, which will lead you to your final ruin. Threads, fine at first as spider's webs, may be so woven together, and become so strong by being multiplied, that they will entangle you in meshes which cannot be broken through without the most violent efforts. Sweep your soul, then, diligently, of these spider-webs of negligence, or you may become, like Judas, an example of one who began well, but ended miserably, and may finish that career which you commenced in the service and friendship of Jesus, by betraying both your Master and your own soul.
But even if you have already gone far in sin, it is never too late to go back, until eternal death has actually made you its prey and closed its gate behind you. The case of Judas was not hopeless until after he had placed the halter on his own neck. The Lord never ceased to remonstrate with him until that last treacherous kiss, and though after this He spoke to him no more, and Judas never saw Him again, yet He did not close the door of mercy on him even then.
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He closed it on himself by despairing. This was the greatest and most fatal of all his sins. Had he hoped in the mercy of Jesus Christ; had he returned to Him in sorrow and tears; had he thrown himself at the feet of his injured Master, and implored pardon, he would, no doubt, have been too late to save that Master's life, but he would have been in time to save his own soul. Even from the Cross the Saviour would have smiled upon him, and the guilt of his treason would have been effaced in that redeeming blood which his treason had made to flow. Oh! sinner, never despair! Even if you have gone to the length of an open apostasy, do not abandon hope; do not place the halter around your own neck. All is not yet lost. Retrace your steps; return to Jesus Christ; offer him the kiss, not of a traitor, but of a penitent; and you will receive from his clemency the pardon of your sins.

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Sermon XV.

The Interior Life.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is within you."
St. Luke xvii. 21.
(From the Gospel for the 13th Sunday after Pentecost.)

A few years ago, and the people of California were a quiet, agricultural and trading people, by which they procured for themselves the three great wants of life; viz., shelter, clothing and food. They were content with as much as this, for they were unconscious that underneath their very feet, as they were working their farms and gardens, there lay that immense treasure of gold which has since been brought to this city. By chance a lucky spade turned over a clod of earth and stone, on which a yellowish tinge was noticed.
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It was found to be gold. The report soon found its way next door, and then about the neighborhood, and so went rapidly through the country. The cabbages and potatoes, the peas and beans, which till now had been the pride of the cottage, were pulled up without ceremony and thrown aside, in the eager search that was everywhere being made for gold. The news came over to us, and I dare say you remember well the excitement created by it here. The great tide of commerce was turned toward San Francisco, and such was the haste of our people to get there, that a crowd was daily seen pressing around the offices of the various packet and steamship lines, eager to secure an early passage.

We, my dear brethren, are living on the surface of life, with our cabbages and beans, very much as those Californians were, and all the while within our souls there is a mine of untold riches, of which we seem to be quite unconscious. We are leading a grovelling life, when we might be living an angelic one. Our condition differs as much from what it might be as the state of the caterpillar differs from that of the butterfly.

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They are the same creature, yet how different! The caterpillar crawls upon the ground; it feeds upon roots and leaves, and one is tempted to put his foot upon it as he passes by. The butterfly is a light airy thing on beautiful wings. It feeds upon honey which it gathers from the flower gardens, and is the admiration of every one. But before the caterpillar can become a butterfly it must build for itself a little house of silk. It must enclose itself there, and in proportion as it dies to itself, it lives again in the butterfly. My brethren, this house is your soul. There, with God, is your true life. Would that I could make you realize this. Would that I could realize it myself. Well, in order to do something toward it, I will this morning show you under what beautiful images Holy Scripture describes the beauty of a soul that is in union with God. I will name two great advantages of this union; and finally, I will tell you the conditions on which God offers it to you.

I. The beauty of a soul in union with God.

We cannot see our souls, and God has no where given us a description of them; but many things are said in Holy Scripture, from which we get the idea of their great beauty when united to him.

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The soul is called God's "Palace." This is what our Lord says in my text: "_The kingdom of God is within you_." What is the idea that we have of a kingdom? Why, I suppose we call to mind some of the great powers of Europe, with their extensive dominions, great power and wealth. Among the cities of these Kingdoms there is usually one more populous than the rest, where the streets are laid out, and the public buildings and private houses are erected with a view to magnificence; as for example: London in England; Paris in France; Vienna in Austria; St. Petersburg in Russia. The Sovereign's palace is there. This palace is grand in its proportions outside, and it is furnished within in as costly a manner as gold and silver, polished wood, rich silks and tapestry and choice paintings can make it.

Well, then, the soul must be this, and more; for it is the palace of the King of kings. Holy Angels are there in attendance upon Him. There He entertains his faithful at his table with the Bread of Angels. It is there that He deigns to hold those conversations with the soul after communion that are so precious.
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St. Teresa has this same idea under another figure. She begins by saying that the beauty of the soul is incomprehensible. That the mind cannot conceive its real worth, as words cannot express it. Then she says that she conceives the soul to be like a magnificent diamond castle, with rooms above and below; but in the very centre there is a room more spacious and more sumptuous than all the others, where our Lord dwells with the soul.
The soul is God's "Temple." "_Ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost_," [Footnote 103] says St. Paul.

[Footnote 103: 1 Cor. vi., 19.]

We often see engravings of those grand Cathedrals and churches which are so common abroad. There is one in almost all the old towns of England. Their tall spires or massive towers stand majestically over the country, and their whole exterior is elaborately worked in stone. On the inside they are poor and cold enough, it is true, for a false worship has been set up there, which has stripped them of their fine statuary and paintings, banners and rich hangings, which formerly decorated the sanctuary and walls, and they are no longer what they once were, "the Temples of God."
{239}
There is no correspondence between the size and magnificence of those churches of the olden time, and the formal service that is held in them now; and so a few square yards are penned off in the middle for the handful who will assemble. But there has been a time when those walls were two narrow to enclose the thousands who came to follow their Lord as He made the circuit of his Temple, in the procession of Corpus Christi. Those floors have been covered with kneeling multitudes who waited for his benediction in the Blessed Sacrament. Then, gold and silver, lights and flowers, massive candlesticks and rich vestments adorned the altars with something approaching to regal splendor, for it was the Temple of God. Those cathedrals and churches are now standing, after the lapse of hundreds of years, as monuments of the ancient faith that inspired their erection; but the day will come when, as our Lord said of Jerusalem, "_one stone shall not be left upon another_." But our souls are everlasting Temples. How strong, then, as well as how beautiful, God must have made them!
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The soul is a "Fountain" of never-failing water. This is what our Lord told the Samaritan woman. "_The water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up unto everlasting life_." [Footnote 104]

[Footnote 104: John iv., 14.]

I think our blessed Saviour could not have said any thing which would have given us a more beautiful idea of the effect of his presence upon our souls. The deserts of the East are like the

ocean in their great, boundless wastes of hot sand. Travellers tell us that for days there is no living object to be seen, even to a blade of grass. Occasionally, however, they come upon what appears like an island, where there are trees, grass and flowers. Invariably it is found that in the middle of these "oases," as they are called, there is an overflowing spring of the purest water. This is the cause of all that verdure in the midst of so barren a wilderness. How beautiful such places must be to the weary traveller, and how grateful to the eye, as he catches sight of them in the distance! How he must bless God as he sits under the cool shade of the rich foliage, or as he bathes his feverish brow and limbs in the cool waters!

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Well, our souls are so many "green islands" in the desert of this world, and our Lord is the fountain in their centre. His presence adorns the soul with all that fragrance and fulness which we find in the innocent and pure. St. Teresa had a great fondness for this passage of Scripture from her very childhood. Though at that time she did not know the value of this promise of our Lord as she did in after life, she says: "I very often asked the Divine Master to give to me this precious water."

The soul is God's "Image." "_Let us make man to our image and likeness_." [Footnote 105] So God said when he created the first human soul.

[Footnote 105: Gen. i., 26.]

Our souls, then, are like God. God is the perfection of all beauty. As we say, God is truth, so we say, God is beauty. There are two ways in which we are like God, for He says: "Let us make man to our image _and_ likeness." In one way, the devils and souls in mortal sin are like God. They have the gifts of intelligence and free will. This is the image of God which, when a creature once has, it can never lose. The likeness which a soul in the state of grace bears to God, is in the gift of habitual, or sanctifying grace.

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This can be lost, and the devils and souls in mortal sin have lost it. God has made us pupils of his, as it were. Our Master has drawn the outline of Himself upon our souls, and our work is to fill up this sketch with light and shade. A Christian is therefore an artist of the highest class; for there can be no subject so inspiring as his. What a beautiful talent it is to be able to transfer to canvas some scene from nature, of which it becomes the exact copy. There are certain combinations of water and mountain, meadow and foliage, nature and art, blended and softened by a peculiar state of the atmosphere, which act like a spell upon one. All we can say, is, how very beautiful!

But, beautiful as it is, it will vanish before the winter's frost. The canvas, too, in time will moulder away. But the image of God on our souls is more beautiful than any scene in nature, and it will preserve its beauty forever.

These are some illustrations from Holy Scripture which enable us to form an idea of what is the beauty of a soul when in union with God.

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Did you ever know, my brethren, that God had been so good to you? Have you not over looked and undervalued your treasure? This life of yours hitherto, on the surface of things, has been both a great mistake and a great misfortune.

II. To make you realize this, let me tell you two great advantages of an interior life.

The first is, the great "peace" that it brings to us. Peace, did I say? Is it, then, possible to wear a constant smile in this valley of tears? Can these fretful souls of ours find rest even upon earth? We pray for the Holy Souls in Purgatory, "that they may rest in peace," as if we felt that there was no rest short of Heaven. Can we find it, then, even short of Purgatory? Yes, for it is a share, by anticipation, of the ineffable peace which those holy souls enjoy in the possession of God. Like them, we can be glad while we suffer. Joy and suffering are not irreconcilable! How was it with our blessed Lord? You know He is called the "Man of sorrows," in that his Passion is thought to have been before Him during the whole of his thirty-three years on earth. But all the while, his human soul was in the perpetual enjoyment of the Beatific Vision, and therefore in perfect peace. {244}

Well, of this peace, in the midst of trouble, our Lord, as the great Head, allows us, his members, to participate. Hear what He said to his Apostles: "_Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you_." [Footnote 106]

[Footnote 106: John xiv., 27.]

What robs a man of his peace of soul, is either an inordinate desire for something which he has not, or the fear of losing some thing that he has. Now, the man who lives an interior life, is in the possession of God, who is the fulness and perfection of every good. He does not fear the loss of pleasure, for his highest pleasure is to do the will of God. He says, it is not God's will that I should have pleasure now. Nor of riches, for he fears them as a snare. He does not fear poverty--he will have less to give account of at the Last Day; nor of station, for he feels that there is no nobility like being a son of God. He is living with God and his Holy Angels, as their companion; as though God and they and he were the only beings in the world. Nor of comforts, for he has learned to bear his cross, and he is learning to love it. Nor of reputation, for he seeks the favor of God alone. {245}

Man's judgment of him will neither aid nor injure him before his only true Judge. The daily round of bodily weakness, sickness, disappointment, or mortification, is turned into so many occasions of gaining merit with God. It is true of him what the Scripture says, that "_all things work together for good, to those who love God_." [Footnote 107] He is like Midas, the fabled King of Thrace, who was said to have the power to turn every thing that he touched into gold.

[Footnote 107: Rom. viii., 28.]

St. Basil was such a man. On one occasion he was called before a magistrate, who said in great anger, "Basil, I will tear out your liver." "Well," was the meek reply, "you will do me a great favor then, for it is a great trouble to me where it is." Such a man is

invulnerable.
To come nearer to our own day, I can show you such a man, in our Holy Father Pope Pius IX. What is the invariable testimony, both of Protestants and of Catholics, as to the manner of his receiving them? Every one speaks of his composure, of his cheerful conversation, and of the sweetness of his smile. Now, where is the man in Europe, who has so much care and anxiety upon him as he has?
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For whom would we be so ready to make excuse, in case we were told that he was found to be reserved, or even at times out of humor, on occasion of those "receptions," which are so numerous and indiscriminate, and which we would think must be so very tiresome to him? At this moment, while Sovereigns and statesmen are threatening him with the seizure of the ancient inheritance of the Church, which is intrusted to his care, and himself with banishment, not only is he calm, but he prophesies that, from these present trials, great glory shall result to the Church. Pius the Ninth is a man who lives in close union with God. Down in the bottom of his soul there reigns a supernatural calm. With an interior life comes also a strength to do and to suffer, which is naturally quite beyond us.
As our Lord chose his Apostles among a class of men whose natural advantages were very few, in order that his guidance and power might be shown in them, so He has adorned the early Church with a number of young female Martyrs, whose amazing fortitude under the severest torture, clearly proves that He was also the source of their strength.
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Let me give you an example. St. Potamiena was a Nubian slave of a Roman master. He required her consent to something which was contrary to the law of God. On her refusal, he threatened her with such torture as was exercised upon those who, like herself, had embraced the Christian faith. The magistrate before whom she was brought on the charge of being a Christian, commanded her to obey her master in all things, or she should be cast into the cauldron of boiling oil, which was seething before her. She replied: "I have but one request to make: allow my clothes to remain upon me; then, if you will, let me down by inches into this cauldron, and you will see what strength Jesus Christ, my Lord, will give me to bear its pain." This was the cruel death by which, without a murmur, she won her crown of "Virgin Martyr."
Let me give you another example of fortitude, which you can perhaps better appreciate. Some few years since, in England, there was a young lady of noble family, and of very attractive manners, who became a Religious in a convent near the town where I then resided.
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To please her father, she had, for several years past, attended the numerous parties that were given among her circle of acquaintance. Her presence was always thought to be a great acquisition. But all the while, her heart was in religion. She longed for the time when her father would yield, and allow her to try her vocation within a convent's walls. At last, he did; but

what was his grief when he found that she had chosen one of the most austere orders in the church. She wished to become a Poor Clare. Now, you may not know that a Poor Clare never leaves the walls of her convent; she never sees any one; she walks bare-footed; she uses the painful discipline, and spends many hours of the dead of the night in prayer, while the outer world is asleep. Here, then, was a young girl who had been brought up in luxury, entering at once upon a life of the greatest severity. When I last heard of her, which was a long time after she had entered this convent, she was said to be as merry as a cricket, and the life of her convent, as she had formerly been of her parties of pleasure.
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Now, how shall we account for such fortitude as this? I will tell you. It was our Lord in her heart, where she had made Him a home, that gave her the courage and strength she needed to comply with his call to her, to be a spouse of his. That became easy to her, which her relatives and friends could not comprehend. There is no one who can do any thing great for God, without this interior life. I will say even more than this; neither she nor any other member of a religious community, can hope to persevere in any well-regulated convent, on any other ground than this. With this, any one, whether in religion or in the world, can trample underfoot the difficulties and trials peculiar to their state of life.
God offers us this interior life, on two conditions. In the first place, we must be in the state of grace. One must first be introduced to a man, before he can become his personal friend. A man in mortal sin is as though he did not know God. He needs to make his acquaintance. He is in a condition that is even worse than that of a stranger; he is God's enemy, and he must be first reconciled.
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To drive a locomotive at the rate of forty miles an hour, one must first get it upon the track, before it will move at all. You, then, my dear brethren, who are so unfortunate as to be in mortal sin--you can take no comfort from any thing that I have said. I have been offering peace to such as lead a Christian life; but what does Holy Scripture say of you? "_There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked_."
Again, we must be generous with God. Ah! now that I have told you the terms, I tremble for the cause I am advocating. It seems to me that I hear you answering, as some other disciples of our blessed Lord answered him: "_This saying is hard, and who can hear it_." [Footnote 108]

[Footnote 108: John vi., 61.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is John vi., 60.]

What is it to be generous? It is to give from a motive of love, and because it is a pleasure to give. It is to consider the object to which we are giving, rather than the amount of what we are giving. What millions of dollars are being expended on the Central Park here just beside us? We consider the money contributed, as little in comparison with the importance of the work. It is an object of pride with us to see tins Park as

ornamental as money and art can make it.
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See what generous efforts are being made, by both sides, in this unhappy conflict, which has made a battle-field of our country! Not money only, but blood and life, are as freely offered as water.
Our citizens who hurried off to California at the time of the gold excitement of which I have spoken, thought nothing of the discomfort of a close state-room on board a crowded ship, for a five months voyage. They had already sacrificed home, friends and business, and all this was on the mere chance of success.
Now, how is it with us? The burden of the sermons preached from this altar, the year round, has been merely to get _justice_ done to God. We have been doing our best to get from you what is barely God's _due_. Our endeavor has been to get you to restore to God those rights of his, of which you have defrauded Him; and at best, we have had but partial success. But to-day, I ask you not for justice, but for generosity. Did I not say well then, when I expressed my fear that God would find but few who would accept his terms?
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On his part, He offers to come and dwell in your souls. He offers you interior peace, supernatural strength, holiness, and salvation. Now what does He ask of you in return for all this? That you will act the part of a generous friend toward Him, by giving Him a large share of your thoughts, words, and actions. He is the magnet in the centre of your hearts. He is always drawing you toward Himself. He asks that you will put no obstacle in the way of his influence upon you. If disturbing causes for the moment turn you from Him, like the needle which may be shaken so as to point to the East or the South, like it He calls upon you not to rest till you have found your rest again in Him. St. Teresa says, that a generous soul _flies_ to God. She does not say that it runs, but that it flies to God. Now, what are we doing? We are content to creep and crawl toward God, like worms and caterpillars.
My dear brethren, I have told you a great truth, I have discovered to you a great treasure. It is within the reach of each one of you. Now I call upon this congregation for some companions to go with me in search of this treasure.
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I do not expect to arouse the mass of you, as the cry of "gold" from California aroused the people of this city. I know the sad truth, that most people love gold better than they love God. But I _do_ count upon some. You would not expect that I should urge this "Interior Life" upon you, and remain myself as I am? Well then. I am going to try for it, and I call again upon you for some souls, few though they may be, who with me, will try to be generous with God. I call upon you by your Saviour's love in dying a painful and shameful death, to purchase it for you. I call upon you by his still further love in securing to you his abiding presence, in the most Holy Sacrament of the altar. Lastly, I call upon you by that act of his love which would be satisfied with nothing short of making your heart a tabernacle,

as it were, where He may dwell perpetually, where He may live your life, and where you may live his life, as true children of St. Paul, who said: "_I live now no longer, but Christ liveth in me_." I have put my question. I have made my call upon you. I leave the answer with yourselves.

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Sermon XVI.

True Christian Humility.

"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled,
and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
--St. Luke, xviii. 14.

(From the Gospel for the 10th Sunday after Pentecost.)

It is impossible to mistake the great moral of this parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. It is intended to teach us humility. The Pharisee, with all his pretensions to piety and morality, was rejected because he was proud. The Publican, like the generality of revenue officers in that day, was loaded with sins; but he was sorry for them, and being humble, and ready to acknowledge himself for what he was, his prayer was accepted. All piety, therefore, without humility, is false. No matter what they may say about a man's good deeds or virtues; if he is proud, he is no saint.

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There is no surer test of solid Christian virtue than humility. St. Philip Neri once called to see a sick Roman lady, who enjoyed a high reputation for sanctity. He found her sitting up, looking very weak, and very pious. Being desirous of putting all this perfection to the test, he lifted his dusty shoe upon the beautiful counterpane which covered the bed, and which, as it appeared to him, the good dame regarded with more than ordinary satisfaction. It turned out as he expected. He might as well have put his toe into a hornet's nest, for the pious lady was so mortified at the soiling of her counterpane that she let loose her tongue upon him in such strong Italian terms as came first to mind. "I wish you good morning, holy sister," said St. Philip. We may easily imagine what he thought of her sanctity.

Indeed, to prove the necessity of this virtue, we need go no farther than to the example contained in this day's gospel, and to the words of our blessed Lord in the text; for He tells us in plain terms: "_Every one, that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted_."

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Since, then, humility is so necessary, let us study it this morning; let us try to discover what true humility is, and to fill our hearts with the esteem of it, and the love of it. Christian humility I understand to be this: _A lowly estimate of one s own worth in the light of Divine Truth_. This is, I am well aware, a definition of humility in the mind, rather than that of the heart; but it is not necessary to dwell upon any such distinction here, for humility of the heart is nothing else than the heart's consent to this lowly estimate of one's self, and practically speaking the two are seldom found apart.

1. Humility, I say, is a lowly estimate of one's own worth. Men

are proud because they esteem themselves too highly; and this they do because they look at themselves in a false light. They look at themselves with worldly eyes, and compare themselves with what they see around them. They plume themselves up on advantages which, in the eyes of faith, are of little value. They look too low. The king sees nothing greater than himself, and looks down upon the nobles; the nobles look down upon the untitled gentry.
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We have neither king nor nobles in our country, but we have a class of gentry who live upon fortunes made by their fathers, and were reared in good society. These look down upon those who have made their own fortunes by some honest trade. The tradesman looks down upon the farmer, the farmer upon the hired laborer, and the laborer who has a shanty, with a cow and pigs, finds some one still poorer to look down upon; and this last, perhaps, is proudest of all, for he is descended from some patriot of the Revolution, or, it may be, from Brian Boroihme. If, on the contrary, they would look at the sacred law of God, if they would study the pure and holy lessons of the Gospel, if they would raise their eyes upward to the high and heavenly destiny for which they were created--if by this new light they would compare themselves as they are with what they might be, and ought to be, the trifling advantages of this world would disappear, their pride would wither away, and give place to humility, the earliest, if not the sweetest flower of the Christian year.
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But how is it with those who are _spiritually_ proud? Do not they estimate themselves by the light of faith? No. Their pride would soon die out if they did. Faith, directing their eyes upward, would discover to them in God, in Jesus, and in the Saints, what true holiness is, and their poor store of sanctity would show like thumb-marks in a prayer-book, or spots upon the sun. In the darkness of a cloudy night, when only the nearest objects that lie about your feet are visible, your thoughts are bound up in that little circle as if all the universe were near you and beneath you, and you walking on its summit; but when the clouds are driven away, and the moon and the vast world of stars appear, the heaven seems like a measureless dome, and you, a little insect creeping upon the floor, look up in breathless wonder. So the pathway of a conceited devotee is lighted only by a few straggling rays of religious truth, and he sees himself shining as a luminous point in that narrow circle which is visible to his eyes; but let faith open the sky above him, and give him one long, calm, thoughtful look at the world above, and he stands rebuked and humbled. Oh! how little our virtue appears when, instead of comparing ourselves with the worldly crowd around us, we look up to see how the saints have lived, and what they have done!
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During the Moorish wars in Spain, while the Spaniards were besieging a city of the Moors, a brave Castilian knight advanced before his comrades, at great peril of his life, and for a memorial of his valor, wrote upon one of the city gates: "Hitherto came Vasco Fernandez." His companions were scandalized

at his pride, and anxious to teach him a lesson. The next day, therefore, another hero of superior prowess forced his way still farther, and wrote in large letters upon another gate: "Hitherto Vasco Fernandez did not come." This, my dear brethren, is a lesson for the Christian soldier also, and well worth learning. Instead of comparing ourselves with the feeble and imperfect, and feeding our pride thereby, let us humble ourselves before the achievements of the Saints.

2. If humility is a lowly estimate of one's self, it is none the less truthful on that account. We must look upon ourselves as we really are, "in the light of Divine Truth," for this is included in my definition. One may think meanly of himself upon false grounds.

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One may be ashamed of himself for things which in reality are praiseworthy. There is no virtue in this. Genuine humility needs to borrow no aid from falsehood. She is a grace bestowed by the God of truth. Now, there is something very unhealthy and degrading in this spurious sort of humility, which is founded upon self-calumny and pious exaggeration, for it leads to self-degradation. And this is the reason why I abhor the Protestant doctrine of "total depravity." It teaches men to say that they are, from their birth and by nature, so thoroughly corrupt, that there is absolutely nothing good in them. That there is, in reality, no such thing as natural virtue. That filial piety, honesty, fidelity, love of truth, chastity and temperance, have no merit in the unregenerate man, but, on the contrary, are sinful and displeasing to God. And their doctrine of justification leaves the Saint as bad as the sinner; for although his life is acceptable with God, it is not because he is in reality any better, or that his actions are more meritorious. On the contrary, his righteousness is all "filthy rags," and there is positively nothing good in him. He is justified and saved by faith alone.

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If you say to them, "Ah, well, I understand you; this faith of which you speak is at least something meritorious, because it is enlivened and made holy by charity, or the love of God. It is this which makes faith so efficacious." No; they will not admit your explanation; there is popery in it; it is only an entering wedge to make way for the doctrine of good works. They refuse to accept any principle by which the good man may be supposed to be really any better than his neighbors. He is regenerated by the mantle of Christ's righteousness, which does not take away, but only covers up his "filthy rags." And his lesson of humility is, to insist upon it that there is nothing good in him. Now, I never saw any one, either man or woman, so bad that I thought there was no good in him; and I am always sorry to hear my Protestant friends speak so ill of themselves, for I don't believe them--I have seen too much real merit among them.

In truth, all this is false humility. It is but a form of words, and nobody in his heart believes it, or can believe it. Virtue is not vice. There is such a thing as real virtue and real merit in man.

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God has given to all a conscience, which is nothing else than His own voice applauding or rebuking. There is such a thing as natural virtue, which deserves a reward in the natural order of God's providence; and there is such a thing as Christian virtue, which is begotten by supernatural grace, and deserves the supernatural reward of the Saints.

No wonder that, in the world, humility is too often looked upon as a counterfeit and degrading virtue, which takes away all manliness, hope, courage, and generous ambition, from the soul. Oh, if it were so, I would suffer my tongue to be torn out of my mouth, before I would preach it at this altar. If ever there was a time when we needed manly virtue in the Church, it is now. If ever there was a time when Christianity seemed to have melted into effeminacy and pusillanimity, it is now. The race of Martyrs, of Confessors of the faith, of Christian athletes, of true Sages and sacred Scholars, of men of action who knew how to open their eyes, and men of prayer who knew how to shut them, of Catholic Matrons and Virgins whose hunger after holiness was not satisfied by crosses and medals, scapulars and holy water--this ancient race of Christians has well nigh dwindled away.

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We of the present day seem to be playing with religion. We are not in earnest. We are ashamed of what ought to be our glory; we are proud of that which constitutes our shame. We have no blushes for our sins; while we are too bashful to be devout, and too timid to practise virtue. We acknowledge that we are wicked; although we do not hold it to be precisely our own fault, but a fault of our nature, and we have no ambition to be better. We confess our sins by throwing all the blame upon the God who made us, and this we call humility. Oh! this is false humility. God made us well enough; our sins are all our own. If we look at ourselves as we really are, in the light of divine truth, we shall find matter enough to make us humble.

3. True Christian humility, so far from degrading, ennobles the heart in which it dwells. It leads directly to hope; and hopefulness is, in all great hearts, the essential element of their courage, energy, enterprise, and success. Now Pride, with her two brazen-faced daughters Self-conceit and Self-confidence, stands directly in the way of Christian hope and courage.

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In spiritual matters, so long as one depends upon himself, he is sure of failure; for without the grace of God one cannot advance a single step. "_Without Me_," said our Lord to His disciples, "_you can do nothing_." [Footnote 109]

[Footnote 109: St. John xv., 5.]

With repeated failure comes despair, or at least, despondency; and then all hope, courage, and generous enterprise take flight. But how different is the experience of the humble heart! It begins with self-distrust; it acknowledges its own feebleness. "_For I know_," says the Apostle Paul, "_that there is no good dwelling in me; that is to say, in my flesh. As for the will to do good, that I find present, but the power to do it I do not find_." [Footnote 110]

[Footnote 110: Rom. vii. 18.]
Not daring, therefore, to trust in himself, the humble Christian learns to lean upon God, and to confide fully in his grace; and then he becomes strong and full of courage, and can say with St. Paul, "_I can do all things through him who strengthens me_." [Footnote 111]
[Footnote 111: Phil, iv., 13.]
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Thus, in the Christian warfare, humility is the first and last lesson of all noble, generous, and heroic souls; for their great hearts are sustained by great hopes, and their hope is nourished by humility.
Humility, and that hopefulness and courage which grow out of humility, are also the most efficacious means of converting the shamefaced, downcast sinner. Take, for example, the habitual drunkard. The pledge will not help him long; and why? Because he is degraded in his own eyes, and has no confidence in his own resolutions. What he wants most is courage, and the pledge cannot give him that. The pledge teaches him to rely on himself, and on himself he cannot rely. "I'm willing," says he, "but I'm weak. If you are going to give me the pledge, put it on me strong, so that I won't break it." See how the poor fellow is anxious to find some support to lean upon, outside of his own weak will, and is almost ready to believe that the priest can give him that stability which he so much needs. Now, what is to be done? The only way is to put confidence and courage into his heart; and this is done by pointing him upward to God, the only source of grace and strength, and "_who is able to do all things more abundantly than we can ask_." [Footnote 112]
[Footnote 112: Ephes. iii., 20.]
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Do not take the heart out of him by words of contempt and scalding abuse, but speak to him kindly and encouragingly. "I know, my dear friend, that you are weak; but God is strong, and his grace is able to make you strong. He has had worse cases than you in hand before now, and made glorious Saints of them too. Never despair; you were created for better things. Make one more trial now, and with the help of God you'll shake off this miserable habit forever." That's the way to reform a confirmed drunkard who has grace enough, at least, to be ashamed of himself. Do not strike a man that is already down. Do not make him more self-degraded than he is, but out of his humiliation endeavor to fill him with hope in God. Talk to him cheerfully. Give him a clean shirt and a clean collar. Get him to wash himself and shave himself, and brush his hair. He will now begin to feel like a man; and the next step is to feel like a Christian. Take him then to the Church, and to confession; and when upon his knees, with, a contrite heart, he has confessed and renounced his sins, let him there pledge himself against that drink which has poisoned him, body and soul; and the grace of God will carry him through.
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In this way, courage and strength are born of humility. It is a virtue that does not degrade, but ennobles the heart where it

lodges.
I have said enough, I think--all, at least, my dear brethren, that can well be said within the compass of a morning's sermon, to illustrate the true nature of Christian humility. I need not enlarge upon the advantages or the necessity of it. Humility is one of those sweet virtues which carries its own recommendation with it, which needs only to be seen in order to be prized. Enough has already been said to justify that maxim of the ascetic writers, that humility is the foundation of all the virtues. Any mason will tell you, that before you can build a substantial Church you must dig away the loose dirt below, and hollow out a foundation for the walls. This is the first step of all, and until this is done, neither walls, nor tower, nor roof, nor any part of the building can be safely undertaken. It is the same in that spiritual temple which has to be erected in every soul that is saved.
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Before we build up we must first go down. Humility must first begin the work; must dig up and throw aside the sand and rubbish of pride, and self-conceit, and vain confidence, which have gathered like a loose soil upon our hearts. Then, and not till then, are we ready, with faith, and hope, and charity, and the other virtues, to rear the strong walls, and towers, and arches, with all the parts and ornaments which make the Temple of God complete within our souls. In fine, religion is of little use to one who will not learn to be humble; and therefore an English poet, varying the figure which I have employed, says very well:

"Ye who would build the churches of the Lord,
See that ye make the western portals low!
Let no one enter who disdains to bow!"

If any thing were needed to confirm this view of the necessity of humility, we have the words of our Lord himself: "_Unless you be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven_." [Footnote 113]

[Footnote 113: St. Matt, xviii., 3.]

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Are we then, my brethren, anxiously desirous of saving our souls? Would we be something in the kingdom of God? Would we become strong in faith, great in hope, abounding in charity? Then let us cast pride away! Let us learn to be humble! Let us become willing imitators of Jesus Christ, who has said: "_Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls_." [Footnote 114]

[Footnote 114: St. Matt, xi., 29.]

And let us believe his word, that there is no other way of salvation; for He it is who tells us in this day's Gospel, that "_every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted_."

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Sermon XVII

What The Desire To Love God Can Do.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength,

and with all thy mind."
--St. Luke x., 27.
(From the Gospel for the 12th Sunday after Pentecost)

There are two ways in which one may set about fulfilling this commandment of the Lord.

The first way is, to do what is barely necessary in order that we may be said to fulfil it at all. The second way is, to fulfil it in its perfection, according to the most generous meaning of the words. When may one be said to fulfil it in the first way? When he has a firm determination to keep clear, at all times, of every mortal sin. It is plain, that in this case he can be said to fulfil the commandment, because, after all, he prefers God to every thing else.

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When he determines to avoid every mortal sin, no matter what the temptation to commit it may be, he does give his whole mind and heart to God in some sense--at least, really and substantially, though it may be imperfectly. If he does not go that far, he does not in any sense fulfil this commandment. He loves the sinful thing more than he loves God. He is ready to give up God, rather than his will and pleasure. His whole heart and soul loves sin--is turned away from God. He cannot entertain any hope of eternal life: that is clear from the words of the Saviour in to-day's Gospel. The Lawyer asked Him, "_What shall I do to possess eternal life?_" The Saviour said, "_What is written in the law? how readest thou?_" He answered: "_Thou shalt love the Lord God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind_." And the Saviour replied: "_Thou hast answered right, this do and thou shalt live_." You see what the condition is. We must fulfil this commandment, or there is no eternal life for us.

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Let us not deceive ourselves. If we cannot honestly and sincerely say: 'I am determined to keep clear of every mortal sin,' our religion is vain. Don't build on the idea that we shall be saved because of the Catholic faith we profess. "_Think not_," says Jesus, "_to say, We have Abraham for our Father. Do penance; the axe is laid to the root of the tree; every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire_." [Footnote 115]

[Footnote 115: St. Luke iii., 8, 9.]

But is it enough just barely to fulfil the commandment in this way? No, it is not. One who does not go farther, runs a very great risk of being lost. The fact is, to maintain one's self in an habitual horror of mortal sin requires a great deal of fervor and recollection. In order to do so, one must also aim at avoiding every deliberate sin, small or great; one must really be in earnest to please God, or, in other words, one must strive to fulfil the commandment of the text with a good degree of perfection. That is plain enough to the dullest comprehension. A man may get over an ordinary difficulty well enough, but when a great one comes in his way, he requires all his strength and resolution to overcome it.

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So the ordinary temptations may be avoided, but there come times which try the soul, great temptations, or unusual difficulties, and great fervor is necessary to overcome them. They come just when least expected, when one is off his guard. Unless one maintains himself, then, in this state of fervor, so as to be prepared for these occasions, he must fall. A ship that is strong enough for fair weather, goes down in a strong gale of wind. A drowsy sentinel may serve as well as another for awhile, but when suddenly beset by an enemy, is slain before he can get ready to defend himself; so the Christian, who goes on the principle of keeping clear of mortal sin, but makes light of lesser sins, will be sure to come to a grievous fall at last. "_He that despiseth small things_," the Scripture says, "_shall fall by little and little_." [Footnote 116]

[Footnote 116: Ecclus. xix., 1.]

[Transcriber's note: Ecclesiastes ends with chapter 12. Sirach xix. 1. reads "Whoever does this grows no richer; those who waste the little they have will be stripped bare."]

The man who goes on the principle of gratifying his passions as much as he can short of mortal sin, will never stop there. He will overleap his boundary, as surely as the sun goes down at the close of day, as surely as the water that eats out the sand from the foundations of a house will finally bring it to ruin.
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Such a person is not only in danger of ruin in the world to come, but loses the peace and consolation which the servants of God ought to have in this world. There is too much selfishness about him. He is trying to join together two things as contrary as God and the world--an impossibility, as God Himself says: "_No man can serve two masters, for either he will love the one and hate the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon_." [Footnote 117]

[Footnote 117: Matt. vi., 24.]

Now, the Lord intended to remove these evils, to show us a sure and safe way to everlasting life, and to fill our souls habitually with a heavenly peace and consolation, by enjoining on us to fulfil this commandment with perfection, and, as the words sound--"_with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our mind, and with all our strength_." I think this is enough to prove conclusively the necessity of such fulfilment; now let us see how it is to be done.
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But, at the very outset, a great repugnance and distaste will arise, I doubt not, in the minds of many, at hearing these strong words of the text. It will seem to be asking too much--more than they can dream of fulfilling. In their idea, it would seem an impossibility, even if they had the best will in the world. "What," says the father of a family, "give my whole soul and mind to God? To take care of my children, to put bread in their mouths and clothes on their backs, takes up, and must take up the principal part of my time and attention. I must attend to my business, and use all my skill and prudence and activity to make all things meet. I can not do as the old hermits of the desert

did, pass my time in constant prayer and meditation." "What," says the mother, "give all my strength and all my mind to God! How can I do it? I must expend all my strength going up and down stairs, in the kitchen, in the dining-room, in my own room sewing and mending, to keep every thing decent for the children. I must teach them, and look out for them. One thing or another takes up my time and attention the whole day, so that, when night comes round, I am glad enough to get to bed and to sleep as quick as I can." {276}

"What," says the young woman, just growing out of her girlhood, "give my whole heart to God, when this dear old world is so pleasant, and I have such fine times in it?" Alas! not the young woman only, but the young man, and the old man and the old woman, too, are apt enough to speak in this way. Dissipation and pleasure keep such a hold upon them, that they seem to be more giddy and foolish as they grow older. And another cry comes up from all quarters: "How can I give my whole heart and soul to God, when the troubles and sorrows of the world, its cares and anxieties and disappointments fill me with bitterness and rage, and excite every evil passion? In this miserable world there is no such thing as tranquillity or peace, and how, without these, can the whole heart be given to God?"

Now, dear brethren, whoever you may be who speak or who think in this way, put down that feeling a little while; listen with patience while I propose to you a means of fulfilling Christ's commandment which will smooth away these difficulties, and enable you to do so in a manner most pleasant and agreeable to you. {277}

I do not pretend that this means takes away from you all necessity of exertion--all effort and care to do right. No, the words of Christ must hold true: "_Strive to enter into the straight gate_," He says. "_Fight the good fight_," says St. Paul. The prize of our high calling is too valuable to be had without being in earnest about it. But I can venture to say, that by the method I propose, it is by no means so difficult a thing to fulfil Christ's commandment as you may suppose; that, with a little patience and perseverance, it will become an easy and agreeable thing to do so. What is this method? It is--_to excite and keep in your souls an ardent desire to love God_. This desire will do every thing, if it is strong and lively. Now, the desire to love God is a thing natural to the soul. How so? Why, thus. We naturally desire what is good--what will conduce to our interest, our pleasure or profit. We express this by the very word "desirable." As soon as we become acquainted with the value of any thing to us, we desire it, and our desire for it is in proportion to our appreciation of it. So a good name is more desired among noble-minded men than the possession of riches--a substantial wealth, more than the pleasure of the senses. {278}

Now, what is more desirable than God? To possess Him, is to possess all that is good, all that is beautiful, all that is honorable, all that makes happiness. As soon as we know, even imperfectly, what God is, a strong desire to possess Him must arise in the soul. It may be transitory, quickly fade away and

lost sight of, through the things of the world which occupy the attention, but, whenever we reflect on it, that desire must--it is impossible that it should not--rise up in the soul. This transitory desire, which passes away like a vapor, is of little or no value; it does not last long enough to produce any practical impression. It is what is called a _velleity_, or ineffectual wish, if it is not nourished and made permanent, so as to influence one's life.

But since this desire to love God is natural to one who knows what He is, it must be, therefore, an excellent and easy means to acquire a high degree of that love. It is like the oar in the hands of the rower. It is like the wing by which a bird mounts high in the air. Why, as soon as this desire acquires force enough to control the will (and any strong desire is sure to do so), we cannot separate the desire to love God from the love of God itself.

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God does not measure our love to Him by our feelings, for we may seem to ourselves to have little, while our will shows that we love Him dearly. The trouble then with us, and I may say our only trouble is, that we do not enough desire to love Him; that we do not keep that desire bright and lively in our souls. Surely we have abundant reason for it! Besides the loveliness of God attracting us, our eternal destiny depends upon it--heaven and hell. Only let us turn over in our minds the vast importance of loving God, and we must be compelled to cry out with intense desire: "Oh, that I did love God with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind and strength!" I say, then, excite this desire; think, and think every day, on these simple things: Who am I? Who is God? What has God made me for? What is the world and all in it, compared to the love of God? Or, as the Gospel reads, "_What shall it profit me to gain the whole world, if I suffer the loss of my soul?_" Perhaps this fire of desire is almost out in your soul; but there is still fire there--there is one coal at least burning yet.

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Blow it into a flame! Keep on blowing, and that fire will be sure to spread, until the whole heap is in a blaze. You see, all that is required of you is to think, to reflect. Put your mind upon it with earnestness; and the desire of God must speedily gain the mastery of your soul. When it does so, it will regulate all its motions, and make every thing that was before so unnatural and difficult seem wonderfully easy.

Let us see how it would fare then with sin. Only keep that ardent desire to love God burning in your soul, and you will find it a very hard thing to commit any deliberate sin. It is a maxim in physical science that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. One must displace the other. So, I say, two strong desires, that are opposed to each other, cannot stay together in one heart. Either one or the other must give way and yield possession. So our Lord said long ago under cover of this comparison: "_When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things which he possesseth are in peace. But if one stronger than he cometh upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his

armor wherein he trusted, and distribute his spoils_." [Footnote 118]

[Footnote 118: St. Luke xi., 21, 22.]

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The strong desire for God's love will take away from the desire for sin all its armor, all its strength, and leave it powerless to hurt us. It had a peaceable possession of the soul before, because nothing seriously disputed its right to govern, but now the desire to love God has made it hateful and loathsome. The strong man has become weak as an infant. When we fix our eyes on sin, perhaps its allurements, and the force of old habits, may make it so attractive, that it would gain the mastery once more. Certainly it would make a desperate struggle for the mastery. But let us look up to God! Let us consider how necessary, how desirable in every view is his love, until we become resolved that at least we will long for it, and continue longing for it, as long as life is long; saying with the royal Psalmist: "_As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so panteth my soul after thee, God_." [Footnote 119]

[Footnote 119: Ps. xli. 1.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Ps. xlii. 2.]

Then will all those allurements and attractions of sin vanish. We shall only wonder how such miserable things could have blinded us so long.

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We all know how strong and engrossing the passion of earthly love is. The lover is taken with some real or fancied perfection of his mistress, either a beautiful face, a noble figure, or, it may be, with what is far more to be prized, some noble qualities of the mind or disposition. His whole mind is taken up with her night and day, and his only study is, how he may recommend his suit. If encouraged with the prospect of success, transports of joy fill his soul; if met by neglect and indifference, he is plunged into the deepest melancholy. If parents or relatives put obstacles in the way, heaven and earth are moved to get them out of the way. This is the burden of so many novels and romances that are read with eagerness by people of every condition and every class of society. If the desire of earthly beauty, of body or soul, so imperfect, so unsatisfying, so short-lived, can thus engross the soul of man, why should not the desire of God's love, who is perfect beauty, perfect wisdom, perfect goodness, and our promised portion for ever and ever, be able to do far more? It will remove all obstacles out of the way.

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We shall say, as did St. Agnes to her admirer and tempter: "Depart from me thou food for death, for I am betrothed to Him whom the angels serve, whose beauty sun and moon admire." Every creature that breathes is food for death. Sin is the food of eternal death. The idea that mortal sin brings eternal death, eternal separations from this infinite beauty and goodness, must make us regard it with the same horror that fills the soul at the sight of a ferocious tiger or deadly serpent. It will make the occasions of sin hateful, and cause the soul to exclaim: "Away from me, ye frightful temptations! I know you: Ye bear the

serpent's tongue and the tiger's claw. Ye carry with you the risk of God's anger and my eternal ruin." Who that loves God, or desires to love Him, could venture into any place, into the society of any person, where the danger of mortal sin is lurking, since he knows that mortal sin is banishment from God?
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This sacred desire would also consume every kind of deliberate sin, whether great or small. This is the language of a heart that longs after divine love. "Oh! how can I admit this, it is sinful; it will cool away the fervor of my soul, it will prevent me from making that near approach to God's love which I so much covet." Cursing and swearing, lying, slandering, pilfering, and every form of dishonesty, all immodesty in deed, word or thought, anger and foolish pride--how would these all disappear before such a fervent desire! And all this would be accomplished without any violence to the soul, quietly, but powerfully and effectually, and even with delight and satisfaction. For is it not a joy to follow where our heart's desires lead? But this holy desire leads toward God, and away from sin.
Again, this ardent desire to love God more and more will make it easy and pleasant to us to perform all our duties. We cannot work without a motive, without proposing something to ourselves which appears good in our eyes. If the work to be done is arduous or difficult, the motive or inducement must be a strong one. Such a strong motive will render what is difficult easy. How easy it is for men to take the longest journeys, endure the greatest labors, when their souls are fired with the desire of providing for their beloved ones at home, or with a noble ambition to serve their country, or even for the miserable pursuit of gain.
{285}
Only hold out the prospect of success, and any amount of labor seems light to them. Cannot the motive of God's love do as much? Is it not as great? Can it not fill the soul as much as any other? For an answer to these questions, look at what the Saints, holy men and women, have done. Urged and animated by this all-absorbing love, they have not counted life even as dear to them, but given it up freely and gladly under the most frightful torments. Look at the labors and sufferings of others, for example, of a St. Francis Xavier, enough in his case, one would suppose, to kill twenty ordinary men, all endured with the most heroic cheerfulness and joy. No, depend upon it, the labors and duties of ordinary life will seem trifling in the eyes of the Christian who longs for the love of Jesus Christ. His soul burns for opportunities. What shall I do? he says. 'Why do I stand here idle? Lord, send me something to do.' The cares, duties, and responsibilities of every-day life are the first things to be done; sent by the Lord to be done for his sake. Therefore the soul, instead of finding in them a source of complaint, finds an outlet for that activity which she desires to exercise for God.
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Suppose one would only say to himself, I want to do something to please God and increase in his love. Now, I have not to search for it; it is here before my face. To take care of my family, endure fatigue and exertion for them, to discharge with fidelity

this office or employment committed to me, by which I earn my bread. I will set right to work to do it. It is little indeed that is required of me, but that little, and nothing else, is what God requires of me now. Thanks be to Him who has made my way plain before my face. In this way do things naturally distasteful and irksome become agreeable, when the love of God is spread over them.

This desire for God's love will also moderate all excessive desire for the pleasures of the world. I do not speak now so much of sinful pleasures, as of allowing the heart to go too much after such as are allowed. Such liberty leads to sin by a short road. Our life is too important to be trifled away. God requires of us not to set our hearts on the pleasures or pomp of this world, because then it is sure to forget, what is of so much more importance, Himself.

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Now, as soon as the soul in earnest perceives that indulgence is producing this effect, that she is losing the relish for the love of God and spiritual things, she is startled, and cannot but feel afflicted. What, she says, shall I barter away so immense a good for such trifles? The very pain this reflection causes weans her away from pleasure. She judges, and judges rightly, that a small enjoyment neglected for so high a motive, will bring a higher and better happiness. We all know this in every-day affairs. Most men prefer to neglect the pleasure of the moment when they see that they gain a greater one for themselves in the future. How provident, how temperate they are in early life to lay up an abundance for old age! What old age can compare with eternity? How strong then the motive of the soul to moderate all her earthly desires, that she may have time and opportunity to look out for that eternity. The ardent lover of God looks at every thing in such a light. Pleasure becomes irksome to him very soon, because he has something so much more important on his mind, that he cannot, and will not rest easy, unless it be attended to.

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He is no longer a little child, and cannot amuse himself with running after butterflies the whole day. Besides, a greater pleasure has engrossed and filled up his soul, and leaves no room for trifles. It is the happiness of uniting himself to God. There is no drawback to this. After a day spent in trying, with all his heart, to please his God, he feels no regret for it at night, when he lies down on his pillow. He is not left uneasy, restless, and dissatisfied, as when pleasure, ease, and self-indulgence were his aim, but is full of tranquillity, full of hope, and full of the desire that his whole life may be thus spent in the same, or greater efforts, to please God. The pleasures of the world soon grow to be worthless in the eyes of such a man. With St. Paul he says: "_I account all things as dung, so that I may win Christ_." [Footnote 120]

[Footnote 120: Phil. iii. 8.]

It is not hard to part with what we esteem so little. The joy of the heart amply compensates for all sacrifices, so that instead of a long face, a melancholy and soured heart, such a one enjoys deep gladness and satisfaction of mind, which grows deeper and

more complete, in proportion as he is weaned away from the pleasures of the world.
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Finally, all those things which are naturally disagreeable, such as misfortunes, pains, sickness, trials of all kinds, become easy and even agreeable through such a strong desire. The Martyrs smiled in the midst of their torments. Did they not feel them? Most certainly they had the same flesh and blood as ourselves. But their souls had a sight of Jesus, surrounded by his Angels, and this distracted their attention from all their torments. So St. Stephen, when he saw this sight, became radiant with joy, and his face shone like the face of an Angel. Sufferings, tribulations and trials are things that force the soul to look steadfastly upon Jesus, and the sight of Him takes from them all their bitterness. So we read that an old hermit of the desert complained when his yearly sickness failed to come upon him, that the Lord had neglected to visit him. The soul that earnestly desires God's love needs only to be told that pain of body or mind, borne patiently, as coming from God's hand, is the surest means of obtaining its desire. Pain is accepted then with alacrity, and with pleasure.
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To be sure, the first pangs may be exceedingly hard to bear; the soul may require a little time to recollect herself, and gather force to overcome the repugnance of nature. But a little reflection puts every thing in its proper place. Shall I, she says, reject the very things I have longed for, the opportunities of making rapid progress in the love of God? If this does not still the tumult of nature, prayers are resorted to, and in the end comes victory and triumph, a wonderful vigor and refreshment of the soul.
This is not merely for Martyrs and canonized Saints; it is a thing that belongs to every-day life--the grand remedy for all the ills we are subject to: "_Take up my yoke,_" says the Saviour, "_for my yoke is easy and my burden light, and ye shall find rest for your souls_." [Footnote 121]
[Footnote 121: St. Matt, xi., 29.]
It seems strange that the cross of Christ should give rest, but it is so; and the tribulations which come from his hand, as St. James says, work patience, and patience hath a perfect work; therefore it is to be counted joy to receive them, and not sorrow. And such will be the sentiment of the lover of God.
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So in the Sermon on the Mount, the burden is always: "_Rejoice and be exceeding glad_." For what? Poverty, afflictions, persecutions, false testimony, and so on--they are worthy of joy, because they bring what the soul so much desires.
See then what great things the desire to love God will do for you! May the poor thoughts which I have strung together, excite in your minds this fruitful and wonder-working desire. Regard the love of God as the pearl of great price. Consider over and over again the value of it. Persevere in efforts to appreciate it. Say to yourselves--I will not forget. I will continually repeat: Oh, God, make me to know thee, and to love thee more and more! Oh,

how I wish to love my God better than I do! Excite this desire in the morning when you arise--during the day, when you are tempted--when you are discouraged--when you have any thing to suffer--in the midst of pleasure, and whenever the Holy Ghost inspires it. At night, take some time to reflect upon the love of God, to sigh and beg for it. Persevere, and it will not be long before your heart will be inflamed with it--your whole life will be filled with it. Your only uneasiness will be because that burning desire cannot be fully satisfied in this world.
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This is to hunger and thirst after justice. What a blessed hunger and thirst it is, and what a blessed promise accompanies it! "_Blessed are ye who hunger and thirst after justice, for you shall be filled_." [Footnote 122] Filled with justice! What does that mean? Filled so that we shall not want any more. Not filled with money--which will leave us poor and naked at the last hour. Not filled with sensual pleasures, which please the heart in time and burn it in eternity; but filled with justice, that is, filled with God--filled with a deep inward peace and joy during our mortal life--a foretaste of heaven; and filled with glory and happiness unspeakable in heaven itself forever. Amen.

[Footnote 122: St. Matt. v., 6.]

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Sermon XVIII.

The Worth Of The Soul.

"There shall be joy before the angels of God
over one sinner doing penance."
--St. Luke xv., 10.

(From the Gospel for the 3d Sunday after Pentecost.)

This is what theologians call an _accidental_ joy. The essential joy of Heaven consists in the perfect knowledge and love of God, and is unchangeable and eternal; but the accidental joy of Heaven springs from the knowledge of those events in time which display the goodness and greatness of God. The first of these events was the creation itself, when the hand of God spread the carpet of the earth and stretched the curtains of the heavens. Then "_the morning stars praised Him together, and all the sons of God made a joyful melody_." [Footnote 123]

[Footnote 123: Job xxxviii., 7.]

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After this the great historic events of the world have been successively the burden of the angelic songs--the unfolding of the plan of Redemption, the birth of Christ, the triumphs of the Church. But lo! of a sudden these lofty strains are stopped. There is silence for a moment, and then the golden harps take up a new and tenderer theme. What is it that has happened? What is the event that can interrupt the great harmonies of Heaven, and furnish the Angels with a new song? In some corner of the earth, in some secret chamber, in some confessional, on some sick bed, in some dark prison, a sinner is doing penance. He prays, whose mouth had been full of cursings. He weeps, who had made a mock at sin. The slave of Satan and of Hell turns back to God and Heaven--and that is the reason of this unusual joy. It is not

that a recovered sinner is really of more account than one who has never fallen, but his recovery from danger is the occasion of expressing that esteem and love for the souls of men which always fills the heart of God and the Angels. Therefore, as that contrite cry reaches heaven the Angels are silent, for they know that there is no music in the ear of God like that.
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And then, when God has ratified the absolving words of the priest, and restored the contrite sinner to His favor, they cast themselves before the throne, and break forth into loud swelling strains of ecstasy and triumph, while He Himself smiles his sympathy and joy. Oh, my brethren, what a revelation this is! A revelation of the value of the soul. There are great rejoicings on earth when a battle is won, or upon the occasion of the visit of some great statesman or warrior, or when some great commercial enterprise is successful, but these things do not cause joy in Heaven. The conversion of one soul--it may be a child, or a young man, or an old woman--the conversion of one soul, that it is that makes a gala day in Heaven. Now God sees every thing just as it is, and if there are such rejoicings in Heaven when a soul is won, what must be the value of a soul! Let us confess the truth, we have not thought enough of the value of a soul. We have thought too much of the world, of its pleasures, of its profits, of its honors, but too little of our own souls. We have not thought of them as God thinks of them. Let us then strive to exalt our ideas, by considering some of the reasons why we should put a high value on our souls.
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In the first place, we should value a human soul, because it is in itself superior to any thing else in the world. The whole world, indeed, with every thing in it, is good, for God made it. But He proceeded in a very different manner in the creation of the material world from what He did when He made the soul. He made the world, the trees, the rivers, the lights of heaven, the living creatures on the earth, by the mere word of his power. "_God said, Be light made. And light was made_." [Footnote 124] And God said, "_Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind. And it was so_." [Footnote 125]

[Footnote 124: Gen. i., 3.]

[Footnote 125: Gen. i., 12.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Gen. i., 11,12.]

But when He made the soul, the Scriptures tell us, "_He breathed into the face of man and he became a living soul_." [Footnote 126]

[Footnote 126: Gen. i., 26.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Gen. ii., 7.]

By this action we are to understand that God communicated to man a nature kindred to his own divinity. The Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, is the uncreated Spirit of God, eternally breathing forth and proceeding from the Father and the Son; and God when He breathed into the face of man, signified that He imparted to man a creative spirit kindred to his own eternal spirit.

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The Holy Scriptures indeed, expressly tell us that such was the case; "_Let us make man to our Image and our Likeness_." [Footnote 127]

[Footnote 127: Gen. i., 26-27.]

This likeness consisted in the possession of understanding and free will, the power of knowledge and love--the two great attributes of God Himself. You are then, my brethren, endowed with a soul which raises you immeasurably above God's material creation. You have a soul made after God's image. This is the source of your power. The two things go together in Holy Scripture. "_Let us make man to our Image and Likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth_." [Footnote 128]

[Footnote 128: Gen. ii., 7.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Gen. i., 26.]

In the state of original innocence, no doubt, this dominion was more perfect, but even now it exists in a great degree. "_Every kind of beast, and of birds, and of serpents, and of the rest, is tamed, and hath been tamed by mankind_." [Footnote 129]

[Footnote 129: St. James iii., 7.]

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See how a little boy can drive a horse. See how a dog obeys his Master's eye and voice. See how even lions and tigers become submissive to their keepers. And the elements, often wilder than ferocious beasts, are obedient to you. The fire warms you and cooks for you, and carries you when you want to travel for business or pleasure. The wind fans the sails of your vessels, and the waters make a path for them under your feet. Even the lightning leaps and exults to do your bidding and to be the messenger of your will. Thus every thing falls down before you and does you homage, and proclaims you lord and master. What is the reason that every thing thus honors you? It is on account of the soul that is in you--the power of reason and will--the godlike nature with which you are endowed.

Yes, and your soul is the source of your beauty, too. In what consists the beauty of a man? Is it a mere regularity of form and feature? Do you judge of a man as you do of a horse or a dog? No; the most exquisitely chiseled features do not interest you, until you see intelligence light up the eye, and charity irradiate the countenance--then you are captivated.

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A man may be a perfect model of grace in his movements without exciting you, but when he becomes warm with inspirations of wisdom and virtue, when his words flow, his eye sparkles, his breast heaves, his whole frame becomes alive with the emotions of his soul, then it is you are carried away, you are ready almost to fall down and worship. What is the reason that Christian art has so far surpassed heathen art? the Madonna so far more beautiful than the Venus de Medicis? It is because the heathens portrayed the beauty of dead matter; the Christians portrayed the beauty of the soul. And if the soul is so beautiful in the little rays that escape from the body, what must it be in itself? God

has divided his universe into several orders, and we find the lowest in a superior order higher than the highest in the inferior order. The soul, then, is more beautiful than any thing material. "_She is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars; being compared with the light she is found before it_." [Footnote 130]

[Footnote 130: Wisdom vii., 29.]

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Oh, my brethren, do not admire men for their form, or their dress, or their grace, but admire them for the soul that is in them, for that is the true source of their beauty.

It is also the secret of their destiny. God did not give you this great gift to be idle. He gave it for a worthy end. He gave understanding that you might know Him, and free will that you might love Him; and this is the true destiny of man. You were not made to toil here for a few days, and then to perish. You were made to know God, to be the friend of God, the companion of God, to think of God, to converse with God, to be united to God here, and then to enjoy God hereafter forever. Once more then, I say, do not admire a man for his wealth, or his appearance, or his learning. Do not ask whether he is poor or rich, ignorant or learned, from what nation he springs, whether he lives in a cabin or palace. Let it be enough that he is a man, possessed of understanding and free will, spiritual and immortal, with a soul and an eternal destiny. That is enough. Bow down before him with respect. Yes, respect yourselves--not for your birth, or your station, or your wealth, but for your manhood.

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"_Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, and let not the strong man glory in his strength, and let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that_ HE UNDERSTANDETH AND KNOWETH ME." [Footnote 131] Yes, my brethren, this is your true dignity, the soul that is in you--the soul, that makes you capable of knowing and loving God.

[Footnote 131: Jer. ix., 23, 24.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Jer. ix., 22, 23.]

And yet, there is another reason why you should value your souls, besides their intrinsic excellence--I mean, the great things that have been done for them. Do you ask me what has been done for your souls? I ask you to look above you, and around you, and under you. Oh, how fair the earth is! See these rivers and hills! Look on the green grass! Behold the blue vault of heaven! Well, this is the palace God has prepared for you above; nay, not for your abode--your dwelling-place is beyond the skies, where "_the light of the moon is as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven fold, as the light of seven days_,"--but for the place of your sojourn. This earth was made for you; and, as your destiny is eternal, therefore the earth must have been made to subserve your eternal destiny.

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Why does the sun rise in the morning, and go down at night? It is for you--for your soul. Why do summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, return so regularly? It is for you, and your salvation.

The earth is for the elect. When the elect shall be completed, the earth, having done its work, will be destroyed. This is the end to which, in God's design, all things are tending. God does not look at the world, or its history, as we do. We say: "Here such a great battle was fought;" "there such a celebrated man was born;" "in this epoch such an empire took its rise, such a dynasty came to an end." But God says: "Here it was a little child died after baptism, and went straight to heaven;" "there it was I recovered that gifted soul, which had wandered away into error and sin, but which afterward became so great in sanctity;" "in such an age it was that I lost that great nation which fell away from the faith, and in such another, by the preaching of my missionary, I won whole peoples from heathenism." I know we shrink from this in half unbelief. When it is brought home to us that this little earth is the centre of God's counsels, and our souls of the universe, we are amazed and offended.
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But so it is. "_All things work together unto good to them that love God_." [Footnote 132] All things; not blindly, but by the overruling Providence of Him who made them for this end.

[Footnote 132: Rom. viii., 28.]

Do you ask me what has been done for your souls? I answer, the Church has been established for them. Look at the Church, and see how many are her officers and members--Bishops, Priests, Levites, Teachers, Students. All are yours--all are for you. For you the Pope sits on his throne; for you Bishops rule their Sees; for you the Priest goes up to the altar; for you the Teacher takes his chair, and the Student grows pale in the search for science. That the Apostolic commission might come down to you, St. Peter and St. Linus and Cletus ordained Bishops in the churches. That the true doctrine of Christ might come down to you uncorrupted, the Fathers of the Church gathered in council, at Nice, and Ephesus, and Chalcedon, and Trent. That you might hear of the glad tidings of Christ, St. Paul and St. Patrick labored and died. For you, for each one of you, as if there were no other, the great machinery of grace, if I may express myself so coarsely, goes on.
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Do you ask what has been done for your souls? Angels and Archangels, and Thrones and Dominions, and Principalities and Powers--all the hosts of Heaven--have labored for them. "_Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for those who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?_" [Footnote 133] For you the whole Court of Heaven is interested, and one bright particular Angel is commissioned to be your guardian. For you St. Gabriel flew on his message of joy to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St. Michael, the standard-bearer, waits at the gate of death.

[Footnote 133: Heb. i., 14.]

Do you ask what has been done for your souls? From all eternity God has thought of them, the means of salvation been determined on, the chain of graces arranged. And the Son of God has worked for them. Galilee, and Judea, and Calvary were the scenes of his labors on earth, and on his mediatorial throne in heaven He carries on still his unceasing labors in our behalf.

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And the Holy Ghost has worked. He spake by the Prophets, and on the day of Pentecost He came to take up his abode in the Church, never to be overcome by error, or grieved away by sin, to vivify the Sacraments, and to enlighten the hearts of the faithful by the preaching of the Gospel and his own holy inspirations.
Why, who are you, my brethren? The woman at Endor, when she had pierced the disguise of Saul, and knew that she was talking with a king, was afraid, and "_said with a loud voice: Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul?_" [Footnote 134]

[Footnote 134: 1 Kings xxviii., 12.]

[Transcribers Note: The USCCB reference is I. Samuel xxviii. 12.]

So, I ask you, who are you? I look upon your faces, and I see nothing to make me afraid; but faith tears away the disguise, and I see each one of you radiant with light, a true prince, and an heir of heaven. I look above, and see Heaven open and the Angels of God ascending and descending on errands of which you are the object. I look higher yet, and I see God the Father watching you with anxiety, and the Son offering his blood for you, and the Holy Ghost pleading with you, and the Saints and Angels, some with folded hands supplicating for you, and others pointing with outstretched hand to the glorious throne reserved in Heaven for you.
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Have you, my brethren, so regarded yourselves? Have you valued that soul of yours? Have you kept it as your most sacred treasure? Is it now safe and secure? Oh, how carefully do men keep a treasure they value highly! Kings spend many thousand dollars yearly just to take care of a few jewels. The crown jewels of England are kept, as you know, in the Tower. It is a heavy fortress, guarded by soldiers who are always on watch. At each door and avenue there is an armed sentinel. The jewels themselves are kept in glass cases, and visitors are not allowed to touch them. And all these pains and outlay to take care of a few stones that have come down to the Queen by descent, or been taken from her enemies! And that precious soul of yours, before which all the wealth of the world is but worthless dross--with what care have you kept that? Alas! every door has been left open. No guard has been at your eyes to keep out evil looks. No guard at your ears to keep out the whispers of temptation.
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No guard at your lips to stop the way to the profane or filthy word. Nay, not only have you kept up no guard, but you have carried your soul where soul-thieves congregate. The Holy Scripture says: "_A net is spread in vain before the eyes of a bird_." [Footnote 135]

[Footnote 135: Prov. i., 17.]

Yes, the birds and beasts are cunning enough to avoid an open snare; but you go rashly into dangers that are apparent to all but you. Sinners lie in wait for you. They say, in the language of Scripture: "_Come, let us lie in wait for blood; let us hide snares for the innocent without cause. Let us swallow him up alive like hell, and whole as one that goeth down into the pit_."--and you trust yourself in their power. Oh, fly from them! Consider the treasure you carry. "_What shall it profit a

man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?_" Will you sin against your own soul? you that are made after God's likeness; you that are princely and of noble rank, will you defile that image, and degrade yourselves to a level with the brutes that perish?
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But there are others whose offence is of an other kind. They let their salvation go by sheer neglect. If a man plants a seed, he must water it, or it will not grow. So the soul needs the dew of God's grace; and prayer and the Sacraments are the channels of God's grace. Yet how men neglect the Sacraments! Even at Easter, when we are obliged to receive them, some absent themselves. It has been a matter of the keenest pain to us to miss some members of this congregation during the late Paschal season. You say, you have nothing on your conscience, and it is not necessary to go to confession. But is it not necessary to go to Communion? Will you venture to deprive yourselves of that food of which, unless ye eat, the Saviour has said: "_Ye have no life in you?_" Oh! you have a sad story to tell. You have fallen into mortal sin, and you are afraid to come. But do you think we have none of the charity of the Angels? Only convert truly, for it is a true conversion that gives the Angels joy, and we can give you the promise that Thomas √† Kempis puts into the mouth of Him whose place we fill: "How often soever a man truly repents and comes to me for grace and pardon, as I live, saith the Lord, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live, I will not remember his sins any more, but all shall be pardoned him."
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And to you, my brethren, who, during the Easter season just past, have recovered the grace of God, I have a word of advice to give in conclusion. Keep your souls with all diligence. Keep your souls; that is your chief, your only care. Keep them by fleeing from the occasions of sin. Keep them by overcoming habitual sins. Nourish them by prayer and the sacraments. How great a disgrace, that all the irrational world should do the will of God, and you, the rulers of the world, should not do it! "_The kite in the air hath known her time; the turtle, and the swallow, and the stork have observed the time of their coming; but my people have not known the judgment of the Lord_." [Footnote 136]

[Footnote 136: Jer. viii., 7.]

How great an evil it is in a State when an unworthy Ruler is at its head. The people mourn and languish, and at last rebel. So, when a man neglects the end for which he was made, the whole creation cries out against him. The stones under his feet cry out. The air he breathes, the food he eats, protest against the abuse he makes of them.
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Balaam's ass rebuked the madness of the Prophet; so when you live in sin, the very beasts reproach you. Your horse, your cow, your dog, your pigs cry out: "If we had souls we would not be as you. Now we serve God blindly, and of necessity; but if we had souls, it would be our pride and happiness to give Him our willing service." All things praise the Lord;--"showers and dew;" "fire

and heat;" "mountains and hills;" "seas and rivers;" "beasts and cattle." O, sons of men, make not a discord in the universal harmony! Receive not your souls in vain! Serve God; "praise Him and exalt Him forever."

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Sermon XIX.

Merit The Measure Of Reward.

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with Me, to render to every man according to his work."
--Apoc. xxii., 12.

Society is made up of numerous classes of persons, of very varied position and attainments. How marked is the line, for instance, which divides the man who lives in the Fifth Avenue, anywhere below Fortieth street, from the occupant of a shanty on the outskirts of the city! Again, what point of contact is there between the man of science or literature, whose life is spent in intellectual pursuits, and the vacant lounger that hangs around our steamboat landings and wharves? These men move in separate spheres, and have scarcely anything in common.

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They are like two different races of men. The difference is perhaps less marked in this country than elsewhere, inasmuch as royalty and nobility and hereditary titles do not exist here. But even in this country there is a clear line of division between distinct classes of persons. Shall this always be so? Shall these accidental and artificial barriers survive death? How will it be in heaven?

No, my dear brethren, these particular lines of division, of rich and poor, learned and unlearned, shall cease with this world; but others will be set up in their place. There is an aristocracy, there is a hierarchy, in Heaven. St. Paul, after saying, "_There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for star differeth from star in glory_," adds, "_so also is the resurrection of the dead_." [Footnote 137]

[Footnote 137: 1 Cor. xv., 41, 42.]

St. Teresa calls this difference "a prodigious inequality." We must not imagine, however, that these various ranks of glory in Heaven are founded upon such accidents as birth or good fortune. They are founded upon that proportion of merit which we shall have gained, each one by his good deeds in this life.

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The amount of grace and personal holiness that we possess when we appear in judgment before the Lord, this, and not wealth, or position, or gifts of any kind, will be the standard by which we take a high or low place there. It is about this principle of "personal merit" before God, and in view of Heaven, that I am going to speak to you this morning. In order to do this, I shall speak of the certainty of merit, of the sources of merit, and the conditions of merit.

I. The Certainty Of Merit.

What is meant by merit? It is that supernatural reward, which God has promised by way of justice, to a good work done in the state

of grace. God has made a contract with us, as it were, in virtue of which He has given us the privilege of claiming eternal happiness from Him on certain conditions. Let me show you how this is the teaching of Holy Scripture. "_Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven_." [Footnote 138]

[Footnote 138: St. Matt, v., 12.]

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Our Lord, you see, uses the word reward which I have used. "_Every one shall receive his own reward according to his labor_." [Footnote 139]

[Footnote 139: 1 Cor. iii., 8.]

St. Paul here adds another idea to that of reward, namely, that it shall be given according to one's labor, or good works. This is what our Lord says in the words of my text: "_Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his work_." "_For the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just Judge will give me in that day; and not to me only, but to them also who love his coming_." [Footnote 140]

[Footnote 140: 2 Tim. iv., 8.]

In this passage St. Paul tells us another truth about the principle of final rewards. He says they shall be given by way of justice. The time for mercy will then have passed, and we shall be weighed in the balance of justice, and our reward shall be in strict proportion to the weight of merit we have cast into the scale. "_Therefore, my beloved brethren_ (he writes to the Corinthians), _be ye firm and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord_." [Footnote 141]

[Footnote 141: 1 Cor. xv., 58.]

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Then, there is that passage of which I have already spoken, where St. Paul illustrates the diversity of rewards. "_For there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also shall it be in the resurrection from the dead._"

Thus from Holy Scripture we get these several facts with regard to the rewards of the next life, namely, first, that it is a reward, and not merely a favor from God. Next, that it is a reward for good works. Thirdly, that this reward is given by way of justice. And lastly, that these rewards differ as widely from one another as do the several lights of the sun, moon, and stars. But of what use is Holy Scripture to us without Her interpretation, whose office it is to interpret, as it has been to preserve it? I will quote you two, out of many, decrees which the Holy Church made on this matter at the Council of Trent. "If any one shall say that the just ought not for their good works done in God, to expect and hope for an eternal recompense from God, through his mercy and the merits of Jesus Christ, if so be that they persevere to the end in well doing, and in keeping the Divine commandments, let him be anathema."

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Again, "If any one shall say that the good works of a justified

man are in such sense the gifts of God, that they are not also the merits of the justified man himself, let him be anathema." It is then certain, both from Holy Scripture and from the decisions of Holy Church, that we can merit the possession of heaven as a right, by our good works. But you will say, if this be true, does it not tend to cherish in us a spirit of self-sufficiency, and of independence of God? No, it does not; and for the reasons I am now going to give you, in speaking on the second point, namely:

II. The Sources Of Merit.

There are two sources of merit, neither of which are in ourselves, but both of them are in God. One is the goodness of God; the other, the merits of Christ.

1. My brethren, God is not bound to his creatures except so far as He has been pleased to bind Himself. He could have lived on as well without any creation at all. And even now that he has created our race, his promise is the only measure of our rights and privileges. These promises were forfeited by our first parents, and God might never have renewed them to us, their posterity.

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But "_God so Loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting_." [Footnote 142]

[Footnote 142: John iii., 16.]

"_Behold what charity the Father hath bestowed upon us_," says St. John in his Epistle, "_that we should be called, and that we should be the sons of God_." [Footnote 143]

[Footnote 143: 1 John iii., 1.]

It is because we are sons of God, "and joint heirs with Christ," that God has honored us so much, and made it possible for us to merit by our good works. In order however, to keep us humble and to make us mindful that in all things we are indebted to his goodness, God has reserved to Himself two graces which we cannot merit, and without which we cannot be saved. These are the gifts of sanctifying grace and of final perseverance. A man is not likely to take airs upon himself and be insolent to you, when he is lying on the broad of his back in the road, and cannot stir hand or foot to help himself. No, he is most likely to address you in terms of supplication and entreaty.

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Well, this is our condition when God, of his pure love, bestows upon us the gift of sanctifying grace. Then, again, though we should have this gift to-day, we may lose it to-morrow, and but for God's continued graces we would infallibly lose it. Can you imagine a dependence which is more pure than ours is upon God? An infant is not more dependent upon its mother for the preservation of its physical life, than we are upon God for our spiritual life. "Give us this day our daily bread," is our every morning prayer. We are like little birds in a nest before they are able to fly. All we can do is to make a piteous cry, and hold up our mouths to be filled. Where, then, is there room for presumption in such teaching as this? Now, let me go on to my second source of merit, which is the merit of Christ.

2. We are in a double sense indebted to our Blessed Lord. He is not only our Creator, our Preserver, and our Benefactor, but He is also our Redeemer. It is by his bitter Passion and Death, and in union with these, that what we do in his name has a value and a price in the sight of the Eternal Father. It is that precious Blood of his which is poured into our soul in holy Baptism; it is that precious Blood of his which we drink in Holy Communion, that constitutes the pure and holy source of every good and meritorious act of ours.

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He has Himself explained how this is, in the parable of the vine. "_I am the vine, ye the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, he beareth much fruit_." [Footnote 144]

[Footnote 144: John xv., 5.]

Let us now try to get at our Lord's meaning. It is quite common nowadays to see a grapery in a gentleman's country garden. The entire roof of those ornamental glass-houses is covered with luxuriant vines; and they in turn are loaded with rich green leaves, and with beautiful bunches of grapes. The sap has made its course through the length of the vine, and into the various branches. Here it has forced out a green leaf, and there a bunch of fruit. These it continues to feed, by a continuous flow, until the leaf has gained its size and color, and the fruit its delicacy of flavor. Both leaf and fruit owe their existence, their beauty, and whatever is excellent in them, to this sap, which is the source of all; but will you say that they do not have these things in themselves? Will you say that the grapes are not really fine flavored, but only called so because they belong to an excellent vine?

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No, certainly not. You say the grapes are fine, because they really are fine, because they answer in point of taste to what you understand by that term. They have in themselves a something which is not accidental to them, but which is an essential quality in grapes of that kind, namely, that delicate flavor which has established their worth.

Now, apply this to ourselves. We are united to our Lord through the Sacraments, as branches to a vine. His grace is that precious Sap which has been let in upon our souls, through those seven main channels. They cleanse and purify our souls. They sanctity them, and make them beautiful and pleasing to God. The acts of the soul, so long as it is united to God by this divine gift of grace, are at the same time the acts of grace. They are good and meritorious, inasmuch as they are done by the co-operation of grace with our intelligence and free will. By rewarding such acts as these, God rewards the works of his own hands. This is what St. Augustine says: "When God crowns our merits, He does no more than crown his own gifts."

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Let me illustrate this in another way. St. Paul says, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, "_I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ_." [Footnote 145]

[Footnote 145: 2 Cor. xi., 2.]

Here he calls the soul the wife, and Christ its husband. By this we are to understand, that the grace of Christ in the soul enables it first to conceive good desires, and then to bring forth good works, which are, as it were, the children of the soul. Thus a dignity and worth are communicated to them, which are, in a true sense, divine. Suppose, for instance, a Prince of royal blood were to marry a peasant girl. Her children would unquestionably have royal blood in their veins, how ever obscure may have been the parentage of their mother. They would be entitled to the right of succession, and could claim the throne of their father. Well, in like manner our good works, having God as their Author, are able to claim from Him a supernatural reward.

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III. The Conditions Of Merit.

There is one condition of being able to do a good supernatural work, which always comes first, and that is, that the person shall be in the state of grace when he does it. God can find no pleasure in us so long as our will and affections are turned away from Him, and this is the case when we are in mortal sin.

Again, our merit will be in proportion to the excellence of the work in itself considered. One apple is better than another, though both have grown upon the same branch. To attend the bedside of some poor sick person, is a more excellent work than merely to bestow an alms upon him. To be contrite for one's sins, is more excellent than to do penitential works in expiation of them. To forgive the injury of one's enemy, is more excellent than to pardon the unkindness of an acquaintance. The poorest effort at self-control, is better than the best advice given to another. I remember a story which shows what even one excellent work will do for a soul. It is in "The Lives of the Fathers of the Desert." A monk, who was serving God with much prayer and self-denial, was tempted with the desire to see a man whose merit in the sight of God should be the very counterpart of his own. God gratified his weakness. He was directed to go to a certain inn in a neighboring village where he would see such a man.

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On reaching it, there stood before the door a poor fiddler playing for pennies. The monk understood, by an interior light, that this was the man. Much surprised, and rather mortified too, he nevertheless addressed the fiddler, and asked him what sort of a life he had led, and what he was then doing for God? He answered, that he had, for many years, gained a poor but honest livelihood in the same humble employment. That as to his having done any thing very good, he did not know about that, although there was one thing that he always remembered with a great deal of satisfaction. "With some danger to myself, I once rescued a poor girl from those who would have ruined her." The good monk was made to understand, that for preventing that outrage, God had raised this poor fiddler to a great purity of soul.

A good work, again, is more excellent in proportion as it is more difficult. What a consolation this ought to be to us! How hard we think it sometimes to get on in life, with its multiplied vexations and discouragements!

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We say, "What a strange world!" "What a weary world!" In the language of Holy Scripture we say, "_In the morning, who will grant me evening? and at evening, who will grant me morning?_" [Footnote 146] as though things were turning out very different from what we had a right to expect.

[Footnote 146: Deut. xxviii., 57.]

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Deut. xxviii., 67.]

Ah! God has been good to us in the planning out of our lives, better than we should be, if we had all the planning to ourselves. I have shown you that future rewards are to be determined by merit; now our merits are measured by our trials. By your own admission then, this world, in being full of trials, most completely answers the end for which God created it. If we could but get into the habit of looking at things from this point of view, the face of life would be lit up with a perpetual sunshine. Yes, the harder our state of life is to bear, the more difficulties we find in following our Lord, the more laborious the work, so much the brighter are our prospects for the life to come, if we prove faithful to the end.

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How well the mother of the Maccabees, that noble woman, knew this! Holy Scripture says: "_She was to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men, who beheld her seven sons slain in the space of one day, and bore it with a good courage for the hope she had in God_." [Footnote 147]

[Footnote 147: 2 Maccabees vii., 20.]

As the youngest, her last and dearest, was about to be put to death, she encouraged him to be resolute; and he went to a martyr's reward under the influence of a consoling thought, which he thus beautifully expressed: "_My brethren having now undergone a short pain, are under the covenant of eternal life_."

Again, our merit is in proportion to the purity of the intention with which we do the work. The intention we make, either actual or habitual, is the chalice, as it were, in which we make our offerings to God. It is even more than this; for the excellence of the intention is imparted to the work itself, and becomes the measure of its merit. I once saw some wooden goblets in the window of an apothecary shop. Being curious to know what they were for, I was told by the clerk that they were made of quassia, a peculiar kind of wood which imparted to pure water, when drank from these goblets, a most healthy tonic.

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Now, so it is with a pure intention. If the work that we do for God is only pure and good in itself, the intention will communicate to it its own peculiar excellence, and the work will receive the reward of that excellence, which has become its own. Suppose, for instance, you hear Mass from a mere motive of duty, as being a Catholic. It is a supernatural work, and it will secure a supernatural reward. But to that intention you have added another the next time you hear Mass; namely, the intention of doing penance for your sins. Well, the same act is now doubly meritorious. The third time you hear Mass from a pure desire to

make reparation to our Lord for all the injuries He has received in the Blessed Sacrament, and your intention is more excellent still, and, if united with the other two, will merit a three-fold reward.

Again, great merit is gained by small things done for God. This is surely very encouraging for us who have not the abilities, or the opportunities, of doing great things. Of course I mean great things as the world views them.

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A check put upon a wrong thought; the arrest of an improper word; the silence to which we have forced ourselves, when we feel within us the swelling of anger; the call we make upon a sick neighbor in passing; the alms we bestow, however small; the effort to be patient under sickness or pain; the kind word of advice to the erring; each such act as these, will be a passport at the gate of Heaven.

And now, dear brethren, I repeat once more what I said when I began. There is an aristocracy, there is a hierarchy, in Heaven. As there are nine choirs of Angels, and, so St. John tells us, except "the one hundred and forty four thousand" who had consecrated their virgin bodies as first-fruits to God, none could sing the "_new song_" or "_follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth_," so shall it be forever.

I will say more; and this is what I wish especially to impress upon your minds. You must already have gathered it from what I have said. It is this. That aristocracy, that hierarchy, is in process of formation at this moment. It is not determined by an arbitrary choice in heaven, but on the principle of personal merit, here on earth.

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How is it with a large body of students at one of our colleges or universities? They are class-mates, or even room-mates, for years, but look at them after the lapse of twenty years, and what are their respective positions? One is a merchant, in a small way, in a country town of a new state; while the other is representing his country as Minister at a first-class foreign court. One is a village physician, while the other is the nation's choice to fill the Presidential Chair. So shall it be with families. Some will scarcely be saved, while others will fill up the ranks of the seraphs, which were broken at the time of Lucifer's rebellion. Where, I ask, shall our place be in this hierarchy? Our Lord says: "_The last shall be first, and the first last_." Where shall we be? Grace and a good will are the only materials wanting in the formation of a Saint Aloysius, a Saint Stanislas, or a Saint Elizabeth of Hungary; and these are in the reach of every one. What shall I say in conclusion, dear brethren, to spur you on to do good works? I will ask you to look back upon the past. Does it not lie in your memory in all the blackness and barrenness of a western prairie, over which the desolating fire of the savage has passed?

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Where can you find the trace of any real care of your souls? Where your good works? Where your merit? At least let us resolve now, while our hearts are warm, that we will improve the present,

remembering that "_what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap;_" and that "_he that soweth in the Spirit, shall reap life everlasting_." [Footnote 148]

[Footnote 148: Gal. vi., 8.]

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Sermon XX.
Self-denial.

"We came into the land to which thou sentest us,
which in very deed floweth with milk and honey,
as may be known by these fruits."
--Num. xiii., 28.

[Transcriber's note: The USCCB reference is Num. xiii., 27.]

(A Sermon for the first Sunday in Lent.)

When the ancient people of Israel, after traversing the desert of Arabia, drew nigh to the promised land of Canaan, Moses, their prophet and leader, sent out one of every tribe to view the country, that they might be able to bring back an accurate account of it--of its productiveness, the number and strength of its population, and its means of defence. These spies, upon their return, were all agreed in regard to the wonderful fertility of the country, but in other respects their account was very discordant.

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One of their number, Caleb the son of Jephone, was full of enthusiasm, and said to the people: "_Let us go up and possess the land, for we shall be able to take it!_" But the others that had been with him spoke ill of the country, representing it as unhealthy, and impossible to be conquered. "_The land which we have viewed devoureth its inhabitants; the people that we beheld are of a tall stature. There we saw monsters of the sons of Enac, of the giant kind, in comparison of whom we seemed like locusts_." Why did these last give such a different account from the first? It was because they were cowardly, and afraid of the inhabitants of Canaan, and this blinded them to the fertility of its soil, its fine fruits and great beauty. Their fears caused them to exaggerate difficulties, and to overlook blessings which were within their reach.

This party of pusillanimous Israelites represent a portion of the Christian world in our day, who, taking counsel of their fears, and consulting their ease, speak of the practice of self-denial, and the virtue of penance, as something to be dreaded, unnecessary, and even criminal. "_It is a land which devoureth its inhabitants!_"

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They imagine insurmountable obstacles in the way. "_We saw there monsters of the sons of Enac, of the giant kind_." If their souls were of a more robust make, if their hearts were a little larger, their error would be dispelled, and they would see that a life of Christian mortification, instead of devouring them, would introduce them to the enjoyment of spiritual advantages and pleasures such as they never yet conceived of. They would find it a land "_which in very deed floweth with milk and honey, as may be known by these fruits_."

Their error concerning the virtue of Self-denial is owing in some measure to a misconception of its true meaning. To establish its true meaning, let us ask ourselves first of all, what is a true Christian life? The little catechism tells us that man was created to know God, to love Him and to serve Him in this world, and be forever happy with Him in the next. A true Christian life, then, consists in knowing, loving and serving God. If we give any other direction to our thoughts, or affections, or actions, we live falsely. Self-denial, as a Christian virtue, consists in renouncing all misdirection of the powers of the soul, or in setting aside all things which stand in the way of our realizing the great end for which we were created. Complete self-denial places the soul in true and complete relations with God.
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Man has become in a great measure the servant and slave of the appetites and passions of his inferior nature, and by every act of self-denial he recovers his lost superiority, and renders himself again their master. Whenever, therefore, we find our passions and appetites are leading us astray, we should resist them, and practise self-denial and mortification. If a man, for instance, finds that his sensual appetites lead him to gluttony and drunkenness, he should fast and practise sobriety. If pride and vanity are entering his heart, he should exercise himself in humility. When he finds that the love of riches is making him miserly, he should be liberal to the poor. Anger must be overcome by meekness, incontinence by chastity, and sloth by vigilance and action. Briefly, the office of self-denial is to deny to the instincts of our lower nature what is contrary to right reason, and to God's holy law.
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Should there, however, arise conflicting claims between our higher and lower nature, then the renunciation of one good for another of a higher order must be practised; according to the words of Christ: "_If thine eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee_." [Footnote 149]

[Footnote 149: St. Matt, xviii., 9.]

For what, after all, are created things, or the members of a man's body, or even his life, compared with the eternal salvation of his soul? Men do not hesitate to sacrifice the less to save the greater; to cut away the masts of a ship in a storm to save the vessel; to amputate a limb to save the whole body. It is on this principle that our Lord declares that, "_It is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, than that thy whole body should go into hell_." Again our Lord says, on the same point, "_If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sister, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple_." [Footnote 150]

[Footnote 150: St. Luke xiv., 26.]

The meaning of our Lord is not that there is in these human ties any thing contrary to God's law, for his commandment to us is, "Honor thy father and thy mother;" "Love thy neighbor as thyself."
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The meaning of the text is; if your father, or your mother, or your wife or children, or your brother or sister, or even your own life, should stand in the way of your duty to God, then they must be subordinated, or even sacrificed, to your obedience and duty to Him. Our duty to God is supreme; and when the question arises of obeying Him or clinging to something else we possess or prize, He is content with nothing less than an unconditional surrender. So, then, self-denial is practised not to deny one's self of any thing that is a real good, but in regulating what is disorderly, in repressing what is excessive, in renouncing what is evil, that we may come in possession of our sovereign good. It aims at restraining the excesses of our animal instincts, and holding them in subjection to reason, and not at their destruction. For, in themselves considered, there is nothing even in our animal instincts which is irreconcilable with the perfection of the soul.

The same may be said of all human relationships; if they are not made to stand in the way of our salvation, and the keeping of the Divine Law, they render our natural life the more complete, and the obligation for their renunciation ceases.

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Did not Christ look upon mankind with human eyes, and make all our human feelings his own? As a son He obeyed his mother until his death; and even while suffering on the cross, such was his filial love and solicitude for her welfare, that He gave her in charge to his beloved disciple. As a friend, He wept at the death of Lazarus. In fine, all human sympathies, sorrows, and woes, found a home in his bosom. No, there is nothing in all created things, nor in human nature, even in its lowest appetites and passions, which may not be brought into harmony with reason, be reconciled with what holds the first place in the rank of our duties, and be made to contribute and adorn the perfection of the soul.

For it is not the purpose of Christianity to supersede man's nature; it supposes his nature. Christianity would be of no account independent of human nature. Christianity finds us men, and leaves us men; gentle, not cowardly; child-like, not childish; amiable, not effeminate; zealous, not fanatical; earnest, not narrow-minded; pious, not weak; humble, not abject; full of faith, and yet rational; obedient, not slavish; mortified, not mutilated; for Christ died to save man, and not to transmute man into something else. Christianity demands for its fullest manifestation the most complete nature. The more we are men, the greater our capacity for Christianity.

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This being so, how strange it is to find men who modestly assume the character of Christian philosophers; and yet when the word self-denial, mortification, or asceticism is pronounced in their presence, they startle like one who is about to be exorcised! An ascetic, in their courteous language, is "a miserable victim of a falsely interpreted religion, starved and withered in delusion." Miserable victim indeed, if the highest purposes of life are, to gratify our animal instincts and give one's self up to ease and self-indulgence! Deluded certainly, if it were our belief, as it

was that the heathen, that the grossest indulgence of sensual passions is a part of religious worship! On such a theory, an ascetic is unquestionably a miserable victim! But do these men really fancy that all that lies beyond their mental conceptions is delusion, like the Chinese, who look upon all that come from beyond the limits of their country as barbarians?
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Can they never learn the simple truth, that the practice of self-denial and kindred virtues, will always correspond in degree to one's conception of the dignity of the human soul, and the greatness of its destiny. Or are they cognizant of this truth, but pusillanimous like the Jews, who conjured up to their imaginations, "monsters of the sons of Enac, of the giant kind," being too cowardly to face the dangers and conquer the enemies which stood between them and the possession of "the land flowing with milk and honey"?
Strange indeed it is, that these self-called liberal Christians are not liberal enough to allow men, who have higher aims than the indulgence of sensual propensity and appetite, to live the life they like! If a man abstains from eating meat, why not let him, if he likes, eat fish? If another is bent on practising entire abstinence, why not allow him to fast? If another fancies he will improve by scourging himself, why not let him whip his body? If another takes the notion to shave his crown and walk with uncovered feet, wherein is he to be blamed? If another seeks the desert, or ensconces himself in a cave, what commandment does he break? What is there criminal in these actions, that there should be displayed so much spleen against those who live in this way?
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Christ was born in a stable, he fasted forty days and forty nights in the desert, and often had not a stone to rest his weary head upon. Daniel fed upon pulse, and gained both wisdom and health. The Baptist fed upon honey and locusts, and "_there has not risen among those that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist_."
These men were in pursuit of a great object. You perhaps don't perceive it! It is because the object which they aimed at does not lie within your range of vision, but above it. They were hungering and thirsting after the beauty of holiness. This was the great aim of their lives, and they followed it up like men in earnest.

"Life was to them a battle-field,
Their hearts a holy land."

Be true to thyself, O friend; and learn to "_let every one abound in his own sense_," and in thy liberality, "_let all the spirits praise the Lord_."
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Meanwhile the practice of these virtues richly repays the soul. They restore to the soul her true and perfect liberty. Is this not a great boon? Suppose that a queen was torn from her throne by a band of ruffians, and being stripped of her royal robes, was clothed in rags, and thrown into a dark and loathsome prison. Abuse and contempt are heaped upon her, putrid meat and filthy

water are given to her for food and drink. Her cries are unheeded, and often she meditates an escape, but the sight of the cold and massive walls around her shake and overpower her resolutions. Enfeebled and exhausted, she finally relapses into indifference and despair. Now a slight but strange noise reaches her ears. It grows louder and louder. She listens attentively, and to her quick ears the sounds seems to come like blows struck upon her prison walls. They come nearer and grow louder; the iron bars of her cell give way under them; friends enter and her chains are broken. She steps forth free, breathes once more the fresh air, sees the fair world around her, and she is replaced with increased splendor and dignity upon her throne. Can you not easily imagine that every stroke she heard given against her prison walls, must have sent a thrill of joy through her whole frame?

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What language can express the gratitude which filled her heart toward her deliverers? And this is simply the picture of a soul which has been subject to the demands of its lower appetites and passions, and has been freed by the practice of self-denial. For what prison walls are so strong as the tyranny of passion over the soul? What degradation is equal to that of a Christian enslaved by vice? What food is so loathsome to the body as lust and sensuality must be to a soul made for wisdom and virtue? What comparison is there between the relief felt at escaping from a material prison to the liberation of the soul from the fetters of sin, free to breathe the pure air of angels, and feed on celestial joys. Oh! blessed virtue of Penance which emancipates the soul, and restores that image of God which is stamped upon it, to its original beauty and splendor!

Besides, penance renders a man invincible against his spiritual foes. The mortified man is like a horse in the open fields. You may approach him with a halter in hand, and almost lay your hands upon him, but he easily escapes your grasp.

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So the devil may approach a man who has gained mastery over his appetites and inordinate affections, with his temptations, and the opportunity of committing sin ready at hand, but he has no power to capture or bind him. But the self-indulgent man has not the moral life to resist, nor the strength to escape; he is easily led into sin and made the slave of the devil. The mortified man is like a flower which draws nothing but its necessary nourishment from the earth, and that through a slender stem, while it opens wide its bosom to the light and air of heaven; so he, by self-denial, has narrowed all those avenues of his soul which lie earthward, while his whole mind is open to the contemplation of God, and his heart is filled with the taste of His sweetness.

Moreover, it renders the practice of prayer easy. All the irregular movements of our lower nature being subdued, the soul thus disengaged is able to think steadfastly on God, and attend to his inspiration, according to those words of the divine Spouse in Scripture: "_I will lead her into the solitude, and will speak to her heart, and she shall sing there as in the days of

her youth_." [Footnote 151]

[Footnote 151: Osee ii., 14.]

[Transcriber's note: Osee refers to Hosea.]

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According to the experience of all spiritual men, the spirit of prayer can only spring from, mortification. "Give more study to mortification," says Lewis da Ponte, "than to contemplation, for an unmortified person seeks after the spirit of prayer and cannot find it, whilst prayer itself seeks the man who is truly mortified, and knows how to find him." Saint Ignatius once heard one say in the praise of a great servant of God: "He is a great man of prayer." The saint replied, "No, he is a man of great mortification." And on another occasion he remarked, that "a quarter of an hour spent in prayer is sufficient to unite a mortified man closely to God; whereas an unmortified man would not obtain this in two hours." "He who does not live according to the corruption of the senses," says St. John of the Cross, "has the consolation to see all the operations of the powers of his soul tend to the contemplation of God as to their centre." Finally, it fills the soul with spiritual consolations, according to the words of Holy Scripture. "_Who is this that cometh up from the desert flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?_" [Footnote 152]

[Footnote 152: Cant. viii., 5.]

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While the heart is disturbed with irregular affections and filled with inordinate love for created things, divine love cannot enter it. The desert of which Solomon speaks in the passage just quoted, is produced in the soul by the renunciation and mortification of the irregular movements of the sensual appetites, and the soul then goes forth to meet the celestial spouse; and as all obstacles to his love are removed, she is filled with his divine consolation. And thus supported by her Beloved, the practice of every virtue becomes easy. "Whilst my heart was dilated with thy consolations, I ran in the way of thy commandments." [Footnote 153] Oh, blessed penance, which recovers for the soul its supreme good, and gives it here a foretaste of Paradise!

[Footnote 153: Psalm cxviii.]

[Transcriber's note: This appears to be a paraphrase of Psalm cxix., 1.]

Let us, then, enter upon the duties of Lent with the conviction of their necessity and their high importance. Let us manfully conquer all our repugnances to the works of penance enjoined by Holy Church; for every act of self-denial and mortification of sensuality will open avenues of true spiritual joy to the soul.

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Let us pass through this holy season with sincerity and confidence, practising all its requirements, that it may be said of us also, "_Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning on her beloved?_" For only those who take part in the penances of Lent can share in the joys of Easter.

[Transcriber's notes: This production is based on

https://archive.org/details/sermonsofstpaul06unknuoft/page/n6
Many footnotes have additional citations indicated by "USCCB", based on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Bible found at http://usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible. Most differences appear to be typographical errors not detected in proofreading or minor changes in verse numbering. Quotes from the book of Sirach were attributed to Ecclesiasticus.
Double underscores are used to indicate text that is both bolded and italicized, e.g. __bolded italics__.
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Preface.

The publication of another volume of Sermons by the Fathers of the Congregation of St. Paul the Apostle, is due to the encouragement already given by the extensive sale of the former ones; and to the frequent solicitations for the continuance of their publication kindly made by many of the Reverend Clergy, at home and abroad.

St. Paul's, Fifty-ninth Street, New York,
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Sermon I.

Remembrance Of Mercies.

(For New Year's Day.)

Isaiah lxiii. 7.

"I will remember the tender mercies of the Lord,
the praise of the Lord for all the things that
the Lord hath bestowed upon us."

In the midst of our mutual congratulations at a time like this, whilst we are wishing a happy future year to those we love, we cannot wholly forget the year that is past, and all that it brought to us for good or evil. I would not, my dear brethren,

cast a shadow upon the bright pathway of our hopes; I would not dampen in the least the ardor with which we joyfully set out upon another year's journey of life. May it be as happy in its realization as we could wish it to be! But I fear for the future happiness of him who forgets the happiness of the past. The anticipated joy of life yet to be lived is linked with those other joys that are past--joys over blessings whose richest fruit should be the lessons of experience they have taught us.
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Would we like to enter upon a new year wholly ignorant of the past one? I think not. We have learned many things while it has been passing--lessons of wisdom upon which we rely to make the future better and happier. Much there may have been to regret. Alas! how much for some of us; but the remembrance of even that shall be good for us. There are many of the same stones lying in the roadway ahead of us that we stumbled upon last year. Now we shall not come upon them unawares. There are many of the same beautiful but poisonous flowers growing in the valleys of repose where we shall stop to linger for a while, as we did in days gone by. We shall recognize them, and the beauty that deceived us before shall not deceive us again.
Blessed is the man who remembers. But there is so much good to remember! And in that remembrance so much to make the heart thoughtful, cheerful, and hopeful. It is this thought which I wish you, my brethren, this morning to reflect upon: the duty and pleasure of remembering the mercies of God--His __tender__ mercies, as the prophet so aptly calls them.
It has always been a wonder to me how soon we forget benefits conferred upon us. It is too true. The joy we had when the gifts were new wasted itself away as quickly as music melts upon the air.
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The keen sense of grateful love toward the giver grows dull, and passes into indifference, before the treasure is spent or the beauty of the gem is tarnished. Drink to the health of your friend and praise his bounty, if you will, but have a care--ingratitude and forgetfulness are the last drops which lie at the bottom of the cup. And we treat God no better, if as well as we treat men. His gifts are such as man could never give, and given with a depth of love as unfathomable as the mystery of His own being and divine life. And yet we can forget! Oh! why is it? Did He who made the human heart make it ungrateful? Did He who so loves us make those He loves selfish? Did He who has said, "Son, give me thy heart," ask for a corrupt and treacherous heart? Such a thought may become that gloomy religion which thinks to exalt God by debasing His creatures; but it is not so that we have learned Him. No, this cannot be. It cannot be that the heart of man is naturally ungrateful, or is unmindful of good for which it is debtor; that by virtue of its very nature it is selfish toward man, and treacherous to God. He who made us has not made us to be of necessity the very opposite of what He wishes us to be. What explains this cold forgetfulness, this heartless indifference, that steals over us so soon? There is but one explanation. Love and gratitude must have a test.

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The words of thankfulness, the pressure of the hand, the look of the eyes and the aspirations of the heart which are forced from us in the first flush of happiness when the gifts are showered at our feet, are all good and just testimonies--but they are not enough. Gratitude and love must have the true test of merit, and that is endurance. There must be freedom to forget, that the false be distinguished from the true. That we claim this enduring memory at the hands of others, and are disappointed if it is otherwise, is a proof not only that such a test is naturally called for, but that we at the same time deem it possible. How many gifts pass from hand to hand during this season of rejoicing, with the words--Remember me! God Himself bestows His most Precious Gift to man with the same request, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Yes, now we understand it. The true heart will remember; the false one will forget. The faithful soul delights in cherishing a lively remembrance of benefits received; and the further back in the past the moment lies that saw our brows crowned with the tokens of love, the sweeter and more tender become the memories of them. Judge by this test, my brethren, if you have a true heart to God. Oh! the deep meaning of the prophet's words, "I will remember the __tender__ mercies of the Lord." Time is a refiner of the thoughts.
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The love of the gift itself, the mere sensual complacency in its enjoyment is mixed up in the beginning with the thankfulness we feel for its bestowal. But time will wear off that dross, and only the pure gold of the heart's gratitude will be left. It is not the love of the gift that need last. We do not care for that, neither does God. But we and God want the love of the giver to remain, and the giving of our gift, that act by which we tried to prove our love, not to be forgotten.
Look back, my brethren, look back. What does your memory tell you of His gifts whose mercy has followed you all the days of your life, whose hands have been stretched forth full of new blessings every morning? Here it might become me to enumerate some of these gifts, but where would I begin, or where could I end? Besides, it is you who ought to remember, and remember well. You must have a cold heart if you can forget.
You see, my brethren, what I desire by these words. I wish you to know whether you are grateful to God or not, to that God who has so loved us and crowned us with mercy and loving kindness. At a time like this, when you are asking others to remember you, and when you are thinking of all the dear old friends you have had in bygone years, and of the sweet mementos that came from their hands or were spoken by their lips, I would compel you to see if you have remembered the oldest, the best Friend of all.
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Alas! if you must say--He has been the last and the least in my thoughts. That would be sad to hear, and, above all, from the lips of those who, by their very faith, with all its blessed consolations, live so near to God.
If there be any by whom God wishes to be remembered, and His mercies brought to mind, it is by us who are His chosen people. I

know God loves all men, and more than we can imagine; but there can be little doubt that those whom He has so honored as to make them the brethren of His Only Son, Jesus Christ, upon whom He has bestowed the inestimable gift of the Catholic faith, are the objects of His special affection.

Oh! it is a great thing to be one of the household of faith! That is one of those tender mercies the very thought of which should make our heart bound in our bosom. Sweet and ever present, dear Catholic brethren, should be the memory of the day of your baptism, the day when you crossed the threshold of God's own home, the Church, and there became His child. You know well what light has beamed upon your pathway in life ever since. You know what fountains of refreshment have sprung up to satisfy your thirsty soul. When you contrast your own knowledge of religion, and peace in it, with the ignorance and restless distrust of the blinded world without, then you know how truly wise God has made you.

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It is true for all who own the Catholic name, but what a __tender__ mercy is that to be ever cherished in the heart of a convert!

O day of joy to remember!--proud, loving, humble joy like that which stirred the heart of Mary when the words broke forth in tumultuous rapture from her sacred lips, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour. For He that is mighty hath done great things unto me, and holy is His name." O day of peace to remember!--peace like that which fills the soul of the wanderer upon whose longing sight breaks the vision of his native shore, when, with hands outstretched, as if to embrace the dear land, and in a voice choked with emotion, he murmurs--Home at last! O day of freedom to remember! Freed is the caged bird that beat its wings against bars more cruel than iron--freedom that says to the soul, Fly, for between thee and God no hand shall be found to stop thee. Cleave the skies with thy wings, and go sing at the gates of Paradise, and thou shalt hear the voices of angels responding to thy notes of happiness from within. And who has done all this? O kind God! it is Thou. It is Thou who hast regarded the humility of Thy servant. Let all generations call me too blessed from henceforth; for Thou, even Thou, hast also blessed me. Te Deum Laudamus!

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But it behooves us to ask ourselves the questions--What it is to remember God's mercies, and who are they that do it.

He who does not prize the Christmas or the New Year's gift (however humble may be the offering) for the sake of the giver, has already forgotten it. Here is something that God has too good reason to complain of us. We do not make much of His gifts, as we ought. We receive them, perhaps after many prayers. Prosperity smiles upon us, temptations lose their power, our sins are forgiven, the impending calamity is averted, death departs from our doors, our wishes are granted a thousand times beyond our expectations, and now that the blessing has come, does it look much in our eyes? Does it seem to us, as it is, a great thing--a precious gift? We are proud to display the gifts of friends. Oh!

who is proud of the gifts of God? We plume ourselves upon our success, and glorify creatures for their aid, but too often God complains of us, as He complained of His ungrateful people of old, "They were filled, and were made full; and they lifted up their heart, and have forgotten me." [Footnote 1]

[Footnote 1: Osec xiii. 6.]

[USCCB: Hosea xiii. 6.]

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But He has not to complain of all. There are some who recognize the source of their blessings, who wonder, in their humble, grateful hearts, that One so high could stoop to one so low. "My friends tell me," said a recent convert, "that I never looked so bright and happy in my life. They think it is on account of a piece of good news I have heard; but it is not that. I am all the time thinking how good our dear Lord has been to me. After so many years, to be permitted to come to Him, seems almost too great happiness for __me__." There is a soul remembering the tender mercies of the Lord. "Too great happiness for __me__." Such ought to be the expression of all our hearts at the thought of the very least of God's gracious gifts. A bunch of withered flowers stood upon a table near the foot of the bed of a poor, dying woman. The flowers were many days faded and scentless, yet every morning fresh water was brought to fill the old cracked china vase (the best in the cottage) that held them. "I love to have them there," she would say, "where I can see them, for they were brought to me by __him__, and they shall be laid upon my breast when I am gone to God." "By __him!__" No need to tell the name. It was like the supplication of Mary Magdalen, "If thou hast taken Him away, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will go and take Him away."

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He who brought those flowers in his hand brought her also the holy sacraments of the dying, and was often at her bedside during her long illness. She loved him with that tender, holy, and trusting love which so enchains the hearts of the Catholic poor to their "dear priest." And the gift had come from him. That, was enough. To her the dry, withered stems were daily strengthened by the freshly brought water, the shrivelled flowers looked bright, and shed their fragrance still around the poor chamber. Not to her senses. No; but to her soul. Why should they not? Other flowers might not: but these--"these were brought by __him__." Oh! when the heart remembers, how priceless becomes the gift, what shining beauty adorns it, what magic charms does it not possess!

Thus, beloved brethren, let our hearts remember God for His manifold mercies. They come from Him. They come from the Best, the Holiest, the Truest, the Everlasting Friend. But I speak in vain if you do not understand me. If the Giver is not all that and more to you, never will His gifts be in your eyes as precious and as dear as they should be, and not long will you remember them. It is the question of the Psalmist, "Who is wise, and will keep these things in mind, and will understand the mercies of the Lord?" [Footnote 2]

[Footnote 2: Ps. cvi. 43.]

[USCCB: Psalms cvii. 43.]

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To remember the mercies of God is to make good use of them. To what end has he blessed us with the gift of faith? That it should simply distinguish us from those who do not possess it, and to lie idle and fruitless in our soul? Vain ornament, indeed, that honors neither the giver nor him who receives it. You are a Catholic in name, and you do not forget it. Is it enough to remember that? Oh! answer God to-day. Do you remember when Sunday morning comes, and the priest is ascending the altar, that you are a Catholic, and where a Catholic should be found then? Do you remember when the Church is calling her children to the confession of their sins, and to the Holy Communion at the joyful Easter time, that you are a Catholic, and what it behooves a Catholic to do then? Do you remember when obscene and blasphemous language is used in your presence that you are a Catholic, and think what part a Catholic should take in that? Tell me, can you lift your heart to Him to-day, and say in truth--My God, Thou knowest that I have not forgotten Thee? "I have chosen the way of truth: Thy judgments I have not forgotten." [Footnote 3]

[Footnote 3: Ps. cxviii. 30.]

[USCCB: Ps. cxix. 30; "The way of loyalty I have chosen;
I have set your edicts before me."]

{26}

You got over that illness. I know that you said, "If God spares my life, I will be a changed man--I will be an altered woman. No more will I be seen staggering in drunkenness. No longer will I keep a grog-shop, and stain my hands with the hard-earned and wickedly-squandered money of my neighbor--blood-money, cursed by the cries of the brutally treated wife and the moans of the naked, starved children. No longer will I be a nominal Catholic, a standing scandal to unbelievers, and damning my own soul by my criminal neglect of God and contempt of His Holy Church. I will give up all that spite and malice in my heart, and go and be reconciled with those who have injured me for the sake of Him who said, 'Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.'" Do you remember all that? Yes; but what avails such a heartless remembrance as yours has been? Even He has reminded you of your promise and of His mercy from time to time, as He now again reminds you by my mouth. Oh! mock Him not. Better, far better, would it be had you wholly forgotten both promise and mercy. It would not be generous, I allow; but now you are false and treacherous, for the mercy was granted, but the promise remains unfulfilled.

In the sorrow of your stricken spirit, and with the grievous burden of sin lying heavy upon you, your guardian angel took you one day, trembling, anxious, fearful, harassed by the stings of remorse, to the confessional.

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There you poured out your griefs, and told all the shameful guilt--griefs that seemed eternal, and guilt that no oceans might wash away. And yet, O tender mercy of God! down falls the veil of darkness, and your soul is bathed in light. You, who a moment ago were stumbling in despair at the portals of hell, are now standing before the gates of heaven. You, who had that in your

soul which almost drove you to madness, now are in such peace that words fail you, and you weep for very joy. Yes, of a truth God has been very merciful, tenderly merciful to you. Ah! what would you not then do for God--what sacrifices would you not make--what life long resolutions were you not ready to form! Do you not remember? Ah, yes! now I remind you of it. But how long did you remember it to any profit to yourself or praise to God? And tell me, how now? What of your present remembrance? An East Indian having been shown all about the beautiful city of Paris, through its royal palaces, its galleries of art, its manufactories of wondrous scientific and mechanical instruments, manifested, it was observed, but little enthusiasm. The Indian was too proud to show any emotion at sight of the works of strangers. One day he was taken to the Jardin des Plantes, where are cultivated trees, shrubs, and flowers of every clime.
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Suddenly he stopped short before a tropical tree, fell upon his knees, clasped it lovingly and kissed it, and, as the tears flowed fast down his swarthy cheek, cried out, in his own language, "O tree of my own land! O tree of my own native land, so far away! Let us go back home again."
There are some of you, my brethren, to whom I have shown the picture of a mercy you cannot but remember well. How does the sight of it affect you? Are you moved with that deep emotion such a memory should awaken? Do you hug the memory of that hour of peace to your bosom, and does your heart cry out, "O tender mercy of my God! O sweet hour of peace now so far away! Let me go back to thee again!" Blessed remembrance, as happy for yourself as it is dear to God. You are wise because you keep these things in mind, and have understood the mercies of the Lord, and the praise of the Lord for all the things He hath bestowed upon you.
But can you look at it with indifference, seeing there nothing to stir the depths of your soul, nothing to call forth a grateful aspiration from your breast? Then I think of that uncivilized Indian, and must say: He loved his country better than you love God. He was quick to remember __that__; you have been quick to forget __Him__.
{29}
I am not asking too much, my brethren, am I? I am not forcing upon your notice a subject out of place at this joyous season, am I? When the absent one returns to the old homestead to spend the Christmas holidays, you who have been the kindest to him, the most lavish in your gifts--you who have been sending him time and again sweet tokens of __your__ remembrance--you do not look for him to think the last about __you__. Oh! no. You are tempted to hide yourself in sport before he has seen you, that you may enjoy listening to his anxious and hurried questions about __you__, and his wondering where __you__ are, and a thousand eager expressions, which show that he has been thinking about the pleasant meeting he would have with __you__ all the way home, and that his joy is not full till he can run into your embrace. Oh! his every question almost drags you out from your hiding-place. But suppose you listen in vain for the mention of your name; that in the midst of his joyous congratulations and

happy wishes he does not ask where __you__ are, and evinces by no sign that in your absence anything is wanting to him. Oh! the ugly pain at your heart as you steal away to your chamber, unwilling now to be seen, hurt by his forgetfulness, and stung to the very quick by his silent ingratitude.
{30}
Brethren, I am speaking for God; for the best Friend, who of all must be the nearest and dearest, and the first in your thoughts. Looking down from His throne in heaven, he watches, to see who have been making preparations to meet Him; who are renewing at this time their grateful remembrances of Him. Ah! there are some who remember, and they have already gathered about His holy Table, and feasted at His heavenly banquet. Though no earthly friends may have been kind or thoughtful enough to send them a holiday present, they have still had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year's for all that. They have met the Friend of all friends with the kiss of peace and the embrace of welcome, and that has been more than enough.
But there are some who never said a word about Him, never thought of Him, never remembered all He had done for them. Nay, there are some who never came at all. Not that __He__ forgot to invite them, not that He neglected to prepare His Christmas feast. No. He is the Friend who never forgets. What shall I say? Does God not feel that heartless coldness and neglect of theirs? Oh! the sad, tender, complaining reproaches of Good Friday are heard in heaven at Christmas. "My people, what have I done unto thee, or in what have I grieved thee? Answer me." "Put me in remembrance," as he said to his people of old, "and let us plead together. Tell me if thou hast anything to justify thyself."
{31}
Yes, answer Him, you of whom He is speaking. Answer to that God who has never wearied of heaping blessing after blessing and mercy after mercy upon your head. Tell Him what He has done to you that you have forgotten Him. Too well you know, however, that in Him you shall find nothing to accuse.
So, then, let us rather turn to the exciting in our hearts a lively remembrance of His manifold mercies, and to make that memory to good purpose. Let us seek to know, if possible, why God has so blessed us; what object He had in view; what He expected of us; what promises we made when we received them, and now resolve that He shall be no longer disappointed in the fruits He looked for from them. It will help us to acquire that spirit of humble gratitude which so enlarges the heart, and helps us to do great and generous things for God. With the Psalmist, then, let us say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all that He hath done for thee. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and compassion." [Footnote 4] So shall the New Year begin with praise and thanksgiving, to end with blessings new and better than the last.

[Footnote 4: Ps. cii. 2-4.]
[USCCB: Ps. ciii. 2-4.]

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Sermon II.

The Three Gifts Of The Magi.

(For The Feast of The Epiphany.)

St. Matthew ii. 11.

"__And going into the house, they found
the child with Mary his mother: and
falling down, they adored him: and
opening their treasures, they offered
to him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh__."

These wise men, who are supposed by many to have been kings, were led by the appearance of the miraculous star in the heavens, and the secret inspirations of the Holy Ghost, to Bethlehem, in order to find out and adore the Child who was born king of the Jews. After a long search, they found Him, lying in a manger, and, in spite of the poverty and the straw, they recognized in Him the King of souls, the Creator of heaven and earth. With a deep faith they adored Him, and, opening their treasures, offered to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

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And we are all, in like manner, drawn to do the same thing. The light of faith directs us to the poor stable of Bethlehem, where we behold the Lord of Glory disguised in the form of an infant, and it becomes us also to offer Him our treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And, first, what is the pure gold which is acceptable to our God and Creator? By gold is understood charity or the love of our God. And by this charity is understood the pure intention of pleasing God by which we should be governed in all our works. The love of God does not essentially consist in a tender feeling of affection or in a sensible devotion of tears, which we are not always able to elicit, much as we might desire it, but in a good and pure intention. That this is so should be a great consolation and encouragement to us. We have no right to say, as many do, "I cannot love God," for this is an untruth. It lies in every one's power to love Him, if he only desires sincerely to do so. We might say with truth--My heart is cold, and I am grieved because I cannot experience that warm love of God which I desire so much; but I would reply to all such--Set your fears at rest; make a good intention to please and love God to the best of your ability, and you have, at once, the real, true, and solid love of Him which will bring you by the shortest route to the kingdom of heaven.

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It is related that one of the old heathen kings had an avarice so great that he desired that all he touched might be turned into gold. His request being granted, he perished of hunger. Avarice for spiritual treasures has no such evil effect. On the contrary, our Lord says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled." Now I wish that, in like manner, what ever you touch with your hearts--that is, what ever you long for or desire--might, by a good intention, be turned into the gold of the purest charity. Our Saviour has said, You cannot so much as give a cup of cold water in My Name--that is, with a good intention--without receiving a reward for it. The

treasures of grace and merit lie in immense heaps all around us, and we can help ourselves. Whatever we do, then, let us do it in the name of the Lord, following out the injunction of St. Paul, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all things for the glory of God." [Footnote 5] I hope, then, you will all, on this blessed festival, determine to direct all your thoughts, words, and actions to the glory of God to the very best of your ability, and thus open your treasures, and offer to the Infant Jesus lying on the straw a great heap of pure, bright gold.

[Footnote 5: I Cor. x. 31.]

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The wise men of the East offered not gold only, but also frankincense. What does this signify? It means devotion. You have often seen incense put into the censer at High Mass or Vespers, and the smoke from it immediately arise straight upwards. It is a figure of the prayers and burning wishes of the soul ascending up to heaven. The Scripture says: "And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God: and the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel." [Footnote 6]

[Footnote 6: Apoc. viii. 3, 4.]

[USCCB: Revelation viii. 3, 4.]

The act of true prayer or adoration by which we acknowledge, with our whole heart the infinite mystery of God and His complete dominion over us, our own entire nothingness of ourselves without Him, and by which we declare and protest that we desire nothing else but that He should govern us and dispose of us and all our affairs as He pleases--this is the highest and noblest act of our own reason. For what could we do so real and true as this? How could we realize in a better way the simplest and at the same time the most sublime of all truths? Our prayers ought to go up from our hearts as from a censer which contains a fire that no created thing is able to put out. The smoke of it should continually arise, and all we do should be done in the way of a prayer and supplication to our Last End and Chief Good.

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Alas! we have incense enough to offer to idols. We swing the censer to wealth, honors, and pleasures; we bow the knee, and worship houses, and lands, and cattle, and fine clothes, and sumptuous fare, and sell our very souls for a few pieces of gold; but we have but little incense for God--no pure and sincere homage for Him, the eternal, uncreated Source of all our good. And when you offer the incense of your adoration to God, offer pure and clear incense. Do not mix with the frankincense resin or other foul-smelling drugs. And what are they? Those desires of the heart by which you cling to the creatures of earth with a passionate eagerness. Clear your heart of such desires, so that you may say, "My God and my all." "My God, if I possess Thee and lack all else, I am rich in deed." "If I have the whole world, and all it contains, and have not Thee, I am poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked." Then will your prayer arise as a sweet

odor from the golden altar before the throne of God, and in numerable blessings descend upon you, not only for eternity, but even in this present life.
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Offer frankincense, or you will have no gold to offer. When you open your treasures, if there is not plenty of incense--that is, prayer--you will find the chest, in which you thought there was much gold, to be empty. For without prayer there is no charity or love of God. Prayer is the food by which you nourish and keep charity alive and on the increase. Prayer is the capital in trade by which you are to make your fortune in the charity of God to enrich you for eternity.
And having offered your gold and frankincense, do not forget the myrrh. And what is signified by myrrh? It means self-denial, or, as it is more commonly called, mortification. I wish we all understood the value of self-denial better than we do, because nearly all the miseries which afflict the soul come from the fact that we do not deny ourselves as much as we ought. We give the reins to our natural desires and inclinations, and they run away with us. Just as if we were driving a span of spirited horses, and instead of putting a curb-bit upon them and holding them in, we should throw the reins down upon their necks and let them go without restraint. When they once begin to go fast, they break into a headlong race, and never stop until they have dashed everything in pieces. Thus we let our desires for amusement and pleasure run away with us, until we find our pious resolutions and the spirit of devotion entirely gone, and drowned in the sea of forgetfulness.
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How can we love God if we be absorbed in a love of good eating and drinking? Can God come and take up His abode in a soul which occupies itself and is taken up with the satisfaction of sumptuous fare, rich meats, and choice wines or liquors. Such souls are vividly described in Holy Scripture: "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." [Footnote 7]
[Footnote 7: Philip., iii. 18, 19.]
How can God give Himself to the man who is absorbed in money-making and heaping up possessions? It is impossible for such a soul to enjoy the presence of God. Neither can He divide the empire of the soul with worldly honors, nor even with a passionate human love of wife or children. He is God, and they are creatures, the mere work of His hand. They shall pass away and be gone, and He shall remain. Such inordinate love is like disgusting vermin in the mansion of the soul, and all such vermin must be swept out. What ever we love must be loved on account of God, and in subordination to His love, or God will not come and take up His abode with us. This is the plain dictate of our reason.
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We must deny ourselves, and that not merely in forbidden things, but in those which are lawful. If we go to the limit of what is

lawful in self-indulgence, depend upon it we shall soon pass the limit. We shall fall into sin, and very likely into mortal sin. Many a one has fallen in this way. He has said to himself, I can do this thing, for it is not forbidden. Again, I can do that; it is not certain it comes within the letter of the law. I can indulge myself in this respect, for, even if sinful, it is a matter of small consequence. Thus he goes on in a downhill progress, until he becomes utterly selfish, and virtue has died out in his soul. Our Saviour has laid down the rule for a Christian; "He that will be My disciple, let him deny him self daily, and take up his cross and follow Me." Again, "He that loveth father or mother, wife or child, houses or lands, more than Me, is not worthy to be My disciple."

We must deny ourselves, and, if we would be great friends of God, we must deny ourselves a great deal. The fact is, in order to become possessed of God, we must deny ourselves in all things, at all times, and in all places. We must repress and bring into subjection our desires, so that they may not occupy and fill our hearts. The Scripture says, "Think not for the morrow what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewith ye shall be clothed; but think of the kingdom of God and his justice."

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Now, reflect on this: we cannot be thinking on both these things at the same time; one thought will crowd the other out; therefore you must drive out of your hearts those eager desires of the world, and temporal things, and anxiety about the future; you must deny yourselves these earthly desires, or you will never become spiritually-minded. Could we only banish all care and solicitude for these things, and discharge our duties and our business in life without anxiety, for God, and for the ends God has appointed them, we should be recompensed a thousandfold in this life, and we should be filled with gratitude to God for inspiring us with such sentiments. Offer myrrh, offer plenty of myrrh to God. Offer it with gold and frankincense--that is, with the intention of cleaning and sweeping out from your hearts all vain and useless love, that they may be ready and prepared for the Divine Love, and with many prayers and good wishes; and God will accept it. It will be most pleasing to Him. Without this, your self-denial will be in vain. Self-denial, without the right intention, is superstitious, and nourishes an empty pride; with it, the least act of self-denial renders you like to God, and more fit to receive the impressions of the Holy Ghost within your souls.

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Begin, then, to offer myrrh with the gold and frankincense. Deny your eyes what they like to look upon, that the eyes of your souls may look on God more steadily. Deny your ears what they like to hear; news and gossip, not to speak of detraction and evil talk, that you may more readily hear the still, small voice of the Holy Ghost gently speaking within your hearts. Deny your sense of smell; the gratifications of perfumes and sweet odors. Deny your palates delicate and luxurious food, that you may relish better the plain and solid meat of the Gospel. Deny yourselves all around, whenever you can bring yourselves to do it

cheerfully, for the sake of God, for He loves not the unwilling, but the cheerful, giver.
This is what the saints did, and it is what made them saints. Impelled by the strong desire to love God more, I dare to say that self-denial was the sweetest pleasure to them in this life. Having food and raiment, and wherewith to be clothed, they were content therewith; the superfluous and the unnecessary they abominated, for they knew they would only lead them away from Jesus Christ.
Present these gifts not only now, but every day of your lives. God will give them to you, and then you must give them back faithfully to Him, and in a short time He will give you a present which excels anything you ever thought of. He will give you Himself, and inundate your happy soul in an ocean of inconceivable joy and unspeakable happiness, never to be lost for all the ages of eternity.

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Sermon III.

How To Pass A Good Lent.

(For Ash Wednesday.)

2 Cor. vi. 2.

"__Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation__."

This morning, my brethren, we knelt before this altar, and received from the Holy Church the ashes from which this day takes its name. Why did we do so? Was it merely because we had done so in past years? because it is a Catholic custom? because others did so, and we were expected to do the same? To receive them for such reasons would be better than not to receive them at all; but better still would it be to feel the meaning, and enter into the spirit of this sacred rite.
In the early ages of the Church, those whose sins were such as to require (in the severer judgment of those days) a public penance, received the ashes on this day from the bishop, and were then, after some other ceremonies, expelled from the Church, and not allowed to assist at Mass till Holy Thursday.
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As they were being driven out, the words. __Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris__--"Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return"--which were repeated to each one of us as we received the ashes this morning, were said to them. Their exclusion from the Church, often during a much longer time than the few weeks of Lent, was by no means the only penance to which many of them were subjected, besides those which they voluntarily undertook; but it is enough to mention so much, that we may understand what are the feelings which we, who are to-day in the place of these public penitents, should have.
Receiving the ashes was for them a sign of the most profound humiliation and repentance. They were in disgrace, separated from the rest of the faithful as unworthy to partake with them in the sacred mysteries; and they expressed by their submission a firm purpose to amend their lives, and repair the scandal they had

given. Now it is to us no disgrace to receive the ashes, but even the contrary; and we are not, perhaps, understood as expressing sorrow for our sins by the act, but humiliation and penance are really meant by it, and it is in this spirit that the Church wishes us to perform it.
{44}
This meaning is also contained in the very ashes themselves. For what can more completely express humiliation than ashes, which are the mere remains of their former substance, without beauty, strength, or any of its qualities? And what can better represent repentance than the fine dust of which they are composed? For this reducing to dust or powder is the real meaning of contrition: the contrite heart is that which is not only broken, but even ground to dust with sorrow. The ashes, also, as we are reminded in receiving them, represent the dust of death to which we must sooner or later come, and in which all the distinctions upon which we pride ourselves so much now will be confounded, nothing being left of us in this world after a short time but a few handfuls of dust, and our souls having gone to another, where their claims to consideration will have been judged according to a very different standard from that which prevails in this life. The thought of death, then, which they suggest, ought to fill us with humiliation on account of the vanity of our worldly distinctions, and with repentance now while we have time, because after death repentance will be impossible.
But Ash Wednesday is not a day by itself. It is the beginning of a season in which the sentiments which it suggests are to be continued and even strengthened. It is of the right way of passing this penitential season of Lent that I wish to speak to you to-night.
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And, in the first place, let us try to have a firm purpose to pass it in the right way. With a good resolution, the battle is half won. It is well worth our while to spend a good Lent; heaven is, as it were, nearer now, and grace is more abundant. "Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation." Yes, my brethren, the Church does not give us Lent merely as a penance, but to help us in saving our souls.
What, then, shall we do to spend Lent well?
The first thing to do is to cease from sin, and obey those commandments of God which are binding at all times as well as now. To one who will not resolve to quit mortal sin, nothing else that he can do will be of any use except so far as it helps him to make such a resolution. All who have lost grace know well enough what sins are ruining their souls; and these they must give up, or their Lent will have been of little or no use--perhaps even worse than useless, being another of those graces of the good God which they have thrown away and trampled under foot, and which He will reproach them with at the last day. Though He is always entreating us to give up sin, yet it is now specially that He urges us, as we are about to commemorate the bitter sufferings which He endured to redeem us from its power.
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And though we are always bound to give it up, yet are we

specially now so bound, because everything reminds us so strongly how hateful it is to God. Leave off sin, then; that is the great thing. I do not say that nothing else must be done till this is; but this must be done sooner or later, and the sooner the better, for it is very dangerous to wait. This night, this very hour, may be the last that we shall have.

This naturally suggests a special precept that comes to us at this time. Whether we have sinned or not, we must make our Easter duty. At other times, our Lord invites us to come to Him; now, He commands us to come, under pain of a new and great sin if we refuse. Obey, then, this loving command as soon as possible; do not delay, especially if guilty of mortal sin; for, besides running a great risk, you will lose the merit of all you may do in this holy season as long as you remain unforgiven. It is not so hard as it seems; and the moment of absolution will be the happiest one of life.

Another positive precept at this time is, of course, the fast, as prescribed by the rules of the diocese. This we must keep as well as we can, not considering that we are exempted from it merely because it is difficult; but only allowing such reasons against it as make a strict observance really imprudent--remembering, of course, the exemptions given in the regulations, but trusting to the judgment of a confessor or physician, rather than our own, if there be any doubt about the matter.

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And let us not make the sacrifice unwillingly, merely because we are obliged to, but as cheerfully as we can, so that we may please God, as well as avoid offending Him. In this way we may gain more merit, perhaps, than by anything else we can do in the course of the year, on account of the difficulty of the work, and because at other times we should hardly be justified in imposing such a penance on ourselves. Besides, obedience is better than sacrifice; and fasting in Lent is an act of obedience. So, if we cannot fast, we lose the opportunity of doing something a little difficult, and which we know will please God; which should make us sorry rather than glad.

Now, to come to things not absolutely required, but which nevertheless ought to be attended to in Lent, and which must be done, if we wish really to pass it well. They may be classed under the three eminent good works, as they are called; namely--fasting, prayer, and alms.

It may seem as if the subject of fasting had been already disposed of. And so it has, perhaps, in the usual sense of the word; we are not required, nor would it probably be advisable, to keep a more rigorous fast than the Church prescribes, at least in point of quantity; but we may give up some things in the way of food, which are not forbidden, practising some voluntary mortification or self-denial, as far as the strength of our souls and bodies will allow.

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It rarely does us much harm to deny our taste something; to give up or limit ourselves in something which we like particularly, if we do not really need it, and there be plenty besides. And though abstaining from the sin of drunkenness is not probably a

mortification, but a most severe obligation at all times, yet, as in this penitential season this vice seems to acquire new malignity, still greater precautions ought to be taken in those occasions which might lead to it.

But the word fasting really means more than abstaining from food and drink. It implies self-denial in other ways; and there are a great many ways in which we can deny ourselves besides eating and drinking. The tongue, for example, can be restrained in speaking, as well as in its sense of taste. We can talk a good deal less than we might without sin, as well as eat less, and yet be none the worse for it. Then we can restrain our curiosity for news, both public and private; we can refuse to gratify our sight, hearing, and other senses--in short, there are plenty of ways for one who has the will.

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But if we have no will for such voluntary mortification, we can at least take patiently what we have to suffer from cold, fatigue, or any pain of body or mind; and not complain of those grievances which come to us from the neglect or carelessness, or even from the bad will, of others, and of which it might seem that we have, in some sense, a right to complain. We may well consider that we have forfeited our rights by sin, and that though sometimes we are bound to claim them, yet often it will be better to give them up. But what are the motives for all this self-denial? There are many. One is to make up, in some degree, for having gone beyond what was allowable by now stopping somewhat short of it; that is, to atone for our sins. But besides this, it makes us love ourselves less, and God and our neighbor more; and it makes us a great deal more free really than if we were all the time having our own way, for it takes away a thousand cares and anxieties which are all the time distracting us, and keeping us from attaining the end for which we were created. Nor can we be happy without self-denial, strange as it may seem; for we cannot be happy unless we are contented; and the only way to become contented is to cease to care about the many things which we are always desiring but often cannot have; and the only way to do this thoroughly is sometimes to give them up when we can have them. Besides this, God is pleased and gives us grace when we deny our selves; for it shows our love for Him.

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And at this time He seems specially to ask these sacrifices from us. "Now is the acceptable time"; and if we do not make them now, there is not much chance that we will at any other season of the year.

Then we must make more prayer now than usual, employing in this way the time that we cut off from other things. Try to come to early Mass on week-days; of course, nothing can be better than to assist at this, the greatest act of Christian worship. Also, come to Vespers on Sunday, and say the beads at home, in common if possible, and as many other prayers as there is time for, especially such as are indulgenced, for these are, of course, more powerful in satisfying for sin. And in this time of special trial for the Church and the Holy Father, we will not forget to pray that the triumph of our Faith, which is sure to come sooner

or later, may be speedy; that the plans of the persecutors of the Holy See may be utterly defeated; and that they may return as obedient children to their Mother and ours, the Holy Catholic and Roman Church.

But, besides these devotions, which we can practise at any time, there are also others peculiar to this season: those in the church on Wednesday and Friday nights, which will be the same as in previous years, and which will, no doubt, be attended as well as or even better than they have been heretofore.

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There will be a sermon every Wednesday, and the Stations on Friday. Next to repenting of sin and confessing it, one can hardly do anything more pleasing to God in the time of Lent than to assist at the Stations, and help to commemorate His bitter sufferings and those of His Blessed Mother. "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed." Surely, the least we can do at this season, when the Church presents His Passion to our minds, is to come and go with Him over the way of sufferings by which we were redeemed. You will notice, also, by looking at the table of festivals at the door, that the Church commemorates, on every Friday during Lent, some one of the mysteries of the Passion. These mysteries we will do well to think of specially. Try to come every Wednesday and Friday, and not miss a single evening from this to Good Friday; and also persuade others to come who are not here to-night, or who have not been in the habit of coming; and come not for amusement, or even principally for instruction, but for the honor and glory of God and the good of your souls.

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Much hardly needs to be said about alms, the last of the eminent good works. It is evident enough how pleasing it is to God, and what a rich reward it secures for us. In the office of next Sunday the Church reminds us specially of this, saying, in the words of Holy Scripture, "Break thy bread for the hungry, and bring the needy and wandering into thy house; then shall thy light shine forth as the morning, and thy justice shall go before thy face." And, during the following week, she repeats: "Give alms to the poor, and it shall pray for thee to the Lord; for as water quenches fire, so do alms extinguish sin." That is, if we have repented of our sins, almsgiving will satisfy for them; and if we have not, almsgiving will help us to have contrition to repent, and will move God to give us abundant grace; He will be obliged, as it were, by gratitude, to give it to us; for He has said, "As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me." Almsgiving will not save us without repentance, but it will help us very much to have repentance; and, to impress us with its importance, our Lord seems, in His own description of the last judgment, to make our salvation depend upon the charitable works which we have done in this life. And if, by His grace, we have repented of sin and confessed it, almsgiving will give us a degree of merit and amount of reward which we may, in one sense, call unjust and excessive, so great is the mercy of God.

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Fasting, prayer, and alms; self-denial, devotion, and charity; these are the principal good works at this and every time; but they are more urgent and necessary now than usual, if we wish to obtain the special fruit of this holy season. And, besides these, we must not put away the spirit of humiliation and penance expressed in receiving the ashes this morning. These are not for Ash-Wednesday alone, but for the whole of Lent. We must abandon, in spirit at least, the vain distinctions by which we are trying to raise ourselves above others, and follow, at a great distance, the example of our God and Saviour, who, being our Creator and absolute Master, became the servant of servants for our sake. And we have an immense number of sins which are not yet fully expiated; for these we must do penance sometime or other, before death or after it, in this world or in purgatory. We can do it better now than at any other time; first, because we are obliged to do some difficult things, which can be made to pay this temporal debt if they are done with the right spirit and intention; and, also, because penance is the spirit of the season, and we can come to the church oftener, and do of our own accord other things which are a little inconvenient and put us to some trouble, without any danger of attracting attention or of getting proud about it; for others will be doing the same.
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Finally, my brethren, in the words of the Apostle, "We exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain." This may be our last Lent; it certainly will be for some of us; but, at any rate, we shall not feel sorry to have spent it as if it were so. God's love for us is immense; He is continually giving us fresh graces, which we are trampling under our feet; but there will come a time when I will not say His patience will be exhausted, but when, in the course of His providence, we must be taken from this world, and grace for us will be no more. Then, when we lie on our death-bed, we shall look back--if, indeed, we are able to collect our thoughts--upon the gifts of God which we have thrown away, and wish most earnestly for a day, or even an hour, of the time that we have wasted. Then, if we have spent this Lent badly, we shall remember it and the others that we have neglected, and bitterly repent our neglect when it is too late. Then we shall fear and tremble at the thought of the awful judgment of God, before whose face we are so soon to appear; or, if we have confidence that by His mercy the guilt of our sins has been taken away, we shall still feel how unfit we are, after a sinful life, to remain in His sight, and shall see the flames of purgatory prepared to expiate those offences for which this Lent and the others we have wasted might have atoned. Perhaps years of suffering will await us there instead of the few days of penance which we have refused in this life.
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And, even if we have spent this time well, we shall then see clearly how we might have spent it better; and every good work which we could properly have done, which we had the grace and opportunity for, and yet did not do, will give us more sorrow than its omission gave relief.

But let us hope better things. There is no reason why this Lent should not be for us all that God meant it to be. That it may be so, the first thing to do, and the most agreeable of all, is to get into the grace and friendship of God, if we are now in sin; and then we have only to go on and do what we can, not in a grudging or weary spirit, but cheerfully and with our whole heart, to please our good God, who loves us each as much as if we were His only creature, and has done infinitely more for us already than we can ever do for Him. His Blessed Mother and the saints, especially St. Joseph, under whose patronage the greater part of Lent almost always comes, will help us, and we shall have joy enough in our souls to fully make up for all that is unpleasant or tiresome. And all the while we shall, by penance, be shortening the road that lies between us and our true home in heaven, where our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is waiting to have us come and be happy with Him for all eternity.

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Sermon IV.

Pretended And Real Christians.

(At Special Lenten Service.)

2 Cor. vi. 1.

"__And we do exhort you
that you receive not the grace of God in vain__."

What is the reason, my dear brethren, that you are all here to-night? I know very well what it is. There are very few who have not one and the same reason. You came because you wish, when you are removed out of this world, to reach the kingdom of heaven. You came because you would secure yourselves from the punishments denounced by God against the sinner. You came here to-night because you feel a strong interest in the salvation of your souls. It is the grace of God which stirs within your hearts and impels you to come. Now you are here, I say to you, with St. Paul, "Let not this grace of God be in vain." It is not enough to come within the church-walls and hear the voice of the preacher, unless you arc also willing and anxious to follow out his instructions.

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I want to tell you what it is to be rightly and truly called a Christian, and to have a well-grounded hope of salvation. A vast number of absurd notions are afloat in the minds of many as to what it is to be a Christian. Where they came from, I cannot tell. It is not from the Church, for she never has taught them, and never can teach them. It is not from good sense and right reason, for they teach exactly the contrary. It must be from the devil, for he is said, in Scripture, to be a liar and the father of lies, and these lies are the very ones which are the most destructive of the soul. One of these lying notions is that outward communion with the Church of God renders a man a true Christian, and makes him sure of his salvation. The Pharisees had this idea. "Are we not children of Abraham?" they said. But what did St. John the Baptist say? "Say not to yourselves, We have Abraham for our father; for I say unto you that God is able of

these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance." [Footnote 8]

[Footnote 8: St. Matthew iii. 9.]

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And our Saviour said unto them, "If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham." If there are any Catholics foolish enough to build their hopes of salvation on the mere fact of being Catholics, without having the spirit and the works of the Catholic religion, let them consider the fearful denunciation of our Lord against them. Take the parable of the wheat and the tares. The kingdom of heaven is like to a man who sowed wheat in his field, and by-and-by, when it came up, a quantity of weeds, or tares, came up with it. The servants asked their lord, "Shall we not go out and pull up the tares?" "No," he replied; "lest, pulling out the tares, ye pull out the wheat with them. Suffer them to grow together until the harvest, and then the wheat shall be gathered into my barn, and the tares shall be bound up into bundles to be burned in the fire." The question is not--Am I growing in the field of the Church? but--Am I the wheat? or the tares, fit only for the burning? Our Lord never seems to grow tired of denouncing this doctrine. Listen to His description of the last judgment: "And when the master of the house shall be gone in, and shall shut the door, you shall begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying: Lord, open to us; and he answering, shall say to you: I know not whence you are. Then you shall begin to say: We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. And he shall say to you: I know not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." [Footnote 9]

[Footnote 9: St. Luke xiii. 25-27.]

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You see, then, the plea of being familiar in the house of God, of eating and drinking in His presence, is of no avail. Others, who are not in the outward Church of God, though in it in heart and soul, may enter the kingdom of God, but all the wicked in the Church shall be thrust out.

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. When you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you shall be cast out. And they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." It is no doubt of immense and incalculable benefit to be within the pale of the Church, and within reach of the Sacraments, but if you presume on this alone, instead of getting any benefit, you will only make them the occasion of your damnation. You have received this great grace, but remember that you are thereby rendered responsible for the right use of it. "Brethren, beware lest you receive this grace of God in vain."

Now, there is another false idea of what it is to be a Christian, and I am convinced that this prevails much more extensively, for, after all, few are foolish enough to build their hopes of salvation exclusively in the mere fact of being outward members of the Church of God.

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This idea is, that, if a man belongs to the Church and does some good and religious acts, he can indulge himself to some extent in mortal sin, and still be a Christian and expect heaven. I know very well there are many sinners who know better. When they sin, they are aware of what they are about: they know well that they lose heaven, and that they renounce all pretensions to be true Christians, and this salutary knowledge drives them back to repentance and their duty; but are there not some who persuade, or half persuade, themselves to the contrary? They drink in sin like water, and make themselves out to be pretty good Christians notwithstanding. Do they not go to Mass? Do they not appear occasionally in the tribunal of penance? Do they not cry, Lord, Lord, and beat their breasts, and call to mind that there is such a being as God, and that they must do something now and then to please Him, or else He will get angry with them? And then they go off and sin as hard as they can, until they come to Mass again, and beat their breasts once more, and cry out, Lord, Lord, again. The Chinese do very much the same thing. They set up a huge, ugly idol in their temples, and now and then go and prostrate themselves before it, and burn incense, and make some offering. This is the sum and substance of religion with them, and I fear it is the idea some Catholics, in their ignorance of their holy religion and through their evil disposition, have formed to themselves, too.

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Sin all the week, and try to appease the anger of the Almighty on the Sunday by some false and hypocritical acts of worship! Why, they must think God to be something like the idols of the heathen, instead of being, as He is, the God of in finite power, and wisdom, and goodness.

What is the story of such people in the confessional? Sin, mortal sin, is a matter of course with them. Have they undertaken to deny themselves anything they had a strong desire for, in order not to commit mortal sin? No indeed! They think it quite excuse enough that they were tempted. "I could not help it, I was tempted." "Are you determined not to commit this sin again?" "I do not know; I will not unless I am tempted." The power of God is held very cheap by such people. They stand ready to sell it for little or nothing at any time: for a filthy gratification, for a drunken debauch, for a dollar or two. Judas sold our Lord for thirty pieces of silver. They would sell Him for two or three. Such a person comes to confession after an interval of a year or so. What is his story? Guilty of frequent absence from Holy Mass without any excuse--guilty of repeated drunkenness--guilty of cursing, swearing, and indecent language--guilty of unchaste conduct. Such has been his life for many years past; and such, it is to be feared, will be his life until death closes it.

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His purposes of amendment are only on his lips, and not in his heart. They are made, not to be fulfilled, but to be broken. And yet such men persuade themselves that this kind of religion is acceptable to God, and that it is going to bring them to heaven. Of what value are your prayers it you lead such a life? The prophet Isaias tells you: "Offer sacrifice no more in vain:

incense is an abomination to me. The new moons, and the Sabbaths, and the other festivals, I will not abide; your assemblies are wicked. My soul hateth your new moons, and your solemnities; they are become troublesome to me: I am weary of bearing them. And when you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away my eyes from you; and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear; for your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes; cease to do perversely, learn to do well." [Footnote 10]

[Footnote 10: Isaias i. 13-17.]

Now, I have placed before your eyes the picture of a false and hypocritical religion, on the one hand; I will hold up before you, on the other, the idea of a real, true, genuine Christianity, which will certainly lead the soul to heaven--the idea of our Lord Himself in the holy Gospels.

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He invariably represents the true Christian as one thoroughly converted from the evil of his ways. He compares him to a tree--"A good tree," He says, "cannot bring forth bad fruit; neither can a bad tree bring forth good fruit." Why not? Because there is good sap in the good tree, which goes alike into all the fruit of the tree, and makes it all of a good quality, whilst the harsh and sour sap of the bad tree affects all its fruit, and makes it all bad.

A real Christian has a thoroughly good disposition. He fears God, and keeps His commandments. This principle of his affects all his actions. The whole tenor and course of his life is good. He no longer brings forth evil actions. He may have been bad once, but he has turned once for all and finally from the evil of his ways, and has become good. Once he had a bad disposition; he committed sin, and gratified his unlawful passions, in spite of God and His commandments, and his fruit or actions were corrupted by his bad dispositions. They were all worthless for eternal life. But he turned to God with his whole heart; he was grafted into Christ, and it is the sap and nourishment of Christ that flows through his soul, rendering him a new man, and his actions meritorious of an everlasting reward. To be a Christian is represented also under this very figure.

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St. Paul says: "But you have not so learned Christ, but you have been taught in Him to put off, according to the former conversation, the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth." [Footnote 11]

[Footnote 11: Eph. iv. 20-24.]

And then we have a beautiful summary of the practical uprightness and candor of the thus newly-created man, and of the excellent fruit of virtue which should proceed from him: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye the truth every one to 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. Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands that which is good. Let no evil speech proceed from

your mouth. ... Let all bitterness and anger, and indignation and clamor, and blasphemy be put away from you. ... And be ye kind and merciful and forgiving, even as God has forgiven you in Christ." [Footnote 12]

[Footnote 12: __Ibid__. iv. 25-32.]

These are, indeed, golden words, which deserve to be read over time and again, and pondered in our hearts, and embodied, every one of them, in fervent prayers and ardent desires, arising like incense out of our hearts to God, that we may have the grace to realize in ourselves the pattern of the true Christian which they present to us.

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Let us listen once more to the holy apostle, threatening us if we fail to conform to this measure and standard of the Christian life: "The night is past, and the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences." [Footnote 13]

[Footnote 13: Rom. xiii. 12-14.]

Again: "Know ye not that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God? Be not deceived. Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of God; and such some of you were, but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." [Footnote 14]

[Footnote 14: I Cor, vi. 9-11.]

You see that unless one puts away all these things he has no right to the hopes of a Christian. A Christian is a follower of Christ. Do we follow Christ when we go to places of drunkenness and debauchery? Do we follow Christ when we refuse to forgive our enemies? Do we follow Christ when we are covetous and hard hearted?

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Look at the first Christians. They were Jews; but when they heard the news of the Gospel of Christ, they turned with their whole hearts to conform to it. They burned their bad books. They quit their evil ways. They confessed their sins. They were even willing to sell all their goods, and throw the proceeds into a common fund, because this religion appeared to them of more value than all the world besides. They were one in heart and soul. They were steadfast in prayer, and blameless in their lives. You might say of them, without hesitation, that they were of such as should be saved, and their names were written in the Book of Life.

Look at the martyrs. When it was a question of obeying God, they laid down their lives rather than disobey. They did not commit mortal sin, and say, "Oh! it is nothing. I will just swing the censer to that image, or offer that sacrifice, for the fire is too hot, or the sword is too keen, but I will still remain a Christian in my heart." No, indeed! They were not Christians of this sort; but they suffered by the fire, and by the sword, and from the wild beasts, and all kinds of cruel deaths, and thus

manfully they earned the kingdom of heaven. These were Christians; and they teach us what that sacred name of Christian means.
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What kind of Christians are we? Let each one ask himself this question: Do I come up to the standard? Am I worthy of the name? Have I any real, well-grounded hope of salvation? Am I, this moment, in a state of salvation or of damnation? Have I the principle, the fixed, well-grounded principle, which ought to govern all the actions of a Christian? Have I considered this matter, and looked it steadily in the face?
These are important questions, and now is the time to answer them. If you have been Christian in name heretofore, but heathen in life, do not let this Lent go by without a thorough change. Arise out of this miserable state, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Devote the whole of this Lent to this purpose. Say--I have a most important business to transact, and it must be done at once, before the Lent is over. Turn away from all sin with horror, and to God with your whole heart. Drop all foolish amusement. Drop all sinful company. Drop all excess in eating and drinking. Drop, as far as possible, all anxiety about business, or any worldly affairs, and give your attention to your poor soul. Think, oh! think of eternity, of death, of judgment, of the punishments denounced upon sinners. Do not let the thoughts of these things leave your minds. Force yourselves to think upon them--it is all-important to you. And pray: cry to God for mercy.
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The promise is sure: "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Make such a use of this season of penance as God and the Church wish you to, and you will find it the best, the most profitable, the most joyful of your whole life.
You will exclaim--I was poor, wretched, blind, now I see, now I am rich in grace, now I am indeed happy, for God has spoken the word of peace to my soul. Never, never more will I be so ungrateful as to offend Him again.

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Sermon V.

The Sins And Miseries Of The Dram-seller.

Habacuc II. 15.

__"Woe to him that giveth drink to his friend,
and presenteth his gall, and maketh him drunk."__

I once made a journey to a strange country; and so utterly at variance did all the social customs and personal lives of its inhabitants seem to be with the ordinary habits of people of this world, that I thought for a moment I must have stumbled upon beings who had been transplanted from some other planet.
Among other remarkable features in their character, I noticed that, instead of being as ambitious of obtaining a high reputation amongst their neighbors as men generally are, the inhabitants of that country were striving, as it appeared to me, during every leisure hour they could spare from their daily labor, to lower themselves in the estimation of others and become

degraded. Instead of riches, they sought poverty; instead of learning, ignorance; instead of health, disease; and a premature death rather than a long life.
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The means to which they resorted to bring this about seemed equally strange. By a sort of general consent, a certain number of them were chosen to absorb all the respectability, property, and comfort of the rest. These individuals distributed themselves about in different quarters of the towns, and you could easily have recognized their habitations from the rest for being the finer buildings, which increased in size as the surrounding dwellings of their neighbors became the more squalid, desolate, and uninhabitable. They, with their wives and children, also added the more to their comfort and luxury as the families about them became the nakeder and the hungrier. So far was all this carried, that, I observed, not a few, after having given up all their own, would often go and steal from others, and carry not only money, but even articles of furniture and clothing, to these men, who seemed also to be very popular persons and great favorites, if I might judge of the number of their clients and the pleasure apparently derived from long visits to them, to the loss of the company of their friends and families, and of their natural rest after wearisome days of toil.
I wondered greatly at all this, and asked my guide to explain it to me. "Do you not see," said he, "that these rich and powerful persons are in possession of a wonderful elixir?
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It is said to produce happiness for those who may obtain a little of it, and these people are so anxious to be happy that they eagerly give up all they have, and all they hope for in this world and the next, in order to get some of it." "I do not see," I said, "that it makes those who use it happy; on the contrary, they seem to me to be really bartering all their means of happiness away, and getting nothing but misery in exchange." "You need only look around you upon those comfortless homes and diseased men and women, and glance at their daily lives, to confirm the truth of your observation," he replied. "Then these poor, misguided souls are only grasping at shadows of happiness, and losing the reality in the meanwhile?" "You have spoken the truth," said he; "and you need not be surprised at it, for the country you are in is called the Land of the Shadow of Happiness." "I will tarry no longer here," said I, "for the sight sickens me. I will return quickly to my own country." "So you may," said my guide; "but the seller of the shadow of happiness lives and thrives with you also." "Does he?" I asked. "And what may he be called?"
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"The Dram-seller."
I awoke from my reverie, and found myself standing, not in a strange land, but in the streets of my own city, before a fine brick building, ornamented with cut stone, proudly rearing its showy front, and looking down with contempt upon the humble homes of the poor that surrounded it; and glittering in the sunshine shone the gilded sign-board over its doors, "IMPORTED WINES AND

LIQUORS."

Yes, the dram-seller lives and thrives with us, too--the vender of the shadow of happiness, and dealer in ignorance, disease, degradation, poverty, ruined reputations, strifes, jealousies, insanity, delirium tremens, and dishonored and early graves. The drunkards whom he makes are wretched enough, and commit, through their intemperance, the most grievous of crimes; but I know not if the sins and miseries of the dram-seller be not worse and far more hopeless of reparation than theirs. For in one it is often the result of weak and uneducated minds, unable to use God's gifts in moderation, or to bear up against the trials and temptations of this life; but the other must be a cold, heartless, calculating, money-worshipping soul, who can thus fatten himself upon the sinful appetites of others, and from year to year defraud his neighbor by the sale of his vile, adulterated trash, and take the hard-earned dollars of his customers in exchange for it without a blush.

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The dram-seller and his traffic is a well-known and prominent rock of scandal in the community, whether it be the secret sale from one barrel of beer or liquor in the earth-floored shanty, or the flourishing business of a well-stocked and gilded saloon. What are the sins of the dram-seller? He sins against justice and against charity.

He sins against justice. To all who have examined the matter, it is a well-established fact that in every case this business is necessarily connected with the sale of false, adulterated articles, and with an unreasonable, unrighteous, and usurious profit. And the only excuse any one connected with it has ever been able to offer is, that they are obliged, if they sell at all, to keep cheap liquors for poor people, or that, if the article is adulterated, it is none of their business, for they sell it, either just as they purchase it from large dealers, or, at the worst, only add a certain modicum of water, as they say __the raw spirit might do the poor people harm!__

But they know the fact as well as I know it, that scarcely one drop is dealt out by them that is not more or less adulterated; that their so-called wines never saw the juice of the grape; that their brandies, and rums, and cordials are all composed of proof spirit, coloring matter, drugs of the most poisonous character and deadly strength, and water. I am in possession of a document circulated privately among these manufacturers of "imported wines and liquors," which purports to give recipes for making any kind of wine, liquor, or cordial you can name, with the address of certain houses where the drugs I have alluded to may be obtained.

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A friend was invited by a dram-seller to visit his vaults. Taking out the bung of a large hogshead, he drew up from the liquor by a cord a gauze bag of very small dimensions, and, with a peculiar wink of his eye, remarked, "You see, that's the way we manage it." "Oh! that's the way you manage it, is it?" the friend replied. "I am very glad to know it."

The cheap materials from which the drink ordinarily sold is manufactured, and the large adulteration with water made on their

own premises by the retailers, enables them to make the most exorbitant, usurious profits. The popular wonder is, how so many can carry on the business and make money by it. That is the reason.

If the character of the drink sold, or the adulteration of it, were always harmless to the consumer, there might be a semblance of palliation to this iniquity, though no just excuse even then; for in such a case the consumer does not get either what he supposes or the worth of his money.

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But when we see the dreadful effects produced by these liquors, the morbid cravings which they engender in those who partake of them, the extra-ordinary prostration of mind and body caused by a fit of intoxication on them, the physical and moral degradation resulting from their constant use, there can be no excuse for the dispensing of such noxious articles, and he who practises it is guilty of a fraud--a fraud of the basest and most criminal character upon the people, and makes himself a fit object for the scorn and righteous indignation of a just community.

Am I not right in saying that the dram-seller sins against justice?

2. The dram-seller sins against charity. He sins against himself, his spiritual and temporal good, and that of his family.

The business is a proximate occasion of sin, and good morals can never allow one to remain in that state. In the first place, it is a proximate occasion of the sin of drunkenness for himself and for the members of his household. The necessity of pleasing and attracting his customers obliges him often to treat and be treated during the day. The effect of this constant tippling is very visible in the persons of those who have been some time in the business, and the number of those who fall into the sin of drunkenness from the proximity of the occasion furnished by the sale is very great. It is not an unfrequent occurrence for them to take the pledge, in order to prevent themselves from drinking with their customers.

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Their wives, children, and clerks are exposed to the same occasion of sin. The language and character of the frequenters of the dram-shop are demoralizing to the last degree, not only to the man, but to the wife and children, and pave the way to every conceivable crime.

How many a young man has engaged in this vile traffic, who commenced it sober and virtuous, but who, by the occasions it presented, soon became a degraded and irreclaimable sot! And when he first thought of going into it, how his conscience reproved him, how often he reflected that this was not a fit thing for a good Catholic and practical Christian. When he met the priest in the street the day or so after the opening of his store or saloon, how he reddened up to the eyes, and was glad if he perchance passed him without observing him his pastor, whose nod, and smile, and shake of the hand, and cheery "God bless you!" he used to be so anxious and happy to have from the hour of childhood. But now his uneasy conscience keeps him away altogether from the Sacraments, and often from Mass. If people

enquire what has become of him lately, or wonder that he is seen no longer at the altar, the answer that he "has opened a liquor store" is deemed a sufficient one.
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And knowing the wrongs from it, I thank God that there is such a sense of Christian propriety and rectitude in the public conscience left amongst us, that will deem such, a response a sufficient one.
I know that, as time goes on, and the greed of gain takes possession of them, the conscience gets less clamorous: but it is scarcely ever completely blunted. They are always rather ashamed of the business, and never mention the fact of their being engaged in it in an open, frank manner. A person, whom I did not know, called upon me once to consult me upon an affair, and I had occasion to ask him his profession. He replied, evasively, "I am a member of the ---- Convention." "But your business is--" "Oh!--ah! (hesitating) a grocery and liquor store."
But the sin which adds the last and most grievous stain upon the dram-seller and his traffic is the heinous breach of Christian charity against his neighbor. He wrongs his neighbor in his property, his person, his soul, his family, and in all his social relations. He makes bad husbands, bad wives, immoral children. And all good citizens and practical Catholics will bear me out in the assertion that the dram-shop is the gulf which swallows the hard earnings of the laboring classes; the health, property, happiness, life, and well-being of thousands of the community; and is the responsible first cause of the increase of pauperism, and crime, and the consequent burden of taxation upon the State.
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Recent statistics show that, in the cities of New York and Boston, there is a dram-shop for every one hundred inhabitants; and that, in Boston alone, the arrests for public drunkenness in one year were equal to one in ten of the entire population. This is a horrible state of things. As a contrast, I remember preaching a mission in a certain town where, by the exertions of the parish priest, all Catholics, save one, had given up the traffic. We found the sin of drunkenness in that place comparatively rare. No one who has examined the matter will pretend to dispute the fact that drunkenness increases in the same ratio with the multiplication of the dram shop. It is therefore a public nuisance, a crying scandal amongst us, a proximate occasion of sin, an iniquitous trade in which no good Christian can engage without putting the salvation of his soul in peril.
Such or such a man and his family whom you could name were happy enough before he got enticed into the dram-shop. It was a sight to make the angels smile to witness the clean, bright home that man found on his return from business. Every thing was there to cheer him. The wife welcomed him with an unclouded brow. The children dropped their playthings to run and embrace him. If he had not luxury about him, he had plenty and comfort. Plenty of furniture, plenty of clothes for his work, and a new suit for the Sunday morning.
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The table wanted nothing but the blessing upon the food whenever the meal time came. The doctor's bill never came so very heavy, and, if one of the family happened to be ill a little longer than common, he felt a worthy pride in being able to go and pay the doctor at his office, and exchange thanks. His name was good in the bank whenever he wanted money; and, as year by year rolled by, he was getting up in the world. Men talked of his "good luck," as they called it. Friends whispered, about election times, that he would make a capital fellow for this or that vacant office in his township. No family stood higher in respect, if they did in wealth, at the parish church than his. Happy and beloved at home in the bosom of his family; honored and respected abroad; at peace with God and man; what fiend will dare bring his foul presence within the circle of so much joy? Alas! for the dark day that he was bidden by the dram-seller to "be neighborly and come in and take a friendly glass." Alas! for the fatal hour when the tempter invited him to "come round of an evening, and be sociable, and not to be such a man-baby tied to his wife's apron-strings." Now it begins the oft-told, woeful tale. A hurried supper, and out for the evening. Later and later he returns, with the signs of liquor on him. He used to try to hide it at first by washing his mouth with water and taking a smart walk. But he takes too much now to care for Appearances; nor is he able for the walk.
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In order to smooth over matters, he takes an opportunity on his wife's birthday, and brings out the bottle and proposes her health, and makes her drink with him; and then a little taste of the sugared drops at the bottom of the glass for the children. It is brought out every day now; and when the night comes, the wife sits up late, goes often to the window, watching his return, and there's a heavy weight at her heart that forces from her eyes many a bitter tear. The plague marches fast. He is drunk every Saturday night, and seldom goes to Mass. Work or business is neglected, and the time spent at the bar-room. The money leaks away extraordinarily fast. Articles of furniture are pawned--first for food, soon for drink. The wife helps on destruction by trying to drown her sorrow in a glass of liquor now and then. The best Sunday suit and the new bonnet and shawl are no longer in the wardrobe. The children's bare feet peep out of old shoes, and a strange sadness and silence has come over the once merry little group. They seem to be getting old-fashioned in their ways, and less like children. Is that the reason, I wonder, why there are no new toys and presents now at Christmas or at Easter, as in the days gone by? Soon comes debt.
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He had to go in debt to procure the necessaries of life, but spared a little of the borrowed money to get his daily drams at the grog-shop. But debt must be paid, and, as he has nothing to discharge it with, a few days of delay, and there is a sheriff's execution in the house. All the furniture swept, away! From bad to worse, from one step to an other: down goes the family to beggary and vice. Frequent quarrels, blows, and curses pass between husband and wife, the children and their parents. He gets

an odd job to do now and then, for he is turned out of his regular situation, and drinks a part of the wages, not at his old friend's, but at a low beer-shop; for one night, after the sale of his house and lot, he demanded trust for liquor; but, as he had spent his last dollar, his friend, the dram-seller, told him, "__he__ kept a decent place, and wouldn't have any drunkards around __him__," and kicked him out of doors, bidding him go home and take care of his wife and family! The wife begs around for broken victuals, with a downcast face, and her old hood pulled far over her forehead to hide a black eye and her untidy hair.

The boy, his eldest boy, that was to be sent to college, was sent up last week to prison for shoplifting; and the girl--where is she gone? Answer me, dram-shop, where is the girl gone? And now I have more to ask of you, O mouth of hell! Where is the house and lot gone to?

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Where is the furniture gone to? Where now are the good husband, the happy father, the thrifty wife, the faithful mother, the innocent children, the food on the table, the fire on the hearth, the comfort and joy and good name and trust and neighborly confidence, and the good Christians, the pious Catholics, that used to be at Mass every Sunday morning in their places? Answer me. Do you not hear a righteous God, your judge, demanding in tones of wrath, "Dram-shop, where are my children? You--you have robbed me of my beautiful flock!" O cruel dram-seller! O dram-shop! scandal of our times, look upon the ruin you have wrought! See the black cloud which hangs over your dwelling. It is a threatening mass of darkness and woe, made up of heavy curses, of sighs from broken hearts, the gloom of grievous bitterness of spirit; and that cloud is pregnant with hidden lightnings and thunders of the wrath of God descending upon you. "Woe to him that giveth drink to his friend, and presenteth his gall, and maketh him drunk, that he may behold him stripped and naked. Thou art filled with shame instead of glory; drink thou also, and fall fast asleep; the cup of the right hand of the Lord shall compass thee, and shameful vomiting shall be on thy glory." [Footnote 15]

[Footnote 15: Habac. ii. 15, 16.]

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Your sin is the sin of Ephraim, whom the prophet reproved. You make to yourself an idol of gain. "And Ephraim said, But yet I am become rich. I have found me an idol: all my labors shall not find me the iniquity that I have committed." [Footnote 16] To that idol you have sacrificed men, women, and children, and brought upon many a wretched soul temporal and eternal ruin--robbing heaven of saints, and filling up the caverns of hell.

[Footnote 16: Osec xii. 8.]

[USCCB: Hosea xii. 9.]

Hear what God answers to Ephraim: "I will meet them as a bear that is robbed of her whelps; I will rend the inner parts of their bodies, and I will devour them as a lion; the beast of the field shall tear them." [Footnote 17]

[Footnote 17: Osec xiii. 8.]
[USCCB: Hosea xiii. 8.]

Your very daily walks must be misery to you, one would suppose. For how can you put on those fine clothes, and see your children clad in warm coats and caps and shoes, and your wife parading that beautiful new silk dress and expensive jewelry, when you know that they were bought with money that ought to have been used to clothe a family that goes about our streets in destitution and nakedness so pitiable that it makes the heart ache? How can you sit down and ask God's blessing upon your plentifully supplied table, if you ever do it now, when the hand that gave you the money to purchase all these luxuries snatched the piece of bread from the mouths of his starving, hungry children?

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How can you dare go to sleep in your soft, warm bed, listening to that cutting winter's blast as it goes howling past your windows down the street, and forces its way in the open crevices of the drunkard's shanty, freezing the half-clad forms of his neglected little ones, huddled in the corner upon a filthy wisp of straw? Have you a human heart yet left beating in your bosom? Do you know anything of a husband's affection or of a father's love? Oh! then you must be a miserable man. How do your neighbors speak of you? "Oh! he's a rum-seller." And the tone in which it is spoken is a plain index of the contempt they attach to the name. Your wife is designated as "a rum-seller's wife," and of your children it is remarked, "Their father sells liquor." And it is a common reply of many of the most degraded drunkards, that "although they have drunk pretty hard, they thank God __they__ never sold liquor."

Can I ask you to quit it? Yes, I can demand of you to quit it. You admit, and the common sense of the entire community admits, that those low groggeries, in which drunken bacchanalian orgies are of daily and nightly occurrence, ought to be stopped, and that no man who keeps such a place is fit for absolution--that is, none such can claim the right to the sacraments of the Church, living or dying; in a word, cannot save his soul if he be not ready to abandon it.

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But you tell me that your establishment is not of such a character; you keep a decent house. I would like you to bring me one single liquor-seller who does not say the very same. The business is notoriously vicious and hurtful, and success in it is dependent upon an increase of sin and misery among the people. It is a stumbling-block in the way of the salvation of men addicted to drink, and woe be to that man who dares assume the responsibility for the loss of a soul!

I have a right, then, in the name of the general well-being of the community, in the name of Christian charity, by virtue of the warning of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it were "better for a man to have a mill-stone hanged about his neck, and he be cast into the depth of the sea, rather than scandalize one of the children of God," [Footnote 18] to demand of every man who aids, abets, or by his own act takes part in this abominable scandal, to quit it

on peril of damnation.

[Footnote 18: St. Matt, xviii. 6.]

I tell you, moreover, that the holy Catholic Church, which some of you pretend to belong to and to obey, has solemnly declared, in the twenty-second canon of the Third Council of Lateran, that all priests are absolutely forbidden to give absolution to those who remain in any employment, profession, or business which they cannot pursue without sin, because they remain in the occasions of sin.

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But you insist that such is your business, bad as it is, and you have been brought up to that. Yes, I know it is a bad business, and will be your destruction. And I wish to know if a man must remain a thief because he has been brought up a thief, and never learned an honest trade?

"But the loss, father; I cannot afford it." Do you not hear the words of Jesus Christ thundering in your ears: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out. If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off. For it were better for thee to enter lame and blind into life everlasting, than, having two hands or two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire"? [Footnote 19] Where is your Christian faith and trust in God? "Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things will be added unto you." [Footnote 20]

[Footnote 19: St. Matt. v. 29.]

[Footnote 20: St. Matt. vi. 33.]

No, no, there is not a single excuse which will avail you. I wish I could find one. Many and many a time I have wished I could frame an excuse for it, when the fact has been thrown into my face that so many of our people are engaged in this diabolical, unchristian traffic, and, as a consequence, have propagated amongst us the vice and miseries of drunkenness.

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Do you love your good name as a citizen? Have you any manly pride left? Do you love your religion? Would you shrink from being the instrument of damnation to your neighbor's soul, or of tying the hands of the priest and preventing the spread of the true faith in our country? Do you love your own immortal soul? Do you hope for heaven? Would you like to hear the approval of your Divine Lord and Master on the Last Great Day of Account? Oh! rise up to the dignity of the Christian vocation to which you are called. Stir up within your hearts that fire of generosity which is never totally extinguished in the Catholic breast, and learn to sacrifice something for the love of God and for the salvation of your neighbor's soul.

Believe me, brethren, I have drawn no exaggerated picture of this evil, nor deduced any unwarrantable conclusions. So lamentably true is it all, that, were I to preach this sermon in almost any town or city in the country, there would be found among my hearers some who might imagine I was describing the character and life of their own brother or father, near relation or intimate acquaintance.

I appeal to you, therefore, loyal Catholics, to set your faces against the traffic; to aid the priesthood, in company with all who love God and have the social advancement of our people at

heart, in denouncing and laboring to extirpate this scandal from our midst.
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To you who have hitherto been engaged in it, from whatsoever motive, I appeal; and beseech of you, with all the fatherly affection of a Christian priest, and with the supplicating tears and sighs of many a broken heart, for God's sake, for the Church's sake, for your soul's sake, to resolve now, and make that resolution good, that hence forth no man shall point the finger of scorn at you and say: "Woe to him that giveth drink to his friend, and presenteth his gall, and maketh him drunk."

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Sermon VI.
Communion With Jesus.
(For Holy Thursday.)
St. John vi. 57.
[USCCB: John vi. 56.]

"__He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him.__"

It is right, my dear brethren, that, on this Holy Night we should meditate upon and speak of the solemn and wonderful scene which is commemorated by the Holy Church, the sad farewell which our dear suffering Master took of his disciples before giving Himself up to be crucified, and the institution of the sacred memorial Sacrifice, through which He intended to remain with us always, to be an ever-present Lover and Friend, the Divine Victim for our altars, and the Supreme Offering of thanksgiving for the whole world. Kind Lord, I would I had the tongue of angels to tell the story of all Thou didst on this night for me and all who truly believe in Thee, for human speech is feeble where Thou, my God and my Saviour, art the theme. Help me by Thy grace.
{90}
Help these Thy people, whose hearts are yearning to hear what Thou hast done; help them, that they may know and understand it better than I can tell them!
The Gospel tells us that our Lord made an appointment with His disciples to meet them, and to eat the Paschal Supper alone with them. "And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve disciples with Him." They met in a large upper chamber, far from tumult and noise. Look in, my dear brethren, upon that group. Jesus you cannot fail to choose from among them all. There is a strange beauty about that face, a beauty which at once attracts and awes the beholder, and, what is more, the countenance tells of the hidden beauty of his soul. There is revealed at one glance the beauty of Holiness itself, the most spotless of all innocent lives, the supreme perfection of all virtue, the mirror of all truth. What kindness beams from out [of] those gentle eyes! What a sweet expression plays about the half-parted lips, as a harbinger of some holy words soon to be spoken! What a calm majesty rests upon that broad, pale forehead, needing no crown of gold to tell its royalty!
Nor would any one mistake who is Master here. One is the object upon whose word, look, or movements the eyes of all the others

wait. They call Him Master. Well they may. He is truly Master of all hearts. They call Him Teacher. Well they may.
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He is the source of all Truth, the Eternal Wisdom, the Word of God. They call Him Lord. Well they may. He is Lord of lords, and King of heaven and earth. It is Jesus. Seated there, only a few know Him yet as He is. But the world will soon know Him, and curse its ignorance and blindness on that day. Around Him are a few disciples, of whom living men, in ignorance of their worth, despise, but when they are dead their tombs will govern the world.
No sooner are they assembled than they know that Jesus has brought them together to bid them farewell. "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer." Yes, on the morrow He was to be betrayed into the hands of wicked men, and to die in expiation of the sins of the world.
But why this desire? The events will show. It was the time of the great feast of the Passover, which the Jews kept every year to commemorate the miracle which took place when that whole nation was in bondage in Egypt--a miracle which brought about their deliverance. Their Egyptian masters refused to set them free, in spite of many warning plagues which God sent upon them; and at last, one terrible night, the angel of God passed through that doomed land, and in the morning the first-born in every Egyptian house lay dead.
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The Israelites had been commanded by Almighty God, through Moses, to prepare for this, and what they did became, as God intended, a ceremony typical of the greatest mystery the world has ever known--the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, the deliverance of the world from the slavery of sin and hell by that death, and the institution of a sacrifice which, should be an ever-present, continual, and lively memorial of that act. This is what they did: They killed a lamb without spot or blemish; ate it with unleavened bread; and sprinkled the door-posts of their houses with its blood. "I am the Lord. The blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be, and I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you, and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I shall strike the land of Egypt." [Footnote 21]
[Footnote 21: Exod. xii. 13.]
The performance of this solemn commemorative ceremony was obligatory upon every Jewish family, and this was the occasion which brought our Lord and His disciples together, and you see how exactly the sacrificial death of the Paschal Lamb, the sprinkling of its blood on the door posts, typified the death of Jesus, the Immaculate Lamb of God, whose blood was sprinkled on the wood of the cross. But there is something else for us to note. A part of the lamb was to be eaten, and with unleavened bread.
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What was that a type of? Was Jesus, the Lamb of God, slain for our sins, to be eaten, and with unleavened bread? Listen to what He said some time before this night: "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he

shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." [Footnote 22]

[Footnote 22: St. John vi. 52.]

[USCCB: St. John vi. 51.]

Now, after the Paschal Supper was finished, Jesus took the unleavened bread, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to them, saying--"This is My body which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me. In like manner the chalice, saying, This is the chalice, the New Testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you." Here then, is a perfect fulfilment of the Old Testament. Here is the real Paschal Sacrifice of the New Testament. The supper-table becomes an altar; Jesus becomes, under the forms of unleavened bread and wine, the victim, and He is at the same time the priest. What He did Himself, he tells His disciples to do. "Do this for a commemoration of Me." Then and there He ordains and consecrates them to be priests, and gives them the awful power of sacrificing His body and blood under the forms of bread and wine.

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From that supper-room they go forth to do His words, and to receive the fulfilment of His promise: "I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom: that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom: and may sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." [Footnote 23]

[Footnote 23: St. Luke xxii. 29, 30.]

What was all that for? Why this sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ? Why should this be repeated all over the world? Listen once more: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him." The reason was that his disciples and all others who should partake of that sacrifice might be united to Him in the closest manner possible--"should abide in Him, and He in them." We call that sacred act Communion--communion with Jesus. That is what it is, brethren. Our souls and bodies are united in a mysterious manner to the Divine Person of our dear Lord and Saviour, who became man and died on the cross for our salvation. He calls us to this communion, and gives Himself to us as the sweetest pledge of His Divine Love, as the most precious means of our sanctification, as a comforting food, as a holy offering by which we may praise and give thanks to God, as a feast of joy and the kiss of peace to the forgiven sinner.

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If the Cross be, as it is, the measure of sin by which we offend Jesus, Communion is the measure of the love with which Jesus loves us. Love is measured by sacrifice. One loves another only a little if he is content to give up only a little in the other's favor. His love is perfect if he willingly gives up all. This is what our Lord does in Holy Communion. He sacrifices all for us, because He sacrifices Himself. What do I mean by this sacrifice? He makes Himself so utterly nothing for us, that He does not keep even His appearance. He hides His divinity, His blessed and beautiful Person, under the veils of bread and wine, and in that state He abandons Himself so utterly to our power that we can do what we will with Him. The life of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

is a life of total self-abnegation. He does not even protect Himself from ill-treatment, from the contempt and scoffing sneer of the unbeliever, from the mockery of silly children, nor from the horrible sacrileges committed against Him by bad Catholics. He can suffer all that, and does so without a murmur, in order that He may approach us, and that we may receive Him in such a manner as shall be the best for our comfort, for our joy, for our soul's peace. We know by experience, I hope, what a good, happy communion is.

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Is it not the moment of supreme happiness, and of such happiness that nothing else is like it in the world? Then we cry Lord, now that Thou art mine and I am Thine, I am all blessed. There is no chord in the heart that does not vibrate with thrills of love at the presence of Jesus. He makes us feel then, more than we can express, how much He loves us; and cold must be the heart that does not respond with some emotion to the sweetness of His loving embrace.

The love of our dear Saviour for men is more ardent, more constant, more, shall I say, anxious than __our__ love can ever be; and the reason is, because __His__ love is wholly unselfish. The life of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament proves it. He does nothing there apparently for Himself, nor takes any thought of Himself that we can divine. It is for us that He lives so. For our love He has given up all.

You may say that it was by dying for us that He proved His love the best, as He Himself said, "Greater love hath no man than that he should lay down his life for his friend." Yes; but do you not see that it is just in the Blessed Sacrament that He brings that proof home to us? It is a memorial of His passion and death. He has linked the two together, so that they make only one act. The sacrifice of the Mass, in which the bread and wine are consecrated into His body and blood, and the sacrifice of Calvary, are one essential act.

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It was in the night in which He was betrayed that He instituted it. On __this__ night. What did He say? "This is My body which is given for you. This is My blood which shall be shed for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me"--of Me, upon whom the shadows of death are already falling--of Me, who even now begin to be sorrowful and sad at heart, knowing that My hour is come--of Me, who to-morrow will be spit upon, and scourged, and crowned with thorns, and nailed to a cruel cross, and suffer the bitter agonies of a horrible death for you, My beloved--you for whom I came into the world--you for whom I live--you for whom I die. "A little while I leave you, and a little while I come unto you. Remember that, when we shall meet again. When I come to you in Holy Communion, then you will receive One who you know loved you to the end. I will come to you, and be the surest pledge of what I have done for you, and how much I have loved you."

Holy Communion is one of the most powerful means of sanctification granted to us. What shall the presence of the All-Holy be unable to do? What other light and grace could we desire both to detect and shun all evil, and to delight in what

is pure and true? Oh! when Jesus comes to the willing heart, and finds a welcome there, all is easy. No tempest of passion or of doubt is to be feared when the Master is with us.
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My dear brethren, this world is very foolish when it sneers at the sanctification of the soul, or bids us follow its guidance in getting rid of the power or shame of sin, and in our strivings after higher and better things. Little it knows about the true progress of the soul. Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom, is the sole teacher. A fervent communion with Him will do what the world cannot do. It will make us holy. It will make our souls sacred to God--more sacred to Him than the altar before which we bow, or the precious vessels upon it that hold His Body and Blood. If you would confirm that sanctity, come often to the source of sanctity. Come so often that He may be said to abide with you; then will you surely live and die a saint.
In the next place, Communion is an act which possesses a peculiar significance for the forgiven sinner. It should have. It was sin that made Him die, and Communion is a memorial of His death. But why is it that a contrite sinner, burdened with the memory of the many outrages he has committed against Jesus Christ by his bad life, by his cursing, his profanation of the Holy Name, his drunkenness and debaucheries, his lies and thefts, his dark crimes, it may be, that make even his brother men shun him as they would a poisonous reptile--why is it, I ask, that even such an one, coming, heartily sorry, to Confession, ready and eager to amend his life and do better, and so receives absolution, should have such a strange longing, as all forgiven sinners do have, to get Communion, and that as soon as possible?
{99}
One would think they would rather fear to approach Him, and dread to be confronted with the awful memorial of their crucified and so cruelly offended Lord. Not so. Their hearts are Christian after all; and He draws them to Him closer and closer by the strong cords of love the moment they turn to Him. True, He appoints His priest to forgive them in His name. But that does not satisfy the desire with which He desires to be reconciled with them in person. "Come to Me," He cries from the altar; "come to Me now. My poor lost one. Come, get My kiss of peace. Come, we have been separated too long. I have been watching you. I have heard you praying. I saw you go into the confessional. I heard you tell your sins. I saw the tears course down your cheeks. I felt every throb of your heart. My hand, too, gave you absolution and full forgiveness for all. You went there one of the devil's own. Now you are Mine. Come, now, take Me to your heart. We will be friends again, and I shall have only one reproach to make you; Oh! why have you stayed so long away?" The forgiven sinner knows Jesus is saying all this.
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Do you wonder that he goes home from confession a happy man; that he counts the hours until he can come back, and thinks the time long until he can go up to the Holy Table, and there clasp his long-forgotten and neglected Lord to his bosom? Oh! the earnest, upturned face, radiant with joy, which makes the priest's hand

tremble with sympathetic emotion as he gives him the Holy Sacrament. You have seen friends long separated and divided come together and make up. You know what a touching scene it is. There are smiles upon your lips and sparkling tears in your eyes at the same moment. So it is often here when Jesus meets and makes up with old hardened sinners. Blessed, a million times blessed, be the kind and loving heart of Jesus, which, once laid open by the spear, is never shut to any one who will enter in and abide there.

Holy Communion is a Feast of Thanksgiving. That is the meaning of the word Eucharist--thanksgiving. It is one of the names of the Blessed Sacrament. You remember that when Jesus first broke the bread on this night He gave thanks. He meant that we also should use it as a worthy and precious thank-offering for all He has done for us; for having created us; for having redeemed us; for having died for us; for His great love in this Holy Sacrament; for all the benefits with which He has crowned our lives.

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Who is there that can approach here without crying out with the Psalmist, "What shall I render to the Lord for all that He has rendered to me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." [Footnote 24]

[Footnote 24: Ps. cxv. 3, 4.]

[USCCB: Ps. cxv. 12, 13.]

No word of thanks at your Communion--not a grateful thought in your heart? Oh! how is this? Have you really come back to make up with Him, or have you come--O horrible thought!--only like Judas to betray Him? Does He say to you as He said to that lost disciple, "Friend, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" Are you, then, half-minded to go back to your old sins? Have you not, after all, given up the devil and his works? Then I do not wonder that you are thankless and ungrateful. Then I do not wonder at that cloud upon your brow, nor at the indifferent manner in which you presume to receive the Body of your Lord. Friend, that cloud is the shadow of impending damnation. For says the apostle, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord." [Footnote 25]

[Footnote 25: I Cor. xi. 29.]

Oh! no; let me hope I am mistaken; that it is far otherwise with you; that if indeed you may have ever done this before, you are not come to repeat it now.

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Now you have utterly cast off all sin and all intention to sin. Now you wish to belong only to Jesus. Seeing from what a pit of hell He has delivered you, and knowing to what a height of grace and glory He has raised you, I feel sure you are only anxious about one thing, and that is, how you can give expression to the gratitude of which your heart is so full. Shall it be in long, devout prayers, full of emotion and tender feeling, telling the Lord over and over again that you are so thankful for what He has done for you, for His great condescension and surpassing love? Well, brethren, you may do that if you like, and I think Jesus will be pleased with it. But that is not the only test of a

thankful heart. If you can say truly--O my Jesus! my dear Lord! I love Thee above all; for Thee I love all that Thou hast loved, even my enemies, and I forgive them all the offences they have done to me, as freely and fully as Thou hast forgiven me; and now it is my firm purpose never to commit another sin while I live--then, dear brethren, I am sure you will praise Him aright. Let your prayer be such as Blessed Henry Suso made in his communion. His words are far better than mine, and they will be more profitable to you. Let me end my discourse with them:
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"Lord, if my heart had the love of all hearts, my conscience the purity of all angels, and my soul the beauty of all souls, so that by Thy grace I should be worthy of Thee, I wish to receive Thee to-day so affectionately, and so to bury and sink Thee to the bottom of my heart and soul, that neither joy nor sorrow, neither life nor death, could separate me from Thee. Amen."

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Sermon VII.

The Holy Ghost, The Comforter.

For The Feast Of Pentecost.

St. John xiv. 16.

"I will ask the Father,
and He will give you another Comforter,
that He may abide with you for ever."

To-day is the Church's grand high festival of the coming of that other Comforter, who abides for ever with those whom Jesus loves. We are tempted to wonder why He, who had done so much for the peace of the world, whose coming was the pledge of every joy to the human heart, whose words are a healing balm for every wound, a solace for every misery, and through whom comes all forgiveness for sins, should not have remained Himself to bless and comfort His own with His Divine presence.
What other Comforter of our souls would we ask or could we need than Him? Oh! that He had stayed with us! Had we not all in having Him? When the Father in His love sent Him to us, did he not send all He could give? What other Comforter is there in heaven to give that will be better than He?
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Truly, brethren, we would not be able to imagine that anything more or better could be done for us than that our Blessed Lord should remain amongst us, had He not Himself said: "It is expedient for you that I go; for if I do not, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." [Footnote 26]

[Footnote 26: St. John xvi. 7.]

There is a mystery here which we cannot fathom, because we are not able to fathom the works of God. Our Lord knew that it was best for Him to depart, and that the Holy Ghost must come, as He said, to bear testimony of Him, to teach all truth, to fill the hearts of the faithful with grace, and kindle in them the fire of Divine Charity, so that they might strive manfully for the faith, and win the crown of everlasting joy set before them.
It is not in vain that our Lord called the Holy Ghost the

__Comforter__, which signifies the strengthener. We are weak, vacillating, full of wandering desires, led away from God and heaven by trifles, easily cast down and disheartened, in constant danger by temptation, discouraged by doubts, crushed quickly beneath some present sorrow, and fearful of the coming storms of adversity and grief; and grace, which it is the office of the Holy Ghost to bring to us, is the life-giving force which leads and directs us, which enlightens, strengthens, and comforts us in all.

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It is this which inspires the Holy Church, in the sequence of the Mass for to-day, to cry

"Veni, Sancte Spiritus,
Et emitte coelitus
Lucis tuae radium.
Veni, Pater pauperum,
Veni, dator munerum,
Veni, lumen cordium.
Consolator optime,
Dulcis hospes animae,
Dulce refrigerium.
In labore requies,
In aestu temperies,
In fletu solatium
O Lux beatissima,
Reple cordis intima
Tuorum fidelium!"

I cannot do better than explain these words of the Holy Church, which express in so many beautiful forms the comforting grace of the Holy Ghost.

Who is this Divine Comforter? God the Holy Ghost. Not an attribute of God, such as His omnipotence, His omnipresence, His justice or mercy, but the Person of God Himself. God lives in Himself an eternal, infinite life; a mysterious life to us, in that He needs no other object besides Himself to give Him life.

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God is but one being; and hence the Holy Ghost is the same God as the Father and the Son; but God possesses, as it were, a threefold personal life, which, being mutually dependent and united, is but one. The Father is the Infinite Personal Cause of His own Divine Life; the Son is the Personal Life of God, begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost is God personally enjoying, living the Divine Life, begotten by Himself. Think of it! This is what we invoke when we cry, __Veni, Sancte Spiritus!__ This is what was promised by our Lord, when He said: "I will ask the Father, and He will send you another Comforter." The Life of God! Life full beyond human imagination, of ineffable joy, and of peace that passes understanding! Life full of beauty, sublimity, and majesty! Life of omnipotence and of glory! "O Lord, my God," exclaims the enraptured Psalmist, in one of the Psalms of to-day's matins, "Thou art exceedingly great! Thou hast put on praise and beauty, and art clothed with light as with a garment." [Footnote 27]

[Footnote 27: Ps. ciii. 1,2.]

[USCCB: Ps. civ. 1,2.]
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The sun rises in his splendor, and no man may look with unblenched gaze upon it; but who shall describe the dazzling brightness of Him who dwells in light inaccessible! And it is a ray of the light of the Life of God we crave for our darkened souls, when we say, __Veni, Sancte Spirtus, et emitte coelitus lucis tuae radium!__ "Come, O Holy Spirit, and send forth upon us a ray of Thy heavenly light!"
The coming of the Holy Ghost to man is the completion of the mysterious union between God and us. By the Father Almighty we are created. Something of the hidden essence of Life is given to us in creation. "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul." [Footnote 28]
[Footnote 28: Gen. ii. 7.]
In creation, we are united to the Life of God the Father. By the Incarnation of the Word, the Son of God, we became, as St. Peter declares, "partakers of the Divine nature." Humanity became united to the Life of God the Son through Jesus Christ; and now the Life of God the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love, descends and fills with Divine grace the hearts of the faithful children begotten to God through the creation and Incarnation; the union between God and man is complete, and the love of God to man is exhausted.
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Truly, the Father Almighty was a Comforter, to bring us out of nothingness, and bestow upon us the boon of being and the joys of an eternal existence. God the Son was a Comforter in redeeming us, and regenerating us, and giving us the right, which angels might envy, to call our Creator our __Father__; but the Holy Ghost was yet another Comforter, and He would not deny Himself to those whom the Father had loved to create, whom He had yet loved more so as to send His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him "might have life, and might have it more abundantly"; and thus the life of man becomes exalted and deified by its union with the Eternal, Infinite life of the Triune God. Look down from the deck of a ship in mid-ocean, and pierce the mighty depths of waters with a glance. Look up into the blue vault of heaven, and with unaided vision scan the uttermost bounds of space, far beyond the dizzy distances where roll the last stars in their lonely course; but fathom if you can the height, the depth, the immensity of that Infinite Life of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in which, as in a boundless and fathomless ocean of comfort, and as in a measureless firmament of glory and of rapture, the soul of man is swallowed up and lost in the love of his God.
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But who among men belong thus entirely to God? To whom does the Holy Ghost come in His fulness? Not to all; for I read that our Lord said that "the world cannot receive Him, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him." [Footnote 29] To whom, then? Let St. John answer us: "As many as received Him (Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God), to them He gave power to become the sons of

God, to them who believe in His name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." [Footnote 30]

[Footnote 29: St. John xiv. 17.]

[Footnote 30: Ibid. i. 12, 13.]

It is not enough, then, to be a creature of God, to be born of the flesh, or of the will of man. The soul who would receive the Holy Ghost, to see and have God in His fulness, must be born of God. "Except a man be born of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." [Footnote 31] As the Son of God became incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin, so the sons of men must be born again of water and the Holy Ghost in Baptism, to become the sons of God. Then, and then only, can we call God Father. Then, and then only, do we "receive the spirit of adoption of sons," as St. Paul declares, "whereby we cry, Abba (Father)." [Footnote 32] We must believe in the Word made flesh, in Jesus Christ, else that other Comforter will not come unto us; and hence the Church invokes the Holy Ghost to come down into the hearts of the __faithful__, or the believers in Jesus Christ.

[Footnote 31: Ibid. iii. 5.]

[Footnote 32: Rom. viii. 15.]

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"Come, O Holy Spirit! fill the hearts of thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of thy love." Alas! for those who do not realize this great truth. By their rejection of Jesus Christ and the new birth unto God in Baptism, they remain for ever in the lower sphere of the simple creature, with no hope of the enrapturing vision of the Blessed Trinity when their souls shall have passed beyond this human life, in which the choice of that higher destiny is given to them. This is the first thought suggested to us by the opening invocation of the sequence of the Mass.

And now the sentiment of the sequence suddenly changes. Though we be so exalted by the Divine relationship, though the light of Heaven's glory is beaming upon our footsteps as we advance towards it, and our loosened tongues cry out with St. Paul, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!" [Footnote 33] yet what is our human life now compared with the Heavenly Life in God! It is a blessed truth to me, some of us say, and a hope that I would not part with for life; but though inexhaustible riches, and crowns and harps of gold, are waiting for me in the kingdom of the Heavenly Father, here I am poor, here my heart is too sad to sing.

[Footnote 33: Rom. xi. 33.]

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Though there I shall possess wisdom, to which the wisdom of this world is foolishness, yet here I am ignorant. There shall be no want, I know; but here I am ever in want. I cry, Give, give, and my soul is never satisfied. There, in the light of glory, shall be peace, rest, and victory; but here is toil, strife, temptation, defeat, and my heart is oft darkened within me, even to forget my God. Hark what the Holy Church inspires you to say:

"Veni, Sancte Spiritus,
Veni, Pater pauperum,
Veni, dator munerum,

Veni, lumen cordium!"
"Come, O Holy Spirit!
Come, O Father of the poor!
Come, O giver of every gift!
Come, O light of every heart!"

Are you poor? Repine not, for Jesus has said it is a blessed state. God loves you, and has given you poverty, that through it you may receive the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Money is the riches of man, but the comforting grace of the Holy Ghost is the riches of God; and the poor may have that easily if they will. God has deprived you of the things of this world that you may set your heart on Him. Wonder not that thousands of Christians have left all, and vowed themselves to poverty, that they may get the grace of God easily, like you.

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Ask for grace, then, poor man, and your requests shall be quickly granted. Cry with the Holy Church--__Veni, Pater pauperum!__ Come, O Father of the poor! and the Comforter will come, and pour out upon you a flood of graces that shall make your heart sing for joy. Then you will say with the Psalmist, enjoying nothing here below, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; it is Thou who wilt restore my inheritance to me." [Footnote 34]

[Footnote 34: Ps. xv. 5.]
[USCCB: Ps. xvi. 5.]

Are you in ignorance of what is best for you here and hereafter? Is it hard for you to think of God? Lift up your heart, and say--__Veni, Sancte Spiritus! Veni, dator munerum!__ Come, O Giver of every good and perfect gift!--and you shall receive the Comforter's gift of Divine Wisdom.

Are you ignorant of the truths of faith, or do they seem difficult to you and beyond your grasp? Pray--__Veni, dator munerum__!--and the Comforter will bestow upon you the light of the gift of understanding.

Are you ignorant of the ways of God's providence? Do you look around, and see the wicked prospering, the good suffering, the widow oppressed, and the orphan deserted, while wickedness and injustice are enthroned in high places, and are you tempted to doubt if God careth for His own? Pray with the Church--__Veni, dator munerum!__--and the Comforter will bring you His gift of knowledge.

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Are you wayward in heart, now overzealous and now too lukewarm, oftentimes grieved and cast down at the ill-success of your undertakings or your prayers, and disappointment and disgrace make you feel as if you would almost give up trying to be good? Cry to the Giver of every good gift, and say--__Veni, Sancte Spiritus!__ and that Comforter will enlighten you with His gift of counsel.

Are you hard-hearted, stubborn, and resentful, easy to take offence? Do the sins and offences of others destroy your peace of mind, and dry up within you the fountains of mercy and pity for sinners? Do you wish you could feel more like God, kind and long-suffering, and less like Satan, watching for the falls of

others, and exulting over them? Oh! cry to the Holy Ghost, and that Comforter, the Spirit of perfect charity, will soften that dry heart of yours with the grace of His gift of piety.

Are you timid and shamefaced in your service to God? Are you a victim to human respect? Are you a Christian who is ashamed of Christ, and do you draw back from a bold, consistent profession of your holy faith when the wicked scoff and sneer? Or, are you one who dares do great things for the God who has done so much for you?

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Does your heart burn to offer Him a glorious and complete sacrifice, and yet you can not summon up the courage to accomplish it? Put up your supplication, and say--__Veni, Sancte Spiritus! Veni, dator munerum!__--and the Comforter, the Divine Strengthener, will come with His grace, and cover your weak soul with the armor of His gift of fortitude.

Are you proud? Does the demon of intemperance, of anger, or of lust creep stealthily into your breast, and leave foul traces of his presence there? Is the majesty, the power, the holiness of that God to whom you belong forgotten? Do you tremble no more when you hear of justice, of chastity, and of the judgment to come? Pray, for your danger is great. Put up a strong and earnest cry, and say--__Veni, Sancte Spiritus! Veni, dator munerum!__--and the Comforter will be with you, bringing the help you need in your peril, with the grace of His gift of the fear of God.

These seven good and perfect gifts it is the office of the Holy Ghost to impart to those who ask for them. We prize the simple gifts of friendship and affection which serve us in our daily life for our comfort or protection. Oh! that we but knew the gifts of God, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Friends bestow their gifts and depart, but the Almighty Friend abideth with His gifts for ever in the faithful soul.

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The gifts of men wear out and tarnish, and the rust and moth corrupt them; but the gifts of God are as incorruptible and as unchangeable and as eternally bright and beautiful as His own divine, unchangeable life.

The sequence now invokes the Holy Ghost as "the Light of every heart." The soul of the innocent child, of the pure-minded youth and maiden, of the upright man and pious matron, of the aged Christian, whose locks are whitened in the service of God, is bright with this heavenly Light; but even these know their hours of heaviness of spirit. "Though one may have rejoiced in many years," as says the Scripture, "he must remember the darksome time, and the many days, in which the passed things shall be accused of vanity." [Footnote 35]

[Footnote 35: Eccles. xi. 8.]

There are times to the merriest soul when the heart is dark. The hour of sorrow will come sooner or later--sorrow for earthly losses and disappointments, grief for the misspent years, anguish for our or others sins and misfortunes; the grave will open at our feet and rob us, the house will be hung in black, the mourners will go through the streets, the clods will fall upon

the coffin, and we shall return to the home that has been despoiled, and cover our faces against the light of day, and sit in loneliness and gloom with our own darkened hearts.
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Speak not to us now, nor smile upon us when our hearts are dark. Leave us alone. Alone with what? Alone with my own wretchedness and comfortless thoughts, says the unbeliever. Leave me alone, says the Christian, with my God. Yes, the Christian has his God to go to in his darkest hour. He has always abiding with him that other Comforter, the Light of every heart.
Sinner! now contrite and sorry for the bitter past, who, weeping with the penitent Psalmist, say, "My heart hath expected reproach and misery. I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort me, but I found none" [Footnote 36]--you have a Comforter to go to. Raise your drooping head, and cry--__Veni, lumen cordium!__ Come, O Light of every contrite heart! and the seeds of the grace of contrition, which He has already planted in your soul, will spring up, and bear the sweetest fruits of peace and pardon. Go to thy God, and confess thy sins to Him, and when the Holy Ghost shall give thee the grace of absolution, thou shalt return lighter of footstep and comforted in spirit.
[Footnote 36: Ps. lxviii. 21.]
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Christian mourner and sufferer, I know that the brightest days are obscured by the clouds of sorrow which hang over your bereaved head, and the nights are oppressed with a thicker darkness than comes when the sun goes down; but a Light is shining ever in heaven, behind the dark clouds which hover over this world--the comforting Light of every sad heart. Call to Him--__Veni, Sancte Spiritus! Veni, lumen cordium!__--and though the tears cease not to flow, yet comfort will steal in upon you, and the spirit of holy resignation to that higher and better will in which you trust will descend, and abide with you for ever.
While I am speaking, there is one, now lying in a poor, humble cabin, whom God has been pleased to afflict with a lingering illness, which must soon end in death. As she told me of the long, weary days and sleepless nights she spent, I said to her: "You must be very lonely." "Not so lonesome," she replied; "for, after all, God is not far away." On another occasion, I said: "This world is but short, my poor child; but, short as it is, it has pleased God to give you many dark days of suffering in it." "Ay, priest dear," she answered, "it is His blessed will, glory be to Him. But, then, when once I am on the bright side of the cloud, it is not much thinking of the dark side I'll be."
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Oh! surely you, and all who invoke that Divine Comforter, will be ready to exclaim, in the words of the sacred song,

"Consolator optime!
Dulcis hospes animae,
Dulce refrigerium!"

O Thou of all consolers the Best! most welcome Guest of every soul! O sweet Refreshment to the weary heart! no labor for either

earth or heaven tires when Thou art near. No burning heats dry up the welling springs of grace whilst overshadowed by Thy dove-like wings. No sorrow wrings the breast to which Thou canst not bring a solace, and wipe the tears away.

"In labore requies,
In aestu temperies,
In fletu solatium!"

In all that concerns our happiness, here and hereafter, there is the Holy Ghost, the giver of all happiness, the heavenly Comforter. Whichever way we turn, there is the God of love beforehand with us, waiting with His gifts of peace.

Look at the Holy Church herself. Is she not our pride, our glory, our comfort? Why is she holy? Because the Holy Ghost dwells within her. If we have any comfort from the security and surety of our faith, it is because the Holy Ghost keeps that faith pure and unchangeably true. If we have any comfort in her words of wisdom, her good instructions, her guidance of our souls in a holy life, it is because the Holy Ghost keeps her pure in morals.

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If we have any comfort in the Sacraments, those blessed means of grace, it is because the Holy Ghost is the life-giving power in them all. If we think a good thought, or speak a good word of prayer, of kindness or advice; if we do a good deed of mercy or of charity, it is because the Holy Ghost is the Inspirer of them all. Through His influence all conversions are made, whether of sinners or of unbelievers. He is the Infinite Goodness, the Source of all holiness, and there is nothing that is good but cometh from Him. Nay, more, my brethren. If God the Father was good to us in creating us, it was because of the love of the Holy Ghost. If God the Son was good to us in redeeming us and bringing us to salvation, it was because of the same Holy Spirit; and now He Himself, God the Holy Ghost, fills up the measure of His mercies, and God Himself can do no more.

__O Lux beatissima!__ exclaims the Church. O most blessed Light! fill the depths of the hearts of Thy faithful. Break forth, Christian soul, into singing, and with rapture praise the Holy Ghost.

Yes, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove! may we never cease to invoke Thee in our needs, and praise Thee for the comfort Thou dost bring us. The words of the Psalmist are upon our lips: "Oh! how Thou hast multiplied Thy mercies, O my God! The children of men shall put their trust under the covert of Thy wings.

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They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure. For with Thee is the fount of life; and in Thy light"--O Lux beatissima!--"we shall see light." [Footnote 37]

[Footnote 37: Ps. xxxv. 8-10.]

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Sermon VIII.

The Duty Of Upholding The Pope's Temporal Sovereignty.

(Preached On The Feast of Pentecost,

1870, When A Collection Was Made
For The Holy Father.)

Zach. vi. 13.

"__He shall bear the glory,
and shall sit and rule upon his throne;
and he shall be a Priest upon his throne__."

We celebrate on this day the foundation of the Catholic Church. For it was on this day that the Holy Ghost came down on the Apostles to bestow those gifts of grace which make the Catholic Church a reality. This descent of the Holy Ghost was the fulfilment of prophecies made by the ancient prophets of the old law, who, under the figures of Sion and Jerusalem, have described the Holy Roman Church, and the universal Church under her obedience, diffused through out the world. In their inspired visions respecting the building of the second temple, among others, they have foretold the foundation, the extension, and the glory of this true and everlasting Church and kingdom of Christ upon the earth.

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As, for instance, the prophet Zacharias, sent by God to build the walls of Jerusalem and the second temple, has foretold the institution of the sovereign pontificate of the Bishops of the Roman Church, the Vicars of Christ, who unite the priestly and the royal dignity in their persons, in the words of my text. "And thou shalt take gold and silver: and shalt make crowns, and thou shalt set them on the head of Jesus the son of Josedec the high-priest. And thou shalt speak to him, saying: BEHOLD A MAN, THE ORIENT IS HIS NAME: and under him shall he spring up, and shall build a temple to the Lord. Yea, he shall build a temple to the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; AND HE SHALL BE A PRIEST UPON HIS THRONE." This is the kingdom of Jesus Christ, called by the prophet THE ORIENT, which he exercises through his Vicars, the Roman Pontiffs, and which is a spiritual sovereignty, with a temporal sovereignty annexed, as is shown by the words, "a priest upon his throne," as well as by the emblem of the two crowns, one of gold and one of silver. The prophet also foretold that the new Jerusalem, the city of this priestly monarch, should be built of a size so great that it could not be enclosed by walls. "I will be to it a fire round about: and I will be the glory in the midst thereof. Jerusalem shall be inhabited without walls, by reason of the multitude of men." [Footnote 38]

[Footnote 38: Zach. ii. 4.]
[USCCB: Zechariah ii. 9.]

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This is the Holy Roman Church, considered in its Catholic extension as the mother and mistress of churches in all parts of the world, which are bound together in one Holy Catholic Church by their obedience to the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff. The Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church includes the whole vast number of the faithful in her fold in fact, and all mankind in right. No walls--that is, no bounds short of the limits of the earth--can be set to her rightful jurisdiction. And beyond this, the prophet teaches us that her strength does not consist in

fortifications and bulwarks of stone, or, in other words, is not derived from any material resources, whereas it is spiritual in its origin and nature. God is a wall of fire round about her, and her glory in the midst of her. The Roman Church is made glorious by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by spiritual might and force, by truth, grace, and sanctity. These same divine gifts and powers pervade the whole Catholic Church by virtue of communion with the See of the Vicar of Christ. The burning light of faith, the burning fire of charity, are concentrated within, and diffused all around the Catholic Church, constituting all her glory and all her power, and by these she illumines and inflames the whole world.

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The Church is really and truly a kingdom, that is, a stable and perfect society, established upon a permanent constitution, with a hierarchy having power to make laws and exercise jurisdiction, and bound together in unity by a monarchical regimen. This kingdom is spiritual, because it is established for the spiritual and eternal welfare of men, and because it is founded on ideas and principles which belong to the supernatural order. That is, it is founded on faith in Divine revelation, in truths and doctrines made known by Divine inspiration, and on a right and authority conferred immediately by Jesus Christ, acting in his quality of Redeemer and Regenerator of mankind. Moreover, it is by supernatural and Divine grace, by Divine, life-giving sacraments, that men are constituted members of the Church and of the hierarchy. The Church overcomes the minds and hearts of men by truth and grace, by inward conviction and conversion, and thus, through both mind and heart, subdues them entirely to herself. She makes individuals and nations her subjects, by making them parts of the Church, and thus amenable to her laws. They are subject to her jurisdiction, as the spiritual kingdom of God, in everything which relates to doctrine, sacraments, and morals; and, therefore, in everything, even of the natural and temporal order, so far as it relates to religion and morality.

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It is, therefore, necessary that the Church should be completely independent of all human authority, and supreme in her own sphere. Her rights, her property, and the persons of her hierarchy must be sacred and inviolable. She must have full and unrestricted liberty to exercise the powers and fulfil the mission committed to her by her Divine founder, without any interference of kings, rulers, or the people; of lawless individuals, or any usurping, tyrannical state. It is most necessary of all that the Supreme See and Sovereign Ruler of the Church--that is, the Roman Church and Pontiff--should possess this perfect liberty and independence. The Pope is the Vicar of Christ, the supreme judge of all questions of doctrine and morals. So far as the rights of religion are concerned, he is the judge of all sovereigns and states, and they owe him obedience. He is the judge, also, of the justice and morality of laws, whether national or international, and of all practical cases in which conscience and the divine or ecclesiastical law are concerned. For this reason, he ought not to be the subject of any

temporal prince or state. And, in point of fact, Jesus Christ has given him the rights and privileges of a sovereign.
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When tribute was exacted of our Lord, before paying it, He stated distinctly to his disciples that He Himself was above all human jurisdiction and law, and insinuated, in an equally unmistakable manner, that He designed to communicate this privilege to St. Peter. "And when they were come to Capharnaum, they that received the didrachmas came to Peter, and said to him: Doth not your Master pay the didrachma? He said: Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying: What is thy opinion, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute or custom? of their children or of strangers? And he said: Of strangers. Jesus said to him: Then the children are free. But, that we may not scandalize them, go thou to the sea, and cast in a hook; and that fish which shall first come up, take: and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a stater: take that, and give it to them for me and thee." [Footnote 39]

[Footnote 39: St. Matt. xvii. 23-26.]

[USCCB: St. Matt. xvii. 24-27.]

The argument used by our Lord is very plain. The son of a king is exempt from tribute. "I am the Son of the King of kings, and, therefore, owe no tribute to the servants of My Father." But, if our Lord owed no tribute to any temporal ruler, He owed no kind of obedience or subjection. And as He paid tribute as a free act of condescension, in order to uphold the authority of kings, so, for the same reason, He respected that authority in other things.
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His emblematic action in providing, miraculously, a coin for the tribute-money, which He ordered St. Peter to pay in the name of Christ and for himself also, insinuates in the most significant manner that St. Peter was to obtain from Him a like privilege with that which He possessed by natural right as the Son of God. Christ is a sovereign in His own native right. The Vicar of Christ is a sovereign by a delegated privilege. The obedience of Christ to temporal rulers and laws was not due by the obligation of a subject, but a mere voluntary conformity for the sake of the common good. So, also, the Vicars of Christ, independent of all temporal rulers and laws, should be bound to God alone, and not before men, to subject themselves to the authority of an earthly sovereign, only so far as times and circumstances might require them to do so for the well-being of the Church. For several centuries it was, in fact, necessary for the Popes to submit to the sovereignty of the Roman emperors, pagan and Christian. During this period they maintained their spiritual independence and supremacy chiefly by an incessant conflict with the imperial power--frequently ended only by their martyrdom. It was partially secured by the voluntary respect and obedience of the Christian emperors to the spiritual authority of the Vicar of Christ. But this was an imperfect state, suited only to the beginnings of the Church; and therefore the providence of God gave to the Popes the temporal sovereignty over Rome.
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The personal sovereignty and independence of the Pope was given

him by a divine right, and conferred on him immediately by Jesus Christ. This divine right did not, however, convey an immediate title to the possession of any temporal kingdom of subjects. It only gave the right to acquire such a kingdom by human right, and made this human right, once acquired, sacred and inviolable. The title of the Popes to the sovereignty of Rome is, therefore, in its origin human, and based on principles of human law and justice; but in regard to its inalienable, inviolable sacredness, it is of divine right. It is not essentially contained in that sovereignty which Christ gave to St. Peter and his successors, but it is its natural and necessary consequence. It is annexed to it for its maintenance and protection. Ever since the civilized nations became Christian, this sovereignty has been necessary, and it still continues, and must remain in future, necessary for the due exercise of the spiritual supremacy of the Roman Church and Pontiff. The sacredness and inviolability of the temporal sovereignty of the Pope over the Roman kingdom, and the necessity, under the present condition of things, of this sovereignty to the well-being of the Church, have been repeatedly and solemnly declared by the sovereign pontiffs and by the Catholic episcopate.

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It is impossible for any true and loyal Catholic to think otherwise; and the events which have occurred and are now occurring make it clearly and plainly manifest that this judgment is just. God has given to the Roman Pontiff a temporal throne and kingdom, a country and a capital, that it might be a Christian Sion and Jerusalem, a holy and inviolable sanctuary, in which the Vicar of Christ can possess and exercise in sovereign freedom and independence all the rights of his spiritual supremacy over the universal Church.

From what I have thus far said, which is the expression not of my opinion merely as an individual, but of the common belief of the whole body of sincere and faithful Catholics throughout the world, I draw the following evident conclusion: In that combat which the Holy Father has been so long waging, he has defended only what God has given him for the spiritual and eternal welfare of the human race. This determined and glorious conflict with unprincipled governments and the detestable horde of revolutionists for the defence of the temporal princedom of the Roman Pontiff, is a combat between infidelity and faith, hell and heaven, Satan and Jesus Christ.

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The real and final aim of those who have conspired together to overthrow the temporal sovereignty of the Pope has been and is the subversion of his spiritual supremacy, and of the freedom and independence of the Catholic Church; the abolition of the kingdom of Christ upon the earth; and the emancipation of human society, together with all the individuals who compose it, from the law of God. It is true that many of those who have taken part in this conspiracy have not clearly foreseen or intended this final and inevitable tendency of their movement toward communism and atheism. But these are merely the purblind followers and accomplices, the servants and tools of more clear sighted and

desperate leaders, who make use of them, and who despise them. All together are but the instruments and agents of one who is far more clear-sighted and more desperate than any of them, the great enemy of Jesus Christ, the original author of all rebellion, the apostate archangel, Lucifer.

The Holy Father and his devoted adherents have been fighting for the principles of truth, justice, and morality, for the welfare of society, the laws of God, the cause of religion throughout the whole world. Rome is the sanctuary where these precious jewels are treasured. Those good, brave men who have died in defence of the Holy See have died as martyrs for the faith and law of Christ. All Catholics owe them reverence and gratitude, and ought to be stirred up by their glorious example to an equal zeal and loyalty in the sacred cause of God and the Pope.

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All Christians have sworn allegiance to Jesus Christ as their King. The Pope is the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and, therefore, no Christian can pay allegiance to Jesus Christ without paying allegiance to the Pope. This allegiance is spiritual, but, by its very nature as a spiritual allegiance, it binds every Catholic to support and assist the Pope by all possible and lawful means to defend and preserve those temporal rights, which are necessary to him and to the Church, as the condition and the guarantee of the freedom and well-being of both.

It is also the interest of all Catholics, as well as their duty, to stand bravely and loyally by the Pope in his struggle against the enemies of the Church and of religion. What is there so precious to the Christian as the faith, the holy and divine religion into which he has been baptized; the Church, which is his ark of safety; the adorable Sacrament of the Altar, which is the link between heaven and earth; the Communion of Saints, through which he remains still united to the faithful departed whom he once loved on earth; the hope of future glory and blessedness in the kingdom of God? Health, wealth, pleasure, honor, science, art, home, country, the whole wide world itself, are of no value in comparison. But the treasure which each one possesses in his religion he holds only by virtue of that charity which binds him to all other members of the Catholic Church, and to its Head.

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Our interests are in common, and if any member, but especially the Head, be wounded, the whole body and all the other members must suffer with it. Each one has an interest in the well-being of the whole Church. We have an interest in the preservation of the sacred deposit of faith and grace in all nations; in the salvation of our neighbor, in the spiritual good of our posterity; in the prosperity of Christendom; in the conversion of the world; in the triumph of Jesus Christ; in the glory of God. All these are bound up in the cause of the Holy See, the Roman Church, the Sovereign Pontiff. It is only by the Catholic Church that mankind can be saved and that God can be glorified. Peter is the Rock on which this Church is built. The successors of Peter hold the golden keys by which hell is shut and heaven opened. The See of Peter is the centre of unity, light, life, and strength,

for the whole Church throughout the world. It is against the Rock of Peter that the forces, proceeding from the gates of hell to make war on religion, morality, society, the spiritual and temporal well-being of the human race, direct their most fierce and obstinate assaults. The downfall of this citadel would cause the destruction of the kingdom of God on earth, and give the victory to Satan in his warfare against Christ.
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"The gates of hell shall never prevail against it." God will preserve the Roman Church until the end of the world. But He will not do it altogether by miraculous and supernatural means, or by His own immediate intervention in human affairs. God ordinarily works through secondary causes, and by means of human agencies. He has established the civil princedom of the Roman Pontiff as the bulwark of his spiritual supremacy, and this bulwark must be defended by the loyalty and valor of all true Catholics against the assaults of the gates of hell. If faithless sovereigns and wicked conspirators despoil the Sovereign Pontiff of his lawful patrimony, rob the Roman Church of her possessions, and thus weaken and embarrass the functions of the supreme government of the Catholic Church, duty and interest alike require of the faithful to repair this injury, and to succor the distress of the Mother and Mistress of all churches by their generous and abundant contributions.
This is the obligation of the poor and of the rich alike, though not in equal measures. Upon those who are relatively poor, by comparison with the wealthier class--that is, those who are dependent upon their own hard labor for a modest livelihood--it is not necessary to press this obligation in urgent terms. They make up the great body of the faithful, and by their zeal and charity it is in a great part that the enterprises of the Church are sustained.
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To those of you, my dear brethren, who belong to this class, what I have said already will be enough--that is, to the greater part. For there are some who waste in the service of the devil what they can save from their earnings, and, therefore, have little or nothing left to give to God and the Church. Those who give themselves to excessive drinking--as some unhappily do, to their own shame and ruin and the scandal of religion--waste their hard-earned money in the service of the devil. So, also, those who give their money to unlawful societies, and to foolish, wicked enterprises, which are forbidden both by the laws of the Church and of the country, waste it in the devil's service. All such persons are bad subjects and rebels in the kingdom of God. Therefore, I exhort them to return to their fidelity and allegiance, to renounce the service of the devil, and to give a part of what they have devoted to his wicked works to the holy cause of God and the Church. Let those, also, who are led away by foolish vanity to spend more money than is suitable and right upon the decoration of their person, sacrifice those ornaments which are not in keeping with the modesty of their state in life, that they may have more to give to our Lord, and may merit more precious and lasting jewels, which will never lose their lustre.

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Those who serve the meek and lowly Saviour of the world, who put on the form of a servant for our sakes, in humble labors and offices, are ennobled by their Christian charity. Imitate, therefore, the zeal, self-denial, and generous liberality of your forefathers and brethren in all ages and countries, who, out of their poverty, have made such great gifts to God and their fellow-men, and whose alms have swollen from small rills to such an abundant stream, fertilizing and blessing the earth. It will come back to you a hundredfold, especially when it is bestowed on the Vicar of Christ, who is, like his Divine Master, in a special sense the father of the poor.

The obligations of the rich in respect to giving are far greater than those of the poor, but not generally so well fulfilled. The spirit of the Catholic religion ought to inspire them with a generous and lavish charity. The spirit of God is a princely spirit; and in the early and middle ages this princely spirit was manifested in a princely munificence. There are not wanting, in our own times, many signal instances of this same generous and noble magnanimity of Christian character in the great and wealthy. The present needs of the Holy See have called forth, in numbers of those who are noble or rich, a manifestation of that same piety, devotion, and liberality which has adorned the history of happier epochs, and given a purer lustre to so many illustrious names.

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But our age is one of luxury and self-indulgence. The rich are exposed in an unusual degree to those temptations which have always made their state so dangerous. Therefore, they need special admonitions to administer well the goods entrusted to them by Almighty God, and beware of that excessive love of money, that pride, selfishness, and extravagance, which are so contrary to the spirit of Christianity. They need to be stirred up to give in proportion to their wealth to the sacred cause of God, and not to stint themselves to the small measure which, for the poor, is generous and honorable, but which for them is niggardly and disgraceful. To the rich, therefore, I say that they should imitate the example of those holy and noble persons who have consecrated their wealth to God.

You serve an exacting Master. You are placed in a position which is beset with responsibility and danger. It is a responsible position, because of the great and important duties and obligations which are annexed to it; dangerous, because of its great difficulties and temptations. Those who are favored and elevated above their fellows by Divine Providence, have not received these blessings in order that they may make a display of themselves or indulge their passions, but in order that they may glorify God and do good to their fellow-men.

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If they wish to be safe in the midst of the allurements and seductions of this world, to derive real and lasting advantage from their wealth, and to save their souls, they must consecrate their riches to the service of God. There is but one end for which one can live in this world which is worthy of a

Christian--the exaltation of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Princes, nobles, men of power and influence through their talents, learning, station, or wealth, if they do not devote themselves heart and soul to the advancement and extension of the Catholic Faith and the Catholic Church, are recreant to their trust. It is this treason of the great and rich in Catholic nations to the sacred cause of Christ and His Church which is the chief cause of irreligion and vice among the people, of rebellion and revolution, political and social disorder, and which threatens to produce convulsions still more extensive and terrible, in which the privileged classes will become the victims of a conflagration which their own folly and wickedness have kindled. The throne of the Roman Pontiff is the keystone of the arch of political and social order, public peace and prosperity, civilization and good government. Those who have the greatest stake involved in the social commonwealth have the greatest interest in maintaining the rights of that august and sacred throne.

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It is a disgrace to Christendom that the Sovereign Pontiff of the Catholic Church should be left to struggle almost alone and single-handed with enemies who have plotted the overthrow of the Holy See and of religion. It is shameful that he should be left to bear the burden of debts and embarrassments which have been created by those who have unjustly invaded and despoiled the patrimony of the Church. The majestic figure and attitude of Pius IX. is a condemnation of the nations of Christendom in this nineteenth century before the tribunal of conscience and of Almighty God. Only those can free themselves from this condemnation who are found on his side, sustaining his cause by word and deed, proving their loyalty to Christ and His Vicar by their open renunciation of all sympathy and complicity with the enemies of the Holy See, and by their zealous and active support of the spiritual supremacy and temporal princedom of the Roman Pontiff.

By the grace of God, my dear brethren, we will not incur that condemnation. We are true and faithful members of that Holy Catholic Church which was founded on the day of Pentecost. Although remote in the distance of space from the See of Peter, the Holy Roman Church, we acknowledge with pride and joy that the Mother and Mistress of Churches is the Mother and Mistress of the Church of this Western world.

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We are the loyal and devoted children of our Holy Father, Pius IX. His rights we will sustain while life shall last. Our prayers shall never cease to ascend to heaven for his success and triumph; our generous contributions to his temporal necessities shall never fail him. We rely on the unfailing word and almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ to give victory and triumph to the cause of His crowned and anointed Vicar and of His Holy Church; and we will, therefore, do our duty zealously and faithfully to promote that victory, that we may share in its glory and reward.

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The Sermon IX.
The Living God.
(For Trinity Sunday.)

Jer. x. 10.

"__The Lord is the true God:
He is the living God__."

To-day the Church makes a solemn profession of faith in the mystery of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. It is true this is a profound, inscrutable mystery, which we could never have discovered, and which, even now that it is revealed, we cannot fully grasp with our reason; but it is not so absolutely impenetrable that we may not reason about it in so far as to see a fitness in it, and to recognize its truth and conclude its necessity from its perfect harmony with the other mysteries of the Christian faith. We can see how the whole system of religion, which shows us God as the Creator of the universe, and the Redeemer and glorifier of the human race, finds its fittest sanction and most reasonable explanation in its truth; while the rejection of it would leave the mind oppressed and bewildered with a thousand difficulties impossible of solution, and of such a nature as to lead us to abandon the belief in God as a living personal Being, and seek for their explanation in some theory of Pantheism or Polytheism, the first of which denies the personality, and the second the unity, of God.

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If I needed an apology for endeavoring to show the reasonableness of this doctrine, it would be that in our day it is famentably true that the great body of so-called Christians, who have cast off the primary authority of revealed truth, and set up the destructive theory of private judgment in its stead, are fast losing their faith in this necessary truth of Christianity, and falling away into Rationalism and Infidelity. It becomes the Christian preacher, therefore, to raise his voice in defence of this fundamental doctrine of Christianity. Christianity is true only because the Trinity is true. Abandon that, and belief in Christ the incarnate Son of God is impossible.

Let us consider, then, with all due reverence, the mystery of the being of God, and express the reasons which our own mind can present to confirm the faith of the Christian, when, signing himself with the sign of Christ, he adds the solemn declaration of his belief in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

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First of all, it is proper to state distinctly what the doctrine of the Trinity is. We believe that there is one infinite, eternal Being, whose nature is in no way divided, nor can be conceived of as partly one thing, and partly another thing. We believe that God, though one in being, is a Trinity in person. This Trinity of person in God does not separate His being into parts any more than His attributes, such as His wisdom or His justice, could divide Him, making His wisdom or justice one thing, and Himself another thing, which is not wisdom or justice.

It is God who is both wise and just, and His wisdom and justice have no existence but in Him. So it is God, one Being, who is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and these three Persons, taken

together, or one by one, are not something else besides the being of God, but they, each and all, are God. God __is__ the Trinity. So that the Father cannot regard the Son, or the Holy Ghost, as some other being--some other God, because the Son and the Holy Ghost are the same God as the Father is. In being God is not three, but one. Nor does the fact of there being three Persons add anything to the being of God, or lessen the absolute perfection of His unity, by introducing an element of division: on the contrary, we shall see that a perfect being must exist in three persons, and a being with only one person, such as we are, is necessarily an imperfect being.

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And when we say that the three Persons are distinct one from the other, so that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Holy Ghost, that again in no manner can affect the unity of the Divine Being, which in all three is identically the same. God, whose being is one, lives in three persons, and we can address ourselves to any one of the three separately, to God living as the Father, to God living as the Son, or to God living as the Holy Ghost; but the Being who __lives__, either as Father, or as Son, or as Holy Ghost, is One, and cannot be addressed in any manner as if He was double or triple. This very reasonable distinction between a being and the person of that being seems to be something which many wise and learned men appear either unable or unwilling to understand.

The being of God lives. He is the living God, and the three persons are His life. Not that God has three different lives; that as Father he has one life, and as the Son a second life, and as the Holy Ghost a third life. There is but one life in God, and it is the three persons that live that life. This appears to me to be the most reasonable explanation of the Trinity which our minds are capable of conceiving, and I will develop this thought in a few words.

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God is a __living__ being. Let us ask ourselves whence does God receive the life of His Divine Being? Who is the author of His life? Plainly, from no one but from Himself. He is the first, and only, and complete cause of His own life. There was nothing before Him from which He drew His infinite being, nor upon whose prior existence He depends for life. There is nothing now that can sustain Him or support His life, neither can there be anything after Him. He is the eternally living God. He is, then, the eternal cause of His own life.

What is He as cause, and what is this divine life of His being which is the effect of that cause? As cause, He is the Father, the Parent, the Progenitor, the Producer, the Begetter of His own life. And that life, which is begotten in Himself, is the Son. He is the eternally living God, and hence the Son is eternally begotten of the Father. The Person of God who begets His own life is the Father. The Person who is the Life begotten is the Son; and is a Person, because it is God who says by the mouth of the Son--I am the Life begotten.

Both the Father and the Son are equal, because it is the same Divine Being who is both Father and Son, as we profess in the

Creed--"__consubstantial with the Father__." Both are eternal. The Father does not exist before the Son, because it is the same Divine Being which is the life as Son, as well as Giver of life as the Father. God is the Father, because He begets a Son--His Life.
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God is the Son, because He is the Life begotten of the Father--the Divine Progenitor of the Life of the Eternal Godhead. God is the eternally living God. He lives the life which He gives Himself. His life is infinitely perfect, infinitely lovely, infinitely good. He enjoys the life He has. We possess life, not like the life of God, it is true, because it is limited in duration, imperfect in action, subject to change, and incapable of absolute happiness; but, such as it is, we live it, we enjoy it. The enjoyment or living of our life proceeds from two sources. First, from the cause of our life--from that which makes us live; and, secondly, from the life we possess. And we say--I enjoy my own life. But, mark it, we cannot say as the Father can say--I give myself life; nor as the Son of God can say--I am the life. We can only say--I enjoy the life which is given to me. Hence we are only one person--the person living, enjoying the life which is not from ourselves, but from God.
So God enjoys with an infinite beatitude His own life. It is the Person of the Holy Ghost. He says not--I give myself life. It is the Person of the Father which says that. He does not say--I am the life. It is the Person of the Son who says that. But he says--I am God, living My life; I am God, enjoying My life.
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Yet it must be kept in mind that all this is one simultaneous act in God: the eternal giving of life to Himself; the life itself eternally springing into being, and the eternal enjoyment or fruition of life. These are not separate acts, but one, single, inseparable act of the Triune God. The Being which acts is God, and God is not one or two of the Trinity, but the Trinity itself. The principle of the act is attributed to the Person; the act itself to the God head. Hence, again, the Son does not live a different life from the Father, or the Holy Ghost a different life from the other two Persons, but the life they live is all one.
To the Holy Ghost is attributed the living or enjoyment of life, as we attribute the living of our own life to our own person; and, therefore, our person is, in a remarkable manner, an image of the Holy Ghost. We speak of our __spirit__ as living, rejoicing, etc., and when we die or yield up the living of our life, we say--We give up the ghost.
In Me, says the Holy Ghost, are all possible perfections; I rejoice in them. My life is all good, wherefore I love Myself with infinite love. My life is all beautiful, wherefore I admire it, and am well pleased, and take an infinite delight in it. My life is all holy. I am the supreme object of My own adoration. My life is all true, wherefore I contemplate all truth with unspeakable bliss. In My life is no conflict, no change, no anxiety, doubt, or sorrow, wherefore I am in eternal peace.
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My life is all that is or can be, wherefore I seek not for My happiness outside of My own happy being. Such I am, and such I live, the Holy Ghost, who proceed from the Father and the Son, who, together with the Father and the Son, am adored and glorified, the great I AM, the Ancient of Days, Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty, Good, Wise, Just, and True, the eternal, living God.

Dear brethren, such thoughts, I know, are bewildering, and leave our poor human intellects stupefied in presence of that Majesty, the simplest idea of whom is beyond all power of expression. But we know that God is, and that we know Him, great as He is, incomprehensible as He is, so far transcending all grasp of our feeble minds; yet even in His mysterious Being He is no stranger to us. The doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in God is wonderful, but it is not a strange doctrine. It is a truth full of light and consolation. It is a revelation of Him, who is all in all, that draws us, if I may say so, nearer to Him.

Starting with this view of Him, enlightened with this truth, all that He has done for us in the world of nature and of grace, becomes clear, plain, reasonable, and consequent. All the other mysterious truths of Christianity, as I have said before, suppose the truth of this, and, indeed, would be unmeaning without it. The consideration of one or two of these will confirm the view I have taken of it.

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Look at creation. This is fully as incomprehensible to our minds as the mystery of the Trinity itself. But without a revelation of the Trinity, it would be more difficult of belief, further away from our grasp, baffling more utterly all our attempts to form a reasonable conception of it. What is it? It is that God, who is all that is or can be, yet can create and has created something which is not God. It looks like a contradiction. Those who have rejected the Trinity and yet believe in God so regard it, and are led to imagine that the created universe and all that is in it and of it is Divine.

We read that, when God created man, He said, "Let us make man to our image and likeness." [Footnote 40]

[Footnote 40: Genesis i. 26]

The creature is, then, an image of the Creator. Creation is not God, but is an image of God; that is, the being and life of creatures, analogous to the being and life of God, is not of themselves, but is a reflected image of God, which we may compare to the reflected image of ourselves in a mirror. The image we behold is not our own being, but an imperfect likeness of it. So the creation which God beholds imaged in His own Divine mind is not His own Divine being, but an imperfect likeness of it.

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And now it is not the image of an abstract being--of an ideal being--but of a living being. The living God is the Trinity, as I have shown. The mystery of creation is illuminated by this truth, as you will see.

We say in the Creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." He is the Personal Cause, the

Progenitor of all creation. Yet we also say, with St. John: "The Word was God. All things were made by Him: and without Him was nothing made that was made." [Footnote 41] And with holy Job: "The Spirit of the Lord made me, and the breath of the Almighty gave me life." [Footnote 42] And again, with the Psalmist: "Thou shalt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created: and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth." [Footnote 43]

[Footnote 41: St. John i. 1-3.]

[Footnote 42: Job xxxiii. 4.]

[Footnote 43: Ps. ciii. 30.]

[USCCB: Ps. civ. 30.]

We speak of creation, then, either as of the Father, of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost, because it is of the Trinity--one act of the Godhead. But we attribute creation properly to the Father, because He is the Infinite Personal Cause. We attribute it to the Son, because He is the Infinite Personal Life. "In him was the life," says St. John, in the next sentence after that in which he says all things were created by the Word, "and," he adds, "the life was the light of men."

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So chant we in the Credo: __Lumen de lumine__--Light of light. It is the first word spoken by God at the creation--"__Fiat lux!__" Admirable conception! Light is, as it were, the Creator of the image reflected in a mirror, and the Divine Word is the light--the Creator of the creature who is the image and likeness of God. St. Paul calls our Lord, who is Man united to the Word, "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. In Him were all things created in heaven, and on earth, visible, and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and in Him: and He is before all, and by Him all things consist." [Footnote 44] Because our Lord was the Word of God, the same thing is declared of Him, as the Eternal Wisdom, by the inspired prophet: "I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures." [Footnote 45] The creative act is, then, an image of the Son of God being divinely begotten by the Father; and creation in existence is an image of Him who truly said, "I am the Life."

[Footnote 44: Coloss. i. 15-17.]

[Footnote 45: Ecclus. xxiv. 5.]

[USCCB: Sirach xxiv. 3.]

We attribute the creation to the Holy Ghost when we say in the Creed, "And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Life-giver."

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Recall what I said about the Holy Ghost, that He is God living, enjoying His Divine life. Creation is the image of God living, and hence of the Holy Ghost. When man was created, the Sacred Record says, "God breathed the breath [or spirit] of life into his face, and man became a living soul." With man, everything lives and enjoys its being with an enjoyment which is a reflection of the supreme living beatitude in God. Thus exclaims the writer of the Book of Wisdom: "The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole earth: and that, which containeth all things,

hath knowledge of the voice." [Footnote 46]

[Footnote 46: Wisdom i. 7.]

It is the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, the Lord and Life-giver, who, as holy Job declares, "hath adorned the heavens" with their radiant beauty, who hath filled the whole earth, and vivified it, so that it is not a dead but a living image of the Eternal, Omnipotent, Living God. Did I not say well, my brethren, that the mystery of the Holy Trinity is an illumination of the mystery of creation?

Look, again, at the Mystery of the Incarnation, in which are included the other Mysteries of the Regeneration and Redemption of man. We can not understand its manner. We cannot see how it is, any more than we can understand how the Son is begotten of the Father, or how the Holy Ghost proceeds from them both.

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But the Trinity illuminates that also, and enlightens us to see and believe it, now that it is revealed to us. Like Creation, it is an act of the Trinity, because it is God uniting His Divine Person of the Son to humanity, His created image. This is why our Lord, as Man as well as God, calls Himself the Son of God. This is why the Apostle calls us, who are His brethren in the flesh, sons of God. It is the act of God as the Father. "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son." [Footnote 47] It is an act of God as the Son. In His last discourse, Jesus says to His disciples: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father." [Footnote 48] It is an act of the Holy Ghost. As we say in the Creed, and as the Scripture testifies, "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost."

[Footnote 47: S. John iii. 16.]

[Footnote 48: __Ibid__. xvi. 23.]

[USCCB: John xvi. 28.]

The mystery of the Trinity thus enables us to recognize the Divinity of the Person of Jesus Christ, as also the sublime character and object of His Incarnation. It reveals to us the true destiny of man, and shows us how the very reason of creation is in God Himself, and is to find its end, its accomplishment and fruition in God. For, as you see, the Incarnation was an act, of which the Person of God Himself was the object.

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It was God communicating His Divine Life to the creature, and thus all creatures, through Jesus, who is the First-Born of them all, are to find their destiny, the end of their creation, in eternal union with the Divine Life. "I am the Life," said our Lord, and "because I live, you shall live." [Footnote 49] He and the Father are one. But, O wonderful revelation! "In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." [Footnote 50]

[Footnote 49: St. John xiv. 6 and 19.]

[Footnote 50: __Ibid__. 20.]

"God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world," says St. John, "that we may live by Him." [Footnote 51] "Ye are the temples of the living God," [Footnote 52] exclaims St. Paul. "We are made partakers of the Divine nature," [Footnote 53] says St.

Peter. And St. Paul again designates us, first, as the "partakers of Christ," [Footnote 54] and next as the "partakers of the Holy Ghost." [Footnote 55]

[Footnote 51: Ep. St. John iv. 9.]

[Footnote 52: 2 Cor. vi. 16.]

[Footnote 53: 2 Ep. St. Peter i. 4.]

[Footnote 54: Heb. iii. 14.]

[Footnote 55: Heb. vi. 4.]

Once more, our Lord bids us fear not the apparent annihilation of death. "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, though he be dead, shall live. And every one that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever." [Footnote 56]

[Footnote 56: St. John xi., 25, 26.]

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How clear, how consistent is every word! As we contemplate the truth of the Incarnation in the light of the revealed Trinity, our faith must grow stronger, and the hopes and aspirations of our hearts be confirmed, and our love wax the deeper; for this brighter view of God must draw us nearer to Him by sight and by love. We, too, burn to answer our Lord as did Martha, when He asked her if she believed His words: "Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God, who art come into this world." [Footnote 57]

[Footnote 57: St. John xi. 27.]

We set out, my dear brethren, to look at the reasons which Christian philosophy is able to show us of the reasonableness of the mysterious doctrine, of which we make acts of profession oftener, perhaps, than of any other, for we do it every time we make the sign of the Cross; and in honor of which we are to-day keeping solemn festival. We have been talking and thinking like philosophers on this deep mystery, and to us might be very properly addressed that pertinent remark of Thomas √† Kempis: "What doth it avail thee to discourse profoundly of the Trinity, if thou be wanting in humility, and, consequently, displeasing to the Trinity? If thou didst know the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would it all profit thee, without the love of God and His grace?" [Footnote 58]

[Footnote 58: __Imit. Christi__, book i. ch. I.]

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Truly, a question of no little import to us all. Today the Church brings us, as it were, face to face with the awful Majesty of the Ever-Blessed Trinity, the Living God. It is a fearful thought to be in that Presence, for it must compel us to ask ourselves--Are we indeed the image and likeness of the Living God? And not only that, but are we, as we should be, __living images of Him?__ Are our souls living in His Divine grace, or are they standing before Him to-day dead in sin? To be wise in the knowledge of the Blessed Trinity is well, but to love Him is better. To be ignorant of the Blessed Trinity is a misfortune; but to sin against Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being is a crime against the Life of God. Wonder not that to lose God is to lose eternal life, and fall into hell, the eternal death. To sin is, in the language of St. Paul, to "trample under foot the Son of God, and offer an affront to the Spirit of Grace." [Footnote

59] Filled with horror at the thought of this crime against the Holy Trinity, he exclaims: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God." [Footnote 60]

[Footnote 59: Heb. x. 29.]

[Footnote 60: Heb. x. 31.]

Therefore, brethren, let us adore with profound humility the Ever-Blessed Trinity, full of gratitude that He has vouchsafed this revelation of His mysterious Being to us, and thus enlightened our minds that we may know Him, and love Him, and serve Him better.

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But let us so live, as children of the Heavenly Father, as brethren of Jesus Christ our Lord, and as sanctified temples of the Holy Ghost, that, when the veil of this life be rent in twain, and we shall stand face to face in eternity before the glorious majesty of God, and in presence of the glittering hosts of angels who surround His throne, we may be able to present the record of a life which has truly been an image and likeness of the Life of the Living God--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; to whom be glory now and for ever throughout eternal ages. Amen.

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Sermon X

The Real Presence.

(For The Feast Of Corpus Christi.)

St. Matt. i. 23.

"__They shall call His name Emmanuel,
which, being interpreted, is God with us__."

We conclude the seasons of Easter and Pentecost with the Feast of the Blessed Trinity, following in thought our ascended Jesus up to the right hand of His eternal Father. From Christmas to Ascension we commemorate the mission (as it is called) of the Second Person of the Trinity: how the Father sent the Son to become Incarnate, to accomplish our redemption, and found the Church. At Pentecost we celebrate the mission of the Third Person: how the Father and the Son together sent the Holy Ghost, to become incorporate in the Church, and abide with and in it through all time. Then, on Trinity Sunday, the Church, in her turn, bids us remember that, although the Son and the Holy Ghost were sent down to earth, yet they never left heaven; where they had dwelt from eternity, and will dwell to eternity, consubstantial and coequal with the Father.

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But the Church is the kingdom of the Incarnation; and the Incarnation is God made visible. Therefore, as a true spouse, living only for her Beloved, she does not leave us contemplating the invisible God, but quickly sets before us the Incarnation again--the end of her yearly song no less than its beginning. For the feast of Corpus Christi is to Christmas as the end to the beginning of a chain of mysteries which centre in the Incarnation. It is, indeed, a sort of second Christmas--the sacramental life of our Lord bearing striking resemblance to His helpless infancy. Again, lest we should forget that our ascended

Lord left behind Him the very body He carried into heaven, the Church does not let us stand gazing up after Him with the group on Olivet, but invites us to turn and rejoice with her in the mystery of His perpetual presence here below--a presence not the less real because supersensible, nor the less consoling because veiled.

I shall speak, then, of the Blessed Sacrament, first, as a reality; and, secondly, as a consolation.

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First, as a reality. You are aware, my dear brethren, that no article of our faith excites so much the wonder of those who are not Catholics as the doctrine of the Real Presence. They are forced to acknowledge, too, that we actually do believe in it, and take it as a matter of course. Their wonderment is natural enough: for they judge of it only by the senses; and certainly we cannot conceive of any mode in which it would have more apparent __un__reality. If, however, they believe that the Christ who was born in a stable, lived in obscurity for thirty years, was rejected by the Jews as "the carpenter's son," and, at last, died a felon's death, was God, they must allow that the Godhead in Him had very much apparent unreality, and that its surprising concealment can only be accounted for by design. Again, if they are familiar with the Bible, they know that in several passages a certain adorable secrecy and shyness are ascribed to God as characteristic of Him. As, for instance, in the Psalms we are told that He "makes darkness His hiding-place." [Footnote 61] In Job it is asked, "Peradventure thou wilt comprehend the steps of God, and find out the Almighty perfectly? He is higher than heaven, and what wilt thou do? He is deeper than hell, and how wilt thou know?" [Footnote 62] while Isaias breaks out with the exclamation: "Truly Thou art a hidden God, Thou God of Israel, the Saviour!" [Footnote 63]

[Footnote 61: Ps. xvii. 12.]

[USCCB: Ps. xviii. 12.]

[Footnote 62: Job xi. 7.]

[Footnote 63: Is. xlv. 15.]

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As far, then, as the hiddenness of the Real Presence goes, it ought rather to commend our doctrine than otherwise, and create a presumption in its favor.

But the radical difficulty with the stranger to the truth lies in his not understanding the Incarnation and its object. It is nothing to him, I may say. He professes belief in it, indeed, but has utterly "lost its meaning" (as dear Father Faber says). Let him once begin to realize the Incarnation, and he will find he is taking the road to Rome: he will find that there is such a thing as a visible Church, and such a person as the Mother of God. To the Catholic, on the contrary, the Incarnation is everything. It is the fount of the whole system to which he glories in adhering. The Church exists for nothing else. The world exists for nothing else. The world for the Church, the Church for Christ, and Christ for God.

Now, the object of the Incarnation was briefly this: The establishment of a visible kingdom, in which the Creator should

receive an adequate worship from the creature, and the creature be raised to the highest possible union with the Creator. We say, then, that the Church is this visible kingdom--to wit, an organic body, of which we are made members by Baptism (an outward and visible rite); and that the twofold end of worship and union is accomplished by the perpetual presence of the Incarnation here on earth, as at once a sacrifice and a sacrament.
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A sacrifice in which the creature offers to God a divine victim--the only adequate worship He can receive, God being offered to God--and in a created nature. A sacrament, in which the assumed humanity in Christ, hypostatically united with the divinity, is made to blend with our humanity in a union so close as to render us, in turn, "partakers of the divine nature." [Footnote 64] Moreover, we say that the form of food, in which our Lord chose to impart to us His deified and deifying humanity, was (so to speak) the most natural form He could have chosen: since food becomes one substance with its recipient--the difference between ordinary food and this divine food being that the latter, instead of being changed into us, transforms us into itself.

[Footnote 64: 2 St. Peter i. 4.]

Therefore, to us, who, by the grace of faith, understand the Incarnation and its object, the doctrine of the Real Presence is simply the supplement to the doctrine of the Incarnation. The one is the consequence of the other. We behold in the Church, with the Blessed Sacrament on her altars, the mystical Mary with the Divine Babe on her lap: and when we kneel to her, that she may give Him to us, or bless us with Him, we have no more feeling of unreality than the Shepherds and the Magi had in the cave at Bethlehem.
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The feast of Corpus Christi, then, my brethren, is one of a blessed __reality__: a reality which ought to make us thank God every day of our lives that we are Catholics. For can anything be more dismal, more barren, more pointless, than a Christianity in which the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin have no place?
But, secondly, it is a feast of peculiar consolation. It is this which most endears the Blessed Sacrament to us. For as long as we are in exile from our true fatherland--the "patria" of the __O Salutaris__--we shall always be wanting consolation, and prize it as a foretaste of our rest. This consolation, then, this foretaste, is abundantly vouchsafed to us in the Blessed Sacrament. And, first, as regards our Lord Himself. It is impossible to love Him without sorrowing for all He once suffered; without grieving at the thought of the world's sins, and our own share of them, which drenched His soul with anguish, and steeped His heart in woe. And what pains us most is the melancholy fact that His love was thrown away on the majority of mankind, and is so at this hour. It is, therefore, indeed a consolation that now He dwells on earth without the condition of suffering--impassible for evermore; that, at last, He "comes unto His own, and His own __do__ receive Him"; that He is

enthroned King of His elect in the kingdom He so dearly purchased; that He can now take unmixed "delight" in "being with the children of men"; that if His Sacramental Presence is still to the heretic "a stumbling-block," and to the sceptic "foolishness," yet to millions upon millions, who believe and love, it is "the power of God and the wisdom of God"; and, further, that whatever degeneracy may come upon Christ's kingdom, however widely the "love of many may wax cold," yet, even in the worst times, "those whom the Father hath given Him" will unfailingly confess Him their "Emmanuel."
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Again, the Blessed Sacrament is full of consolation as regards ourselves. In the first place, because it is our Emmanuel--God tabernacled with men; and because the veiled Presence here is an earnest of the unveiled hereafter. Also, because it is an abiding "propitiation for our sins," and the perpetual oblation of infinite merit to obtain us all good things. Again, it is the food in the strength of which we travel, like Elias, through the wilderness of this world "unto the mount of God": [Footnote 65] the medicine of our spiritual diseases, the balm of our sorrows, and, sweetest thought of all, perhaps, our viaticum in death.

[Footnote 65: 3 Kings xix. 8.]

[USCCB: 1 Kings xix. 8.]

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If God could thus address His people of old, how much more meaning have His words for __us__: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou shalt pass through the waters, I will be with thee, and the rivers shall not cover thee; ... for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." [Footnote 66]

[Footnote 66: Is. xliii. 1-3]

But especially ought we to take comfort in the Blessed Sacrament in times of trial for the Church, such as that which is on us now. You remember how the ship of Peter was tossed one day on the lake of Galilee, and the disciples got terrified and awoke their Master, who was asleep on a pillow. [Footnote 67]

[Footnote 67: St. Mark iv. 36-38.]

And He rebuked them for their want of faith; because, let wind and sea rage as they might, could that vessel have perished with the Lord of the elements on board, though He __was__ "asleep on a pillow"? Now, that ship is a striking figure of the Church, with the Blessed Sacrament reposing on her altars. She has ridden out many a heavy gale as yet, and no matter how many more are in store for her, weather them she __must__ while she carries the Almighty Saviour. Instead of losing heart, then, our aspiration should be that of the sacred poet:

"Amid the howling wintry sea,
We are in port if we have Thee."

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And even if there should come a time, as many think, when "the daily sacrifice shall be taken away," when it shall be death to say Mass or to hear it, and the Church has to "fly into the wilderness"--if the final persecution thus exceed even those of the C√¶sars, yet Mass __will__ be said and Communion

__will__ be given; and still, at the words of the priest, "even as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth unto the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man" to His altar; and still, "wheresoever the Body shall be, there will the eagles be gathered together." [Footnote 68]

[Footnote 68: St. Matt. xxiv. 27, 28.]

In conclusion, my dear brethren, let me remind you how apt we are--we who are so favored with the faith--to neglect the Blessed Sacrament, to be irreverent in its presence, to show it ingratitude by receiving it too seldom, and to betray our forgetfulness of its presence by never coming to visit it. I would dwell a little on this last point. When we meet with misfortune or trouble of any kind, we often brood over it at home, and get impatient and fretful, and make mischief in consequence to others as well as to ourselves, instead of coming to tell the Sacred Heart all about it, and draw on an ever-ready help. So, again, we are constantly complaining how cold the world is, what a want there is of sympathy, how selfish and thankless people are.

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And what are we but cold and unsympathizing, selfish and thankless, toward our best Friend? He is here "love's prisoner"--__our__ prisoner; and how few of us take any notice of Him as such! Were an earthly dear one in prison for our sake, we should move heaven and earth to get to him. But here is the Lover of all lovers, the infinite beauty, accessible all day long, and how many come to visit Him of those who are __not__ reasonably prevented? I wonder that more of us are not haunted by those words, "I was in prison, and ye visited Me not." [Footnote 69]

[Footnote 69: St. Matt. xxv. 43.]

Let us endeavor, then, my brethren, to realize more the treasure we possess in our Emmanuel, our __Ges√π Sacramentato__ (Sacramented Jesus), our __Dios Sagramentado__ (Sacramented God), as the happy Italian and Spanish languages can word it. If we could only accustom ourselves to think a little more of the Blessed Sacrament, it would soon have a perceptible influence on our lives, on our domestic relations, on our intercourse with society, on our dealings with the world of business. And this influence would be anything but oppressive, as some of you may think. It would exercise a wholesome restraint, indeed, for which we should often be deeply thankful afterwards, but would give us a true cheerfulness and an abiding sense of calm. Oh! that all our words and actions might harmonize in one ceaseless chorus of praise--

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"Blessed and praised every moment
Be the most holy and most divine Sacrament!"

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Sermon XI.

St. Paul, The Divine Orator.

(For The Patronal Festival.)

2 Cor. xii. 9.

"__Gladly, therefore,
will I glory in my infirmities,
that the power of Christ may dwell in me.__"

The Church and the world are agreed in the estimate formed of St. Paul as a preacher. By a common judgment, the name of this great apostle has been inscribed at the head of the illustrious list of teachers of doctrine. His renown increases as time goes on, and in our own day his personal character, life, and writings have been made the subject of an extraordinary amount of discussion, and have elicited newer and higher eulogiums.

There is this difference, however, in the judgments formed by the Church and the world of the prince of Christian preachers. The world's panegyric is illogical, being made in direct contradiction to its principles and the lessons which it has ever inculcated as necessary to an orator's success.

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The Church alone, by the aid of the supernatural principles of faith, is able to explain the true secret of the wonderful power he wielded in life, and the miraculous influence of his words upon the nations of the earth during the many centuries which have elapsed since he ceased to speak face to face with men. What, indeed, are these words of his, "I will glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me," but foolishness to human wisdom, or, at best, an enigma without solution! But it is precisely these infirmities of which he boasts that gave him the power he possessed, and laid the foundation of all his glory. "When I am weak," he says again, "then am I powerful." Nonsense to human reason, but divine wisdom to faith.

If, therefore, I would praise St. Paul, as is befitting on this day, I must praise hid infirmities--weaknesses which the world calls misfortunes, and deficiencies upon which none but saints ever rest their hopes of success.

To judge after the manner of man, we would ordinarily expect to find in one who is an orator of great power certain personal qualifications which, in the very nature of things, would serve to impress and win his audience. We would seek for great polish in the style, and consummate art in the preparation and delivery of his discourses.

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For one who aims at swaying not only a chance multitude who, for the moment, comes within the sound of his voice, but at conquering their souls, and winning them to the point of making most heroic sacrifices; who not only preaches to his hearers, but commands them with the air of one having authority, we would look for the favorable, popular verdict shown in honors and dignities showered upon him, in credit and influence, and his having reached that summit where men vie with one another in giving him place, and when even his enemies fear to gainsay or persecute him.

Such, indeed, are the orators whom the world crowns with its laurels. But in all these St. Paul was lacking; and yet, by the world's own confession, he has surpassed them all. To meditate upon this mystery of Divine Providence, which makes use of the

weak things of this world to confound the strong, and the foolish to confound the wise, cannot fail to enlighten and edify us.
We who, like the world in general, have known the great Apostle chiefly from the sublime picture which his unparalleled success presents, have doubtless imagined him to be a person of tall and majestic stature, of pleasing address and magisterial deportment; being, as we say, a man of fine presence, whose appearance was alone sufficient to bring forth plaudits from his auditory, and enforce at once a respectful and submissive hearing.
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Such are, indeed, the ideal portraits of him with which we please ourselves, and such have the masters in art represented him. But from various allusions he makes in his writings to himself, it is certain that he was frail in body, of a diffident and submissive bearing, and altogether wanting in that air of decision and self-assertion which naturally overawes the multitude.
When he, with his companion apostle, St. Barnabas, healed the cripple at Lystra, the people imagined them to be gods; but in calling St. Barnabas, rather than St. Paul, Jupiter, it is evident that other apostle far surpassed St. Paul in the dignity and majesty of his person. He can write boldly, he says, but "in presence is lowly"; [Footnote 70] and, again, he affirms the truth of what people said of him, that "his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible;" and the frequent contrasts he draws between his personal infirmities and his spiritual power and graces, leave the fact beyond doubt that he was by no means a man of dignified aspect or commanding mien.

[Footnote 70: 2 Cor. x. 1]

We might be tempted to think he would feel this infirmity most keenly as a serious drawback to his success as an orator, as we ourselves would judge it to be. But no. He will rather glory in his infirmities as the source of his power; and here at the outset we get an insight into the whole spirit of this champion of the Gospel.
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From the instant of his miraculous conversion, he appears to be wholly absorbed in the contemplation of the sublime mystery of the voluntary abasement of God in concealing the awful majesty and splendor of his Divine Being in human nature, that what he, with apostolic hardihood, calls the "foolishness of God" and the "weakness of God," might subdue and atone for the sinful pride and vainglory of men. He rejoices, therefore, that he has nothing in himself which might cause the admiration of men and make void the humility of Jesus and His cross--a thought which so fills his soul that he says he knows nothing else besides. The less he has in himself to glory in, the greater is his consciousness of the power of the Gospel of the Crucified, which he only lives to preach. "Power is made perfect in infirmity," was the revelation made to him when caught up to the third heaven. "I will glory, therefore," he exclaims, "in my infirmities." I am glad that I am weak in bodily presence and contemptible in speech. Freed from this temptation of human vanity, which in turn would divert the souls of my hearers from the Gospel to the preacher of the Gospel, the power of Christ will dwell more fully in me. "When I

am weak, then am I powerful."
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When I, Paul the Apostle, am nothing, then will the victory of grace be complete in the souls who, through me, believe and are converted--when I have nothing in me to please and attract the sight, men will see only the Cross which I hold up to their gaze. So fearful was he of attracting to himself any personal affection, that he avoided baptizing his own converts and receiving them into the church, lest they should say--I am of Paul, I belong to the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, instead of acknowledging, as he was always doing himself, "By the grace of God, I am what I am--a Christian saved from hell by God's mercy." Let us look now at his second and greater infirmity--his weakness as an orator. He had a strange, difficult, shocking, and what he terms a scandalous doctrine to preach--the redemption of the world by a crucified God. Surely, this man, who is so lacking in the external qualifications of an effective speaker, possesses at least the magic power of sublime eloquence. He who has such a repulsive truth to announce will seek the most polished phrases, and cover up the hard things which he has to say by flowers of rhetoric, and, with studied art in his tones of speech, will charm his unwilling audience to receive and obey the austere lessons of the Gospel.
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By no means. Such was his infirmity in this respect that his disciples called his speech contemptible, and he acknowledged the truth of their judgment, and reminds his beloved Corinthians that he was "with them in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," adding, "My speech and preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom." [Footnote 71]

[Footnote 71: I Cor. ii. 4.]

Not only do we see in the discourses recorded of him the most simple and unadorned phraseology, but even his writings, full as they are of the most profound and heavenly doctrine, are the most inartificial, disconnected, and poor in imagery that could well be imagined. What a misfortune for an orator! cries the world. "What a glory is mine infirmity!" responds the Apostle of that Gospel which is wisdom hidden from the self-sufficient rich and the insolent magnates of a depraved world, but a revelation of divine truth to babes. And I, who praise St. Paul, will praise this infirmity of his as well, knowing that he has not rested his power as an apostle and his hopes of success upon it in vain. If St. Paul be unable to use, or disdain in his preaching all rhetorical flourish and tricks of oratory, if his language is almost rude in its plainness and harsh from the total absence of brilliant metaphor or well-rounded period, it is because he has nothing to preach but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
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All those harmonious cadences which flatter the ear, all that fanciful imagery in which the orators of human doctrine and science deal so largely and are paid with clapping of hands, are at best but showy tinsel, unworthy of the Incarnate Wisdom, and a vain mockery of the lowly speech and simple words of the Man of Sorrows. What we adore in our Lord's person is His lowliness and

humility, mingled with a certain divine and grand simplicity of character. So are all His words, plain and simple; spoken evidently without passionate gesture, and in no loud or clamorous tone. Simple, because all that is divine is simple; all else is human pride and sensuality. Such is what I may call the divine instinct of the Church, the Body of Christ, who also disdains, when she lifts her voice in prayer or praise, all the effeminate and meretricious ornaments of harmony or melody, which are the sources of attraction and admiration in worldly music, and adheres to what is simple in its enunciation, grave in movement, and moderate in tone, as one who reveals divine thoughts, and not the dreamy, overwrought imaginations of impassioned genius, which minister rather to the senses than to the soul.
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Behold, therefore, the great Apostle, inspired by this simplicity of Divine truth, going out upon his great mission to become the preacher of that truth to the whole world, but so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the meek and humble-hearted Jesus that he speaks in weakness, in much fear and trembling, yet with such power that even Greece, that mother of philosophers and orators, forgets the fervid eloquence of her Plato and Demosthenes to drink in the divine lessons of the Gospel from the lips of this unskilled orator; and Rome herself, the mistress of the world, at his word overthrows her idols and consecrates her majestic temples of glory to the worship of a Man crucified at Jerusalem. O glorious Apostle! well mayest thou glory in that which before men is thy weakness! Thine infirmity is thy power. Without human power, thou abandonest thyself wholly to the divine power of Christ, and that--that is more than enough power to conquer the world. That world in its pride will criticise you, and ridicule your want of polish and lack of rhetoric, and your trembling, hesitating gesture, but it will believe in Jesus Christ and Him crucified whom you preach. Its orators will not follow you as a model, but they themselves will beat their breasts, and confess their sins, and do penance at your bidding.
But, powerful as he is in the infirmity of his speech, to fully convince the world of the truth of his awful and austere doctrine, he has yet to measure his strength against a more obstinate and unyielding enemy to the Gospel of the Cross.
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The mind of man cannot long blind its sight to the illumination of the truth; but who shall subdue and win the hardened heart? O wondrous science of the saints! O divine enigma which no one shall understand who does not write its solution in his own blood! "__Regnavit a ligno Deus!__" "God hath reigned from the wood of the cross." Even God cannot reign in the kingdom of the hearts of men until He is a crucified man, whose streaming blood cries aloud and pleads, with the irresistible torrent of the eloquence of suffering, to heaven. Yes; to heaven must the voice of suffering preach; for Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase. From God alone can come the grace that achieves the consummation of the triumph of the truth, and completes the labor of the Apostle. When was Jesus Christ the Master of the world? Where was it that He drew all things to

Himself by the cords of Adam and the bands of love? Was it when He went about doing good, working miracles, preaching His divine doctrine? Ah no! It was when He was lifted up the pleading Victim, whose blood and wounds spoke better things than the blood of Abel, and whose requests could not be denied.
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Well does the Church say, "__Regnavit a ligno Deus!__" And what shall we expect, if even Jesus is only powerful from His cross, but that His chosen vessel of election, who shall carry His Gospel to the whole world, first shall say: "I judge myself to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified"; and that afterwards his life should prove the truth of his same infirmity in himself: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross," [Footnote 72] "I die daily;" that he should be stoned and scourged, and imprisoned and persecuted, and driven from city to city, "in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from the Jews, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren, in labor and painfulness, in long watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness;" [Footnote 73] and, added to all these sufferings, those interior trials and bitternesses of spirit with which God invariably purifies the souls of His elect. He must preach in the stead of Christ, and therefore he must suffer in His stead. Wherefore he says: "I fill up in my own flesh those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ." [Footnote 74]

[Footnote 72: Gal. ii. 19.]

[Footnote 73: 2 Cor. xi. 26, 27.]

[Footnote 74: Col. i. 24.]

Nor are we surprised, if the world be, that he should please himself in this life of constant suffering in what seems to be, as men judge, failures and losses, and disheartening, conflicting obstacles to his success.
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The world, to whom the cross of Christ is foolishness, would demand for a preacher who could hope for a success equal to St. Paul's, invariable good health, a well-nourished body, a mind not overtaxed, popular applause, and a career of unvarying triumph. But I, who would praise St. Paul, will praise him for his life of suffering. When he is weak before men, then is he powerful with God. God and the whole court of heaven is the audience of the suffering man; and he who would sway the Divine Mercy must take counsel from the Crucified Incarnate Wisdom, and find an advocate in his own blood.
For thirty long years did this "Victim dear to heaven" suffer a daily death, yet rejoicing always that he was counted worthy to suffer for the name of the Lord Jesus; and as we follow him about from country to country, and from city to city, we can number his successes by the number of his adversities--adversities which had no power to subdue his exalted soul, or shake for one instant the constancy of his superhuman love for Christ and His cross. Hark to that outburst of generous love from his undaunted heart--"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? I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." [Footnote 75]

[Footnote 75: Rom. viii. 35-39.]

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Thirty years of restless labor and fatigues, and now this aged and worn-out Apostle, to whom we would fain grant some days of sweet repose for his declining years, must gird up his loins and prepare to meet the crowning suffering of his life--a martyr's death.

Rome, imperial Rome, palace of pride and sensuality, thou boastest that thou art the mistress of the world; that thy name and power is honored and feared by every nation, and none dare refuse thee tribute! Proud throne of the world, tremble! for there is coming into thy gates a conqueror who will humble thee in the dust, who will take away all thine armor in which thou trustest, and compel thee to pay tribute to him; and, through him, constrain thee to bring the world under another Ruler, whose kingdom shall be without end, and whose principality no man shall take away. Go, O captain of many victories! __Prospere procede, et regna__. Rome will laugh at thy apostolic folly, but thou shalt make her weep. Rome is the world's citadel of error; thou shalt make her the ever-enduring and infallible chair of truth. Rome will bring thee into her as a prisoner in chains, but thou shalt prove her liberator.

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Rome will put thee to death, but the voice of thy martyr's blood shall cry to heaven and give her eternal life. Take glory to thyself, O holy Paul! and rejoice and exult in thine infirmities, for now is the hour when thy strength shall be divine!

Though dead, he yet speaketh. From his tomb St. Paul is still the preacher of the truth to the whole world. Still he announces the truth as it is in Christ Jesus and Him crucified. Still he confounds the Gentile philosophies of every age, still draws with irresistible eloquence the hearts of men to the sacrifices of an heroic love for Christ. The text of St. Paul living and suffering was, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He who to-day approaches the vast temple beneath whose majestic dome repose the sacred ashes of the divine preacher, descries upon the base of a lofty obelisk that confronts the portals of the Apostle's world-renowned sepulchre the text of St. Paul dead and triumphant:

"Ecce crucem Domini!
Fugite partes adversÂ¶."
"Behold the Cross of the Lord!
Let all its adversaries be put to flight."

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Sermon XII.

The Value Of Faith.

(For The Feast Of St. Peter's Chains.)

I Cor. xvi. 13.

"__Watch ye; stand fast in the faith;
do manfully, and be strengthened.__"

We celebrate to-day the feast called "St. Peter's Chains," to commemorate the miraculous union which took place between the two chains that had bound St. Peter in prison--the one under King Herod, and the other at Rome, under Nero--when they were brought together.

Why was St. Peter willing to be bound and imprisoned for the faith of Christ? Because he esteemed it more precious than liberty, or any thing else that the world prizes; as he says when he writes to others suffering for the same cause, "That the trial of your faith (much more precious than gold which is tried in the fire) may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the appearing of Jesus Christ." [Footnote 76]

[Footnote 76: I Ep. St. Peter i. 7.]

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What is it that gives to faith its priceless value? Why is it to be esteemed above liberty, the possession of wealth, more than friends, parents, the whole world, and even more than life itself? There are those who do not possess this gift, and who, to all appearances, are as happy as those who do. Nations have existed, and now exist, strong and prosperous, and are without faith. What is there in faith that makes it worthy of being praised as the "pearl of great price," as "more precious than fire-refined gold," as something better to be desired by men--yes, even by nations--than power, rank, or glory? The value of things may be got at in two ways. The first is by estimating them according to their real qualities; the second, according to what men are willing to give or sacrifice for their possession. Let us consider the value of faith weighed in each of these balances.

There are many things which men prize highly. At certain seasons they cross the seas, endure fatigue, spend a great deal of time and money--and what for? To gaze on beautiful scenery, view works of art, and visit great men and places renowned in history. They are charmed with the aspect of the mountains, the trees, the flowers, the streams, the glowing sunsets, and are filled with admiration. These moments of joy outweigh with them all the fatigue, expense, and time expended in reaching these favored spots of nature.

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It is the same at home. We leave our busy cities in the summer, and hasten to our mountains, our lakes, and the sea-shores. And why do men prize these beautiful scenes? There must be, there is something valuable in them. Their charms, the joy and pleasure derived from nature, spring not from ourselves. What attracts us in creation is the traces of God's beauty, and in contemplating these the soul is drawn nearer to God, and its joy increased. It is God in nature who dilates the soul.

Why do men love poetry, music, architecture, painting, and sculpture? Why have the verses of a Homer, a Dante, a Shakespeare, been the delight of ages? Why is it that a whole nation feels honored in the possession of a work from the chisel of Michael Angelo, or a Madonna of Raphael, or a Cathedral of

Cologne, or in having given birth to Dante or Shakespeare? Why are our souls enlarged and raised above the senses in listening to strains of music composed by a Palestrina or a Beethoven or a Mozart? It is because art is a higher expression of the Divine, and brings us nearer to the All-True, Holy, and Fair.

We know how men are devoted to science, to philosophy; how they rival the severest ascetic in their self-denial, in order to advance knowledge. The astronomer, gazing on the heavens, discovers new planets, and finds out the great laws which govern all material things.

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The geologist digs deep down into the bowels of the earth, and reveals to us its secrets and its ages of growth. The philosopher analyzes thought and the secret folds of the soul, and teaches us its laws and dignity. Why all these studies--why so much time, energy, patience, and devotion to the sciences? What sustains these men of science? What pays them for all their trouble? What is it that stimulates them in their pursuits? Is it pride and love of fame, or selfishness? No! it is the hope of the discovery of unknown truths. What is Truth? God is Truth. Then, at last account, these men are seeking God.

You perceive that nature, art, science, are only different channels of arriving at the one source of all truth and beauty--God; for all truth is in harmony. The truth, whether in nature or art or science, is derived from the same source, as is also the truth in our souls or in the sacred Scriptures, which the Holy Church infallibly teaches. If men sometimes fancy there is a discrepancy between religion and science, it "arises chiefly from this, that either the doctrines of faith are not understood and set forth as the Church holds them, or that the vain devices and opinions of men are mistaken for the dictates of reason." [Footnote 77]

[Footnote 77: Vatican Council.]

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This capacity to perceive the true and beautiful in nature, in art, and from the discoveries of science, belongs to our natural reason, and cannot be esteemed too highly. It is a sin against its Giver not to improve it. It is the glory of the Holy Church that, by her institutions of learning and her encouragement and fostering care, she has ever been the promoter of science and of the fine arts.

But what unaided reason can know in nature of God does not satisfy man. The soul seeks to know more of God, to come nearer to God. Nature, art, and science do not suffice to satisfy its aspirations--aspirations after the real, of which nature, art, and science are only imperfect images or limited conceptions. It is to meet this want that the divine light of faith is given to the soul. It gives to the soul a greater knowledge of God, by revealing to it truths above nature and beyond the utmost reach of man's reason. The strength which faith imparts brings the soul nearer to and in closer union with God.

If, therefore, men value things because they give a clearer knowledge of God, and bring them closer to Him, how much more ought they to value the light of Christian faith? If men love

nature, art, and science, that is the reason why they should be Christians, and all the better Christians, because Christianity brings us nearer to the object of all our seeking than reason, art, and science can ever possibly do.
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Reason brings us to God as His creatures, and makes Him known to us as Providence. Faith brings us to God as His children, and leads us to cry to Him with the inmost affections of our hearts, "Abba, Father!" Reason, by science, art, and philosophy, leads the mind to the contemplation of God as the great First Cause and the Archetype of all beauty. But faith makes us participators in the Divine nature, "heirs of God," and, when perfected by the light of glory, enables the soul to gaze on the Divine Essence, fills it with torrents of delight, and bathes it in the sea of God's own beatitude. Is not everything else as nothing compared with the Divine light of faith! O inestimable faith! the crown and glory of human reason! the best of God's gifts to man!
Having learned that faith is inestimable on account of its inherent qualities, now let us test its value by what men have done and suffered to keep so great a possession.
Look upon the crucifix above the altar, that tells you what the God-Man suffered to bestow this gift upon man. His wounds, His blood, His life, is the price He paid in our stead for it. If a thing can be estimated by what __men__ pay to suffer or do for it, look at Calvary, at what God has paid and suffered for it, and tell us what is comparable with faith.
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The Apostles, before they obtained it, were weak and timid; but when they had received it, they suffered and gloried therein. They lived, labored, suffered, and in turn laid down their lives in testimony of the priceless value of that gift of all gifts. And when the faith was preached in pagan Rome and throughout its Empire, honors, riches, and all earthly joys and ties were, by all classes of men, renounced for its sake, so highly did they prize it. For it Stephen, Ignatius, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia, and the millions of martyrs, "full of faith," poured out their blood like water, and cheerfully laid down their lives. It was the wish to communicate this rare gift to others that stimulated the zeal of the apostles of the nations--a St. Patrick in Ireland, a St. Augustine in England, a St. Boniface in Germany, a St. Francis Xavier in the Indies, and led the saintly Father Jogues to our land, who was martyred by the Indians on the banks of the Mohawk. Columbus prized so highly the gift of faith, that, to bring its light to the benighted savages whom he supposed existed on this hemisphere, he encountered unknown dangers, and sustained heroic sufferings, in the enterprise of its discovery.
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Most of you, my dear brethren, are from the old country, and have come to this strange land--and why? Did your native hills lose their charms for you? Did the ruins of your land and the graves of your ancestors awaken in your bosoms no longer any feelings of attachment and veneration? Have you no affection left for those parents, those brothers and sisters and kindred, left in the old

home? Have you forgotten the glories of your history, and think it nothing to lose your nationality, and see your children after you grow up the sons and daughters of another soil?
Why, then, have you renounced all that men hold so dear? It is because you loved your faith above every consideration in life. You counted all else as nothing compared with it, and so that you might keep it, you were ready to endure suffering, poverty, and persecutions, and abandon all that men hold dear. This is why you are here to-day and not in Ireland. Had your forefathers, or you, chosen to apostatize from your Catholic faith, and deny the truth of Christ, you could be this moment prosperous and smiling under the favor of kings and princes in your native country.
Look, again, at the throng of converts who have cast aside position, wealth, and fame for that holy faith, and in turn become the heralds of truth to the world. A Prince Gallitzin chose banishment and the sacrifice of a princely fortune in becoming a Catholic; and when a priest, hiding even his rank and name, lived and toiled like an apostle in the wilds of the Alleghany Mountains.
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Look at an Ives, who esteemed it greater to possess the faith in the humble position of a Catholic layman, than to hold the rank of Bishop in the Protestant Episcopal Church without it.
Thousands have given up parents, brothers, and sisters, and kindred, become poor and outcasts, to gain this pearl of great price, the gift of faith, thus fulfilling the words of our Lord, "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." [Footnote 78]

[Footnote 78: St. Matt. x. 37.]

O holy faith for which the martyrs died, the missionaries and saints toiled, and for which houses, lands, parents, and friends, and all things, are counted as nothing! Do we prize thee, O divine gift, as these have done? Art thou to us above all price? If so, then to us the words of the apostle have a true and living meaning:--
"__Watch ye__," or else this gift will be stolen from you.
Nations to which the Church gave birth, and under whose fostering care they have grown great, have lost the faith. There is not a people upon earth to-day, as a nation, to whom the Holy Church can look for defence against persecution, spoliation, and downright robbery.
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As in the days of paganism, she is surrounded by enemies, and has no one to rely on but her Divine Founder. Why has the faith been stolen from the nations? Because it has first been stolen from the people. It will be stolen from each one of us, unless we keep a constant watch over ourselves.
Watch over what we read. The literature of our time is filled with misrepresentations, calumnies, and falsehoods concerning our holy faith. The press, the most powerful engine of modern times, is on the side of the enemies of our faith. The very atmosphere we breathe is poisoned with scepticism, infidelity, and atheism.
"__Stand fast in the faith__." Claim our rights. To claim

these, we shall be charged with stirring up strife. But this must not disturb us. The same charge was made against our Lord. "He stirreth up the people," said the envious priests.
As to our rights, they are equal, if not prior, to all others. Catholics discovered this continent. The feet of Catholics first trod the native soil of these United States. Catholic missionaries first reddened it with their blood for the Christian faith. Catholics fought and bled for our independence, and for its maintenance. Our right to breathe freely the air of heaven, to religious liberty, to equal political rights, and equal privileges with all other American citizens, is indisputable. We ask for these--no more; and with no less will we be content.
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"__Do manfully__." Can men say what they please against our holy faith, and we not lift up our voices in its defence! It is our joy that our holy faith can never be opposed except by ignorance or calumny. Shall all we hold sacred be caricatured, calumniated, and we sit with folded arms in silence? Shall the literature of the day undermine the faith of our people, and the press caricature and falsify it, and we not employ this most efficient weapon in its defence and for its propagation? A Catholic invented the printing-press. Catholics first used it. Are the children of darkness always to be wiser than the children of light? Shall we not turn their own weapons against them? Let us be up and do manfully.
"__Be strengthened__." Our faith is our force. Our forefathers knew how to die for the faith. Can we not live for it? Be strong in our convictions of its truth! Defend it publicly, politically, and privately! We cannot suffer by so doing, for no man is esteemed who is false to his own convictions. Acting thus, we shall be strengthened, and though every one of the enemies of our holy faith were ten thousand, we shall be victors. The hour of death will then be the crowning point of our lives.
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We shall be able to say, with our great patron St. Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: and, 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." [Footnote 79]

[Footnote 79: 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.]

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Sermon XIII.

The Supremacy Of St. Peter.

(Feast Of Ss. Peter And Paul.)

St. Matt. xvi. 18.

"__And I say to thee: That thou art Peter;
and upon this Rock I will build My Church__."

The shortest, most direct, most conclusive, and most intelligible method of proving the truth of any system is to find its principle, its fundamental idea, and to establish the reality and certainty of this idea. When this is done, the whole system which is logically and justly built on this foundation is already proved. In the case of the Christian religion, we have only one

thing to establish, in order to convince all pagans, Mohammedans, modern Jews, and unbelievers, who are truly rational, of its divine truth. That one thing is the divine mission of Jesus Christ. When that is established, there is but one question which can be reasonably asked--What is the authentic doctrine and law promulgated by Jesus Christ?
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In the same manner, in order to convince all rational men that the Catholic religion is entirely true, and the real Christianity established by the Apostles, it is only necessary to prove its fundamental principle, the Supremacy of St. Peter and his successors, the Roman Pontiffs. This doctrine, held and understood in its strict and complete Catholic sense, distinguishes the Catholic religion from every other. This once established in the conviction and belief of the mind, the truth of the whole Catholic religion, in all its parts, follows as a necessary consequence. It follows that the communion of which the Pope is the Supreme Head, is the true Church established by Jesus Christ--One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, incapable of falling away, and infallible in doctrine. The foundation of this great and world-wide Church is the Papal Supremacy of St. Peter and his successors, and its principal portion is the Roman See. If I prove that this foundation was laid by Jesus Christ, it will be evident that the Church founded upon it is the true Catholic Church, and the faith of that Church the true Christian and Catholic faith. I will then endeavor to prove, first, that Jesus Christ appointed St. Peter as Prince of the Apostles, His Vicar, and the Supreme Pastor and Ruler of the Church; and, second, that the Bishop of Rome is St. Peter's successor.
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First, Jesus Christ appointed St. Peter as Prince of the Apostles, His Vicar, and the Supreme Pastor and Ruler of the Church. This will be the theme of the present discourse.
The title, Prince of the Apostles, signifies that St. Peter was the chief and head of the Apostolic college, and enjoyed a pre-eminence of honor and authority over the other Apostles. This preeminence of St. Peter is everywhere manifest in the New Testament. He was not the first called, for St. Andrew was before him, yet he is always placed first in the catalogue of Apostles, and is expressly called the "First" by St. Matthew. He generally appears as the leader and spokesman of the other Apostles, and is always mentioned as the first of the three Apostles who enjoyed the peculiar confidence of Jesus Christ, were witnesses of His transfiguration and agony, and in other ways were preferred before the rest, the other two being James and John. He was the first of the apostles who saw the Lord after His resurrection, and the angel at the sepulchre sent him a special message by name, "Go, tell the disciples, __and Peter__." He was the first who pronounced in the Council of the Apostles his judgment that they must elect another Apostle in the place of Judas--the first who preached Christ to the Jews, and the first who admitted the Gentiles to baptism. He pronounced sentence in the Council of Jerusalem.
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While the other Apostles confined themselves within a particular circle, he visited the Church everywhere--"__pertransivit universos__." He approved the writings of St. Paul, and the same St. Paul went expressly to Jerusalem, as he says, "to see Peter," commanded by "a revelation"; that he might submit his gospel to the judgment of the Prince of the Apostles, of St. James the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the other Apostles there, in order to obtain the approbation of St. Peter and his fellow-bishops--"lest perhaps," as he writes to the Galatians, "I should run, or had run in vain." Perhaps the most striking proof that St. Peter had a real oversight over the other Apostles, as the pastor of pastors, is found in the fact that Jesus Christ, immediately before His passion, committed the other Apostles to his care, and offered up a special prayer for him, to obtain the grace necessary for this high trust. He said to all the Apostles, speaking to St. Peter by name as their representative, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have __you__ [in the plural number, designating the eleven], that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for __thee__ [in the singular number], that __thy__ faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren"--"__Aliquando conversus confirma fratres tuos__." A remarkable passage! Our Lord, at this awful moment, disclosed a portion of His divine knowledge, and gave His Apostles a glimpse into futurity.
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He showed them Satan, exerting his utmost to destroy them as the guardians of the faith, and the custodians of all the hopes of the human race. He intimates very plainly that but for Him they would be inevitably swept away. But He had prayed for them, and, when He prayed with an unconditional will that His prayer should be heard, its effect must be infallible. His prayer was especially for St. Peter, that __his__ faith should not fail, in order that he might confirm his brethren. So that it was by a special grace conferred on St. Peter, by which he was enabled to watch over them, that they were to be confirmed in faith. Who does not see here that pre-eminence of St. Peter over his colleagues which is expressed by the title, Prince of the Apostles? [Footnote 80]

> [Footnote 80: Matt. x. 2; Mark iii. 16; Luke vi. 14; John i. 33-41; Luke xxiv. 34; Acts i. 15 et seq.; ii. 14 __et seq__.; x. 34; xv. 7; ix. 32; 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16; Gal. ii. 2; Luke xxii. 32. __Conf. Perrone Loc. Theol__. De Primatu.]

I cannot sum up all this testimony of Scripture better than in the grand, concise language of Bossuet, in his sermon on the __Unity of the Church__:

"Peter appears in every respect as the first: the first to confess the faith; the first in the manifestation of love; the first of all the Apostles who saw the Saviour raised from the dead, as he was the first witness of the fact before all the people; the first, when it was necessary to fill up the number of the Apostles; the first who confirmed the faith by a miracle; the first to convert the Jews; the first to receive the Gentiles; the first everywhere.

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It is impossible for me to mention every proof. Everything concurs to establish his primacy; yes, even his very faults. When power is given to several, the exercise of the power by each one is restricted by the fact that others share it with him. But power given to a single individual over all, and without exception, necessarily implies the plenitude of power. ... All the apostles receive the same power, but not in the same degree, or with the same extent. Jesus Christ commences by the first, and in this first one He develops the whole, in order that we may learn that the ecclesiastical authority which was originally constituted in the person of one man is not imparted to others, except on the condition of remaining always subordinate to the principle from which its unity is derived, and that all those who shall be charged with its exercise are found to remain inseparably united to the same chair."

This is enough to show what some of the most eminent Protestant writers even have acknowledged, that St. Peter was the first, the chief, the most pre-eminent, the Prince of the Apostles. St. Peter was also the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the Supreme Pastor and Ruler of the Church.

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The title of Vicar of Christ implies that Jesus Christ delegated to him His own jurisdiction over the Church. A vicar is one who exercises the authority vested in the principal by delegation from him. A viceroy or vice-king governs a subordinate kingdom, __vice regis__, in place of the king. A vicar-general exercises episcopal jurisdiction, __vice episcopi__, in place of the bishop, and governs the diocese during his absence. So when St. Peter is said to have been made by our Lord His Vicar, it means that he received jurisdiction to govern in the place of Jesus Christ Himself, Who is by personal and inherent right the High Priest of the Catholic Church, but Who, being absent from the earth, must exercise His functions by a substitute. It is unquestionable that, under the Old Law, the high-priest was the vice gerent of God, and the supreme head of the Jewish Church. It is equally unquestionable that, in establishing the New Law, Christ appointed St. Peter His Vicar and the Supreme Head of the Christian Church. There is nothing clearer in the New Testament than this. Jesus Christ distinctly promised to St. Peter that He would build His Church upon him, and would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and He actually fulfilled these promises before He ascended into heaven, by committing His universal flock to him alone to feed and rule it. This promise is recorded in the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel:

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"Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That them art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth,

it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."

In this magnificent promise, Jesus Christ evidently declares His intention to delegate supreme power to St. Peter, and constitute him His Vicar in the Christian Church.

This supreme power is signified by a double metaphor, viz., a __foundation__ and __keys__. First, He says: "Thou art Peter; and on this rock I will build My Church." In order to understand the force of this declaration, it is necessary to call to mind that the name of Peter, which signifies Rock, was not the proper name of the Apostle. His name was Simon. The Lord gave him the name of Peter when He first called him to the apostleship, as an appellation significant of his character and office in the Church.

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But it was on the occasion of his noble confession of Christ, made by a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that He first announced the full import of that mysterious name. St. Peter said, "Thou art Christ"--by this title, which signifies the Anointed One, acknowledging all those divine attributes and prerogatives which are implied in the character of the Messiah of God and Redeemer of the world. The Lord replied in a manner denoting the solemnity of the occasion, and speaking with all the dignity and authority of a Legislator and a Prophet, by conferring on St. Peter, in return for the honor which he had just rendered Him, the highest honor which was in His gift: "Thou art Peter [i.e., a Rock]: and on this Rock I will build My Church." The plain and natural sense of these words of Christ is, that He appoints Peter to occupy a position in the spiritual edifice of the Church corresponding to that occupied by a foundation in a material building. The foundation sustains and, as it were, rules the whole edifice--__i.e.__, by its strength it keeps the whole building in order, and every portion of it in its proper place, thus keeping it from crumbling into ruin--and losing all structural form in a mass of shattered fragments. The foundation is to the building the principle of its unity, repose, order, and durability.

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Therefore, Peter must be the same to the Church. By him the Church must be sustained, ruled, kept in order, and prevented from falling in pieces, and thus losing its organic form. His authority must be the principle of its unity, strength, and perpetuity. All the force of its laws must be derived from him, and all its authority must ultimately rest on him as its final ground and basis. This is the first portion of our Lord's divine decree concerning St. Peter. Let us now examine the second.

"I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Among the principal nations of antiquity, and particularly among the Hebrews, it was a received usage that the tradition of the keys denoted the transfer or acknowledgment of supreme power over the house, citadel, or city to whose gates they belonged. These keys, when made of precious metal, and, as was often the case, richly ornamented, were a symbol of power and dignity, and carried only by kings, princes, and magistrates. In the Hebrew monarchy, the

chief of the royal household, who was a kind of grand chancellor of the kingdom, or vicar of the king, carried a large key on his shoulder as a badge of his office.
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In the Prophecy of Isaias,[C. xxii.] we read this prediction concerning Eliacim, son of the high-priest Helcias: "I will place upon his shoulder the key of the house of David, and he shall open and there shall be no one who shall shut, and he shall shut and there shall be no one who shall open, and he shall be on the throne of glory of his father's house."
This probably signifies that Eliacim should become high-priest in his father's place; and gives us a plain proof that the keys were an emblem of the sovereign pontificate in the Jewish Church. In the Apocalypse of St. John, the same emblem of the keys is used to designate the sovereign pontificate of Jesus Christ Himself: "These things saith the Holy One and the True One, He that hath the key of David; He that openeth, and no man shutteth; shutteth, and no man openeth." [Footnote 81]

[Footnote 81: Apoc. iii. 7.]

[USCCB: Revelation iii. 7.]

Our Lord, as the lineal descendant of David, was the lawful King of the Jews, and this royal lineage according to earthly and temporal laws, was typical of His inherent royalty as the Son of God. Therefore, the key of David, or the outward and visible sign of David's royalty, is taken as expressive of His supreme dominion as Lord and Redeemer of the world. When Christ promised to give the keys of the kingdom of heaven--the keys of His own kingdom, and the symbols of His own Sovereignty--to St. Peter, He must have intended to delegate that sovereignty to him, and to constitute him His Vicar on the earth: To make it still more plain that He meant this, our Lord made a distinct and express declaration to this effect, in these words: "And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."
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These words designate the plenitude of power to be conferred on St. Peter, of making laws, and binding the consciences of all to observe them, punishing transgressors, abrogating these same laws and pardoning offenders, and doing whatever else the good of the Church or its individual members may require, according to the diversity of times and circumstances. Jesus Christ gives before hand the seal and warrant of His divine authority to all these laws. This is what is called, in the language of commerce and politics, giving __carte blanche__. King Charles V. of Spain, when he sent commissioners to America to inquire into the abuses and cruelties perpetrated by the avaricious Spanish colonists against the Indians, gave them a number of blank sheets already signed and sealed with the royal sign-manual, that they might promulgate royal edicts according to their own judgment. In the same way, Jesus Christ promises that He will give to St. Peter this unlimited power of exercising jurisdiction, in His name, in the Catholic Church, with the sealed sign-manual of heaven.
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But Jesus Christ not only promised to bestow this power on St. Peter: He made to him, after His resurrection and before His ascension, a formal grant of this power, and solemnly delivered up the care and government of His universal flock into his hands. This fact is recorded by St. John, in the twenty-first chapter of his Gospel. Everything about this chapter is mysterious and sublime in the highest degree, and every word, every circumstance, points to that high office of the Chief Pastor, and, after Christ, principal founder of the Christian religion, which was given to St. Peter.

It was an awful moment; like that mysterious and solemn period of twilight, when the sun has set, but still leaves some lingering gleam of his light behind him, before the dark hour of night draws on, and the milder and fainter radiance of the moon succeeds to the brightness of day--the brief period of transition from day to night--from light to darkness--the holiest hour of the day, when the soul, as it were, naturally withdraws from the world towards God and heaven. Such a moment had now come in the progress of time, the twilight of the world. Jesus Christ, the Light of the world--the Sun of Justice, who had risen in the East with healing in his beams--had gone down to the grave, had closed His earthly career, and the world henceforth, so long illuminated by the presence of the bright Sun of truth and grace, would have no longer any other light to shine upon it except the reflected light of the Catholic Church.

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The time of night and of the absence of Jesus Christ from His disciples was approaching. And yet He was not altogether withdrawn. Still, in His spiritual and glorified body, He lingered on the earth, coming and going, approaching and vanishing before His disciples. He was still with them, but no longer as an inhabitant of the earth, but of heaven. At this time it was that St. Peter said to his fellow-disciples, "I go a-fishing." Who can fail to see here, with all the wisest and holiest interpreters of the Scripture, a mysterious foreshadowing of that great fishery for the souls of men, in which the Apostolic net was to draw so many into the Church? It was Peter who was the leader and chief here, and by his orders the nets were cast. Suddenly, Jesus Christ appeared standing on the shore, and commanded them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat. They did so, and, although they had before this caught nothing, their net was immediately so filled with large fishes that they could not draw it. It required the assistance of all those who were on board several other boats to draw the net. And yet, when the Lord commanded some of these fishes to be brought, St. Peter, alone, went and drew the net up on the beach.

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Evidently do these emblematic events indicate St. Peter as the one who should command the ship of the Church, and preside over the grand fishery of souls, and by his supernatural power should pull the net by which the elect of God were drawn from the waves of perdition to the shore of eternal life.

Jesus Christ assembled His disciples around Him on the beach, by the seaside, and they dined together from the fish which they had

taken. Then, when this mysterious meal, the parting banquet of Jesus and His disciples, was finished, the Lord exacted from St. Peter three times a profession of his love, and of his peculiar love--a love greater than that of the other Apostles. "Simon Peter, lovest thou Me more than these?" And thrice He gave him the solemn charge: "Feed My lambs. ... Feed My lambs. ... Feed My sheep." In these words, Jesus Christ evidently committed not one or the other portion of His flock, but His entire flock, all His people, the universal Church throughout the world, to his pastoral care. The expression, "Feed My lambs--feed My sheep," indicates much more than simply to give them their food, namely, by teaching salutary doctrine. Two different words are used in the original Greek, [Greek text]; which is literally in Latin, __Pasce in cibo, agnos meos__--Feed My lambs.
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But after using this expression, which indicates the tender and paternal care of the pastoral office, He uses another expressing its authority, [Greek text]; this signifies, as a learned theologian (Perrone) remarks, __pascere cum imperio, pascere pr√¶sidendo__, to feed by ruling, to feed by presiding, or to feed, rule, and preside over at the same time, as a shepherd over his flock. This is in accordance with the usage of ancient writers and the Scriptures.
In Homer and other ancient authors, kings are called shepherds or pastors, and __poimaine__, feed, signifies to rule or exercise kingly authority. In these words, then, Jesus Christ constituted St. Peter chief pastor and supreme ruler over His universal flock--sheep and lambs together; not merely the lambs, who represent the laity, but the sheep, those to whom the lambs are subject, and by whom they are fed--that is, the bishops and pastors of the Church. It is in vain that the enemies of St. Peter's chair exert all their ingenuity to escape the force of these passages. They are too plain and clear to be evaded, and, after centuries of exertion to heave the Rock of Peter out of the Scriptures, there it stands, an immovable and unquestionable fact that the Rock of Peter is the foundation of the Catholic Church, that the Catholic Church is built on the Rock of Peter, that Peter received the keys of heaven from Jesus Christ, and was constituted by Him chief pastor over His universal flock.
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And here allow me to remark how singular it is that Protestants should be ready to build up with out hesitation a vast pyramid of doctrine on the narrow foundation of a few texts of Scripture, and at the same time reject the most clear and unequivocal statements of the New Testament. For example, they will most positively assert the transfer of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, because the word Lord's Day is once used, and the assembling of the faithful on the first day of the week is once casually mentioned, although nothing is said of their being an observance of divine obligation intended to supersede the Sabbath. They will prove the baptism of infants from the circumcision of Jewish children, and from the fact that some entire families were baptized, although there is no evidence that there were any infants in these families. Some will prove

Episcopacy, and others Presbyterianism, and others Congregationalism, from the Scriptures. And yet they will reject without hesitation the evidence of the supremacy of Peter, which is so clear that even some Protestants are forced to admit it in a partial sense; and the celebrated Jewish infidel Salvador, a man who perhaps excels all the modern advocates of infidelity in perspicacity of intellect and ingenuity of reasoning, declares with out hesitation that the supremacy of the See of St. Peter is an institution of Jesus Christ, and an essential part of Christianity.

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It is one among many proofs that those who profess to make the Bible their only rule do not really derive their doctrine from a candid examination of the Scriptures; but that they receive what they have been taught by their parents and religious teachers, and search the Scriptures to find proof and confirmation of these doctrines. Thus, each one, in stead of conforming his belief to the Scripture, bends the Scripture into conformity with his belief. Those parts of the Scripture which are not easily bent into this conformity remain to him a dead letter, they make no impression on his mind, and, no matter how clear and plain they may be, he forgets them if he can, and, if he is forced to pay attention to them, he explains them away. Thus it has been with the passages of the New Testament which prove so clearly the supremacy of St. Peter. There is nothing in the New Testament more clear, more plain, more explicit, more obvious, than this supremacy; when these various passages have been once collated, placed in juxtaposition with each other, carefully examined and reflected on, and confronted with the great fact of the perpetual existence of the supremacy of the Roman Pontiffs as the acknowledged successors of St. Peter. This last topic I have not directly considered in this discourse, but have reserved it for another.

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Nevertheless, whoever will attentively consider what is involved in the very idea of St. Peter's supremacy will see at once that this supremacy must be, by its very nature, perpetual. It was made the foundation of a perpetual structure; it extended over all bishops and all the faithful, without any limit of time or place; it provided for the exercise of that power of the keys which is necessary in all ages; and it was made the means of keeping the rulers of the Church in unity of faith under the severest assaults of Satan, which are undoubtedly those of the last days of the world.

Our Lord in establishing the supremacy of St. Peter gave to His Church a constitution and a government. He placed His kingdom under one monarchical head. He made the sacerdotal hierarchy subject to one chief. This law must therefore last as long as the Church lasts, that is, through all time. There is no power which can change the divine law of our Lord. The supremacy of St. Peter must therefore be perpetual in his successors. And that these successors are the Roman Pontiffs I shall proceed to show in my next discourse.

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Sermon XIV.

The Roman Pontiffs
The Successors Of St. Peter.

St. Matt. xvi. 18.

"__And I say to thee:
That thou art Peter;
and upon this Rock I will build My Church__."

I have proved in a former discourse that St. Peter was constituted Prince of the Apostles and Vicar of Jesus Christ, with supreme jurisdiction over the Catholic Church, by the Lord Himself. It remains now to show that this supremacy was given also to the successors of St. Peter, and that the Bishops of Rome are his successors, and consequently inherit his supremacy. That the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church is the See of St. Peter, and the Mother and Mistress of Churches; and that the Bishop of Rome is the Vicar of Christ, and Supreme Visible Head of the Church--this is what I now undertake to prove.

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This is proved, in the first place, by an argument, the force of which is admitted in all courts of law, viz., the argument of __prescription__. The Roman Church is in possession of this claim, and has been from time immemorial. A claim on a certain property or to a certain right, which is so ancient that the mind of man runneth not to the contrary, is always admitted as valid in a law court. Now, it is evident that the Roman Church now asserts this claim; that she asserted it before the Reformation; that she asserted it before the Greek schism; and that not a single Church exists in the world which has not at some time admitted this claim, and submitted to it. If we go back, then, to the earlier centuries, we find the Roman Church always in possession of this supremacy, and we can never find its beginning. Protestants and others, who wish to prove that it began after the Apostolic age, can never agree together as to the epoch of the rise of the Papal power, although all give it a very early date. Now, I say that, according to all sound principles of reasoning, the fact that this claim had been made and assented to from time immemorial is a certain proof that it is just. It could not have been established so early and so universally without violence and without resistance, unless it existed under the Apostles, and was established by them in the infancy of Christianity.

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Just as it would be impossible for the Governor of Virginia to take peaceable possession of the Presidential chair and govern the United States, as its acknowledged chief magistrate, without any election of the people; so it would have been equally impossible for the Bishop of Rome to make himself peaceably the supreme ruler of the Catholic Church, unless he were appointed by St. Peter and the Apostles, according to the divine constitution of the grand Christian commonwealth, with the knowledge of all Christians. This argument alone would be perfectly conclusive, even if the New Testament were altogether lost, or were entirely silent on the subject.

But when we compare the fact that the Roman Church, under the name of the See of St. Peter, has always existed as the principal edifice of a vast agglomeration of smaller but similar edifices, with the prophecy of Christ that He would build the Church on the Rock of Peter, the conclusion is irresistible that the fact is the fulfilment of the prophecy. Here is the prophecy of Christ, that He would build His Church on Peter as a foundation, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. There is the Roman Church, evidently built on Peter as its foundation, which has endured through eighteen centuries, and is now as firm and immovable as ever. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that this is the Church built by Christ. The fact corresponds exactly with the prophecy, and there is no other fact which does, therefore the fact is the fulfilment of the prophecy.
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Let me illustrate this by a comparison. Suppose you describe the Moro of Havana to some one who has never seen it, and who is about taking a voyage to Cuba. You tell him it is a castle of large size and great strength, built on a rock which rises perpendicularly from the sea, at the mouth of the bay. There is no castle similar to it: on his route. Now, when this traveller comes on deck some morning, and sees a castle founded on a rock at the mouth of a harbor, with a large city in the distance, is it not evident that this is the Moro? If you sail from the city of New York, knowing that there is an American ship of the line anchored in the bay, and you pass a large man-of-war with the United States flag, and the broad pennant of an admiral flying at her mast-head, is it not evident that this is the ship in question? Though a hundred smaller vessels are anchored in the vicinity, you cannot hesitate a moment, you can not for an instant imagine that any of these is a man-of-war. The first glance tells you which is the line-of-battle ship, for there is only one which makes any pretension to that character, which has the size, the armament, or in any aspect the appearance of a man-of-war.
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Precisely so it is with the Roman Church, which professes to be the See of Peter, the only one which bases a claim of universal jurisdiction on the supremacy of Peter; which pretends [puts¬†forward a claim] to be the ship of Peter, and to bear his standard. It is unique, unrivalled, and alone in its character and claims. It must be, then, that Church which the Lord promised to build on the rock of Peter, with such immovable firmness that all the assaults of hell could never overthrow it; it must be that Church which the Lord committed to the guidance of Peter, and which is destined to outride all the storms of time. But, although I consider that the claim of the Roman Church to supremacy is fully proved by this argument from prescription, I will not confine myself to it, but proceed to adduce some positive testimonies. The perpetuity of St. Peter's supremacy in the Church can be clearly proved from Scripture, and the fact that the Bishops of Rome have inherited this supremacy is not only evident from the fact that no other supremacy has ever existed, but from a clear chain of historical facts and

evidences, running back to the very age of the Apostles.
In the first place, it is clear from the Scripture that St. Peter's supremacy was to continue. A number of the ablest Protestant writers have proved most conclusively what is called the Apostolic succession, that is, that Bishops are the successors of the Apostles, tracing their authority and descent in an unbroken line of ordination to the Apostles. This is perfectly evident from the commission of Jesus Christ to the eleven Apostles:
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"Going therefore teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." [Footnote 82]
[Footnote 82: Matt. xxviii. 19.]
[USCCB: Matt. xxviii. 19-20.]
If the Apostles by virtue of the commission of Jesus Christ were the perpetual pastors of the Church, and enjoy the perpetual presence of Jesus Christ to the end of time, the Apostolic office is by its own nature perpetual in the Church, and the original Apostles have been succeeded by others. For the same reason, the office of Prince of Apostles must be perpetual. The plenitude of the Apostleship was given to St. Peter alone, under the similitude of the keys, and afterwards the same power was given to the others by participation and in subordination to him. The supremacy of the chief enters, then, into the primary constitution of the Apostolate or Catholic Episcopate, as one of its essential and component parts, and is therefore perpetual.
Jesus Christ committed the government of His Church to one supreme Ruler, whose authority was signified by the symbol of the keys. He committed His flock to one chief Pastor, when He said to St. Peter: "Feed my lambs--feed my sheep."
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If, therefore, the authority of St. Peter expired with his person, then a total and fundamental change took place after his death in the constitution and government of the Church, a supposition not to be admitted for one moment without clear evidence. But there is none such. On the contrary, our Lord declares without distinction or limitation that "there shall be one fold and one shepherd." [Footnote 83]
[Footnote 83: John x. 16.]
The metaphor of a foundation which He uses to express the supremacy of St. Peter, of itself shows the perpetuity of his office. This supremacy is the Rock on which the Church is built. But a foundation must last as long as the building itself; it can neither be removed nor changed; therefore the supremacy of Peter must endure with the Church itself.
Again, the reason for which Christ instituted the Primacy exists always, and, indeed, demands much more imperatively its continuance than it did require at first its foundation. The reason is thus expressed by St. Jerome: "__Ut capite constituto, schismatis tolleretur occasio__"--"That a head being constituted, the occasion of schism might be removed." [Footnote

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[Footnote 84: Lib. i. adv. Jov. 26.]
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The preservation of unity was the reason for instituting the primacy. What is the reason of a central government, with a president at its head, in Washington? The preservation of unity among the States. It is the unanimous teaching of tradition that Christ established the Primacy in the Church for the same reason--the preservation of unity among all particular churches and Bishops, by their dependence on one Mother Church and one Chief Bishop. But there was far less necessity to guard against schism, and to watch over the preservation of unity by means of a head or central authority, in the days of the Apostles, who were all saints and inspired, in the days of persecution, of primitive zeal and piety, and when the members of the Church were few and her extent limited, than at any subsequent period. The Primacy was more necessary after the Apostolic age than during it, therefore it was intended to continue. The supremacy of St. Peter once admitted--and it is proved by invincible arguments--the continuance of this power in his successors follows necessarily. The seat of power is the Roman Church, of which St. Peter was the founder and first Bishop.
This requires no proof; for the Bishop of Rome is the only one who claims the power of St. Peter, and his title is admitted by all those who admit any supremacy in the Church, according to the universally received tradition.
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St. Peter, after having preached in different regions without having fixed himself in any particular see, for about six years, founded the Patriarchal See of Antioch, which he governed for seven years, and then, having consecrated another Bishop in his place, went to Rome, where he fixed his See permanently, and, having presided over it for twenty-five years, was crucified, in the year of our Lord 67 or 68, under Nero; St. Paul being at the same time beheaded.
The New Testament contains no regular or complete history of the events of the Apostolic Age, but only some fragmentary annals of some of the acts of the Apostles, chiefly of St. Paul, and some allusions in the Epistles.
It is not surprising, therefore, that it gives no account of the foundation of the Roman Church. St. Paul, however, in his celebrated Epistle to the Roman Church, already speaks of that Roman Faith, "__fides Romana__" which has been in every age so admirable and so renowned throughout the world: "First, I give thanks to my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all, because your faith is spoken of in the whole world." [Footnote 85] He also predicts the future greatness of the Roman Church: "And the God of peace crush Satan under your feet speedily." [Footnote 86] This is a form of speech which expresses a prediction under the form of a prayer.
[Footnote 85: Rom. i. 18.]
[USCCB: Rom. i. 8.]
[Footnote 86: Rom. xvi. 20.]
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Now, how was Satan crushed under the feet of the Roman Christians, if it were not when, by the conversion and victory of Constantine, this great capital of the world and seat of idolatry was changed into the capital of Christendom, the heathen temples transformed into Christian churches, and the cross everywhere erected in triumph over this proud and pagan city?

There is no event in history better established than the episcopate and martyrdom of St. Peter at Rome. It is admitted by a great number of the most learned Protestants. It is proved by the catalogues of Roman Bishops in ancient writers all tracing back the succession to St. Peter. It is proved by pictures, statues, and other ancient monuments; by the pilgrimages which from ancient times were made to the tomb of the Apostles, of which even Eusebius in the fourth century makes mention. It is proved by the testimony of St. Clement, the immediate successor of St. Peter; St. Ignatius, Papias, St. Dionysius, St. Iren√¶us, Caius, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Cyprian, Eusebius, Lactantius, St. Athanasius, St. Epiphanius, Julian the Apostate, St. Augustine, Palladius, and others. Indeed, any one who would dispute the fact, that the Bishops of Rome have succeeded each other in that see in a direct line from St. Peter, might as well dispute the succession of the Roman emperors from Julius C√¶sar, of the English kings from Alfred, and the kings of France from Charlemagne.

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The fact that the Bishops of Rome succeeded also to the supremacy of St. Peter over the whole Catholic Church is also proved by a crowd of testimonies in every age. It is, as every one will see, not convenient, in a discourse like the present, to cite and explain at length those passages from the ancient writers, especially after having already taxed your patience so severely. I will therefore cite only a few passages as samples of the manner in which ancient writers have spoken on this subject, and leave it to yourselves to read over the testimonies more carefully in some of the various works where they are collected.

St. Iren√¶us, Bishop of Lyons, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, says: "With this Church, on account of the more powerful principality, it is necessary that every Church, that is, the faithful who are in every direction, should agree." [Footnote 87]

[Footnote 87: L. iii. c. 3. Kenrick.]

Tertullian, about the end of the second century, exclaims: "From no other cause have heresies arisen and schisms sprung up, except from a want of obedience to the priest of God, and because they do not remember that there is one judge for the time being in the Church, in the place of Christ."

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The great and general Council of Nice, A.D. 325, in one of its canons says: "The Roman Church has always held the Primacy." The Council of Sardica, in a letter to the Pope, says: "This seems excellent and most suitable, that the priests of the Lord from the respective provinces should report to the Head," __i.e.__, to the See of the Apostle Peter. In the fifth century, all the Bishops of the province of Aries, in France, in a letter to Pope

Leo, say: "The Holy Roman Church, through the most blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, has the principality above all the churches of the world." The grand Council of Chalcedon, where six hundred Bishops were present, mostly from the East, and out of the limits of the particular patriarchate of Rome, when the letter of the same Pope Leo was read, defining the faith of two distinct natures, divine and human, in Christ, exclaimed with one voice, "Peter has spoken by the mouth of Leo." At the beginning of the sixth century, the Bishop of Patara said to the Emperor Justinian: "There may be many sovereigns on the earth; but there is one Pope over all the churches of the universe." Not only Christian bishops and councils speak in this way of the Roman See, but emperors, and even pagans, use the same language.
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In the year 268, when Paul, Patriarch of Antioch, was condemned of heresy by a council, the pagan Emperor Aurelian directed that the Church of Antioch "should be delivered up to those whom the Bishops of Italy and the Bishop of Rome should appoint." Ammianus Marcellinus, a pagan writer of the fourth century, affirms that "the Bishops of the Eternal City enjoy a greater authority." The Christian Emperor Valentinian, in a decree of the year 455, says: "The merit of the blessed Peter, who is the Prince of priestly order, and the dignity of the Roman city, the authority also of the Synod, strengthened the Primacy of the Apostolic See." These testimonies extend from the sixth back to the second century, when the disciples of the Apostles still lived. They are not merely the testimonies of the Bishops of Rome themselves, or of those who lived in the vicinity and under the immediate influence of Rome, but they are collected from Italy, France, Africa, and the whole Eastern Church, where those great Patriarchs flourished who afterwards renounced their subjection to Rome. Thus, it is evident, from these and a host of similar testimonies, that, during the first six centuries, the Bishops of Rome claimed to exercise the supremacy in the place of Peter, and that this claim was universally acknowledged.
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This is only a confirmation of the texts of Holy Scripture which I have already cited, and was foreshadowed when Christ chose the bark of St. Peter in preference to the rest, to preach from it to the multitude on the shore. The conversion of nations through missionaries sent by the Pope is Peter superintending the miraculous draught of fishes and drawing them upon the shore. His exercise of authority over patriarchs, bishops, and churches throughout the world is only the fulfilment of the commission, "Feed my lambs--feed my sheep"--be the pastor of my entire flock, the prince of pastors, the Bishop of bishops. The might, the power of the Roman See, is the fulfilment of the prophecy, "On this rock I will build My Church." On the foundation of Peter, the Catholic Church was built, and on this foundation she has ever rested. To Peter was given the power of the keys, of binding and of loosing, and his successors have ever exercised this supreme authority. If time permitted, I should now go on to show that this authority committed to St. Peter and his successors is the same, and equally of divine right in his present glorious

successor, Pius IX., as it was in the times of the martyr popes of the first century; that the Roman Church has never failed, never fallen, never forfeited her supremacy, and never will while the world shall stand. But I must waive all further consideration of the attributes and notes of the Catholic Church. At present, I will only allude to the concluding part of our Lord's promise to St. Peter: "The gates of hell shall never prevail against it."
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Here there is the divine assurance that this rock on which the Church is founded shall stand until the end of the world, and the Church itself, on account of the firmness of its foundation, shall never be overthrown. The supremacy of his successors shall endure until the last day, and that Church which is governed by the successors of St. Peter shall alone continue to be the true Church. The gates of hell shall wage perpetual warfare against it, but in vain. That rock shall remain immovable and impregnable. By this rock it is that Jesus Christ has provided for the preservation of the Faith and for the salvation of the world. Let us recall to mind the object which we had before our minds at the commencement of these discourses: it was to find the sure and immovable basis of the Catholic faith and religion. And how admirable is the provision of Almighty God for this purpose! He has taken the greatest and most powerful city of the earth, the capital of the world; there He has erected the beacon-light of faith; there He has fixed the immovable seat of truth; there He has established the capital city of Christianity, the chief city of His kingdom on earth; there Jesus Christ has placed His Vicar, the pastor and teacher of the world, that Rome, once the mistress of the world by her arms, might rule by her faith as the Mother and Mistress of churches, and that title of the Eternal City which was given her by her pagan soothsayers might be literally fulfilled.
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Happy those who, amid the storms and winds of error, doubt, and ever-changing doctrine, take refuge within the walls of the Eternal City; whose faith is built not upon the shifting sands of private judgment, but on the immovable basis of church authority; whose wanderings terminate, like those of St. Paul, at Rome, whence, like him, they ascend to that celestial city whose builder and maker is God! Such a person is like the wise man of whom our Lord speaks, "that built his house upon a rock, and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not; FOR IT WAS FOUNDED UPON A ROCK."

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Sermon XV.

The Thought Of Heaven.

(For The Fourth Sunday After Easter.)

Heb. iv. 9.

"__There remaineth therefore a rest
for the people of God__."

These words, my dear brethren, are full of consolation to each and every one of us. They lift our minds, at this Paschal season, far away from this earth, and fix them in contemplation on that

happy land, the heavenly Jerusalem, where there is no sorrow, no pain, no sickness, and no death; they take us with the beloved disciple to see that celestial country, the city of God, in which stands the tree of life, and where flows the river of life, beside whose banks are seated all those who have died in the Lord, and rest from their labors. They open those pearly gates to allow us to behold the white-robed army of saints who stand before the Lamb; and we can almost hear their anthems of praise, set to music which no human heart can conceive of, that swell the courts of heaven with the celestial cry of, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come!"
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Heaven, a rest after the toils of life are over! Heaven, a reward for fidelity! Oh! how good is the thought of heaven! How necessary to many as a stimulant to practise virtue and persevere therein! What a reward for a good life! The thought of heaven is very good, for it encourages us when we grow faint-hearted; the thought of heaven is that which prompts a man to abstain from evil and do good, because he knows that heaven will be his reward, and the loss of it his punishment. It is necessary; for, without this thought being before the mind of a Christian, he might give way to many an enticing temptation. It is far more meritorious, also, than the thought of hell, just as an act of __contrition__ is more meritorious than an act of __attrition__; for the former excites us to sorrow for having offended a good God, who has created us for heaven, and the latter excites us to fear lest we incur the displeasure of an angry God and be condemned to hell.
The Holy Church, as a stimulant to the doing of good, as an encouragement to persevere under many difficulties and temptations, and as a reward for all our labors in saving our souls, ever keeps the thought of heaven before our minds. In the Sacraments she does this.
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The unregenerate cannot go to heaven because there is an obstacle--original sin; it is removed in Baptism; and the strength to fight in the spiritual warfare, is given by Confirmation. She calls us to Confession, because something is again between the soul and heaven, and that is mortal sin. She absolves us, and sends us to Holy Communion, which is a foretaste of heaven. She anoints the dying, that all the peculiar temptations which attack them in the hour of death may be overcome. She unites the "children of the saints" in Matrimony, because marriage is a sign of the union of heaven and earth, and gives the grace for the married couple to "marry in the Lord." She ordains her clergy, that they may teach the way to heaven, and distribute all those means of grace that are sure to bring us there. So you perceive that this seems to be the leading thought in the mind of the Church. It is the development of the response to the question that every Catholic child can answer--Why did God create you? "That I might know Him, and love Him, and serve Him here in this world, and be happy with Him for ever in the next." The thought of heaven conveys the greatest consolation to those who in this world find but little happiness, and are surrounded

by peculiar difficulties in the practice of virtue. It gives strength to those who grow tired of the spiritual life, and who would give up were it not for this thought. Hence the thought of heaven is good, necessary, and comforting.
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The rest spoken of in the text is not for all, but only for the people of God. Who are the people of God? They are the people of God who are baptized and made members of the Catholic Church. But not all will enter into that rest prepared for them, because something more is necessary than simply being called by that name. Baptism is a sacrament which requires those whom it admits to be __heirs__ of the kingdom of heaven, first to answer certain questions, and imposes certain obligations to be observed. The priest says to the person to be baptized, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments, love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." So you see that, at this very instant, the thought of heaven is suggested to the person, and the way to arrive there is clearly shown. And, before the priest pours the sanctifying water on the brow of the person, he says, "Dost thou renounce Satan and all his works and all his pomps?" When the person promises, "Yes, I do renounce them," then baptism is administered, and that person takes his place in the world a Christian. But not all who are called Christians are Christians indeed. Many do not live as though they believed in a God, a church, a heaven, or a hell.
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They follow the inclinations of their own sinful hearts, and live up to the false maxims of this wicked world. They do not walk according to the Spirit, but rather according to the flesh. They look on life as something to be enjoyed to the utmost, and when that is ended they consider all ended, body and soul. Ah! foolish people! who thus deceive themselves, who are ashamed of the religion of Jesus Christ, who violate without any remorse their baptismal vows, who treat our Lord far worse than did the Jews of old, for they never professed to believe in Him.
The way, then, to be a Christian in deed as well as in name is to live up to that "perfect law of liberty," that law which was made and given by God, which allows the highest kind of freedom to its observers, and which ennobles and elevates man rather than degrades him. This law is simple, and, if it is observed, all things will go on peaceably. As of old, the saying was, "All are not Israelites that are of Israel," [Footnote 88] so they are not heirs of the kingdom of heaven who do not walk in the path marked out for them to follow, or who do not fulfil the conditions required for a holy life. "Not every one that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven." [Footnote 89]

[Footnote 88: Rom. ix. 6.]

[Footnote 89: St. Matt. vii. 21.]

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And that will is made known to us all by the Catholic Church. She is the ark that will bring us safe to the haven of rest. She sets herself in array against the powers of this world and wicked men, because she is holy; she is born of God, and divine; she does

this by her sacraments, her sacrifices, her laws, instructions, missions, and her institutions of charity. She teaches men reverence for holy persons and holy things; she teaches them to venerate the name of their Creator; she tells them to sanctify Sundays and holydays; she enjoins, under pain of eternal death--which includes the loss of heaven--honesty, justice, purity, sobriety, and all the other requirements of the decalogue. She is not conformed to this world or its ways. The world says: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." "If your enemy strike you, strike him back; if he calumniate you, never forget it; if he do you an act of injustice, if he slander you, treasure it up, do not forgive, but pay him back some day with interest." The world says: "Eat and drink, grow rich in this world's goods, have a gay time, make the most of life: heaven is far away, and you will have opportunity to prepare when the time comes for it." "Make plenty of money," says the world, "no matter whether the business be just or lawful, you may get to heaven after all; others worse than you have had time to do penance before they died."
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But the Holy Church says differently. She enjoins charity, meekness, poverty of spirit, preparation for death. "If thine enemy hunger, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him to drink." [Footnote 90] "If a man strike thee on one cheek, turn to him the other." [Footnote 91] "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." [Footnote 92] These are her lessons of heavenly doctrine, which all must learn and put in practice, if they would obtain entrance into the kingdom of heaven. And every day she writes in letters of fire before our eyes: "In the hour that ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

[Footnote 90: Rom. xii. 20.]

[Footnote 91: St. Matt. v. 39.]

[Footnote 92: St. Matt. v. 3.]

So we perceive that man needs to pay attention to that immortal soul of his just as much as to attend to his mortal body. And a man cannot attend to a business of importance in a short time, of which he has been ignorant all his life, and in which he has had no practice, and therefore very little experience. It would be a difficult task, indeed, for a man who has been nothing but a salesman in a store all his life, to become a scientific artificer, or to undertake to discharge the duties that devolve on a professor of the higher branches of science, because he has never given any thought or study to these things. So will it be very, very difficult for that Catholic to properly prepare for heaven after long years of neglect of the means to obtain it, and, because he has never thought about it, it will be hardly possible for him in his last hours to make proper preparation for it.
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The mind will be so absorbed with the past, and so perplexed as to the future, that he cannot give his famishing soul the nourishment that it needs. The death-bed scenes of worldly-minded men certify to the truth of this. They have viewed heaven as something to be thought about in the future, and intended to

prepare for it, but all of a sudden sickness prostrates them, and when told they will never hear another sermon, never attend another Mass, the trouble begins not so much about their soul as about their body and the business of this world.

But thanks be to God! while there are those who are walking on that broad and pleasant way which many, too many, find, and which leads to destruction, there are many faithful Christians who, even though some of them have but little or no comfort here, are looking forward, and hastening unto that reward which awaits those who love our Lord Jesus Christ. Heaven, to them, is no gloomy word. Heaven does not make them regret leaving this world, with all its fleeting joys, for heaven is a most interesting and important subject to them. Heaven is the reason of all their hopes, the reward of all their prayers, fastings, and other good works.

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To the pious and virtuous, the thought of heaven is the polar star which guides them to their eternal happiness, To the poor and desolate, it opens the celestial country where flow milk and honey, and where the foot is never weary, where all tears are wiped away from their eyes, and where the sweetest consolation of an eternal reward awaits them. The thought of heaven brings the young to give their hearts early to God. It leads them to their first Confession, and encourages them to make their first Communion, so that, by keeping God's holy laws, they may receive the crown of life. The thought of heaven helps the old, who are weak and trembling, for they receive new strength when they see the evening of their lives, and view the dawning of that happy land, the Canaan of the children of God.

How comforting, indeed, then, is the thought of heaven, for then all our hopes will be realized, and our love made perfect! O you who thirst for human love! your desire is to love and be loved. Love is the object of your life, the light of your hearts; but know this: that no earthly love will ever bring you perfect happiness; and if it should so happen that you should find a joy in possessing some creature, tell me, how long will that joy last? Not long, for God sends death, and He takes away the objects of your love, the idol that you have placed between Him and your soul.

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A mother finds the greatest joy in beholding the child to whom she gave birth. It may be her first-born; she loves it, caresses it; she spends days in caring for it, and, if at night she awakes, the first thought is of that child: but some day death comes in, and lays his icy hand on the life-strings of its tiny heart, and severs the link that binds it to this life, and it is no more. But the Christian mother willingly gives it up to God, for she knows that in heaven she will again embrace that child. It is the thought of heaven that brings her consolation. A friend has found unspeakable joy in living with his companion, they were boys together, they grew up together, they received the Holy Sacraments together, and, just as they suppose their happiness to be complete, death terminates the existence of one, and the other is left alone to learn the lesson all men must, sooner or later,

learn--all persons, all things are perishable, and "the heart," as St. Augustine says, "is at unrest until it rests in God." No matter what bereavement comes over the Christian, he is animated with hope, and his joy speedily returns when he thinks of heaven as a place where he will meet and recognize his loved ones. Here, my dear brethren, we grow tired of the most costly and beautiful objects. It is impossible for us to keep up our enthusiasm for a long time, as we are creatures of change and chance.
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In heaven, we shall never grow tired; for, in beholding Almighty God and all the glories of heaven, we shall be so entranced that nothing will be able to distract us. In heaven, time will pass away unnoticed, and its events will have no power to weary us. There is a beautiful legend told of a Franciscan friar, which will illustrate my meaning better. He thought that he would become tired of heaven itself and its occupations; for by his time of life he, too, had learned the secret that nothing in this world can bring real, lasting happiness. So, one day, his superior sent him out to gather fuel for the fire. As he was picking up the wood, he heard a far sweeter warble than ever came from the throat of a bird; but it was not a bird of the earthly forest; it was some sweet strains of celestial music that he heard. He must pause one moment to hear the end of the song before making up his bundle of wood. So he stood still, and the warbling went on, so full, so sweet, so rich, that he almost held his breath in ecstasy. When it ceased, "How short it was!" he said, then picked up the arm-load of sticks and returned to the monastery. He rang the bell at the gate, but a brother came whom he did not know. "Who are you that takes the place of Brother John?" he inquired. "But rather who are you?" was the reply.
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"Ah, I am Brother Francis." "Brother Francis! There is no Brother Francis." Then the oldest monk in the monastery was called, and he tottered in on his cane, and told how, when he was a boy, he had heard some old gray-haired monks tell that, long, long ago, when they were young, Brother Francis had gone, one afternoon, for wood, and never returned: killed doubtless by the wild beasts. So they counted the years, and found that Brother Francis had listened to the bird's song one hundred and fifty years, and thought that too short. Now, if the sweet singing from the voice of an angel could so entrance this holy man that he thought so many years to be but a moment, how much more will our soul be enraptured with the sight of heaven, with the song of the choir of the redeemed, and by the vision of the Blessed Trinity! In heaven, the heart will stand still, and in the fulness of its joy remain transfixed for ever.
Then why is it that we give way under our sufferings, our daily trials and crosses? Why do so many grow faint-hearted, and think that there is no rest, no peace, for them? Why do people despair of ever being happy? It is because they forget the very object for which they were created. They lose sight of the eternal joy and the unending happiness that God has prepared for those who love Him.
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At Holy Mass, whether it be a festival, fast, or funeral, these sublime words are sung by the sacrificing priest at the altar, "__Sursum corda__"--"Lift up your hearts," and the faithful answer, "__Habemus ad Dominum__"--"We have lifted them up to the Lord." Now, these words are kept before our minds, on a festival, to remind us of the eternal joys of heaven; on a funeral, to call our attention to that home above where there is no death, no parting, and where all tears are wiped away from the eyes. Then let "__Sursum corda__" when it is sung this morning, revive this thought of heaven in your hearts--you who are sad, who are sick and poor, you who are in the midst of severe temptations; and carry these words with you through the week, and, whenever you are tempted to murmur against your lot, "Lift up your hearts." Think of Paradise. We were made for Paradise, and we ought always to remember how joyful the thought of Paradise is to the Christian's heart. "O most happy mansion of the city above! O most happy and bright day, that knows no night, but is always enlightened by the Sovereign Truth! The citizens of heaven know how joyful that day is; but the banished children of Eve lament that this our day is bitter and tedious. Oh! that this day would dawn upon us, and all temporal things would come to an end!"
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Then, at this time, let us all look up, and be more vigilant in the service of God while on earth. Let us so live here that our lives may be a foretaste of heaven. Let the Church on earth be the vestibule of heaven in which we wait patiently for the time of our admission therein. Let us be faithful to the laws of God and the Church: "Laying aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, by patience let us run the race set before us; looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who, having the joy proposed to Him, underwent the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth down at the right hand of the throne of God," [Footnote 93] to whom let us lift up our hearts, and offer that beautiful prayer which the Holy Church is chanting throughout the world on this Fourth Sunday after Easter: "O Almighty God, who alone canst make the faithful to be of one mind: grant that they may love those things which Thou dost command and desire, those things which Thou dost promise, that so among all the changes of this world their hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen."

[Footnote 93: Heb xii. i.]

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Sermon XVI.
The Clergy
The Teachers Of The People,
(For The Seventh Sunday After Pentecost.)

St. Matt. vii. 15.

"__Beware of false prophets,
who come to you in sheep's clothing,
but inwardly they are ravening wolves.__"

By the word prophet is meant a teacher or leader of the people;

any one who sets himself up, or is commissioned by those in authority, as an expounder of the sense of the Scriptures, or of the principles of morality or of religion, so as to lead others to adopt his opinions, and act according to his directions.
The office of prophet, or teacher, is the most important of all in human society. For, if we are rightly taught and follow the teaching, everything goes on harmoniously, and conduces to the best result; the greatest amount of substantial happiness in this world, and the securing of our immortal destiny in heaven. If we are wrongly taught, our great blessings are turned into curses, and our lives are failures, both for this world and the next.
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And our Lord Jesus Christ took especial pains to provide for this great need of ours. He selected His twelve Apostles, kept them with Himself during all the time of His public ministry, instructed them by word and example, and sent them out to teach with this full and explicit commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." [Footnote 94]

[Footnote 94: St. Mark xvi. 15 and St. Matt, xxviii. 20.]

If we desire to know them who are the true prophets, we have the means of finding out: they are the lawful successors of the Apostles, the priesthood of the Holy Church. And, on the other hand, we have the means of determining who are the false prophets or teachers: all those who are in opposition to this lawful body of teachers, commissioned by God Himself to teach us.
The priesthood of the Holy Church, then, are our teachers in the principles and practice of religion, and of morality, which is embraced in religion. They are the ones to teach us our duty, in all respects, as individuals, and as members of society; our duties to ourselves, to our fellow-men, to our families, to the government or state in which we live, as well as to God.
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This is what many people do not seem to understand. They say, Let the clergy confine themselves to their own sphere, to the teaching of religion, and let other things alone. Why should they meddle with questions of politics or government? Why should they interfere with private or family affairs? Why should they say anything about a man's business, or try to interfere with his personal liberty to do this or that? Now, whence do these objections arise? From the mistaken notion that religion deals exclusively with the relations of the individual to his God, and has nothing to do with society or government; that there is divorce between politics and religion; that the law of God is separable from human laws.
Nothing can be more untrue than this idea. The divine law is the rule according to which all human laws must be conformed. These laws derive all their authority and sanction from the divine will. Religion cannot be divorced from politics, from government, from legislature, from the family, from business, or from any of the affairs of life. Wherever a moral question is involved in politics, there religion is involved. Every Christian is bound to

carry the law of Christ into his politics.
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Every voter is bound to vote for those who sustain this divine law, and never for the opponents of it; and every legislator is bound not to make any law which is in opposition to it.
And the authorized teachers of the divine law are the ones to expound what the law is, and to lay down the duty of each one in reference to it. They are to teach, and to insist upon the observance of what Christ has taught them: in the state, the duty of obedience to the civil authority, and the wickedness of resisting it, in the lawful exercise of its power;--in the family, the sacredness of the marriage-tie, in spite of any human laws contrary to God's law, and the obligation of the religious education of children;--to the individual, the sin of unlawful or immoral combinations, and many other things which will readily suggest themselves to any one who will reflect.
Those, then, who try to depreciate the influence of the clergy, and to bring their teaching into contempt, or to set themselves up as independent judges of the morality and right of all questions relating to politics and society, are false prophets, boasting of their liberty, appealing to pride, worshipping themselves in place of God, and flattering the passions of others. They are ravening wolves, destroying the spirit of religion and the souls of men, and leading their victims to anarchy, riot, and bloodshed.
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Do not misapprehend my meaning. I do not mean that the clergy should come down into the arena of party politics to advocate the claims of this or that candidate for office, or convert the Church into a political debating-room. Thank God, they have a better idea of their sacred office than that. But where the duties of the individual or the general interests of religion are involved, they are bound to speak out, and they should be listened to as the ambassadors of God.
"Let the clergy mind their own business," is sometimes said. Well, and what is the business of the clergy? It is to seek the salvation of souls. It is to keep the people, as far as possible, from any violation of the commandments of God; from the commission of sin, which leads to the destruction of souls. If they can foresee that this or that course of action will involve their people in sin, they are bound, disregarding all self-interest or any worldly consideration, to raise their voice in protest against it. If the people rush into any unlawful combination, which, perhaps, involves loss of property or loss of life, or, at any rate, is sinful and tends to the destruction of the soul, then, whether the thing is popular or not, they are bound, as far as they can, to set their face against this evil, and warn the people to keep from it.
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If they do not do this, then they do not "mind their own business." They are no better than the "hirelings who flee when the wolf cometh."
But why are the clergy especially fitted to exercise this office of prophet or teacher? Because, in the first place, they are, as

a class, men of education and thought. They have withdrawn from other pursuits, and passed many years in study. They have had particularly to study questions relating to morality; of right and wrong; of the meaning of the law of God, and are better fitted than any other class of men to give decisions on such questions.

This is reason enough why the mass of the people, who have not the time, the freedom from other occupations, the books, or the habit of reasoning correctly, should defer with great respect to the opinion of the clergy on any important question. It argues a great want of humility--an antichristian and unreasonable pride, when their opinion is treated with contempt and brought into ridicule.

In the second place, they are disinterested parties, and are able to decide, for the most part, free from prejudice. The only prejudice they can have is, that God's law be observed and His honor vindicated. They are a body of men independent, free from family ties, and cares, and obligations; freed in an unusual degree from what prejudices other men--the desire of heaping up wealth. In short, they have every inducement to love right and hate wrong.

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Thirdly, they are the fathers of their people. Having no wives or children of their own, the people are their children. The term "father" by which they are addressed is a true expression of the feeling which the people have towards them, because they have a truly parental affection for them. That priest must be a monster who does not love his people, as a general thing so devoted and affectionate to him. Our Saviour says, "The good shepherd will lay down his life for his sheep." The Catholic people are the flock of the priest; it is his business and his happiness to look out for their interests; to advise them and warn them of dangers; to go after them and bring them back when they go astray; and it is only natural for them to look up to him for advice, for counsel in doubt, for consolation in trouble. There is no sweeter or more beautiful tie than that which binds the priest and people together.

But lastly, and above all, the priest is the representative and agent of Jesus Christ. This last reason includes and carries with it all the others; they all grow out of it. Hear what St. Paul says: "And some he gave to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and others pastors and teachers.

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For the perfection of the saints, for the edification of the body of Christ." [Footnote 95] All that relates to the building up or edification of the faithful belongs to their sacred office. In the direction of St. Paul to Titus, he tells him: "Admonish them to be subject to princes and powers, to obey at a word, to be ready to every good work." [Footnote 96] And again: "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." [Footnote 97] Once more he says: "Let a man look upon us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." [Footnote 98] And when our Lord sent out His Apostles, He used these emphatic words: "He that heareth you

heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me."

[Footnote 95: Eph. iv. 11.]

[Footnote 96: Ep. Tit. iii. 1.]

[Footnote 97: Ep. Tit. ii. 15.]

[Footnote 98: I Cor. iv. 1.]

Who are the false prophets we have the most need to be warned against at this present time? Not the professed teachers of heresy, because they are too well known; their doctrine and their principles have lost all attraction for Catholics. Their hatred and opposition to the Holy Church and her doctrines is too violent and untruthful to have any power of attraction for the Catholic heart. I should say they are not wolves in sheep's clothing, but rather wolves in their own skins. No, it is not they.

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It is rather the irreligious, unprincipled newspapers which are sowing the worst principles broadcast in the community, which are ridiculing all that we hold most sacred, which make all religion to consist in the present and laugh at the future world; which are prating all the time about clerical influence, and extolling a purely secular education; which are talking everlastingly about progress and enlightenment, and this nineteenth century, and the dark ages and superstitions; whose infernal doctrine may be summed up in one sentence: "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

These are the false prophets who clothe themselves with sheep's clothing, that is, with professions of liberty, enticements to pleasure, and to the gain of worldly goods, as if there was no hereafter, no responsibility, but each one was free to do as he pleased.

And who are some of the other false prophets? They are leaders of secret societies; interested persons who make a living out of professions of patriotism and love of country; who live in luxury--many of them, out of the hard earnings of the poor laborer and the girls at service; who beguile the ignorant into unlawful and forbidden ways, sinking them down deep in mortal sin, and hindering them from getting out of it, because they impose a distrust and dislike of the clergy and of the Church which condemns them. Like the Pharisees, they "move heaven and earth to make one proselyte, and, when they have made one, they make him more a child of hell than themselves." Avoid them, for they are truly "ravening wolves."

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And lastly, avoid another false prophet within yourself: the spirit of pride and self-will. Without this, all the others I have mentioned above would be powerless to hurt you. This is the very evil one himself who stirs up within you every evil passion. Be cautious, weigh well the thoughts of your hearts. Try them by the standard of the Gospel and of the example of Jesus Christ, and, if they cannot abide the test, no matter how fair an appearance they have, abandon them.

Ah! if we would only stop to consider calmly what we are about; if we would only utter one sincere prayer to God for guidance, and to obtain a good-will, this false prophet of self-will would

be detected and driven out, and we would be quickly delivered from destruction.
Finally, give good heed to the Scripture which says: "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them, for they watch as being to give an account of your souls, that they may do this with joy, and not with grief."
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Obey the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the Pope, the Head of the Church and Father of the faithful. When he solemnly pronounces his judgment as to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of anything, obey as you would if you heard it from the lips of Christ Himself. It is a fearful thing for any one to put himself in opposition to Christ's Vicar and the Successor of St. Peter, to whom our Lord gave the charge to feed both His sheep and His lambs.
Obey your Archbishop, who is more immediately placed over you. It is his place to judge what is for the good of religion, and to foresee the evils likely to arise at any time among ourselves. Let those who disregard his admonition look well to it, lest they implicate themselves in grievous sin, and in inflicting great injury upon the religion of Christ. Such men are a scandal and cause of ruin to the faithful, and our Lord has denounced the anger of God upon those who are guilty of it.
Obey your priests, who will have to give an account of your souls. Give no cause of offence or scandal in your parish, but rather co-operate with your fellow-parishioners in the extension of Christ's kingdom upon earth.
It is by this spirit of docility and obedience you will break through all the snares of Satan, and be delivered from error. Thus, walking in the clear light of truth, you will finally be united to the Eternal Truth, God, the fountain of all joy, forever.

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Sermon XVII.

Humility In Prayer.

(For The Tenth Sunday After Pentecost.)

St. Luke xviii. 13.

"__God, be merciful to me, a sinner.__"

One of the chief lessons our blessed Lord intended to teach us by the parable told in to-day's Gospel is the necessity and power of humble prayer. Let us see this, and try to draw some useful thoughts from it.
The great positive precept of prayer goes hand in hand with a man's salvation. Nothing can excuse the neglect of it, nothing is promised except through it, and therefore one cannot hope for anything without it. Yet it is not every spirit of prayer that is of God. In spite of a professed total disregard for it by some, nevertheless men have an instinctive faith in prayer. The hardiest blasphemer and scoffer at religion will often be found the first to pray when in imminent danger of death.
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He prays in fear. Others, with out any spirit of devotion, will be found praying at stated times, like the Pharisee, because it is a highly respectable thing to do, and keeps up their credit

and good character, who apparently regard prayer as a sort of business transaction with God, the fulfilment of certain conditions of barter with Providence, by which they may expect to hold their own, and be further well rewarded. These pray in pride. Others are full of themselves and their own desires. __They__ wish to be happy, let others be as miserable as they may. __They__ want no sickness, no accident, no reverse of fortune, no contempt, no temptation, let God try other souls with His chastening hand as He pleases. These pray in selfishness. And yet all these are the first to complain that their prayer is not heard and instantly answered. They become petulant over delay, and utterly discouraged if their desires are not fulfilled. __God's__ will is nothing to them. It is not "Thy will," but "My will" be done. Listen, my brethren, to the true spirit of prayer, the only kind of prayer which will infallibly be heard. It is the prayer of those who pray in humility.

The very essence of prayer consists in the acknowledgment of God's supreme dominion and government over us, and our complete dependence upon Him as the source of all blessings, spiritual and temporal. The better this is acknowledged by the soul, the more perfect must be the prayer; and, if this be the spirit which inspires only a few words of prayer, or even a silent aspiration of the heart, then more is accomplished than if hours had been consumed in the recitation of forms of prayer, where this high and reverent thought of God is wanting.

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Now, this is also the fountain thought of humility: that God is all in all to us, that it is He, and not we ourselves, who has made us, and prospered us, and blessed us, and raised us up, and obtained peace and forgiveness for our erring hearts; that He is the Truth; that the true religion is His making, not what we may fashion to ourselves. These are the thoughts to bring the heart into a proper relation with God, the relation of an humble hope, trust, and reverence for Him, and in this we need lose nothing of a proper and just esteem for ourselves. It is the secret of the making of great saints and heroes in religion (all of whom were renowned for their humility), that a man is always the gainer by just so much as he gives to God.

So we see in the case of the humble publican, that God regarded him the more because he did not so much as lift his eyes to heaven. God drew the nearer to him, the farther he stood off. God comforted him, and justified him, the more he acknowledged his own wretchedness, and condemned himself. Not without reason, it is true, because he __was__ a sinner. While he, who was not a sinner, went up in his pride and sinned in his very prayers. The humble sinner went away justified; the proud, just man went away condemned.

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And hence we may conclude that, if one does not pray in humility, his prayer is of no value, and he moreover runs a great chance of committing sin by praying, and of receiving curses instead of blessings in answer.

"God resisteth the proud," says the Apostle, "but giveth grace to the humble." [Footnote 99] He is, as it were, shocked and

indignant to see a man approaching him in presumption or pride. He has no grace for such an one, and then without that he will infallibly commit sin and be lost.

[Footnote 99: St. James iv. 6.]

For what happens? He who prays without humility thinks that he has done a great thing, for which God honors him, and holds him up as an example for the admiration and imitation of others, especially for those who seldom or never go to their knees, or pray so quickly and unobtrusively that no one notices them. So he rises from his prayer puffed up with self-conceit.

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Look at the Pharisee. He came to the treasure-house of God with a large sack; he extolled its capacity, and stretched it out to its utmost dimensions; he made his prayer long, wordy, and full of self. As he really did not profess himself to be in want of anything, God sent him away, with his sack empty of everything but his own windy words, which God despised and returned to him for his pains. His load was not heavy, and he could walk with head and shoulders proudly erect.

As he passed out he gave a scornful glance at the miserable publican, crouching in the porch, and thought within himself: What bad people there are in the world, to be sure! The humble object of his disdain followed him out with bent shoulders and downcast head. He had come empty-handed to God's treasury. But something had passed between him and God which the proud Pharisee little imagined: and he might well go away still humbly bending to the ground, for God's mercies and blessings lay heavily upon him. So sang the humble Virgin: "He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he hath sent empty away."

Many imagine that the wealthy are the chief ones who pray like the Pharisee; but this is a great mistake. There are quite as many poor "rich Pharisees" as wealthy rich ones. Being in humble circumstances does not make one humble. The Blessed Virgin did not mean the rich in this world's goods, but those who were rich in their own conceit.

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So we see many who have not much money to boast of, yet will boast pretty loudly of their piety. They come to pray to God for forgiveness of their sins; and what do they say? "I don't do much. I don't curse. I don't steal. I don't slander my neighbor." And if God did not rouse them up to a sense of the sins they do commit by questioning their consciences, they would go away fully persuaded that they were out-and-out saints, while all the rest of the world were thieves, and liars, and extortioners, and workers of all kinds of iniquity, especially that quarrelsome neighbor who has just taken their place in the confessional, and who, they hope, will meet with severe and righteous treatment. O self-sufficient, rich Pharisee! it is true I have seen you in silk and broadcloth, but I have seen you also in a cotton gown, and a coat out at [the] elbows.

Not a few are found lacking in this requisite to make prayer of any value, because they pray in fear. At first sight, fear would seem to be almost identical with humility; but it is quite a far different thing, for humility brings the soul nearer to God,

while fear drives it away. Humility recognizes the greatness and goodness of God, and, while it reverences Him, holds Him for that knowledge in the highest esteem; but fear hides itself, and, in place of esteem, holds Him in slavish dread.
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Humility is hopeful; fear is full of despair. See those sinners who find themselves in shipwreck, or in some imminent danger of death from disease. They pray, it is true, but how? Is it in sorrow for their sins? Do they want to get back the lost love of God? Oh! no; that is the last thought they have. It is to be saved from death; it is to be cured of their diseases; and what does it all amount to, but that they are trying to make a truce with God? Their whole lives have been at enmity with Him; and now, when God compels them to acknowledge Him, when He conquers them and brings them down, it is not peace they want, but a cessation of hostilities. It is plain enough God is the master. Such souls tremble at death, because it is bringing them nearer to God; the humble souls fear life, because it is so full of the danger of losing Him.
Such was the prayer of the wicked King Antiochus, who prayed to God and made great promises; but it was only fear that wrung the prayer out of him. He cared for nothing but to be restored to life and health; but God rejected his prayers, and left him to die a horrible death, being eaten up by worms. The Scripture says of him: "Then this wicked man prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not to obtain mercy." [Footnote 100]
[Footnote 100: 2 Macc. x. 13.]
[USCCB: 2 Maccabees ix. 13.]
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Now and then the judgments of God hang over sinners. Hell gapes underfoot, and they pray and cry to the Lord for mercy, yet are not heard, because they have no contrition; and are wanting in contrition, because they have no humility. Their fear is the fear of those sinners described by the prophet: "The sinners in Sion are afraid; trembling hath seized upon the hypocrites." [Footnote 101] But the humble soul is not afraid to draw near to God, for the promise encourages it: "An humble and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Such are not afraid, because their contrition is founded on the love of God, and is real and hearty. "Perfect love," says St. John, "casteth out fear."
[Footnote 101: Isa. xxxiii. 18.]
[USCCB: Isa. xxxiii. 14.]
Look at Mary Magdalen. There was an example of boldness in a truly contrite, humble heart. She dared a good deal. Jesus, her Lord, the God of infinite purity, is the honored guest of a wealthy and proud citizen; she, an abandoned woman. Yet she dared enter the rich man's door. She dared the sneers and contempt of the servants. She dared enter the banqueting hall as an unwelcome intruder, at the risk of being ignominiously expelled. She dared approach the Spotless One, and touch His sacred feet with her polluted hands. But perfect love casteth out fear.
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Her tears were so many eloquent words of prayer that went straight to the heart of Jesus. Her penitent love chased all fear

away, and moved the Lord to say of her: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."

But the most common want of humility is seen in those who pray in selfishness. Has God seen fit to send them a trial--say, a defect in their hearing or sight, or one of their children is born deformed or sickly--then they act as though the like had never been seen before, so querulous are they under the affliction. They pray--a good long string of complaints--over it. Or else the selfishness takes another shape, and, while they can look with indifference upon hundreds who suffer worse, they cannot bear to have the hand of the Lord touch __them__. They come to beg of the priest to cure them; they come humbly enough in their manner, will go down on their knees, and even kiss the ground, but they have not a particle of humility in their hearts. They are so selfish about their pains and aches that they are quite surprised and vexed if the priest does not profess himself quite ready and able to perform a miracle in their favor; as if the Almighty owed them miracles, or as if they were the only people in the world about whose ease and comfort He was concerned. And then they go away disappointed, giving no heed to the holy words with which the priest tried to teach them to profit by their affliction, and instruct them how to pray to God to be relieved of it, if it be His holy will.

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Very probably, such people are not in the grace of God at all; and it is plain even to human wisdom that, if God heard and answered their selfish prayers, they would go away puffed up with pride, never think of returning Him any thanks, and lead a worse sinful life than they have before. For it is a proverb: "Do a proud man a favor, and he hates you for it." He dislikes the idea of being laid under an obligation; and this is just what would happen to such. They would dislike God for putting them under the obligation to serve Him the more strictly in return for His favors. God sees this, and, because they have no humility, their prayers are not heard.

It is the same with many spiritually minded persons too. They are led to look for mortifications and crosses, and, when these are sent, then they are both mortified and crossed in another sense. They are humiliated, but not humbled. Oh! how hard they pray to be delivered from these very means of their sanctification. But it is selfishness that makes them pray. They thought themselves saints, and it galls their pride to be treated as though they were yet far from perfection. They suffer, and keenly too, I know. So did our Blessed Lord in His agony, and dereliction on the Cross. But when __He__ prayed, He said to His Father, "Not My will, but Thine be done."

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The want of humility in prayer is the bane of those living in heresy. Heresy, you know, is the offspring of pride. Souls fall into it, and wilfully remain in it from an undue opinion of their own wisdom. All heresy must have "private judgment" as its basis of religion. If the true religion ever comes up before them for examination or acceptance, they are almost afraid to pray at all, lest they should pray themselves into submission to it.

They see that the road before them is the road of humility. They start back at the hard sayings. Wanting humility, they have very little conviction of sin; and, like the Pharisee who went up to the temple to recount his good deeds, you will not unfrequently hear such persons, in speaking of the confessional, say with unaffected surprise: "Why, what in the world can you have to tell? I don't think I have any sins to confess."

Oh! if they could once be brought down to pray humbly for light and guidance, how differently would they talk, and how quickly all their fancied difficulties and impossibilities would fade away!

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A celebrated master in the spiritual life used to send persons away to pray who came to him to talk controversy. If they were humbly seeking the truth, they found all their objections answered in prayer before they returned. If not, he knew their pride would be proof against both prayer and argument, however long the one or powerful the other.

My brethren, we have all got to pray for what we want, and to pray humbly too, if we expect our prayers to be heard. To pray like the Publican, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner," and not like the Pharisee, "O God, I thank thee I am not like the rest of men."

I recollect an instance, on one of our Missions, which will be a lesson for all those whom I have been addressing this morning. A young man came to me, whom I soon learned to be one of those unfortunate Catholics whose parents do nothing more towards making them Christians than to get them baptized. The first words he said to me were these: "Father, I'm a mighty hard case." I found he was quite ignorant of the principal doctrines of the faith, and sent him away for a few days to learn them. When he presented himself again, he was surprised I did not recognize him. "Why, don't you know," said he, "I'm the mighty hard case?" It was necessary not only to instruct him, but to give him some serious warnings, that he might keep out of bad company, and live thenceforward a good life.

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Perhaps I was led to speak in a tone that appeared to him rather severe; and it went to my heart to hear the poor fellow repeat the humble judgment he had passed upon himself: "Yes, father, I told you so. I told you I was a __mighty__ hard case." The "mighty hard case" got his communion with great joy and a holy pride; and I remembered the words of the Lord: "Amen, I say to you, this man went down to his house justified ... for every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Reflect upon this touching example of an humble soul, and, when you go to pray, think of the necessity of humility, and of patience and resignation to God's will in all things.

Pray! Not in proud self-conceit, for God will despise you, and resist your supplications, and withhold His grace. Without grace you will find yourself falling so repeatedly and grievously into sin that you will lose faith in prayer. When it comes to that, you are on the road to hell.

Pray! Not in fear. That is a bad sign. It looks as though you did

not love God; and, it such be the case, you cannot expect Him to hearken to you, or grant you any favors.
Pray! but not in selfishness. Let God and His holy will be all in all to you. Take what He sends. Learn to trust Him in humility and patience. The Lord does not always tell us the reasons why.
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Whether He commands us as a Master, chastises us as a Father, or teaches us to imitate Him in some hard lesson of humiliation--as when He Himself washed the Apostles feet--He very often has but the same answer to us that He gave to the astonished Peter: "What I do thou knowest not now; but them shalt know hereafter."
Pray in humility, O ye doubting, distrustful souls! God's truth is near enough and plain enough. It is you who are too high-minded to see it, too proud to pray that you may know it. Ask not with Pilate, "What is truth? what is truth?" in the presence of the Infinite Truth, and then, like him, turn away and never hear it.
Cease not to pray, though the morn is long in dawning, and the day of redemption be delayed; but cease not to pray humbly, for, says the wise man, "the prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, and he shall not depart until the Most High behold." [Footnote 102]

[Footnote 102: Ecclus. xxxv. 21.]
[USCCB: Sirach xxxv. 17.]

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Sermon XVIII.

Preparation For A Good Death.

(For The Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost.)

Isaiah xxxviii. 1.

"__Put thy house in order,
for thou shall die, and not live__."

When I read the Gospel for to-day, which describes the raising of the widow's son to life, I ask myself the question--Did he die prepared? When his friends could no longer give him any hope of recovery--when he was forced to make that bitter acknowledgment to himself, "My time is come," then did he make ready to die? Did he put his house in order? Had he time to do it? Was he in a fit state to do it? When his soul had departed, could his widowed mother console herself with the thought--He lived a good life, and he died a good death? We can not answer for the young man, as the Gospel tells us nothing either of his life or of his death, but we can answer for many whose lives and whose deaths we know; and, knowing our own lives, we ought to be able to answer for the kind of death we would die if the word of the Lord came to us as it came to King Ezechias: "Put thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live."
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A friend, about to take a journey to Europe, remarked: "I have arranged all my affairs, so as to have a pleasant journey." He did well. We will do better when we shall have arranged all our affairs for a pleasant journey to that far-off land from which we shall never return. Let us see, brethren, what it is to arrange one's affairs that one may die a good death. This preparation may

be summed up in the fulfilment of three obligations--the first, to God; the second, to our neighbor; and the last, to one's self. To die well and happily, we must fulfil our obligations to God. Here I must confess I am somewhat troubled to answer how a man who is near death, whether he be in good health at the present moment or given up by his physician, shall satisfy this demand, if he has not already done so. The last, and usually the most useless, hours of one's life are hardly the time to give God his due. God's obligations are fulfilled in living not in dying, well. Our Lord compares the dealings of God with us to a man who hired workmen to labor in his vineyard; to another who gave certain talents to his servants which they were to improve; and, again, to a husbandman who sowed his seed expecting to reap a harvest from it in due time.
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These are very apt figures of the duties and the fruits of life. The heavenly reward will be bestowed upon him who labored at God's work in life. He shall enter into so much of the heavenly joy of his Lord as he has fitted himself for by the improvement of the talents which God gave him. God will reap just so much of a harvest as the seed of His divine grace has been cultivated and allowed to grow in the heart. Now we are sent to begin our work, to improve our talents, and His grace is sown in our hearts when life begins. God's obligations begin when we begin to live, not when we begin to die. Oh! this is a startling truth! What a fearful thought this must be to him who has never realized it as life went on, and only now begins to think about it when the terrors of the coming judgment are casting their shadows before, and darkening the last hours of his misspent life!
I hardly know what to say to that man to whom religion has never been a reality in life, who has shirked its duties, and deafened his conscience to its appeals, who thinks of it only when life is not worth thinking of; who makes use of it only to smooth his dying pillow, to bless his grave, and pray for him when he is gone.
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The thought that his life, the only life he has had or will have upon which God has such a heavy claim for his service, for the worship and love of his heart, upon his personal exertions and sacrifices for the cause of His holy faith--has simply been allowed to wear away, day after day and year after year, and that nothing has been done, must be a thought of misery and dismay, such as would overwhelm the mind of a merchant who, after making a long and, as he supposed, prosperous voyage across the ocean, finds, to his disappointment, that he has forgotten to bring either the money or the letters of credit wherewith to purchase his expected cargo.
I hardly know what to say to that man whose life has been little more than a mockery of the God whom he pretended to serve; whose principles and faith were indeed Christian, but whose practice and works have been heathen. He has been a Catholic--oh! yes, in name, but not in deed. It would be better to say of him that he was not a Protestant, nor a Jew, nor an infidel. That is all. That he is a Catholic seems to be a happy accident; for, to judge

from the indifference he manifests in its practice, it is to be feared that, had circumstances made him anything else, the Catholic faith would be the last thing to which he would give a serious thought. When such are suddenly surprised with the message, "Put thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live," indeed it is hard to say how they are to prepare to answer to God for their life.
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Their memory brings up little else than despised warnings, grace trifled with, neglected sacraments, prayerless days, and desecrated Sundays; and I know not where they are to find the fruit that God comes seeking of them.
You see, my brethren, that the first condition of being able to prepare for a happy death is to have lived well. But you ask--Is one who begins late in life to serve God, who knows that he has but a short time to do something for Him, to give up his case as hopeless, and despair of fulfilling this great obligation? Must he say I have, alas! made no life-preparation of this solemn account, and it is too late now? Far be it from me to say that; but this I know: he must begin now all the more earnestly, and do what he can with all the greater effort, as the time is the shorter. O my dear brethren! that these late workmen in God's service, and the dying, would understand this! Such an one falls sick. He is attacked with a disease which will soon run its course. He sends for a priest. He makes his confession as well as he can--he would have made a better one if he had been well, for he is not in a condition to remember the events of so many years; he is sorry for his neglect and his sins; sorry for all the comforts of religion that he has lost; but, tell me, is he sorry for what God has lost by his careless life?
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Does he express one regret that God has not only not had His own, but that He has also been dishonored by his bad life; that the Church of the faith he professes has been a loser by him; that he, by his inconsistent conduct, has been a stumbling-block and a rock of scandal to the unbeliever and the scoffer? No, this is the last thing that troubles him. What is one to do? Plainly this: Religion ought now to be his all-absorbing thought. Every moment should be employed with a holy jealousy in prayer, lest God might be forgotten again. One, and only one, desire ought to fill his heart, and that is a desire to love God as perfectly as he may before he die. He should frequently call to mind that comforting assurance which our blessed Lord gave to the penitent Magdalen: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath __loved much__." It is not the time for excuses, as so many seem to think it to be, but a time of humble abandonment to the will and the mercy of God. It is a painful sight to witness the contrary; to see the sick and the dying full of complaints, resisting the will of God, and praying for a few more years of a miserable life. If it were for the purpose of living in the love of God, and repairing the bitter past, it would be well. But no, their hearts are breaking to think they are forced to part with the world that they have loved too well.
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But oh! how sweet it is to see a soul, at the close of life, striving to detach itself from the world, and, as it were, reaching forward to throw itself into the embraces of its God. True, it may have been idle for many long years, and it may have come only at the eleventh hour, but that hour, at least, is well spent. These are they of whom the Master will say: "I will give to these last even as to the first." [Footnote 103] Such may also say, in the language of the wise man: "I awaked last of all, and as one that gathereth after the grape-gatherers. In the blessing of God I also have hoped; and as one that gathereth grapes, have I filled the wine-press." [Footnote 104]

[Footnote 103: St. Matt. xx. 14.]

[Footnote 104: Ecclesiasticus xxxiii. 16, 17.]

[USCCB: Sirach xxxiii. 16, 17.]

To die well and happily, we must, in the second place, fulfil our obligations to our neighbor. Scarcely a day of our life passes in which we do not find that our neighbor has had somewhat against us. Debts accumulate, disputes arise, the incautious word is spoken, the scandal is given, the character of our neighbor suffers from our folly or our spite, reconciliation is not made, forgiveness is neither asked nor given, friends are alienated, the sun goes down upon our wrath, and on the morrow we must die. Who is there who is able to say, when he comes to die--I owe no man anything; my debts are all paid; I never wronged any one to whom I did not make full restitution; I never lost a friend but I found him again; I have not an enemy on the face of the earth? {276}

Happy is that man, for he will die a happy death. But how many there are who find themselves at the hour of death as they have always been, both unwilling and unable to pay their just debts! How many leave behind them an unsettled inheritance to their relatives, which becomes an inheritance of discord, law-suits, enmities, and deadly feuds! How often men die, and show no fear to go to God with unclean hands--hands stained by the contact of ill-gotten goods and stolen money! How many die unreconciled with their neighbor, and with no earnest wish to be so! How lightly the wrongs of a lifetime weigh upon their conscience! How many die and make no restitution of all the detraction and the calumny of which they have been guilty, and go to their grave amid the secret jeers and curses of their neighbors! "Blessed is he that is defended from a wicked tongue," says the Holy Scripture, "that hath not passed into the wrath thereof, and that hath not drawn the yoke thereof, and hath not been bound in its bands. For its yoke is a yoke of iron: and its bands are bands of brass. The death thereof is a most evil death: and hell is preferable to it." [Footnote 105]

[Footnote 105: Ecclus. xxviii. 23, 24.]

[USCCB: Sirach xxviii. 19-21.]

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Do you wish to escape such a lamentable end? Would you die the death of the just, leaving your name in benediction, your loss sincerely mourned, and your soul defended with prayers at the bar of judgment? Deal with thy neighbor now whilst thou art in the way with him. "Put thy house in order," and especially when you

come to die. Let no worldly consideration, no thought of pride, hinder you from a perfect reconciliation with all men--a full payment of every debt--a free forgiveness for every wrong you have suffered. The few moments that remain to you, you will need to pray for God's forgiveness for your own sins. Remember the Lord's words: "For with what judgment you have judged, you shall be judged; and with what measure you have measured, it shall be measured to you again." [Footnote 106]

[Footnote 106: St. Matt. vii. 2.]

Lastly, to die well, we must fulfil the obligations we owe to ourselves. We are Christians, and should meet death like Christians. That is, we owe it to ourselves to show at that supreme moment some evidence that we are not being forced out of life as if there were no existence beyond it, but that we are ready to answer the call that God makes to us to come home; not that we are setting out upon a journey of darkness and lonely misery, but that we are following Jesus, who has overcome the sting of death and robbed the grave of its terrors.

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That we may be encouraged in this, we should bring to mind the examples which the holy martyrs and the other saints of God have left us in their deaths. Death, in its very nature, is humiliating and degrading to human nature. It conquers us; it leaves us not a trace of our beauty nor a vestige of our power. No wonder that the flesh is weak and trembles before it; but the spirit, ennobled with Christian faith and hope, and strengthened with Christian charily, is willing and courageous. The Christian's death is then no longer an ignominious defeat, but a glorious sacrifice. The flesh goes, indeed, to the prison of the grave; but the spirit, set free from its mortal bonds, mounts to the skies to be crowned with power and immortality.

One thought alone should occupy our minds in our last hours--the thought of uniting our souls to God, whom we are so soon to meet. It is painful to see a dying person thinking of nothing but how to give some momentary relief to his body, each instant calling for some new comfort, as anxious and careful as if he were preparing for a long life, instead of employing the precious moments in prayer, in acts of contrition for the sins of his past life, and in acts of love to God. I know that many persons think it useless to try to pray at such a time, when the strength is failing and the senses are growing dull; but it is not so.

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They can "pray in their soul," as a saintly woman told me on her death-bed. Seeing that I noticed the beads in her hands, she said to me: "I am not able to __say__ my beads, father; but, when I feel lonesome, I take them out to keep me company, and I pray in my soul." We may make all our acts acts of prayer, if we will. Our acceptance of sickness and death in the spirit of penance is prayer. Our resignation to the will of God--our patience in suffering--our gentleness and mildness with those who are tending and watching us--all these things are prayer, if we practise them with the thought that they are pleasing to God.

Then, there are the holy sacraments of the dying, full of grace, comfort, and strength to our souls. I know few Catholics wilfully

neglect these, but it is a source of grief to the priest to be called, so often as he is, to administer the last sacraments to those who ought long ago have received the first ones they need. I think it is one of the most discouraging events in the ministry to go to a dying man and find that it is years since he confessed or received the Holy Communion. Confession! I tell you that it is very seldom that one on his sick-bed makes as good a confession as he would if he were well. He cannot do it. His mind is not as clear; his memory fails him; and, worst of all, he makes little or no effort to prepare himself for it. What is the consequence?
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His contrition is as vague and indifferent as is his confession. With how much devotion does he receive the Holy Viaticum and the Extreme Unction? Alas! this man did not begin to pray or to think about either till an hour ago, when the doctor told him he had to die. The priest absolves him, and he and his friends are content. But did God absolve him? Tell me if he made a good confession, or was sincerely sorry for his sins, and then I will tell you whether God absolved him. Woe be to him if he did not, for it is the last chance he has to confess, and but too frequently it is the last appeal he makes to God for forgiveness. The priest gives him the Holy Communion. Does he receive it worthily? Not, of course, because he is going to die, or because this is his last Communion. Does he receive it in as good dispositions as would make it a worthy Communion if he were well, and had received it in the church at the altar? If not, he makes an unworthy Communion, and eats and drinks damnation to himself. The priest anoints him. Is he signed and consecrated to God, and are his senses purified, and his soul strengthened? Yes, if he be in the grace of God. If not, he is signed and delivered over to Satan by it, and his soul is prepared for hell. Oh! if one wishes to be able to fulfil these obligations well at the hour of death, he must not neglect the preparation for them in life.
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Beautiful is the happy death of a Christian! Death! He does not die. He enters into life; he rests from his labors; he falls asleep in the Lord. Not long ago, I received an invitation to attend the funeral of a priest. It was couched in these words: "You are invited to attend the funeral of the Very Rev. Patrick Moran, who entered into his rest at half-past eight on Wednesday morning last." Fitting sentence, indeed, to describe the death of that venerable and holy old man! Through a long life he lived and labored only for God. Full of years and of merit, ripe for heaven, and ready to begin his eternal life, he ceased from work at the call of his divine Master, and entered into his rest. Thus should every Christian die. It is what the Holy Church wishes for us all. When the solemn dirges are chanted over us, again and again she prays: "__Requiem √¶ternam dona eis, Domine." "Requiescant in pace.__" "Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord!" "May they rest in peace!"
My brethren, I have tried to-day to lay before you the duties of the dying Christian. Soon will some of you be called upon to put them in practice. Are you all ready for the last preparations? Is your life to-day such as you would like it to be, if to-morrow

you are to die? Is your confession made for this year? Have you received the Easter Communion? Are you at peace with God and men?
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These are questions which you will wish to be able to answer in the affirmative when you call upon the priest for your holy rites and his parting blessing. Prepare now, that you may be prepared then. Begin to-day, for the hour may come sooner than you imagine in which you shall hear this awful message from the Lord: "Put thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live."

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Sermon XIX.

The King's Marriage Feast.

(For The Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost.)

St. Matt. xxii. 14.

"__For many are called,
but few are chosen.__"

There are some Catholics who, with the smallest quantity of the spirit of the Catholic religion, are very boastful of the name. They look down upon those who are out of the fold of the Church with scorn and contempt. Their whole demeanor indicates that they consider themselves immensely superior to these unfortunate creatures, who are all doomed necessarily to eternal destruction. As to themselves, they deem it impossible that they should incur the same doom, because they are Catholics. They are not members of the Church so much by a special divine favor, but rather they have conferred a favor on God by belonging to it. The Church belongs to them by the right of birth, and the fact of their parents having been Catholics gives them the privilege of sneering at all not born under similar circumstances.
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I have even heard such persons call converts to the faith by the sweet and charitable epithet of "turncoats," and say they should have remained where they were, and that it is a disgraceful thing to abandon the religion of one's forefathers. Catholicity with such is a thing of descent and of family pride; not a thing of the heart and of the will.
The Holy Ghost understood this spirit, and, by the mouth of St. John the Baptist, rebuked it severely: "Bring forth fruits worthy of penance, and do not begin to say, We have Abraham for our father." [Footnote 107] These words, applied to the Jews of old, might well be translated for the benefit of many Catholics nowadays--Do not begin to say, We are born of Catholic parents, our forefathers have been Catholics for many generations, if you are living like the heathen; but bring forth fruits worthy of that holy and sacred name of Catholic; otherwise you will never come to enjoy the presence of God, but be everlastingly cast out.

[Footnote 107: St. Luke iii. 8.]

The parable of to-day gives us the most useful instruction on this very subject. A certain king made a marriage feast for his son. This king is the God of heaven and earth. The marriage feast He makes is the participation of the creature in His own glory; a boundless and inconceivable happiness, which shall never have end or diminution; a realization of more than we have dreamed of, or

could possibly imagine.
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This is the marriage feast of His Eternal Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, because He, by taking our flesh upon Himself and becoming man, by suffering and dying upon the cross, has redeemed us from sin, elevated us far above the capacity of nature, and enabled us to aspire to this magnificent destiny. It is His marriage feast, because it is the celebration of the eternal nuptials of Himself with the soul. It is the marriage feast in which the Omnipotence of the Eternal Beauty is exercised to render the guests eternally and supremely happy, filling them with an ocean of unbounded joy and contentment.
The king sent out his servants into the highways and public streets, with directions to call or invite to his feast all they should meet, and urge them to come in.
This is what God does now every day. He calls, indiscriminately, the rich and the poor, the noble and the lowly, into the fold of His Church. It is no merit on their part which brings them the invitation. They are all ragged and dirty in the sight of God. Not one of them but would be a disgrace to the King's feast; but God does not look at that. He is moved only by His desire to do them a great favor, and confer upon them great happiness.
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When He invites them, He intends to make them fit; to wash off the dirt, and put suitable clothing upon them, so that they may be made fit to enter His banqueting-hall. He has them brought to an outer room, where are baths and precious ointments, and splendid garments, and servants in abundance to put them on. They need not trouble themselves with the expense of providing anything, for the King provides all.
A child is brought to the priest for baptism. That child is of Catholic parents, and they bring it. The child knows nothing at all of what is done for it. It had no choice in the matter. It might have been born of another race and of another religion, but God, and not itself, has caused it to be born of Catholic parents, and to be brought by them to baptism. It is, as it were, met on the highway and called in, all stained by original sin, to be washed in baptism, endowed with the right to the sacraments, and invested with an immortal inheritance. So likewise Jesus Christ has commanded His ministers to go and preach the Gospel to every creature; to go and invite everybody who hears their voice to come in and enjoy the same privileges. Those who accept the invitation have as much right as those who are invited in the other way, by the accident of their birth; for no one has any other right than what comes from the pure bounty and goodness of the King.
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Those who are born of Catholic parents, and those who are Catholics by their own free choice in later life, stand on the same footing. We are all a crowd of beggars, who were in the broad highway, and have heard the invitation of the King of kings, and have come in in obedience to it. We are now all standing in the outer hall of the eternal banquet, or rather in the banqueting-room itself, waiting for the King to come in, when

the music will begin, and all its grandeur be lighted up by His presence.

It is a most solemn reflection, my friends. You and I have received this invitation. The King's messengers have met us on the highway, and they have forced us to come in. We have been compelled to come in, for ruin and death were the alternative of staying out. We have no longer the liberty of ranging the highways. We are no longer in the position of the heathen--without the knowledge of the true religion, and without baptism. The indelible mark, or character as it is termed, of baptism has been imprinted on our souls; all the ages of eternity will not suffice to wipe it out. Poor as this privilege was to be hungry and ragged and miserable, it is ours no longer, but we are in the banqueting-hall of the marriage feast.

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There we are, and we cannot go out into the highway again. Once in, the door is shut behind us, and there is no key to unlock it. Once removed out of the state of our birth and made heirs of the kingdom of heaven by baptism, it is impossible to put us back again in our former relations. The mark of baptism, stamped upon our souls, will remain with us either in heaven or in hell. Elevated by God's goodness far above the condition of our nature, if we fall, it must be down, deeper far than the condition from which we were first taken.

A man may neglect his duty to God, and try to persuade himself that the end and object of his existence is to get money, or fame, or power, or pleasure, but he will find to his cost that it was no such thing. The end and object of his existence was to learn to love and serve God in this world, in order to be happy with Him in the next; to prepare to be a worthy guest at the marriage feast of the Lamb, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now we are all in at the feast, and the King comes around to see the guests. He discovers one without a suitable garment on; one who has had the brazen-faced shamelessness to intrude himself into the company all ragged and dirty, without the least pains to make himself look decent, and pay respect to the King and his guests. Could there be a more outrageous insult?

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Could anything be more wanton and impudent than such conduct? The King had provided everything; all they needed was at hand; He had warned them to make themselves fit before going in: and here is this man, in spite of all this, deliberately walking into this splendid entertainment, with old tattered clothes and unwashed face and hands. The King is justly indignant, and commands him to be bound hand and foot, and cast into a dismal prison.

Is it not so? Has not God provided the Holy Sacrament of Penance, where, with little trouble, the soul can be washed and cleansed from all its defilements? The Holy Sacrament of the altar, where the soul is nourished, and strengthened, and adorned by feeding on the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ? Are not innumerable graces and virtues waiting for us, ready to be given, if we will only take the trouble to ask for them?

Yes, the King of Glory will come around to see the guests at the

eternal feast. He will inspect each one of us. When will He come around? When we die. Then it is the Judge of the whole human race will come around to see if we are in the banqueting-hall of the eternal feast with the marriage garment on.
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We came up to the door of the church, and we received a ticket of admission. All right so far. We entered the door, and we remained within among the rest. Still all is right, and no doubt we felt pleased to be in such good company, and no one turned us out. But what good will all this do if we have not the wedding garment on? What good will it do us to have gone to the church and heard the sermons, if we have not on the wedding garment? What good to have had the sacraments in life, or even at the hour of death, if we have not on the wedding garment?
What is this wedding garment? The grace of God. If we are in mortal sin, we have not the wedding garment on. We pulled it off when we committed sin, and rendered ourselves utterly unfit for the company of heaven. If we are in mortal sin at this moment, we are now in the marriage feast of the King's Son without the wedding garment, and woe be to us if the King should happen to come around. At any moment His eye may fall upon us, and we may hear the words, "Friend, why camest thou in hither with out having on a wedding garment?" You will be struck dumb with confusion and have nothing to reply; and then will go forth the irrevocable sentence, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
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Oh! who can comprehend the folly of the human race--a race of beings so feeble and miserable, and limited by its nature, and yet so unlimited and unbounded in its cravings for happiness--who can make so little of that offer which lifts them out of all this misery and exceeds their highest expectations? One would think this offer would fill them with delight and a noble enthusiasm to avail themselves of it. And yet, what do we see? God's offer is despised. An immortal destiny is thrown away. Man, created to the image and likeness of God, makes himself like the beasts that perish. He boasts and prides himself on the fact that he lives for the body, and despises eternity and God.
Many are called. Many are placed in the way of salvation. Many have an abundance of means in their hands to attain to it. With a little attention, with light exertion, many would be saved who are lost. What inexcusable folly! Let us not be guilty of it. Let us live for our immortal souls. Let us put on the wedding garment of truth, and sincerity, and justice--that white garment that we received at baptism--and see that we keep it unspotted until the end.

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Sermon XX.

Good Use Of Sickness.

(For The Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost.)

Ecclesiasticus xxxviii. 9.

[USCCB: Sirach xxxviii. 9.]

"__My son, in thy sickness neglect not thyself,
but pray to the Lord, and he shall heal thee.__"

The Gospel of the day relates the miracle of the healing of the ruler's son. That this man had the right kind of faith which pleases God, and obtains extraordinary favors from His hand, is shown by the promptitude of his belief in what our Lord said to him. Although he had urged and insisted upon our Lord's going down to Capharnaum with him, yet, no sooner did he hear the words, "Go thy way, thy son liveth," than he immediately returned home alone without further doubt or remonstrance.

I do not think, my brethren, that we exercise enough of this faith in God in our sicknesses; not, understand me, that we are to look for miraculous cures of our ailments and diseases, or that we are to condemn ourselves for want of faith if our prayers for relief are not answered on a sudden; but what I mean is, that we too often misapprehend the cause of our sicknesses, and do not make the good use of them we might. Let me say a few words which may be for our instruction and edification on these points.

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In any event, whatever may be the direct cause of our sickness, it is, after all, the will of God. If we fall sick through our own culpable neglect or criminal excesses, it is still the will of God. We have, in this, disturbed the good order of His Providence, and suffer the natural consequences of it. There are, besides, those countless forms of disease and phases of ill health which afflict us, and which we are not able to trace to any fault of ours. We fall sick, and cannot tell how or why. An invisible hand has touched us at a moment we knew not, and our strength is gone, the light has fled from our eyes, and the color from our cheek. A secret poison has insinuated itself into our blood, and dried up the fountains of health and vigor. Fierce and rapid in its destruction, a week, a day, or even a few hours suffice to bring us to the point of death, and shatter the boasted glory of our strength. Then, if the danger passes and the prospect of returning health smiles upon us, we have yet to pass through the long and tedious days and nights of convalescence, gathering but slowly, and with great labor and suffering, that which we lost so quickly and so easily.

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The first and most necessary truth for a Christian to reflect upon in the time of sickness is that, in some way or other, God's hand is in it, and that the stroke falls either in chastisement, in mercy, or as a special favor and blessing. We must never forget that life is given to us with all its vicissitudes of joy and sorrow, of prosperity and adversity, of pains and pleasures, more because of eternity than on its own account. Sickness comes in its proper turn at fitting times as a part of the life that we are to lead here below; and when it is good for us, then God sends it. He has ends in view that we may be wholly ignorant of. He knows our souls well and watches over them, and a Christian ought to believe that he is never sick in body but for the sake of the health of his soul.

But some one may say that is bringing sickness, health, and the like within the pale of religion. "O ye sons of men! how long

will ye be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity, and seek after lying?" We are cunning enough in the ways of the world, but why so slow to understand the ways of God? Is there anything that we are, or have, or can be that is not of God? Why forever trying to lie to ourselves, and leave Him out of account? Are we sick or well, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, honored or despised, that God does not know it, has not so appointed it, and has not good reasons for it? And is not the referring of any or all of the states of our being to Him an act of religion?
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The truth is, my brethren, that the manner in which one receives and bears an attack of illness is a good test of one's religion. You will see some giving away to inordinate fear and anxiety upon the approach of the first symptoms of disease. They are not in the habit of referring even their health to God, or of thanking Him for it. They imagine they live of themselves. So, when they feel their own strength leaving them, and are forced to say--I can hold up myself no longer, then terror seizes upon them, as if all aid, human or divine, was wanting, because they can no longer help themselves.
See, too, how the positively irreligious and wicked man generally acts in the commencement of sickness. He talks about his fate, his ill-luck, and curses it. He utters incoherent cries of impatience, and is full of anxiety to discover the act of indiscretion on his own part, or the fault of others, through which he has fallen ill.
But the true Christian, whose soul is prepared for tribulation, with whom God is no stranger in the time of health, recognizes instantly the hand of God when that health is threatened. With holy Job, he exclaims: "If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?" [Footnote 108]
[Footnote 108: Job ii. 10.]
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He may be surprised, as all are, at the unlooked-for blow, but there is no sign of angry complaint or of envious repining. It is all right, he says, God knows best. This one thought satisfies his heart, God knows about it. He knows why He sends it. He knows how long it will last; how much I shall suffer, and how it will end. May His holy will be done!
You see, my brethren, that what I desire to impress upon your minds is that, in all sickness, from whatever cause, the will of God is to be acknowledged. It is not every Christian, I regret to say, who does so look upon it. Too often you will find it regarded as a grievous misfortune, having no good reason why it should be, and without any compensation for the loss of worldly enjoyment and advantages which it necessarily entails; and, even if they do agree that God has sent it, then it is because God is angry with them. He is taking vengeance upon them. There appears to be no other possible reason that can be given for it.
As I said before, we are afflicted with sickness not only as a chastisement for sin, but sometimes also in mercy, as an act of loving-kindness and forethought on the part of God; and again very frequently, as in the case of holy Job, as an opportunity to try our faith, to enable us to show our constancy and love to

God, and is therefore to be looked upon as a mark of predilection, and a positive blessing and grace.
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Certainly, sickness is sometimes sent as a punishment for sin. It comes as a natural and just consequence of sinful excesses. Look at the drunkard and the debauchee. They have gone on for awhile in seeming impunity, but every debauch was a blow struck upon the citadel of life and health. Soon it is shattered, and totters and falls into ruin. Go into the streets, and you may meet them, with haggard faces and trembling limbs. Go to the hospitals and the insane asylums, and see those wrecks of humanity, almost soulless men and women, drivelling idiots, and sickening masses of corruption. Go to many a sick bedside, in palace or in hovel, in this great city, and you may see how sin is punished by an outraged God. And, though you yourself could not trace the fever that blighted you for many long weeks to any natural cause, you know that you deserved it all. Your alarmed conscience did not fail to tell you that there were crimes of your life that demanded retribution. Your overweening pride, your ungovernable anger, has been humbled in the dust. Your days are shortened because of your disobedience and cruelty to your parents.
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The money you have stolen and would not restore has been wrested from you by the heavy charges of your illness. Your disorderly appetites and lusts are now punished with compulsory and exhausting fasts from all food. "He hath struck you as being wicked, in open sight; who as it were on purpose hath revolted from Him, and would not understand His ways: so that you have caused the cry of the needy to come up before Him, and He has heard the voice of the poor." [Footnote 109]

[Footnote 109: Job xxxiv. 26, 28.]

You thought in your sin that you were stronger than God. Now He has rebuked you by sorrow on the sick bed, and has made all your bones to wither. Bread is become abominable to you, and to your soul the meat which before you desired. You have trampled on God's holy law; you would not go to Mass to worship Him. Now, though you would gladly go any distance, and suffer any pain to be present at it, you are denied that joy and consolation. You are as one upon whom the church doors are closed, for whom the altar is thrown down, and the priest departed. "In whatsoever a man sins," says the Holy Scripture, "in that also shall he be punished."
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Sickness has come upon you. Why? In mercy, God sees how indifferent you have become to Him. He sees how your soul has become absorbed in worldly things. Your heart is following after strange gods, and your footsteps are leading down to hell. As Eliu said to Job, "Your guardian angel has spoken to God for you, and said, Deliver him, that he may not go down to corruption." and God in mercy has heard his prayers, and your way is stopped. It is because God loves you, and would save you, that this has come upon you. In the days of pain, and during the long, feverish nights, you will remember God. In your anguish you will turn to Him for comfort, and in your fear you will put your trust in Him.

This world has had too much of your heart. On a sick bed you will be able to judge how much it is worth. You will condemn the vanity of your life. The past will be repented of. New resolutions will be made. You will come back to health with a refreshed and chastened spirit. What the friend of Job said to him, you will say of yourself: "My flesh is consumed with punishments, that I may return to the days of my youth. I will pray to God, and He will be gracious to me: and I shall see His face with joy. When I look upon men, I shall say, I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I deserved, hath delivered my soul from going into destruction, that it may live and see the light." [Footnote 110]

[Footnote 110: Job xxxiii. 25-28.]

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Yes, my dear brethren, I think this is the cause of a great deal of the sickness that is sent upon us. The fever, the cholera, the accident, are good preachers, and they make themselves heard. I do not wonder, then, to see men compelled to listen to their threatening tones, and their souls terrified at their menacing gestures of death, and their eloquent descriptions of the coffin and the grave. The words of God's appointed preacher fall unheeded upon their ears. As long as they have strength enough to hear us, they have courage enough to disobey us. But God shows them a vision of a newly made grave, and causes their feet to totter upon its brink, that they may not go down into it unabsolved.

O blessed sickness! how many wandering souls have you not brought back to a forgotten God! How many almost lost have you not snatched from the jaws of hell! God is a kind and thoughtful Father to us, when we often think Him a hard and cruel Master. Like a surgeon, the deeper and more hidden the wound, the more resolutely does he cut down upon it, and lay it open, in order to effect a radical cure. He chastises us in mercy here, that He may spare us at His judgment-seat in the day of His wrath.

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Why are you sick, you who have no grievous crimes to expiate--you whose whole heart has belonged to God this many a day? Because you are the object of His special graces, and a chosen vessel of election. What is the secret of this apparent contradiction? God wishes to try you, and prove your constancy. Not that He doubts you. On the contrary, He knows how true your heart is. He has every confidence in your fidelity. But He wishes to glorify that fidelity. He wishes to give you a chance to show that you can trust Him in the darkness as well as in the light. He strikes you, that you may have glorious wounds to show at the last day. Do you not know that to suffer for any one is to give a better proof of love than to confer favors and benefits? You have done a good deal for God, I know. He does not forget it. He asks you to give up that which it is the hardest thing in the world to sacrifice--your health. It seems the most unreasonable thing to sacrifice. Your friends and neighbors pity you. They know how much good you were able to do when you were strong and well. They regret to see your usefulness cut off. That usefulness was your constant self-sacrifice for the good of your neighbor. They would

like to see that go on. They forget that God wants you to do a little self-sacrifice for Him, for Him alone, just as if there were no one in existence except you and He in the whole universe. This is why you are sick and suffering.
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Rejoice, then, O Christian sufferer! and bear your cross, not only with patience and resignation, but with holy joy and a thankful heart. Your labors are accepted in His sight, and only this is yet wanting to you--the merit of suffering for Him.
My brethren, this is, I well know, a strange doctrine in the ears of the world, and especially to the unbelieving world around us in our day. Meritorious suffering is something which our Protestant friends not only do not comprehend, but laugh at, so that to most of them, even the very passion and death of our Lord is an enigma. They may believe it, but it is an unreasonable belief on their part, for they ridicule the very principle upon which its reasonableness is founded.
The Catholic Church teaches us that there is a merit in suffering, in voluntary mortification, in fasting and abstinence, in giving up the world, its friendships and its pleasures; that it is meritorious and pleasing to God for the priest and the virgin to deny themselves the joys and comforts of the married state; in a word, that God is glorified as well by suffering as by act. This is her principle. It is the only principle which can give any reasonable explanation of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord, and to deny it is to deny Christ.
Accidental, or rather Providential, suffering, such as we have in sickness, is turned to the same account, and sanctified by our offering it to God in the spirit of sacrifice; for it is not in the act of suffering itself, but in the will, that merit is obtained.
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Now, my brethren, you see in what spirit we should receive and endure sickness. The will should accept it at once, calmly, willingly, without murmur or complaint. It is God's will. That should be sufficient. Our own will must respond and make an entire and generous offering of it. In the beginning of sickness, then, let us say, O my God! I accept this at your hands with all the pain I shall suffer, whatever may be the reason you have so willed it, in satisfaction for my sins, as an admonition to lead a better life, and as a happy chance to suffer something for your sake in union with the sufferings of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Help me by your grace to profit by it as you desire.
While the sickness lasts, let us often look back upon God, as a gallant knight upon a perilous journey thinks upon his liege lord, whose behests are his law, and whose honor is in his hands, renewing again and again our first fervent offering and oath of fidelity. There will be times when we need to think upon God--times of trial and temptation, when nothing but the thought of God will support us. For there are moments of suffering, when our nearest and dearest friends are dumb in our presence; when the friendly hand, uncertain, stops and hesitates before us, fearing lest too rudely it may draw aside the veil that shrouds our anguish--agonizing moments when all human thought and

language dies upon the threshold.
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Happy the soul who then knows whither to turn for that longed-for comfort which the world in its weakness cannot give! Happy is he who has learned the secret of sanctifying suffering! For such the Lord's words have a meaning: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."
These thoughts and the lessons they teach appear to my mind not inappropriate to the season through which we are passing. Nature is putting on her autumn garb of sombre tints, telling us that her strength and beauty are passing away, and that her days of brightness are declining. The woods, once vocal with the song of birds, now begin to look lonely and deserted. Their stillness is broken only by the rustling fall of the dry and withered leaves, like the stealthy and hushed footsteps heard in the sick chamber. The sighing of the winds through the branches robbed of their crown of verdure is mournful in the ears of the listener, as the low, dreamy moanings in a sick man's sleep. They both speak of decay and whisper of death. Of those of us, my brethren, for whom God is preparing the couch of sickness, against whose sight the light of day will be shut out, and upon whose prostrate form the shadows of suffering will soon fall, some will rise and walk forth in the warm sunshine of a hopeful spring, and some, like the fallen leaves, will never flourish again, but lie, like them, to crumble, decay, and mingle with the dust.
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Their white pall of the winter snow shall also be ours. The fierce winter storm shall howl its doleful requiem over our heads as it passes by, but we shall not heed it. The earth shall smile in beauty again, but not for us.
Oh! be it for us as it may--God knoweth! it will be well for us to have thought upon sickness, and to have prepared our souls for the trial. If health be again granted to us, we shall return to it again all the better for having known how to receive it and how to improve its time. If not, then, when our name shall have become a memory, and our form a vision of the never-returning past, we shall look back from the further shore of the dark river of death over which we have passed, and be glad that we learned how to lean upon God in those last dreadful hours in life, glad that we offered to Him beforehand the willing sacrifice of health and strength and life, and thus ascended from the altar of the bed of suffering, as a victim of acceptable merit in the sight of Him who rewards, more than tongue can tell, the least we ever do or suffer for His sake.

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Sermon XXI.

Thoughts For Advent.

(For The Third Sunday Of Advent.)

Philippians iv. 8.

"__For the rest, brethren,
whatsoever things are true,
whatsoever things are modest,
whatsoever things are just,

whatsoever things are holy,
whatsoever things are amiable,
whatsoever things are of good repute;
if there be any virtue,
if there be any praise of discipline,
think on these things__."

The Christian is so deeply impressed with the truth, that a time will come when his faith will be changed to sight, his hope be realized in reward, and his charity be perfected in the enjoyment of all that is good, that he may be said to have this thought always uppermost in his mind. It regulates his conduct, consoles him in affliction, cheers him in the hour of darkness and of doubt, and puts in his mouth and hands the words and deeds of encouragement to his fellows. It is a magnetic thought, which, amid the storms and tempests of life, and through all its weary wanderings, keeps one's heart ever turned towards God and eternity.

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This blessed time for which we are all looking is the coming of the Lord, the manifestation and glorious consummation of the Kingdom of God. As the Apostle expresses it: "Looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." [Footnote 111]

[Footnote 111: Ep. Titus ii. 13.]

The holy season of Advent brings this truth more strongly before us, and directs our thoughts to it by the Gospel prophecies of the second advent of Christ, and by the warnings to prepare for it which St. Paul gives so often in his epistles. The words of the text follow immediately the admonition of the great Apostle which the Church has chosen for the third Sunday of Advent: "The Lord is nigh." Let us to-day, then, think on these things, and endeavor to make these thoughts profitable.

I. __Whatsoever things are true__. Here is a thought worth thousands. We look around us, and see so much insincerity, duplicity, and double-dealing; we meet so many who will overreach us with a friendly smile on their countenance, and cheat us without a blush, that we are tempted both to exclaim with David, in haste, "All men are liars," and to descend from our Christian stand-point of high integrity and noble frankness, in order to cope with the world after its own fashion, and meet it with its own weapons.

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But it is an unfortunate day for the Christian when he begins to forget or disbelieve in what is true, and to think on what is false. His mind is quickly pervaded with a subtle poison, which induces a meanness towards his fellow-men--a distrust of their good faith, and ends in a practical disbelief of the Providence of God. To him such unmerited success as attends the corrupt and swindling practices of the day is at first astonishing. The wicked seem to have it all their own way, and profit by the delay, and despite the coming of the hour when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed before the judgment-seat of Christ. His Christian simplicity and candor gives way little by little before the attacks of this lying spirit; his faith in truth, honesty,

and pure motives is gone, and his practice is not slow to follow his faith.

It is a trite saying that the world is full of humbug, but it is a degrading thought; and to accept this saying as a universal truth, or as the guide of his actions, is unworthy of the Christian man. I envy not the man who acts on the despicable maxim, "Treat every man as a rogue until he has proved himself honest." Rather, a thousand times, would I trust in the power of truth, be true to myself, and, if need be, suffer the loss thereby; for he who has cheated me is the loser in the end, while I have preserved, for a small price, that which is above value, my Christian honor and loyalty to truth.

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Sincerity and candor are not dead, neither has humbug killed them. There are many true people in the world, be there ever so many hypocrites; and truth is always living, real, indestructible, for it lives with a divine, immortal life. Remembering our blessed Lord's words, then, let our "speech be always yea, yea, and nay, nay; for that which is over and above these is of evil." [Footnote 112] Whatsoever things are true, let us think on these.

[Footnote 112: St. Matt. v. 37.]

From another point of view, what a thought that is for those who are out of the pale of the Catholic Church! Have they the true faith? Have they now that truth which shall stand the trial at the coming of Jesus Christ? Do they consider their present state a true one in all respects--true before their conscience, and without doubt before their intelligence? Do they regard their religion as a sure religion? What a serious thought it ought to be for many of them who are even now struggling with the strong power of duty, which bids them make their calling and election sure, by embracing, at all hazards, and with ready obedience and trust in God, that truth in the Holy Catholic Church, without which they would not now dare to die.

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Oh! how earnestly, sincerely, and courageously ought they to listen to the Apostle's words, and think upon those things which are true!

There is one of the eight beatitudes for those who think upon the truth. It is the first: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"--the poor in spirit; the simple in heart and mind; a heart and mind to which cunning, duplicity, or falsehood is both strange and repulsive. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven which Christ will bring at His coming, who are poor and humble in spirit, receiving God's truth as a little child, and not rejecting it with high-minded and arrogant self-will, or with proud disdain. Brethren, whatsoever things are true; let us think on these things during the Holy Advent time.

II. __Whatsoever things are modest__. Modesty is a marked and well-known characteristic of the Christian. No one would ever think of using the expressions, "heathen modesty" or "Mohammedan modesty," simply because it is neither a heathen nor a Mohammedan virtue. The Apostle evidently uses it here in the sense of reservedness of action which springs from true humility of heart.

This displays itself in a most pleasing manner to us in the persons of those who, though endowed with some remarkable talent or accomplishment, yet, through the Christian humility they possess, are not on that account arrogant and puffed up, but bear their honors meekly, and with gentle, unassuming manners.
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So with their natural gifts. God has given to some, more than to others, beauty of face or form, or some personal qualification which excites our admiration or affection. And in those who are thus favored, how much all this beauty is enhanced by the softened halo which Christian modesty and reserve throws about them! Who would pretend to compare the beauty of the haughty and sensual Magdalen, flaunting her profane charms in the streets of Capharnaum, the theme for the toasts of libertines, to the beauty of the saintly and almost angelic penitent, bathing the feet of Jesus with her tears, and wiping them with her dishevelled hair! He whose thoughts are modest cultivates an unselfish spirit. Alas! what with our fund of pride, our intolerant self-will, and ungovernable temper, how much we need to think on whatsoever things are modest! How prone we are to stand upon our rights; how ready to quarrel with and grumble about our neighbors! A profitable thought for the Advent time, St. Paul urged this especially: "Let your modesty be known of all men." And why so? Because "the Lord is nigh." Yes, He is nigh who taught us a similar lesson: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and humble of heart." [Footnote 113]

[Footnote 113: St. Matt. xi. 29.]

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At His coming He will recognize for His own flock, not the wolves, but the sheep; not the bold-faced and giddy votaries of fashion and pleasure, but the meek and humble Christians, whose beauty is the beauty of their holiness. It is not the useless thorns and briers, which no one can approach without being wounded, but the hidden and inoffensive wheat that will be gathered into the garner of the Lord.
There are two beatitudes for the modest-minded--the second and the third: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." And again; "Blessed are the mourners: for they shall be comforted." For the meek and modest, who possess as though they had not; who teach as though they learned; who rule as though they obeyed; whose beauty of body and soul shines among men as though they but reflected that of others; whose inheritance is renunciation, and whose wealth is in their gifts; for them is the whole earth reserved, in its beauty and its glory, at the coming of the Lord. For the blessed mourners, whose perfection in Christian modesty has led them to fly all worldly honors and escape its flatteries; to exchange the gay paths of life for the tearful road of penance, and whose contrite and humble hearts God has promised not to despise--for them is dawning an everlasting day of comfort.
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III. __Whatsoever things are just__. The just man always desires to act honorably and fairly in his dealings. The Christian is required to give anxious thought as well to the

obligations he has contracted towards his neighbor. The closing year naturally brings these obligations to mind; the debts that are owing, the promises made, and the claims for support which others hold against us; and it is a mark of the good, conscientious Catholic that he is anxious about these things, and is earnestly striving to discharge them.

A wise thought for Advent. For now the Lord is nigh, the day of His Judgment approaches, when all wrongs will be made right. The unjust escape payment here, through some quibble in the law, or through practices of chicanery and partial testimony of which they take an unfair advantage, but whose unpaid debts and hidden thefts will not escape the memory of their righteous Judge on the last day. Let our thoughts be, then, to render quickly unto every man his due, "because the Lord cometh, because he cometh to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with justice, and the people with His truth."

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He who thinks upon whatsoever is just will think upon the poor. It is the word of God, that "the just taketh notice of the poor, but the wicked is ignorant of them." [Footnote 114]

[Footnote 114: Prov. xxix. 7.]

God has given to the poor and needy rights which no Christian man can ignore. They are committed to him by his Master, and their Friend and Protector, to be taken care of, to be thought about, to be sought out and ministered unto. Oh! a thousand times happier is he who in Advent time thinks upon the poor: when winter, with his icy blasts, is making the poor shiver with cold and nakedness; when the poor man goes sadly home to find the cupboard bare and his little ones moaning for hunger; when lonely widows and friendless girls, whose homes are in hovels and cheerless garrets, sit up far into the night with no fire in the stove, warming their weary and chilled fingers over the candle, that they may be able to ply the needle that keeps them from starvation. Oh! blessed is that man who, knowing no hunger or thirst for his body, yet hungers and thirsts in his soul after justice for the poor; whose thoughts revert to them when the weather grows colder, and the storm howls more fiercely, and can say when he lays his head upon his pillow at night: "Thank God, I have not forgotten them to-day!"

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You all know the beatitude in store for those who think on what is just. It is the fourth: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall be filled." Yes, God will reward them plenteously. The Psalmist says of them: "The just shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow up like the cedar of Libanus; they shall increase to a fruitful old age, that they may show that the Lord our God is righteous." [Footnote 115]

[Footnote 115: Ps. xci. 13, 15.]

[USCCB: Ps. xcii. 13, 15.]

IV. __Whatsoever things are holy__. The vice of the world is irreligion. Its votaries do not believe in sanctity. Unholy in their lives, so are their thoughts. They are ever ready to scoff at holy persons and things, and to stigmatize the pious as hypocrites. But the Christian is slow to suspect evil. To his

pure mind all things are pure. His religion, which is the law of his life, he knows to be replete with holiness; that it is holy in doctrine, holy in its moral teachings, and glorious in the great multitude of its saints. And just so far as his religion guides him, and exercises its hallowing influence over him, just so far will he delight to think upon what is holy and pure. There are times when the evil we are forced to witness becomes a severe trial to us. Scandals are now and then brought to light which grieve the saints, bring the blush of shame to the cheek of the good Christian, and not unfrequently destroy the faith of the lukewarm.

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"Scandals must needs come," said our Saviour; but is it, therefore, necessary for us to think about them and brood over them? No; there is good enough for our thoughts, good enough for us to glory in, and for which to praise God. The Church never bears her name in vain. She is always the __Holy__ Catholic Church; and we should rather be striving to prove that holiness in our own lives, "pressing forward towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," than stay and linger on the way, losing our time in mourning an evil we see and cannot remove.

There is a beatitude for those whose thoughts are holy. It is the sixth: "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God." The pure-minded, the holy in heart, are those who are most dear to God. Brethren, this is a blessing worth winning, and it is easily won. Remember that the Lord is nigh. Keep your thoughts in the presence of God, and you will prepare your hearts and minds to see Him in the clear vision of His glory, which is promised to the clean of heart.

V. __Whatsoever things are amiable__. To the Christian there is something sacred in all the beauties of nature and of grace. In everything he sees the hand of God, and all the acts of Providence are admirable, and he does not need to be told that they are the best that could happen.

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One who has such thoughts is sure to be a kind-hearted soul. The world wears easily with him, for he sees only what is pleasant, is long mindful of favors, and quickly forgets and forgives injuries. If his friends happen to be at a disagreement with him, or even among one another, it is a positive pain to him. He is uneasy until it is all made up again. It gives him unfeigned delight to bring about a reconciliation between people at variance. Oh! charming and beautiful is such a soul! Sweet is the interior peace which it enjoys. He is filled with thoughts of kindness and gentleness because he thinks on those things that are amiable.

There is a beatitude for such. It is the seventh: "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." Let us strive, dear brethren, to merit this blessing during holy Advent time, when we are preparing to meet our Lord, who came to bring peace on earth to men of good-will.

VI. __Whatsoever things are of good repute__. I love to see good honest pride. It tells me that there is a desire not only to

be respected by men, but to stand well and blameless before God. How much sin would be avoided if Christians would only be more thoughtful of the character and name they bear! And how many could easily be rescued from shame and degrading despair if one could inspire them with true self-respect!
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One day, there came to a priest a young man in the lowest state of moral cowardice from drunkenness. He thought it was of no use to try to retrieve himself, and his friends looked upon him as a hopeless case. The priest, however, did not say one word of reproach to him. He did not need that, poor fellow; he was down enough already. But he shook him warmly and encouragingly by the hand, and said to him, "Why, my dear sir, you have only to think what I believe about you, and in three months time you will be one of the most respectable members of the church." He heard himself called "sir," and "my __dear__ sir," and it would have delighted you to see the change that came over him. He brightened up immediately, his eyes filled with tears, and, returning the pressure of the priest's hand, he said, with a voice choked with emotion, "So I will, father"; and he departed full of hope, and strengthened to make good his resolution. Thoughts of good repute will shut the mouths of backbiters and slanderers, and will school the tongue to speak well of every one. The love of our own good repute should teach us to be merciful to others. For, if there was one who knew all our sins as we ourselves know them, and threatened to expose us before the world, how piteously would we cry to him for mercy, and beseech him to spare the good name we hold!
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He who would have that mercy shown to him, let him show it to others, and bury the knowledge he possesses of their shame in that deep oblivion and secrecy in which he would wish to hide his own.
There is a beatitude for such. It is the fifth: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."
VII. __If there be any virtue, if there be any praise of discipline__. The presence and influence of the Holy Ghost in the Church has infused into her members a spirit whose manifest workings have made the world stand in awe. It is Christian fortitude. This has enabled the martyr to smile in the midst of torture, and changed the dungeon into an ante-chamber of heaven. This has nerved the missionary to bid an eternal farewell to home, friends, and kindred, and carried him with a fearless heart into the haunt of the savage, to the shore of the cannibal, and to the land of the relentless and cruel pagan who gloats over the horrible death he makes a Christian die. This it is that gives strength to timid, weak woman to put on the habit of sacrifice, and enter the pestilential wards of the hospital with a cheerful step, and watch through the long and weary night by the bedside of the dying stranger, whose contagious disease carries death to her own brave heart.
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This gives her courage to face the cannon's mouth, and stand amid shot and shell ready to bind up the bleeding wounds of the

soldier, or to waste and wear her life away in seeking out, teaching, and reforming the vilest outcasts upon the streets. This it is that covers the Little Sister of the Poor with a panoply of heroism as she goes from door to door begging for the superannuated and bedridden wretches whom she has picked up out of the gutters, or from the purlieus and filthy alleys of the city, degraded, friendless, and miserable from want or disease; and it wreathes her head with a halo of glory as she sits down with a merry laugh to eat the scraps of food which they have left, or puts on the thin and ragged dress which is not warm enough or good enough for her dear old poor.

This Christian fortitude, this heavenly virtue, this divine power of discipline and mastery over souls, is seen in the earnestness and the fearlessness of all the deeds of charity and mercy, of all the admonitions and exhortations, and even of the threats and warnings of God's Holy Church to the nations of the earth. She is able to teach her children to carry out the lesson of the Lord: "Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." [Footnote 116]

[Footnote 116: St. Luke xii. 4.]

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Oh! let us think a little upon this virtue, this discipline worthy of all praise, and it will lead us to be more trusting and loyal to the Church, and also to obey her commands the more readily who, like her Divine Founder, "speaks as one having authority." A thought for the Holy Advent time: for at the bottom of it all lies the grand reason of the Church's existence and work. She prepares men for the coming of the Lord. She is looking for the establishment and triumph of the kingdom of our Lord on the earth. The principle of her actions, which she learned at the foot of her Master's cross and with which she inspires her children, is this: Sacrifice for love; suffering for justice's sake.

She wins a blessing for it. It is the last: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice's sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." I have not brought the beatitudes to mind in connection with these Advent thoughts without reason. St. Paul has a promise of beatitude to those who think on these things--a comprehensive beatitude, the sum of all happiness: "And the God of peace shall be with you" [Footnote 117]--a blessing, my dear brethren, which I hope we may all enjoy when the coming Christmas shall bring the angelic salutation to our ears: "__Pax hominibus bon√¶ voluntatis!__"

[Footnote 117: Phil. iv. 9.]

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Sermon XXII.

Fraternal Charity.

(For The Festival Of St. John The Evangelist.)

I Epistle St. John ii. 10.

"__He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no scandal in him__."

We celebrate to-day the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, the Apostle who is distinguished in Holy Scripture as the disciple

whom Jesus loved, and who is represented as leaning on the bosom of the Lord at the Last Supper. Now, we may ask what is the reason the Lord showed this marked preference and especial affection for St. John above the other Apostles? It must have been because St. John was more like the Lord than any of the others, for God must always love us in proportion as we approach His divine image and likeness. The more we put on Christ--that is, the more we are clothed with the thoughts, ideas, feelings, and dispositions of Christ, the more is Christ attracted to us in love.

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Now, what was the characteristic virtue of this great Apostle, which rendered him so like to Christ and so dear to Him? It was his tender and overflowing love to his neighbor--that is, to all his fellow-men. He is pre-eminently the Apostle of fraternal charity, or of the love of one's neighbor.

Nothing, then, will please St. John better today than to speak of the excellence of this virtue, which was the continual subject of his discourse.

What, dear brethren, is the end and object for which we live in this world? Undoubtedly it is to acquire the love of God. This divine love will render us for ever blessed, and we shall be blessed just in the proportion we have acquired it. The greatest saints are those who have loved God best; the least in heaven are those who have loved Him least; but all must love God in some degree, or there is no place in heaven for them.

Now, I assert that the easiest, shortest, and most efficient road to the love of God is the love of our neighbor, or of our fellow-man, who is designated by the word neighbor. I assert it on the authority of St. John himself, who has laid it down in the clearest manner. We read in the breviary of to-day this beautiful narrative of St. Jerome:

> "The blessed John the Evangelist, whilst he was living at Ephesus, in his extreme old age, was scarcely able to be brought to the church by the hands of his disciples, and could not weave together many words into a sentence. He did nothing at the different assemblies but repeat the same words, 'My little children, love one another.' At last the disciples and brethren who were present, getting tired of always hearing the same thing, said: Master, why do you always repeat this? He replied in a sentiment worthy of St. John: 'Because it is the precept of the Lord, and if this alone be observed it is sufficient.'"

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How beautiful is this! "Little children, love one another," and, "This alone is sufficient." We must love one another with the sincerity, the artlessness, of little children. There must be no hypocrisy about our love; it must be genuine, and flow from the right fountain. And what is this fountain? It is the love of God. Our love of our fellow-men must proceed from the love of God. We must love him for the sake of God, and because God wishes us to love him, and because he represents God to us.

There is a love which is not on account of God, but, on the contrary, opposed to God, and which destroys the love of God in

us. A parent, for example, is distractedly fond of a child because the child is beautiful, or talented, or amiable, and this child is consequently indulged and spoiled; is educated for show and vanity, or, to sum it all up, exclusively for this short-lived world and its object.
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Such love as this does not lead to God, but turns the soul away from Him. With passionate eagerness it fixes it on the present, as its last end and chief good, and quenches its thirst for God, who is the only last end and chief good for which it was created. We must love our neighbor, because we see in him an immortal soul, created to the image and likeness of God, and destined to participate at last in the glory and happiness of God. We must love our neighbor, because he has been bought by the blood of Jesus Christ, his God, who was willing to lay down His life for him, after thirty years of toil and hardship, suffering the agony of the cross.
Now, dear brethren, let me explain this a little more practically. You see a person who is in some respects repugnant to you. His manners and ways of acting are not pleasant to you; indeed, some of his actions are very disagreeable. Well, then, if you are actuated in loving your neighbor by the love of God, you will not allow your mind to dwell on these things so far as to conceive a dislike or hatred, but, on the contrary, you will rise above such thoughts, by considering his relation to God. You will see God in him, and this will keep your mind sweet, gentle, and kind towards him.
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This is what our Lord says: "You have heard what has been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy; but I say unto you, 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 the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love those that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathen the same? Be ye perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." [Footnote 118]

[Footnote 118: St. Matt. v. 43-48.]

There, Christians, is the doctrine of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. If it is not yours also, is it proper to call you by His name, Christians? Should you not rather be called, according to His way of naming, heathens and publicans?
But how many objections are raised against this plain and heavenly doctrine? How much repugnance and fighting against it! You see a poor man in the street, or in his miserable shanty. He is ragged and dirty, for rags and dirt are often necessary accompaniments of poverty. Do you see in him Jesus Christ? No; only an object of disgust. Instead of relieving him, you begin to reason. Why does he not go to work?
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He is idle and shiftless. If he is relieved, he will be just the same. Instead of helping him, let him be forced by stress of

poverty and starvation to find work. And after all, the poor man has done his best, and at least should not have to bear undeserved reproach, as well as his poverty.

My dear brethren, how is it possible that we should have this right love of our neighbor, which is supernatural, unless we love him for God's sake; unless we hunger and thirst to please God and acquire His justice, and unless we pray constantly to God to grant us this wonderful effect of His goodness?

Let us understand, then, that, if we will acquire the love of God, we must pray for the love of our neighbor, and then act it out in all sincerity whenever an opportunity offers itself to us. St. John tells us in his epistle: "How can we love God whom we have not seen, when we love not our neighbor whom we have seen?" This text deserves an explanation. You desire to love God more; you feel that this love is of more value to you than anything else; this prompts you to fall upon your knees and beg earnestly for it. You say My God, give me Thy love; give me a great decree of this love. Then comes the natural thought What shall I do to acquire this treasure? How shall I conduct myself and order my life, so as constantly to preserve and increase it?

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If God would only show Himself to me, and I could behold His beauty, and experience His goodness, then I should know how to love Him. Why does He not reveal Himself?

But all is dark, all is silent. God is hidden: we cannot form a picture of Him in our minds. We have never seen God at any time, and we shall not see Him as long as we remain in the flesh.

But God and our Lord Jesus Christ walk the streets every day. We meet them whenever we go abroad. How is that? It is in the person of every one we meet, particularly of the poor, the miserable, and the despised. The promise is absolute: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these, ye did it unto Me." Love one of these poor men, entertain a sentiment of compassion for him, and you have made a genuine act of love of God. Entertain an habitual love for him, and respect him for the sake of the One he represents, and you will form the habit of God's love in your soul.

When St. Martin cut his cloak in two, and gave half of it to a poor man he met on the roadside, our Lord appeared to him the same night with the half cloak upon his shoulders, and said: "Martin the catechumen (St. Martin was at that time under instruction for his baptism) has clothed Me in this garment."

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In the account of the last judgment, everything is described as being settled on this one principle. "Then the King shall say to them that shall be on the right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess 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 ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: sick, and ye visited Me. I was in prison, and ye came to Me. Then shall the just answer: Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, and fed Thee; thirsty, and gave Thee drink? and when did we see Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and covered Thee? or when did we ever see Thee sick or in prison, and visit Thee? And the King answering, shall say to

them: Amen, I say to you, as long as ye did it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto Me." [Footnote 119]

[Footnote 119: St. Matt. xxv. 34-40.]

This is what the saints understood and fully realized. St. Catharine of Sienna found an old woman sick of the leprosy. She was so disgusting and loathsome an object that everybody had deserted her, and she was perishing of neglect and starvation. The saint gladly took charge of her, cleansed her sores, prepared her food, and lavished upon her every possible attention.

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The mother of the saint was not so charitable. She heard of her daughter's proceedings, and became very angry. In her fear of the infection, she forbade her to attend the sick woman any longer. But St. Catharine pleaded our Lord's case so strongly that her mother was obliged to yield. Then the old woman, overcome by her miseries, took a dislike to her, and repaid her kindness by a constant torrent of the foulest abuse. St. Catharine, in spite of all this, never relaxed her kindness a moment. As a further trial, she caught the infection, and her hands were all covered with the loathsome disorder. But nothing deterred her from her purpose until she had the satisfaction of receiving the last breath of this poor creature, who died in sentiments of the deepest contrition. Then the saint finished her work by burying her with her own hands, and, as she cast the earth into the grave, those hands became instantly freed from all traces of disease, and became white and more beautiful than ever before.

If we love for God's sake, we shall love all, and no one will be excluded from our love. Love will flow from our hearts, like the water from a perpetual, inexhaustible fountain, which makes all the soil it waters fertile, producing rich fruits and beautiful flowers, These fruits and flowers of divine charity are well enumerated by St. Paul: "Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely: is not puffed up; is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger; thinketh no evil: rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth: beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things." [Footnote 120]

[Footnote 120: I Cor. xiii. 4-7.]

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Dear brethren, let us reflect on this virtue of fraternal charity, and resolve to increase in it. Let us be more pleasant and kinder in our way of speaking. Let us look more kindly upon others, and their ways of acting. Let us endeavor to maintain towards all such a manner of speaking and acting as we suppose our Lord Jesus Christ to have had, and, altogether, be more amiable than we have ever been before. Indeed, let us set no bounds within our own hearts to our love of our fellow-men. Every action of love, no matter how small, will increase the love of God in our hearts. Everyone will be another stroke of the oar which drives forward the little boat of our soul toward the kingdom of heaven. Every one will be an increase of merit and of eternal reward.

[Transcriber's notes: This production is based on https://archive.org/details/fiveminutesermon00paul/page/n4]

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Five Minute Sermons

For Low Masses on all Sundays of the Year by Priests of the Congregation of St. Paul

Volume I.

Frederick Pustet & Co.,
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Preface.

These short sermons were commenced in St. Paul's Church, New York, toward the close of the year 1876. The motive for doing this was that the great number of persons who generally attend only a Low Mass on Sundays might enjoy the advantage of hearing the word of God preached, without being delayed too long for their convenience. For this reason they were limited in time to five minutes, while the effort was made to condense within this brief compass a sufficient amount of matter at once instructive and hortatory, in plain and simple language, to answer the practical purposes of a popular discourse. In order to secure this twofold object of making the sermons so short that they would not overrun the limit of five minutes, and at the same time so solid and pungent that they would furnish a real nutriment and stimulus to the minds and hearts of the audience, it was obviously necessary that they should be carefully written out. For each priest to write and commit to memory his own sermon would be undertaking too much; and therefore the plan was adopted of assigning to one the task of writing all the sermons, to be read by each priest celebrating a Low Mass for the people.

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The sermons have been published every week in the _Catholic Review_, and an advanced sheet of the printed copy, pasted on a tablet, has been furnished, to be used in preaching the sermon at each one of the Low Masses on the Sunday. The utility of these sermons, the satisfaction they give to the people who hear them, and the advantage which can be derived by reading them after they have been published, are too obvious to need explanation. This advantage we hope to make more extensive by now publishing the greater part of the sermons which have been thus far preached, and printed in a weekly newspaper, in the more convenient and permanent form of a volume. It is hoped that they will be practically useful to many priests who may read them, or use them in preparing similar short sermons of their own for those occasions when it is not practicable to give longer and more elaborate discourses to their congregations. Many of them will be found, besides, to furnish a nucleus for the composition of sermons of the usual length and rhetorical completeness. To the faithful they afford matter for spiritual reading and profitable meditation which is all the better for being put into a brief and

simple shape.
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The merit of devising and first carrying into execution this excellent plan of preaching the Five-Minute Sermons at Low Mass belongs to the late Rev. Algernon A. Brown, C.S.P. It is quite proper to praise the works of one who has departed this life, even though he was one of our own society. Many of the sermons written by Father Brown and contained in the present volume are masterpieces in the art of miniature discourse. They are not fragments or sections of sermons, reading like pages taken from longer discourses or meditations, but genuine sermonettes, each one complete and perfect in itself. They are marked, also, by a grave and solemn earnestness remarkable in the utterances of so very young a priest, and seeming to be like a shadow from a very near proximity to the eternal world, cast over his spirit as he rapidly drew near to the goal of his appointed course. It will surely be deemed appropriate, and prove agreeable to the readers of this volume of sermons, that a few lines should be consecrated to the memory of the one who may justly be called its author, although the greater portion of its actual contents came from others who succeeded to him in the task from which he was called away at so early a period of his sacerdotal life.
Father Algernon Brown, the son of a respectable physician who is still living and resides in the Isle of Wight, was born at Cobham, Surrey, England, May 30, 1848. He was bred in the Established Church of England, and during his early youth was educated at a ritualistic school in Brighton.
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His tastes and predilections were ecclesiastical, and he entered warmly into the study and practice of the doctrinal, moral, and liturgical views and ways of the Anglican ritualists. At the age of eighteen he was received into the Catholic Church by Father Knox, of the Oratory, and went first to St. Edmund's College, afterwards to Prior Park, in order to prepare himself for the priesthood.
After nearly completing his course, and having already received minor orders, he came in 1871, with two younger brothers, both converts, and one of the two an ecclesiastical student, to the United States, and was ordained priest by the Most Rev. Archbishop Purcell in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, May 25, 1872.
In the year 1874 he was received as a member of the Congregation of Paulists after a year's novitiate. During the four years which elapsed between this period and that of his death Father Brown suffered continually, and often severely, from ill health, yet nevertheless continued to labor bravely and cheerfully, beyond his strength, until he was actually overpowered by fatal disease. His special department of work lay in the direction of the sacristy and of the ceremonies at the public offices of divine worship, and the management of the devout confraternities established in the parish. His accurate knowledge of the rubrics, ceremonial, and sacred chant, his ardent zeal for the order and decorum of the divine service, and his untiring assiduity in the work assigned him, were equally valuable to the religious

community of which he was a member, and edifying to the people.
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After the Easter of 1877 his failing health obliged him to make a visit to his native England and his paternal home as the last hope of prolonging his life. In the following autumn he returned, enjoying a considerable but only temporary amelioration in his physical condition, which soon after began to grow sensibly worse. On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception he attempted for the last time by a heroic effort to say Mass, but was prevented by a fainting-fit which prostrated him at the foot of the altar as he was commencing the Introit. From this day forward he was slowly dying, until at last, after long and careful preparation, he closed his eyes peacefully under the icy hand of death. His death occurred on Monday in Passion Week, the 8th of April, 1878, at the age of twenty-nine years and eleven months, and his solemn obsequies were celebrated on the following Wednesday. All the sermons in this volume which can be identified with certainty as his are marked with his initial letter, B. May they long remain unfaded, a bouquet of immortelles.

[Transcribers's note: His full name has been substituted for "B" and a "B" has been inserted in the Table of Contents entry.]

In MEMORIAM!

St. Paul's Church,
Ninth Avenue And Fifty-ninth Street, New York.
Feast of All Saints, 1879.

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Five Minute Sermons
Volume 1.

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First Sunday of Advent

Epistle.

Romans xiii. 11-14,

Brethren:

Know that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light; let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel.

St. Luke xxi. 25-33.

At that time Jesus said to his disciples:

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

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Sermon I.

Heaven and earth shall pass away.

--St. Luke xxi. 33.

Ah! my friend, how are you? How do you do? Where are you going? These are everyday expressions, dear brethren. Probably some neighbor spoke to you thus as you were coming to Mass. This is the first Sunday in Advent, the Sunday of judgment, and I am

going to put the same questions to you. I begin with the last one. Where are you going? Young men, old men, women, girls, children, people, priests, rich and poor, where are all of you going? Are you going to church or for a walk? No, we have a trial at court and are summoned to appear. Whose trial? Our own. Yes, we are all going to judgment, the trial of eternity before the all-seeing Judge. We are all formed in a great procession. No matter whether we are good or bad, in a state of grace or of mortal sin, no matter whether our case is a good one or a bad one, no matter if our cause be just or unjust, we are all going to judgment--all going to the great trial, in which every living soul, each man and woman and child, shall be the prisoners at the bar, and God, the judge of all, shall sit upon the great white Throne. When will that trial-day come? No one knows, not even the angels, our Lord says. Judgment will come suddenly. Time has been given you. You have been told "beforehand." The _actual_ coming will be sudden. "Behold, I come as a thief in the night." "Behold, I come quickly." "Behold, I come as the lightning." Such are the terms in which our Lord speaks of his second advent. When men are eating and drinking, marrying, buying, and selling, burying the dead, laboring, praying, waking or sleeping, _then_ there will be a cry heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet Him."
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Go forth just as you are; just as the moment finds you; without a moment more to prepare, without an instant in which to say, "God help me!" Where are you going, then? Going to judgment. Going to a _sudden_ judgment. Going to meet accusers who will rise out of the graves of earth and from the pit of hell to bear witness against sinners for all the commandments they have broken, all the duties they have neglected, all the scandal and bad example they have given. Woe to bad parents in that day! Woe to disobedient children in that day! Woe to the drunken, the impure, the thieves, the liars, the false witnesses, the apostates in that day! Ah! then, how do _you_ do. Christian, Catholic? How are you, baptized of God? How is your health, the health of your soul? Are you in the fever of sin? Do you see upon your souls great livid plague-spots of mortal offences against the Almighty? Then tremble, for you have to face the God "whose eyes are brighter than the noonday sun"! He will ask: "How are you? What mean these stains upon your soul? Where is the white garment that I gave you? Where is my image and likeness?" Woe to every one who cannot answer these questions; for to be unable to answer means to be unable to go to heaven, means that you will be found guilty by the Eternal Judge and condemned to everlasting death. Let, then, these two questions ring in your ears: Where are you going? How are you in God's sight? You are going to judgment. Are you in a fit state to appear there? Brethren, it will be an awful day, that day of judgment, even for the just.
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"Where, then, shall the unjust and the sinner appear?" Look up to the heavens as you leave this church. The clouds are not yet riven. The sun is not yet darkened. Oh! then there is yet time. There is a moment's lull before the storm breaks; a second's

pause before the trumpet sounds. But the day of judgment _will come_, for Jesus Christ has told us so, and, as he says: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon II.

Brethren: Know that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep.

--Romans xiii. 11.

To-day, my dear brethren, is the New Year's Day of the Catholic Church. Today she begins again that round of seasons and festivals which will never cease to be repeated till that day comes of which this season of Advent reminds us--that day in which, as St. Peter tells us, "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 burnt up"; that day when He who died for us on the cross shall come to judge the living and the dead.

The church begins her year with Advent, because this season represents principally, not that last coming of our Lord of which I have just spoken, but rather that time which went before his first coming--that long period of several thousand years, answering to the four weeks of this season, with which the world's history began, and in which it was waiting for the promise of redemption to be fulfilled.

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But there is another very good reason for each one of us to begin our own new year now, and it is one of the reasons why the second advent of Christ is presented to our minds by the church, as well as his first, at this time.

It is that we may now make that serious examination of our past life, and those firm resolutions for the future, that we can best make at the beginning of a new year, when we feel most strongly that one more of those short cycles by which our life is measured has gone for ever beyond our reach, and brought us so much nearer not only to the day of general judgment, but also to that more imminent one in which each one of us shall stand alone before the throne of God to give an account of the use which we have made of these precious years which he has given us, and which are passing so rapidly away.

This new year's day of the church is a time, then, above all others in which we should make those resolutions without which we cannot be saved.

It is said that hell is paved with good intentions; it may with equal truth be said that heaven is paved with good resolutions. What is the difference between the two? An intention is a purpose the carrying out of which is put off till some other time; a resolution is one which is carried out now. So, as the putting off of our good purposes is the sure way to lose our souls, the carrying them out at once is the means absolutely necessary to salvation and certain to secure it.

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No one ever saved his soul without some time or other making a

resolution to keep the law of God, and going to work at once to carry it out, and persevering in it to the end of life, Such a resolution has got to be made at some time, and now is the time to make it.

Look back, then, my brethren, on this first day of the new year, at the one which has just gone never to return, and see if you are satisfied with the way you have spent it. Ask yourselves if you have not been trifling away enough of the short time which was given you to be spent in the service of God, and if there is any too much left to make some recompense to him for all that he has done for you; and say, with the church in the Epistle of this Sunday, that now it is indeed the hour to rise from sleep, from this fatal sleep of indifference and ingratitude, and go to work in real earnest on the business of your salvation, and not rest again till the time for rest has come. God will surely give that eternal rest to those who labor during life, but he has not promised it to sluggards and traitors, as those certainly are who care only for themselves and not for him, and who expect their reward without doing anything to deserve such a favor at his hands.

Sermon III.

Heaven and earth shall pass away.
--St. Luke xxi. 33.

By the word "heaven" our Lord does not mean that heaven to which we shall be admitted if we are faithful, for that, as we know, is eternal. No; he means some part of the visible heavens with which our earth is immediately connected.

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The earth, and to some extent the visible heaven also, we do not know how, will pass away as to their present state--they will be so changed that it may be said that the old earth and the old heaven have been destroyed.

It is to remind us of this second coming, or advent, of our Lord, when the world and all that it contains shall pass away, as well as of his first coming, which we are to celebrate at Christmas, that the church keeps this season on which we have just entered, and calls it by this name of Advent.

This truth, that the heavens and earth which we see shall pass away, or be destroyed, is a matter of faith. We cannot, probably, prove by science that this must take place, certainly not that such a change is so near as the Scriptures seem to indicate; but we do not need the light of faith to show us that they shall pass away from _us_, and that, perhaps, very soon. In a few years--perhaps in a few months or days--we shall close our eyes in death, and the heavens and earth which we now see shall disappear from our sight for ever. There are two lessons which we may learn from this evident and certain truth, and which the church wishes us to consider at this time.

The first is that the pleasures of this world are so fleeting and uncertain that it is not worth while for us to take any pains to secure them. We can only hold them for a little while at the most; they are like the treasures which one sometimes possesses in a dream and which melt away in the hands on waking. A moment

after death it will make no difference to us whether we have had them or not; they will seem to have been possessed only as in a dream when we wake to the reality of the next world.
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"They have slept their sleep," says the Psalmist, "and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands." The life of one who makes pleasure his object is like a sleep; and, as St. Paul warns us in the Epistle of to-day, "it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed."
Our real salvation, the only life which is really worth enjoying, is coming very soon. This life is only a season of Advent to prepare for that eternal festival to which we have been invited by the King of kings.
So, as our first conclusion is that it is not worth while to seek for the pleasures of this life, our second is that it is not a matter for great grief if we have pain and affliction in it. One would not mind suffering for a day, or even for a week, if the rest of only this short mortal life was to be passed in uninterrupted enjoyment. So, if it be the will of God, perhaps we can manage to pass a few years in pain and sorrow, with the promise, which will not fail us, of happiness that shall be eternal.
Especially when we remember that pain and sorrow in this life make that promise all the more sure. "Blessed are ye poor," says our Lord, "for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. ... Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "Behold," he says, "I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works."
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Let this, then, be our care, not to seek pleasure nor to avoid pain which shall soon pass away, but so to live that we shall be anxious to meet him and have a well-grounded hope of receiving that reward; that when he says, "Surely I come quickly," we may be able to answer with the apostle, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." For that life is the best in which one is most willing and ready to die; in which one hears most gladly that this heaven and this earth shall pass away.

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Second Sunday of Advent

Epistle.

Romans xv. 4-13.

Brethren:

What things soever were written, were written for our instruction; that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures, we might have hope. Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of one mind one towards another, according to Jesus Christ: that with one mind, and with one mouth, you may glorify God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive one another, as Christ also hath received you unto the honor of God. For I say that Christ Jesus

was minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers. But that the Gentiles are to glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: Therefore will I confess to thee, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and will sing to thy name. And again he saith: Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again: Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and magnify him, all ye people. And again Isaias saith: There shall be a root of Jesse; and he that shall rise up to rule the Gentiles, in him the Gentiles shall hope. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing: that you may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Gospel.

St. Matthew xi. 2-10.

At that time:

When John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples he said to him: Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another? And Jesus making answer said to them: Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me.

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And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? a prophet? yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my Angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

Sermon IV.

Behold, I send my Angel before thy face.

--St. Matthew xi. 10.

I suppose, brethren, among the first things you remember hearing of in your childhood were "_the angels of God_" or, as people often say, "_the angels of God in heaven_." You remember, I am sure, how pleased you were to look at their pictures, with sweet faces and large, outstretched wings, and how glad you were when you were told that one of those guardian spirits was always by your side. But this morning I want to speak to you, not of the "angels of God in heaven," but of the _angels of God on earth_. And who are _they?_ you will ask. Are they spirits? Have they wings like the angels we saw years ago in the picture-book? No, they have not wings; they are not pure spirits; they are men, women, and children just like ourselves. The word "angel" means a messenger, one who is sent with tidings. Thus St. John Baptist (who was sent to tell the world that Jesus Christ was coming) is called in to-day's Gospel "an angel"--that is, a messenger from God. Now, brethren, all of us ought to be messengers of God to our neighbor and to the world.

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We are all Catholics, have all been called to know the true faith, and we have all been taught how to observe God's moral law. First, then, we Catholics ought to be the _angels of God on earth_ to those who are not Catholics. We ought to do our best in our own little circle to spread the knowledge of our holy religion. By our lives we ought to show the world that the Catholic religion makes us better citizens, better and more honest men of business, and truer lovers of our neighbors and mankind. Many of you "live out" at service in Protestant or infidel families; many of you are working for non-Catholic employers; many are employed in factories, surrounded by those who belong to false religions or who have no religion at all. Oh! what chances such have to be _angels of God on earth_. You can show by your fidelity to work, by your strict honesty, by your modest behavior, that you belong to a religion which comes from God. By a seasonable word, by the loan of a book, by showing your horror of cursing and swearing and of bad talk, you would be doing God's work, and showing to those outside the church that there is _something_ in your belief which makes you good. Have you done this? Have you not, on the contrary, often scandalized our non-Catholic friends by your bad example, your dishonesty, your exhibitions of temper, your outbursts of blasphemy, and your consent to what was impure? Ah! when you do these things you are the _angels of the devil on earth_. You are doing his work and bearing his message. Again, to your own Catholic brethren and to your own family you can be _angels of God on earth!_ Have you got a scandalous neighbor, a negligent father or mother, a wicked child, a profligate husband or son? {29}
Oh! be angels of God to these unfortunate ones. By your good example, your patience in affliction, by your charity and forbearance, your strict attention to your religious duties, and, in short, by a really good life, you will be able to "prepare the way of the Lord." You will "go before his face" to prepare the way for his graces. Don't let it be said by those who are not good Catholics, "I don't see that those who go to their duties are any better than I am." Show them that you are better, and that it is _religion_ that makes you so. "Example is better than precept." Actions speak louder than words. Oh! then be angels of God to those outside the church, be angels of God to your children, to your parents, to your friends and neighbors. Once there was a child who had been very badly brought up by his parents. He went to church by chance one day, and heard an instruction on the laws of the church. When he came home, although it was Friday, there was meat for dinner. The boy would not eat it. Furious at this, his bad parents beat him; but the child remained firm, till at last, touched by his example, the parents converted themselves and lived as good Catholics. That boy was an angel of God on earth. "Go ye and do in like manner," and then our Lord Jesus Christ, the "Angel of the great covenant," will summon you at death to take your place among his holy angels, with whom you shall be glorified and chant his praises for ever and ever.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

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Sermon V.

_He that is not with me
is against me._
--St. Matthew xii. 30.

There are many Christians who do not seem to know that they are Christians. They do not seem to realize what the word Christian means; or, if they do, they do not act as if they did. They do not understand, if we are to judge them by their actions, that it is the name of one of the two great parties in this world--the party of Christ and that of Anti-christ.

The issues between these two parties are more important than those between any others that ever have been or ever will be; for they are questions not only of time but of eternity. And the principles of these parties are so different that no compromise between them is possible. They are fighting with each other for the possession of the world, and neither will be satisfied till complete victory is gained--that is, till the other ceases to be. Every one has got to belong to one of these parties. It is impossible for any one to remain neutral in this contest and a mere spectator of it. Every one has got to be on one side or the other. This is what our Lord himself says: "He that is not with me is against me."

Every one, then, that does not wish to be on the devil's side has got to be on that of Christ. But this is just what a great many of you, my dear friends, do not, I am afraid, see so clearly as you should. You often try, I fear, to stand off and be on neither side when duty requires you to come out boldly on the side to which you belong.

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Perhaps, for instance, you are compelled to associate daily with persons--either infidels, Protestants, or bad Catholics--whose mouths are full of impious or impure talk, which they expect you to agree with or join in. They enjoy this filth and profanity, and pretend to think their foul and blasphemous jests very funny, which they very seldom are; and they expect you to laugh at them, as they themselves do.

Now, I do not say that you are bound each and every time to reprove these sins, but I do say that you are sometimes. You cannot expect not to be counted among these people, and justly so counted, too, unless you say or do enough in some way to show plainly on what side you are. Do not, then, keep your faith and piety shut up in your prayer-books, only to be brought out when you are on your knees before God and no one by who will not admire you for them. No; bring them out plainly in the sight of his enemies, and let them see that you are really in earnest--that you really and truly believe that you have got a soul to save, and that your professions are not at all a pretence.

For, if you do not do this, you will be carried over to the other side in spite of yourself. If you do not reprove and separate yourself from what is sinful, you will join in it. Your own experience ought to show you that. Your effort to be neither the

one thing nor the other, neither God's servant nor the devil's, always has been in vain and always will be. For the Eternal Truth has said, "He that is not with me is against me."
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Yes, my brethren, it is certain that if you will not confess Christ boldly and openly before men; if you will not acknowledge that his faith and his morals are yours also; if you will not bravely and generously take his part in the great battle which he is fighting in this world, and in which he has enlisted you to fight under him; but if, on the other hand, you sneak off into a corner and stay there as long as his enemies are in sight, he will not count you as his servants or friends, and you will not be so, either in this world or in the world to come. "He that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven." And if you will not confess him, you must deny him; there is no middle course.
Be not, then, runaways, but brave soldiers in the conflict to which you are called. The enemies of Christ are not afraid to let their principles be known; if you would imitate their example the tables would be turned. They would be ashamed of themselves, if you would not be; and it is they who ought to be ashamed, not you. Moreover, God would get the glory which belongs to him, and if you will not give it to him you cannot expect him to save your mean and cowardly souls.

Sermon VI.

_What went you out into the desert to see?
a reed shaken with the wind?_
--St. Matthew xi. 8.
--usccb.org/bible: St. Matthew xi. 7

In these words, my dear brethren, our Lord holds up the character of his great precursor, St. John Baptist, as a model for the imitation of his disciples, and also for our imitation. "St. John is not like a reed shaken with the wind; see that you follow his example"--that is the meaning and the lesson of this question asked by our Lord.
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St. John, indeed, was not like a reed shaken with the wind. He was rather like a massive column of stone, which is not moved a hair's-breadth from its place by the most furious storms. He was firm and unyielding to all the assaults of temptation. Born free from original sin, he persevered without actual sin through the whole of his glorious life.
He has set us a magnificent example of firmness and fortitude--virtues in which Christians of the present day are wofully wanting. There is a great deal of piety nowadays, but it seems often to be of a very superficial kind. It looks well, but it does not wear well. Its outside is very promising, but there Is something wanting inside, and that is a backbone. It does very well in the sheltered atmosphere of the church, but it breaks down when it is taken out of doors into the world.
The assaults it seems to be weakest against are those which come from without. It stands well against interior temptations, on the whole, but it quails before even a word spoken against it. It is

dreadfully afraid of what people will say. It is very much under the power of false shame and what is called human respect. It is a most lamentable sight to see people who are really in their hearts and principles thoroughly good Christians, and who might be the instruments in God's hands of a great deal of good both for his glory and the salvation of others, so terribly under the influence of human respect that their example counts almost for nothing, or perhaps is even a scandal and a discouragement to those around them. They have a great deal of faith, and they really want to avoid sin, but they do not seem to want anybody to know that such is the case.
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One would perhaps, think they were very humble and did not want anybody to know how good they are--and I have no doubt that they do not want some people, at any rate, to think that they are good; but it is not on account of humility, but on account of fear. They are afraid of what these people will say; they tremble at the slightest breath. They are very different from St. John, and very much like reeds shaken by the wind; and it requires only a very light wind to shake them, considering the strength they ought to have.
There are Catholics, for instance--and plenty of them, to the glory of our faith be it said!--who have a great horror of the dreadful sin of impurity, and would by no means of their own accord commit any offence of this kind. But their daily occupations lead them among others who have very different ideas and habits, or who, perhaps, are sinning wilfully against the clearest light. These wretched people are continually bandying jests or telling stories which show the corruption of their minds. Out of the abundance of their hearts their mouths are always speaking; they are bad trees, and all the time bringing forth bad fruit. Well, do our good Christians show any disgust for these things? Oh! no; they will say they cannot help laughing at them. I am afraid they are deceiving themselves; they could help it, if they dared to help it. They would seldom or never laugh if such foul things occurred to their own mind; they would be too much afraid of God. But now their fear of God disappears before their fear of man.
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Or these good Christians meet with people who, either through ignorance or malice, ridicule and blaspheme the Catholic Church and the true faith. Perhaps these people only need to find some Catholic who will stand up boldly for his religion. If any one would only confess Christ before them it might be the beginning of their conversion. But, instead of coming out fearlessly for the truth, our good Christians are afraid of being thought foolish or priest-ridden; and if they acknowledge that they are Catholics at all, it is only to compromise or deny what they in their hearts believe, so that people may think that they are pretty good Protestants after all.
These instances will suffice to show what I mean. You can find plenty of others yourselves. Do so, and resolve, for the sake of God our Saviour and for the glory of his name, to put an end to this despicable cowardice, if you have been guilty of it.

Catholic faith and morals are things to glory in, not to be ashamed of. And, besides, there is really nothing to fear. What you are afraid of is only like the wind which passes by; in their hearts even the wicked will honor and hold in everlasting remembrance the true and faithful servants of God.

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Third Sunday of Advent

Epistle.

Philippians iv. 4-7.

Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men: The Lord is nigh. Be not solicitous about anything: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Gospel.

St. John i. 19-28.

At that time:

The Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and levites to John, to ask him: Who art thou? And he confessed, and did not deny: and he confessed: I am not the Christ. And they asked him: What then? Art thou Elias? And he said: I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered: No. They said therefore unto him: Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? what sayest thou of thyself? He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias. And they that were sent, were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying: I baptize with water; but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not. The same is he that shall come after me, who is preferred before me: the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

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Sermon VII.

Let your modesty be known to all men.

--Philippians iv. 5.

To-day, brethren, is called _Gaudete_, or Rejoicing Sunday, and is intended by the church as a little _letup_, as the people say, on the solemn season of Advent. To-day flowers deck the altars; at the High Mass the dalmatic, the deacon's vestment of joy, which has not been used for two Sundays, is again assumed. Where possible, and where the church is rich enough to buy them, rose-colored vestments should be worn. The first words of the Mass are, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice." It is just as if the church said to you all: "Be glad and joyful; make yourselves as happy as you can." "Ah!" some of you will say, "that is just the doctrine for us; that is just what we like." Do not be too fast, my friends. Listen to what comes next. "Rejoice," says the church; but in that rejoicing, in that striving to live happily, "let your modesty be known to all

men." So, then, the Christian is to be a happy man, but he is also to be a modest man--a man of simple or moderate habits. My friends, does not the shoe pinch you a little? Do you not see the cap gradually taking a form that will fit some of your heads? You men, when you are together on some festive occasion--when you have a gala-day of one kind or another--you rejoice then, it is true, but is your modesty known to all men? Have you not often aped the manners and swagger of the worldly-minded? Have you not listened to indecent stories? Have you not told some such? Oh! what scandal you give when you do these things. Then your _immodesty_ is known to all men.

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You are going with the crowd. You are following the multitude to do evil. You are walking in the wide path that leadeth unto perdition. You unfortunate drunkards that totter as you walk, who fall in the gutter and by the wayside, is your modesty known to all men? No, your shame is known to all men, and the shame of all who belong to you. Again, what think you of the woman who, because it is the fashion, goes out to balls indecently and improperly dressed--who is not covered as becomes a Christian matron or maiden, but is so clad as to bring the blush of lust to the face of the brazen, and of shame to that of the pure in heart; or of those who go to all sort of plays and spectacles, who encourage the most questionable of dances and ballets, and bring up their children in the same spirit? Is their modesty known to all men? My friends, to find the modesty of such people would be like searching for a needle in a bundle of hay. You would never find it. You, too, who spend every cent you have upon your backs, who have almost all your hard earnings invested in dry goods and millinery, who come to church tricked out in finery which belongs neither to your state nor calling, offend also against Christian moderation and modesty. Once there was an old jackdaw who dressed himself up in peacock's feathers; then off he went among the peacocks and tried to pass for one of them. But these splendid birds soon found him out and pecked him almost to death. My friends, when you deck yourselves out in clothing, in fashions which are beyond your means, unsuited to your calling as a Christian, unfit for your state in life, and fit, indeed, for none but the vain people of the world, what are you? Nothing but jackdaws in peacock's feathers.

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Oh! then don't make yourself ridiculous. Follow the advice of St. Paul: "Let your modesty be known to all men." These are the days of immodesty, of wasteful extravagance, of extreme vanity. Oh! then set your faces against this running tide of worldliness. Be modest, speak modestly, dress modestly, enjoy yourselves modestly. Don't dress up your children luxuriously, instilling into their minds even in childhood the spirit of vanity. Don't put on too much style or too many airs. Be happy, rejoice always, but be modest, be simple. "Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh. For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things. The grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ be with your spirit."
Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon VIII.

_There hath stood One in the midst of you,
whom you know not._
--St. John i. 26.

St. John spoke these words, as the Gospel tells us, not to his disciples, but to those who had been sent from Jerusalem to question him on his mission, to ask him what business he had to preach and to baptize. It may be that both those who were sent and those who sent them had no real desire to know if he were indeed a prophet, but were merely trying to make him say something which could be used against him--to set a trap for him, like those which they afterward tried to set for our Divine Lord--since his language to them certainly seems like a rebuke.
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For who was this One who had stood in their midst, and whom they had not known? It was our Lord Jesus Christ. It was the Son of God, the Word made flesh. He had been living in their midst since his childhood, but they had not known him. Even those in his own town of Nazareth, who had often met him in their streets, who had often seen him and spoken to him, had passed him by as if he was no more than one of themselves, as if he were only a poor carpenter's boy.

Now, we, my dear brethren, are something like these Jews at that time. For during our lives there has stood One also in the midst of us, whom we have not known. And it is the same One whom the thoughtless and the sinful passed in the streets of Nazareth, and whom they afterward crucified in Jerusalem. The King of Glory is in our midst at this moment; he who dwells in the tabernacle of the altar is indeed God made man.

It is true for us as well as for them that we cannot see that it is he with our bodily eyes; but there is much more to point him out to us than there was to them. The church has taken care that we shall not pass him by unnoticed; all the worship of the sanctuary is directed to his throne--that poor throne in our midst which he has come down from heaven to occupy. It is because of him that the altar blazes with candles and is adorned with flowers, and that the clouds of incense rise; it is to him that we bend the knee; all the splendid ceremonial of the Catholic religion is only our poor effort to worthily honor Him who has condescended to dwell among us under the sacramental veils.
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And yet, in spite of all the care which his church has taken, do we not too often behave as the Jews of his own time had a better excuse for behaving? A better excuse, I say, for they needed a special light to recognize him; but all we need is faith, and that we all have. But one would think that his people had no faith, to see the way in which they sometimes conduct themselves in his most holy presence.

It would seem as if a Christian had not faith in that Real Presence when you see him pretend, as it were, to reverence the altar by a sort of half-genuflection, very quickly made, which

looks more like a sign of disrespect than of adoration. What would you think if you should see the priest, when saying Mass, making his genuflections in this way? Well, you ought to do the same as he. Our Lord is as really before you as before him; and you are not more exalted in your station than the priest, that you can afford to treat God more familiarly. Bring the knee to the floor slowly and reverently when you pass the high altar, or any other altar, while the Blessed Sacrament is on it. And when our Lord passes in procession, or in any other way, through the church, kneel down and pray; do not stand or sit and stare about. And remember, too, that he is as really present when he goes outside the church as when he remains in it. The state of things in this country requires us to carry him to the sick without the solemnity which should be observed; but he is as truly in your houses when he comes to give himself to you there as if the priest brought him with lights and sacred vestments, with the sound of the bell, and with a train of attendants to do him honor.

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Imagine what you would do if he should come visibly at the side of the priest, with that Face with which you are so familiar, with glory shining round him, and with the prints of the nails in his hands and feet; and do the same now. Do not stand around and talk to the priest as if he had come for a social visit; kneel down as soon as he enters the room, if the Blessed Sacrament is with him. And do not kneel leaning on a chair, with your backs to our Lord; that is a strange way to show respect for him.

If you will only think who it is that stands in the midst of you, you will find out many other things which I have not time to suggest. It is not really so much want of faith as want of thought that makes people behave to our Lord in the irreverent and almost insulting way that they sometimes do. Think, then, about this matter, and you will need no rubrics to teach you what to do in the presence of Him whom you really know and love.

Sermon IX.

_I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Make straight the way of the Lord._
--St. John i. 23.

Whenever, my dear brethren, men are going to a place they always ask the way. They also make up their minds as to which is the long way, which the short way, which the most convenient and easiest way. They do this with reference to the places to which they go in this world. Now, we are all going to heaven; at least, each one of us will say, I hope I am going there. We know there are many places to which we can go in this world, and many different ways by which we can get to them.

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There are also many places in heaven, but there is but one way of getting to any one, even to the least of them.

Which is that way? Some will say it is the good way, or the way of the good man. Another will say it is attending to your duties, to your church. Yet another will say it is by keeping away from mortal sin. Each answer is a good one, but neither one brings out

the important point. The true answer, and the first one to be given, is that it is God's way--the way of the Lord. Yes, my dear brethren, it is the very way, the one and only way, that our Lord Jesus Christ has travelled before us. Every step he took along this path was marked by the precious Blood from his own veins. It is the way of the cross, of sacrifice, of penance and mortification.

Are we all going this way? Is each one of us now here present moving daily and hourly on this path? It is almost useless to ask this question, for I know many, very many indeed, will answer. No! It is indeed a sad truth that most people, most even of our Catholic people, are not going this way.

But why is this? One reason is because they do not try, sincerely and earnestly, to fix in the mind that this is the only condition upon which any soul can be saved. For our Lord himself declares that unless a man take up his cross _daily_ and follow him he cannot be his disciple. They do not realize that there is an absolute necessity, an unchangeable law in this assertion. God has said it, and will not unsay it. Yet how quickly will men stop a business or a transaction that will surely cause them to lose their money! How quickly will they turn from a road that is sure to lead to death! They realize the necessity when property and life are to be lost; but they will not see or feel the same necessity when their souls and eternal life are most certainly to be forever lost.

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Again, they are discouraged because the way is hard and difficult. Show me any way in life not hard and difficult. Ask the father, the mother, the single man, the married man. Ask the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the active business man, the idle and slothful man, as well as the common tramp. All have the same answer--that life is a hard road any way you may take it.

Man, then, is reduced to the necessity of suffering and mortification. The secret of this is that all men are under sin, all poisoned by it. The only remedy is to cure ourselves, to get rid of this poison. The way of the Lord is the way given us to go in order to find this cure. All along this way we find the remedy at every turn. It is found in a good confession, in true penance and mortification, in the sacrament of the altar, the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is intended to nourish our souls and to act against this terrible poison.

Make straight, then, the way of the Lord. Do not be terrified by trouble, pain, and difficulties of any kind. Do not permit the devil to make you think it will always last, always be the same. These difficulties become less and less by degrees. They wear away, as it were, or God so fills the soul with strength and patience that it is the same in the end. We then bear easily by the grace of God that which was so troublesome at first.

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Set to work, then, at once. Let your souls be ready for the holy Feast of Christmas. Remember that we must celebrate that as Christians ought to do. Gratitude, love, Christian manliness, and honor require that all shall celebrate the birthday of a

suffering God in such a manner as to make him feel he is truly remembered and honored. The least one can do, then, is to begin to make straight the way of the Lord by cleansing the soul of all mortal sin and by making a good Christmas communion. That feast, you know, is a time when great graces are given to the sincere soul. Do not, then, for the sake of your own soul, fail to keep Christmas day as a true Catholic should keep it.

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Fourth Sunday of Advent.

Epistle.

1 _Corinthians iv._ 1-5.

Brethren:

Let a man so look upon us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Here now it is required among the dispensers, that a man be found faithful. But as to me it is a thing of the least account to be judged by you, or by human judgment: but neither do I judge my own self. For I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet in this am I not justified: but he that judgeth me, is the Lord. Therefore judge not before the time; until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise from God.

Gospel.

St. Luke iii. 1-6.

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

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Sermon X.

Christmas Eve.

For he shall save his people from their sins.

--St. Matthew i. 21.

To be _saved_, dear brethren, always supposes a previous danger. Thus, we say saved from drowning, saved from a fire, saved from a terrible accident. Also it supposes a person or thing that saves. Now, dear friends, we are met together here to-day, and it is Christmas Eve. The church tells us in the holy Gospel that Jesus Christ came to save his people. Let us think, then, for a few moments what danger it was that he came to save us from, and who he was who came to act the part of Saviour. The danger from which we were to be saved was the danger of sin. Sin

is dangerous in the extreme. It is more dangerous than the most terrible disease, more perilous than the cholera or the plague. These things only kill the body; mortal sin kills the soul. If Jesus Christ had not redeemed us sin would have destroyed us. Adam and Eve brought sin into the world. Sin spread with the awful swiftness of an epidemic. It threatened to descend upon mankind and to bury everything beneath the ruins of everlasting death. Then, when poor human nature seemed about to be overwhelmed, Jesus came and saved it, washed us in his precious Blood, and snatched the uplifted sword from the hand of the enemy. Yes, the danger was great, but we were saved from it. But a little while ago we read in the papers of an awful calamity--the burning of the Brooklyn Theatre.

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We can imagine how frightful was the scene of hundreds of human creatures fighting for life--the all too narrow door before them, the crying multitude around them, the scathing, ruthless flames behind them. What would we think of one who, saved from such a place, should afterwards make light of the danger and care nothing for the one who saved him? O brethren! it was not from the danger of earthly fire, from the peril of blazing rafters, falling beams, and a trampling multitude, that Christ saved you and me. 'Twas from the fire of hell that he snatched us. 'Twas from the danger, the all-surrounding danger, of sin. And what have we done, many of us? We have turned back, let go the hand that held us, and gone back into the appalling peril. Because men do not see a _material_ danger they will not believe there is _any_. Dear friends, there is danger. You that have gone back into the ways of sin, you that are in mortal sin now, at this moment--you are in an awful danger. Save your lives, then; take the hand held out to you or you are lost! Brethren, some of those poor creatures who perished in the Brooklyn fire were so charred, so burnt that they could not be recognized. Take care that you do not become so disfigured by sin that at the last day God will say to you: "I know ye not."

Who saved us from the awful peril? It was Jesus Christ, Jesus the Son of God, Jesus the Babe of Bethlehem. In the morning it will be Christmas day. The church will bid you come to the crib. Will you still persist in rejecting the Saviour? You know who he is. You know he is God. You know he is full of love and full of power--full of love for your souls, full of power to rescue you from the danger in which you stood. Come to him then, and no matter how black or how many your sins may be, you will know that "he shall save his people from their sins."

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Brethren, I doubt not that many of you mourn the loss of some dear ones. Within the last few years some one has gone from the fireside, some sweet voice has been stilled for ever. Perhaps a father or a tender, beloved mother has gone home to rest with God--gone in the peace of Christ to their reward. 'Tis Christmas Eve in heaven to-day, and oh! don't you think they are waiting for you--praying for you that you may be there with them? Don't disappoint them. Don't let them wait in vain. Flee from sin, the danger that threatens to separate you from them for ever. Do not

disappoint Jesus and Mary and Joseph. Do not spend this holy time in sin. Don't go back into the danger. Keep Christmas like a Christian. Then, brethren, in the morning, the bright morning of eternity, the Christmas morning of heaven, we shall see His glory. We shall be united to Jesus and our dear ones who have gone before. We shall hear them and the white-winged angels who circle around the throne, singing aloud: "Glory be to Jesus Christ the Babe of Bethlehem, for he hath saved his people from their sins!"

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon XI.

Preaching the baptism of penance
for the remission of sins,
--St. Luke iii. 3.

St. John Baptist certainly seems, from what we read about him in the Gospels, to have been quite a stern and uncompromising preacher. He did not come with a coach and four to take people to heaven.

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He had but one message for every one, high and low, rich and poor; and that message was: "Repent of your sins; do penance for them, and bring forth fruits worthy of penance. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; get rid of your bad habits, and put good ones in their place. If you have wronged any one, make restitution for it; and, moreover, practise charity even to those whom you have not wronged. These things you must do; there is no other way possible in which you can flee from the wrath to come."

This was St. John's doctrine, everybody must acknowledge. But some people seem to think that our Lord, when he came, offered salvation to sinners on somewhat easier terms than these. This, however, is a great mistake. There never has been, is not, and never will be any way for a sinner to be saved except by doing penance. Our Saviour did, indeed, by his coming make salvation easier; but how was it that he did so? It was not by offering it on any other terms than these, but by making it easier for men to comply with these terms. He did not free us from the obligation of doing penance, but gave us more abundant grace that we might be better able to do penance. That is plain enough to every one who will stop and think.

And yet some Christians seem to imagine that it is enough to be a Catholic, to be quite sure of one's salvation. Practically, at least, they hold the heresy which the devil brought in at the time of the so-called Reformation, and which before that time hardly any one had dared to put in words--that a man may be justified by faith without good works.

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They say to themselves the very thing which St. John warned the Jews not to say: "We have Abraham for our father." They say to themselves: "We are Catholics; we are children of the holy church; all we have to do is to remain so (and, thank God! we have not the least idea of being anything else), and then to receive the rites of our church when we come to die, and we will be as sure of going to heaven as a child which has just been

baptized."
But, my friends, this is a fatal delusion. Depend upon it, the devil is glad when he sees men or women with this notion in their heads, for he has got good hopes of having them with him in hell. He knows well what such people do not seem to know: that it is not enough to be a Catholic, but that one must also be a good Catholic, if he is to be saved. He knows as well as St. John that penance is necessary now, as it always has been; but he takes good care not to preach what he knows.
And what is penance? Is it a mere confession that we are sinners? No, by no means. If it were, every one would be a penitent who was not a fool, for every one who has common sense must acknowledge that he has sinned. Nor is it a mere acknowledgment that sin is a bad thing, and a wish that we had not committed it, and that God had given us more grace that we might not have done so. No, it is a real and hearty sorrow for it, with a conviction that we might have avoided it, and that the fault was not with God, who gave us plenty of grace to avoid it, but with ourselves, who did not make use of the grace which he gave. And following from this, as a matter of course, is a firm conviction that we can avoid it for the future, and a firm determination to do so.
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And following from this, also as a matter of course, is a real change in our lives, a real giving up of sin. That is the only certain mark of a true repentance and of a good confession--that a man stops committing mortal sin. The priest may indeed give absolution to one who continues to fall; but it is with the gravest fears that the sentence which he pronounces is not confirmed by Him who alone has power to forgive.
I said in the beginning that salvation was easier than before our Lord came, because we have now more grace to help our weakness. But that only makes penance the more necessary. "A man making void the law of Moses," says St. Paul, "died, without any mercy, under two or three witnesses; how much more, do you think, he deserveth worse punishments, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean, by which he was sanctified, and hath offered an affront to the Spirit of grace?" Be warned, then, in time; repent indeed, and change your lives. Make not only a confession but a good confession at this holy time, and cease, for the love of God, to offend him any more.

Sermon XII.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord.
--St. Luke iii. 4.

Before our Blessed Lord came into public notice his missionary, St. John Baptist, appeared in the wilderness preaching penance, and good works worthy of penance, to the people, who were in the darkness and bondage of sin. He cried out in a loud, thrilling voice; "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."
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So the church on the last Sunday of Advent, the first before Christmas, cries out to those who expect to meet our Lord on Christmas and worship him on that glorious feast: "Prepare ye the

way of the Lord." To the tepid and lukewarm she cries out: "Come away from your darling venial sins; fill up your empty hearts to the brim with the overflowing love and grace of God; be more generous in his worship and service." To the young: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Give me your heart while you are young and tender; do not be allured by the empty joys and false pleasures of the world; avoid those dangerous occasions of sin that are about to entice you, and keep your youth innocent and pure, that you may see the evening of your life in joy, and not in bitter remorse.

To the old: Forget the past; if it has been bad, ask pardon and do penance; if good, preserve it and live in grace and fervor, so that when you are near the end of your pilgrimage here you may attain to the great destiny for which you have been created.

To the sinner--to the one in mortal sin; the one who has not had a happy Christmas for many a year, for the sinner has no chance to have part in the real joy of Christmas; to the sinner who has been exalted with pride and worldly pleasure, who has been in the valley of impurity, and wilful neglect, and cold indifference--oh! to you there is a voice terrible and irresistible: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Prepare it by prayer for grace; warm your heart by gratitude and love; fall on your knees at the foot of the cross in the confessional; have your heart purified by the bitter waters of penance, and you will indeed have a happy Christmas.

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Then the promise: All flesh shall see the salvation of God. Yes, to know and to feel and see the pardon and peace and love of God--to have the consciousness that he is our friend, and that we have no enmity against him--is the way to see on this earth the fruits of salvation.

The poor shall see the salvation of God. O ye poor men and women who have nothing in this world but sorrow, tears, and bitter suffering! to you this coming feast of Christmas is a foretaste of the great reward that is prepared for you. God loves you. He spurned the palaces and royal robes of the C√¶sars when he came on the earth, and chose a poor Virgin for his mother and a hovel for his birthplace. The poor shepherds were the first to see him, and they will be near to him in his glory. "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven." For He who was rich, for your sakes became poor.

The poor shall see the salvation of God; for He who was rich, for their sakes became poor.

The rich shall see the salvation of God; for they will be taught humility by looking into the crib at Bethlehem, and learning a lesson that they can learn nowhere else, and that will dazzle them more than their jewels, diamonds, dresses, or palaces.

So if we prepare the way of the Lord we shall finally see the salvation of God in eternity, where we shall rejoice evermore in the thought that all our preparation here to please God, by keeping the commandments, suffering, and toiling, will be rewarded by the vision of the Redeemer of all nations who washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

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Sunday within the Octave of Christmas

Epistle.

Galatians iv. 1-7.

Brethren:

As long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all: but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father: even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law: that he might redeem those who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Therefore now he is no more a servant, but a son. And if a son, an heir also through God.

Gospel.

St. Luke ii. 33-40.

At that time:

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

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Sermon XIII.

_And the Child grew, and waxed strong,
full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in him._
--St. Luke ii. 40.

Jesus Christ is our model in all things, and in the verse above quoted we see him presented as the model of youth. Your children, brethren, ought to be strong in body, wise in mind, and to have the grace of God in their hearts. Now, who is to form them after the model of Jesus Christ? It is the duty of parents. First, then, you ought to take care of the bodily wants of your children, in order that they may grow and wax strong. How often parents offend against this duty! There are some who let their children eat just what they please, who pamper their appetites, who give them all kinds of unwholesome food. Such children will never be healthy. There are others who spend all their money in drink--who leave their poor little ones at home, moaning and

starving with hunger; who, through their imprudence, leave their children without food for a whole day, having squandered their earnings in all sorts of foolish and wicked pleasures. Then, too, there are those who allow their children to sit up till all hours of the night, who let them go off to heated ball-rooms, who dress them either too much or too little--who either coddle them up so that they can hardly stand a whiff of air, or else send them out to shiver with cold.
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No wonder that our city children are unhealthy; no wonder death sweeps them away as it does. Is it not because parents are neglectful? Look to it, then; see to the diet, the clothing, the habits of your children. Do not overtask their feeble strength by sending them too soon to work. Never permit them to form luxurious appetites. Watch over their daily lives, see that they take proper exercise; then, like the child Jesus, they will "grow and wax strong." Neglect the duty of corporal education, and we shall have a generation of sickly children and adult invalids. And if it be so necessary for parents to watch over the bodies of their children, what shall I say of the duty of watching over their minds and souls? Your children should be full of wisdom, and the grace of God should be in their hearts. Oh! when I think of the neglect of many Catholic parents in this respect I am tempted to take up the Gospel's most awful tone, and cry. Woe to you, careless parents! woe, eternal woe to you guilty fathers and mothers, who are letting your little ones run to destruction! You make your home uncomfortable by your crossness, by your curses, by your slovenly, untidy habits. Your children, from their earliest infancy, take to the street. They hear impurity, blasphemy, and cursing. They hear words and see sights which are not fit to be mentioned here on God's altar. They keep what company they like. They learn infamous and immoral habits that destroy both body and soul. Oh! for God's sake beware, beware! Do you think they will ever be full of wisdom or have the grace of God in their hearts?
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Again, you are anxious enough that they shall learn to read and write, to keep books and be quick at figures, but are you sure they know their catechism or can tell a priest all they ought to know of Jesus Christ, their Saviour, or how many sacraments and commandments there are? Where are they on Sundays? Where are they when confession day comes around? Oh! these are vital questions, if you want them to be full of grace and wisdom. Some boys and girls of our day, brethren, have lost a great deal of their freshness. They smoke, they chew tobacco, they flirt, they act like little men and women. There is no innocence about them. They are revolting spectacles to men and angels. Wisdom, forsooth! They have none. Grace of God? It is destroyed. Their childhood is more like the childhood of an incarnate devil than of an incarnate God. Look, then, carefully to your children. Look to the little ones; correct them when they are babies. Don't wait till a child is in its teens; then it will be too late. Set them a good example. You know the story of the old crab, who said to her little ones, "Why do you walk sideways?" "Suppose, mother,"

they said, "_you_ show us how to walk straight." Yes, if you are wicked, foolish, and sinful, your children will be like you. "Like father, like son," says the proverb. Oh! then you parents, be pure as Mary, be industrious, modest, patient like St. Joseph; then your children, like Jesus, will grow and wax strong, full of wisdom and of the grace of God.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

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Sermon XIV.

_This Child is set for the fall,
and for the resurrection of many in Israel._
--St. Luke ii. 34.

These words of to-day's Gospel, my dear brethren, have, perhaps, a strange sound to us at this joyful Christmas season. It seems strange that holy Simeon should have said that the blessed Infant whom he held in his arms, and who had come to save the world, should have been set for the fall of many of even his own chosen people.

And yet we know that his coming was actually the occasion of the fall not merely of many but of far the greater part of that chosen people of Israel. However strange Simeon's prophecy may seem, we see that it was a true one. Up to that time the Jewish people were God's true church on earth; now almost all of them are wanderers outside of it, rejecting the true Messias whom their fathers crucified, and either vainly looking for one who will never come or ceasing in despair to look for any Messias at all. Instead of Christ's coming having been the means of salvation for them, it has really been the occasion of their fall from the grace which they had before.

But though we know that it has been so, it may still seem strange that it should have been so. One would think that the Saviour, who is our joy, our pride, and our glory, would have been theirs too, and even more theirs than ours, having been born of their own nation, a Jew of the royal line of David. But if we consider the matter a little we shall see that it was natural enough that it should turn out as it did; and we shall see, moreover, that there is a good deal of danger that, as they fell from grace when Christ was presented to them, so we may do the same.

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For we shall, if we think, find out the reason why they fell, which is the reason why we may fall too. They were looking for a Saviour, indeed, but not for such a Saviour as actually came. They were looking for one who would redeem them from their subjection to the Roman Empire; who would make their nation what it had been in the days gone by; who would make them an independent and powerful people; who would give them the greatness and glory of this world. So when he did not fulfil their expectation, when he came not with earthly splendor but in poverty and suffering, they were scandalized. It was only his miracles which made them hesitate; and when he would work miracles no longer, when he would not save himself from the cruel and ignominious death of the cross, they rejected him with the horrible imprecation, "His Blood be upon us and upon our

children."
Yes, my brethren, the cross was their scandal, and the cross is likely to be our scandal, too, for we have the same fallen human nature as they. "We preach Christ crucified," says St. Paul, "unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness"; and it is a good deal the same with us Christians now.
We feel glad, indeed, when Christmas comes; but I am afraid that if we had been living at the time of the first Christmas we should not have been much more likely to rejoice at the birth of our Lord than his own people were at that time. Christmas now is very pleasant, with its festivity, its amusements, its giving and receiving of presents; but there is not much of the cross in this. The original Christmas, with its cold, its poverty, and its humiliation, was quite a different thing.
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It is right for us to rejoice at Christmas; but perhaps we should not rejoice if we remembered that our Lord came to bring into the world the cross not only for himself but also for us too. That is the scandal for us now. We can see what the Jews could not, that it was right that he should suffer; but we cannot see that it is right that we should suffer too--that what holy Simeon said to his Blessed Mother is true for each one of us: "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce." So in this way, even now, "this Divine Child," with his cross in his hand for a Christmas present to us, "is set for the fall of many in Israel." We are too apt to shrink away when he urges us to accept it for his sake.
Indeed, we should always fall away when the cross is offered to us, had we only our own natural strength to depend upon. It is not in us, by any natural power, to bear the cross of Christ. But he offers with it the grace to bear it. And in this way he is set also for our resurrection. For it is only by the cross, by bearing the cross ourselves, that we can rise from sin, which is the only death which we really have to fear.
This Child, then, is set for our fall by our natural weakness, but for our resurrection by his supernatural grace. His will is that it should be for the latter; let his will, then, be done. Let us welcome him, then, at Christmas, but let us welcome his cross too; for it is only by bearing it ourselves that we can come to eternal life.

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Sermon XV.

_Behold, this Child is set ...
for a sign which shall be contradicted._
--St. Luke ii. 34.

My brethren, can this be possible? It is not only possible but too true. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the sign of the love of God the Father to us, is contradicted, is resisted, by those whom he came to save.
And is it only those who are strangers to him that contradict him? No; it is those who know him well and who ought to be his friends--his own people, who call themselves Catholics, who claim to belong to his true church.

What does the word "contradict" mean? It means to speak against or in opposition to any one. It may mean, also, to act against any one, or even to reject inwardly what one say's, though not a word of contradiction be spoken. Fervent gratitude would now exclaim: "Surely no Catholic can do any of these to Jesus Christ?" Yet such there are, though perhaps many of them do not realize what they do.

Who are they? They are those who speak against and resist the teachers he has sent them; who put themselves always in opposition to the authority of the church, and even to its head, the Vicar of Christ on earth; who believe no more than they are obliged to under pain of ceasing to be Catholic at all; and who never obey except when it suits their own convenience. "Well," you will say, "I am not that kind of a Catholic." I am glad you are not; still, there are many such. But there are many more who do not go quite so far as that, and yet have a good deal of the same spirit. Perhaps you are one of them.

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Who are these that I speak of? They are those who are always opposing their pastors and confessors, finding fault with and criticising their words and their actions. They reject their counsel. They even make a jest of their opinions. They think them behind the times, and not up to the spirit of the present day. They even sometimes violate the sacred confidence of the confessional, and talk thus lightly even of what has been said to them there.

Or they oppose outwardly the plans and efforts of their parish priests. They think that they know more about everything than their pastors. Unwilling to unite with them in their work for our Lord, they are discontented because others are not as rebellious and disobedient as themselves. They do not rest until they succeed in making a party against those whom they should unite to support, which destroys a great deal of the good which they have done, and prevents much which they could otherwise do. In vain do they pretend to be friends of Christ when they thwart and spoil his work. The work of the parish is as much his work as that of any other part of the church. The church makes parishes wherever she sends her priests. If the people in them oppose her she cannot do God's work.

Or if they do not resist, they despise their priests, or certainly act as if they did. They do not seem to remember that every priest, unworthy as he is, of course, still represents our Lord. If they respect him, it is as a man, not as a priest; that is, they do not respect the priest at all as such. They use him for their own convenience when their conscience requires them to hear Mass or approach the sacraments; but otherwise they treat him just as a Protestant might do.

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And by this bad example they lessen the respect of others for him, and weaken the authority and influence for good which he ought to have. This really is resisting and contradicting our Lord, whom he represents. Let all, then, examine themselves, and see if they are not in the habit of speaking, acting, or neglecting their duties in such a way as to oppose and contradict

our divine Lord. Be humble as he was on the first Christmas day, and try to help, not to hinder, his agents in all they are obliged to do to carry out his work; for he has said to them: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me."

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The Epiphany

Epistle.

Isaias lx. 1-6.

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

Gospel.

St. Matthew ii. 1-12.

When Jesus, therefore, was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and we are come to adore him. And Herod the King hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him: and assembling together all the chief priests and Scribes of the people, he enquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him, In Bethlehem of Juda; for so it is written by the prophet: "And thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come forth the ruler who shall rule my people Israel."

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Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, enquired diligently of them the time of the star's appearing to them; and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and search diligently after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him. And when they had heard the king, they went their way; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And going into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down, they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their own country.

Sermon XVL.

_Rise, and take the Child and his mother,
and go into the land of Israel._
--St. Matthew ii. 20.

At this season of Christmas and Epiphany, in these days when the church brings us to the manger in which the infant Son of God was laid, it is impossible for any Christian to come to Jesus without coming to Mary also. He cannot see the one without seeing the other; and surely he will not adore the one without honoring the other also.

It is plain enough to us all at this time how inseparable Our Lady is from her Divine Son, and how we must go to her if we would gain admission to his presence. But we are apt enough to forget it at other seasons, even at times like the month of May, specially commemorated to her love and service.

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We are apt to imagine devotion to her as a sort of thing apart by itself, beautiful and reasonable, it is true, but still having no necessary connection with the worship of God. We do not understand that it is impossible for us to love and adore him as he wishes unless we also honor his Blessed Mother--as impossible as it would be to have a true devotion to her and forget him. The two devotions must go hand-in-hand not only now but through all the year.

The forgetting of this is one great reason why there is so much sin in the world. One who has a true love for Mary can hardly fall into mortal sin; and that not only because she will specially pray for him and defend him, but also because he will love her Son too much to do so. And even if he should fall into mortal sin he will not stay in it long; not only because she will obtain his conversion, but also because love of God cannot be far away while that of his Blessed Mother remains.

This is also true, in its measure, of venial as well as of mortal sin, and of those imperfections which keep people from being saints. You will hear many complaining that they do not make any progress in the spiritual life; that they are always committing the same faults, and even just as often; and that they have no more piety now than they had years ago--perhaps not even so much. Well, of course there may be many reasons for this; but one of them, perhaps, is that they do not cultivate a real, solid devotion to Our Blessed Lady. They say, no doubt, some prayers to her, and they believe fully and firmly everything about her which the church teaches; but they do not realize that they cannot acquire the love of her Divine Son unless they make his Mother theirs also; that they give themselves entirely to her as her loving children, with all their mind and strength, all their heart and soul.

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What a pity it is to neglect so easy and so safe a way not only of salvation but of perfection! It will lead to everything else, and nothing else will lead anywhere without it.

Let us, then, my dear brethren, at the beginning of this new year make a good resolution--that is, to have more devotion to Our

Lady than we have ever had before. Let us take, as St. Joseph did, the Child and his Mother, and set out with them from this place of our exile to the land of Israel, the true promised land above. Let us take them both, not only at Christmas but always, through our whole journey here below; not to guard and guide them, as he did--for we have not such a privilege--but that they may guard us, and guide us to the country which is waiting, not for one people only, but for the redeemed of all nations, for all the Israel of God.

Sermon XVII.

_And opening their treasures,
they offered him gifts;
gold, frankincense, and myrrh._
--St. Matthew ii. 11.

To-day, my brethren, is a great day for us. It is, in one way, a greater day than Christmas itself; a day, that is, in which we have more cause for rejoicing than we had even then. For what was it which we celebrated then, and what is it which we are celebrating now?

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Then it was the birth of our Lord into this world, and it was indeed a thing which we had cause to rejoice over; but to-day it is something even more joyous for us than that. It is not only that he was born into this world, but that he was born for us, for us Gentiles--to save us as well as his own chosen people, the Jews. The three wise men whom that wonderful star led to his crib were not of that people, but Gentiles like ourselves; and the star which appeared to them signified the appearance to them and to us of the true Light which was hereafter to enlighten in a more wonderful way than before not only a single nation, but every man coming into this world. Appearance or manifestation is what the Greek word "epiphany" means.

It was natural, then, that they should offer gifts to their newly-born Saviour, for they could not but do so in acknowledgment of the great gift which he had given to them. But let us see what was the meaning of the gifts which they did offer--of these gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

They may be, and have been, interpreted in a great many different ways, all of which may well be true. It is commonly said that the wise men offered gold to our Lord because he is the King of heaven and earth; frankincense, because he is Almighty God; and myrrh, because he is also man, and was to suffer death for the sins of the world--myrrh being used to embalm the dead, and hence being a symbol of death. But there is another signification of these gifts which is, perhaps, more practical for us, because it suggests more directly the three gifts which each one of us must offer to him who is our Saviour as well as theirs, if we would partake of the salvation which he came to bring to us.

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These three gifts are, then, understood by some to represent the three duties of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, by which we are redeemed from the tyranny of the world, the devil, and the flesh. These last three are the great enemies of our salvation, and they

must be overcome if we are to be saved. The love of the world, and of the treasures which it offers us, can only be destroyed by sacrificing those treasures for the sake of God, of his church, and of his poor; the power of the devil, who sets himself up as the god whom we are to serve and obey, can only be resisted by constant prayer, by which we draw near to the true God, and devote ourselves over and over again to his service; and the control of the flesh, with its base and degrading appetites, over our immortal souls can only be shaken off by fasting--that is, by mortification of various kinds, by persistently refusing to our bodies all dangerous and sinful indulgences, and by sometimes depriving them of pleasures which are innocent in themselves. These three duties are practised in their perfection by those whom God calls to the religious life by the three vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity. By the vow of poverty the religious sacrifices at once the goods of this world; by that of obedience he frees himself from the tyranny of the devil, subjecting himself entirely to God, whom his superiors represent; by that of chastity he renounces sensual pleasure.

But it is not religious alone who are called on to make these three gifts. The same obligation, in its due measure, rests upon each of you. Almsgiving, prayer, and mortification are duties for all Christians.

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It is hard to see how any one can be saved who gives no more to God and the poor than what is extorted from him, as it were, by force; who merely says prayers now and then because he is afraid to give up the practice, but who seldom or never really prays; and who indulges without scruple in everything which his flesh desires, intending to stop short of nothing but mortal sin.

Let such things, then, my brethren, not be said of us. As we kneel with the wise men this morning before the manger of our infant God, let us make with them these three gifts. Let us offer to him, as they did, with a full and willing heart, our possessions, our bodies, and our souls. This is the time for making presents, and these are the presents which he expects. Be generous, then, with him, and he will be generous with you. "Give to the Most High according to what he hath given to thee."

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First Sunday after Epiphany.

Epistle.

Romans xii. 1-5.

Brethren:

I beseech you, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace that is given me, to all that are among you, not to be more wise than it behooveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety, and according as God hath divided to every one the measure of faith. For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office: so

we being many are one body in Christ, and each one members one of another in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel.

St. Luke ii. 42-52.

When Jesus was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and after they had fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

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And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? did you not know that I must be about the things that are my Father's? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth: and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.

Sermon XVIII.

_And he went down with them,
and came to Nazareth,
and was subject to them._
--St. Luke ii. 51.

Such, my dear friends, is the brief record of our Lord's boyhood and youth. When we next hear of him he has begun his mission to the world. But brief as the record is, it teaches a great lesson--the lesson of obedience. First it proclaims this lesson to children and the young generally. They ought to be subject to their parents. Is this the case? Often, we know, it is not. There are proud, rebellious, and disobedient children in many families--girls and boys who will not do what they are told; who go to places forbidden by their parents; who speak of their parents as the "old man" and the "old woman"; children who do their best to make father and mother subject to _them;_ who think they know better than their parents, and who despise those set over them by God. So glaring has this disrespect for parents become that a witty man has said that soon the sign and title of a firm will be "Jones and Father" instead of "Jones and Son." Disobedient, proud children, I point you this morning to the little home of Nazareth. Look in, conceited, self-sufficient boys and girls.

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What do you see? God obedient to his creatures; Jesus with Joseph and his Mother; Jesus, "very God of very God," subject to them. There is your example. Woe to you if you do not follow it! Disobedience made hell for the devil and his angels, and disobedience, if persisted in, will make hell for you. Hell is

the headquarters of disobedience, and will be the home of the disobedient and rebellious for evermore. So, then, you that are young, cut down your pride, bend the neck a little easier to the yoke. Be more like Jesus, who went home with his parents, stayed home with them, and was _subject_ to them.

But not only to children and the young does this lesson come home; it strikes all of us. In one sense we are all children--children of holy church whose chief pastor is called the Holy Father, and whose priests are called by all "fathers." Now, then, you "children of an older growth," how have you shown your obedience? Are you very particular to keep the laws of _mother_ church? How about fasting and abstinence? What of hearing Mass on a Sunday and of abstaining from servile work? Was your last Easter duty made? Again, how about the advice of your _father_ confessor? Have you followed it? How do you keep the minor laws and regulations which the pastor of each particular church sees fit to make for the better ordering of his services, etc., etc.? When the priest has to rebuke you, to reprove you, how do you take it? O my friends! these are the days of disobedience and false independence, and therefore these questions are of vital importance. You must _obey_, if you want to be good Catholics. You must turn a deaf ear to the suggestions of worldly pride; you must be submissive to holy mother church, to our Holy Father the Pope, to the pastors and fathers set over you in God's providence.

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Obedience! obedience!--that must be your watchword. You must not be scaling the mountains of pride hand-in-hand with infidel and heretic, and the devil's staff for a support. You must obey the church and follow _her_ teachings, and submit to lawful authority. As St. Paul says: "Be not wise in your own conceits. For I say, by the grace that is given me, to all that are among you, not to be more wise than it behooveth to be wise, but be wise unto sobriety. Let every soul be subject to higher powers: they that resist purchase to themselves damnation." Finally, brethren, show yourselves law-loving, obedient citizens of the country in which you live. Let the Catholic always be found on the side of order and regularity. In a word, show to your pastors and superiors, show even to our worst enemies, that you have learnt well the lesson contained in these few words: "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them."

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon XIX.

_Behold the Lamb of God:
behold, he who taketh away the sins of the world._
--St. John i. 29.

There are no words of the Gospel, my dear brethren, more frequently used in the church of God than these. You often hear them from the lips of the priest, but perhaps you do not remember when. They are more familiar to you in Latin than in English.

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The moment when they are said is that when the greatest of all gifts is about to be given to you. It is just before the giving

of Holy Communion. The priest, turning to you with the ciborium in his hand, raises one of the sacred particles from it, and shows it to you, saying, _Ecce Agnus Dei_--which means, "Behold the Lamb of God"--_ecce qui tollis peccata mundi_, "Behold, he who taketh away the sins of the world."

The church has put the words in the mouth of the priest at this time, when he distributes Holy Communion, because he is then showing Christ to the faithful. And she puts them in the Gospel of today, because on this day, the octave of the great feast which we celebrated last Sunday, she commemorates what we may call our Lord's second Epiphany after his hidden life of thirty years, when St. John the Baptist, his great precursor, taking the place of the star which showed him to the wise men, showed him to those who were to become his disciples, and who were to accompany him in that ministry of three years upon which he was about to enter.

As St. John took the place of the star, so the Catholic priest now takes the place of St. John. He has now to show Christ to the world, and especially to the faithful. And St. John, in his humility and self-concealment, has set an example to him which he should try to copy, and which a good priest does try to copy. That is, he tries to show our Lord to the people and to keep himself in the background; he tries to bring the faithful to his Master and theirs, not to himself. He desires that they should see in all that he does not his own power or gifts, but the grace of God, by which alone he can do them any good; that they should not be drawn to him, but to the Lamb of God, who alone can take away their sins.

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And what the good priest does you also, my brethren, should do. You should not think of the priest, but of Him whom the priest represents, and in whose power he acts. And especially should you take care to do this in those sacramental acts which the priest does more particularly in the name of God; that is, when he celebrates Holy Mass, baptizes, hears confessions, or gives Holy Communion. For, in truth, it is not he who does these things, but our Lord Jesus Christ. He, the Lamb of God, is the true priest. He who instituted the sacraments also is the one who confers them.

Remember this when you receive them. When you go to the altar-rail for Holy Communion, and when the priest holds up the sacred Host before you, saying, _Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi_, think not of the priest, of his virtues or his faults, but of the immaculate Lamb of God, who is coming to you, a poor sinner.

And when the priest is baptizing think not of him, but of the Holy One who, by his own baptism in the Jordan, gave water the power to wash away sin. Look at him standing by the side of the priest with infinite love and compassion, and purifying the soul which he came from heaven to save.

When you bow your head to receive absolution in the Sacrament of Penance think not of the minister of the sacrament before whom you kneel, and who is, at the best, but a sinful man, but of Him against whom you have sinned, and who is now about to forgive you

once more. Think only of that loving Saviour who is both your God and your Judge--your judge now not in justice but in mercy.
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And, above all, at holy Mass remember who it is that is saying Mass; who it is that is there at that altar, offering himself in sacrifice for you. Do not be criticising the priest, and thinking whether he is devout or not; his dispositions do not concern you much more than those of your neighbor who is kneeling by your side. Say to yourself, as you look at the altar, _Ecce Agnus Dei ecce qui tollit peccata mundi._ Behold in the midst of that throne the Lamb standing as it were slain, and fall down with the angels in adoration before him.
Yes, my brethren, _Christus apparuit nobis: venite, adoremus_--"Christ has appeared to us; come, let us worship him." Such are the words of the church in the Divine Office at this time. Let us, them, seek him, find him, and adore him in this holy Catholic Church, and in all that is done in it by his power and in his name.

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Second Sunday after Epiphany
Feast Of The Holy Name Of Jesus.

Epistle.
Romans xii. 6-16.
Having gifts different, according to the grace that is given us, whether prophecy, according to the proportion of faith, or ministry in ministering; or he that teacheth, in teaching: he that exhorter in exhorting; he that giveth with simplicity; he that ruleth with solicitude; he that showeth mercy with cheerfulness. Love without dissimulation. Hating that which is evil, adhering to that which is good; loving one another with brotherly love; in honor preventing one another; in solicitude not slothful; in spirit fervent; serving the Lord: rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; instant in prayer; communicating to the necessities of the saints; pursuing hospitality. Bless them that persecute you; bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep; being of one mind one to another; not high-minded but condescending to the humble.
Epistle of the Feast.
Acts iv. 8-12.
Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them: Ye rulers of the people and ancients, hear: If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole; be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him, doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you builders; which is become the head of the corner; nor is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.
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Gospel.
St. John ii. 1-11.

At that time:
There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is that to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come. His mother said to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. Now, there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water, the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.
Gospel of the Feast.
St. Luke ii. 21.
At that time:
After eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus, which was called by the Angel, before he was conceived in the womb.

Sermon XX.

His name was called Jesus.
--St. Luke ii. 21.

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To-day, dear friends, we keep the Feast of the Holy Name. Our dear Lord is known to us by many names--he is called the Word, the Christ, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, the Prince of Peace, and the like--but to-day we are met together to honor his real name; the name by which he was called when on this earth; the name which belonged to him just as our names belong to us; the name by which we are to be saved--the holy name of Jesus! Brethren, this name is a holy name, because it is the name of a God made man. It is a precious name: Jesus shed his Blood for us for the first time as he received it. It is a great and noble name, for it belongs to the mightiest Warrior the world ever saw--to Him who fought with sin and death, and conquered in the fight. It is a terrible name, for when we invoke it hell trembles, earth fears, and even heaven bows the knee. Oh! then, dear brethren, if this name is holy--if precious, if great and noble, if terrible--how much it ought to be revered and respected. We are told by our dear patron, St. Paul, that our Lord "humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." And yet, in spite of all this,

although it is so plain that this name is holy, precious, mighty, and terrible, although it is clear that when it is uttered the faithful on earth, the white-winged angels in heaven, ay, and even the lost spirits in hell bow to do homage to it, nevertheless there is a creature who will not worship; there is a created being worse than the very demons; there is found one who will not reverence that name, holy and good and true--and that creature is the _blasphemer_.
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Yes, brethren, in our streets, in our factories, in our very homes that holy name is taken in vain. Jesus--that sweet name is mixed up with everything that is foul and disrespectful. Jesus' name, the name of our King, our Saviour, and our Judge, is used as an oath; and not only by men coarse and hardened, but by boys and girls, by women, and, unheard of impiety! even by little children. Passing through the streets the other day, I heard a volley of curses in which the holy Name was mingled, and the curser was a boy who could not, I am sure, have been more than eight or nine years of age; and, alas! it is not the first time that I have heard such things. O brethren! I beseech you, by the wounds and cross of Jesus Christ, look to this great sin. When I hear these little baby blasphemers, who scarce, perhaps, know what they say, I know they have learned these oaths from the father, the elder brothers, and perhaps even from the mother, and I tremble to think how deep the evil has sunk into the hearts of men. Oh! then let us never again misuse the holy Name; let us cast out cursing and swearing from our midst, lest it drive us and our children into hell.
It belongs to us to be devout to the holy name of Jesus, for we are taught by holy church to ask for every blessing through it. Are we tempted? Let us call upon it, and He who bears it will come to our aid. Are we in sorrow? Let us whisper to ourselves, Jesus! Jesus! and he who knelt in the dark garden and sweat blood for us, he who faced the horrors of death, forsaken and heart-broken, will send us comfort and heal our wounds. Do our sins terrify us? Let us look up to the Cross of Calvary.
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There on the topmost beam is written the sweet name of Jesus; there beneath hangs the _Saviour_ and the Comforter. Do we need strength for the battle of life, and courage in the struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil? Jesus! Jesus! the Mighty One, the Conqueror, the Lion of Juda, he who is called "Faithful and true, and with justice doth he judge and fight"--he will arm us for the battle and nerve our heart for the combat. Oh! let us reverence the dear, holy name of our sweet Saviour while we live; and when at last our death-cold lips can part no more to utter it, may the great God give us each a friend to whisper it in our ears, so that Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! may be the last name that we shall hear on earth, and the first which our enraptured spirits will hear in heaven.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon XXI.

His name was called Jesus.

--St. Luke ii. 21,

To-day we celebrate the Feast of the most Holy Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The church sets apart a special Sunday for the celebration of this feast, to bring before our minds the sacredness of this name--its preciousness, and the reverence due to it.

This name is the name of the God-Man who came into the world to save us from hell. It is the greatest of all names, because it is the name of the greatest of all beings. It was given to our Lord by the archangel when he announced to the Blessed Virgin that she was to be the mother of God.

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An angel first pronounced it; the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph were the first to call the new-born Babe of Bethlehem by that name; and all holy men and women, from the time of the adoration of the poor shepherds and wise men down to this hour, have had the greatest veneration for that name.

The angel St. Gabriel said to the Blessed Virgin: "He shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." You see, then, how precious this name is: it is the name by which we are to be freed from our sins delivered from hell, and admitted among the blessed, the redeemed of all nations. It is the name by which we are the receivers of the supernatural graces of all the holy sacraments. And St. Paul says: God gave to his only-begotten Son "a name that is above every name, that at the name of _Jesus_ every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." It is the name not only of the Infant of Bethlehem, but it is the name of that One whom you see in the Stations and nailed to the cross, bleeding, and dying, and dead for you.

And yet how our blood runs cold, how we tremble with horror, when we see how little reverence is shown for this name! You need not go far or stay out very long before you hear that name used most irreverently by the child who has hardly learned his prayers, as well as by thieves, drunkards, and murderers, and the lowest rabble that tread the streets of this city; not only by bad men and women, but by people who profess to be respectable Catholics.

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How often we are made to wonder why Almighty God does not send a thunderbolt and strike dead the blasphemer, or cause the earth to open under those who so treat this holy name, and swallow them up quickly in punishment for their crime! A man who steals, or gets drunk, or gives way to lust sees a sensual temporary good in these sins; but what good, what use is there in blasphemy, in cursing, in swearing? None. It is a direct blow at Almighty God himself. If a man were to insult your mother your vengeance would be roused, and you would think no punishment too great for the offender. Shall God not be jealous of his name? Shall he not punish? Yes, he will. He says: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain."

If, then, you have not controlled your gift of speech, which was given you to edify your neighbor, to speak and sing the praises

of God, but have given way to a habit of using God's holy name and that of his Son in vain, ask him to give you the grace to overcome the habit. If you hear people on the street or in company blaspheming, cursing, or swearing, lift up your heart to God and make reparation for the injury by saying the prayer, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." Never give scandal to others, and especially the little ones around your family hearth, by blaspheming, or even by carelessly using the name of God or his saints without due reverence. Many men and women have grown up with this old habit clinging to them--a habit that they contracted at home, and that they learned when young from their father and mother. Cursing and swearing are the language of hell. Blessing, prayer, and praise are the language of heaven.
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Do all in your power to learn the language of the saints--that is, the language of love and reverence for the holy name of Jesus. For "his name is holy and terrible." Repeat the prayer which is sung and said in the holy Mass on this feast:

> "O God, who hast made thy only-begotten Son to be the Saviour of mankind, and hast commanded that he should be called Jesus, mercifully grant that we may so venerate his holy name on earth that we may be favored with beholding his face for ever in heaven."

Sermon XXII.

> _There was a marriage in Cana, of Galilee;
> and the Mother of Jesus was there.
> And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples,
> to the marriage._
> --St. John ii. 1, 2.

As we read the story of this marriage, my dear brethren, it must certainly occur to all of us how singularly favored it was, above all that have ever been celebrated since the beginning of the world, in being honored with the presence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of his Blessed Mother, and of his apostles, and in the fact that it witnessed the first of the miracles which he performed in his three years' ministry--the change of water into wine. But when we come to look at the matter more closely we shall see that, great as was the honor which this marriage received, every Christian marriage has the same. For every Christian marriage is honored really and truly, though not visibly, with the presence of our Lord, his Blessed Mother, and the apostles; and at every Christian marriage a miracle of grace is performed of which we may well believe the change of water into wine to have been only a shadow or type.
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For what is marriage now in the church of Christ? It is one of the sacraments. And what does that mean? It means that whenever a marriage is contracted by those who are baptized there is a grace given with it by our Lord's infallible promise. This grace, moreover, is one which, like those given in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, is to remain permanently in the soul, and to be a source or fountain from which new graces are continually to flow. So I am right in saying that our Lord is

present at a Christian marriage; for it is only from him that this grace can come. And I am right in saying that Our Lady is present at it; because this grace, while it comes from him, comes through her. For she is the channel through which his grace comes to us; which is shown in this marriage at Cana, of which the Gospel tells us, by his working the miracle of the change of the water into wine at her intercession. And, lastly, I am right in saying the apostles are present at a Christian marriage; for such a marriage can only lawfully be celebrated in the presence of the priest, who represents them.

I said, furthermore, that at every Christian marriage a miracle is worked which was represented by our Lord's miracle at Cana. This miracle is the giving of this wonderful sacramental grace; and it is well represented by the conversion of water into wine. It is a miracle--that is to say, an extraordinary and supernatural work of God--because it is not naturally connected with marriage itself.

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Marriage, in itself, is nothing but a contract or agreement between two parties, having no special blessing or grace, except that which comes from its honorable nature and the good dispositions of the parties themselves. Such is marriage among the unbaptized. But among Christians it is, as I have said, elevated to the dignity of a great sacrament--the contract remaining, but the sacrament being added to it; and it cannot exist among Christians without both. Now, I think you will agree with me that this is well represented by the change of water into wine, in which water, indeed, remains, but is blended with the spirit in such a way that neither can be taken away without destroying the very substance of the wine.

Such, then, my brethren, is the dignity of Christian marriage, represented to us in this marriage at Cana, in Galilee. But is it honored among Christians according to its dignity?

How many are there who reverence this sacrament as they should? It is one of the sacraments of the living, as they are called; that is, one of those which require the soul, when receiving it, to be in the state of grace. The Catholic who comes to it in the state of mortal sin commits a horrible sacrilege as surely as he would if he should go to the altar-rail and receive Holy Communion without repentance for his sins. Do not forget this. Do not dare to come to receive the sacrament of matrimony without preparing your soul by a good confession; not only on account of the dreadful sacrilege of which you will be guilty in receiving it unprepared, but also for fear of losing the grace which it is meant to give you throughout life, and which grace may never return; for, like that offered to the soul in Holy Communion, if once despised and rejected, it may be lost for ever.

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And, for the sake of Him who instituted this great sacrament, do not make it, as too many do, an occasion of mortal sin by making it a privileged time for drunkenness and immodesty. A wedding ought to be a time of joy, but for a joy of purity and sobriety. If you make it a time for opening the door to sin for yourselves and for others, tremble lest you bring down on yourselves for the

rest of your lives the curse of God instead of his blessing. Invite, then, like the couple at Cana, our Lord to be present at your marriage, and behave as you would if you were to see him there. So shall you receive his benediction, both for time and eternity.

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Third Sunday after Epiphany.

Epistle.

Romans xii. 16-21.

Brethren:

Be not wise in your own conceits. Render to no man evil for evil. Provide things good not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men. Revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved; but give place to wrath, for it is written: "Revenge is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." But if thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him drink; for doing this thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.

Gospel.

St. Matthew viii. 1-13.

At that time:

When Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him; and behold a leper coming, adored him, saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will; be thou made clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him: See thou tell no man; but go show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony to them. And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion, beseeching him and 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. And the centurion, making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

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And Jesus, hearing this, wondered, and said to those that followed him: Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion: Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour.

Sermon XXIII.

Only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.

--St. Matthew viii. 8.

The centurion in to-day's Gospel, dear friends, is certainly a shining example to us of many virtues, Particularly is he an example to those among us who are rich and well off, or who have any servants or others employed under our authority. When any one is taken sick, what is the first cry? Go for the priest. Run for the doctor. And instantly a messenger is sought out. Now, this man's servant was sick. What did he do? Centurion, and high in station as he was, he went _himself_ for One who was both doctor and priest. His servant, doubtless, had served him faithfully, had been obedient and trustworthy; and now that this servant is sick, remembering the sublime virtue of charity, the master runs off to our Lord and begs of him to speak the word that would heal the servant. Now, many of you, dear brethren, have in your houses hired help, and the poor are around you who serve you in many useful ways; who do work which, did they not exist, would have to be left undone.

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How do you treat those fellow-Christians? Ah! I am afraid, often in a very different spirit to that displayed by the centurion. They are sick. You grumble at the inconvenience to which you are put, but what do you do to help them? Do you get the doctor? Do you offer them such nourishment as a sick person needs? Do you visit your servant's sick-bed, or the beds of the poor, to whom we are all indebted for so much service? I wish it were always so, but it is not. Often a servant is made to work when bed would be a more fitting place to be in than the kitchen. Often the poor suffer dreadfully because those whom they serve in health will not help them in sickness. Oh! then let us all follow the example of the good centurion, and if our servants in our house, or our servants out of the house, are sick, let us, moved by a divine charity, hasten at once to their relief.

And then in spiritual things how do we act? Catholic heads of families, employers, masters and mistresses, keepers of stores and workshops, how do you look after those that work for you? Do you see that they go to Mass? Do you give them time to get to confession? Do you look after the moral conduct of those you employ? When they are sick and suffering are you solicitous that they should have the comfort and help which the holy sacraments afford? Are you sensible of the responsibility which lies upon you to see that the priest is sent for, especially when they are in danger of death? Oh! I am much afraid that many are very neglectful in this respect.

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So long as their work is done they care very little for those they employ. Catholic employers often don't bestow a thought upon these things. But don't deceive yourselves: God will require all these souls at your hands. No Catholic man or woman ought to keep in their houses a servant who is negligent of his or her religious duties. You should give your help and your employees plenty of time to go to Mass and confession; and, more than that, it is your duty to _see_ that they go. You should not employ by the side of innocent young men and women all sorts of roughs and blackguards. By so doing you put immortal souls in peril. You

should remember that you are head of the family, and that the help and the employees are part of that family, and therefore you are bound in conscience to care for them. Imitate, then, the centurion. Love those you employ. Have a great charity for them. Cherish them, tend them in all their wants. Correct their faults, reward their fidelity; and by so doing you will advance Christ's kingdom on earth and people his kingdom in heaven.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon XXIV.

_If it be possible, as much as is in you,
have peace with all men;
revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved._
--Romans xii. 18-19.

There are a good many people who seem to find it very difficult to have peace with all men, or at any rate with all women; for, strange to say, it is, for some reason or other, what is known as the gentler sex that gives and has the most trouble in this respect.

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Of course it is all the fault of some other party that they cannot live in peace; not their own at all. They themselves are perfectly innocent--lambs, in fact, among wolves. Other people are always persecuting and tormenting them, or at any rate belying them; this last is one of the favorite complaints of these poor, harmless, and much-abused creatures. They try to have peace as far as possible, but other people will not let them. And of course they never revenge themselves on their cruel enemies. Oh! no. They never injure or belie them; they would not do such a thing for the world. They may, indeed, meekly complain of their troubles to the few friends they have got left; they tell how wicked these people are who give them so much annoyance. They try to lower other people's esteem of them; but, of course, that is not meant for injury--that is only that others may be duly warned of such dangerous characters. In their zeal they may draw on their imagination a little; but of course that is not belying. They, perhaps on some rare occasions will try to take it out of their persecutors in one way or another; but then that is not revenge--that is only standing up for their rights. They would like to have peace, and so they try to have it by making reconciliation as hard as possible.

It is plain what good Christians they are from their enjoyment of the words which follow those which I have quoted from the Epistle of to-day. These words are: "Revenge is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."' These are, indeed, a great consolation to them.

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"Yes," they say to themselves, "I leave them to God. I cannot revenge myself on my enemies as I would like; I don't dare to, or my conscience won't let me; but I hope God will punish them as they deserve. Revenge belongs to him, I know, and I am glad to think that in his own good time he will lay it on to them well. I shall do all my duty if I wish patiently for the time when he will begin to do it; and meanwhile I will console myself by praying that he may convert them and make every one of them as

good a Christian as I am."
The delusion under which these good Christians are laboring would be amusing, if it were not so dangerous. The danger is that the revenge of God, about which they like to think, is hanging as much over their own heads as over those of the ones with whom they are at variance. They are not really trying to have peace; their own revenge is what they want, though they are willing that Almighty God should be the instrument of it.
They do not care either to preserve peace or to regain it in the only way in which it can be preserved or regained--that is, by charity and humility. Their charity is all for themselves. They may tread on other people's corns, but nobody else must tread on theirs. Other people must be humble, and, if they give offence, even carelessly, must make an abject apology; but they themselves are too good to be obliged to do that.
Perhaps, however, my friends, some of you really do want to live in peace with all. If so, you can do it by following a very simple rule. It is this: Be careful what you say or do to others; they are sensitive as well as yourself--perhaps more so. You must not expect other people to be saints, even if you are one yourself.
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Do not flatter what is bad in them, but acknowledge what is good; stroke them the right way. If they really do you an injury see if you have not provoked it; examine your own actions. If you are sure you have not, put it down to ignorance or misapprehension; try to find out what the matter is, and set it right by an explanation, if you can. But if you have committed a fault do not be too proud to acknowledge it. If you cannot procure a reconciliation speak well of the other party, and believe him or her to be, on the whole, better than yourself. For one who has true humility this will not be very hard to do.
This is the real meaning of the counsel of St. Paul; if you follow it you will, indeed, live in peace as far as it is possible in this world.

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Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.
Epistle.
Romans xiii. 8-10.
Brethren:
Owe no man anything, but that you 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 this word: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The love of the neighbor worketh no evil. Love, therefore, is the fulfilling of the law.
Gospel.
St. Matthew viii. 23-27.
At that time:
When Jesus entered into the ship, his disciples followed him; and behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the ship

was covered with waves, but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and waked him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them: Why are you fearful, ye of little faith? Then rising up he commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: Who is this, for even the winds and the sea obey him?

Sermon XXV.

_And Jesus saith to them:
Why are you fearful, ye of little faith?_
--St. Matt. viii. 26.

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Some people are always worrying. It would seem that they must enjoy it, for they always find something to worry about. If one good matter for worrying is settled they will be sure to rake up another to take its place. Some of them worry about temporal matters, some about spiritual; but whatever their taste may be in this respect, they are so fond of the amusement that, if they cannot get their favorite matter to worry about, they will take something else rather than not have any at all.

You would think that this taste for worrying would be a very uncommon one; but, strange to say, it is not so. In fact, the number of worriers is almost as great as the number of people in the world, and they are worrying about every conceivable thing, though generally only about one thing at a time; it may be about their sins or about somebody else's sins--their children's, for instance--or it may be, and is more likely to be, about some temporal matter, such as their health or the state of their worldly affairs.

Now, what do I mean by worrying? I do not mean thinking seriously about things either spiritual or temporal--for a great many, though not all, of the things people worry about are worthy of serious consideration, whereas nothing is worth a moment's worry--but I do mean thinking about them in a way that can do no good, and that only serves to turn the mind in on itself and away from God.

Here, for instance, is a case of worrying, to which I have just alluded: A good father and mother have children who are growing up, as so many children are growing up, especially in this city, in neglect of their duties and are acquiring various bad habits. Of course this is very painful to their parents, and there is very good reason that it should be. They would be unnatural or wicked parents if it were not so.

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They ought to be distressed about it; and I did not say that people should never be distressed, but only that they should not worry. But these parents probably do worry. They occupy their minds with all sorts of useless questions and imaginations. They say: "What have I done that these children of mine are so bad?" And perhaps, though they ask this question, they never really stop to examine themselves and find out if they have neglected their own duty in any way, so as to make an act of contrition for it, and make good resolutions, if it be not too late, for the future. What they mean rather by it is: "How can God allow this

when I have done my duty?" And then they say: "Suppose these children get worse and disgrace my name, and even, lose their souls--what shall I do then?" Or perhaps they say: "What shall I do now?" But that does not really mean anything, for either they do not set their wits to work to find out what they can do, or they have concluded with good reason that they cannot do anything except pray; and that they do not do, for their time of prayer is taken up with this same useless worrying.

Now, what does all this come from? It comes from a distrust in God's love and providence. It comes from a feeling like what the apostles had, as we read in to-day's Gospel, as if He who ought to take care of them were asleep; but they ought to have known, as their own psalms could have taught them, that "He shall neither slumber nor sleep that keepeth Israel." Even though they knew him not to be God, they should have known that God, who had sent him into the world, and on whom their faith in him rested, would not allow them to come to any harm; and they should have been willing, when they had done their own duty, to trust in his providence for the rest.

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They might, indeed, well have waked him to get his help and advice as to what to do; but he, who read their hearts, knew that their anxiety had its source, not in prudence, but in distrust, and so he deservedly rebuked them, saying: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?"

That is the reason why we, like the apostles, are worrying. It is because we have little faith. We distrust God's providence and mercy, and spend our time in this distrust and complaining, instead of quietly finding out and doing our own duty, and then simply and confidently leaving the result to him. But we have less excuse for it than they, for we know more of him than they did then. Let us, then, be ashamed of our want of faith, and try to do better in this respect for the future.

Sermon XXVI.

And behold, a great tempest arose in the sea.
--St. Matthew viii. 24.

Almost all of us, my dear brethren, have at some time of life been in a position like that of the apostles in their little boat on the Sea of Galilee. We have been out at sea in a storm, with the waves beating against our frail craft and threatening to swamp it every moment. So we do not need to draw on our imagination to realize what their feelings must have been.

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Perhaps you may think I am exaggerating when I say this; most of you, I suppose, cannot remember ever having been in a storm at sea. But it is quite true, nevertheless. Only the sea and the storm were far more dangerous ones than those to which the apostles were exposed that night. For the sea over which you were, and still are, sailing is the sea of this mortal life; and the storm was the storm of temptation; and the danger was that of death, not to the body, but to the soul.

But perhaps you do not remember ever having met with any very violent storm, even of this kind. Well, it may be that God has

singularly favored you, and given you a very quiet and smooth sea to sail over so far. If so, you are an exception to the common rule. It may be, however, that you escaped the storm in another way; that is, by going to the bottom at once. You know the most furious tempests do not reach very far below the surface of the ocean, so that one can always escape them by sinking. So you, perhaps, have escaped temptation by yielding to it at once; as soon as you were tempted to commit mortal sin you committed it, and sank into its horrible and fathomless abyss, continually deeper and deeper, till you were brought up again to the light and air of God's pardon and peace by some mission which he sent you, or by some other extraordinary grace from him.

But that was not what you were made for, any more than a ship is made to be continually sinking and being pulled up to the surface again. Ships are made to sail, not to sink. Their builders expect that they will battle with the elements, not be overcome by them; nay, more, they expect that the very winds which seem to threaten their safety shall be the means of sending them to the port which they are intended to reach.

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And what the builder expects of his ship is what God, who has made us, expects of us; especially of us Christians, with whom he has taken such great pains. He expects, and he has a right to expect, that we shall stay on the surface--that is, that we shall keep in the state of grace; that we shall battle with the winds and waves--that is, that we shall resist temptation; and, furthermore, he expects that the winds, even if they be ahead, shall help us on our course--that is, that they shall be the means, and even the principal means, of bringing us into the safe harbor of our eternal home.

Let us not, then, be surprised, nay, let us even rejoice, if we fall into temptation, so long as we do not seek it. "My brethren," says St. James, "count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations." And why? First, because the fact that you are harassed by temptations is a sign that you have not given way to them. It shows that you are on the surface, that you have not foundered yet when you feel the winds and the waves.

And, secondly, because it is a sign that our Lord puts confidence in you. The builder of a ship, if he could do it, would proportion the wind to the size and strength of his vessel; and that is what our Maker actually does. He has let his saints have temptations compared with which yours are as nothing at all. Such as he allows you to have are meant for your salvation and perfection; the more he thinks you worthy of, the better.

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But do not seek them. A prudent captain keeps out of the track of storms. Be content with those which you cannot avoid, for those are the only ones which God means you to have.

When you cannot avoid them meet them courageously. Do not get frightened, as the apostles did, for God is with you as he was with them, though he may seem to be asleep. He has not forgotten you, and with his help you will conquer them, every one.

But you must ask him to do so. You must go to him as the apostles did, saying: "Lord, save us, we perish." He did not blame them

for that, but for their terror and want of trust in his providence. You must work when you are in the storm of temptation as if the result all depended on yourself; you must pray as if it all depended on him. If you do this you will not sink in the tempest; nay, when it is over you will find that it has driven you nearer to the harbor where storms never come.

Sermon XXVII.
Candlemas-Day.

_A light to the revelation of the Gentiles,
and the glory of thy people of Israel._
--St. Luke ii. 32.

The blessing of candles, and the esteem which Catholics have for candles when they are blessed, is one of the things which Protestants find it very hard to understand. They have no idea of a candle, except that it is a very old-fashioned article, useful enough, perhaps, if you want to grope in some dark corner of the house, but, on the whole, a very poor affair in these days of gas and the electric light. They cannot see why any one who can get a good kerosene lamp should use a candle instead; unless, perhaps, it might be because the candle will not explode.

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The reason for their perplexity is pretty plain. It is because they do not, or it may be will not, understand that we honor and prize candles, as we do the images of the saints and many other things, not for what they are, but for what they represent; and also on account of the sanctification and real use, not to our bodies so much as to our souls, that the blessing of the church is able to give to anything to which it is attached.

Protestants, I say, do not or will not understand these things; but Catholics do. It is not superstition which makes a Catholic prize a blessed candle. He knows, first, that it has been selected by the church to represent our Blessed Lord himself; that its feeble light is a sign of the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world; and he honors and esteems it for God's sake. And secondly, he knows that it has a power and use greater and higher than that of the most brilliant lamps that the hand of man can make; that, though it be but a material thing, it has a spiritual value, like holy-water and other things which the church has blessed and sanctified; and specially that it is a defence against our spiritual enemies, Satan and the other fallen angels, and all the more so because these proud spirits cannot bear to be put to flight, as they are, by such a common and simple thing as a candle or a few drops of water.

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You know these things, my friends; the spirit of faith teaches them to you. But you do not bear them so constantly in mind as you should. How often does the priest go to a house on a sick call, and find that there is no candle to be had! The law of the church requires it when the sacraments are to be administered; but one would think it would not need a law to make any one who had the faith see that at least this honor should be given to them. Strange to say, however, the people of the house never

thought of the matter at all. They keep our Lord waiting while they run out to borrow, if possible, a candle from some pious neighbor. Perhaps they buy one at the grocery-store; I do not know what blessing they think that has received. When they get the candle, such as it may be, there is probably nothing to put it in; it is likely enough that a bottle is all that can be found.

It would look much better, in some houses which we have to visit, if there were fewer bottles and more blessed candles. It would look as if the people who lived there thought at least as much of their souls as of their bodies. It is very unpleasant for all parties--and our Lord is one of them--to have such things happen as I have described.

Get rid of the bottle and have a candlestick in its place. I know that candlesticks, as well as candles, are rather out of fashion; but the supply will always follow the demand. For the honor and for the fear of God, do not remain any longer without a blessed candle in your house and something worthy of it to hold it. There will be no harm in burning it, even though no one be sick and the priest not there, if it be at a proper place and time.

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And, if it be possible, offer a candle to be burned in the place and at the time most pleasing to God of all--that is, on his holy altar while Mass is being offered, or his blessing being given to you in the Sacrament of his love. Honor and glorify him everywhere, but specially in the place where his glory dwelleth, and where he is daily offered up for you.

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Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Epistle.

Colossians iii. 12-17.

Brethren:

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

Gospel.

St. Matthew xiii. 24-30.

At that time:

Jesus spoke this parable to the multitude, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared also the

cockle. Then the servants of the master of the house came and said to him: Master, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest while you gather up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it.
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Let both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn; but gather the wheat into my barn.

Sermon XXVIII.

_Gather up first the cockle,
and bind it into bundles to burn;
but gather the wheat into my barn._
--St. Matthew xiii. 30.

The parable which is the subject of the Gospel of to-day is explained by our Lord himself a little further on. The disciples asked him to expound it to them; and he told them that the good seed were the children of the kingdom--that is, all good and faithful Christians; and that the cockle were the children of the wicked one--that is, all those who refuse to believe in the faith which God has revealed, or who will not obey his law. These two kinds of people, said he, live together in this world, but at the end of the world they shall all be for ever separated, the wicked to be cast into the furnace of fire, and the just to shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Our Lord calls the sinful the children of the wicked one--that is, of the devil. But he does not mean that the devil created them, for he can create no one; no, God created us all, and has, furthermore, redeemed us all with his precious Blood. There is something about them, though, which the devil may be said to have created, and that it is which makes them his children. It is sin, which he first brought into God's creation, to which he tempted our first parents, and to which he is all the while tempting us now. Sin is the devil's work; and sinners are his children, because they do his work.

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But few people, at least few Christians, are all the time sinners and children of the devil. Sometimes they repent and become, at least for a time, children of God. Good and evil are mixed up in them, as they are in the world. So our Lord's parable is true of each one of them as it is of the world at large. Each of our hearts is a little field in which God is sowing the good seed of his holy inspirations, and the devil the bad seed of his wicked temptations; and sometimes consent is given to one, sometimes to the other.

Perhaps we may have asked ourselves the question (for it is a very natural one to ask): "Why has God allowed the devil to sow his bad seed in the world and in the hearts of men? And why, if he lets it be sown, does he not root out this bad seed, and not let it grow and choke what is good?" I should not wonder at your asking this question, and you should not wonder if we cannot give

all of God's reasons for it, for it is one of the mysteries of his providence. But he has himself given one reason for it in his explanation of this parable. The servants, you will remember, wanted to go and root out the cockle; but the master said: "No, lest while ye gather up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it." Would it not be so with us, too, if God should take away all the bad seed of temptation out of our hearts? A great deal of our virtue would be rooted up, too, and what was left would not be very strong and solid. You can see that often. A person seems very good, but what is the reason? It is because he is not much tempted.
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Let a strong temptation come, and perhaps such a person will sin more easily than one who has seemed much worse, but has really been acquiring solid virtue by faithfully combating with difficulties the other has not had. And not only would our virtue not be solid, but our merits would not be very abundant, without temptation; for most of our merit is gained by resisting sin. Our Lord, then, does not mean to pull up the cockle out of the way of the wheat, but wants the wheat to live and outgrow the cockle. It is for us to see that it does so; for if there is any cockle left when we come to die there will be something to do before the wheat goes to the barn--that is, to cast the cockle into the furnace of fire; and that furnace of fire, for those who die in the grace of God, is the fire of purgatory. We shall have to wait there till the cockle of sin is all burned before we can go to heaven with our wheat of virtue and of merit.
Let us not think, then, in this month of November, only of praying for those who are in those purging flames, but also of avoiding them ourselves. Our Lord does not want us to go to purgatory. He would infinitely rather take us to heaven from our death-bed than let us remain in that state of suffering. What he wants is to have the wheat grow over the whole field and choke the cockle instead of being choked by it--in a word, he wants us to be saints. That is what St. Paul says: "This is the will of God, your sanctification." Let this, then, be our devotion in the month of November and all the year round: to imitate those (and there are many of them) who have died and gone before their Lord with plenty of wheat and no cockle on their hands.

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Sermon XXIX.

_Bearing with one another,
and forgiving one another,
if any have a complaint against another:
even as the Lord hath forgiven you,
so do you also._
--Colossians iii. 13.

These words, my dear brethren, are taken from the Epistle of to-day. They certainly contain a most important lesson for us, and one which we are too apt never even to begin to learn. You will find plenty of people who are near the end of a long life--who have, as the saying is, one foot in the grave--who do not seem to know how to overlook and to pardon injuries any

better than when they first began to be exposed to them.
There are two very good reasons, my brethren, why you should learn this lesson. The first is that, unless you do, you can never be happy in this life; the second, that, unless you have learned it, there is great reason to fear for your happiness in the life which is to come.
You can never be happy, I say, in this life, unless you know how to pardon and overlook the injuries you receive from others. And the reason of this is very plain. It is, in the first place, because it is very uncomfortable to be brooding over injuries received--that is plain enough; and, in the second place, you will always be exposed to them. There is a way to avoid them, it is true: it is to go out into the desert and live there in some cave or hut all alone. But I think there are very few nowadays who have any vocation to that; and if you should undertake to live the life of a hermit without any vocation for it, the chances are that you would be ten times as miserable as you would be with the very worst neighbors in the world.
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This is the only way to avoid them; for, however good the people are among whom you live, they will always be somewhat selfish; they will want to have their own way sometimes, at least, and it will often happen that they cannot have their way and at the same time let you have yours. And they will always be somewhat thoughtless. They will not be so very careful not to offend you; and you cannot expect it of them, for you are not so careful yourself. You would be surprised if you should know how often you have given offence to others.
The fact is, there is not room enough in this world for us all to get along without sometimes treading on each other's toes. There are a great many of us sailing together down the stream of life, and it will take the most careful steering to prevent our now and then running foul of each other. And such careful steering cannot be expected of every one, or of any except one or two here and there. If you really should try it yourselves you would find how difficult it is. The saints do try it, and that is one reason why it is a work of sanctity to be indulgent to the faults of others.
Well, I said the second reason why you should learn the lesson of forgiveness to others is that, unless you do, there is great reason to fear for your happiness in the life to come. If you can have any doubt of that, those words of our Lord in another place will settle your doubt. "If you will not forgive men," he says, "neither will your Father forgive you your offences." You may confess all your sins, and receive the sacraments over and over again, but so long as you have a hatred against your neighbor your confessions and communions will be bad; you will not be in the friendship of God; and if you go out of the world with that malice in your heart you will be shut out from his presence.
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You will say to me, perhaps, "Father, I will forgive, but I cannot forget" If you say this to me I say to you: Take care. As long as you do not at least try to forget, as long as you keep in your mind that sore feeling which the injury you have received, or think you have received, has caused, it will always be an

occasion of sin to you. It will always prompt you to withhold from the persons whom you blame that charity which you are bound to show to all. You will always be inclined to speak evil of them, to try to prevent others from praising them, to throw out some hint in which the venom which lies lurking in your heart comes up to the surface. And do not be too sure that you have really done all that God requires because the priest has given you absolution. He cannot read your heart, and often he is obliged to forgive uncharitable people like yourself, with great doubt in his mind whether his sentence is approved by the great Judge who cannot be deceived.

Now, that you may forgive more easily, remember what I suggested a little while ago: that is, that those who have offended you have generally done so either through selfishness or carelessness, not through malice. Believe me, real malice is quite a rare thing. If you could see the real dispositions of others you would see that on the whole they are about as good as your own; and I do not suppose you think you are malicious, and I do not believe you are. Put, then, those unworthy suspicions out of your minds, and forgive others freely and generously as you yourself wish to be forgiven.

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Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Epistle.

1 _Thessalonians i_. 2-10.

Brethren:

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

Gospel.

St. Matthew xiii. 31-35.

At that time:

Jesus spoke to the multitude this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown up it is greater than any herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the

branches thereof.

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Another parable he spoke to them. The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes: and without parables he did not speak to them. That the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world."

Sermon XXX.

The kingdom of heaven
is like to a grain of mustard-seed.
--St. Matthew xiii. 31.

A grain of mustard-seed is very little, as our Lord tells us, and also, as we know, very sharp and burning. So is God's church, which is the kingdom of Christ upon earth. First, it is little; not in numbers, but little because it is poor and lowly. The human spirit is proud above all things, disobedient, rebellious, loving to be exalted, wishing to be praised. That which lost paradise, which brought sin and death into the world, which closed heaven, which opened hell, that which robbed us, stripped us of our heavenly inheritance, was _pride_. So, then, the kingdom of God, the church, that which is to govern the heart of man, to rule its disorders, to bring us back to heaven, is poor, is lowly, in the world's eyes is little. The proud world likes to swell itself out and appear big, and makes a wide path to swagger in. Our Lord tells us, "Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"; and again: "Narrow is the gate and strait the way that leadeth to life." Do not wonder, then, that our holy church, which is glorious and magnificent in the eyes of angels and saints, should be thought little, and lowly, and poor by the world, and the flesh, and the devil.

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Now, it seems that this very poverty of the church ought to be a reason why we should love it. If you are poor, then remember "birds of a feather flock together." The church is poor, too. She has not (particularly in these days) much of this world's goods. Often she is much put about to build even a decent temple in which to worship God. The church sometimes can hardly "keep house" for God--can hardly buy those things which are of daily necessity for his service. Oh! then the poor ought to love the church. Are you rich? Then the poverty of the church ought to touch your heart and open your purse. "The poor you have always with you," says Jesus Christ, and the poorest of the poor is God's church. The priest is obliged to beg for church, for school, and all that is in them--for almost everything, indeed, that is needed for the service of our divine Master. So, then, it is from you who are rich that large alms ought to come, so that Jesus Christ may be able to say that we have _you_ with us and him as well as the poor. Again, while I caution you against hankering after mere ease and comfort in church, and the worldly

elegances to be seen in the soft-cushioned and carpeted churches of the sects, I must express my wonder that many wealthy Catholics appear to be quite content to see the churches where they go to Mass fitted up with furniture that would be too mean for use in their own houses. If our Lord finds only more straw and another manger for a cradle for his divine Majesty nowadays, it ought not to be because we furnish him no better.
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Secondly, the church is like a grain of mustard-seed, because her laws are often sharp and burning to the human heart. Mustard-seed, when crushed, has, as you know, a very strong and pungent odor. If you stand over it when thus crushed it will cause tears to flow from your eyes. If applied to your flesh it will burn and smart. Yes; and sometimes the law of God will make tears start from your eyes. There is some habit you find convenient, some little pet plan you have made, some person to whom you are attached. These things are leading you from God; so his church says: "Change your ways." "Give it up." "It is not lawful for thee." "Cut it off." Ah! don't you feel the sharp mustard-seed getting into your eyes? Again, the flesh rebels. That drink you love so much, that sinful appetite you like to indulge, those places of evil amusement to which you want to go--what says the church about such things? "Take the pledge." "Throw away drink." "You must not gratify that sinful inclination." "You cannot go to that place of amusement." "Give up that bad company or Jesus Christ will give you up." Ah! don't you feel how the mustard-seed burns and stings? But have good courage--better be burnt here than burnt hereafter. That burning of the mustard seed will heal you, will cure you. Its warmth will bring you back to life. Lastly, one day the little seed will become a great tree, whose branches shall reach to the sky, whose boughs shall wave in heaven. Then we, like poor, homeless birds of the air, shall spread our weary wings and go and make our lodgings for ever beneath its sheltering leaves.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

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Sermon XXXI.

_The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven,
which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal,
until the whole was leavened._
--St. Matthew xiii. 33.

The kingdom of heaven, my dear friends, means, as you know, in this as well as in many other of our Lord's parables, not God's kingdom in the next world, but in this--that is, his holy Catholic Church. Understanding it in this way, it is easy to see why he compares it to a grain of mustard-seed or to leaven; for it was small in the beginning, but has grown, as the mustard-seed grows, so that it now has spread through the whole earth; and it was not noticed in the beginning, as the little leaven or yeast would not be in the dough into which it is put, but has now made its influence felt in all the world, as that of the yeast is in the bread which it makes.
This was our Lord's intention, that his church should be

continually growing till every one should enter it, till every heart should be leavened by its faith. But there are some people--Catholics, too, but a very curious kind of Catholics--who seem to think that the church was only made for those nations or those families which now belong to it, and will even blame those who are converted to it for leaving the religion of their fathers. I do not know what excuse one can make for these persons, except to suppose that God has blessed them with a very small share of common sense.

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I do not think that there are many people so stupid as to talk in this way; but there are a good many who act as if they thought as these people seem to think. I do not mean that there are many who give the cold shoulder to converts, for that would be an unjust reproach; but I do mean that there are many Catholics who do not seem to understand the world has got to be converted, and that they themselves have got to do their share towards it; that they are part of that leaven with which our Lord meant that the world should be leavened; that it was by means of them, according to their measure of ability and opportunity, that he meant the faith to be diffused through the world. Every Catholic ought to be a missionary in his way and place, and do something to bring others to that knowledge of the truth which he himself has received. Not that every Catholic should go out and preach the faith on the corners of the streets, or to people who would laugh at him or do him more harm than he could do them good; but that every one should be on the lookout for those who are sincere and well disposed, and be ready to give them a helping hand, to explain any difficulties which they may have, or to persuade them to come to the priest, who can explain them more fully.

But, above all, that he should spread among those who do not believe the leaven of good example, and not scandalize them by a bad life. One can hardly be too careful to avoid scandalizing even the faithful; and much more care should be taken not to scandalize those who are seeking for the truth, and particularly about those things on which their ideas are very strict and their consciences very sensitive.

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Take, for instance, the horrible vice of profane swearing, to which many of you, to your own shame you must confess, are so much addicted, and about which you are inexcusably careless. There is no doubt at all that there is many a Protestant who would not so much as think of enquiring about the faith of a person who was in the habit of blaspheming. And yet he may be really anxious to know the truth, and his soul is as dear to God as yours; and if you are the cause, by this abominable habit of yours, of his turning away in despair from the church, most assuredly you will have to give an account for it when your soul shall come to be judged. Many persons all around us are outside of the church to-day because of the prevalence of this sin of profanity among Catholics, because all the Catholics whom they know seem rather to be children of the devil than of the good God.

There are many other things, particularly drunkenness and

falsehood, by which Catholics spread around them the leaven of bad example, and drive people away from the faith instead of drawing them to it; but I have not time to speak of all. It is for you, my brethren, to look to it that, when you come to die, you shall feel that you have indeed done something to diffuse through the world the leaven of faith and virtue, not of unbelief and vice and that our Lord will not require at your hands the blood of your brother, for whom he died as well as for you.

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Septuagesima Sunday

Epistle.

1 _Corinthians ix._ 24; x. 5.

Brethren:

Know you not that they who run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain.

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

Gospel.

St. Matthew xx. 1-16.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a master of a family, who went early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing in the market-place idle. And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner.

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But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go you also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the laborers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When, therefore, they came, who had come about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should have received more, and they also received every man a penny. And when they received it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou

hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering one of them, said: Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? is thy eye evil because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last, For many are called, but few chosen.

Sermon XXXII.

Why stand ye here all the day idle?
--St. Matthew xx. 6.

This life, my dear friends, is often spoken of in Scripture as a day, both on account of its shortness and because the night of death follows. Now, there are certainly many persons who do stand all their lives idle; that is to say, they do not try to "_work_ out their own salvation"; they do not try to do anything in the Lord's vineyard, the church, by helping forward good works either by their means or by their active service.
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There are a great number of men and women who never think of caring for the great business of their salvation. Day after day goes by, week after week, and they have done no good works, corrected no faults, made absolutely no advancement or improvement. It is too much trouble for them to examine their consciences, too tiresome to stir themselves to go to Mass and the sacraments. They have sunk into a state of spiritual drowsiness by the world's fireside; in a word, they are all the day idle. Oh! if there are any such here, let them take warning. For the night will surely come, and then it will be too late. Perhaps this is the eleventh hour for you. God has called you often before; now, by the voice of his priest, he speaks once more and says: "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" To-day you see again the purple vestments and hangings; they tell you that Lent is fast approaching, that a time of grace is coming round once more. Oh! then, you that have yet a few hours of the day of life left, go into the vineyard of your own souls, root up the weeds, till the soil, plant good seed, that the Father of all may be able in the end to give you the wages of everlasting life. Again, such among you as have means, or who are able to help your pastor by active service in the charge of the sick and the poor, who can teach the uninstructed, help along in sewing-schools and in forming sodalities and pious organizations of various kinds--to you also the cry comes, "Why stand ye all the day idle?" Why, when called upon to bear a little part of the priest's burden, are so many people like an old gun that hangs fire? Why is it often so difficult for the priest to get the active co-operation of the lay people?
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Why does he so often get the "cold shoulder" as people say, when he asks a little help? Is it not because people won't go into the vineyard, won't work, won't take trouble? Because they would rather not be bothered? How often they say: "I have no time"; "What are the priests for, anyhow?" "Let _them_ look after these things." Thus they stand all the day idle, and the hard

work falls on the priests and just a few self-sacrificing helpers. When you are called on, then, by your pastors to help in the parish, "don't be backward in coming forward"; make up your minds that you will not stand idle, but that it shall be "a long pull and a strong pull, and a pull all together."

Why should we be so afraid of idleness in spiritual things and in works of charity? Because, my dear friends, the time is short. Life is passing swiftly. The night of death is at hand. Soon the cry will be heard: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet him." Soon the Master of the vineyard will come and look at our work. Woe to us if he finds that we either never went into the vineyard at all, or, at best, the work there was so ill done that our part of the land is choked with docks and darnels and every kind of weed! You know, doubtless, that people sometimes give to each of their children a little garden to plant; ah! how these children try to make "my garden" the best one. How careful they are of it, how grieved if the frost or some noxious insect should destroy the flowers or fruits! We are all children; God has given us each a little garden, a little piece of his great vineyard, to care and tend. Let us, then, like the little ones, try to make our garden the finest, that when our Father, God, and our dear Mother, Mary, come to look at it they may find it full of beauty and fragrance, and say concerning us: "This one, at least, did not stand all the day idle."

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Sermon XXXIII.

They murmured against the master of the house.
--St. Matthew xx. 11.

We can hardly fail, my dear brethren, to understand the meaning of this parable of our Lord, though he himself has given no explanation of it. He is the master of the house; we are the laborers whom he has hired to work in his vineyard, and hired, too, at a very great price; for the penny which the laborers all received represents the reward of eternal life which he has promised to all who die in his service, even though they come to that service at the eleventh hour--that is, at the end of their lives.

Now, I do not know that we are inclined to find fault with our Lord for forgiving one who has sinned during his whole life and sincerely repents, though it be on his death-bed. We are generous enough to be glad when one is really converted and saves his soul; and perhaps all the more if it be at the last moment. We do not find fault with God for his mercy, but rather we thank him for it.

But we are inclined to murmur against him for what seems to us to be an unjust and partial distribution of his mercies, as the laborers murmured against their master. They did not complain that the last received a penny, but that they themselves did not receive more. They thought that the master ought to have proportioned the wages to the service rendered; but we can see plainly enough that he was not so bound.

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All he was bound to was to give the penny to all those to whom he had promised it; as for the rest, he might have given any one of them his whole property, if he had taken a special fancy to him. You would not say that a man acted unjustly if he should single out any one of his servants and make him a special present over and above his regular wages. You would say, as the master of the house said, that he could do what he liked with what remained after his debts were paid.

Now, let us apply this, which is nothing but common sense, to our Lord's relations to us. He has a debt to pay to us to which he has bound himself. It is a real debt to us, because it rests on a real promise which he has made. And that debt is to forgive us when we really turn to him and repent of our sins, and to give us, through his own merits and the shedding of his own Blood, the eternal happiness which that precious Blood has purchased for us. But he is not bound to give us graces which will force us to repent; nor is he bound to give to each one of us the same graces inclining us to repent. He has promised forgiveness to those who repent, but not repentance to those who sin. Still less is he bound to give to all the same impulses to perfection, the same interior consolations, the same extraordinary supernatural gifts of any kind. He is no more bound to this than he is bound to give us all the same amount of natural strength, whether of mind or body, or the same amount of worldly goods. He has his reasons for the distribution of his gifts, it is true, and they are wise and holy ones, we may be sure; for he does not act from caprice, as we might do. But they are not reasons of justice to us, but mercy. If we were treated according to strict justice I do not know who among us would be saved.

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Remember this, then, my brethren, when you are inclined to find fault with our Lord for his treatment of you or others. Remember that you have already received many times more than in strict justice was your due. Remember the countless favors, both temporal and spiritual, which you have already received at his hands, and be ashamed of complaining that others have received even more. Beware of envying them those things which God, in his great mercy, has freely bestowed on them; take care not to covet your neighbor's goods, for that is exactly what you are in danger of doing. And remember, specially, the great gift which he has given you all, and which many others who certainly seem, even in your own eyes, as good as yourselves have not received; that is, the light of the one true faith. Remember that you have not had to struggle in darkness and uncertainty; that you have always been able to know what to believe and what to do. Others, it is true, might have this, too, if they would do their own part; but that part God has done for you. Thank him, then, for this unspeakable mercy, and do not complain of other things which he has given or withheld.

Sermon XXXIV.

So run that you may obtain.

--1 Corinthians ix. 24.

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There is a great rage just now, my brethren, as you are aware, for walking, running, or footing it in any way. He or she is the best man or woman who can go the greatest number of miles in a week, or the greatest number of quarter-miles in the same number of quarter-hours. The interesting question of the present day is who can plod along with the greatest number of big blisters on each foot, or best endure being stirred up every fifteen minutes from a few winks of much-needed sleep, and go to sleep again the soonest after accomplishing the required number of laps on a tan-bark track.

This is all very well in its way. Walking is not a bad thing for the health at any time; and just now it is a decidedly good thing for the pocket, if one is strong enough to excel in it. But for most people there are better ways of getting over the ground. Even the professional pedestrian will not refuse, now and then, to make use of the elevated railway.

There is one journey, however, which we all have to make on foot. That is the journey to heaven, where we all want to go. There is no elevated railway to take us there. If we are to get there it must be by our own exertions. We may, it is true, save part of the labor by availing ourselves of the very uncomfortable and slow transit provided in purgatory; but that is a thing which we must surely wish to avoid as far as possible.

Yes, my brethren, every sensible person will try to escape that means of conveyance, and make this journey on foot over the road prepared in this world. Furthermore, as he has this long walk to take--for heaven is not very near to most of us--he will try to fit himself for it; to go into training, and to keep in training, so that he may not break down on the way, or find himself with a short record when the end of his time arrives. He will bear in mind the warning of St. Paul in to-day's Epistle: "So run that you may obtain."

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How does the pedestrian manage to run so as to obtain his fame, his thousand dollars, and his gate-money? In the first place he works hard and sticks to his work. He does not waste his time by sitting down on the benches and watching the other man. He keeps on the track as long as he is able. When he cannot keep on any longer he takes the rest and food that he needs--not a bit more--and goes at it again. Sometimes he feels ready to drop; but he keeps on, and the fatigue passes away.

Secondly, he not only keeps to his work, but he avoids everything else that can interfere with it. He does not live on plum-cake and mince pie, or fill up with bad whiskey and drugged beer. He adopts a good, plain, wholesome diet--something that will stick to his bones and go to muscle, not to fat.

Thirdly, he does not stagger round the ring with a Saratoga trunk on his back. Far from it. He lays aside every weight that he can. He even makes his clothes as light as possible. He does not care to carry anything more than himself over the five hundred miles that he has to go.

Lastly, he has a director. He does not call him by that name--he calls him a trainer; but it comes to the same thing. He does not trust his own judgment, but has some one else to feed him, to

tend him, to check him, or to urge him on.
Now, in all things, my friends, the pedestrian sets us a good example: in the earnestness which inspires him, and the means he takes to ensure success.
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Imitate him in them in the great journey before you, in which so much more than fame and gate-money is involved. In the first place, keep to your work; let every waking moment be a step toward heaven. Be not weary in well-doing. Secondly, do not indulge sensuality; use what the world has to give so that it may help you on your course, and not for its own sake. Eat and drink so that your body may be strong enough to serve your soul, but not strong enough to rule it. Thirdly, do not put a great load of riches on your back, unless you have got some good use to make of it. You will have to drop it at the end of your race, and it will only keep you back and prevent your winning. Lastly, do not trust yourself too much. Have some one to help you--a director who will guide you and tell you when you make mistakes, when you are going too fast or too slow.
This is nothing but common prudence; use it, and your transit to the kingdom of heaven shall be both rapid and sure.

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Sexagesima Sunday.
Epistle.
2 _ Corinthians xi._ 19-_xii_. 9.
Brethren:
You gladly suffer the foolish: whereas you yourselves are wise. For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take from you, if a man be extolled, if a man strike you on the face. I speak according to dishonor, as if we had been weak in this part. Wherein if any man is bold (I speak foolishly) I am bold also. They are Hebrews; so am I. They are Israelites; so am I. They are the seed of Abraham; so am I. They are the ministers of Christ (I speak as one less wise), I am more; in many more labors, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea; in journeys often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren: in labor and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in many fastings, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without: my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I do not burn? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my infirmity. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for ever, knoweth that I lie not. At Damascus the governor of the nation under Aretas the king, guarded the city of the Damascenes to apprehend me.
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And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands. If I must glory (for it is not expedient indeed); but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not, or out of the body I know not: God knoweth), such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, I know not: God knoweth; that he was caught up into paradise; and heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter. Of such an one I will glory: but for myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities. For even if I would glory, I shall not be foolish: for I will say the truth. But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth from me. And lest the greatness of the revelations should puff me up, there was given me a sting of my flesh and angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing I thrice besought the Lord, that it might depart from me; and he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Gospel.

St. Luke viii. 4-15.

At that time:

When a very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities to him, he spoke by a similitude. A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And some fell upon good ground; and sprung up, and yielded fruit a hundred-fold. Saying these things, he cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. To whom he said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.

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Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside are they that hear: then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. Now they upon the rock, are they who when they hear, receive the word with joy: and these have no roots; who believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns, are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground, are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.

Sermon XXXV.

And some seed fell upon a rock.

--St. Luke viii, 6.

The sentence which forms the text is sometimes translated "and

some fell upon stony ground"--that is to say, the good seed scattered by the sower fell in a place that was hard and rocky. The sower in the parable is Jesus Christ, the seed is the word of God. The great Chief Sower, dear friends, has gone away, but the good seed, the word of God, the doctrines of holy church, her precepts, her laws, the rules of morality, the standard by which we can tell good deeds from sin--all this good seed is still sown by God's priests, by the divinely appointed and ordained ministers of the word of God. Chiefly this sowing is done in the confessional and in the pulpit. In the confessional the sower scatters the good seed into each heart individually; in the pulpit the seed is scattered over the multitude gathered together.

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It seems a hard thing to say, but alas! in these days the word of God, the good seed, falls for the most part upon stony ground. The priest exhorts, entreats, persuades, threatens, tells of God's justice, speaks of his mercy, holds up the joys of heaven as a reward, points to the abyss of hell as a punishment; and it all falls upon stony ground. It falls upon the high crags of inaccessible rocks, upon the heart of the hardened sinner, upon the stony, adamantine hearts of those who have given up even the thought of repentance. It falls upon you, wretched man, who come to Mass for the sake of appearances every Sunday; upon you who drag a dead, corpse-like, blackened, devil-marked soul here before the altar of God every Sunday morning, without ever thinking of taking that soul to one of those confessionals which stare you in the face. Yes, the good seed falls upon you, and it falls upon a rock waiting to be calcined by the fires of hell. The word of God falls upon the pavement, hard and stony as it is. It falls upon the hearts of frivolous, giddy, conceited girls. It falls upon the hearts of blaspheming, drinking, impure young men. It falls upon the hearts of men of business whose only aim is wealth, and of the women who are votaries of fashion; for what are the hearts of all such but a pavement, a thoroughfare, along which pass every evil beast, every low, degrading passion, and every unholy desire? O you girls and young men of this city and this day! you men and women of the world! you who come and hear the sermon, and afterwards go away with a simper on your powdered faces and a sneer upon your lips! you young ladies and young gentlemen "of the period"--to you I say, your hearts are stony ground.

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The good seed can never grow upon it. Nothing can flourish there but thorns and briers, whose end is to be burnt. O dear brethren, young and old, rich and poor! tear up the paving-stones, shiver to atoms your pride, your love of the world and its vanities; and when you hear the word of God, when the good seed is scattered, let your hearts be not stony, but soft and moist to receive it. There are others whose hearts are like the pebbly beach. The seed falls there, and then the sea of their pride comes and washes it all away. They know what is said from the pulpit is true, they know the advice in the confessional is good, but they are too proud to change their lives, too proud to own that the priest

knows better than they do. They say: Why should the church interfere between my wife and me, or between my children and myself? Why should the head of the family be ruled by the clergy? and the like. On such as these the word falls, but it falls on stony ground. To all of you, then, the Gospel says this morning, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Open your ears and soften your hearts. Sermons are not for you to criticise; they are for you to profit by, for you to form your lives upon. The words of the priest are the words of God. The seed that he sows is the good seed. Woe to you if your hearts are stony ground! There is a rank growth which is called stone-crop, which clings to walls and stones; there is a weed-like, yellow grass that sprouts upon neglected house-tops. What do men do with such plants? They cast them forth into the smouldering weed-fire. And so will God cast into the fire that is never quenched those who receive the word of God on stony ground.

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Sermon XXXVI.

A sower went out to sow his seed.

--St. Luke viii. 5.

You all know, my brethren, what this seed is, and who it is that sows it; for our Lord himself explains the parable, and you have just heard the explanation.

The seed, he says, is the word of God; and it is God that sows it. And what is the word of God? Protestants tell us that it is the Bible; and their idea of sowing it is to leave a copy of it with everybody, whether they can read and understand it or not. That is not the way, however, that the Divine Wisdom has followed. He has put his word, of which the Bible is no doubt a great part, in the hands and the heart of his church, and told her to preach it to all nations--not to leave copies of it with them.

The word of God is, then, the religious instruction which you are all the time receiving, mainly from the priests of the parish to which you belong. It is God that gives it to you through them. It ought to bring forth fruit a hundred-fold, like the seed falling on good ground. You ought not only to hear it but to keep it. Do you?

What was the sermon about last Sunday? Don't all speak at once. Well, I am not going to tell you, though I am pretty sure that many of you will never know unless I do. And if you don't remember the last one there is not much chance that you remember the one before that. In fact, I have no doubt that there are plenty of people in the church at this moment who do not remember any sermon at all. All that they ever listened to--or did not listen to--in the many years they have been going to church, went in, as the saying is, at one ear and out at the other.

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And yet you talk enough about what you hear, some of you at least. You make yourselves a standing committee to decide on the merits of the various preachers that you sit under. You say to each other: "What a fine discourse that was!" or, perhaps: "That

was the worst sermon I ever heard." But what either of them was about it would puzzle you to tell. Your ears were tickled, or they were not, and that was all.

Perhaps you think I am rather hard on you. You will say: "Father, surely you cannot expect our memories to be so good. And then we hear so much that one thing puts out another." Well, there is some truth in that. Even if you try to remember I know you will forget a good deal; but the trouble is that you do not try.

You do not hear sermons in the right way. You think whether they are good or not, but you don't think whether or not there is anything in them that is good for you; and if so, what it is. If, perchance, you do hear anything that comes home to you, you fail to make a note of it. You don't get any fruit from the word of God, though you often think your neighbors ought to. You say: "I hope Mr. or Mrs. Smith, Brown, or Jones heard that"; but you do not hear it yourself. You do not apply it to your own case. You do not try to find out whether anything has been said that it would be well for you to know, or to think of if you do know it.

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Try, then, to amend in this respect. Listen, when you hear a sermon or instruction, to the word of God in it speaking to you. Do not think who says it, but what is said, and what use you are going to make of it. One day you will be called to account before God's judgment-seat for all these words of his that you have heard; look to it that they bear fruit in your heart. It is better than remembering them, to have them change your lives; but if they do that you will remember them. And they will do that, unworthy as his servants are through whom they come to you, if you listen to them in the right way. Remember, now, what this sermon is about, and don't forget it before next Sunday.

Sermon XXXVII.

A sower went out to sow his seed.
--St. Luke viii. 5.

Our Divine Saviour, in his explanation of this parable, points out four kinds of soil upon which the seed fell, three of which gave no harvest. The barren soils represent those souls which either do not keep the word of God--and they are the wayside; or, keeping it, do not bring forth fruit--and they are the stony and the thorny ground. Wayside souls are hardened by the constant tramp of sin and dried by the scorching wind of passion. On such ground the seed remains on the surface; it cannot penetrate. "So it is trodden down, and the birds of the air--that is, the devil, swift and noiseless in his flight--come and take the word of God out of such hearts, lest believing they might be saved." Stony soil looks fair enough, but it is shallow; the rock underneath hinders moisture, and the seed, though it sprouts, has but weak roots, which soon wither.

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There are souls "who hear and even receive the word with joy; and these have no roots," because their Christianity is shallow; right under the fair appearances of religion is the hard rock of worldliness and self-love. Now, the soil in "which we should be rooted," says St. Paul (Eph. ii. 7), "is charity." Again, there

are "those who believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away." The word of God has entered into your souls; it has converted you. But have not evil habits to which you cling, and cherished sins repeated at the first onset of temptation, taken all firmness out of your purpose of amendment and nipped in the bud your good resolution? I hope the mission will have more lasting fruit among you.

Thorny soil is full of the germs and roots of useless and hurtful plants. In such ground, says our Saviour, the good and bad seed started up and for a time grew together. Soon the thorns shot ahead, sucked up for themselves all the juices of the earth, shut out the warmth of the sun from the wheat, closed in upon it, and finally choked it. In our fallen nature are the germs of evil, the hot-bed of concupiscence. They are part of ourselves; we cannot get entirely rid of them, as no ground, however well worked, can be freed from bad seeds. There they are with the good, and will sprout up with it; the mischief is in letting them grow until they kill the grace of God and absorb our souls; then, indeed, we are in a state of spiritual suffocation; the divine seed is choked in us. Now, the thorns, says our Saviour, "are the cares, the riches, and the pleasures of life." As long as we are in the world we shall have to bear with its cares. Yet the great care, you know, is your salvation. All other concerns become choking thorns when they take precedence of this.

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Riches are not the best claim to heaven. Yet it is only the unjust getting, the absorbing love, and the sinful use of them that choke off the life of the soul. And in riches there is danger for the poor, strange as it may seem. As the shadow of St. Peter cured, so the shadow of wealth diseases by causing envy, want of resignation. The poor should beware of the "evil eye" of riches; it is poverty _in spirit_ which is a passport to heaven. The pleasures of life, as you know from your own experience, unless checked by mortification, are fatal to the growth of God's word within us. The sunshine of the world is peculiarly favorable to the tropical vegetation of noxious or useless weeds.

Remember that your soul is a field in which Satan has put germs of evil as well as God, of good. Both are watching the growth and looking out for the final result. On you it depends which crop your soul will produce, wheat or thorns. The wheat will be gathered in God's granary, the thorns are only fit to burn. Be ye, therefore, good ground--_i.e._, "hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience."

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Quinquagesima Sunday.

Epistle.

1 _Corinthians xiii_. 1-13.

Brethren:

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and 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. Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away the things of a child. We see now through a glass in an obscure manner: but then face to face. Now I know in part: but then I shall know even as I am known. And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.
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Gospel.
St. Luke xviii. 31-43.
At that time:
Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass that when he drew nigh to Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. But he cried out much more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he was come near, he asked him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Sermon XXXVIII.

Jesus, son of David,
have mercy on me.
--St. Luke xviii. 38.

There are two points, dear brethren, in the conduct of the blind man of whom we have just read, that seem to be particularly noticeable. First, although he could not _see_ Jesus, he nevertheless knew that he was passing by, and cried out: "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me." Secondly, when "the crowd

rebuked him, that he should hold his peace, he cried out _much more:_ Son of David, have mercy on me."
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Now, that blind man is an image of the souls who are grievously tempted, and also of those who have fallen into the darkness of sin. Now, there are, as we all know, some who are dreadfully tempted. There are good, pious souls who are afflicted with the lowest and most degrading temptations. Crowds of evil imaginations fill their minds; the basest suggestions are made to them by the evil one; the foulest mind-pictures are produced in them; they are urged to be proud, to be vain, unloving, uncharitable, and the like. Such people are for the moment blind. They cannot _see_ Jesus. He is hidden behind these gathering clouds. It seems to them as if the light of God's grace had gone out in their hearts, and they sit down by the wayside, weary and blind. Suddenly they hear sounds in the distance; it is the Mass-bell, the voice of the priest in the confessional, a word from the pulpit, the choir chanting out at High Mass or Vespers. These sounds mingle; they sound like the tread of a multitude, and in the midst of the clamor a still, small voice says: "'Tis Jesus of Nazareth who passes by." Oh! then, poor tempted souls, and you too, unfortunate ones, upon whom has settled the stone-blindness of mortal sin, never mind if you cannot _see_ Jesus; never mind if your darkened orbs cannot gaze upon his sweet face nor meet the look of compassion that he casts upon you; stretch out your hands towards him, all covered with the roadside dust as they are, lift up your choked and faltering voice, and cry aloud to your Saviour: "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!" He will hear you; he will have mercy; he will touch your poor closed eyes and you shall receive your sight. But now another word of advice, both to those who are trying to get rid of besetting temptations and to those who are striving to shake off the chains of grievous sin.
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When you have given the first heart-felt cry, when you have made the first move in the right direction, when you have roused yourselves to make the first real effort either to shake off your temptations or to get free from the slavery of sin, then it will very likely happen to you as it did to the blind man: "The crowd will rebuke you that you should hold your peace." There are a good many well-known characters in that crowd. Their names are Timid Conscience, Old Habit, Fear, Despair, Human Respect, Cowardice, Weak Resolution, Want of Firm Purpose, False Shame, No Hope, and a host of others. Now, all these will rebuke the poor, blind, tempted ones and the stone-blind sinners. What, then, must they do? They must take example from the blind beggar in the Gospel. When the crowd rebuked him he cried out _much more:_ "Son of David, have mercy on me!" He knew that he must cry out louder to make his voice drown the buzzing murmurs of the crowd. Jesus did not seem to hear him, so he shouted louder. O you that are blind from temptation, you that are blind in sin, you that have given the first cry, and whose voices seem about to be drowned by the voice of the crowd of old habits and want of trust, cry louder, cry much more: "Son of David, have mercy on

me!" Then, no matter if your blindness be never so dark, Jesus will stand still; he will command you to be brought to him; he will say to you: "What wilt thou that I do to you?" And then will be the time for you to pray: "Lord, that I may _see_." O my God! grant that all the tempted and all the sinners may have the grace to make that petition. May God "enlighten all our eyes, that we sleep not in death," and bring us all "to _see_ the God of Gods in Sion"!

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Sermon XXXIX.

_And they understood none of these things,
and this word was hid from them,
and they understood not the things that were said._
--St. Luke xviii. 34.

If you have listened attentively to this Gospel, my dear brethren, it seems to me that you must have been astonished at this part of it. For our Lord certainly could not have told his apostles more clearly about what was going to happen to him than he had told them in the words which immediately preceded these. "The Son of Man," he says, "shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and scourged and spit upon; and after they have scourged him they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again." What more clear account could he have given them of his approaching passion, death, and resurrection? And yet it made no impression on them at all. When the time of his Passion actually came they were quite unprepared for it, as much so as if he had said nothing about it beforehand.

How can we account for this? What reason can we give for this blindness to what was put so plainly before their eyes? It was as complete a blindness as that of the poor man whose cure is told in the latter part of the Gospel.

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There is only one way to account for it. You know there is a proverb that "none are so blind as those who do not want to see." That was the trouble with them, and that was the reason why their blindness was not cured, as was that of the poor man of whom I have just spoken, and who did most earnestly wish and beg to receive his sight. They had a fixed idea before their minds, and they did not want to look at anything else. That idea was that their Master was going to have a great triumph, overcome all his enemies, and set up his kingdom in this world as a great prince; and they were going to have high places in that kingdom, to be rich, powerful, and be respected by everybody. What he said did not fit in with that idea, so they paid no attention to it. They thought he could not be talking about himself, that he must mean somebody else, when he spoke about the "Son of Man."

Perhaps you think this was very foolish on their part, and would lay it to some special stupidity or prejudice on the part of these poor, ignorant men. But I think, if you look into your own hearts, you will find them pretty much the same.

Most Christians, I am afraid, have got an idea very much like this in their minds. They know, indeed, that Christ did not come

into the world to be a great king, as the world understands the word; that he did not acquire great wealth for himself or his friends; that he did not enjoy what we call prosperity and happiness. But they think that is what they themselves have a right to expect. They know, of course, all about the Passion of Christ, but they think it is all over now.
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And yet there are words for us just as plain as those which the apostles heard and did not understand. We do not see their meaning, and for the same reason; that is, because we do not want to see it. They are not only once repeated, but so many times that I could preach you a long sermon made up of them alone. Their meaning is that the Passion of Christ is not over; that each one of us has our share in it; that the life which he means for us is the same kind of one that he himself led. St. Paul understood it well when he said: "I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ."
Try, then, my brethren, to get the idea out of your minds that you have come into the world to enjoy yourselves and have a good time. It is an idea unworthy of Christians. Not those who prosper, but those who suffer, are the ones to excite our envy, for they are most like our Divine Lord. And, moreover, those who suffer are really the happiest, if they remember this, for their suffering is a pledge of eternal happiness. It is a sign that he has a place waiting for them in his kingdom very near to him. And let us, like the blind man of the Gospel, ask him to take away our blindness, that we may really see this and believe it; that our eyes may be opened to the light coming from the next world. That will make pain and adversity beautiful and glorious; and we will even hardly wish to hasten the day when, if we are faithful, God himself shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

Sermon XL.

Some very important notices have just been read to you, my brethren. Do you know what they are?
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You ought to by this time, for you have heard them many times before; and yet I am sure that some of you to whom they have been read ten or twenty times already know no more about them now than before you ever heard them at all. Why is this? It is because, as I said last Sunday, you do not listen, and do not try to remember, nor care to understand.
What were these notices, then? They were the notices about this great season on which we are entering: the holy season of Lent, the most important one of the whole year.
What is the first one of these notices which you have or have not just heard? You don't know. Well, it is this: _All the week-days of Lent, from Ash Wednesday till Faster Sunday, are fast-days of precept, on one meal, with the allowance of a moderate collation in the evening_. Fast-days--do you know what that means? I venture to say that many of you do not; or, if you do, you do not act as if you did. Some people that you would think had more sense seem to think that a fast-day is about the same thing as a Friday through the year, except that it is not so

much harm to eat meat on a fast-day as on a Friday. It is hard to understand how any one can be so stupid.
What is a fast-day, then? It is a day, as you hear in the notices, on one meal. That does not mean two other full meals besides, and plenty of lunches in between. It means what it says--one full meal, and only one. The church has, it is true, allowed, as the notices say, a moderate collation in the evening What does that mean? As much as you want to take? No. How much, then? Eight ounces is the amount commonly assigned.
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That is to say, you have your dinner, and a supper of eight ounces in weight. Is that all? No, not quite. Custom has also made it lawful to take a cup of tea or coffee and a small piece of bread, without butter, in the morning. This is an important point; for if this will prevent a headache and enable you to get through with your duties as usual, you are bound to take it, and not get off from the fast on the ground that you cannot keep a strict fast on nothing at all till noon.
This, then, is what is meant by a fast-day. It may be a day of abstinence from flesh-meat, or it may not be. Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday you can have meat, but at dinner only; and no fish, oysters, etc., when you have meat--the tea or coffee and the eight ounces the same those days as on the others. But on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday no meat at any time. And remember, nothing can be eaten on a fast-day but just as I have described--no lunches, large or small, between meals.
But you say: "I will get very hungry and lose a good many pounds on such a scant diet as that." Yes, that is quite likely; and that is just what Lent was made for, that you might get hungry and lose as many pounds as you can spare. That never seems to occur to some people. It wouldn't do some of you any harm to lose a few pounds; you will recover from it, I am sure. The papers say that one of the pedestrians (a woman, too, by the way) lost over thirty in a long walk she has just finished. Is it not as easy to suffer a little for the honor of God as a great deal for one's own?
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But is there no excuse? Oh! yes. There are plenty. They are given in the last paragraph of the notices. If you are weak or infirm--really, that is; not with a weakness beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday--if you are too old or too young; or if from any reason, like hard work, you really need abundant food. In case of doubt consult a priest.
But these excuses do not allow one to eat meat. They excuse, as you hear in the rules, from fasting, but _not from abstinence_. And yet you will hear people saying: "They told me I was not bound to fast," and forthwith eating meat as often as they can get it, just the same as if it was not Lent at all. Understand, then, it takes a much greater reason to excuse from abstinence than from fasting. Never eat meat at forbidden times in Lent without getting proper permission. Ordinary work is no excuse.
I would like to say much more about these matters, that you might fully understand them, were there time to do so. But remember

that the rules of Lent are binding, like the other laws of the church, in conscience; and if you break them in any notable way you commit a mortal sin. Suffer a little now, that you may not suffer for ever, banished from the kingdom of God.

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First Sunday of Lent

Epistle.

2 _Corinthians vi._ 1-10.

Brethren:

We do exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith: "In an accepted time have I heard thee; and in the day of salvation have I helped thee." Behold, now is the acceptable time: behold, now is the day of salvation. Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed: but in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armor of justice on the right hand and on the left: through honor and dishonor: through infamy and good name: as seducers, and yet speaking truth: as unknown, and yet known: as dying, and behold we live: as chastised, and not killed: as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing: as needy, yet enriching many: as having nothing, and possessing all things.

Gospel.

St. Matthew iv. 1-11.

At that time:

Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards hungry. And the tempter coming, said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said: It is written, "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

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Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written: "That he hath given his Angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou hurt thy foot against a stone?" Jesus said to him: It is written again: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. And said unto him: All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus saith to him: Begone, Satan, for it is written: "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve." Then the devil left him: and behold, Angels came and ministered to him.

Sermon XLI.

Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

--St Matthew iv. 7.

What is it to tempt God? The words sound very strange; for we know that God is infinitely good, and that he cannot be tempted, like us, to commit sin. So that cannot be what is meant by tempting him.

We shall see easily enough what is meant by it if we consider what it was that the devil suggested to our Lord. He said to him: "Throw yourself down from this pinnacle of the temple; no harm will happen to you, for your life is too precious to God for him to allow it to be lost. His angels will carry you down safely; a miracle will be worked in your behalf."

That which Satan wished our Lord to do is what is meant by tempting God. It is to try and see if he will not do some extraordinary thing for us which there is no need for him to do; to presume on his mercy and providence.

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That is what the Latin word means from which our word "tempt" comes. It means to try, to make an experiment. That, in fact, is the real meaning of our word "to tempt." When the devil tempts us he is trying us, to see how far our love of God will go; he is making an experiment to find out the strength of our souls. God does not let him try all the experiments he would like to.

He has no right to try us in this way; but God lets him do it for our own good. But God does not allow us to be trying any experiments on his mercy and goodness. He does not allow us to depend upon it, except when we know that we have a right to do so.

And yet that is what people, and even Christians, are doing all the time. Perhaps you do not know how; but you ought to know, and I will tell you.

A man tempts God when he puts himself, without necessity, into an occasion of sin. He knows, or ought to know, that he cannot depend on God's grace to keep him from sin in such a case. He knows that God may indeed help him through, so that he will not sin, and perhaps that he has done so before; but he knows, or ought to know, that God has not promised him such a grace, and that it will be nothing surprising if he does not give it to him. Such is the case of the drunkard who has some sort of a desire to reform his life, and who goes into a liquor-store. He ought to know that he must have God's grace if he is to avoid getting drunk; and so he tries God, to see if he will give him that grace. But there is no need for him to make the experiment, for he could avoid it by simply keeping outside; and that is what God will certainly give him the grace to do, if he prays and is in earnest.

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Let such a man remember, before he goes near the place, those words: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Such is the case, too, of young men or women who trust themselves in company of one with whom they have often acted immodestly before. They may pretend to have great sorrow for these past sins, but it is false; they may deceive themselves or their confessors, but not Almighty God, who reads their hearts. No one is truly sorry for his sins when he continues in the great sin of

tempting God.
I will tell you of some other people who tempt God. They are those who remain quietly in mortal sin, day after day, week after week, month after month. They say to themselves: "God is good; he will give me time to repent." God may well say to such a one: "Thou fool, who has told thee that? This very night I will require thy soul of thee." He has a right to do it; and you have no right to expect another day of him. When you do so you are trying his patience; you are making an experiment on his mercy. This present moment is all you have a right to depend on. And yet you will sleep night after night in sin, forgetting that, if God should treat you justly, the morning would find you dead; forgetting that your whole life is nothing but a long temptation of God.

Sermon XLII.

Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.
--St. Matthew iv. 4.

One of the greatest, if not _the_ greatest, of the defects of the present time is an inordinate care for temporal and material things.
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How shall we live? what shall we eat? wherewithal shall we be clothed?--these are the questions which men are all too much exercised about at the present day. We see persons who rise, and cause their children to rise, at a very early hour, and from that time till late at night they are working and toiling. We see men of the world who really injure their health, and perhaps shorten their days, by their close and unflagging attention to business. Why do people act thus? All for the sake of the bread that perisheth, all in order to heap up a few dollars which at best they can keep but for a few years. So great has this thirst for money-making become that we see it even in our young boys. They don't want to stay at school; they don't want to store up learning; by the time they are fourteen or a little older (having nothing in their heads but reading, writing, and a little confused arithmetic) they want to be off to the store, the workshop, or the factory. Why? Because they want to join as soon as possible in the wild-goose chase after the goods of the world. Now, all these classes of persons have to learn "that man liveth not by bread alone." My dear friends, besides that poor body which you work so hard to feed, to clothe, and to please, you have an immortal soul. Body and soul united form what we call man. So, then, you must not act as if you were all body. You cannot do so without peril to your soul. Suppose you were to try an experiment of this kind. You say to yourself: "I will eat nothing; I will have prayers for breakfast, confession for lunch, prayers and devotions for dinner, and meditation on death for supper." Then you try it for a week.
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What an elegant skeleton you would make for a museum at the end of that time! Yet people treat their souls just in that way. Instead of refreshing it with prayers and devotions, etc., they

give it clothes, meat and drink, calculations of stock, calculations of profits, cares of this world, etc., and thus the soul is starved just as the body would be by improper food. So then, dear brethren, don't try "to live by bread alone." You can't do it. Try also to live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"--that is to say, by doing those things which, either by his church or by the interior inspirations of his grace, he wishes you to do. Are you in business, or at work? Very well; take care of your affairs prudently, work faithfully, but remember this is not all. You must also find time to pray, find time for confession and the hearing of holy Mass. Don't leave piety to priests, religious women, and children, but let the men also be seen in the church and at the altar-rail. It is a custom in some places that the men should sit on one side of the church and the women on the other. Don't you think if we tried that plan that the numbers on the men's side would often be rather slim? Why? Because they are out in the world trying to live by "bread alone." O my dear friends! why care so much for the goods of this world? Why lay up so much treasure where rust and moth destroy, and where thieves break through and steal? We cannot take a cent with us when we go, and our poor body, even _that_ which we have pampered so much, must decay and return to dust. Let us, then, this morning make a good resolution, that when the devil comes and tempts us to give ourselves up too much to thoughts about our food, our raiment, and our temporal affairs, we will repulse him with these words: "It is written, 'Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'"

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Sermon XLIII.

_Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert,
to be tempted by the devil._
--St. Matthew iv. 1.

Do you know what the word "tempt" means, my brethren? I have no doubt that you know what it is to be tempted. You know that, as St. James says, "every man is tempted, being drawn away, by his own concupiscence, and allured." You yourselves have often been tempted; your concupiscence--that is, your sinful passions of one kind or another--have often tempted you, allured you, enticed you away from the law of God.

But the word "to tempt" does not mean "to allure" or "to entice." It means "to try." To tempt any one is to try him to see what sort of stuff he is made of; that's the real meaning of the word--just as a gun, for instance, is tried by putting in an overcharge to see if it will burst, though I would not advise any of you to tempt a gun in that way. It is not a very safe experiment.

That is the kind of experiment, though, that the devil is always trying on us. He is not afraid of accidents. If an accident does happen it will not hurt him. It is just what he wants. So he tries us in various ways to find where our weak point is; for he cannot tell without trying.

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When he succeeds, when we break down under his temptations, he says to himself: "That's good. I hit the right spot that time, I'll try that again." For you see we are not like guns: we can be burst more than once.
Now, the Gospel tells us that our Lord himself was led into the desert to be tempted by the devil; that is, to have the devil experiment on him. This seems strange. What use was it to try him? Did not the devil know that he was God and could not sin? No, my brethren, it is probable that he did not. If he had he would not have wasted his time in a temptation which would be of no use. But why did not our Lord let him know it? It was because, being man as well as God, he chose to be tempted or tried like the rest of us: first, that he might set us an example in resisting temptation; and, secondly, that he might merit for us a grace which should make it easy to do so. So he was led into the desert, for our sakes, by his own Spirit--by the Holy Spirit of God.
He has set us the example and merited for us the grace; and, thanks to what he has done for us, it is easy for us to resist temptation. But you do not believe it, that is the trouble. Some of you think it is impossible to resist temptation. You say, to excuse your sin, "I could not help it." Now, that is simply a lie; or, rather, it is more: it is a blasphemy against God. It is as much as to say, "God did not give me the grace to resist temptation," and thus to make him a partaker in your sins.
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You can help it. When our Lord drove away the devil, as the Gospel to-day tells us, he made it easy for us to do the same. And it is a great shame not to do it. What a disgrace to God, and what a laughing-stock to the devil, is a man or a woman who breaks down every time he or she is tried! Yet I am afraid there are plenty of such.
God does not tempt you. St. James tells us that. He has no need to, for he knows what you are made of. But he lets the devil do it, that you may merit by resisting; and he does not let you have any more temptation than you can bear. Remember that, then, the next time you are tempted. Say to yourself: "I have got strength enough to resist this with the help of God. I'll turn the laugh on the devil, instead of his having it on me. I'll show him he was a fool to try to tempt me. I'll let him see that he hit the wrong spot instead of the right one; in fact, that there isn't any right spot to hit. Here's a chance for me to get some merit, and to show that I am good for something; that I am of some use after all the labor that my Maker has spent on me."
Say this in the name of God and in the strength which he gives you, and you will be surprised to see how the devil will run away. No doubt he will try you again, but if you persevere he will give it up as a bad job at last, and you will enter heaven with the reward the Lord wishes to give you--that is, a great stock of merit instead of sin from the temptations which you have had.

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Second Sunday of Lent.

Epistle.

1 _Thessalonians iv_. 1-7.

Brethren:

We pray and beseech you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received from us, how you ought to walk, and to please God, so also you would walk, that you may abound the more. For you know what commandments I have given to you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from fornication. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles who know not God: and that no man overreach, nor deceive his brother in business: because the Lord is the avenger of all such things, as we have told you before, and have testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel.

St. Matthew xvii. 1-9.

At that time:

Jesus taketh unto him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun: and his garments became white as snow. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him. And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him.

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And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid, and Jesus came and touched them, and said to them: Arise, and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes they saw no man, but only Jesus. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead.

Sermon XLIV.

_And he was transfigured before them.
And his face did shine as the sun:
and his garments became white as snow. ...
Behold a bright cloud overshadowed them.
And behold! a voice out of the cloud, saying:
This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. _
--St. Matthew xvii. 2, 5.

I think, brethren, one can hardly read the above account of the Transfiguration of our dear Lord without having suggested to our minds one of the most beautiful of the many services of the Catholic Church. I mean the rite of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. We ourselves are the three disciples. The mountain up into which our Lord brings us is the holy altar. His face, shining as the sun, is represented to us by the bright lights that cluster round his throne, and by the refulgence of the rays

of the monstrance which contains him. Then his garments are indeed as white as snow; for he veils his divinity under the form of the purest wheaten bread, and hides himself beneath its appearances as though he should wrap his sacred Body in pure white raiment. Then the bright cloud is the floating incense, and the voice out of the cloud the tinkling bell, which seems to say to us as Jesus is held aloft and as we bend low in adoration: "This is God's beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased."
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So then, the Gospel for to-day naturally suggests to our minds a few reflections on this great devotion of the church--Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Now, a great many persons seem to think that Benediction is only "tacked on," as it were, to the office of Vespers. This idea is all wrong. To be sure. Benediction is often given directly after Vespers, but it is an entirely separate and distinct service. Vespers end with the Antiphon of the Blessed Virgin; Benediction begins when the Holy Sacrament is taken from the tabernacle and placed in the costly metal frame called the monstrance, or ostensorium. So, then, Benediction is not part of Vespers, or of any function which may precede it; and I want to make this very clear, because I think the false notion that it is merely something supplementary is a reason why so many people neglect it. What, then, is Benediction? It is the solemn exposition of the same Jesus whose face shone so bright on Thabor. He stays there upon the altar for a little while, that we may kneel before him, adore him, praise him. Then he is lifted up in the hands of his priest, and he gives us his blessing. Remember, it is not the priest who blesses you at Benediction; it is Jesus himself who does so. Now, it is very true, dear friends, that people are not _bound_ to come to Benediction; yet surely, if each one realized what a blessed thing Benediction is, no one who could come would stay away. Jesus is there on the altar. He is waiting to hear your prayers, waiting to receive your acts of love and adoration, waiting to bless you. Oh! then come often to Benediction. Do not say, "There is nothing but Vespers this afternoon"; remember there is something more --Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.
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There is a day fast approaching on which the Holy Sacrament will be carried in procession, and then placed in the most solemn manner in the repository. I mean Maundy Thursday. Now, that is also an exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and, although Jesus is not held aloft by the priest as at ordinary Benedictions, who can doubt but that Jesus blesses us as he passes by? I pray you, then, when that day arrives to remember who it is who comes to you. Let us see the church full, not of gazers at the lights and flowers, but of faithful worshippers of their King and God. If you go from church to church on that day don't go to peer, don't go to see, but to to pray. So when the devotion of the Forty Hours is announced in your church--that devotion which is the most solemn of all the expositions and benedictions through the year--be devout; spend at least an hour in the day before the Lamb of God. Remember that the Holy Sacrament is Jesus Christ--the very same who was born in Bethlehem and died on

Calvary. Lastly, come to Benediction always with a living faith and a burning love. Never let your place be vacant, if you can help it, when you know it is to be given. Set a great store by it. In the words of a living preacher: "Night by night the Son of God comes forth to you in his white raiment, wearing his golden crown; night by night his sweet voice is heard, and he looks for you with a wistful gaze; do not turn away from such blessedness as this; do not refuse to listen to his pleading words; do not let your places be empty before the altar when Jesus comes."

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Sermon XLV.

_And that no man over-reach,
nor deceive his brother in business;
because the Lord is the avenger of all such things._
--1 Thessalonians iv. 6.

These words are from the Epistle of to-day, my dear brethren, and are certainly suggestive, or at least should be so, at this season which the church has assigned as a time for examination of conscience and repentance for sin.

The sin which St. Paul warns us against goes, when it is practised in other ways, by worse names than the one which he gives it here. A man meets you on a lonely road and takes your money forcibly from you; what do you call it? You call it robbery. A man enters your house at dead of night and carries off your property; what do you call it? You call it burglary. A man picks your pocket on the street; what do you call it? You call it theft. Well, it is all one and the same thing. All these are various ways of breaking the Seventh Commandment; and what is that? _Thou shalt not steal._

And what is it to deceive or over-reach some one else in business? It is just the same thing as these; it is the breaking of this same commandment; it is stealing, just as much as robbery, burglary, and theft are, only it does not go by so bad a name, and is not so likely to be punished by the laws of the land. And what do I mean by this over-reaching or deceiving? I mean selling goods under false pretences for more than they are really worth; using false weights or measures; evading in one way and another the payment of one's just debts; taking advantage of one's neighbor's difficulties to make an undue profit for one's self; in short, all the many ways in which men turn a dishonest penny or dollar; in which they get rich by trickery and injustice.

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All these are stealing, just as bad and a great deal more dishonorable than robbery, burglary, or theft, because not attended with so much risk to the person who is guilty of them. Now, it seems to me that this sin of cheating--for that is the bad name such sharp practices ought to go by, though they often do not--is a most strange and unaccountable one; much more so than those other kinds of stealing. The man who breaks into your house or who picks your pocket is generally one who is pretty badly off, and who needs what he takes more than the people do

from whom he takes it. You do not expect to find rich men setting up as burglars or pickpockets. It is true, sometimes you do find people who have a passion for stealing things when they have plenty of money to buy them; but that is commonly considered to be a special kind of insanity, and they have a name made on purpose for it; they call it "kleptomania." The people who do this are supposed to be crazy on this particular point; but is it not really just the same thing for a man who has enough and to spare to be trying to cheat his neighbor? Such a man, it would seem, must be crazy too.

And there is another way in which cheating is a strange thing, and especially in a Catholic. For every Catholic at least must know that if he tries to cheat he himself gets cheated worse than the people he is trying to impose on. For he gets himself into a very bad position. He has got to do one of two things.

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One is to restore, as far as possible, what he has cheated other people out of; and that is a very hard thing to do sometimes--much harder than it would have been to have left cheating alone. But hard as this is, the other is much harder. For the other thing is to go to hell; to be banished from God for ever; to pay for all eternity the debt which he would not pay here.

Do not, then, my brethren, get yourselves into this position. But if you are in it do the first of these two things. Restore your ill-gotten goods. Do it now; not put it off till you come to die. It will cost you a struggle then as well as now; and even if you try to do it then, it is doubtful if those who come after you will carry out your wishes. A purpose to restore which is put off till a time when you cannot be sure of carrying it out is rather a weak bridge on which to pass to eternal life. Remember now what you will Wish at the hour of death to have remembered; remember those words of our Lord: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?"

Sermon XLVI.

Those of you, my brethren, who are keeping Lent as it should be kept are beginning by this time, if I am not mistaken, to think that it is a pretty long and tedious season. Fasting and abstinence, giving up many worldly amusements, getting up early in the morning and going to Mass as so many of you do, and other such things, get to be rather tiresome to the natural man after a few days; and I have no doubt you are quite glad that Lent does not last the whole year, and are looking forward to the time when it will be over. I have always noticed that there were not many at Mass in Easter week, and there are very few, I imagine, who fast or abstain much then.

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And perhaps you are even inclined to say: "What ever did the church get up Lent for at all? Certainly we could be good Christians without it, or save our souls, at any rate." But when you come to think of it you know well enough why Lent was instituted. You know that we cannot save our souls without abstaining from sin, and that we shall not be likely to abstain

from sin unless we abstain sometimes also from what is not sinful. You know also that we cannot get to heaven without doing penance for our sins, and that it is better to do penance here than in purgatory. And you know, too, that most people will not abstain much or do much penance beyond what the church commands; so you know why the church got up Lent.

She did it that we might get to heaven sooner and more surely. That ought to be our encouragement, then, in it, that every good Lent brings us a good deal nearer to heaven; that heaven is the reward of penance and mortification. And it is partly to keep this before our minds that the church tells us in to-day's Gospel the story of our Lord's transfiguration: how he took Peter and James and John up with him on Mount Thabor, and there appeared to them in his glory; and filled their hearts with renewed courage and confidence in him, and with a firm belief that it was worth their while to follow him, even if they had to sleep out at night, and not get much to eat, and suffer in many ways--that it was worth while for the sake of the good time coming, of which his glory was a promise, though they did not know just when or what it would be.

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They thought, perhaps, it would be in this world; that their Master would come out in the power and majesty that they could see that he had, put down all his enemies, and reign as a great king on the earth. We know better; we know, or ought to know, that it will not be in this world. But we know that the good time coming will be something a great deal better than anything that can be in this world.

So we ought to be a great deal more encouraged than they were, especially when we think how little, after all, we have to suffer compared with what was asked of our Lord's chosen apostles. We do not have to sleep on the ground, or live on grains of wheat picked off the stalk in the fields, as they sometimes had to do. We have not got to look forward, as they did after his death, to long and painful labors and journeyings, to being driven from one city to another, to being scourged and buffeted, and put at last to a cruel death. No; on the whole, we have got a pretty easy time. We probably will not starve; nobody will persecute us; we will most likely always have a house to live in, and die in our beds.

It is not much, then, is it, to eat fish instead of meat, to fast enough to have a good appetite, to lose a little sleep and get a little tired? Perhaps if we would think more of the reward for such little things, and think a little more of the good time coming in heaven, we might even wish that Lent was more than forty days long.

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Third Sunday of Lent

Epistle.

Ephesians v. 1-9.

Brethren:

Be ye followers of God, as most dear children. And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us

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

Gospel.

St. Luke xi. 14-28.

At that time:

Jesus was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb; and when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke; and the multitude admired: but some of them said: He casteth out devils in Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. And others tempting, asked of him a sign from heaven. But he, seeing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation, and a house upon a house shall fall. And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say, that in Beelzebub I cast out devils. Now if I cast out devils in Beelzebub, in whom do your children cast them out?

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Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I, in the finger of God, cast out devils, doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things which he possesseth are in peace. But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armor wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils. He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest: and not finding, he saith: I will return into my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there. And the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd lifting up her voice, said to him: Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck. But he said: Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.

Sermon XLVII.

Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation.

--St. Luke xi. 17.

We can see at once how true the sentence just read is; for if the head of a kingdom were to rise against the members, the king

against his ministers, the people against both king and government, and the army and navy against their proper commanders--if all this should take place, then I say that kingdom would certainly be brought to desolation, and any enemy could easily come along and take possession of it.
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Now, dear brethren, the Christian family is a little kingdom. The father and mother are the king and queen, the older and more experienced members of the family are the counsellors, the children the subjects of that kingdom. The Christian family ought to be most closely united, and this for many reasons. Each member has been baptized with the same baptism, been sanctified by the same Holy Spirit. They have all been pardoned for their sins through the same Precious Blood, do all eat of the same spiritual food, the Body and Blood of Christ. Then, to come to natural reasons, they are bound together by the tie of blood, by the tie of parental and filial affection; they live together, pray together, rejoice together, suffer together. So there is every reason why the Christian family should be united; and if it is to fulfil its mission properly it _must_ be united, or it will be brought to desolation. O my dear friends! how many of these little kingdoms which should go to make up the grand empire of Jesus Christ upon earth fall away from their allegiance to him, and all because they are divided against themselves. We see a father, for instance, given over to habits of drunkenness; he comes home either in a dull, heavy stupor or else in a perfect fury of rage; he worries his wife, scares his children, disgraces himself; all his family shrink from him. There you see at once the head divided against the members. Or there is in the family a cross, ill-tempered, scolding wife, and, as the Scripture says, "there is no anger above the anger of a woman: it will be more agreeable to abide with a lion and a dragon than to dwell with a wicked woman. As the climbing of a sandy way is to the feet of the aged, so is a wife full of tongue to a quiet man."
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Such a woman would divide any family; she destroys the unity thereof just as much as the drunken husband. What, also, must be thought of interfering relations, cousins, aunts, uncles, and last, but not least, mothers-in-law? How often do they make mischief and destroy the kingdom of the Christian family! So, too, rebellious children, quarrelsome brothers and sisters--they all destroy peace, they all help to divide the kingdom, they all help to bring it to desolation; and in the end, instead of a fair kingdom, strong and united, nothing remains but a wretched scene of strife and contention, and in comes the devil and takes possession of everything. Now, my dear friends, when by your drunkenness, your crossness, your mischief-making and party-spirit, by your rebellion against parental authority, you divide the kingdom of your family, not only you yourselves will suffer, not only will you and your family have to endure spiritual injury and perhaps loss of salvation, but the great kingdom of Christ, now militant here on earth, and one day to be triumphant in heaven, suffers also. Who make up the church on earth? Individuals, families. Who are to fill the ranks of the

heavenly kingdom? The same. Oh! then, if you are divided against yourselves, if you are brought to desolation, you are part of the devil's kingdom on earth, and will form part of his empire of sin and death in hell. For God's sake, brethren, _stop this evil war_. Stop these things which make the family miserable. Have peace in your homes. Let men see that the peace of Christ and the union of Christ dwell there. Correct your faults; curb your tongues and your tempers; be obedient.
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Remember, the first words the priest says when he comes to your homes on a sick-call are these: "Peace be to this house and all that dwell therein." Try to profit by that benediction. Try always to have the peace of God, which passeth all knowledge, and then shall your kingdom stand.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon XLVIII.

"Are you going to make your Easter duty?" This is an important question just now, my dear brethren. You should put it to yourselves, and your answer should be: "Yes, certainly." The church commands it; and you know very well that he who will not hear the church is to be held as a heathen and a publican; that he who despises the church despises our Lord, and he who despises the Lord despises his Father who is in heaven. Surely you will not make yourselves guilty of this frightful sin of contempt; surely you do not wish to be held as a heathen. But knowing, as you do, the precept of the church binding at this time, how can you expect, if you do not fulfil it, to escape from the consequences of your disobedience, as expressed in the words of our Lord which I have just recited?
To go against the church in one of her commands is to spurn her authority altogether. It is strange that people should make, of their own wits or fancy, distinctions between the precepts of the church, when the church makes and acknowledges no such distinctions. The authority in all cases is the same, and, therefore, the commands are all equally binding. Yet how many Catholics who would scruple to eat meat on Friday or miss Mass on Sunday think nothing at all of breaking, without reason, the fast and abstinence of Lent, and give no heed whatever to the obligation of going to confession and communion in Easter-time!
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It really looks, to judge from their conduct, as if this Easter duty was not on an equal footing with the other commands of the church; as if the church did not mean what she prescribes. Now, the truth of it is, to this precept is attached a more severe sanction than to any other. The church makes any Catholic who violates it liable to excommunication, and deprivation of burial in consecrated ground. So you see the obligation is very strict and the church is terribly in earnest about it, if you are not. To take matters in your own hands, as so many Catholics do on this point, and call little what she calls great, and slight an order that she is so anxious about, is to be a heathen, or, at any rate, a Protestant; it is to set your private judgment above her authority; it is to despise God, who commands through her. If

you would only take this view of it--and this is the true view to take--you would think more than once before you would say: "O pshaw! any other time will do. Once a year? All right; I find it more convenient to go at Christmas." No, any other time will not do; once a year will not do, unless it be just now at this time. Christmas is a glorious feast, and Christmas-tide a joyful season, but it is not the season prescribed by the church for your annual communion; and, heathen that you are, your convenience is not the main point to be considered. The question is: has the church power from God to command me, and what does the church command?
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Oh! then, my brethren, let not the penances, the prayers, the instructions, the special graces of this holy season go to naught and be of no avail; but rather let them lead you up to the end for which they are intended--that is, to bring you to repentance for past sins, amendment for the future, to restore you to the friendship of your God, and strengthen you, for further battling in life, with the bread of heaven, his most precious Body and Blood.

Sermon XLIX.

He saith: I will return into my house whence I came out.
--St. Luke xi. 24.

The warning which our Lord gives us in this Gospel is certainly a most terrible one, my brethren, but it may not seem plain to whom it is addressed; who they are who, now and at all times, are in danger of having the devil come back to them in this way of which he speaks. For nowadays, thank God! it is not very often that we find people who are really possessed by the devil, in the proper sense of the word.
But, in a more general sense of it, there are plenty of people who are possessed by the devil. They are those who are in a state of mortal sin. In them Satan has regained the possession from which he was driven out in holy baptism--that is, the soul which was his at least by original, if not by actual, sin. And he is in them as a dumb devil, like the one which the Gospel tells us that our Lord cast out; that is, he makes the people dumb whom he possesses, by keeping them from telling their sins and getting rid of them by confession.
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But the dumb devil is often cast out, particularly at times of special grace and help from God, like this holy season of Lent through which we are now passing, or at the time of a mission or of a jubilee. At such times you will always find people, who have been away from the sacraments for years, coming back to them and making an effort to amend their lives and save their souls.
Now, this is very unpleasant to the devil, who has counted on these people as his own. He has a special liking for the souls which have been his so long. So when he is driven out of them he does not simply go off on other business, as we might expect; but he always has an eye on his old home. He says to himself, when he finds that he does not get along so well elsewhere: "I will

return into my house whence I came out. I will see if I cannot get in again."

So he comes back to his old house, to the soul which has been his, and too often he finds it pretty easy to get in again. He finds it, in fact, "swept and garnished," as our Lord says, and all ready for his reception. So, of course, he goes in and takes his old place. The soul, which has escaped from sin by a good confession, relapses into it again.

What a pity this is! And yet how common it is! How many, how very many, there are who a month or so after a mission, or some other occasion when you would think they would really be converted in good earnest, are back again in their old sins just the same as if they had never confessed them at all!

It seems strange, perhaps. And yet it is not so strange when you come to think of it. The reason is not very hard to find. It is just the one that our Lord gives: it is that the house of the soul, from which the devil has been driven, is empty, "swept and garnished." Nothing has been put there in the place of the vices and bad habits that were there before.

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There is no habit of prayer; there is no remembrance of the good resolutions that were made at confession; there is no attempt to avoid the occasion of sin; and, above all, there is no grace coming from the sacraments. That is the great mistake these converted sinners have made. They have promised at confession to go every month for the future; but they have not kept that promise. Now, it is perfect folly and madness for one who has been in the habits of sin to hope to persevere by saying a few short prayers and going to confession once a year. Such a way of going on leaves the soul empty of grace, and without anything to prevent its enemy from coming in.

If you want to persevere after a good confession, go every month to the sacraments. This is not a practice of piety; it is only common prudence. This is the means which God has appointed in his church to fill the soul with grace, and leave no room for the devil in his old home from which he has once been driven away.

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Fourth Sunday of Lent.

Epistle.

Galatians iv. 22-31.

Brethren:

It is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bond-woman, and the other by a free-woman: but he that was by the bond-woman was born according to the flesh: but he by the free-woman was by the promise. Which things are said by an allegory: for these are the two testaments: the one indeed on Mount Sina which bringeth forth unto bondage, which is Agar: for Sina is a mountain in Arabia, which hath an affinity to that which now is Jerusalem, and is in bondage with her children. But that Jerusalem which is above, is free: which is our mother. For it is written: "Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not: break forth and cry out, thou that travailest not; for many are the children of the desolate, more than of her

that hath a husband"; now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he, that was born according to the flesh, persecuted him that was according to the spirit: so also now. But what saith the Scripture? "Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman." Therefore, brethren, we are not the children of the bond-woman, but of the free: by the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.

Gospel.

St. John vi. 1-15.

At that time:

Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias: and a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were infirm. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. Now the pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand.

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

Sermon L.

_When, therefore, Jesus had lifted up his eyes
and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him,
he said to Philip:
"Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?"_
--St. John vi. 5.

To-day is mid-Lent Sunday, dear brethren. Half of the holy season has passed away, and the Pasch is near at hand. All through Lent the church has been praying, fasting, and preaching, making extra efforts to bring in the sinners who have so long stayed without the fold.

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Like the Divine Master, she looks down upon the crowd and she has pity on them. She wants to heal the sick; they will not be

healed. She wants to feed the hungry; they will not be fed. The church looks round upon the vast crowd of her children and wants them to make their Easter duty; alas! how many neglect it. Why should you make the Easter duty? First, because it is a strict law of the church. If you fail to make it by your own fault you commit a grievous mortal sin and put yourself in a position to be excommunicated from God's church. Secondly, for your own spiritual good. What kind of a Christian can he be who does not go to confession or communion at least once in a year? How shall you make it? First go to confession, and then, when you have received absolution, go to communion. That is all simple and plain enough. Why, then, do some people stay away from their Easter duty? Let us tell the truth. Confession must come first, and confession is the difficulty. A man has been engaged for years in an unlawful business, or he has stolen a sum of money, or he has been the receiver of stolen goods, or in some way or other cheated in trade. Such a man is a thief. He knows it, and he is also aware that if he goes to confession the priest will say: "Give up the ill-gotten money, sell your fine house and your gilded furniture, and make restitution; you must restore or you will damn your soul." They won't do that, won't give up the dishonest gains, and so they won't make the Easter duty. Or there are some who have committed sins of impurity; they have been unfaithful husbands, dissolute wives.
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They won't give up their bad habits or won't tell their shameful sins, and so they won't make the Easter duty. There are others on whom the fiend of drunkenness has settled; they are always on a spree, always pouring the liquor which stupefies them down their throats; they won't repent and they won't make the Easter duty. Ah! then, if there be any such sinners here--if there be any thieves, if there be any who are living upon dishonest gains, if there be any who are wallowing in impurity and drunkenness--tell me, how long is this going to last? How many more years will you slink away from your Easter duty like cowards and cravens? Will you go on so to the end of your lives? Oh! then you will go down to hell, and your blood be upon your own heads. No one stays away from Easter duty except for disgraceful reasons. There is always something bad behind that fear of the confessional, and such a man deserves to be pointed at by every honorable Catholic. Suppose you _have stolen_, or been an adulterer, or a fornicator, or a drunkard, or what not. Now is the time to repent, and amend, and make reparation. Don't you see the church looking down with eyes of mercy upon you? Why, then, stay? There can be only one reason, and that reason is because you want to go on being thieves, adulterers, and drunkards. O brethren! do not, I pray you, so wickedly. The church is kind. The blood of Christ is still flowing. The confessionals are still open. Go in there with your heavy sins and your black secrets. Go in there with your long story of sin. Go in, even if your hands are red with blood--go in, I say, and if you are truly penitent you will be cleansed and consoled. Let there not be a single man or woman in this church who can have it said of them this year: "You missed your Easter duty."

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And you that have been away for years and years, don't add another sin to your already long list of crimes. You are sick, you are fainting with hunger, you are a poor wandering sheep; but never mind, remember Jesus looks with pity upon you, and he will heal your sickness in the sacrament of penance, and feed you with his own Body and Blood.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon LI.

_Gather up the fragments that remain,
lest they he lost._
--St. John vi. 12.

It seems rather odd, does it not, my brethren, that our Divine Lord should have been so particular about saving all the broken bits of those loaves and fishes? He had just worked a wonderful miracle, and he could have repeated it the next day without any difficulty. When he or his apostles or the crowd who came to hear him were hungry, he had nothing to do but to say the word, and they could all have as much to eat as they wanted. Why, then, be so particular about hunting up all the crusts of bread and bits of fish that were lying round in the grass?

Perhaps you will say: "It was to show what a great miracle he had worked; to show that, in spite of their all having dined heartily, there were twelve basketfuls of scraps left over--much more than they had to start with."

I do not think that was it. The greatness of the miracle in feeding five thousand men on five loaves and two fishes was plain enough. At any rate, that was not the reason that he himself gave.

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He said: "Gather them up, _lest they be lost_." "Well, then," a prudent housekeeper would say, "the reason is plain enough. It was to teach us economy--not to let anything go to waste; to save the scraps, and make them up into bread-puddings and fish-balls."

I know you do not think that was it. Most people who are not forced to this kind of economy are apt to turn up their noses at it, and connect it in their minds with a stingy disposition, which they very rightly think is not pleasing to God.

But, after all, I don't see what it could very well have been but economy that our Lord meant to teach. I don't see what other meaning you can get out of his command to gather up the fragments, that they might not be lost. If that does not mean economy, what does it mean?

No, my brethren, economy, or a saving spirit, is not such a contemptible thing when rightly understood. There may be stinginess with it, but stinginess is not a part of it. Economy, rightly understood, is setting a proper value on the gifts of God.

Yes; what comes from him--and everything does--is too valuable to be thrown away. To despise his gifts is very much like despising him.

And besides, there is not, in fact, an unlimited supply of them,

though there might be. He might have fed his followers in that miraculous way every day; but he only did so twice in his life. Our Lord, then, did mean, I think, to set us an example of economy. Practise it as he did, my brethren. Prize God's gifts, whatever they may be; do not waste them. But especially his spiritual gifts; for they are infinitely more precious than the material ones. Don't count on having a future extraordinary supply of them.

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You have got enough to save your souls now, and to sanctify them, if you will only make use of it. You have got the faith, the sacraments, and the word of God. You don't need to have any one rise from the dead to convert you. Our Lord tells us that a certain rich man who was in hell wanted to go back to earth and appear to his brothers, that they might take warning by his example. He was told that it was not necessary; that they had Moses and the prophets. Well, you have got a great deal more. You know just as well what you must do to save your souls, and even to become saints, as if you had been beyond the grave yourselves. Don't expect more yet.

Save up your spiritual gifts, my brethren; you have got plenty now, but you do not know how much more you will get. When God gives you any grace make the most of it; perhaps it will be the last you will have. Bring back to your minds what you have heard, and the good thoughts and purposes which the Holy Ghost has given you; serve up the spiritual feasts you have had, not only a second time, but over and over again. Make what you have got go as far as possible, and your souls will grow stout and strong. Wait for unusual graces like a mission or a jubilee, and they will be thin and weak all the time. Be economical, especially in spiritual things; that is a very important lesson of the Gospel of to-day.

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Passion Sunday.

Epistle.

Hebrews ix. 11-15.

Brethren:

Christ being come a high-priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation: neither by the blood of goats, nor of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of a heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? And therefore he is the mediator of the new testament: that by means of his death, for the redemption of those transgressions, which were under the former testament, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel.

St. John viii. 46-59.

At that time:
Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me? He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God. The Jews, therefore, answered and said to him: Do not we say well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered: I have not a devil; but I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me. But I seek not my own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Amen, amen, I say to you: if any man keep my word, he shall not see death for ever. The Jews therefore said: Now we know that thou hast a devil.
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Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever. Are thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered: If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. And you have not known him, but I know him. And if I shall say that I know him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know him, and do keep his word. Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him. But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

Sermon LII.

But Jesus hid himself.
--St. John viii. 59.

Thick and fast, dear brethren, the shadows of the Great Week begin to fall upon us. Only a few more days and it will be Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week. To-day we are left, as it were, alone. The crucifix, with its figure of the dead, white Christ, is veiled; the dear, familiar faces of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph are veiled also; and even the saints before whom we were wont to kneel are all hidden behind the purple veil of Passion-tide. Not till Good Friday will Jesus look upon us again, not till Holy Saturday will the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and the saints once more come forth to our view. We are, then, alone by ourselves. God wants us to stand up before him just as we are. Jesus has hidden his face for a while.
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The crucifix has bidden you good-by. In what state were you last night when devout hands veiled the figure of Christ? Will you ever look upon the old, familiar crucifix again? It may be, before the purple veil is lifted from this cross, you will have looked upon the face of Christ in judgment. O brethren! to-day the face of Jesus is hidden. May be the last time you looked upon it you were in mortal sin, and are so still. When and how shall you look upon it again? If you live till Good Friday you will see it then held aloft by the priest, and afterwards kissed by all the faithful. If you die before then, and die, as you may,

without warning or preparation, then you will look upon the face of Christ upon the judgment seat, then you will hear the awful words: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Or perhaps--and may God grant it!--you will next see the face of Jesus in the person of his priest in the confessional, and there it will be turned upon you in mercy and forgiveness. There are some of you, I know, who are as _dead men_. There are some of you who, even up to this late hour, are holding out against grace. Still in mortal sin! I point you to the veiled Christ. I ask you, here in the sacred presence of God, I ask you in the most solemn manner, when and how will you look upon his face again? He has bidden you good-by to-day, he has said farewell, and as he said it he saw that you were a blasphemer, a drunkard, an adulterer, a slanderer, a creature full of pride, full of sloth, full of all kinds of sin. Oh! say, shall he still find you so when he returns? Say, when he is uncovered on Good Friday can you, dare you add to his grief by still being what you are now? And to us all, even the most devout, this lesson of the veiled crucifix ought not to pass unheeded.
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Christ has gone from us to-day! How will he come back to us? All torn and bloody, all thorn-scarred, all spear-pierced, nailed to the cross, and all for love of us! We, too, brethren, who are trying to walk strictly in the narrow path--we, too, may ask ourselves. When and how shall we see him again? Perhaps before Good Friday, ay, perhaps even before our hands can grasp the green palm-branch of next Sunday, we may see the unveiled face of our Beloved. Are we afraid of that? Oh! no. We have loved the face of suffering too well to dread the face of glory. We only expect to hear from his lips words of love and welcome. Brethren, there is a day coming when all veils shall be lifted. There is a time nearing us when all must look upon the face that died on Calvary's Mount. On that day and at that time will take place the great unveiling of the face of Christ: I mean the day of general judgment. O solemn, O awful thought for us to-day before the veiled image of our Lord! May be the judgment day will come before that light veil is lifted from the well-known crucifix. Great God! our next Good Friday may be spent either in heaven or in hell. Go home, brethren, with these thoughts fixed deeply in your hearts. Come here often to pray. If you have sins come here and confess them; and often and often as we turn to the veiled Christ, let us most devoutly cry: "Jesus, when and how shall we look upon thy face again?"

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon LIII.

Under the false accusations of the Jews how calm and self-possessed our Lord remains!
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He does not return passion for passion, anger for anger, accusations for accusations, violence for violence; but he meets calumny with the assertion of truth, and confounds his enemies by humility and meekness. They accuse him of sin; with the sublime simplicity of a pure conscience he dares them to convince him of

sin. They call him names: "Thou art a Samaritan"; to so evident a falsehood he deigns no reply. Blinded by anger, they accuse him of being possessed: "Thou hast a devil"; a simple denial, "I have not a devil," the leaving of his own glory to his Father, the assertion of his divine mission, is the answer to the blasphemous calumny. "Now we know thou hast a devil," repeat they, waxing more passionate; but, unimpassioned, Jesus rises above their rage to the calm heights of the Godhead, and affirms his eternal generation. Finally, losing all control of themselves, they take up stones to cast at him; but he quietly goes out of the temple and hides himself, for his hour--the hour when he would bear in silence the accusations and indignities of man, and allow himself to be led to slaughter--had not yet come.

In this our Saviour teaches us how we should behave when the passions of others fall upon us and we are made the butt of accusations, just or unjust. In such circumstances what is generally your conduct? By no means Christian, I am afraid, but very worldly; for the world counts it true valor and justice to give tit for tat, to take tooth for tooth and eye for eye. Do you not give back as good--and often worse--than you get? Prudence, let alone Christianity, should dictate to you quite another conduct.

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Your counter-accusations do but strengthen and confirm the calumny; they allow it to stand, "You're another" and "you're no better" are poor arguments to clear yourselves. It's a flank movement that does not cover your position, a feint that does not save you from attack. The answering of a question by asking another question is a smart trick, but no answer. A calm denial, if you could make it, or dignified silence would do the work more surely and thoroughly. And so the fight of words goes on in true Billingsgate style; to and fro they fly thick and hot, hotter and hotter as passion rises on both sides. "One word brings on another," until white heat is reached and all control of temper lost. Then, as the Jews ended with stones, so you perhaps come to more serious passion than mere words. The result is quarrels, deadly feuds, bodily injuries, and worse, may be--bloodshed and the jail. A cow kicked a lantern in a stable, and Chicago was on fire for days. Some frivolous accusation that you pick up, while you should let it fall, starts within you a fire of anger that makes a ruin of your whole spiritual life and throws disorder all around you; families are divided; wife and husband sulk, quarrel, live a "cat and dog" life; friends are separated, connections broken. Peace flies from your homes, your social surroundings, your own hearts; the very horrors of hell are around you. Christian charity has been wounded to death, and the slightest of blows, the lightest of shafts has done it. All for the want of a little patience and self-possession! How often we hear it said: "Oh! I have such a bad temper; I'm easily riz, God forgive me! I've a bad passion entirely." Well, my dear brethren, learn from this Gospel how you should control yourselves, how you should possess your souls in patience.

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One-half the sins of the world would be done away with, if only

the lesson of this Gospel were laid to heart and put into practice. What is the lesson?

Firstly, never seek self-praise in self-justification. Jesus turns aside the calumny of the Jews, but leaves the glorifying of himself in the hands of his Father, "who seeketh and judgeth." Secondly, pay no attention to accusations that are absurd, evidently untrue, and frivolous. When Jesus is called names and is made out to be what every one knows he was not--"a Samaritan"--he makes no answer. Thirdly, if serious calumny, calculated to injure your usefulness in your duties and state of life, assail you, it then becomes your right, and sometimes your duty, to repel the calumny, as Jesus did when he was accused of "having a devil." But in this case your self-justification, like that of our Saviour, should ever be calm, dignified, and Christian. It should be a defence, never an attack. The true Christian parries, he does not give the thrust; he shields himself from the arrows of malice, he does not shoot them back. Superior to revenge, he pities enemies for the evil they do; he forgives them and prays for them, as our Lord has commanded. This is Christian charity, and Christian humility as well. But as it avails little to know what we should do, if we have not God's grace to enable us to do it, let us often say, especially in temptations to impatience: "O Jesus, meek and humble of heart! make me like unto thee."

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Sermon LIV.

Why is to-day called Passion Sunday, my brethren? There does not seem to be any special commemoration of our Lord's sacred Passion in the Mass, as there is next Sunday, when the long account of it from St. Matthew's Gospel is read; and most people, I think, hardly realize that to-day is anything more than any other Sunday in Lent.

But if you look into the matter a little more you will notice a great change which comes upon the spirit of the church to-day, and remains during the two following weeks. The Preface of the Mass is not that of Lent, but that of the Cross; the hymns sung at Vespers and at other times are about the cross and our Lord's death upon it; and all the way through the Divine Office you will see evident signs that the church is thinking about this mystery of the cross, the commemoration of which is consummated on Good Friday.

And if you look about the church this morning you will see the pictures all veiled, to tell us that during these two weeks we should think principally of our Lord's suffering and humiliation; that we should, as it were, for a while forget his saints and everything else connected with his glory. And even the cross itself is concealed, for it is after all a sign of triumph and victory to our eyes; it is waiting to be revealed till Good Friday, when the sacrifice shall be accomplished and the victory won.

To-day, then, is called Passion Sunday because it is the opening of this short period, from now till Easter, which the church calls Passion-time.

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What practical meaning has this Passion-time for us, my brethren? It means, or should mean, for us sorrow, humiliation, sharing in the Passion of our Lord. Lent, all the way through, is a time of penance; but more especially so is this short season which brings it to a close. Now, surely, is the time, if ever, when we are going to be sorry for our sins, when we cannot help thinking of what they have made our Divine Saviour suffer. Now is the time to think of the malice and ingratitude of sin; to see it as it really is, as the one thing which has turned this earth from a paradise into a place of suffering and sorrow; to see our own sins as they truly are, as the only real evils which have ever happened to us, and to resolve to be rid of them for our own sake and for God's sake; for he has suffered for them as well as we. Now is the time to go to confession, and to make a better confession than we have ever made before, or ever can make, probably, till Passion-time comes round again. For now is it easier for us to be sorry for our sins, not only because we have everything to show us how hateful they are, but also because God's grace is more liberally given. He has sanctified this time and blessed it for our repentance and conversion. He calls us and helps us always to penance, but never so much as now.

Hear his voice, then, my brethren, and, in the words with which the church begins her office today: "To-day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Do not obstinately remain in sin, and put off your repentance and confession to a more favorable time. There is no time nearly as good as this; this is the time which God himself has appointed.

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You must make your Easter duty, if you would not add another terrible sin to the many which you have already made our Lord bear for you; make it now before Easter comes. Take your share now in the Passion, that you may have your share of the Easter joy.

And there is another reason why you should come now to confession; for there is another unusual grace which God now offers you--the grace of the Jubilee, which you heard announced last Sunday. Now, a Jubilee is not a mere devotion for those who frequent the sacraments; it is a call and an opportunity for those who have neglected them. I beg you not to let it be said that you have allowed this opportunity to go by. Come and give us some work to do in the confessional; the more the better. We will not complain, but will thank you from the bottom of our hearts. The best offering you can make to your priests, as well as to the God whose servants they are, is a crowded confessional and a full altar-rail at this holy Passion-time.

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Palm Sunday.

Epistle.

Philippians ii. 5-11.

Brethren:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery himself to be

equal with God: but debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of men, and in shape found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.

Gospel.

St. Matthew xxvii. 62-66.

And the next day, which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day: lest his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard; go, guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure with guards, sealing the stone.

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Sermon LV.

Behold thy King cometh to thee meek.
--St. Matthew xxi. 5.

Through humility and suffering to exaltation and glory--that is the way our Lord went to heaven, dear brethren, and that is the way we must go if we wish to follow him. To-day is Palm Sunday, the day on which our Lord rode in triumph to begin his Passion. Yes, in triumph; but what an humble one! He rode upon a lowly beast; there were no rich carpets spread along the way, only the poor and well-worn garments of the apostles and of the multitude thrown together with the boughs and branches torn from the wayside trees. All was humble, and doubly so if we think that he was riding to his death. Yes, brethren, those palm-branches were scarce withered, the dust had hardly been shaken from those garments, when the cross was laid upon his shoulders and the thorny crown pressed upon his brow. Dear brethren, let us ask ourselves this morning if we want to go to heaven. Do we want to be where Jesus is now, and where he will be for all eternity? If we do we must follow him through suffering and humility to exaltation and glory. We must be content with little and short happiness in this world; for, as I have said, the triumph of Palm Sunday was short-lived indeed. What followed? Jesus was brought before Pilate. He was condemned to death, forsaken, set at naught, buffeted, mocked, spit upon. He, the innocent Lamb of God, was scourged, stripped of his garments, crowned with thorns. Then upon his poor, torn shoulders was laid a heavy cross, which he carried till he could no longer bear it. And, lastly, outside the city gates they nailed him to that same cross, and he died. But after that came the glory and the triumph--the glory of the resurrection; the triumph over sin, and death, and hell.

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Brethren, we needs _must_ think of heaven to-day; the waving palms, the chanted hosannas, all speak to us of that delightful place. We cannot help thinking of that great multitude, clad in white robes and with palms in their hands, of whom St. John speaks, and of those others who cast down their golden crowns before the glassy sea. We want to reach that blessed place; we want to hear the sound of the harpers harping upon their harps; we want to hear the angels' songs and see the flashing of their golden wings; we want to gaze upon Jesus and Mary and all the heavenly host. But, brethren, not yet, not yet. See the long path strewn with stones and briers; see that steep mount with its cross of crucifixion at the top. That way must be trodden, that mountain scaled, that cross be nailed to us and we to it, or ever we may hear the golden harps or the angels' song. Through humility and suffering to exaltation and glory. Oh! let us learn the lesson well this Holy Week. Let us learn it to-day as we follow Jesus to prison and to death; let us learn it on Holy Thursday when we see him humble himself to the form of bread and wine; let us learn it on Good Friday when we kiss his sacred feet pierced with the nails. Yes, let us learn the lesson and never forget it. Heaven has been bought for you. Heaven lies open to you: but there is only one way there, and that way is the way of suffering. So, then, brethren, when your trials come thick and fast; when your temptations seem more than you can endure; when you are pinched by poverty, slighted by your neighbors, forsaken--as it seems to you--even by God himself, then remember the way of the cross. Remember the agony in the garden; remember the mount of Calvary.
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Grasp the palm firmly in your hand to-day; let it be in fancy the wood of the cross. Cry aloud as you journey on: "Through humility and suffering to exaltation and glory." Keep close to Jesus. Onward to prison! Onward to crucifixion! Onward to death! Onward to what comes afterwards! Resurrection! Reward! Peace!

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon LVI.

_He humbled himself,
becoming obedient unto death,
even the death of the cross._
--Philippians ii. 8.

We are entering to-day, my dear brethren, on the great week, the Holy Week, as it is called, of the Christian year--the week in which we commemorate the Passion and death of our Lord; and at this time our minds cannot, when we assist at the offices of the church, be occupied with any other thoughts than those which are suggested by his sufferings for our redemption.
And surely there is enough to occupy them not only for one short week, but for all our lives. The Passion of Christ is a mystery which we can never exhaust, in this world or in the world to come. It is the book of the saints, and there is no lesson of perfection which we cannot learn from it. So we must needs look at it to-day only in part, and learn one of its many lessons; and let that be one suggested to us by the words of the text, taken

from the Epistle read at the Mass: "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
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What is this lesson? It is that of humility, which is the foundation of all supernatural virtues, and yet the last one which most Christians try to acquire.
In fact, it would seem that many people, who are very good in their way, are rather annoyed than edified by the examples of humility that they find in the lives of the saints. It seems to them like hypocrisy when they read that the saints considered themselves the greatest sinners in the world. But it was not hypocrisy; they said what they really felt. They were not in the habit, as most people are, of noticing their neighbors' faults and making the most of them, and of excusing their own. So, though it was not really true that they were such great sinners when compared with others, it seemed to them that it was.
And, moreover, they were willing that others should think them so. In that they differed very much from some whom you would think were saints. The real saints are willing to bear contempt; they are willing to be considered sinners, even in their best actions, as long as God's glory is not in question; and, what is really harder, though it ought not to be, they are willing to be considered fools. Almost any one would rather be thought a knave than a fool. There are very few good people who like to be told of their faults; there are fewer still who like to be told of their blunders.
Now, it is with regard to this matter that we need specially to think of our Saviour's example. He, who could not be deceived, could not believe himself to be a knave or a fool; but he consented that others should consider him so, to set us an example of humility.
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He was reckoned among sinners in his life as well as in his death; and he hid the treasures of his divine wisdom and knowledge under the appearance of a poor, simple man of the lower classes. But it was in his sacred Passion that his humility is seen most plainly; he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; he, our Lord and our God, suffered the most disgraceful punishment that has ever been devised for common criminals.
There is the example, then, my brethren, for us poor sinners to follow. And the humility which we need most is nothing but the pure and simple truth. It is nothing but getting rid of the absurd notion that we are wiser and better than other people whom anybody else can see are our equals or superiors; for, strangely enough, it is always hardest to be humble when it is most clear that we ought to be. And depend on it, it is high time to set about acquiring this virtue; for, simple as it seems, to get even as much as this of it will take, for most of us, all our lives.

Sermon LVII.

I will say a few words to you this morning, my brethren, on the Jubilee just proclaimed by our Holy Father.
What is a Jubilee? It is the proclamation of a great spiritual

favor which may be obtained by any Catholic in the world during a specified time.
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This spiritual favor is a special plenary indulgence which, if gained in a way that perfectly fulfils all the conditions and completely satisfies the intentions of the church, will surely wipe out not only all the actual sins one has committed in all his life before, but take away also all the temporal punishment one would have to undergo in this life or in purgatory on account of those sins, be they great or small.
No wonder that all the children of the Catholic Church rejoice to hear such a favor proclaimed by their Holy Father, and that everybody is so anxious to partake of its benefits.
What is to be done? Just what the Pope says, and in a way specially directed for his diocesans by each bishop. There are visits to be made to certain churches, and prayers to be said there. There is a fast to be observed on one day. There are alms to be given. There is confession to be made and Holy Communion to be received. And all to be done by or before next Pentecost Sunday.
First. The visits. For this city there are three churches named by His Eminence the Cardinal--viz., St. Patrick's Cathedral, St. Stephen's, and the Church of the Epiphany. Each one of these three churches must be visited twice. All the visits may be made in one day or on different days, and one may, if he pleases, pay the two visits to the same church at once before going to another.
Second. Prayers are to be said in the churches; and they ought, of course, to be devout ones, and offered for all the intentions laid down by the Holy Father. No particular prayers are prescribed. One can hear Mass, or say the beads, or say five times the Our Father and Hail Mary, or one of the Litanies; or any of these prayers will do.
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Third. The fast. This may be in Lent or after, on any day that meat is allowed. But on the day you choose for the fast you must also abstain from meat.
Fourth. The alms. The amount or kind is not prescribed, but is left to your own generosity. It may be in money, in food, or in clothing, and it may be given to an orphan asylum or other such charitable institution, or to build a church. It may be given when making the visits; and special alms-boxes will be found in those churches to be visited, into which the offering can be put.
Fifth. Confession and Communion; and both ought to be prepared for and made the very best one can. Moreover, as one gains the more merit by doing actions in a state of grace, one will likely make the Jubilee better if he begins by making a good confession. Now is the time for great sinners to return to God and obtain his merciful forgiveness; for the Pope has given special privileges to confessors, in order that they may absolve the hardest kind of cases. Let no one, therefore, despair, nor think himself too hard a case. That is what the Jubilee is for--to bring down the mercy and forgiveness of God upon this sinful generation. To ensure this the father of the faithful sets the whole Catholic world

together praying, and fasting, and giving alms, and confessing their sins, and making holy, devout communion, so as to take heaven by storm, as our Lord said we might. "For the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." What a sublime spectacle, which only the Catholic Church can show--two hundred and fifty millions of people all turning to God at once! No wonder the Catholic Church saves the world.
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Look out that you are not found, in eternity, to be one of those whom she failed to turn to God, and lost for ever because you would not hear her instruction and counsel, nor be guided by her into the way of eternal life.

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Easter Sunday.

Epistle.

I _Corinthians v_, 7, 8.

Brethren:

Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new mass, as you are unleavened. For Christ, our pasch, is sacrificed. Therefore let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Gospel.

St. Mark xvi. 1-7.

At that time:

Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back, for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished. And he said to them: Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen, he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see him as he told you.

Sermon LVIII.

Mary Magdalen.

--St. Mark xvi. 1.

Dear brethren, you have all felt the great contrast that there is between the awful rites of Good Friday and the joy of to-day.
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Still fresh in your minds is the memory of the darkened church, the uplifted crucifix, the wailing of the reproaches. You remember, too, "the silence that might be felt" that reigned in God's temple on Holy Saturday. You can recall how still the church seemed yesterday at early morning, just as if some awful deed had been done there the day before; you may remember how unspeakably solemn seemed the silent procession to the porch to bless the new fire; how quiet and subdued all that followed. But

suddenly a voice rang out into the darkness--the voice of the sacrificing priest at the altar; an "exceeding great cry" pierced the stillness, and instantly every veil fell; the sunlight streamed in through every window; chiming bells, pealing organ, and choral voices burst upon your senses; everything seemed to say, "He is risen! he is risen!" And we felt it was almost too much, almost more than the feeble human heart could bear and not break for very joy. If, then, this contrast is so marked and this joy so great after a lapse of eighteen hundred years and more, oh! what must have been the joy of the first Easter day. The first crucifix bore no ivory or metal figure; it had nailed to it the flesh of the Son of God. The first Good Friday was no commemoration of an event; it was the event itself. Oh! then how great, how great beyond mind to imagine or tongue to tell, must have been the joy of the first Easter. Jesus had died, left all his beloved. He had been buried, and there he rested in the quiet garden. Very early in the morning come Mary Magdalen and the other women to the tomb. The sun was just rising; the flowers of that blessed garden were just awaking; the dew-drops sparkled like rubies in the red sunrise; the vines and the creepers, fresh with their morning sweetness, hung clustering round the sacred tomb.
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To that spot the women hasten; the sun rises; she, Mary Magdalen, stoops down; her Lord is not there, but lo! the great stone is rolled away; a bright angel sits thereon; other angelic spirits are in the tomb. The angel speaks: "He is risen; he is not here. Behold, he goes before you to Galilee. Alleluia! alleluia!" The Lord is risen indeed. And now, brethren, wishing you every joy that this holy feast can bring, I will ask the question. Where or of whom shall we learn our Easter lesson? We will learn it from her whose name, whose lovely, saintly name, forms the text of this discourse. In pointing you to Mary Magdalen, the great saint of the Resurrection, I do but follow the mind of the church; for in today's sequence the whole universal church calls upon her, "_Die nobis, Maria, quid vidistis in via?_"--Declare to us, Mary! what sawest thou in the way? She saw the sepulchre of Christ, in which were buried her many sins. In the way, the sorrowful way of the cross, she saw the Passion of Christ; in the way, the glorious way of the triumph of Christ, she saw the glory of the Risen One and the angel witnesses. Oh! is not our lesson plain? Like Magdalen, let us see the sepulchre, and let us cast our sins in there. Let us see the way of the cross and walk therein; let us see the glory of the Risen One and the angel witnesses in the heavenly kingdom. O poor, repentant sinners! you who during Lent have kissed the feet of Jesus and stood beneath his cross in the confessional, what a day of joy, what a lesson of consolation comes to you! Who was it upon whom fell the first ray of Resurrection glory?
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Who is it upon whom the great voice of the church liturgy, in the Holy Sacrifice, calls to-day? Ah! it was and is upon the "sometime sinner, Mary." Joy! joy! for the forgiven sinner to-day. Alleluia! alleluia! to you, blood-washed children of

Jesus Christ; for she who saw the Master first was once a sinner--a sinner like unto you. Alleluia, and joy and peace, unto you all in Jesus' name, and in the name of the redeemed and pardoned Mary! Alleluia, and joy and peace! whether you be sinner as she was, or saint as she became. Alleluia, and joy and peace! for "Christ our hope hath risen, and he shall go before us into Galilee." Alleluia, and joy and peace! for we know that Christ hath risen from the dead. Lord, we know that we are feeble and sinful, but lead, "Conquering King," lead on; go thou before to the heavenly Galilee. Time was when we feared to follow; but she, "more than martyr and more than virgin"--she, Mary Magdalen, is in thy train, and, penitent like her, we follow thee. Alleluia, and joy and peace, to young and old! Alleluia, and joy and peace, to saint and pardoned sinner! for Christ hath risen from the dead.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon LIX.

He is risen.

--St. Mark xvi. 6.

This is Easter Sunday, and the heart of every Christian is full of joy; for on this day the voice of God is heard assuring us that the dead can and will rise again to enter upon a new and never-dying life. To die is to suffer the most poignant grief, the greatest loss, the most grievous pain that man is called upon to endure.

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However long or sweet may be the pleasure of the draught of life, and health, and prosperity that one may drink, all must find this one bitter drop at the bottom of the cup. It is death; and if God himself did not tell us, how could we know but that it is the end of all? "But now Christ is risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that sleep." Who says Christ is risen again? God. How do we hear his voice of truth, which cannot deceive nor be deceived? We hear him when we hear the voice of his divine church, which he has made "the pillar and the ground of the truth." This is, then, her joyful and triumphant news to-day. All who die shall rise again from the dead, because our Saviour, Jesus Christ, first of all rose from the dead, and promised that the change of a similar resurrection should come upon all mankind. And I say again that we know that to be true because the Catholic Church, the only divine voice there is in the world, assures us that it is true. Bitter as death may be, the hope of the resurrection is its complete antidote. Now I understand why the words, "a happy death," is so common a speech among Catholics. It implies an act of faith in the resurrection, and a confidence that he who dies has not only prepared himself to die but also to rise again. This is an important reflection to make on Easter Sunday, for there is a resurrection unto eternal life and a resurrection unto damnation, which, compared to eternal life, is eternal death. A philosopher said: "Happy is that man who, when he comes to die, has nothing left but to die." But the Christian says: "Happy is that man who, when he comes to die, leaves the world and all he has to do or might do in it, sure of

a happy and glorious resurrection."
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All Catholics believe that they will rise again from the dead, but I am free to say that many of them do not prove their faith by their works. They seem to think so much of this world, and give so much of their thoughts and words and actions to it, that certainly no heathen would imagine for a moment that they thought even death possible, or that there was any future state to get ready for. I wonder how any one of us would act or what we would be thinking about, if we were absolutely sure that in less than an hour's notice we would some day be called to be made a bishop or a pope, or a king or queen; or would be carried off to a desert island, and left there to starve and die without help. We do not believe either fortune likely to happen to any of us, therefore we do not prepare for it. Alas! so many Catholics do not prepare for the sudden call to rise to a glory and dignity far higher than that of any prelate or prince, or to sink to a miserable state infinitely worse than to starve and die on a desert island; and why not? I say the heathen would answer, because they do not believe that either fortune will be likely to happen to them. If they did their lives would prove their faith. Now, I know I have set some of you thinking, and that has just been my purpose. Have I a right to participate in the Easter joy of to-day, or am I only making an outside show of it, while my conscience tells me I am a hypocrite? Have I kept the commandments of God and of the church? Have I made my Easter duty, or resolved to make it?
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What kind of a life would I rise to on the day of resurrection, if I died to-night? What would Jesus Christ, my Judge and Saviour, find in me that looked like him, and therefore ought to give me the same glorious resurrection as he had? Dear brethren, that is what he wants to find in us all. That is what he died to give us. That is what the Holy Spirit is striving hard to help every one of us to obtain. Come, a little more courage, and let us rise _now_ from all that is deathly, or dead, or corrupt, or rotten in this life we are leading, and Jesus will be sure to find in us what will fashion us unto the likeness of his own resplendent and divine resurrection to eternal life.

Sermon LX.

_Christ, our pasch, is sacrificed.
Therefore let us feast,
not with the old leaven
nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness,
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth._
--1 Corinthians v, 7, 8.

There are none of us, my dear brethren, I am sure, who can fail on this Easter morning to have something of the spirit of joy which fills the church at this time, and which runs through all her offices at this season. "This is the day that the Lord hath made," she is continually saying to us; "let us rejoice and be glad in it."
Yes, we are all glad now; we all have something of the Easter

spirit, in spite of the troubles and sorrows which are perhaps weighing on us, and from which we shall never be quite free till we celebrate Easter in heaven--in that blessed country where death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; where God shall dwell with us, and he himself with us shall be our God.
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But what is the cause of our joy? Is it merely that the season of penance through which we have just passed is over, that the church no longer commands us to fast and mortify ourselves? That may, indeed, be one reason, for there are certainly not a great many people who enjoy fasting and abstinence; but there should be another and a much better one. It should be that Lent has not left us just where it found us; that we can say to-day not only that Christ has risen, but that we also have risen with him. Yes, my brethren, that is the joy that you ought to be feeling at this time. What is Easter, or Christmas, or any other feast of the church worth without the grace of God? It is no more than any secular holiday; merely a time for amusement, for sensual indulgence, and too often an occasion of sin. If you are happy to-day with any happiness that is really worth having, it is then because you have the grace of God in your souls, either by constant habits of virtue, or by a good confession and communion which you have made to-day or lately. It is now, as at the last day, only to those who are really and truly the friends of Christ that he can say: "Well done, good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." For this is the day, the great day of his joy; and it is only by being united with him that you can share in it.
This, then, is the desire which I have when I wish you to-day a happy Easter, as I do with my whole heart: that if you have not made your Easter duty, you will make it soon; and that if you have made it, you will persevere--that, having risen from the dead, you will die no more.
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It is the wish compared with which all others are as nothing; for the happiness of the world is but for a few short years, but the joy of the soul is meant to last for ever.
And if you would have it, there is one thing above all which you must do--which you must have done, if you have made a really good communion. Holy church reminds us of it in a prayer which is said today at Mass, and which is repeated frequently through the Easter season. This is to put away all that old leaven of malice and wickedness, that spirit of hatred and uncharitableness for your neighbor, which is so apt to rankle in your hearts. If you would be friends with God you must be friends with all his children. Let there be no one whom you will not speak to, whom you would avoid or pass by. When there has been a quarrel one of the two must make the first advances to reconciliation; try to have the merit of being that one, even though you think, probably wrongly, that you were not at all in fault. This day, when we meet to receive the blessing of our risen Saviour, is the day above all others for making friends. Unite, then, with your whole hearts in this prayer of the church which I am now about to read

at the altar, first translating it for you: "Pour forth on us, Lord! the spirit of thy charity, that by thy mercy thou mayest make those to agree together whom thou hast fed with thy paschal mysteries; through Christ our Lord. Amen."

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Low Sunday.

Epistle.

1 _St. John v_. 4-10.

Dearly beloved:

Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in water only, but in water and blood. And it is the spirit that testifieth, that Christ is the truth. For there are three that give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one. And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God, which is greater, because he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself.

Gospel.

St. John xx. 19-31.

At that time:

When it was late that same day, being the first day of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands, and his side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord. And he said to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you shall retain, they are retained.

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Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Unless I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days his disciples were again within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then he saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not incredulous, but faithful. Thomas answered, and said to him: My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in

this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing you may have life in his name.

Sermon LXI.

_Unless I shall see in his hands
the print of the nails,
and put my finger into the place of the nails,
and put my hand into his side,
I will not believe._
--St. John xx. 25.

"It is no vain question," says Father Matthias Faber, of the Society of Jesus, from whose writings this sermon is adapted--"it is no vain question whether we do not owe more to St. Thomas, who was slow in believing the fact of Christ's resurrection, than to the other apostles, who credited it instantly." Then he goes on to quote St. Gregory, who says that "the doubt of St. Thomas really removed _all_ doubt, and placed the fact that our Lord had really risen with his human body beyond all dispute."
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So today, following the good Jesuit father, I am going to be St Thomas. I shall hear from many of you something of this kind: "O father! I am so delighted: my wife or my husband, my son, my brother, my friend, has risen from the dead. He or she has been to confession, given up his bad habits, come again into our midst; has been to Communion, has said, Peace be to you, has altogether reformed and become good." Ah! indeed. Is that so? Of course it is quite possible; but towards those whose resurrection you announce to me I am St. Thomas this morning, and say to them: "Unless I shall see in their hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into their side, I will not believe." In a word, I will not believe that any of you have risen from the dead, I will not believe that you have come out of the grave of mortal sin, unless I see in you the signs of a former crucifixion. First, I want to see the print of the nails. I want to see in your hands and feet--that is, in your inclinations and passions--the print of the nails that the priest drove in, in the confessional. I want to see that these hands strike no more, handle no more bad books, pass no more bad money, write no more evil letters, sign no more fraudulent documents, are stretched forth no more unto evil things, raised no more to curse. I want to see these hands lifted in prayer, stretched out to give alms, extended in mercy, busy in toiling for God and his church. I want to see these hands smoothing the pillows of the sick, giving drink to the thirsty, food to the hungry, and raiment to the naked. I want to see the print of the nails, or I will not believe. These feet, too--I must see them bearing you to the confessional regularly, taking you to Mass, carrying you to Benediction, bent under you in prayer.
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In a word, I must see in you the signs of a true conversion, or I will not believe that you have really risen from the death of sin. Then, like St. Thomas, I must "put my finger into the place of the nails." That is, when you are taken down from the cross,

when, as it were, you have persevered for quite a while in God's service, I want at any time to be able to assure myself that the wound is really there. I want to be sure that those old charlatans, the world and the flesh, haven't been round and healed those wounds with their salve of roses, their pleasures of life, and their elixir of youth. I want to know for certain that you have, by God's grace, raised your body from the grave, having first nailed it to the cross, and to be sure that it is the same body. I want to put my finger into the scars of crucifixion. Lastly, I want to put my hand into your side to see if the heart is wounded. I want to see if there is true contrition there. I want to find out if the old designs, the old loves, the old plans are driven out; I want to find out if that heart has really upon it the scar of the spear of God. O brethren! to say, "I have risen with Christ," is an easy thing; for others to tell the priest that you are truly converted presents no difficulty; but I am St. Thomas, and I want to _see_ the wounds. Then what a consolation for the priest if he can perceive plainly the print of the nails, put his hand into the place of the nails, and put his hand into the side! Then, like St. Thomas, he can cry: "My Lord and my God." For in the truly crucified and converted sinner he can see clearly the work of the Almighty. Ah! then, brethren, strive to crucify your flesh every day; strive to know nothing but Jesus, and him crucified.
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Try to bear about in your bodies the "stigmata of the Lord Jesus," for they will be your best credentials on earth and your brightest glory in heaven.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon LXII.

_For this is the charity of God,
that we keep his commandments._
--1 St. John v. 3.

We have in these words the infallible test of a true Christian life. He alone truly loves God who keeps his commandments. I once heard of a man who used to get down on his knees every morning and recite the Ten Commandments as a part of his morning prayers. I believe that that man's religion was practical. He certainly had in his mind the right idea of what religion meant. We are apt to keep the commandments too much in the background. True, we have them and know them well enough, but they don't shine out in our lives as they should. Here is a man that prays, but don't pay his honest debts. Here is another that always goes to Mass, but has the habit of cursing. Another is honest and just with his neighbors, but, as everybody knows, gets drunk.

People sometimes talk about the difficulties of having faith; but this is not where the trouble lies. The real struggle and conflict of religion is to correct the morals of men. True religion insists upon the keeping of the commandments, and that is why it is so repugnant to men. Faith is easy to the virtuous; if men wished to be moral there would be no difficulties about faith. We sometimes hear people say: "Your religion is a perfect tyranny." Yes, if you choose to call the Ten Commandments

tyranny.
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This is the only tyranny that I have ever found. I think, also, that every Catholic will testify that these Ten Commandments are what really make religion hard, and that if these could only be set aside men would never complain of its being hard. I never heard of a Catholic who was willing to keep the Ten Commandments who thought that anything else connected with his religion was hard. Here we have, then, in a nutshell, the whole secret of the opposition of men to the true religion; but, inconsistent as it may seem and really is, men, while they hate, have yet to admire what they hate. An apostate monk may set himself up as a reformer and talk about "justification by faith alone," but the world laughs at such nonsense. It trembles, though, when it hears our Lord say: "Every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire." "If any man loves me he will keep my commandments." This pretended reformer, Doctor Martin Luther, who called that wonderful Epistle of St. James, in which we are taught that "faith without good works is dead," "an epistle of straw," proved, however, to the world by his own life that it was this straw of being obliged to keep the commandments which broke his back, as it has broken the backs of so many others. But people do not have to leave the church to be thus broken, for we have in the bosom of the church, also, those who try to have piety without morality; but they are the hypocrites, the sham followers of Christ. They will some day, unless they speedily change their lives, hear our Lord saying to them: "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Ah! may we not some of us have good reason to fear that we shall one day be judged as hypocrites?
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The bankrupt merchant is afraid to look at his books, and trembles at the thought of attempting to calculate his liabilities; so those false Christians dare not look at the law of God to examine their lives by it. But, to their shame and grief, the day of reckoning will come. The devil may whisper to such, "Soul, take thy ease," but, thank God! there is the voice of God's church, which will not allow us to delude ourselves. If we Catholics go to hell it will be with our eyes wide open. The waves of passion can never drown that voice. It will always tell us of our sins, and will never let us be content in being hearers of the law, unless we are also doers. This is the way which is certainly pointed out to us; "and it shall be called the holy way."

Sermon LXIII.

_Jesus came, and stood in the midst,
and said to them, Peace be to you._
--St. John xx. 26.

In spite of there being so much fighting in the world, I think, my brethren, that there are not many of us who really like it for its own sake, or who would not rather have peace. Of course we are not willing to sacrifice everything for it; we do not want peace at any price. We do not want the peace of slavery--that

which comes from being beaten. We want an honorable one--that which comes from having had the best of our adversary in a just war.
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There is another kind of peace besides these two. It is that which comes from being let alone. But that is something which is not intended for us in this world. Somebody will always be interfering with us; if nobody else does, the devil, at any rate, will be sure to do so. No, arrange it as we may, our life will always be full of annoyances and conflicts, both from without and from within.
And this kind of peace was not what our Lord wished and gave to his apostles on that glorious day when he arose from the dead. He knew very well that they, of all men in the world, were not going to be let alone. They were going to be put in the very front of the battle. Not only their neighbors but the whole world was going to rise up against them; and Satan, with his infernal host, was going to single them out as the special objects of his hatred and vengeance.
No, the peace which our Lord gave to his apostles was not this, but that which comes from victory. And that is the peace which he wishes us also to have.
Over whom, then, are we going to be victorious? In the first place, over the devil and all his temptations.
Many Christians, I am sorry to say, make the opposite kind of peace with the devil--that is, the peace of slavery; one which they would be ashamed to make with anybody else. Should they be tempted by him to impurity, drunkenness, hatred, or blasphemy, they give in and strike their colors at once. Being tempted and sinning are all the same thing to them. Well, they have peace in a certain way by this; that is, the devil, when he finds what miserable and cowardly soldiers of Christ they are, does not trouble himself much about them. He feels pretty sure of them; they are his prisoners of war, and it is for his interest to treat them well as long as they are in this world.
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Yes, if you want to make peace with the devil you can surrender to him at once. But shame, I say, on such a peace as this! It is a base, contemptible, and cowardly one, and it will not last long. Satan only waits for this life to be over to satisfy all his malice and hatred on those he now seems to love.
But you may have, if you will, the peace and satisfaction of victory over him. Make up your mind to have it--to have it every time he tempts you. It is not so hard as you think; it is easy by the merits of our Lord's sacred Passion, which are at your command. He showed this to his apostles on that first Easter day, when he said to them: "Peace be to you." He showed them his hands and his side, bearing those glorious wounds, the marks and the pledge of victory.
And you can also have the peace of victory over all others who trouble you in this world, however unjust and strong they may be. How? Why, in the same way as our Lord and his apostles had it. Not by fighting with them, and giving back as good as you get--no, but by giving much better than you get; by doing them

all the good you can. Evil is not to be conquered by evil, but by good. "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you"; that is what the Eternal Wisdom has said; that is the way to have victory and peace, not only in the next world but also in this; and the sooner you believe it and act on it the happier will you be.

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Second Sunday after Easter.

Epistle.

1 _St. Peter ii._ 21-25.

Dearly beloved:

Christ has suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not: but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly. Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree: that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray: but you are now converted to the pastor and bishop of your souls.

Gospel.

St John x. 11-16.

At that time:

Jesus said to the Pharisees: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own sheep they are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and flieth; and the wolf snatcheth and scattereth the sheep: and the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd: and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

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Sermon LXIV.

I am the Good Shepherd.

--St. John x. 11.

It is not requisite for me to prove to you, dear brethren, that our Lord was and is, in every sense, the "Good Shepherd," nor is it my intention to speak of him this morning in that character. I want to bring this fact before your minds--namely, that although the "great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" has gone from us, yet he has left other authorized pastors to take charge of his flock. The Pope is a shepherd, the bishops are shepherds, and, to bring it down close to you, the priests of God's church are shepherds. You and your children are the sheep and the lambs of Christ's flock; we are your shepherds appointed by Jesus Christ to feed you, to watch over you, to keep you in the fold, to check you when you want to go astray. Now, then, every priest can say, "I am the good shepherd." And what does a good shepherd do? First, he tends his flock with care; and, secondly, he derives from it his means of support. Now, brethren, the priest's duty is

to watch over and care for you; and that he does so you will not deny. He must hear your confessions, give you Holy Communion, come to you when you are ill, administer the sacraments to you, advise you, preach to you, instruct you, shield you from the wolves and seek you when you are lost, and often serve you at the risk of his own life. Now, the priest does all these things, not because he is paid, not because the people hire him and pay him a salary, but _simply_ and _solely_ because he is the good shepherd; because it is his mission, his office to do so; because he is placed over you by authority.
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Now, it follows from this that it is your duty to be fed, to be kept in the fold, to be checked when you are going wrong, to hear his voice and obey him. I am afraid some don't understand this. How is it we hear of milk-and-water Catholics going to be married before magistrates, or, what is worse, before ministers of a false religion? How is it that we find Catholics denying their faith and going to a Protestant place of worship for the sake of a little food and clothing? The priest has God's own authority; you are the sheep. The priest has you in charge. God does not come and ask you if you would like a shepherd; he places one over you, and that he may guide you, and not that you may guide him. I say this for the benefit of those who are always talking about their priests, always picking holes in the conduct of their pastors. Such people forget their position, forget their obligations, and make themselves appear very ignorant, much wanting in faith, and very impertinent. Again, the shepherd lives by his flock; so the priest must be supported by the people. A priest has a body as well as you have, and he can't live on air or on shavings. Then he wants to build and keep in repair God's temples. He wants money to build schools and support them; he wants money to feed and clothe the poor. He wants money because it is your _duty_ to give it; for one of the laws of the church is, "To pay tithes to your pastors." Often, too, it is a great kindness for us to accept some of your worldly riches, which otherwise would, perhaps, prevent your entry into heaven. We can do with the riches what the shepherd does with his wool: make clothes for the naked and destitute, exchange what we get for building and decorating God's church, and a hundred other things of which you, the sheep, and your children, the lambs of Christ's flock, will get the heavenly merit and the everlasting profit.
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Oh! then, brethren, have faith, try always to cling to the priest as the good shepherd, so that at the last day we may call you all by name, and find that of the little flock of sheep and lambs not one is missing.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon LXV.

_Christ suffered for us,
leaving you an example
that you should follow his steps_.
--1 St. Peter ii. 21.

The holy church is not going to let us forget the cross, my brethren, even in this joyous Easter season. There is a prayer, or Commemoration of the Cross, which she orders to be said in the divine Office even more frequently now than during the rest of the year; and here in the Epistle of to-day she warns us that we all must take up our cross as our Lord took his, if we would have a share in the triumph which we now celebrate.

"Christ," says St. Peter, "left us an example that we should follow in his steps." St. Peter had not forgotten those words which his Master after his resurrection spoke to him on the shore of the Sea of Galilee: "Do thou follow me." He tried to do it; and he did follow his Lord in a life of toil and suffering, ended by a painful death on the cross like to that which his Saviour had borne. He followed the example which had been set him; he believed what he says in this Epistle of his, and acted on it. How is it with us?

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Many Christians seem to imagine that our Lord, by his resurrection, took away, or ought to have taken away, all trouble from the earth. They cannot understand how it is that in this redeemed world, whose sins his Blood has expiated, the cross still keeps coming down on them at every turn. They honor the cross, and are grateful for the redemption which it has brought them; but even when they kiss it on Good Friday they do not understand that they have got to take it, embrace it, and bear it themselves.

And yet that is the fact. The cross is to free us from eternal suffering, but not from that which passes away. Our Lord did not suffer in order that we might have no suffering at all, but that we might be able to bear our sufferings better, and to bear greater ones than we could otherwise have borne. He might have redeemed us without suffering as he did; but one of the reasons why he did not choose to was that we, the guilty, to whom the cross belongs, may bear it cheerfully when we see Him who was innocent taking it on his shoulders.

But why did not our Lord suffer enough to free us from suffering at all? I think there are not many who are ungenerous enough to ask such a question plainly, though it seems to be in a great many people's minds. Well, I will tell you why he left us a share of his cup. It was for the same reason that he took his own share: it was because he loved us, and chose what was for our best good. And he knew it was better for us to be saved through our own sufferings as far as possible.

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They could not be enough of themselves; so he did what was enough, and then enough more to bring down our own share to just what we could make the best use of with his grace and by his example.

That is the reason, then, why the cross is left in the world. Try to see it and acknowledge it yourselves; that is better than to have the cross meeting you as a strange and unaccountable thing. For it will meet you at Easter as well as at other times of the year; even when you are happiest there will always be some cloud in your sky. There will never be any real and true Easter for you

till you shall, like your Redeemer, have exchanged this temporal life for that which is eternal. But do not be too much in a hurry for that time. He knows best how much suffering is good for you. Count it a joy and an honor that he has thought you worthy to follow in his steps, and thank him for the example which he has given you to help him to do so, as well as for his merits which he has also given you that your following might not be in vain.

Sermon LXVI.

_And other sheep I have
that are not of this fold;
them also I must bring,
and they shall hear my voice,
and there shall be one fold
and one shepherd._
--St. John x. 16.

If we only knew how much our Lord loves those "other sheep" who are not in the one true fold, we should think and act differently from what we do towards them. As we look upon the sacred image of our Divine Lord upon the cross, we behold his arms and hands stretched to their utmost extent to embrace the whole world.
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He is the second Adam, who came to undo the work of the first Adam; and as the terrible consequences of the first transgression have extended to _all_ men without exception, so, also, to repair this evil which has come upon all men it was necessary that the grace of salvation should be offered to _all_ without exception. And from this we may infer that God does not simply will that men should be saved, but that he actually gives to every man that is born sufficient grace to accomplish this great work. But are those who stay outside of the one fold in the way to use this sufficient grace? Certainly they are not, or our Lord never would have said: "Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." No one, therefore, can be said to be in the way of salvation who stays outside of the one true fold of the Catholic Church. We cannot, of course, know what extraordinary means of grace God may use for those who are ignorant of the church, yet we do know with perfect certainty that the Catholic Church, with its doctrine, sacraments, and other means of grace, is the only divinely-established means of salvation for all men.
Knowing, then, that our Divine Lord, inasmuch as he died for all men, wills to bring all men into the one true fold, where they may be under one shepherd, we must feel it to be our duty, if we have the love of Christ in our hearts, by our prayers, words, and good example to bring the "other sheep" of whom our Lord speaks so lovingly to the knowledge of this one fold.
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It is only a coldness of faith and charity which can make us look upon those who are outside of the church as if they were already where they ought to be, and where God wishes them to be, or make us think that it is a hopeless task to try to bring them into the true church. Our Lord has promised that they shall hear his voice. We know, then, that he will co-operate by his all-powerful

grace with what we do for their salvation.
Our first duty is that of prayer for these "other sheep." Every prayer that we offer up for the conversion of infidels and heretics will be heard, and will bring down upon them additional grace. Prayer opened the hearts of the Irish people, when they were in the darkness of paganism, to receive the true faith from St. Patrick. In our own day, also, prayer has brought thousands of Protestants and infidels into the true church. Father Ignatius Spencer, of the Order of Passionists, was raised up by God to spread among the Catholics of Ireland and England the devotion of prayers for England, and we behold the results of these prayers in the great "Oxford movement," which brought so many into the church and has opened the way for so many more conversions. Can we ever by our words bring others into the church? Yes. An explanation of some point of Catholic doctrine, an invitation to come and hear a sermon, the lending of a Catholic book, may be the means which God has chosen for the conversion of our Protestant neighbor. "Who knows," said St. Alphonsus Liguori, "what God requires of me? Perhaps the predestination of certain souls may be attached to some of my prayers, penances, and good works."
But, above all, by our good example we should lead others into the "one fold." "Actions speak louder than words," but woe to us if our actions belie the truth of our faith!
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What shall we answer if accused before the tribunal of God by souls who would have known and have been saved by the truth but for our bad example? We must never forget, dear brethren, our duty towards those "other sheep" for whom our Lord died just as much as he did for us.

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Third Sunday after Easter.
Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph.

Epistle.
1 _St. Peter ii._ 11-19.
Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims to refrain yourselves from carnal desires, which war against the soul; having your conversation good among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, considering you by your good works they may glorify God in the day of visitation. Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake; whether it be to the king as excelling, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of the good; for so is the will of God, that by doing well you may silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not as making liberty a cloak of malice, but as the servants of God. Honor all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; honor the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Epistle of the Feast.
Genesis xlix. 22-26.
Joseph is a growing son, a growing son and comely to behold;

the daughters run to and fro upon the wall. But they that held darts provoked him, and quarrelled with him, and envied him. His bow rested upon the strong, and the bands of his arms and his hands were loosed by the hands of the mighty one of Jacob: thence he came forth a pastor, the stone of Israel.

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The God of thy Father shall be thy helper, and the Almighty shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, with the blessings of the deep that lieth beneath, with the blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of thy father are strengthened with the blessings of his fathers: until the desire of the everlasting hills should come; may they be upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the Nazarite among his brethren.

Gospel.

St. John xvi. 16-22.

At that tine:

Jesus said to his disciples: A little while, and now you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me: because I go to the Father. Then some of his disciples said one to another: What is this that he saith to us: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me, and because I go to the Father? They said therefore: What is this that he saith, a little while? we know not what he speaketh. And Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him; and he said to them: Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me? Amen, amen I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you.

Gospel of the Feast.

St. Luke iii. 21-23.

At that time it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also being baptized and praying, heaven was opened: and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape as a dove upon him: and a voice came from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus himself was beginning about the age of thirty years: being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph.

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Sermon LXVII.

Our Holy Father, Pope Pius IX., as you know, dear brethren, has made his reign glorious by defining the dogma of the Immaculate Conception; thus placing in our dear Lady's diadem the brightest gem that adorns it. He has further rendered his pontificate glorious by declaring the chaste spouse of Mary Immaculate, St. Joseph, to be the patron of the universal church. When we

celebrated the feast of St. Joseph, on the 19th of last month, his statue was veiled by the hangings of Passion-tide; but today his image is exposed to our gaze, and I have thought that this discourse cannot be better occupied than by considering how fitting it is that good St. Joseph should be the patron of the universal church, and how great a devotion we should have towards him.

St. Joseph is a fitting patron for the rich and for those whom God has placed in the high positions and stations of this world; for let us never forget that St. Joseph, although poor, was, by lineal descent, of the royal house of David. He was of high birth, of noble blood, and yet how humble, how willing to work for his living when it became necessary!

So, then, here is a lesson for those who hold their heads high in the world. Some day, dear friends, you may come down, you may be brought low. You may lose your money, lose position, lose your place in society. Take example, then, from St. Joseph. Do not say like the unjust steward: "To dig I am unable, and to beg I am ashamed"; but remember that the fairest hands that ever were, and the noblest blood that ever flowed, are never disgraced by honest labor or necessary toil.

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St. Joseph is a fitting patron also for the poor. He had to work hard. He had, for the safety of the Divine Child and his Immaculate Spouse, to take long and weary journeys. He had the pain of seeing Jesus and Mary turned from the doors of Bethlehem, while those who had money were safely and comfortably lodged. Yet he never complained, never murmured. He worked, and bore all the inconveniences of poverty without a word. Is it so with you who are poor? Don't you sometimes envy the rich, get discontented with your position, feel rebellious against the will of God? If so, I point you to St. Joseph. He is your model. He is your example; strive to imitate him in all things. Are you humiliated? Bear it for Christ's sake. Are you punished by cold and hunger? Bear it for Christ's sake. Are you weary after your day's labor? Bear it, bear it all for Christ's sake, as good St. Joseph did.

St. Joseph, too, is a model for the married. He cared tenderly for the Virgin Mother and her Divine Child. He loved them, he guarded them. He is a model for the unmarried in his purity of life. He is a model for the priest, a model for the people, a model for the young, an example for the old. Oh! then how wisely our Holy Father acted in making him patron of the universal church. But not only is St. Joseph patron of the living, but also of the dying and the dead--of the dying, because he died in the arms of Jesus and Mary. Beautiful death! The Son of God at his side, the Mother of God to support his dying form! brethren! we who are here to-day living will one day be dying.

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Let us, then, pray St. Joseph that he will obtain for us the grace of a happy death--the grace to die, as he died, in the arms of Jesus and Mary. Then, no matter if flames devour us, or waters overwhelm us, or disease slays us, we shall be safe--safe, for the Son of God will hold us by the hand; safe, for the Mother of God will throw around an all-protecting mantle of defence.

And, lastly, St. Joseph is the patron of those who are dead and in purgatory. He waited long in limbo before he entered into the joy of heaven. Separated from all he loved on earth, and seeing the pearly gates of heaven, not yet opened by the bloodshed of Calvary, shut against him, oh! how great must his longing have been. Ah! then I am sure St. Joseph feels for and loves the holy souls in purgatory, who, like himself, have lost earth and not yet gained heaven.

Let us all, then, hasten to St. Joseph to-day. Let us pray for ourselves and others. Let us pray for the living and pray for the dead. Let us say: "O great patron of the whole church! look down from the loftiness of thy mountain to the lowliness of our valley; obtain for us to live like thee, to die like thee, and to reign _with_ thee in everlasting bliss."

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon LXVIII.

On this Sunday, my dear brethren, the church celebrates every year the feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph. You have often heard it read out from the altar, you heard it just now; and yet I am afraid most of you might as well not have heard it, for all the impression it made on you.

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If you thought anything about the notice you probably thought that it was only something to interest the pious people, to let them know when to say their prayers and go to Communion.

If you did you made a great mistake. St. Joseph is not a saint for pious people only, but for every Christian. That is true of all the saints, but specially so of St. Joseph. All the saints take an interest in all of us, however weak and imperfect, or even sinful, we may be; they all love us and care for us far more than our friends in this world. Still, they have perhaps a particular care for some, as we have, or should have, a particular devotion to some of them as our patrons.

But St. Joseph is everybody's patron. That is what holy church means by inviting us all to celebrate this feast of his Patronage, and by giving him the title, as she did only a few years ago, of patron of the universal church. He is the patron of the church in general and of each member of it in particular.

What is a patron? The word has rather gone out of common use. Well, it is a friend at court. A patron is one who has got influence and power to use for our advantage. If we want anything he is the one to get it for us. He is the man that you go to if you want to get an office or employment of any kind from the powers that be; and generally you will find it pretty hard to get a place, if you have not such a friend to go to.

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Well, St. Joseph is such a friend for all of us in the court of heaven, and that is the one where we all want to have an interest; for there is where all matters are really arranged, whether regarding heaven or earth. If you want anything whatever St. Joseph is the one to go to, whether it be the most important thing of all--that is, the grace of final perseverance and salvation--or merely to pay your debts or save you from want. He

will get you either one, though I do not know that he will get you the dollar, if you do not want the grace also.
But you will say, perhaps: "I do not need St. Joseph's help so much, for I have Our Blessed Lady to go to; is not she more powerful even than he is?" Well, I do not deny that, of course, nor that she is the best of all patrons. Neither does the church; for she celebrates, as you know, the feast of Our Lady's Patronage also. But I would not give much for your devotion to her, neither would she herself, unless you include St. Joseph in it. You might as well try to separate her from her Divine Son as St. Joseph from her.
Besides, you know the saints have what I may call their specialties. It is not, for instance, a superstition to ask the help of St. Anthony of Padua to find for us what we have lost. St. Joseph has several specialties; and one of them, and one which I know you will think quite important, is the help which he will give to us in temporal necessities when we are hard pressed for money, or things seem in any way to be going very much against us. Let me, then, suggest to you a very practical form of devotion to him. When anything goes wrong, instead of worrying about it and making it keep you from prayer, or even, perhaps, from Holy Mass, go to St. Joseph about it; ask him to get you what you want or to relieve your from your trouble. He will do it for you, unless it be bad for your soul.
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Perhaps you think this is all fancy. Well, all I say is, just try, and you will see whether it is or not. You will find plenty of people who will tell you that what I say is true. But ask St. Joseph to help your soul, too, for he does not want to have you neglect that. See if you cannot make the patronage of St. Joseph, both temporally and spiritually, more of a reality to yourselves before another year has gone by.

Sermon LXIX.

_Be ye subject therefore
to every human creature
for God's sake._
--1 St. Peter ii. 13.

If we stop to consider these words of the Epistle, my dear brethren, they must certainly have a strange sound to us in this age of the world, and especially in this country, which makes liberty its great boast. Many of us, I am afraid, in spite of their reverence for St. Peter, who gives this instruction, would be tempted to say that this doctrine of his is a very curious one. "Be subject to every human creature," indeed! Why, on the contrary, in this free and enlightend republic, we do not acknowledge subjection to any one; we hold that every man is equal; we are all sovereigns and make laws ourselves--not subjects, obedient to laws made by others. We observe the laws of the land, it is true, but that is because they are arrangements made by the majority for the good of the nation, state, or city, and because we must have some sort of law if we are to have any kind of order.
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Well, this creed, which some of you, perhaps, have adopted, may sound well enough in itself, but unfortunately it does not seem to agree very well with St. Peter's inspired and infallible teaching. We must, if we are Catholics, acknowledge that instead of claiming that no one has a right to control us, we ought, as he says, to "be subject to every human creature." The only thing, then, is to find out just what he means by this.

Does St. Peter mean, then, that we must be willing to obey every human creature, every man, woman, or child that undertakes to command us? Yes, there is no doubt that such is his doctrine. We must be _willing_ to obey every one; we must have a spirit of subjection and humility, not of superiority and pride. We must not think that we are too good or too wise to be commanded by any one, however bad or however foolish he may seem to be. We must have a desire to obey, not to command.

But does St. Peter mean that we actually must always obey every one, man, woman, or child, who chooses to command us? No, of course he does not mean that. We shall see what he does mean by bringing in the rest of the text.

"Be ye subject," he says, "to every human creature _for God's sake_." That is, be subject, as a matter of counsel, to every human creature, whenever we can suppose that creature to be speaking in the name of God; and as a matter of precept whenever we are sure that such is the case.

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The first is a counsel, as I said, to be followed by those who would be perfect; to mortify our own will and submit to the direction of others when it is not evidently wrong or foolish. But the second is a strict duty to be practised if we would be saved: to submit to the commands of those who certainly do speak in God's name, when their commands are not plainly wrong. And who are those who speak in God's name? First, they are those whom he has appointed to rule his church--your Holy Father the Pope, the bishops, and your pastors. Remember, when they speak to you they speak in the name of God; do not murmur against them, but obey cheerfully for his sake, whether their commands come to you directly or through others whom they appoint to duties connected with the church.

Secondly, they are those whom he has appointed to rule the state or nation. No state or nation can be governed except in the name of God. That is what St. Paul says distinctly: "The powers that are," he says--and he was speaking of the heathen emperors--"are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist purchase to themselves damnation." Be submissive, then, to the authorities and officers of every degree and kind in the nation, state, or city, when you meet them in the discharge of their duty. Though you may have chosen them yourselves, when they have been chosen they speak to you in God's name.

Lastly, those who rule in the family do so in the name of God. Children should remember that when they disobey their parents it is God's commands they are disobeying, and that disobedience in any grave matter is a mortal sin. And servants--for such really are those who live out in families--should also bear in mind

their duty of obedience for God's sake and as to God. "Servants," says St. Peter in this Epistle, "be subject to your masters with all fear."
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Yes, we should all fear to disobey lawful authority,
because God has established it, not we ourselves.
And we should also understand that only in obedience
for God's sake is true liberty to be found.

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Fourth Sunday after Easter.

Epistle.

St. James i. 17-21.

Dearly beloved:

Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change nor shadow of vicissitude. For of his own will hath he begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be some beginning of his creatures. You know, my dearest brethren, and let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man worketh not the justice of God. Wherefore casting away all uncleanness, and abundance of malice, with meekness receive the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Gospel.

St. John xvi. 5-14.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples: I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he shall come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin indeed: because they have not believed in me. And of justice: because I go to the Father; and you shall see me no longer. And of judgment: because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, shall come, he will teach you all truth. For he shall not speak of himself: but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak, and the things that are to come he shall show you. He shall glorify me: because he shall receive of mine, and will declare it to you.

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Sermon LXX.

_I tell you the truth:
it is expedient for you that I go, ...
But I will see you again,
and your heart shall rejoice;
and your joy no man shall take from you._
--St. John xvi. 7, 22.

We all know, dear brethren, what place our Lord was speaking about and to which he was soon to go. He was soon to leave his disciples and go to heaven. To that place we all hope to go also,

that we may see him there, where, as he promises further on in the same discourse, our hearts shall rejoice, and where our joy no man shall take from us.

Now, there are three joys, it seems to me, which go to make up the happiness of heaven. First, we shall be consoled; second, we shall be satisfied; and, last and best of all, we shall see God.

We shall be consoled for all the evils we have suffered in this world. Oftentimes we have to fight pretty hard against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and we have received, perhaps, many a grievous wound in mind and heart. Then, again, we have endured much sickness, experienced many a bitter pang, undergone many a heavy trial. Once we are in heaven we shall be consoled for all these things there; our wounds will be healed, our sins forgiven, our hearts comforted. There we shall see the fruits of our penance, there we shall be solaced for all we have borne. He who leads his flock like a shepherd and carries the lambs in his bosom will come to us; he will fold us in his holy arms, and for evermore we shall be at peace.

Again, we shall be satisfied. Here we love certain places and their surroundings; we love creatures; we love all that is beautiful. But we are not satisfied, for all these things either leave us or we are forced to leave them.

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Now, in heaven exists all the beauty and loveliness of earth, only in a degree infinitely higher and fairer. There we shall have all things we can desire, and possess them without fear of change or loss. There we feel all the sweetness of prayer, all the delights of sensible devotion, all that the saints on earth felt when rapt in ecstasy, and more. Here there is always something to disappoint us, something that makes us restless and uncomfortable. There everything will exceed our highest hopes, our best desires--in a word, in heaven, and in heaven alone, we shall be perfectly satisfied.

Then, lastly, O joy of joys! we shall see God. We shall see him face to face. We shall see the beauty of God. We shall behold his wisdom and his everlasting glory. Yes, brethren, these poor eyes, that have shed so many tears, they shall see God. The poor eyes so weary from watch and vigil, so tired of looking up into heaven after Jesus and Mary, so sick of looking around on earth, so terrified from looking down into hell--these eyes shall see God. We shall gaze on all the blessed. We shall see Jesus, and Mary, and Joseph. Our eyes will look upon the golden pavement of the celestial streets, the gates of pearl, and the walls of amethyst. We shall see all the brightness and glory of heaven, for we shall see God.

Brethren, these joys are waiting for you. Every baptized member of Christ's mystical body has a right to a home in that land of peace! Ah! then be careful, I pray you, not to lose the way. See where the Standard-bearer leads! See the cross that he bears. Oh! you all want to go to heaven, I am sure you do. There is only one thing that can keep you out, and that is mortal sin.

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Stain your soul with mortal sin by grievous violation of any one of the commandments, and that is enough, should you die

impenitent, to keep you for ever from being consoled, from enjoying eternal happiness, from seeing God. Ah! then, brethren, walk in the narrow road. Be faithful and loving children of the church, and then one day you will leave this poor, weary, sinful world and go to dwell for ever within the walls of the City of Peace.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon LXXI.

_Let every man be swift to hear,
but slow to speak._
--St. James i. 19.

I think that every one of you, my dear friends, will agree with me that this would be a much happier world than it is if this recommendation of St. James, in the Epistle of to-day, were carried out. For it is quite plain, I think, to every one of you that other people talk too much. If they would only say less, and listen more to what you have to say, things would go on much better. If they would only be swift to hear, but slow to speak, the world would get much more benefit from your wisdom and experience than is now the case.

But, unfortunately, this general conviction, in which, I think, we all share more or less, does not tend to produce the desired result, but rather the contrary; for it makes everybody more anxious to speak and to be listened to, and more unwilling to listen themselves. We all want everybody except ourselves to keep St. James's rule, but do not set them a good example.

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So our example does harm, while our conviction does no good; and things are worse than if we did not agree with St. James at all. Now, would it not be a good idea if each one would try, if it were only for the sake of good example, to be less willing to talk and more willing to listen? And perhaps, after all, even we ourselves do sometimes say a word or two which is hardly worth saying, or perhaps a great deal better unsaid.

A story is told of a crazy man who, in some very lucid interval, asked a friend if he could tell the difference between himself and the people who were considered to be of sound mind. His friend, curious to see what he would say, said: "No; what is it?" "Well," said the crazy man, "it is that I say all that comes into my head, while you other people keep most of it to yourselves." My friends, I am afraid the crazy man was about right, but he was too complimentary in his judgment of others. By his rule there would be a great many people in the asylum who are now at large. Really, it seems as if it never occurred to some persons who are supposed to be in their right minds whether their thoughts had better be given to the world or not. Out they must come, no matter whether wise or foolish, good or bad.

Yes, the madman, for once in his life, was pretty nearly right. One who talks without consideration, who says everything that comes into his or her head, is about as much a lunatic as those who are commonly called so; for such will have one day to give an account for all their foolish and inconsiderate words, long after they themselves have forgotten them. And to carelessly run up

this account is a very crazy thing.
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A little instrument has lately been invented, as you no doubt have heard, which will take down everything you say; it is called the phonograph. It makes little marks on a sheet of tinfoil, and by means of these it will repeat for you all you have said, though it may have quite passed out of your own mind. There are a great many uses to which this little instrument may be put; but I think that one of the best would be to make people more careful of what they say. They would think before they spoke, if a phonograph was around. Few people would like to have a record kept of their talk, all ready to be turned off at a moment's notice. It would sound rather silly, if no worse, when it was a day or two old.
Perhaps the phonograph will never be used in this way; but there is a record of all your words on something more durable than a sheet of tinfoil. This record is in the book from which you will be judged at the last day. Our Lord has told us that at that day we shall have not only to hear but to give an account for all the idle words spoken in our lives.
Should not, then, this thought restrain our tongues, and make us rather be swift to hear than to speak?--more especially as it is generally only by hearing that one can learn to speak well.
But what should you be swift to hear? Not the foolish or sinful talk of others no more careful than yourselves. Be willing, indeed, to listen to all with humility, believing them to be wiser or better than you are; but seek the company and conversation of those whom you know to be so. Nothing better can come out of your heads than what is put into them. You will be like those with whom you converse.
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And therefore, above all, seek silence, that in it you may converse with Almighty God, and hear what he has to say to you. He is the one above all others whom you should be swift to hear. When you get in the way of listening to him you will be slow enough to speak. There is nothing so sure to prevent idle words as the habit of conversation with God.

Sermon LXXII.

_Let every man be ... slow to anger.
For the anger of man
worketh not the justice of God._
--St. James i. 19, 20.

What is the reason, my brethren, that people sin by anger so much? There is no temptation, it seems to me, that is more often given way to. Other ones, though frequently consented to, are also frequently resisted, even by those most subject to them; but with this it seems as if we were like gunpowder: touch the match to us, and off we go; if any one does us an injury or says an insulting word, we flare up at once and give back all we got, and more.
Afterward, perhaps, we are sorry; but that seems to do no good. Next time it is just the same. And so it goes on, till perhaps we begin to think that we really are like gunpowder; that God made

us so that we cannot help going off when the match of provocation is applied.

But that is not true. It will never do to make God the cause of our sins. It is our own fault. But what is the fault? What is the matter that this temptation is not resisted like others?

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I will tell you what I think the matter is. It is that the temptation to anger does not seem to be a temptation at the time. The angry word seems to you all right when you utter it. It is not so with other things--sins of impurity, for instance. You know they are wrong, and that you ought to resist them, even when they are on you; and sometimes you make up your mind to do so. But it is not so in this sin of anger.

And why does it not seem to be a temptation? Why do you think it no sin to say the angry word, to flare up when you are provoked? It is because your mind is confused at the time, so that you cannot tell what is sin and what is not.

That is the truth, if I am not mistaken. It is just the peculiar danger of this temptation that it disturbs and confuses the mind more than any other one. You cannot tell what really is right when you are under it; it is not safe to do anything at all. You are for the time like one who is drunk or crazy.

When a man has drank too much, if he have any sense left he will keep out of the way of other people until he is sobered. For he knows he is not fit to do or say anything when he is intoxicated, and that he will only make a fool of himself if he tries.

That is common sense and prudence; and many men, oven when drunk, have enough common sense and prudence left to follow this course. But very few have when under the passing drunkenness of anger. Most angry people do not know enough to hold their tongues. They ought to. They ought to have learned by experience. Well, then, this being the matter, the fault of angry people is plain enough. It is this: that they do not try to guard themselves against this temptation in the only way they can--that is, by remembering and acting on these words of St. James which I read to you from the Epistle of to-day: "The anger of man worketh not the justice of God." It always works injustice; that is, it always makes a mistake and does what is wrong. It has not sense enough to do what is right.

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The only way to avoid the sin, then, is the one that St. James gives. Be slow to anger. Don't trust it, however sure you may be that it advises you rightly. It is a fool; don't listen to it. Wait till you get cool, till reason can have fair play.

I say this is the only way you can avoid this sin. I mean that nothing else will cure you of it unless you do this. Confession and Communion, prayer, penance, and other things, will help you; but this is indispensable. You know when you are under the influence of anger well enough. When you are, hold your tongue and hold your hand. You may have to do or say something afterwards, but very seldom there and then. God will not be likely to give you grace that is not needed; and you will not have the grace to do what is right when your duty is to do nothing, and wait till the temptation passes by. Remember that

you are a fool when you are angry, if you do not want to act like one and be sorry for it afterwards.

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Fifth Sunday after Easter.

Epistle.

St. James i. 22-27.

Dearly beloved:

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his natural countenance in a glass. For he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. But he that hath looked into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued in it, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work: this man shall be blessed in his deed. And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion pure and unspotted with God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation; and to keep one's self undefiled from this world.

Gospel.

St. John xvi. 23-30.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples: Amen, amen I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive: that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask in my name: and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and I go to the Father. His disciples say to him: Behold now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things, and that for thee it is not needful that any man ask thee. In this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

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Sermon LXXIII.

_Amen, amen I say to you,
if you ask the Father anything in my name,
he will give it you._
--St. John xvi. 23.

What a wonderful promise this is--that everything we ask of Almighty God, who is the Father of mercies, shall be granted to us, if we ask it in the name of his only-begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Does our Lord really mean all he says? Do people get all they pray for? Does it not seem to us sometimes that we pray in vain--that God seems to shut his ears against our cry, and has no regard to our tears and supplications? Yes, it does often _seem_ so, but it is not really so. God's ways

are not always our ways to reach the end we desire. And our own experience will tell us that it is very seldom it would be the best for us if God took us at our word. The real reason why we do not obtain the answer we wish to many of our prayers is, first, because we do not ask, as we ought, in the name of Jesus Christ. What is it to ask in his name? It is to ask in the name of Him who came on earth, not to do his own will, but the will of his Divine Father. Oh! how seldom we pray for favors and blessings according to the will of God. Our blessed Lord, on the night before he was crucified, foreseeing his death, and bowed to the earth in his agony, ended his prayer with the words. "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." That is not our way.
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When we are in sorrow and trouble we think God should will as we will, and we are disappointed and discouraged because we do not get well of our sickness, or that calamity we feared comes, or poverty sticks to us, or the conversion of those we pray for is denied, or we do not obtain the employment we seek, or we have to give up hope of getting that farm we set our heart upon. Who is the judge, after all, about granting prayers? Who else but God, who not only has the power to grant or refuse them, as he chooses, but also has the perfect knowledge whether it would be best for us to receive a favorable answer or not? He who prays in the name of Jesus, prays with implicit trust in God's goodness and wisdom, and if he has not mistaken his own will for the will of God, will feel and should feel just as contented, no matter which way God answers his prayer.
The second reason why we do not always get what we pray for is because we are constantly asking for things which we dare not presume to ask in the name of Jesus Christ. We know in our heart of hearts that it is a petition he would not offer to his Divine Father for us. If we had to write that petition down we would neither begin nor end it with the words, "In the name of Jesus." It is our pride that is praying, our worldly ambition, our lusts and our selfish desires. We do not put the name of Jesus to our prayer, because the spirit of Jesus is not in it. Charity is wanting. We want to be happy, even if others are suffering. We want money, even if our brethren starve. We desire high places and the success of our undertakings, even if our neighbor and his interests go to the wall. Alas! it is self that prays the loudest and the oftenest and makes the greatest show.
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Now, dear brethren, let us learn to bring all our prayers up to the right standard. No matter what we ask for, let it be always according to the will of God, and that alone. Then our prayer will surely be granted, for the will of God, no longer opposed and hindered by our will, accomplishes just what is best for us. If we do not get just what we think best, it is because God, in his divine generosity, chooses to give us something better, or takes a wiser way to do it than we knew of.
If I were to advise you how to always pray in the name of Jesus, I would say, Add always these words to every prayer you make: "So may God grant it, if my salvation be in it." God grants no prayer that does not have that end in view. His divine love for us

constantly regards that, even if we forget it. Pray, then, with confidence and perseverance, but have a care to pray always with and for the will of God. Then in heaven we shall see, if not here, how not a single true prayer we ever made was left unanswered.

Sermon LXXIV.

_Amen, amen I say to you,
if you ask the Father anything in my name,
He will give it you._
--St. John xvi. 23.

These are the words of Christ, taken from the Gospel of to-day; we cannot doubt them for a moment. They are the words of him who is the infallible Truth, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. And yet how seldom do we act as if we really believed them! How seldom do you, my brethren, ask anything of the Father in the name of Christ with real confidence that you will receive what you ask for.

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Many people say prayers, but few really pray. That is, many say over certain forms of prayer which they know by heart or read out of their prayer-books; many even feel bound to say some particular set of prayers every day, for the scapular which they wear, or for some other reason; but if you should ask them what they are praying for, what particular thing they wish to obtain from God when they say these prayers, few would be able to tell you, unless, indeed, they happened to be making a novena for some special object.

So, I say, it does not seem as if we Christians believed what our Lord tells us in these words. For surely, if we did, almost all our prayers would be petitions for some particular thing which we wanted, instead of mere devotional exercises. And why? Because we are always in want of something, and we must certainly believe that Almighty God has the power to give us what we want; should we not, then, be always praying for what we want, did we fully believe that he has the will to give it to us?

Is it, then, really true that God will give us all good things which we ask in prayer? Yes, it certainly is; that is exactly the meaning of these words of Christ. All good things, I say; for it is only good things which we can ask in his name. And if God would give us bad things which we should ask for, our Saviour's promise would be a curse, not a blessing as it really is.

No; God will not answer bad prayers--that is, prayers for what is bad. People sometimes make such prayers and expect him to answer them. They pray for vengeance on those who have injured them; they pray that others may suffer as much as they have made them suffer, and the like.

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Or they pray for something which seems to them good, but really is not so--that they may get rich, for instance, when riches will only be an occasion of sin to them. The prayer seems to them good, but it is not; perhaps even those prayers for vengeance may seem so. But God knows better, and will not, as he says in the Gospel of to-morrow, give us a stone when we ask for what seems

to be bread. If anything, he will give better, instead of worse, than what we ask.
But really most things that Christians would think of praying for are not bad; but you do not pray for them, because you think that if they are good for you, you will get them, if you try, whether you pray or not. Now, that is the great mistake which our Lord wishes to correct. When he says, "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you," that means, also, that if you do not ask he will not, or at least not in such abundance.
Try, then, to bring this truth home to yourselves and make it practical: that if you want anything the way to get it is to ask it from God, not forgetting, of course, to work for it as well as to pray; for no one prays in earnest who does not do that. And the way not to get it is not to ask for it.
Pray, then, for what you want; and of course, before praying, find out what you do want. You want, for instance, to be kept from sin; but what sin? What is the one you are most inclined to? Examine your conscience and find out. Then your prayer will really mean something, especially if it be accompanied by good and strong resolutions against your besetting vices.
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If you know what you want, and pray for it in Christ's name and in earnest, using all other means to get it, it shall, if it be good, be yours. That is the lesson of our Lord's words in the Gospel of to-day.

Sermon LXXV.

_Amen, amen I say to you,
if you ask the Father anything in my name,
He will give it you._
St. John xvi. 23.

These words must be true, my brethren, for it is the Eternal Truth who has spoken them. And yet I dare say you cannot see how they are. You have often, perhaps, asked God for something which you wanted, and put our Lord's name to your prayers, and yet you have not got the thing on which your heart was set.
Well, let us see what is the matter; why it is that our experience seems to contradict our faith. It may be that, though the words seem plain, we do not understand them aright.
Perhaps we are under a mistake as to what is meant by asking in the name of Christ. Let us consider what is really the common and natural sense of asking for anything in somebody else's name. What should we ourselves mean by it?
Suppose I say to one of you: "If you ask Mr. So-and so for such a position or employment in my name you will get it," what do I mean? I mean that his regard for me is such that, if you have my name to support you, he will give it to you for my sake.
Well, now, this is, as it seems to me, what our Lord means by his promise. The sense of it is: "The Father loves me so much that if you have my name to support your prayers--that is, if I wish that you should have what you ask for--he will give it to you for my sake."
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What it comes to, then, is this: If we ask the Father for

anything _really_ in the name of Christ--that is, if our Lord really endorses our prayer--we shall have it.

"Well," perhaps you may say, "it seems to me that does not amount to much. Will not God give us what our Lord approves of, any way, whether we ask it or not? I don't see what we gain by praying, if that is all."

There, my friends, you labor under a great mistake. The Father wants Christ's name, but he wants your prayer, too. Some things, it is true, you have got without praying; but there are many which you have not got, but which you might have had if you had added your own prayer to the name of our Lord.

I do not believe, for instance, that you ever asked in his name to be rich. And yet it is quite possible that you might have done so. If he knew that it would be good for yourself and others for you to have money, if he knew that you would make a good use of it, he would have put his name to your request. So you might, perhaps, have been much richer than you are; perhaps it was only the prayer for it on your part that was wanting. If it could have been made in the name of Christ--that is, with his approval--it would have been effectual.

It is very likely that he would, for good reasons, have refused to give his name to such a prayer. Still it would be worth while to try. It is always worth while to try praying for anything that is not in itself bad; we may be able to get Christ's name for it, who knows? And if we do not pray for what we want we will not be nearly so likely to get it.

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There are some things, though, that we can be sure to have his name for, and which are besides much better than worldly goods. Those are the virtues with which our souls ought to be adorned--our true riches, the riches of the soul. Pray for these, then, with full confidence that he will endorse your prayer. But when you pray for them work for them too. He will not give you either spiritual or temporal riches if you sit still and fold your hands, and wait for them to drop into your lap. A prayer which is not in earnest is no prayer at all; and no prayer is in earnest if the one who makes it is not trying to get what he wants in every way open to him.

Now, I hope you see that our Lord's promise is a real and true one; for by it we can get many, very many things which otherwise we never can have. And I hope you see that it is a most generous one; for by it we can have everything that is really good. Could you possibly ask anything more?

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Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension.

Epistle.

1 _St. Peter iv._ 7-11.

Dearly beloved:

Be prudent, and watch in prayers. But before all things have a mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring. As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the

manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let it be as from the power which God administereth: that in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel.

St. John xv. 26-_xvi_. 4.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples: When the Paraclete shall come whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me. And you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you, that when the hour of them shall come, you may remember that I told you.

Sermon LXXVI.

Charity covereth a multitude of sins.

--1 St. Peter iv. 8.

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Those words are from the Epistle appointed for this Sunday, and St. Peter, when he wrote them, meant that a man who gets his heart full of charity is sure to be truly penitent for his sins, no matter how many they may have been, and will thus win the mercy of God and receive full pardon for them. St. Peter's words are quite a popular saying. You will hear all sorts of people quote them with evident satisfaction and belief in their truth. But do they all mean just what I have said _he_ meant? I am not so sure that they do. I fear that some think that giving a few dollars to the poor (which they call charity) is a convenient way of throwing a cloak over a multitude of sins--covering them up, as it were--and hiding them rather than getting rid of them. I know the Scripture says also that "almsgiving redeems the soul from death," and tells the sinner to "redeem his sins with alms and his iniquities with works of mercy to the poor." But the Catholic doctrine is that charity must prompt the almsgiving in order to work the miracle of pardon. It is not the money or the clothing, the food or the fire, given to those who need, which compounds for sins and buys pardon at a cheap rate; but the virtue of divine charity, a Christ-like love of God and of our neighbors, that wipes out the judgment of condemnation and cleanses the guilty stains from the soul. The giving of alms to the suffering poor is certainly one of the first things that a sinner who is trying to get back, or has already got back, the love of God will set himself to do; and it is the very sacrifice of his goods for God's sake and for God's love that proves he wants to have done with his sins, and that he is anxious to do penance for them. It would be the greatest folly in the world for a man to give alms _for his sins_, if he was not trying to do so for the love of God.

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It is all very well and very benevolent to help a poor wretch with food and raiment because we do not like to see a fellow human being suffer. But thieves, and adulterers, and drunkards, and Easter-duty breakers, and all sorts of sinners who have no intention whatever of stopping their sinful career will do that; and when they say, "Charity covereth a multitude of sins," they are very well content to have their benevolence accounted as a set-off to their sins. But mere benevolence is not charity, and to think it is would be a very great mistake. St. Paul says that a man may distribute all his goods to feed the poor, and yet not have charity. So then, dear brethren, if you want your almsgiving to be profitable to your own soul as well as helpful to your suffering neighbor, stop your sins and begin to be, first of all, a little generous with God. Give him what he is constantly knocking at the door and begging for--your heart, your love. Then you will have the charity that covereth a multitude of sins, even before you give the poor a cent. Get into the love of God, and then the love of your neighbor for God's sake will follow of itself. You will then feed and clothe and comfort the poor, not only because you pity them, but because you love them. Then will God love you and forgive you your sins.

Now that we have a just idea of charity, you see how it is to be exercised in a great many more ways than in almsgiving. You will easily forgive your neighbor his offences against you; you will hold no spite or revenge in your heart. If he has disgraced himself you will not go and tell all your acquaintances of it, but will jealously hide it and excuse it, and help him out of his trouble.

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Thus the charity you have will not only cover a multitude of your own sins, but a multitude of your neighbor's sins as well. When you forgive in charity you will forgive out and out, as God does, and hold no grudge afterwards. O my dear Christians! try to learn this lesson and lay it to heart. Strive after this divine love; pray for it; ask Our Blessed Lady and all the saints to help you obtain it; your salvation depends on it. I say it again: your salvation depends on it. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins." Yes; but nothing else will cover even _one_ sin. Without the love of God there is no contrition; without contrition there is no absolution; without absolution you are lost! Think well on this.

Sermon LXXVII.

_Before all things,
have a mutual charity among yourselves;
for charity covereth a multitude of sins._
--1 St. Peter iv. 8.

What does St. Peter mean, my brethren, by these words? How does charity cover a multitude of sins?

Well, it covers our own sins, of course--that is, it helps us to obtain their forgiveness, and it atones for them when they have been forgiven. There is no better way to obtain mercy from God than to show it to others.

But then all the virtuous acts which we can do have the same

effect to some extent; so I think that the sins which St. Peter speaks of are not our own merely, but also those of others. And it is a special effect of charity to cover the sins of others; it seems, then, that it is charity as shown in this way that the apostle here urges on us.
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It is not a very common kind of charity, either, this of covering other people's sins. Some, indeed, seem to think that the sins of their neighbors ought not to be covered. They do not appear to understand that every one has a real right that his sins should remain unknown; that it is not only uncharitable but unjust to mention them to those who do not know them already. No; as soon as they hear a piece of news to any one's disadvantage they are not easy till they have told it to their whole circle of acquaintance; the idea of covering it up, of not letting it go any farther, of saving their neighbor's character never occurs to them. If they feel pretty sure that it is true, that is enough to remove all scruple about telling it.
But this telling about people's sins is a sin, as I have said, not only against charity but against justice. Charity goes a good deal farther than that. It covers sins not only from other people's eyes, but even from our own.
That is what St. Paul says about it. He says: "Charity thinketh no evil"--that is to say, it does not see sin in other people; it puts the best construction on their actions. How rare it is to find any one who thoroughly practises charity of this kind!
For instance, somebody tells something about you which you know to be false; do you put the best construction on this? No, you put the very worst you can. You say to yourself: "He, or she, did that out of malice. He knew very well that what he said was not true, and said it to slander me, out of pure spite." You never stop to think that he maybe laboring under a false impression--may really think that what he says is true, and that he is, moreover, justified in saying it.
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You never make any allowance for the passion he may be under which has blinded his judgment; you never think of the provocations he may have had, or may at least fancy that he has had. The utmost you do is to say: "Well, I do not wish him any evil; I forgive him the injury he has done me." And if you have said that, which ought to be a matter of course, you look upon yourself as a great Christian hero.
Try to learn, then, that charity means more than forgiving sins. It means _excusing_ them--finding out, if possible, some reason which may show that what seems to be a sin was not really so. You are ready enough to excuse your own sins; to say, "I could not help it," or "I did not mean any harm." Why don't you say the same thing for somebody else? Throw the veil of charity over the faults of others--if they have sinned it will do you no good to know it--and take it off from your own, which you ought to know a great deal better than you do. By the charity of covering other people's sins from your own eyes you will cover your own from the eyes of God.

Sermon LXXVIII.

_Before all things,
have a mutual charity among yourselves;
for charity covereth a multitude of sins._
--1 St. Peter iv. 8.

Nothing is more frequently or more forcibly commanded by our Lord and his apostles than fraternal charity. Mind well the text: "_Before all things_", says St. Peter, "have a mutual charity among yourselves." In fact, if you give a little attention to your daily thoughts, words, and deeds, you will find that the burden of your daily sins is uncharitableness in one form or another.

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It was want of fraternal charity that brought about murder on the very morning of this world's life. Hatred came between the first two brothers of our race, and the result was the murder of the innocent Abel. A preacher who lived some three hundred years ago--they had a quaint way of telling plain truths in those days--said in a sermon, and was willing to wager, that the first thing that Adam and Eve did after eating the apple was to quarrel, to have a downright good dispute, which was only continuing, in another way, the first sin. Samson slew a thousand Philistines "with a jawbone, even the jawbone of an ass." How many reputations are destroyed in a like manner!--for a wise man knows how to hold his tongue. What a heaven on earth our homes and our social circles would be, if a constant mutual charity was kept up between husband and wife, brothers and sisters, and acquaintances! "With charity," said St. Gregory, "man is to man a god; without charity man is to man a wild beast."

It may seem rather bold of St. Peter to say that charity should be had "_before all things_"; but he gives a good reason for his assertion, and a very consoling one it is for us: "for charity covereth a multitude of sins." We all have, God knows, a multitude of sins on our souls; anything that will take them away, rid us of them, cover them up from God's sight, is of the greatest possible benefit to us. Now, this is just what charity does. How? It is said that love is blind; charity blinds us to the defects and sins of our neighbor--in fact, covers them up either by excusing, or by bearing patiently, or by forgiving the sins and offences of others.

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"Charity," says St. Paul, "is patient, is kind, charity envieth not, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, beareth all things, endureth all things." But in thus covering the sins of others how does charity cover our own? Remember your "Our Father": "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Here is a contract between you and God; you stake the forgiveness from God of your sins on your forgiveness of the sins of others. If, therefore, from a motive of charity you cover the sins of others, God will cover your sins; they will stand no more before him and against you.

"Well, well, dear father," it is often said to us, "forgive, yes; but I will never forget." My dear friend, you remind me of the beggar who, seeing a gentleman put his hand in his pocket,

fervently exclaimed, "May the blessing of God follow you," and then, seeing that it was the smallest of coins that was handed to him, added no less fervently, "and never overtake you!" To _forgive really_ is to forget. We are to forgive as God forgives; that is the bargain, is it not? Now, God forgets our sins; they are for ever wiped out of his memory. Remembrances of offences are temptations that you must hunt down as you would impure thoughts; you must try to forget, else you do not forgive. Next Sunday we celebrate the descent of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the spirit of love, the outcome of the mutual charity of the Father and the Son. Pray to him that he may put in your hearts the true virtue of Christian charity.

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Feast of Pentecost, or Whit-Sunday.

Epistle.

Acts ii. 1-11.

When the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in the same place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this voice was made, the multitude came together, and was confounded in mind, because that every one heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these who speak, Galileans? And how have we every one heard our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

Gospel.

St. John xiv. 23-31.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples: If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words. And the word which you have heard is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

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These things have I spoken to you, remaining with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you: not as the world giveth do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I have said to you: I go away, and I come again to you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I.

> And now I have told you before it come to pass; that when it shall come to pass, you may believe. Now I will not speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so I do.

Sermon LXXIX.

> _The Holy Ghost,
> whom the Father will send in my name,
> he will teach you all things._
> --St. John xiv. 26.

Today, my dear friends, as you know, we celebrate the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles. It was, of all the wonderful works that God has wrought for the salvation of men, in one way the most extraordinary and miraculous; for it was an immediate and evident change, not in the material world, but in the spiritual--that is, in the souls of those upon whom the Holy Spirit thus came. In a moment they became entirely different men from what they had been before.

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What was this change which was worked in the souls of the apostles? It was, as we commonly regard it, an infusion of supernatural courage and strength. Before they had been hiding themselves, hardly daring to appear in public, still less to preach the Gospel, or even to profess themselves Christians; but now they came forth boldly, ready not only to be known as followers of Christ, but also to suffer all things for his sake. There was, however, another change worked in them in that moment; and it is the one which our Lord predicted in the words which I have taken from the Gospel of this day. "The Holy Ghost," said he, "will teach you all things."

What was the meaning of this promise, and what was its fulfilment? Did our Lord mean that the Holy Ghost would teach the apostles all the truths of natural science; that they should become great chemists, geographers, or mechanics; that they should know how to construct steam-engines or telegraphic cables? By no means. These things are in themselves of little importance, and would have had no direct bearing on the work to which St. Peter and his companions were called. No; the things which the Holy Ghost was to teach them, and did teach them on the day of Pentecost, were spiritual things--those things which concerned the salvation of their own souls, and of the other souls which were committed to their charge. In an instant they became learned in the mysteries of the kingdom not of nature but of grace; they became in a moment great saints and doctors of theology. They knew at once what others, superior to them in natural gifts, have not been able to acquire after long years of study and prayer. They were miraculously prepared to do the work of infallible founders and teachers of the Church of God.

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It was a wonderful promise of Christ to them, and wonderful was its fulfilment. But are we merely to admire it in them, or have we too a share in it?

We have a share in it. Yes, though the promise in its fulness was only made to them, all of us, even the humblest, can claim it for ourselves. The Holy Ghost will teach us also all spiritual things, if we will only listen to his voice--not suddenly or miraculously as to them, but none the less surely. He has already taught to millions of the faithful children of the church, though they were ignorant of that natural science which the world values, what the most learned and able men have died without knowing.

He will teach us all things, but we must listen to his voice. Where, then, is that voice to be heard?

First, it is to be heard in the voice of the church itself, which speaks in his name and by his power. You can hear it in the words of your Holy Father the Pope, the successor of the apostles, and in those of your bishop and of your pastors. You can also hear it in good books, published with the authority and approval of the church. Lastly, you can hear it in your own souls. The Holy Ghost is always speaking there, but it is with a gentle and low voice; and if you would hear it pride and passion must be still. It is in silence and in prayer that you will learn those things which he has to teach you. Listen, then, to the voice of God, of the spirit of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, and of knowledge, which you have received in Confirmation, and which dwells in your souls; and our Divine Lord's promise shall certainly be fulfilled in you.

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Sermon LXXX.

_If any one love me
he will keep my word_.
--St. John xiv. 23.

There are some people who have a great deal of what they call devotion, and there are others who seem to have very little or none at all. The hearts of the first are filled, one would think, with the love of God. They are never so happy as when at church, assisting at Mass or some other service, or on their knees before their altar at home. They say as many prayers every day as would make up the office which a priest is bound to recite, or perhaps even more. Some other people, on the contrary, find it a hard matter to say any prayers. Their minds wander, they cannot tell why. They do not care much about coming to church; they come, though, for all that. But it is all uphill work with them; and they think they are in a very bad way, and are tempted to envy those who seem to be getting along so much better.

But is it certain that those whom they are tempted to envy are, in reality, in so much better a state? No, I do not think it is. Of course it is a good sign for any one to like to pray. It is much better to have a taste for that than for the pleasures of the world. But it does not certainly follow that one who likes to pray really loves God very much. He may like it because he is paid for it; that is, because he gets rewarded for it in a way that others do not. He may like it in the same way that a child would like the company of any one who would give him candy. If the supply of candy stops his affection is gone. If, instead of

getting candy, he is asked to go on an errand, his feeling will be very different.
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So one may like to pray because he or she has in prayer a pleasure which would be attractive to any one, even to the greatest sinners. The pleasure may come merely from one's having a lively imagination, and getting what seems to be a vision of heaven when on one's knees or in church. But ask such a person to do something for the one who gives him this pleasure--that is, God--and there will perhaps be a great change. If our Lord, instead of giving candy, proposes him an errand--if he asks a girl, for instance, instead of going to Mass or to Communion, to stay at home and help her mother--the shoe, it may be, will begin to pinch immediately.
The others, who have little of what is called devotion, may stand this trial much better. They may be willing not only to give up prayer, which they are not so fortunate as to like, but other things which they really do, if it is the will of God. They pray because it is God's will, and because they know it will bring them nearer to him, and they will do anything else that he wishes them to do for the same reason.
Now, do not misunderstand me. I do not mean that all those who do not like to pray are better than those who do; far from it. But I do mean that real devotion which is the same as a true love of God, is what our Lord sets before us in the words of to-day's Gospel which I have read. "If any one love me," he says, "he will keep my word"; that is, "he will do what I want him to." "You are my friends," he says in another place, "if you do the things that I command you." That is true devotion, to have our will the same as God's will; to be willing to sacrifice everything for him, even the pleasure we may find in his society.
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So I mean that a person who has none of what is called devotion, but who does what he understands to be God's will, and avoids what is contrary to it, is much more acceptable in his sight than one who has what is called devotion, and gives up God's will to satisfy it. Thus, for instance, any one of you, my brethren, who has not been to Holy Communion since Lent began, and who really wants to please God, will go this week, before the time of the Easter-duty runs out, and not wait for Corpus Christi, which comes in the next week. That is just now a special good example; try and remember it. If any one wants to commit a mortal sin, let him put off his Easter-duty till Corpus Christi and the Forty Hours, for devotion's sake.
Real devotion is to remember God's words and obey them at any cost. This is the true way, as he also says in to-day's Gospel, to induce him and his Father to really come to us and make their abode with us; and to have the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from them, enter into our hearts, though we may not feel his presence, as the apostles did on the first Pentecost day.

Sermon LXXXI.

_Let not your heart be troubled,
nor let it be afraid._

--St. John xiv. 27.

Our Lord spoke these words to his apostles before his Passion, but they were not to have effect till after his ascension into heaven. It was not his will that they should have the courage and confidence to which he here exhorts them till that time which we celebrate to-day, when the Holy Ghost came upon them and fitted them for the great work to which they were appointed.

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Even while our Lord was with them after his resurrection, and still more after he had ascended and left them to themselves, they were anxious and fearful, not daring to call themselves his disciples or to risk anything for his sake. But when they received the Holy Ghost all this was changed. They confessed Christ openly; all their doubts and fears were gone; and "they rejoiced," as we read in the Acts, "that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. And they ceased not every day, in the temple and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus."

Now, we ought to imitate their conduct after Pentecost, and not that before. For we have not the excuse that they had before that time. We have received the Holy Ghost, as they did. He has not come on us visibly in fiery tongues, but he has come just as really and truly in the sacrament of confirmation which we have received. There is no reason for us to be troubled or afraid; when the Holy Ghost came into our hearts he brought courage and confidence with him; he brought them to each one of us, as he did to the holy apostles.

And he gave this courage and confidence to each of us for the same reason as to them, because we have all to be apostles in our own way and degree. We have not all got to preach Christ publicly, as they did, but we have all got to speak a word for him when the proper occasion comes. We have not all got to die for Christ, as they did, but we have got to suffer something for the sake of our faith in him, and that quite often, too, it may be.

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We have a real duty in this matter; we shall be rewarded if we fulfil it, and punished if we do not. It was not for his apostles only but for each one of us that those words of his were meant: "Every one that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven; but he that shall deny me before men. I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven."

And yet how often must it be acknowledged, to our shame and disgrace, that Christians do deny their Lord and Master before men! I do not mean that they deny their faith, and say they are not Catholics when they are asked; this, thank God! though it does happen, is not so very common. But is it not common enough to find young Catholic men and women with whom one might associate for years and never suspect them to be Catholics, and, in fact, be quite sure that they were not?--and this not merely because they do not parade their religion, but because they do not defend it when it is attacked; because they agree with, and even express, all sorts of infidel, heretical, false, and

so-called liberal opinions, that they may not give offence; or even, perhaps, without any sort of need, but only to win favor for themselves by falling in with the fashion of those with whom they associate.
And how often, again, do Christians, even if they do stand up for their faith, cast contempt on it in the eyes of the world by acting and talking just as if it had no power over their lives, and was never meant to have any! They curse, and swear, and talk immodestly, just as those do who do not profess to believe in God and Christ, and even, perhaps worse.
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Or if they do not go so far as this, they laugh at profanity and impurity, and make companions of those who are addicted to these vices; and this they do, not because they really wish to do or to sanction such things, but merely from a miserable weakness that prevents them from facing a little contempt and unpopularity. What would they do, if called on to shed their blood for Christ, who cannot bear even to be laughed at a little for being practical Catholics? They are like cowardly soldiers who run away from a battle at the first smoke from the enemy's guns.
You know what a shame it is for a soldier to be a coward. And now try to remember, dear Christians, especially on this holy day, that a Christian has got to be a soldier, and that if he is a coward he disgraces himself and his cause. The Holy Ghost is given to us in confirmation that we may not be weak and cowardly, but strong and perfect Christians, and true soldiers of Jesus Christ. If you have not yet received him in this way make haste to do so; if you have, make use of the graces which he has given you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid; there is nothing to be afraid of, for God is on your side. Do not fear but rather count it a joy to suffer a little persecution for his name.

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Trinity Sunday.

Epistle.
Romans xi. 33-36.
O the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and recompense shall be made to him? For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen.
Gospel.
St. Matthew xxviii. 18-20.
At that time:
Jesus said to his disciples: All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.
Last Gospel.

St. Luke vi. 36-42.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples: Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall measure it shall be measured to you again. And he spoke also to them a similitude: Can the blind lead the blind? do they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master; but every one shall be perfect, if he be as his master. And why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but the beam that is in thy own eye thou considerest not?

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or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye, when thou thyself seest not the beam in thy own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye.

Sermon LXXXII.

_Teach all nations:
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost._
--St. Matthew xxviii. 19.

The mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity is one of those wonderful truths of our holy faith which form the foundation of the Christian religion. He who does not believe in the Trinity cannot call himself a Christian; neither can any one be a Christian unless he is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We are taught to make acts of profession of this mystery oftener than of any other. We do so every time we make the sign of the cross; and there are very few Catholics who do not make that sign more than once every day. Every one should know what is meant by the Trinity.

There is but one God, who is the infinite, eternal, almighty, all-wise, all-good, and all-just Being who created all things that exist.

But God, who is one in his Divine Being, is a Trinity in person. That is, he is three persons. These persons are named Father, Son, Holy Ghost. God is, then, Father, and he is Son, and he is Holy Ghost. These three persons are the same God. So, if there were three men praying to God, one praying to the Father, a second to the Son, and the third to the Holy Ghost, they would all be praying to the same God.

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How there can be more than one person in one being is a mystery to us, because we have no knowledge of any other being but God who has more than one person. But now this truth is revealed to us, we know, by our faith, which is divine knowledge, that there are three persons in God, and are sure also that God must, as a Divine Being, have three persons, because God cannot be other than he is. Let us help our minds to understand this by a

comparison. Suppose a tower built in such a shape that it has three sides. Now, there are _three_ distinct sides and only _one_ tower; and whichever side we look at we see a distinct side which is not either of the other two sides, but we always can say, I see the tower. So, no matter which person of God we regard, it is always the same God.

Our holy faith teaches us that God the Father is the Divine Person who created all things, as we say in the Creed: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth." It furthermore teaches us that God the Son is the Divine Person who redeemed us by becoming man and dying on the cross, as the words of the Creed declare; and again it teaches us that God the Holy Ghost is the Divine Person who sanctifies us and is the source and giver of all grace. These truths are revealed to us, and we believe them, as we do all mysteries, for the reason we give when we make an act of faith: "O my God! I believe all things taught by the holy Catholic Church, because thou, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived, hast revealed them to her."

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The Catholic Church is the voice of God to us, and when we hear her we hear God. She lives, and speaks, and acts by the Holy Ghost through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, her Divine Head. The reason some very wise people, very learned in different kinds of science, do not believe in the Trinity and other mysteries of religion as we do is because they do not hear the voice of God in the Catholic Church. It is not by science that we know the Trinity to be true, but by divine faith.

This divine faith is a gift of God, which we are bound to nourish in our souls with profound gratitude and humility, for it is a sad truth that this faith may be lost.

Catholics lose their faith by their sins, and chiefly by the sin of pride. All heretics and apostates show this in their conduct and in their words. They adhere to their own opinions and refuse to submit to the divine teaching of the church. O dear brethren! let us fear this sin of pride more than all other sin--a temptation, too, that is very apt to come up when we are ridiculed by unbelievers for our faith. Then is the time to confess the truth boldly, for if we deny our Lord before men he will deny us before the face of his Father in heaven.

Let us keep our faith by purity of life and humility of heart; for, as says the _Imitation of Christ:_ "What doth it avail thee to discourse profoundly of the Trinity, if thou be wanting in humility, and consequently displeasing to the Trinity? If thou didst know the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would it profit thee without the love of God and his grace?"

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Sermon LXXXIII.

_In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost._
--St. Matthew xxviii. 19.

To-day, my dear brethren, the church celebrates the greatest of

all the mysteries of our religion: the mystery of the Holy Trinity; of the one God in three Divine Persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

We all believe it; we must believe it if we would be saved. But no one of us can perfectly understand it. St. Patrick, you know, is said to have illustrated it to his converts by showing them the shamrock with its three leaves on one stem; but, of course, he never pretended that this was a perfect explanation of it. No perfect explanation of it can be given to us.

And why not? Is it because it really has no explanation? No, but because we are not able to understand the one which might be given. Explain the solar system to a child of five years: will he understand you? It is something the same with us and this greater mystery of God.

Some people, especially at the present day, who consider themselves very wise, say to themselves and to others: "Oh! this doctrine of the Trinity cannot be true." Ask them why not, and they will say: "Because we cannot understand it; it seems to us to be nonsense."

Well, what does their argument amount to? Just to this: "If the doctrine were true we should understand it; but we don't understand it, therefore it is not true."

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"If it were true," they say, "we should understand it." And why? "Why, of course, because we are so wise that we can understand everything. It is well enough for stupid people, like those benighted Romanists, to believe what they don't understand, but such a proceeding would be quite below our dignity and intelligence. It is quite absurd to suppose that there is any mystery so deep that we cannot see to the bottom of it."

Now, I do not want to accuse these worthy people of any one of the seven capital sins; they are, no doubt, as good as they are wise. But there is something in what they say that looks just a little bit like one of those sins; like the first and most deadly of them all: that is, the sin of pride. And there is not much doubt that pride has in some form or other had something to do with all heresies; so I am afraid that those who deny the Holy Trinity are not quite free from it.

You think so, my brethren, I have no doubt. But, after all, are you not perhaps guilty of a little of the same sin yourselves? You believe in the Holy Trinity, it is true, but are there not some other things which you do not fully believe, though you ought to, and for very much the same reason?

God has given you the gift of faith; and you are willing to believe what you know to be of faith, even if it be beyond your reason, especially if it be something, like the Holy Trinity, beyond the reason of any one else. But are you not sometimes rather unwilling to believe other matters of religion, for which there is good authority, just because you, with your present lights, do not quite see through them? That is just the trouble with the heretics of whom I have spoken; is it not so with you, too, perhaps?

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Do you not say even about some of these matters: "Oh! I do not

think the same about that as the priests do; they are welcome to their opinion but I claim the right to mine"? It may be some question of morals; then you say: "The priest say so-and-so is not right; but I don't see any harm in it. I have got a conscience of my own."

Did it ever occur to you that as God knows more, and has told more to his church about himself than you could have found out, so he may have enlightened it rather more about some other matters in its own sphere than he has enlightened you, even though they are not of faith? And even setting that aside, is it not possible that those who have studied a subject know more about it than those who have not?

I think there is only one answer to these questions. Try, then, to have the same humility which you have about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in other things too. You believe that the officers of a ship know a little more about her position and proper course than you do; make the same presumption in favor of those who are in charge of the bark of St. Peter. It is only reasonable to think so; only showing a little of the same common sense which you show in other things.

Sermon LXXXIV.

_Why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye,
but the beam that is in thy own eye
thou considerest not?_
--St. Luke vi. 41.

These words, my dear brethren, are taken from the Gospel of the first Sunday after Pentecost, which is always read at the end of Mass on this day. Of all those which our Divine Lord spoke during his ministry on earth, there are none more practical, none which have a more immediate bearing on our daily lives.

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There is nothing which shows the perversity of our fallen nature more clearly than the common habit, in which even many persons who are pious in their way continually indulge, of criticising and commenting on the actions and character of others.

Some people, indeed, seem to think that there is no harm in talking about the character and conduct of their neighbors, as long as they do not say anything which is not true. This is a great mistake; one hardly needs to stop and reflect for a moment to see that it is a grievous injustice to speak of a sin which another person has actually committed, if it be not known, or at least certain soon to be known in some other way, by the one to whom we speak. So there are many who have sense enough not to make this mistake and who do hold their tongues about the secret sins of others. But there are comparatively few who seem to realize that it is against charity, though not against justice, to speak even of well-known and evident faults of one's neighbors, when there is no good object to be gained by so doing; and, in fact, even to think of them and turn them over in one's mind, for which there can never be any good object.

It is to such as these--and there are hosts of them--that our Lord's words are addressed. He does not himself answer the question which he asks in the text; but there is not much

difficulty in our answering it ourselves.
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"Why," then, "seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but the beam in thy own eye thou considerest not?" The two always go together. You will always find that just in proportion to a person's watchfulness about others' faults is his carelessness about his own. Why, I say, do you do so? Let us try to find out. Are you so sensitive about your neighbor's faults because they offend God? No, I do not believe that is the reason. If it were you would be a great deal more troubled about your own than you are. If you really cared for God's honor in the matter you would go to work on your own sins, which you really can amend, and not on those of your neighbors, which you only carp at but do not even try to correct. Do not pretend, then, that your habit of finding fault with others comes from a desire that God may be better served. Such a pretence would be only hypocrisy. It is especially to such pretenders that our Saviour says: "Hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thy own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye."
Are you so sensitive about your neighbor's faults, then, because they offend yourself? No, I do not think that can be the reason either--or, at least, not the whole reason; for you are nearly as apt to speak of them when they do not concern you at all. You even take trouble to find out about those which do not come under your own observation. I know that we all have a weakness for noticing unpleasant things when they occur, and passing over those which are agreeable as a matter of course; we complain of the weather when it is bad, and give no thanks when it is fine; we grumble when we have a bad dinner, and say nothing about a good one. But this does not explain the matter entirely, for most of the faults which you notice in others do not hurt you in any way.
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No; the fact is, it is simply a vice in yourselves which makes your neighbor's faults so glaring in your eyes. And that vice is the great vice of pride. You are trying to exalt yourselves, at least in your own mind, above others, and the easiest way to do it is to try to push them down. This is at the bottom of all this uncharitableness which is the staple of so many people's thoughts and conversation.
There is, therefore, only one real remedy for it, only one which strikes at the root of the whole thing: that is to cultivate the virtue which is the opposite of pride, the great virtue of humility.
I said just now that as a person is watchful about his neighbor's faults, so is he careless about his own. Well, the rule works both ways. If you will be careful about your own you will not notice those of other people. For you will acquire this virtue of humility. You will appear so bad in your own sight that others will appear good in comparison. And then, when you have cast out this beam of pride from the eye of your own soul, you will indeed be fit to correct others, and not till then.

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Second Sunday after Pentecost.
and Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi.
Epistle.
1 _St. John iii._ 13-18.
Dearly beloved:
Wonder not if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself. In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him: how doth the charity of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.
Gospel.
St. Luke xiv. 16-24.
At that time:
Jesus spoke to the Pharisees this parable: A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were invited that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee, have me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee, have me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning, told these things to his lord.
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Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you that none of those men that were called shall taste my supper.

Sermon LXXXV.

_A certain man made a great supper,
and invited many._
--St. Luke xiv. 16.

If there could be any question about what kind of a "great supper" our Lord meant in the parable all doubt is removed by reading the Gospel, which tells us that some one of the persons to whom he was speaking had just said: "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." We know how to interpret the parable. The "great supper" is the divine banquet of Holy Communion, in which we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. On another occasion our Lord said: "I am the bread that came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." The parable of the "great supper" is, therefore,

very appropriately chosen as the Gospel for this Sunday in the octave of the magnificent and triumphal festival of Corpus Christi. This festival is also well placed in the calendar of the church, coming as it does, at the end of all the solemn commemorations of the divine life and person of our Lord. For the institution of the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest act of his love; the consummation and fulfilment of his love.
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"Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." He is present in this divine mystery because he would be present with us and give himself to us, and unite himself to us in the most intimate manner. He promised that he would live in us, and we in him and be one with him. In the Blessed Sacrament he makes that life and union a reality.
Before the altars of his holy church, therefore, he spreads the holy table for his "great supper," and he invites many to the banquet. Such an invitation, we would think, does not need much urging to bring in the guests--_all_ the guests--as quickly and as frequently as he desires. And yet, as he tells us in the parables, and as we see and hear ourselves, there are many who make little of his invitation, and either do not come at all or come with such reluctance or so seldom that it is plain they are acting more from fear of punishment than from a motive of love. It is true that those who do not come when he calls are far from daring to say that it is not worth coming to, but they act very much as if they thought so. They have other friends who invite them to their feasts, and as they think more of these friends than they do of Jesus Christ, and relish their food more than they do his, they send in their excuses to him. These excuses are paltry enough. One has bought a farm and must go and see it; another has purchased five yoke of oxen--this is just the time he must go and try them; a third has just got married, and so on. Any excuse for not coming to Communion seems good enough for some Catholics, who want to keep friends and company with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and eat their dishes of avarice, lust, and pride.
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I don't wonder they stay away; for let a man get his heart full of avarice, or burning with lust, or puffed up with pride, the very idea of Holy Communion is wearisome and distasteful to him. But there is a dreadful warning in the parable. _The excuses are not taken_; and he who sets forth the banquet declares that none of such men shall eat of his supper; and he makes that threat in anger. Woe, then, to those Easter-duty breakers who heard the invitation and came not! They have incurred the anger of the Lord. To pass by the Easter duty out of contempt for it, or because one is unwilling to give up the sins that he knows make him unfit to make it, is to commit a mortal sin. And when I see some persons who know their duty, and have every opportunity, neglecting their Easter Communion for years, and appearing to be perfectly hardened against every appeal and argument made to them, I am always fearful lest the Lord is not only angry with them, but that he is carrying out his threat that he will never invite them again, and that they will die some day without

absolution and without Communion. Oh! if there be any such here let them hasten to beg pardon with deep contrition for their past neglect, and earnestly seek for admission to the heavenly banquet. Perhaps it may not be yet too late even for them. I know it is the eleventh hour, but the Lord invites some to come even at the eleventh hour. But they must not wait longer! At midnight the door will be shut, and the only answer they will get then is; "It is too late; I know you not!" God grant that such a curse of banishment from the eternal Communion of heaven shall never be addressed to one of us!

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Sermon LXXXVI.

And they began all at once to make excuse.
--St. Luke xiv. 18.

Notice the words, my brethren. Our Lord does not say that these men whom the master of the house invited to supper all happened to have an excuse, but that they began all at once to make one. They gave various flimsy reasons why they could not come--reasons that anybody could see would not have prevented them from coming if they had wanted to, but were merely given in order to avoid telling the plain truth, which was that they did not care a straw for the one who had invited them or for the supper that he proposed to give.

Well, now, what did our Saviour mean by this story which I have read you in the Gospel?--for he certainly did not tell it simply for the amusement of his disciples. It was a parable, and had a spiritual signification, or more than one. I think there cannot be much doubt in our minds about one of them, at least. We cannot help seeing that the supper means the rich banquet to which all of us are invited, and which has been commemorated in the great solemnity of Corpus Christi, through which we have just passed. God himself is the master of the house, and he has invited all of as his friends--that is, all of us who have come by holy baptism into the fold of his church--to come to this great feast, the feast of his own Body and Blood. Not once only but many times he has invited, nay, commanded, you all to come and taste of this supper, which is himself--to receive him in Holy Communion.

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And what have you done--many of you, at least? You have done exactly what these men did of whom the parable tells us. You have, as soon as the words of invitation came to you, immediately set about to see if you could not find some way of avoiding compliance with them. You have begun all at once to make excuses--excuses as silly as those which the men made in the parable.

"Oh!" you say, "I have not got time to approach the sacraments worthily. It's all very well for women, who can run to church whenever they want, but I have got my business to attend to; if I neglect it my family will starve." Humbug! I say--as transparent humbug as that stupid story which the man whom our Lord speaks of had about his farm. "I have bought a farm," says he, "and I must needs go out and see it." That excursion to his farm was got up just to dodge the invitation, which he did not care to accept. It

is the same with you. Your business is not so important that it will keep you from the theatre or the liquor-store, but as soon as the service of God is mentioned it becomes urgent all at once. Or perhaps you do not plead any particular business, but you make an excuse like that of the man who said he had married a wife, and therefore could not come. You say: "Piety is very good for priests and religious; but I am living in the world, and can't be good enough to go to Communion." Humbug!
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I say again; you know very well that there have been plenty of people, who have lived in a much brighter world than is ever likely to be open to you, who have not only made good communions, but made them frequently, and become saints by doing so. Kings and queens have given the lie to your excuse. Are you more in the world than St. Henry, Emperor of Germany; St. Louis, King of France; the two Saints Elizabeth, of Hungary and Portugal; and St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland, whose feast we kept last Tuesday?
Don't make any more foolish excuses, then; our Lord, who has invited you to his banquet, will not be deceived by them. Acknowledge the truth, that if you do not come to his supper it is because you do not care for it, or for Him who gives it. But do you dare to say this? I hope not. Do not say it, then. Do what is far better. Come when he calls you. Come, that you may not offend him, as those ungrateful men of whom the parable tells us offended the master of the house. Come, that he may not say to you, as the master of the house said: "Those men who were called shall not taste my supper," not even when they shall desire it at the hour of their death. Come, that your inheritance in the kingdom of heaven may not be taken away from you, and others called in to take the places which you have refused. Come and show love and not base ingratitude to Him who has taken so much pains to prepare this feast for you; this feast which is not only the greatest gift that he can give you now, but also a pledge of the kingdom which has been prepared for such of you as are faithful, from the foundation of the world.

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Sermon LXXXVII.

And they began all at once to make excuse.
--St. Luke xiv. 18.

When men are in sin and do not wish to give it up the answer which they commonly make to an invitation of God is an excuse. Excuses! Yes, there are plenty of them. But from what do these men of whom our Lord speaks in this parable wish to be excused? Is it from something painful and humiliating? No, strange to say, it is from a great privilege; it is from a wonderful feast in which men receive the Food of Angels and are made one with God; it is from the feast of the Blessed Sacrament, in which our Blessed Lord offers his own Body and Blood. What! is it possible that one who has the faith and is possessed of reason can slight such a gift from the God who has redeemed him? Listen to the excuse of one: "I have bought a farm." What is a farm? It is dirt. His excuse, then, is that he does not want the Bread of

Heaven, because he is occupied with dirt. In a word, he prefers dirt to God. But another man has this excuse for spurning the heavenly banquet: "He has bought five yoke of oxen," and he wants "to go and try them." He declines the company of the saints and angels because he prefers that of oxen. He had rather be with the brutes, because he is much like them himself. His body rules his soul, and he is too much of an animal to care anything about a feast which furnishes only good for the soul.
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But we hear yet another excuse. Here is a man who "has married a wife, and therefore cannot come." What does this mean? Does he pretend that the holy sacrament of matrimony is keeping him away? But this is not the shadow of an excuse. Ah! if he would speak out his mind clearly he certainly would have an excuse. He means that he cannot come because he is wallowing in the mire of sin. He is too filthy to come. He would have to purify himself. He cannot put on the wedding garment of divine grace and wallow with the swine, so he thinks that he will leave the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ to others and stay where he is.
You see, brethren, what it is to offer an excuse when God invites or commands; and these are only fair samples of the excuses which all sinners who seek to justify their conduct make. But what do such excuses denote? They are sure signs of impenitence. Men often make hypocrites of themselves by their excuses. Some even make bad confessions by covering their guilt with an excuse; and a great many show their imperfect sorrow for sin in this way. On the other hand, the man who is sincerely sorry for his sins fears nothing so much as to excuse a fault. He would rather accuse himself of too much than to excuse himself for the least fault. Excuses such as are mentioned in this parable may justify men before the world, but never before God. When our souls come before the Divine Judge all their disguises shall be torn off. Eternal justice shall then reveal all; it shall weigh every motive; it shall judge every act.
But what does our Divine Lord say of those who now refuse his invitation to this heavenly banquet? He says: "None of those men who were called shall taste my supper."
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Those who now receive the sweet invitation of our Blessed Lord to approach the altar will at the hour of death wish for that divine food, which they now treat with so much contempt; but God may then say to them: "You did not come when I invited you, and now you shall not taste my supper."

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Third Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

1 _St. Peter v._ 6-11.

Dearly beloved:

Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation. Casting all your solicitude upon him, for he hath care of you. Be sober and watch; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing

that the same affliction befalleth your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, when you have suffered a little, will himself perfect, and confirm, and establish you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel.

St. Luke xv. 1-10.

At that time:

The publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus to hear him. And the Pharisees and the Scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spoke to them this parable, saying: What man among you that hath a hundred sheep: and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, doth he not lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing: and coming home call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost. I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance. Or what woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost. So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

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Sermon LXXXVIII.

_Rejoice with me,
because I have found my sheep that was lost._
--St. Luke xv. 6.

I am sure you have often heard related, if you have not yourselves known, examples of the singular affection which parents show towards the worst behaved child they have, the "black sheep of the flock," as their neighbors call him, or her, as the case may be--some wretched, ungrateful, dissipated son whose disgraceful life and cruel treatment of them fairly breaks their hearts; or some disobedient, wild daughter who is led off and gets ruined. While they are in the height of their bad career the parents are very apt to act as if they wished every tie between them broken. No one dares mention the name of their lost child to them. Instances have been known where the angry parents have blotted out the name of the dishonored one from the record in the family Bible where it was written on the day when he was brought back an innocent child from the font of baptism, and when they have taken the little lock of flaxen hair cut from their darling's head, and kept so many years as a treasure, and have scattered it to the winds. But what do we see? There comes a time when things are at their worst, when their poor lost one has reaped the bitter fruits of his disobedience and is in utter misery and despair; then the hearts of the parents are softened; they yearn to see their poor child once more, and all on a sudden there is a reconciliation, all is forgiven and forgotten; the one

who was dead has come to life again, and the lost one is found.
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The parents will not hear one word said against him, but on the contrary, in word and action, say to all their friends: Rejoice with me, because I have found my child that was lost.
Now, if we examine into any such a case we shall almost certainly discover that the penitence of the bad child bears no comparison to the greatness of the parents' affection or to the magnanimity of their forgiveness. Very few such repenting sinners are deserving of the joyful pardon they receive. Mercy is always a mystery, and pardon ever a miracle. So it is with God and his divine forgiveness of repenting sinners. Our Lord tells us there is joy in heaven over their return. Did you ever know any such case whose repentance you thought was worthy of such celestial rejoicings? Very, very few, I am sure. And how many forgiven sinners, do you think, realize that God loves them so much as that--so much that, when he has brought back to his love and obedience one so unworthy, he should tell all his holy angels of the happy event and bid them rejoice with him? Not many. This truth however, is a most important one which our Lord wishes us to learn. It is the greatness of his mercy and the depth of his love. To tell the honest truth, it is the revelation of God's mercy and love that will bring hardened sinners back, which will win and convert them when nothing else will. We often see the proof of this on our missions, when we find the hardest cases, the most abandoned and hopeless sinners, coming to confession after the sermon on the mercy of God.
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And who does not know that an appeal made to sinners by showing them the crucifix, where they see their Lord and Saviour dying for his great love, with arms outstretched to receive them back, is an argument few of them can withstand? The sermon of the Cross is one the holy church is always preaching--the sermon of love and mercy.
Well, dear brethren, learn this lesson from the Gospel. When you find the burden of sin heavy on you, and your conscience tells you that you have wandered far from God, go before a crucifix and let the love and mercy of your crucified Lord preach to you. There is nothing helps one so much to overcome the horror and shame of going to confession as a few minutes' prayer on one's knees before a crucifix. Are you in temptation and danger of losing God? Kiss the feet of a crucifix and you are saved. Do you want to win and save those who have sinned against you? Preach to them the sermon of mercy and love, in your own way, and, like God, you will win them and convert them, and rejoice with your friends that you have found the lost one again.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon LXXXIX.

Be sober, and watch.
--1 St. Peter v. 8.

These few words of the Epistle, my brethren, contain a most important lesson for us. We may indeed say that of all the innumerable souls which have been lost, and which are going down

every day into hell, far the greater part have come to this terrible end for neglect of this warning.
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There is a proverb, with which you are all familiar, that [the road to] hell is paved with good intentions. What does this mean? Does it mean that a good intention in itself is a thing which leads to hell? Of course not. But it means that the kind of good intentions which people are too apt to make are signs rather of damnation than of salvation, as they should be.
What is this kind of good intention? It is one which stops just there, and which the one who makes it does not take the means to carry out. Sometimes we call them by a stronger name than intentions. We call them purposes, even firm purposes of amendment. They are the kind of purposes which a great many people make when they repent, or think they repent, of their habitual sins.
A man comes to confession with a fearful habit of sin--of profane swearing, for instance. It has been on him for years. He has learned it in his youth, perhaps, from wicked parents or companions. He has almost become unconscious of it, and it seems to him no very important thing; it may be that he would not even mention it, did not the priest question him pretty closely. But when the priest does warn him about it he makes up his mind in a certain way that he ought to stop it, and makes a kind of purpose to do so. It is to be feared, however, that this is one of the purposes or intentions with which hell is paved. And why? Because it stops just there. It has no effect at all. It is all gone before he gets out of the confession-box. He will swear just as much to-morrow as he did to-day. He does not, probably, even remember his purpose, at any rate only till the time of his Communion; or if, perchance, he does remember it, he does not take the means to carry it out.
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And what is that means above all others? It is to watch against his sin. This he does not do. He does not keep on his guard to avoid those horrible oaths which have become a fixed habit with him. He does not watch himself, and, of course, falls again as he did before.
Now you see, perhaps, the importance of St. Peter's warning in the Epistle. Most of you who will be lost will be lost on account of habitual sins like this I have spoken of, not on account of occasional and unusual ones. It may be a habit of impure thoughts or words, of drunkenness, or something else; but it is a habit of some kind that will cause your damnation. The habit is a disease of your soul; you must get rid of it, if you wish to have any well-grounded hope of salvation. And you cannot get rid of it without watching as well as praying. "Watch," says our Lord, "that you enter not into temptation."
Yes, a bad habit is a disease of your soul, a weak spot in it which you must guard. It is there your enemy is going to enter. What does St. Peter go on to say? "Be sober, and watch," he says, "for your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour." Very well; the devil is not such a fool as to neglect your weak points. So it is those which you

must watch and guard.
If, then, you would be saved, keep before your mind all the time your habitual sins. Be on your guard against them continually, just as a man going on slippery ice is all the time careful how he places his feet. Repeat your resolutions frequently; make them practical and definite. Say to yourself, "Next time I am provoked I will keep down that profane word; next time such an object comes before my eyes I will turn them away; next time such a thought occurs I will instantly repel it."
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Be on the lookout for danger, as a sailor is for rocks or icebergs in his course. Pray, of course, earnestly and frequently, but watch as well as pray. If you do you will save your soul; if you do not you will lose it.

Sermon XC.

_There shall be joy in heaven
upon one sinner that doth penance,
more than upon ninety-nine just
who need not penance._
--St. Luke xv. 7.

I do not think, my brethren, that there is any parable in the Gospel which comes more home to your own experience than these which you have just heard about the lost sheep and groat. I am sure you have all of you lost something at some time or other; and I am sure, too, that, even though it was not very valuable, you began to think it was when it was lost, and hunted for it high and low. It seemed to you that you cared more for it than for any other article of your property, and that you did not mind much what became of your other things as long as that was missing.
That, of course, was not really the case. For, although you seemed to give all your thoughts and energy in searching for the lost article, you cared just as much all the time for what you meanwhile left at home or unnoticed. And if, while you were hunting up one thing, another should get lost, you would start out after that with just as much anxiety as you did for the other.
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So our Lord spends his time, not only now and then but always, chiefly in hunting after what he has lost, and lets what he has got shift a good deal for itself. Always, I say; for he has always lost something. He keeps losing things all the time. The sheep keep straying away from his fold continually. As soon as one is brought back another has gone, and he has to set out in pursuit of it. And meanwhile the sheep in the fold do not seem to get as much care and attention as they think they deserve for their obedience and general good behavior.
Now, this is an important thing for the sheep to understand, both for those who have not strayed away and for those who have. Those who are faithful must be contented with his absence, and those who are not should thank him and reward him for his labor for them.
Those who need no penance--that is, those who remain habitually

in the state of grace--are apt to say: "Why is it that religion does not give me more happiness? Why is it that I have so little devotion and that God seems so far away?" Well, the reason is because he is away. He is off hunting for sinners. He is giving them his chief attention and his choicest graces because they need them. The just can get along with the sacraments, which are always open to them, and with the other ordinary means of salvation.

Or you say, perhaps: "Why is it that the best preachers and confessors among the fathers are out on the mission, so that we seldom or never see or hear them?" Well, that is for the same reason. Our Lord sends them out on the hunt in which he is so much interested. Surely you will not find fault with him. You will not deprive him of his greatest joy--that of bringing sinners back--for the sake of offering him a little more devotion, which he does not care so much about.

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No, you will rather be faithful, and do your duty in the place where he has put you, and be very thankful that you are not among the lost, and perhaps one among them who will never be found. And surely those who have strayed away and whom he is seeking, when they come to think of it, will try to give him the consolation which he takes so much trouble to secure. They will not let him spend all his time on them and get nothing for it in return. No, they will not hide from him any longer; they will give themselves to him, never to stray again; and be the occasion of a joy in heaven which shall not be merely for a moment, but which shall last for evermore.

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Fourth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Romans viii. 18-23.

Brethren:

I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that made it subject, in hope: because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth, and is in labor even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel.

St. Luke v. 1-11.

At that time:

When the multitudes pressed upon Jesus to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth. And he saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And going up into one of the ships

that was Simon's, he desired him to thrust out a little from the land. And sitting down, he taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering, said to him: Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing: but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net was breaking. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them.

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And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking; which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt be taking men. And when they had brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed him.

Sermon XCI.

_And sitting down,
he taught the multitudes out of the ship._
--St. Luke v. 3.

The ship, as the Gospel tells us, was St Peter's, and our Lord continues to teach his divine doctrine from the same ship. This ship of St. Peter is the Catholic Church. Its captain is the Pope, the Vicar of Jesus Christ. He not only guides the ship in its ordinary course, but knows also what special orders to give when particular dangers threaten it. The plain duty of every Catholic is, therefore to receive with obedience the teaching of the Pope, and in times of danger to be on the alert and obey quickly, without hesitation and with perfect confidence. There is no fear for the ship herself, no matter what storms may arise. The danger is for those who are in her, and each one's safety depends upon his prompt obedience. There are some Catholics who appear to think that because the ship is always safe they are safe too, no matter how they behave.

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Alas! this is often a fatal mistake. Christ teaches by the mouth of Peter, and their salvation depends upon their listening to what is taught, and learning the lessons of faith and morality which fall from his lips. But what do we see? We see many who remain so ignorant of their religion that they ought to be ashamed to call themselves Catholics. There is plenty of instruction given, but they take no pains to hear it. Year in and year out they never come to a sermon or instruction. They never think of reading a good religious book or a Catholic newspaper. They have time to go to some immoral play at the theatre, they read the trashy, beastly stuff that is served up daily and weekly to pander to depraved appetites such as theirs, but of their sublime, true, and holy religion, which should be a light to their minds and a comfort to their hearts, they know next to

nothing. They let their children grow up in the like ignorance, who are swift to follow the bad example set before them. Now, the chief duty of a Catholic is to learn what his religion teaches, and it is a grievous sin to neglect the opportunities one has to acquire that knowledge. The devil is busy scattering the seed of false doctrine, and keeping his agents at work telling all sorts of lies about God and Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church, and it is not possible for one to keep his faith pure unless he takes care to learn all he has the chance to learn of the truths of his holy religion.

Then, again, see how anxious people are nowadays that their children should have what is called "a good education." What is the teaching of Christ from the ship of Peter on this subject? It is that _without religion education cannot be good_.

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Our faiths, as well as our experience, tells us that an education with religion left out is apt to prove rather a curse than a blessing to a child. Pride, conceit, loose morals, love of money, disobedience to parents and clergy--these are the things we see plenty of in the lives and habits of children who have received a "good education" with religion left out.

There is another thing which is often the subject of much wonder to me. From time to time the bishops and priests find it necessary to warn their people against certain prevailing vices, or to denounce certain secret societies as anti-Christian, or to make regulations which are required to secure the proper administration of the sacraments--for instance, the publication of the bans of marriage--and there are found Catholics who set themselves in opposition to these counsels and laws of their pastors with a pertinacious obstinacy such as one would not expect to see except in a downright heretic. The conceit of these people is truly marvellous. They talk and act as if the whole Catholic Church belonged to them, and their priests were a miserable set of hirelings who can be persuaded to connive at anything they choose to pay them for. What is the reason of this? I'll tell you. It is due to their ignorance. The better instructed a Catholic is the more docile and humble he is. He hears Christ teaching when he hears the instructions of his pastor, and he rejoices to follow his counsels. "He that heareth you heareth me," said our Lord. God send us Catholics who love their religion well enough to make them desirous of being well instructed in its doctrine!

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Sermon XCII.

_I reckon that the sufferings of this present time
are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come._
--Romans viii. 18.

Brethren, if we wish to rejoice in the next world we must suffer in this. There is no escape from suffering here if we reckon on happiness hereafter. And there are good reasons for this. One is because we must atone for sin. Do not our own sins, little or great, continually cry out for penance? And if we give not suffering willingly they threaten to crucify us in spite of

ourselves. And there are the sins of others, of heathens, and heretics, and bad Catholics--all these demand atonement, and, as it was not beneath the dignity of the Son of God to die for them, so, if we are Christians more than in name, we shall be ready to suffer with our blessed Lord for the sins of the world. Another reason why we mast suffer is that we may not become attached to the joys of this world, for we must leave them all some day or other. And, besides, God demands a heart quite undivided; he wants all our love, and not what is left after we have expended our chief affections on created things. And yet another reason for suffering is that we may merit more happiness in heaven. The Christian has a kind Father in heaven, who notes every pang, and sigh, and tear, and who will know how to reward.

So one would think that a wise man would seek sufferings rather than avoid them; would thank God for the afflictions of his providence, and would look upon the troubles of this life--the loss of health, the loss of reputation, the loss of money--would look upon all this as God's way of elevating our life here on earth and of increasing our happiness hereafter; and that it would be true wisdom to voluntarily deny ourselves the joys of this world, reckoning rather upon those of the future life as the apostles did.

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Yes, brethren, patient suffering is the very A B C of the Christian religion. What are Christ's blessings? Blessed are the poor; blessed are they that mourn; blessed are you when they persecute and revile you. Truly his religion is a religion of the cross.

But what kind of Christians must we think ourselves since we all hate to suffer? We reckon fondly upon the joys of this life; those of the life to come may take care of themselves. Although we have a lifetime of horrid sins in our memory, and know that we have not done any penance, still we not only refuse to suffer willingly, but we speak and act as it God were a cruel tyrant thus to send upon us sickness, and poverty, and disgrace. And as to suffering in union with our Lord Jesus Christ for the sins of the world, such a generous thought never enters our mind at all; nor do we think of mortifying the rebellious passions, nor of the merit of sacrifice, nor of anything except to enjoy this world, to cling to this poor, fleeting world and its deceptive joys.

Brethren, let us strive to obtain a wiser and stronger spirit in regard to suffering. I know that we may not hope to become heroes all at once, but may in time if we begin without delay; and the only way to begin is by prayer. You complain of the company of wicked and unpleasant people; but instead of snapping at them and quarrelling, offer your annoyance to God and pray him to assist you.

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Are you in poverty? Instead of giving way to weariness and despair, think of Jesus and Mary at the humble cottage at Nazareth; think of the poor, wandering life of our Lord while he preached the Gospel, and beg him to give you some of his own patience. Are you afflicted with incurable illness? Remember that God has sent you this for your own good and will know how to

recompense you. Instead of making your friends miserable by your impatience, think of Christ upon the cross, and of your sins which crucified him.

St. Teresa had for her motto these words: "_Either to suffer or to die_." Oh! that we had only a little of the heroic spirit of the saints. Then we could welcome every dispensation of divine providence, whether of pleasure or of pain, and should be able to say with St. Paul: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content therewith. I know both how to be brought low and how to abound ... both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need; I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 11-13).

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Fifth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

1 _St. Peter iii._ 8-15.

Dearly beloved:

Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, loving brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble: not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but on the contrary, blessing: for unto this are you called, that by inheritance you may possess a blessing. "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him decline from evil, and do good: let him seek peace, and pursue it: because the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears unto their prayers: but the countenance of the Lord against them that do evil things." And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good? But if also you suffer anything for justice' sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their terror and be not troubled; but sanctify the Lord Christ in your heart.

Gospel.

St. Matt. v. 20-24.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples: I say to you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be guilty of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be guilty of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be guilty of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be guilty of hell fire. Therefore if thou offerest thy gift at the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and first go to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

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Sermon XCIII.

_Unless your justice abound
more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees,
you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven_.
--St. Matt. v. 20.

The Scribes and Pharisees were very particular about keeping the _letter_ of the law, and prided themselves mightily on this kind of "justice." But Jesus Christ says that unless _our_ righteousness exceed theirs we shall not save our souls. Here, then, he teaches us that we must keep the _spirit_ of the commandments as well as the letter. And to show what he means by the _spirit_ of the law, he quotes the commandment which forbids murder. "Now, it is not enough," he says, "that you refrain from committing murder; you must equally refrain from the passion of anger--anger, that is, which destroys charity, and breeds ill-will, hatred, and revenge; for those who give way to these malicious feelings shall be arraigned at my judgment-seat side by side with murderers." Among those who heard him was St. John, his apostle; and St. John says: "He that hateth his brother is a murderer."

Again, our Lord tells us that the spirit of the Fifth Commandment includes lesser sins than anger--that to call our brother contemptuous names, to provoke and irritate him by hard words (except, of course, in the case of just rebuke), is a grave violation of this law as he would have us Christians understand it.

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The words which follow--addressed to those who were in the habit of going into the temple to lay their gifts before God's altar--apply with even greater force to _us_. _We_ come before God's altar when we come to hear Mass, and we come with the profession, at least, of offering a gift--that worship which is the tribute of our faith and love. There is one thing, then, which our Lord requires before he will receive our offering: that "our brother have" not "anything against us." In other words, we must be in perfect charity with our neighbor. If we have anything against _him_, we must forgive him there and then "from our hearts." If _he_ have anything against _us_, we must either have already done our best towards reconciliation and reparation, or at least be prepared and determined to do it at the very first opportunity.

Now, it may be we are not in the state of grace when we come to hear Mass, but, on the contrary, laden with mortal sins. Well, we still have the right to hear Mass--nay, are bound to hear it; and, further, we can still offer a gift, and a very acceptable gift--an earnest prayer for contrition and amendment--a cry for mercy and deliverance. Our Lord once said to St. Mathilda: "However guilty a man may be, however inveterate the enmity of his heart against me. I will patiently bear with him whenever he is present at Mass, and will readily grant him the pardon of his sins if he sincerely ask it." Clearly, then, dear brethren, there is but one thing that can keep even a poor sinner from coming before God's altar with an acceptable gift--viz., the want of charity to his neighbor; that is, either the refusal to say from his heart: "Forgive us our trespasses _as we forgive_ those who trespass against us"; or, equally, the refusal to seek reconciliation or make reparation for wrongs of his own doing.

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Now, in either case there is a brother who "has something against

us," and that brother is Jesus Christ himself, who calls all men his brethren without exception, and especially our fellow-Catholics, having given to all his Sacred Heart and the love of his Blessed Mother.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon XCIV.

_He that will love life and see good days,
let him refrain his tongue from evil._
--1 St. Peter iii. 10.

The words of the blessed Apostle St. Peter teach us that the good, peaceable man is the happiest, that God rewards a kind heart even in this life. Yes, the kindly-spoken man is a happy man. He has no quarrels on his hands. You cannot make him quarrel. Though he be strong and active, yet he is incapable of using his strength to injure his neighbor. Say a sharp, bitter thing to him, and instead of feeling insulted, he will laugh it off, and tell you to be good-natured, or will act as if _he_ had offended _you_. And the good, peaceable man is no slanderer or tale-bearer. When he hears anything to his neighbor's detriment he is sorry; he buries it in his kind heart, and tries to forget it. If his friends quarrel among themselves, he is the ready and successful peacemaker. If death, sickness, or misfortune of any kind afflicts his neighbor, he is the kind and skilful comforter. What do people think of such a man? Everybody loves him. And is not that happiness? Why, if a dog loves you it gives you joy, and the affection of many friends makes this world a paradise. So the good, peaceable man has that element of a lovely life and good days.

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I need not say that the good, peaceable man is happy in his family. How children love a kind parent! How they enjoy home when he is there, with his happy laugh and innocent jest! His wife is proud of that husband, and blesses God for such a father for her little ones. There is no bickering, jealousy, or ill-will in that home, but charity and joy the whole year round.

And the good, peaceable man is happy in his own self-respect. Without presumption he may say with the apostle: "I owe no man anything." He owes no man any grudge. He has inflicted sorrow upon no man. He has deprived no man of honor or of goods. He who is not at war with his neighbor is at peace with himself. His conscience is at peace, and a peaceful conscience is a soft pillow. So that by his kind words and deeds he really loves his life, as St. Peter says, and has provided himself with good days.

But besides all this, God watches over the good, peaceable man. "He that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law," says the Scripture. Our Lord loves those who love his children, and he is one who can make his friends happy. Did he not promise a reward for even a cup of cold water? And are not kind words often of more worth than bodily refreshment? God loves the good, peaceable man, and the love of God is enough to make any one happy.

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So the next time you complain and say, "Oh! why am I so miserable? what ails me or my family, or my neighbors, that I am

always in hot water, and can scarcely call one day in ten really happy?" just ask yourself: "Am I a peaceable, good-natured man?" Anger, hatred, and ill-will poison one's food as well as kill the soul, disturb one's sleep as well as perplex the conscience. To be happy you must be loved; and who will love one who hates? A sour face, a bitter tongue, a bad heart, gain no friends. A harsh voice, a cruel hand, a selfish heart, turn wife and child into enemies. So the suspicious man is unhappy; he breeds treason and jealousy among his friends. The touchy man is unhappy; you shun his company, for you fear to offend him. The critical man is unhappy; he is over-zealous about others and careless of himself. And, brethren, I might continue the sad litany, and to every unkind act, or thought, or word I could answer, it makes men miserable.

Come, brethren, let us all try and be good-natured. Let us be so for the love of our Lord, who made and loves us all, and died to bind us all together in one happy household.

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Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Romans vi. 3-11.

Brethren:

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

Gospel.

St. Mark viii. 1-9.

At that time:

When there was a great multitude with Jesus, and had nothing to eat, calling his disciples together, he saith to them: I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint in the way, for some of them came from afar off. And his disciples answered him: From whence can any one satisfy them here with bread in the wilderness? And he asked them: How many loaves have ye? And they said: Seven. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground, and taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he broke, and gave to his disciples to set before them, and they sat them before the people.

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And they had a few little fishes, and he blessed them and commanded them to be set before them. And they did eat and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

Sermon XCV.

Taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he broke and gave to his disciples to set before them. --St. Mark viii. 6.

On this and on other occasions our Lord Jesus Christ blessed the food that was to be eaten. In imitation of his divine example we are taught to give thanks and bless ourselves and our food at meals. This pious practice is commonly called grace before and after meat. The word "grace" is English for the Latin word "_gratias_," which means thanks, taken from the thanksgiving to be said after meals. There are two prayers to be said, therefore: the first, a blessing to be invoked upon ourselves and upon the food prepared; and the second, a thanksgiving to be said after we have eaten it. The first is as follows: "Bless us, Lord, and these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bountiful hands, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

When we say the words, "Bless us, Lord," we should make the sign of the cross on ourselves. When we say "These thy gifts," we should make the sign of the cross over the table. The thanksgiving is said thus: "We give thee thanks, Almighty God, for all thy benefits, who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen." And it is also proper to add: "May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace." The Catholic practice is also to say these prayers standing.

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In religious communities the blessing and grace are much longer, consisting of versicles and sentences from Scripture appropriate to the ecclesiastical season or festival; the Lord's Prayer is said and the "Te Deum" is said.

This is a pious practice which ought to prevail in all Catholic families. The children should be taught to do it from the time they can bless themselves and lisp the words. Yes, everything we eat and wear ought to be blessed first before we use it. The sign of the cross and asking God's blessing is to acknowledge, as we are in duty bound, the source of all that is given to us, and to sanctify it to our own use, and also to make a good intention in using it. To act otherwise--to hurry to table and eat and drink without a thought of God or a word of religion, as I have seen so many do--is to act like a heathen or a beast.

And this practice is not only for those who have a table set before them supplied with every luxury in the way of food, but it is especially good for those whose poverty compels them to sit down to scanty and common meals. The rich certainly ought to bless their bountifully-supplied tables, lest they prove to them the dangerous occasion of intemperance and gluttony, but the poor should remember the miracle of to-day's Gospel, when our Lord blessed and gave thanks over seven loaves and a few little fishes, and with that small store satisfied the hunger of four

thousand people. God is ever a kind, loving Father, and will not forget the cry of those who put their trust in him.
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Such was the trust of the poor man who had nothing but a little porridge to set before his family at dinner when he said: "God be good to us, and make this trifle of porridge go far enough for a poor man with a wife and seven children."
This makes me think of two classes of people who I wish could be obliged to bless with the sign of the cross what they give and receive as nourishment. I mean the liquor-seller and the drunkard. The grocery-keeper, the butcher, the baker could do it, and why not the liquor-seller? You know the result if they did; the one would soon give up the business, and the other would soon give up drinking.
But do not forget, as some do, to return thanks--to say the _grace_ after meals. Thank God for what you have received from his bounty. Again I say, act like a reasonable being and a Christian in this, and not like a heathen or a beast. You who are parents should see to the carrying out of this instruction. If you have not done so yet, begin to-day. Let the father say the prayer and make the sign of the cross over the table, and if one of the children come late don't give him a morsel to eat till he has said his blessing. In all things remember you are Christians, "giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God and the Father."

Sermon XCVI.

> _Know you not
> that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus
> are baptized in his death._
> --Romans vi. 3.

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These are strong words, brethren, too strong, I fear, to be accepted in their full meaning by many of us; for we are quite too apt to mitigate the strong doctrine of Christ. Those great maxims of penance, of poverty, of obedience, of perfection, which the saints understood in their plain reality, we are very anxious to understand in a figurative sense, or to apply to somebody else besides our guilty selves. But let us look fairly and frankly at these strong words of St. Paul. How are we baptized in Christ's death? By being guilty of the sins which delivered him up to his enemies. Did he not die on account of mortal sins, and have we not committed mortal sins--violated God's most sacred commandments, and done it often--and wilfully, and knowingly, and habitually done it? Then the innocent blood of the Lamb of God is upon our hands, and nothing but penance can ever wash it off. And what sort of a penance? So thorough, so heartfelt, so practical that the apostle says it must condemn and put us to death with Christ; a penance so thorough that our Lord himself tells us that it must produce a new being in us: "Unless a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." So you see that St. Paul, in the words of our text, has given us the very charter of Christian penance; just as he explains it a little further on: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that

the body of sin may be destroyed."
Behold, therefore, brethren, the plain statement of the greatest of all the practical duties of the Christian; to make reparation to God for his sins in union with the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. They tell us that our only hope of restored innocence is in participation in the crucifixion--its shame, its agony, and its death.
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Oh! that we could fully realize the necessity of penance. Oh! that the terrible form of Christ upon the cross could be ever in our eyes as it is ever above our altars. Oh! that the awful cries of Jesus' death agony could be ever sounding in our ears. Then we should be Christians indeed. Then the profound hatred of sin, the Christian duties of fasting and prayer, the holy offices of helping the poor and instructing the ignorant, the devout reception of God's grace in the sacraments; in a word, all the yearly round of a good Catholic life would have its true meaning. If we appreciated that Christ died for our sins, we should not have to drag ourselves so reluctantly to confession, we should not grumble at the fast of Lent, we should not strive to creep out of the duty of paying our debt of penance to God by this or that all too ready excuse, but we should take Christ for our example and his cross for our standard, and long for stripes and even death as the wages of sin. We should appreciate the wisdom of what the old monk of the desert said to the novice when asked for a motto: "Wherever you are, or whatever you are doing, say often to yourself: I am a pilgrim." Yes, a pilgrim; a banished son wearily waiting till his Father shall call him home; a convicted traitor working out the years of his banishment. I know, brethren, that this sounds like a melancholy doctrine. Yet is it not true? And to know the truth is the first beginning of peace in the heart. And listen to the joyful side. Hear it stated by the apostle in this very epistle: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, in like manner we shall be of his resurrection."
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Yes; if we die to our old selves and to sin, we shall rise with our Lord Jesus Christ to everlasting glory. He sprang forth from the grave filled with joy, triumphing over sin; and so shall we rise if we are buried with him in penance. And what is the world's joy compared to the joy of paradise? What care we for a few years of labor and waiting here, when we think of the countless ages of the kingdom of heaven! You have heard, brethren, that St. Peter of Alcantara led a very penitential life; well, shortly after death he appeared to one of his friends surrounded with heavenly light and his face beaming with joy, and he exclaimed: "Oh! happy penance which has gained for me so great a reward." Brethren, let us do penance while we can, and leave it to a good God to provide us with happiness, and he will give us joys which will never fade.

Sermon XCVII.

_That as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father,

so we also may walk in newness of life._
--Romans vi. 4.

The words of the Epistle to-day carry us back to Easter-tide, and give us a renewal of the lessons of Easter. St. Paul tells us that as Christ is risen from the dead and dieth no more, so we also should die indeed to sin, and rise again to newness of life through Jesus Christ our Lord. And as the Gospel relates how our Lord miraculously fed the multitudes in the wilderness, the church to-day seems to speak with especial force to those who have let the Easter-time go by without fulfilling the precept of yearly Communion, without seeking that heavenly food without which our souls must surely die of starvation.

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To you and to all sinners the church appeals to-day, bidding them at least now to rise from the death of sin and walk in newness of life.

The circumstances attending our Lord's resurrection teach us how we, too, should rise from the dead. An angel descended from heaven, and a mighty earthquake shook the holy sepulchre. And so the grace of God descends into our hearts, moving us to penance, and as with an earthquake our hearts must tremble with the fear of God and true sorrow for our sins. And then as the angel rolled away the stone from the mouth of the tomb, so divine grace will assist us in removing every obstacle in the way of our repentance--the slowness and dulness of our minds and wills, our spiritual sloth, the false shame that may keep us back from a good confession. Arise, and, God's grace urging you, make one mighty effort, and the stone will speedily be rolled away.

Around the grave of our Lord stood the watch of Roman soldiers, guarding the seal that had been set upon the stone. Satan, perhaps, has set his seal upon your heart, and the devils watch around it for fear you should break loose from their bondage. But if you are determined to rise from the death of sin they will be as powerless to hinder you as the Roman soldiers were to prevent the resurrection of Jesus. When he rose from the dead he left behind him the grave-clothes and linen bandages with which his body had been bound. And this teaches us that we should leave behind us our evil habits and inclinations, and no longer remain slaves to our passions. Lazarus could not walk freely after his resurrection until he had been freed from his grave-clothes.

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Your grave-clothes are the habits of sin you have contracted, the cravings, of your sensual appetites, the love of sin that lingers in your hearts. Cast off these thongs that bind your souls, that you may walk freely in newness of life. When the women came to seek the body of Jesus the angel said to them: "Why seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." If, risen from the death of sin, Satan should again seek to gain possession of you; if your former bad companions should try to bring you back to your old ways; if the voice of passion should strongly lure you to leave the path of right, you can answer: "Why seek you the living among the dead? My soul is not here; but is risen--risen from the dead. It dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over it." Crucify, then, my dear brethren,

the old man within you, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and that you may serve sin no longer. "Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, so as to obey the lusts thereof," but "reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God, in Christ Jesus our Lord." As our Lord had compassion upon those who listened to his words, and fed them with the loaves and fishes, so will he also have mercy upon you, if you hearken to his voice now calling you to penance, and will feed you with his own most precious Body and Blood.

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Seventh Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Romans vi. 19-23.

Brethren:

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

Gospel.

St. Matthew vii. 15-21.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree yieldeth good fruit, and the bad tree bad fruit. A good tree cannot yield bad fruit, neither can a bad tree yield good fruit. Every tree that yieldeth not good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not every man that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

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Sermon XCVIII.

_Beware of false prophets,
who come to you in the clothing of sheep,
but inwardly they are ravenous wolves._
--St. Matthew vii. 15.

A prophet is a teacher, and a teacher who assumes to have more than ordinary knowledge. He is one who claims to speak from authority, and demands a hearing on the score of his being inspired directly by the all-wise God, or as being commissioned to speak in the name of God. When such true teachers speak to us we are bound, of course, to listen to them, to receive their words with humility and obey them implicitly.

It is the way of God with men. We are taught all we know. Now, if all teachers were true teachers, all men would believe alike and there would be no error in the world. But because there have been and are many false teachers, there are many false religions and innumerable lies of all kinds which thousands believe to be truths. For one to be sure, therefore, that what he believes is true, he must not be simply content with the fact that _he_ sincerely believes it, but he must know that his teacher is a true teacher.

Those who are not Catholics wonder how it is that we feel so certain of the truths of our faith. Their wonder would cease if they were to become Catholics, as it does happen with all converts; for then they would know, as we know, _how it feels to be sure of one's teacher_. That is our inestimable privilege and inexpressible joy--that we know our teacher is true, and that a false teacher is instantly detected, no matter how carefully and cunningly he has put on his sheep's clothing. The disguise is never thick enough to hide the wolf's teeth and claws.

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I do not say that a Catholic may not be deceived and be misled by these wolves in sheep's clothings else our Lord would not have told us to beware of such, and the history of all heresies proves that many can be deceived by them. But that is their fault. They go out of the fold where all is light and clear, and where a wolf is found out in a moment, and they wander about in places and in company where there is no light of divine faith. To tell the truth, the false teacher finds his victims already misled and enticed away by their own passions and pride. He finds they have already begun to believe a lie, and he has only to encourage them in it. What do I mean by wandering outside the fold? I mean imitating the talk and following the example of those whose principles are false; who say: "Religion is a matter of choice"; "It does not matter what a man believes so long as he is good"; "Education is the business of the state"; "Religion has nothing to do with science"; and also immoral principles such as these: "A man cannot help his nature"; "A young man is expected to sow his wild oats"; "We are in the world and must go with it," and such like.

When a Catholic talks that way he is fair game for the first false teacher that comes along.

Then one wanders outside the fold and is caught by the wolves when he ventures into forbidden secret societies. These wolves have got the sheep's clothing of charity and brotherly love on. It is a wonder that there can be found Catholics silly enough not to feel the wolf's claw the first time they are taught the secret-society grip.

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"Charity and brotherly love" forsooth! They had better say, "We swear to love ourselves, and to look out for number one," for this is what all the twaddle of these secret brotherhoods amounts to. Avoid them. Their leaders are false teachers, their principles are false, and their association is dangerous to both faith and morals.

Beware of the false newspaper prophet. Everybody reads the newspapers, and too many, alas! think they have the right to read any newspaper that is printed. That is what the false newspaper prophet says when he offers for sale his filthy, licentious, and lying sheet. Beware of him! His talk is corrupting and demoralizing.

Do you wish, dear brethren, to make sure of not being deceived by these wolves in sheep's clothing? Then obey with humility and docility the shepherd of the flock. When he cries, "Wolf! wolf!" then be sure that there is a wolf. Defer to his judgment. _His_ preaching, you know, is true. Follow that, and not even the devil himself can deceive you.

Sermon XCIX.

Every tree is known by its fruit.
--St. Luke vi. 44.

The great lesson taught us to-day by the offices of the church is that the Christian life of faith must show itself in good works. Faith is the foundation, but a building must not stop with the foundation; more stones must be added continually until it rises complete in all its parts, according to the plan of the architect.

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So we must not be content with the foundation of faith, but, by co-operating with the graces God is always giving us, must be always striving after the model set before us by the Divine Architect, our Lord Jesus Christ, always adding virtue to virtue, until at last we shall appear before the God of gods in Sion to receive the reward of our good deeds. Faith is the root, but the root must grow into a tree, and put forth not only leaves and blossoms, not only pious thoughts and fine words, but the fruit of good deeds, the fruit of a life spent in conformity to the maxims of our holy faith.

Our Lord tells us that a tree is known by its fruit. For there is no good tree that bringeth forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree that bringeth forth good fruit. So the earnestness of our faith will be known by our lives. If we find that our lives correspond to what our faith teaches us, we may be sure that our faith is living and not dead. "By their fruits ye shall know them," Alas! how many who call themselves Catholics make their lives an argument against the faith in the hands of its enemies, who point at us the finger of scorn, and loudly proclaim that, by our Lord's own test, we fail. And then we have the careless and the lukewarm, who, while they are not an open scandal, yet fall far short of the test our Lord proposes. In them we see plenty of leaves, and even blossoms, but the fruit is sadly wanting, or, at best, is but worm-eaten and rotten through a lack of earnestness and a pure intention. They, perhaps, will talk about their faith as though they were the most zealous Catholics in the world; but if we look into their practice we find it very different from what their language would lead us to expect. How many, for instance, are ready enough to defend in argument the doctrine of the Real Presence who never think of making a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, nay, who rarely approach the Holy Communion,

and perhaps have not made their Easter-duty!
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Well, I fear it will always be so. Fine words are cheap and good resolutions are easily made, but it is another thing to keep them. But listen to our Lord's warning: "Every tree that yieldeth not good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." Our eternal welfare depends upon our deeds. Our faith alone will not save us. It is necessary, indeed; for just as the root is to the tree the source of all its life, so faith is what gives to our good works their merit before God. But unless it bears the fruit of good works it is worthless and dead.
"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter 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." That is to say, not every one who professes the true faith shall be saved, but those only who shall bring their wills into conformity with the will of God. It is not enough to acknowledge God as our Lord and King, if his holy will is not fulfilled in us and by us. If we would enter into life eternal we must keep the commandments of God and his church. And we also do the will of God by suffering it; that is, by enduring with patience all the trials and crosses he may send us, for these are his holy will for us as much as his positive precepts. There is often more merit in patiently suffering than in great deeds that would astound the world. This is the way to fulfil the prayer so often on our lips: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Strive, then, both in doing and in suffering, to make real for yourselves this holy petition, that God may not have to say of you, as he said of the Jews of old: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

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Sermon C.

The wages of sin is death.
--Romans vi. 23.

This is a truth plain enough to the thoughtful; but there are some, alas! who think about it only when it is too late. The wages have not yet become due, and the sinner, thinking only of his present pleasures, goes on unmindful of that time when the terrible wages will have to be paid in full.
Death, says St. Paul, is the wages. Tell a man that if he goes to a certain place or performs a certain act the penalty will be death, and he cannot be persuaded to go to that place or perform that fatal act. On the other hand, he will do anything to save himself from such a fate. But the death of which St. Paul speaks is not to be compared with that of the body, for it is the soul. The wages of sin is, then, a spiritual death. If we could see before us in one vast pile a number of bodies corrupted by death, what a revolting spectacle it would be! But if we could see the dead souls of so many around us, who seem to be so full of life, as God beholds them, we should be far more horrified. There are some who, as they sit in their houses, walk in the streets, are engaged at work, or even as they are on their knees in church, have with them only wretched corpses of souls. Who will reap this

terrible wages of sin? We have all sinned, therefore we must all reap some of its wages.
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By the sin of one man "death has passed unto all men, in whom all have sinned." Death is the most dreadful temporal calamity with which we are acquainted; yet it is the wages which the whole human race have to pay for the sin of one.
But the penalty of that second death, which is eternal, is the most terrible wages of sin; and yet our holy faith teaches us that one mortal sin is enough to cause the instant death of the soul. But the man who lives in mortal sin abides in death. Every sin that he commits plunges his soul deeper into the abyss of death, till at last he receives the full wages of his crimes in the flames of hell. How shall we escape this terrible penalty? Our blessed Lord, by his death, received the wages due to us on account of sin. Through the infinite merits of his death our souls may be brought to life, if we will truly repent and sin no more. St. Paul says: "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive." But we cannot hope to escape the bitter wages of sin, unless we cease to sin. If we live in sin, and, as generally happens to such, die in sin, we shall not be helped by the death of Christ, but shall receive more bitter wages for our sins than if Christ had not died for us. We shall then, in addition to our other crimes, be guilty of the death of our Blessed Redeemer; for, as St. Paul says: "By our sins we crucify Jesus Christ afresh."
There are, also, wages which have to be paid for sins forgiven. Though the eternal guilt is remitted, the infinite justice of God has yet to be satisfied. We shall all of us have to receive the wages of our forgiven sins in penance and sufferings in this life and in purgatory till the last farthing has been paid.
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This ought to make us fearful about our past sins, and to make us dread nothing so much as to fall into sin again. The words of the text, "For the wages of sin is death," should be continually in our minds when we are tempted to sin, and, knowing the terrible consequences which must follow every sin, we shall rather endure any temporal evil than to incur the terrible misfortune of having offended God.

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Eighth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Romans. viii. 12-17.

Brethren:

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

heirs with Christ.
Gospel.
St. Luke xvi. 1-9.
At that time:
Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him: What is this I hear of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship: for now thou canst not be steward. And the steward said within himself: What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.
Therefore calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: A hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? Who said: A hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: Take thy bill and write eighty.
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And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. And I say to you: Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.

Sermon CI.

_Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity,
that when you shall fail
they may receive you into everlasting dwellings._
--St. Luke xvi. 9.

What is this mammon of iniquity of which, or with which (for that is the true sense of the words), we are to make friends for ourselves? It is the money or other property that God has given us to use in this world. We have only to read a few verses more to see that this is what it means; for when our Lord said immediately afterwards, "You cannot serve God and Mammon," the evangelist tells us that "the Pharisees, who were covetous, laughed at him."

It is called the mammon of iniquity or injustice, because it is the cause of almost all the injustice in the world.

We have, then, to make friends for ourselves with the money or other temporal means which God has entrusted to us.

This is what the steward of whom the Gospel tells us did. He was entrusted by his master with the management of an estate. He was to take care of it in his master's interest, not in his own, for it did not belong to him; as we are here to use our property in God's interest, for he is our Master, and what we have really belongs to him and not to ourselves.

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The steward was not faithful to his master; he wasted his goods; so he was discharged from his office and had to give an account of his stewardship, as we also shall have to give an account of ours to our Master when we are discharged from it--that is, when

we come to die. Then he began to think how he could make use of the means that had been committed to him to provide for himself in the new state of life upon which he had to enter. He had not much time to make his arrangements, but he hit upon a very good plan. In that we do not resemble him, for with all our lifetime to make our arrangements in, and the certainty that we shall have some time to be discharged from our stewardship, and give an account of it before the judgment-seat of God, we too often make none at all. As our Lord says: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

The steward, I say, hit on a good plan; and that was to obtain the favor of his master's debtors by taking something off the bills which they had to pay, that they might in return contribute something to his support and save him from the necessity of working or begging for the remainder of his life. In this way he made friends for himself with the money which had been committed to him, in order that these friends might receive him into their dwellings when he was turned out of his own.

This is the part of his conduct which we have to imitate. We have to imitate the steward by making friends with the means which our Lord has given us--friends who will be of service to us in the new life upon which we have so soon to enter, the life which comes after death.

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But who are these friends to be? Generally people try to buy the favor of the rich and the great. But these are not the friends who are going to be of use to us in the next world.

No, the poor, not the rich, are the ones whose friendship will be of use to us there. In this life they will not help those who help them, because they cannot; but they will in the next. If you help them the blessing which they give you is not only a blessing when you receive it, but it is treasured up for you, long after you have forgotten it, in God's eternal memory.

He is preparing in heaven beautiful and glorious mansions for these friends of yours, who are also friends of his, to make up for the miserable ones in which they have lived on earth. There are others like them which he is preparing for us all. He has gone to get them ready. "In my Father's house," said our Lord, "there are many mansions. ... I go to prepare a place for you." These mansions are being prepared for you, but whether you enter into their possession depends very much on how you treat the poor, to whom they more properly belong. Be charitable, then, to them, for they have the keys of the homes which you will shortly have to seek.

And in your charity to the poor remember one who is always poor, at least in this country of ours. I mean God's holy church. She is a very great beggar, and a very tiresome one, I know--always asking you for more; it seems as if she would never be satisfied, and I do not believe she ever will.

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But then she is a good friend of yours, and what you give to her is, like what you give to other poor people, more for your own good than for hers. For it is chiefly by her help that you are to reach those everlasting dwellings which our Lord promises to you.

If you did not do anything for her it certainly would be hard for you to be saved; for it is through her that the means of salvation come. The more liberal you are to her the more liberally will those means be given to you; and if you think you have enough of them, and are quite sure of heaven with what you have got, certainly that is not the case with everybody; and you know we ought to love our neighbor as ourselves.

These, then, God's poor and his church, are the best friends you can make with the temporal means that he has given you, for they are the ones who can provide for you in that eternity which is coming so soon. Imitate the prudence of the steward, and you will not only make friends as he did, but you will also please your Master, which he did not, and obtain from Him who is your best friend an eternal reward.

Sermon CII.

Give an account of thy stewardship.
--St. Luke xvi. 2.

There is nothing said against the ability of this steward. On the contrary, he gives every evidence of being a shrewd business man. His investments had probably been prudent, and his debtors reliable men. The fault for which he is held blamable is carelessness. He had not kept his accounts squared up.

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If the master had waited for the regular time of enquiring into his accounts, or had given him a little notice of his intention to do so, he would, in all probability, have found everything in excellent order, and have praised his steward for his good management. But he came upon him unawares, when he had many debts outstanding and his books were in disorder. This, in a business man, is inexcusable; and whenever we hear of a similar case we always condemn the unfortunate man, and say, "It served him right; he should have attended to his business." Little do we think, indeed, how our own words may some day stand witness against us. The application of the Gospel is too plain to need any explanation, but there is one point I would impress upon you particularly this morning: our carelessness. We are all stewards of our own souls, and concerning the care we have taken of them, the use to which we have put the many opportunities of merit, the investment, as it were, we have made of the innumerable graces offered us, we shall have to render a strict account, and at what moment we know not. We know that we have many debts, and that it would go hard with us if we had to meet them at once; we know that we have not straightened up our accounts for a long time, and that everything is in disorder. Yet we go on in the same careless way day after day and month after month. Sometimes we get messages and warnings from our Lord; a mission is preached, we meet with temporal reverses, or we are thrown on a bed of sickness and think our Lord is about to ask us for the account of our stewardship, and we make a hurried compromise with our sins, the best we can do under the circumstances.

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But no sooner do we find the account is not really required than we fall back into the former careless way of conducting the

business of our soul. Indeed, it is strange that women who are such good housewives, and men who give such careful attention to the temporal things of this life, are so utterly negligent when it comes to that which is the most important of all--the business of their soul. One would think they had no faith. The foolish excuses they make!--they are too much mixed up with the world to be pious, they have to attend to their family, and the like. As though they were not to save their soul in this world; as though the attending to their soul and the care of their family were two separate and distinct things! And then, when God, seeing that prosperity is not good for them, sends them reverses, they neglect their soul more than ever, and fail to see that if they had looked after their soul they might have been even better off in this world's affairs. Take a warning, then, my brethren, from the lesson of to-day's Gospel; keep the accounts of your soul in order, for you know not the time when the Master will say: "Give an account of thy stewardship." And let not those who make their Easter duty think the lesson does not apply to them, but let not a single month pass by without rendering an account to God.

Sermon CIII.

_Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity,
that when you shall fail
they may receive you into everlasting dwellings._
--St. Luke xvi. 9.

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Every Christian knows our Lord does not intend to encourage men to love that which is entirely worldly. In fact, his caution often repeated, his most important warning to men, is that they do not love too much the riches of this world. He even tells us it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven unless God himself keep that man from loving his money and possessions more than he ought to do. This is what too often makes riches a mammon of iniquity. The words can also be taken to mean riches gained by fraud, robbery, or unjust dealing of any kind. Men of the world will say this is all the words can mean. God, however, has more to say about it. In his mind these words include all that a man may gain from motives which are impure and mean in the sight of God. Now, the duty of every man is to look at everything as God looks at it. He must find out God's opinion of what is right or wrong, and make that opinion the law of his own life. The words "mammon of iniquity" mean, therefore, not only riches and possessions gained unjustly, but also that honor, esteem of men, that social position, or that high office gained by sinful actions or from bad motives. What, then, is a man to do who has offended God in this way? If he has gotten unjustly money or property he must restore it, be it much or little. But, one may say, "I will lose my reputation if I give it back. I shall be found out." This is not true in most cases. A man can restore privately. He can see that the one he has wronged gets back again that which belongs to him. He is not obliged to tell him who took it from him. If it cannot be done by himself without losing his good name, let him tell his confessor about it. He will manage it for him. The priest is ordained and instructed in order to help

him in this as well as in other difficulties.
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Moreover, what sort of a good name is that which that man knows is a false one? If not dead to sincerity of spirit that man must feel like a hypocrite. He must feel that he is not even the shadow of an honest man so long as he is called by a name he does not deserve. He must sometimes long to be again a truly honest man. Let him restore, and then he will be again an honest man. He will then have that peace which is more to him than wealth or honor of this world. At least let him tell the priest about it. He makes a great mistake who stays away from confession because he has done wrong. The confessor can help him when he cannot help himself. He can make it easy for him to do right when it seems hard. Another will say: "I have taken a little from this one and a little from that one. I do not know the people I have wronged." Then give what is gained unjustly to the poor. The law of the land, as well as God's law, will not permit a man to keep that which he has gained dishonestly. The one who restores in this manner adds good works to his act of restitution. He relieves God's poor; he clothes the naked and feeds the hungry; he gains the prayers of the poor, whom God has promised to hear always. These prayers bring blessings on his head, true sorrow for sin into his soul, and secure for him the grace of a happy death. Riches of injustice thus used will make friends who will get for him by their prayers an everlasting habitation in heaven. What other things are included in the riches of injustice? All that is valued by pride, ambition, self-love, vanity. All that man loves in this world because it makes him appear to be above his fellow-men. The proud, ambitious, selfish, and vain man has robbed God of the glory and honor due to him alone.
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He has worked for himself alone, and forgotten God, except to use God for his own private benefit. This man will often make bad confessions and communions in order to appear to be good. But what riches of injustice has he gained? He has gotten a pleasant manner, a sweet smile, a habit of talking respectfully to every one whose praise is pleasing to him, who can bring him custom or give him a vote for office. These things, good in themselves, are made bad by the motive in his heart. Let this man change his motive and all will be right. He must use these same manners and smiles for God's sake. He must show that respect to every one, high or low, rich or poor. He must do this for the love of God and love of all men, for God's sake. This man, also, will then have gained the prayers of the poor by repairing in this way sins of pride, ambition, and self-love. He will find he has gained friends with the riches of injustice who will cause him to be received into everlasting habitations.

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Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

1 _Corinthians x._ 6-13.

Brethren:

We should not covet evil things, as they also coveted. Neither

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

Gospel.

St. Luke xix. 41-47.

At that time:

When Jesus drew near Jerusalem, seeing the city, he wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee: and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.

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And entering into the temple, he began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying to them: It is written: "My house is the house of prayer"; but you have made it a den of thieves. And he was teaching daily in the temple.

Sermon CIV.

_My house is the house of prayer.
But you have made it a den of thieves._
--St. Luke xix. 46.

What made our Lord so severe with these people of whom the Gospel tells us, who were selling and buying in the temple? He was usually gentle and mild, not violent, as on this occasion. He was generally content with reproving what was wrong; here he resorted to force--that force which no one could resist, and which he could always have used if he had chosen; by which he could have destroyed all his enemies in a moment, if he had seen fit to do so. And he not only made these buyers and sellers leave the house of God, but he drove them out in confusion, and also, as we read elsewhere, overturned the tables and chairs which they had used. Well, one reason for his severity probably was that those who sold were making an unjust profit out of the necessities of those who bought; for the things which they were selling were such as had to be offered by the people for the sacrifices of the temple, and could not well be obtained by them anywhere else. But I think his principal motive was to impress on his followers, and on us who were to come after them, a lesson which we are very apt to forget. He wanted to teach it to us in such a way that we could

not forget it: and therefore he made use of this extraordinary means.
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This lesson is contained in the words which he quotes from his prophet Isaias: "My house is the house of prayer." These words were true of the temple in which he then was, but they have a more special reference to the temples in which he now dwells, in which he dwells continually, which he did not in that temple, magnificent as it was.
You know, or ought to know, what these temples are. They are our churches, where he is all the time, in his Real Presence, in the Blessed Sacrament. These are the temples of which that in Jerusalem was only a figure or type.
The church is the place for prayer. That is the lesson for us, and we were, as I have said, the ones whom he chiefly wanted to instruct. For prayer--that is, for acts of religion of all kinds--and for nothing else. It is the place to think of God and to speak to him, and not to do anything else, innocent though it be.
It is not a place to talk or laugh in. You know that well enough, and would not, I suppose, laugh or talk; at any rate not much in church, especially if Mass was being celebrated or if there were a good many people there. But perhaps that would be because you would be afraid of what these people would say or think of you; for there are persons who, sometimes when nobody seems to be looking, do not scruple to have quite a nice little conversation, which might just as well be put off till some other time, if, indeed, there was any need for it at all.
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The church is not a place to stare around in, or to see what is going on, except at the altar. And yet there are persons who come to it, especially if there is to be a wedding or some other event of general interest, simply for this purpose and for nothing else. Perhaps they will kneel down a little while for form's sake; but they did not enter God's house to pray for themselves or for anybody else, but only to gratify their worldly curiosity by seeing how people look or behave, and to have something to talk about, possibly to make fun about afterwards, if not, indeed, at the time.
And that reminds me of another thing. The church is not the place to see what kind of clothes people have on, or to show off one's own good clothes. It is a place to be well dressed in, as far as one's means will properly allow; but that is in order to give honor to God, not to win it from one another. It is the place to dress neatly, but not showily; not in such a way as to attract the eyes of others, and draw their thoughts from those things on which they should then be employed.
And this again suggests something else; that is, that our thoughts, as well as our words and actions, belong specially to our Lord when we are in his presence, before his altar. Let us take particular care about this. If we take care of our thoughts our words and actions will take care of themselves.
And let us remember that when we spend our time in church unworthily we are stealing something from God. What is this that

we are stealing? It is the time and the honor that he has a right to expect from us. It is because of these thefts that he can truly say to us: "My house is the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves." This seems strong language; but do we not deserve it if we take from our Lord the little that he claims as his own?
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He may have called those who sold in the temple thieves, because they were cheating their neighbors; but is it not as bad to cheat him? Let us, then, be sorry for this cheating of ours, and try to make restitution in the time that is to come.

Sermon CV.

_God is faithful, who will not suffer you
to be tempted above that which you are able._
--1 Corinthians x. 13.

Some people seem to think that their sins are principally God's fault. A great many of you, my dear friends, who are listening to me now have frequently, I have no doubt, said as much. Of course you will say, and very rightly too, that such a charge against the good God is a horrible blasphemy; but, for all that, you have often been guilty of it.
You will, I think, want me to prove this before you will fully believe it. Well, it is very easy to do so. Have you never, when you accused yourself of some sin, said that you could not help it? You got in a passion, for instance, perhaps quite frequently, and spoke angry words, which of course you were sorry for afterwards; but you say that at the time you could not help it. What follows, then, if what you say is true? Why, in the first place, it follows, of course, that it was not your fault that you sinned; that in fact it was no sin for you at all, for if a person really cannot help doing a thing he is not to blame for it. But it was a sin; you acknowledge that; so if it was not your sin it must have been somebody else's.
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And that somebody else must have been Almighty God. He was answerable for the sin by not giving you the grace to avoid it. That is what it amounts to when you say that you could not help committing sin.
This horrible blasphemy, which then certainly is implied by the words, "I could not help it"--this blasphemy, which makes God the author of sin and responsible for it, is what St. Paul denies in the words from the Epistle of to-day which I have read to you. He says: "God is faithful"; he does give you enough grace. "He will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able"; he will not let you have a temptation so strong that, with the grace which he gives you, you cannot resist it.
There are some things which one cannot help, but sin is not one of them. If a hot coal falls on one's hand one cannot help feeling pain from it; and in the same way one cannot help feeling the fire of temptation with which God is sometimes pleased that we should be tried. But sin, which is the giving way of the will to temptation, one can always help. Sin, the giving way to temptation, is like holding the hot coal in your hand after it

has fallen there.
You do not want to hold the coal in your hand; but you do want to give way to temptation, because there is something pleasant in that. It is more pleasant to give way than to resist it; if it were not it would not be a temptation. It relieves your mind to say that angry word when you are provoked. It is hard often to resist temptation; that is the amount of it. But it is not impossible.
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Never say, then, when you accuse yourself of anything with which your conscience really reproaches you, that you could not help it. Do not say it, unless you wish to blaspheme God and throw the blame of your sin upon him. Remember that he is faithful, and does not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able; and say, rather, "It was hard to help it; I was very much tempted, but I could have resisted, and I am very sorry that I did not." I know that is what you mean very often when you say, "I could not help it." Say, then, what you mean, for it will help you very much the next time. It will put you in mind of what you must know to be the truth--that is, that you could have kept from sin; and when you are convinced of this you will, if you are in earnest, use all the means you have to do so. Above all you will see that one great reason why it was so hard to resist temptation was that, though you had grace enough to do so, you did not have enough to make it easy; and you will pray hard to get that abundant help which God will give to all who continually ask it from him.

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Tenth Sunday after Pentecost.
Epistle.
1 _Corinthians xii._ 2-11.
Brethren:
You know that when you were heathens, you went to dumb idols, according as you were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, saith Anathema to Jesus. And no man can say, The Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit: and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. To one, indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom: to another, the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit: to another, faith in the same Spirit; to another, the grace of healing in one Spirit: to another, the working of miracles: to another, prophecy: to another, the discerning of spirits: to another, divers kinds of tongues: to another, interpretation of speeches: but all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as he will.
Gospel.
St. Luke xviii. 9-14.
At that time:
To some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others,

Jesus spoke this parable: Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: O God! I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor such as this publican. I fast twice in the week: I give tithes of all that I possess.

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And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven; but struck his breast, saying: O God! be merciful to me a sinner! I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Sermon CVI.

_Two men went up into the temple to pray:
the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican._
--St. Luke xviii, 10.

There are not supposed to be any Pharisees nowadays, and the word "publican" is getting rather old-fashioned; so perhaps, before applying this parable to our own times, we had better understand who the Pharisees and the publicans were.

The Pharisees, in our Lord's time, were a very religious class among the Jews, very strict and correct in their belief, and with very strict consciences, too--strict, at least, about some things, particularly about such things as concerned their reputation for piety. About other matters they were sometimes rather too easy and charitable--easy and charitable, that is, to themselves; for it is quite possible that they might have criticised others for faults not very different from their own, as when this Pharisee in the Gospel called the poor publican standing in the corner an extortioner, or robber, as perhaps the word is better rendered; forgetting, it may be, some little transactions which, if rightly understood, might have fixed as bad a name on himself.

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These publicans, on the other hand, were not in any way a religious set of people; they did not pretend, like the Pharisees, to be so, nor were they in point of fact. They were called publicans because they collected the public taxes; they were blamed by the people, and with good reason, for extorting money unjustly from the poor. Their business was really, in those times, a proximate occasion of sin; this was the reason why St. Matthew, who was a publican before our Lord called him to be an apostle, never went back to his business again, as St. Peter did to his innocent occupation as a fisherman. The publican of this parable also, no doubt, had either made up his mind to give up his sinful life or was endeavoring to do so.

Both of these men, the Pharisee and the publican, were sinners. In that they were alike; the difference between them was that the publican acknowledged that he was a sinner and was trying to amend his life, while the Pharisee thought that he was perfect, or that, if he had any faults, they were such as no one could avoid, and which his Maker would readily overlook, especially in

a person of his exalted piety.
Now, I said in the beginning that there were not supposed to be any Pharisees nowadays: but I think that we shall find that there are some people of this kind, even among us Christians; and perhaps, if we go down very deep into our own consciences, we shall even find that we are Pharisees ourselves.
Some of these Pharisees make excellent confessions. They show a care in their examination of conscience equal to that of the saints; they have the most accurate knowledge of every fault, and are willing to go into every detail, if they are permitted to do so. This delicacy of perception of sin is a quality which certainly commands our admiration; but there is a circumstance which prevents this admiration from being quite unlimited.
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This circumstance is that the faults which they are so keenly alive to are not their own. They are those of other people with whom they live, or of whom they hear through some person of the same sort of sensitive conscience that they themselves have.
The world, in the eyes of these sensitive people, certainly has a melancholy aspect. Everybody is doing wrong, and nobody is doing right--nobody, that is, except themselves. They, thank God! are not so bad. They are innocent sufferers, enduring a continual martyrdom at the hands of these wicked people who live in the same house or close by. Their only consolation here below is to tell their friends how much they suffer, and how much others suffer, from these sinners. Others, it is true, may deserve it, but they themselves certainly never have. They wish that they were dead and out of reach of their persecutors. The most curious thing is that one of their great causes of annoyance is the way that other people will carry stories; this is the story that they spend their lives in carrying.
Perhaps you think this picture is overdrawn. I hope it is. And I do not believe that many people are such thorough Pharisees as these whom I have described. But there is too much, a great deal too much, of the Pharisaic spirit about us all.
And not nearly enough of the spirit of the publican--of humility, contrition, and purpose of amendment. How shall we acquire this spirit By looking into our own conscience, unpleasant as it may be, and letting those of our neighbors alone.
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If we sincerely examine our own hearts we shall not thank God that we are not like others, but rather pray to him that we may, before we die, have something like the perfection that many others have already reached; and ask him, as the publican did, to have mercy on us sinners--on us poor sinners, who are trying to be so no more.
That is the way, and the only way, that we sinners can get into the company of the saints; not by fancying ourselves there already. If we wish, then, to reach that blessed company, let us start on this way at once, for there is no time to lose.

Sermon CVII.

_Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled;
and he that humbleth himself shall be exulted._

--St. Luke xviii. 14.

One does not need to be a Christian, my dear brethren, to understand, as it would seem, the truth of these words of our Lord. Everybody knows that a man who is all the time praising himself, or who even shows that he has a pretty good opinion of himself, loses by it in the opinion of others. He does not even get as much credit for ability or virtue as he really deserves, besides being considered as stuck up and conceited, which everybody feels to be a defect. In fact, a man who is evidently very proud makes himself ridiculous.

And, on the other hand, one who is modest and unassuming generally is supposed to be more clever than he really is. People sometimes get a reputation for learning and depth of thought by simply holding their tongue--so convinced is the world that a really great man will not make a parade of his greatness.

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But this lesson of worldly prudence is not the real meaning of our Saviour's words. He does not wish to show us how to get a reputation for learning or for anything else. This would be merely encouraging and helping our vanity and pride. What he wishes to teach us is humility. He wants us to humble ourselves really; not to pretend to do so, that we may be more esteemed by the world.

Why, then, if that is the object, does he promise us that if we humble ourselves we shall be exalted? That, it would seem, could be no inducement to a man who had real humility. Such a man would not want to be exalted, you will say. Ah! there is where you are mistaken. Every humble man, every really good man, does want to be exalted. The saints, who are the models of humility for us, wanted it more than any one else in the world.

This may sound strange, but it is undoubtedly true. For what is it to be exalted in the true sense of the word?

It is to get near to God, who is the Most High. And the more one loves God the more does he wish to be near him; so all those who love God wish to be thus exalted and the saints more than all, because they love God more than any one else.

And this exaltation, which comes from being near to Almighty God, is what he promises, in these words of the Gospel, to the humble and refuses to the proud. This was what he gave to the publican and refused to the Pharisee; for he gave the publican his grace and his friendship, but the Pharisee failed to receive it on account of his pride. "This man," says our Lord, "went down to his house justified rather than the other"--that is, nearer to God, and therefore more exalted.

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The humble, then, will be raised into the friendship of God, and the proud will not. Nor can they come near him in any other way. He is too high above us for us to come near him except on his own terms. You cannot get near Almighty God by making the most of your natural powers, any more than you can get near the stars by going on the roof of your house. Some people in old times thought to scale the heavens by building a high tower; but God confounded their pride, and the tower of Babel is a byword for human folly and presumption to this day.

Let us, then, my dear brethren, not follow their example. Let us seek truly to be exalted, but in the way that he has appointed, in the way that his saints have chosen, and especially the way of Our Blessed Lady, the nearest to him and the humblest of all. And, in fact, if we really wish for this true exaltation it must needs be in this way; for if we really wish to be near God it must be for the love of him; and if we love him we must often think of him; and if we often think of him we must be humble; for how can the creature be proud who often thinks of the Creator of heaven and earth?

Sermon CVIII.

Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled;
and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.
--St. Luke xviii. 14.

It is a blessed and a happy moment, a sort of turning-point in life, my brethren, for any one of us when he wakes up to the conviction that he is nothing extraordinary after all. That is, if there is such a moment; for sometimes this conviction dawns on one gradually.

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Almost every one begins life with the other idea. Not that he has it himself at the start, but his friends have it for him. Almost every baby is considered, as you know, to be the finest and most beautiful one that ever was seen. Perhaps he does not quite come up afterward to the expectations of his fond parents; but at least he is remarkable in some way. He is a very clever boy, or a very good boy, or, at any rate, he could be if he wanted to; he has got it in him; he is much finer in some respects, perhaps in a great many, than the common run. He is going to turn out a great man; he is much more likely to be President of the United States than any other boy of his age.

And by the time he has got to man's estate he has a good deal of the same opinion himself. He does not like to have it even hinted that he is at all below par in anything; or if it is plain, even to himself, that he is, then it is a thing of no consequence, or he could excel in it if he chose to. The sorest points are of course those in which his choosing would make no difference. The less said about these the better.

Well, you know all this is what we call pride. Almighty God has mercifully arranged it so that it is generally knocked out of us to some extent as we travel on through the world; but still a good deal of it remains.

It is a thing that gives us a great deal of trouble of mind, and which generally keeps us back a great deal from really excelling in anything. It is a thing, therefore, which it is good to get rid of as soon as we can; and of course, therefore, you all want to know how to do this. I think the Gospel story of to-day throws some light on this point.

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The way to do it is the way of the publican, and the way not to do it is that of the Pharisee. And the way of the publican is that of common sense, too.

What is it? It is lo look at and consider our defects, and not

our strong points. The publican might have talked like the Pharisee, too. He might have said: "I am a much better fellow than that old Pharisee. I am a good, hearty, generous soul. I treat my friends to the best I have got; and if I do cheat sometimes a little in business I make up for it in charity; and I don't make a show of the good I do and put on a pretence of religion like those canting hypocrites."

And so he might have gone on to the end of the chapter. But he didn't. No; he just went off in a corner all by himself and said: "O God! be merciful to me a sinner." He did not think about his virtues, but about his sins; and when he asked the Lord to be merciful to him he meant that he wanted to amend his life, and was going to do it with the help of God, and imitate the Pharisee, whom he really thought better than himself; for you see he did not think of the sins of the Pharisee, but of his virtues. I say that his way was of common sense. It is the way we all follow when at work on anything except ourselves. We look at the defects in our work, and not its excellences; and if we have very good sense it seems to us pretty much all defects.

Humility, then, after all, is only common sense. And I think you ought to see pretty well one reason at least why, as our Lord says, he that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself exalted.

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The one who exalts himself, who stops to look at his virtues, is all the time running down, and losing even the little virtue that he admires; while he that really humbles himself is constantly getting better. So humility is necessary for progress. It is so in the things of this world even, and much more so in our spiritual affairs.

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Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

1 _Corinthians xv._ 1-10.

Brethren:

I make known unto you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand: by which also you are saved, if you hold fast after what manner I preached to you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all, which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures: and that he was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then was he seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace in me hath not been void.

Gospel.

St. Mark vii. 31-37.

At that time:
Jesus going out of the borders of Tyre, came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the territories of Decapolis. And they bring to him one that was deaf and dumb; and they besought him to lay his hand upon him. And taking him aside from the multitude, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue: and looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And he charged them that they should tell no man.

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But the more he charged them so much the more a great deal did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

Sermon CIX.

_He hath made both the deaf to hear,
and the dumb to speak._
--St. Mark vii. 37.

Our Saviour, in his ministry on earth, no doubt cured a great many deaf and dumb people. The story of this particular cure has been preserved for us on account of the peculiar and significant way in which he performed it. The memory of it is renewed every time that a child is baptized in the Catholic Church.

In the ceremonies of baptism the priest, who represents our Lord in this as in all other sacraments, touches the nostrils and the ears of the infant or adult with his thumb moistened with the saliva of his mouth, saying this same word, "Ephpheta"--that is, "Be opened."

Now, the child or grown person who is brought to baptism is not, as a general thing, deaf or destitute of any of the senses, and the priest does not, in performing this ceremony, work what we should commonly call a miracle, as our Lord did in the cure of this deaf and dumb man. But in baptism what we may call a miracle, because it is so wonderful, though so common, is worked; or rather not one miracle but many. One of them--the one represented by this action of the priest, and also by that of our Saviour in the Gospel--is the opening of the spiritual senses by the words which come from the mouth of God.

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This opening of the spiritual senses is a much greater blessing than the opening of the bodily ears. But, unfortunately, most of us who are baptized do not preserve this great grace. As we grow up, instead of seeing and hearing better and better all the time with our spiritual eyes and ears, as we do with our bodily ones, we are too apt to lose the use of them altogether. They get covered over and choked up with the dust of this world; and, after a while, though having eyes we do not see, and having ears we do not hear.

So there are a great many deaf and dumb people besides those who are commonly called so. These deaf and dumb people, however, often talk a good deal, and hear, as it would seem, pretty much

everything that is to be heard. But there is only a very little of all the immense amount of talk that comes from their mouths that is of any use to themselves or to their neighbors, and that which they happen to hear that might be of use to them seems to go in at one ear and out at the other.

What is it that the spiritual ear ought to hear? It is the voice of God. The Holy Ghost is all the time speaking to us, either by his own inspirations in our hearts, by our guardian angels, by the voice of the clergy who preach with his authority and in his name, by good books, or by some other means. But we do not listen to his voice; we do not let it reach the ears of our soul, though it may those of our body; and so those ears of the soul, from want of practice, get so deaf that they cannot hear it, though it sound ever so plainly.

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And so, becoming deaf, we become dumb also. You know that is always the way. When a person cannot hear at all he is apt to forget how to speak. This is the case with people who become deaf to God's voice. First they do not try to hear it, either because they are careless, or because they do not want to; they stifle his inspirations; they never think of such a thing as reading a spiritual book, and if they listen to sermons it is only to criticise the preacher, not to hear the word of God, which they could find in any Catholic sermon, if they chose. And so, not hearing his voice, their spirit loses its tongue; they forget to pray to him, or, if they do pray, it is only with the lips and not with the heart; they forget to say anything for him or about him to their neighbor; and, worst perhaps of all, they forget to go to confession. That is where their tongues are specially tied. Sometimes they even imagine that if they should go to confession they would have nothing to tell.

To be spiritually deaf and dumb is a great deal worse than to have no bodily senses at all. A man may live without those senses just as with them; but when he is spiritually deaf and dumb, it means that his soul is dead. If, then, you are in this state, or falling into it, rouse yourself while there is time, and beg of our Lord to open your ears that you may hear his voice plainly, for it will not speak to you much more; and to loose your tongue, that it may give glory to his name before you die.

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Sermon CX.

_He hath made both the deaf to hear,
and the dumb to speak._
--St. Mark vii. 37.

There are a good many people, my dear brethren, who are afflicted with a deafness and dumbness a great deal worse than that of the poor man whose cure is recorded in to-day's Gospel. You all know several such people, I think; perhaps you are acquainted with quite a number; it may be even that you are such yourselves. The trouble with the poor man whom our Lord cured was only in his body; the trouble with these people of whom I speak is in their souls. He was deaf and dumb corporally; they are deaf and dumb spiritually. Who are these unfortunate people? They are those who

are in the state of mortal sin; who are living day after day in that state, and have been, perhaps, for years. Their souls are deaf; for God is calling to them continually to repent, and they refuse to hear him. Their souls are dumb; for they have had for a long time a confession to make, and that confession is not yet made.

As I said just now, you all know such people. They are easily known. They are the people who let Easter after Easter go by without approaching the sacraments. Their life may be evidently bad; or perhaps, on the other hand, it may seem to be pretty good. They go, it may be, quite regularly to Mass, and observe some of the other laws of the church. But there is one which they neglect, and that is the one which shows their true character. That is the precept of the yearly confession.

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When it comes to that either they are honest enough to say: "I cannot make up [my] mind to give up my sins, so it will be no use for me to go to confession," or they are dishonest enough to make some wretched excuse, such as: "I have too much reverence for the sacraments to receive them without due preparation, and I have not time to prepare," or, "I am sure I don't know what I would have to say to the priest; I can't think what you people are bothering him for all the time."

My dear brethren, people that make excuses of this kind are like ostriches. These birds, it is said, when pursued, hide their heads in the sand to avoid being seen, leaving their whole bodies exposed. Excuses like these never deceived anybody yet, and never will. Everybody knows that if a man refuses to go to his confession when the church requires him to do so, the reason is that he is living in a way that his conscience reproaches him for, and that he does not choose to live in any other way. Everybody knows that if a man's conscience is really clear he will be very willing to go to the priest and tell him so; and everybody knows that everybody has time to prepare.

No, the fact is that these Christians who live in the state of sin and neglect of their duties are, if not already quite deaf and dumb spiritually, at least rapidly becoming so. Every day the voice of the Holy Ghost is sounding more and more faintly in their ears; every day, instead of bringing them nearer to a good confession, puts them farther away from it. Every day the cure of their spiritual deafness and dumbness is getting more and more difficult, and needing more of a miracle of God's grace to accomplish it. They are like travellers who lie down to rest in the Alpine snows and wake only in the next world.

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If any of you, my dear brethren in Christ, who are now here and listen to my voice, which is another call from him to you, are in this fearful state, or are falling into it, may he work that miracle and bring you back to your senses! But whether he is to work it or not depends very much upon yourself. Rouse yourself, then, and ask him to do so while you are yet able.

For a time is coming, and that soon, but too late for you, when he will make you hear and speak indeed, whether you will or no; when the thunders of his eternal judgment shall sound in your

ears, and when you will have to confess your sins, not to one man in secret, but before all men and all the angels and saints; and not with the hope of forgiveness, but with the certainty of condemnation. God grant that you may save your soul before that dreadful day, and be able to say with thankfulness, not with terror and despair: "He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

Sermon CXI.

And taking him aside from the multitude.
--St. Mark vii. 33.

I suppose there is no trouble more common to people in the practice of their religion, whether they are particularly pious or not, than distractions at prayer. One's thoughts, perhaps, are pretty well under control while employed in the usual duties of the day; but as soon as the time comes to get on one's knees before God, away go the thoughts over everything under the sun except the words which are in the prayer-book.

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It really is quite discouraging sometimes; it appears as if our Lord did not want to speak to us or to have us speak to him. But we know that this is not so. How, then, shall we account for our not hearing his voice, and not being able to say anything worth his hearing, when we set out to pray? How is it that we are so deaf and dumb in his presence?

There are various reasons, no doubt, my brethren, but there is one common to almost all people living in the world; and I think it was this which our Saviour wished to suggest to us when he took the deaf and dumb man aside from the multitude, as we read in to-day's Gospel, before he would work his cure.

He could have cured the man where he was; but he took him aside from the multitude, he got him away from the crowd in which he was, to show us, as it seems to me, that we cannot be cured of our spiritual deafness and dumbness, that we shall never be able to hear God or to speak to him as we should, till we, too, come out of the crowd.

This living all the time in a crowd is really the most common and most fatal obstacle to prayer, at least with those who are really trying to serve God. It is not always that there are so very many people around us; we may make a crowd, a multitude for ourselves out of a very few. The crowd is not so much one of people as of ideas coming from the people and things which we meet with in our daily life. We talk too much; we look around and notice things too much; we read the papers too much--too much for our profit in any way, but especially for acquiring the spirit of prayer.

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What wonder is it that it is so hard to pray, and that there are so many distractions? One kneels down at the end of the day and tries to say some evening prayers. There is not a single thought in his or her head like those which are in the prayer-book. And why not? Because there is no room for any. The poor head is packed full of all sorts of other ones coming from the events of the past day or week. All the people one has seen, all the foolish things they have said, the gossip they have retailed,

even the clothes they have worn, or perhaps the stories or squibs and the useless and trifling news one has seen in the paper, take up the mind; there is a multitude of reflections and echoes from the sights and sounds of the day, which hide the face of God and drown his voice. It is in vain to say that one cannot help it. Of course one cannot separate one's self from these things altogether. Those who live a life of prayer in the most secluded convent, even the hermits of the desert, have sources of distraction around them and in their past lives. But what is the need of having so many of them? Why not hear less talk and gossip, see fewer people and things, read less useless trash, cultivate silence a little more, and make a little solitude within ourselves, even when we cannot have it outside? If we will not do this, if we will distract ourselves needlessly out of the time of prayer, what wonder if we are distracted in it?
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Come out of the multitude, then--the multitude of people that surround you, and of unnecessary thoughts, words, and actions, and see if your spiritual deafness and dumbness will not get better. You will hear a good deal from God, and be able to say a good deal to him that seems impossible now, if you will get a little away from this crowd, and from the noise it makes.

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Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

2 _Corinthians iii._ 4-9.

Brethren:

Such confidence we have, through Christ towards God. Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God. Who also hath made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the Spirit. For the letter killeth; but the Spirit giveth life. Now if the ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which is done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather in glory? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory.

Gospel.

St. Luke x. 23-37.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them: and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself." And he said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou

shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor?
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And Jesus answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead. And it happened that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, he passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey came near him; and seeing him was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine: and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him: and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go and do thou in like manner.

Sermon CXII.

_Which of these three in thy opinion
was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers?
But he said: He that showed mercy to him.
And Jesus said to him:
Go and do thou in like manner._
--St. Luke x. 36, 37.

You would not think it a compliment if one should say that you were a bad neighbor, for that would mean that you were quarrelsome and tale-bearing, that you kept late and noisy hours, that you beat the neighbors' children; perhaps that you would steal something, if you got the chance. So none of us would like to be called a bad neighbor. But let us see how good a neighbor we are, using our Blessed Lord's words read to-day as a text.
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As we pass along the road of life here and there we see a neighbor lying half dead. He is stricken down with sickness; his body tormented with racking pains, burning with fever, and perhaps deserted by all--not one left to give him a drink of cold water. What kind of a neighbor are we to this poor brother of ours? When we hear him moan and cry, and ask for a bite of nourishing food, for a little money to buy some medicine, does our heart soften towards him, do we kindly assist him, or do we pass on as if we saw him not, hard of heart like the degraded Jewish priest or the self-sufficient Levite?
And we come across many a poor creature who has fallen among the worst kind of thieves--viz., those who have stripped him of his good name. Alas! you are often forced to stand by and see and hear your neighbor deprived of his reputation by scandal-mongers. How do you act in that case? Does your heart burn with sympathy for him? Do you raise your voice in his defence? Do you correct your children when they engage in such talk? Do you turn out of your house those notorious backbiters and tale-bearers of your neighborhood when they begin their poisonous gossip? If you act

in this way you are a good neighbor, a good Samaritan to an outraged and dying brother. But if you fail in this--if you hold your peace when you could say a good word of praise or excuse; if you permit those subject to you to talk ill of others; if you let your house be made a gossip-shop--then, by your silence and your consent, you are like the priest and Levite of this day's Gospel. And if you join in backbiting, why you are worse yet; you are yourself a robber of your neighbors dearest possession, his good name.
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But O my brethren! what lot so sad as that of the poor wretch who has fallen into the clutches of Satan and his devils, who has been robbed of God's very grace, his soul killed by mortal sin? The ways of life are full of such poor sufferers. Oh! what pity have you for the poor sinner? What prayers do you offer to God for the conversion of the sinner? What warnings and exhortations do you give him, especially if he be dear to you by ties of blood? What example do you set him? I fear that some of us despise the poor sinner, and feel quite too holy to seek him out, to invite him to hear a sermon, to ask him to come and get the pledge, to try and get him into good company.
Brethren, may God give us grace to be good Samaritans; to have a tender heart and a generous hand for Christ's poor and sick and outcast; to have a charitable word for the saving of our neighbor's good name; and, above all, to be always ready to bind up the spiritual wounds of the sinner by our prayers and example, and to pour healing oil upon them by our exhortations!

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon CXIII.

There are two opposite faults to both of which almost everybody is more or less inclined. The first of these is meddling with other people's business; the second is shirking one's own.
It is rather the second of these than the first which is rebuked in the Gospel of to-day, in the persons of the priest and the Levite who went by without helping the poor wounded man.
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Now, in the first place, let me explain what I mean by shirking one's own business or duties. It is not simply leaving them undone and expecting that they will remain so; but it is putting off what one ought to do one's self on to somebody else, and expecting somebody else to do it for you. So it is, you see, just the opposite of meddling, which is trying to do somebody else's duty for him when he would prefer to do it himself.
Now, this shirking was just what the priest and Levite were guilty of. I do not suppose that our Lord meant to describe them as really hard-hearted men, willing to let the poor man die rather than help him; but they said to themselves, "Oh! this is not my business particularly; there are plenty of other people passing along this road all the time, and I am a little hurried now. I have got a deal to attend to, and there will be somebody coming this way before long. Five minutes or so will not make much difference; and perhaps there is not so much the matter with the man after all. It may be his own fault. Very likely he has

been drinking. At any rate, he has got no special claim on me." This is a very natural state of mind for a person to get into, and how common it is, in such a case as this, we can see from the common proverb that "everybody's business is nobody's business." There are very many good works that really are everybody's business, that everybody ought to do something towards at least, but which are in great danger of not being done at all on account of this habit of shirking which is so common. And the ones which are most in this danger are those of the kind of which this Gospel gives us an example; that is, works of charity toward our neighbor.

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People say to themselves, just as the priest and Levite did: "Oh! there are plenty of other people that can attend to this matter a great deal better and easier than I can. I am sure it will be done somehow or other. Such things always are attended to. I don't feel specially called on to help in it."

Well, this might be all very good, if those people did really help in some things generously, and the case before them was one of no very urgent need. Of course we cannot contribute to everything. But the difficulty is that too often we find them shirking, not occasionally, but all the time. If a poor man comes to the door, or a collection is taken for the poor in the church, they say to themselves: "The St. Vincent de Paul Society can look out for those things; I am sure they must have money enough. I shall do my duty if I put a few pennies in the poor-box now and then." If contributions are called for in times of famine or pestilence, they say: "There is plenty coming in to supply all that is wanted; I can see that by the papers. They can get along very well without me." And so it goes all the way through. They do not give anything to anybody or do anything for anybody--that is, nothing to speak of--without getting a return for it. They will go to picnics, fairs, or amusements for a charitable object; but when it comes to doing anything simply for the love of their neighbor, that is left for somebody else.

Let us all, then, my brethren, examine ourselves on this point, and resolve to amend and to do our fair share of the work of charity, which is everybody's business; and not, like the priest and the Levite, pass it on to the next man who comes along.

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Sermon CXIV.

_But he, willing to justify himself,
said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor?_
--St. Luke x. 29.

The lawyer of whom the Gospel tells us to-day, my brethren, seems to have wanted to be excused from loving everybody, and to find out just how far the circle of his affections must be extended; or, at least, to get our Lord's opinion on that point. The question which he asked was something like that of St. Peter when he enquired how often he must forgive his brother; though I hardly think the lawyer was as much in earnest as the great Prince of the Apostles to know the answer.

Well, our Saviour, as you see, did not answer the question

directly, but told a story which is, or should be, familiar to all of you: the story of the good Samaritan. He made the Samaritan give his judgment on the point, and then approved that judgment.

"Which of these three," he asked of the lawyer after telling him the story, "was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers?" That is, "Which of the three seems to have considered the poor fellow to be his neighbor?" "The Samaritan," replied the lawyer, of course, "because he showed love for him." "Very well, then," said our Lord, "adopt his opinion, for it is the right one. Go and do thou in like manner."

And yet what reason had the Samaritan to consider this man to be his neighbor? He must naturally have supposed him to be a Jew, finding him so near to Jerusalem; and the Samaritans had no very neighborly feeling toward the Jews.

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The Samaritans and Jews were, in fact, very much like cats and dogs to each other. You may read in the chapter of the Gospel just preceding this how the inhabitants of a certain place in Samaria would not let our Lord into it, simply because he seemed to be going to Jerusalem; and in another of the towns of the Samaritans a woman thought it strange that our Lord, being a Jew, should even presume to ask her for a drink of water. And though this was a good Samaritan who was passing over that road between Jerusalem and Jericho, still he must have had some of the feelings of his people.

The reason why the good Samaritan considered the man his neighbor is, then, plain enough. If he regarded a Jew as his neighbor it was because he regarded every one as such. That was the judgment of his which our Divine Lord approved. Let there be no limit to your charity. Love every one; that is the meaning of his command, just as he told St. Peter to forgive any number of times.

But how few there are who obey this law of his! Some only care for their relations or acquaintances, and regard the rest of the world with the most supreme indifference. Others, on the contrary, live in a perpetual quarrel with almost every one whom they know, though very willing to be friendly with strangers. Others stop at the limit of their own nation or race; a man who is so unfortunate as to speak a foreign language or have a skin somewhat darkly colored is quite beyond the reach of their benevolence.

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It is plain enough that this is all wrong. If we would be like our Lord, and do as he commands, we must get over all these feelings. Above all, we must sink for ever out of sight those hateful standing quarrels which are more after the devil's own heart than anything else which he finds in this world; we must drop at once all that humbug about not wishing any harm to Mr. and Mrs. So-and-so, but being never going to speak to them again. It is not enough to wish no harm to any one; we must wish good to every one, and try to do every one all the good that comes in our way; make up our minds to feel kindly to every one, and to show every one that we are willing and anxious to act as we feel. Of course there must be degrees in affection; we are not required to

love every one as much as a father or mother, or a son or a daughter; but that no one must be excluded from it; that we must have a positive love for all; that it will not do even to pass by with indifference a single one of our brethren, however seemingly estranged from us--this is the lesson taught us by the parable of the priest, the Levite, and the good Samaritan.

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Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Galatians iii. 16-22.

Brethren:

To Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed. He saith not, "And to his seeds," as of many; but as of one, "And to thy seed," who is Christ. Now this I say, that the testament which was confirmed by God, the law which was made after four hundred and thirty years, doth not disannul, to make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. But God gave it to Abraham by promise. Why then was the law? It was set because of transgressions, until the seed should come, to whom he made the promise, being ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now, a mediator is not of one: but God is one. Was the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could give life, verily justice should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Gospel.

St. Luke xvii. 11-19.

At that time:

As Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he passed through the midst of Samaria in Galilee. And as he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off: and lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed.

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And one of them, when he saw that he was cleansed, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell on his face, before his feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said; Were there not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger. And he said to him: Arise, go thy way, for thy faith hath made thee whole.

Sermon CXV.

_And as he entered into a certain town,
there met him ten men that were lepers,
who stood afar off._
--St. Luke xvii. 12.

The leprosy is a most foul and loathsome disease which attacks the skin and sometimes spreads itself over almost the entire surface of the body. This pestilential disorder, besides the

intense suffering it must cause, renders its victim an object of disgust and aversion to those around him. It seems to have been very prevalent in the East in former times, and during the middle ages it was quite common in Europe, where it was brought by the Crusaders returning from the wars carried on for the possession of the Holy Land. A man infected with leprosy was looked upon by the state as dead, and hence the disease was called civil death. The leper was cut off from all intercourse with his fellows, and compelled to live alone or in the company of other lepers. Leprosy, therefore, subjected a man to the most galling sort of exile, since it forced him to part from home and friends, and to tear asunder every tie which binds the heart of man to this earth and to his fellow-men.

The holy Fathers have always regarded leprosy as a strong figure of sin. Sin spreads itself over the soul as leprosy does over the body, tainting and corrupting it, rendering it disgusting in the sight of its Maker, and forcing him to separate it from himself and the company of his angels and saints.

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Sin, too, forces the soul into exile from God, its true home, and severs all those endearing attachments which cluster round the thought of home. In this sense all mortal sin is a spiritual leprosy; but the one sin which deserves the name above all others is the sin of impurity, because it defiles body and soul alike, and is more infectious even than the ancient leprosy of the East. Impurity not only reproduces its pestilential self, but has, besides, the sickening power of engendering a horde of other frightful maladies distinct from, and only less disgusting than, itself. And yet, alas! impurity is now, as it was in the days of Noe, the crying sin of the world; a sin that is foreign to no class of society, to no order of civilization; a sin that each individual has to take constant and wearisome precautions against, if he would not be infected by its virus, which seems to permeate the very air we breathe, and lurk unseen in the meat and drink we take for the support of life.

St. Clement of Alexandria calls impurity the metropolis of vices, by reason, doubtless, of the numberless other vices which are born of it and make their home around it. This leprosy of the soul, impurity, is worse than any leprosy of the body, inasmuch as the death of the soul is an infinitely greater evil than that of the body.

God has at times allowed some of his saints to experience something of the foulness which the sin of impurity inflicts on the soul of the one who commits it. So it was with St. Euthymius and St. Catherine of Siena, who discovered impure persons by the stench which emanated from their presence.

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It were well, perhaps, if all innocent persons possessed this rare gift of some of God's saints, for they might then easily avoid contracting from others the foul leprosy of impurity. No one, indeed, can look for a grace so extraordinary, but every one who has charge of others, especially of the young, should take every means suggested by wisdom and experience to preserve them from contact with persons already infected with this vile

pestilence. A brief conversation with one badly tainted with the leprosy of impurity is oftentimes enough to implant its seeds in young and innocent hearts; and once the seeds are planted, they are hardly, if ever, entirely uprooted.

Leprosy not only attacked persons, but was found also in garments and in houses. So it is with the contagion of impurity, which not only watches its victim from the muddy eye of the libertine, but hides itself also in the folds of the lascivious dress, by which it is scattered abroad, and clings like some noxious vapor to the walls of houses where wanton deeds are done and loose language spoken. From all such persons, and things, and places keep the young and the innocent afar off. Let us remember that those only who love cleanness of heart shall have the King of heaven for their friend; and as we know from Holy Scripture that we cannot be chaste unless God gives us power to be so, let us ask him fervently and frequently for this most royal of all royal gifts, the gift of purity. Let us put aside all pride of heart, which, more than anything else, would provoke Almighty God to leave us to our own weakness and folly. Impurity is the lewd daughter of pride, while humility is the chaste mother of purity.

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Finally, brethren, let us all listen to the exhortation of St. Paul, and walk in the love of Christ, and let not fornication and uncleanness be so much as named among us; nor obscenity, nor foolish talking, nor scurrility, but rather giving of thanks (Ephesians. v. 5-6).

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon CXVI.

_And it came to pass,
as they went, they were cleansed._
--St. Luke xvii. 14.

You will find people who go to the sacraments pretty regularly sometimes giving rather a strange excuse when they have been away longer than usual. They will say, "My mind was upset," or "I had a falling out with my neighbor"; and they seem to think that, of course it was out of the question to go to confession till their minds got right side up again, or till they were thoroughly at peace with themselves and all the world.

And you will find people who do not go to the sacraments regularly, who, in fact, have not been for a long time, and who make a similar excuse for staying away--that is, that they are not in good dispositions to receive absolution. These people also think that they should not go to confession till in some way or another they have got in good dispositions.

It is natural enough, perhaps, that both these kinds of people should think as they do. They want, of course, to make a really good confession. They would not like to receive absolution feeling just as they do now; so they put it off till some time when their dispositions will be improved; but they make a great mistake, and lose a great deal of time by doing so.

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The mistake which they make is in not understanding that the preparation for confession which they could make with their

present dispositions is the best way for getting them into better ones.

They might learn a salutary lesson from the Gospel of to-day. You will have noticed, if you have listened to it carefully, that the poor men whom our Lord cured were simply told by him to go and show themselves to the priests, and that they set off, with the defilement of the leprosy still upon them, to obey his commands. They might very well have excused themselves by saying that they were not fit to go before the priests; and it would have been very true that they wore not. For, according to the law of the Jews, it was only lepers who had already been cured who were to show themselves to the priests; just as now it is only sinners who are penitent who can ask for absolution. The priests of the Old Law could not cure the leprosy, any more than those of the New Law can absolve a sinner before he repents.

But, nevertheless, they went, though it seemed to be of no use for them to go. And what happened to them on the road? Why, it happened, as the Gospel tells us, that as they went they were made clean.

Now, this, as I have said, has a lesson and a meaning for such as now are laboring under any spiritual disease or disorder, be it small or great, which is keeping them from the sacraments. The remedy for them, as for these men of whose cure we read in this Gospel, is to set out to show themselves to the priests; that is, to prepare themselves for confession. If they do they also will be cured on the way.

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I will venture to say that if those Catholics throughout the world who now feel themselves in any way indisposed for absolution would go to a church at the next opportunity, kneel down by a confessional, say a few prayers in earnest, examine their consciences, and then go in when their turn should come--and these are surely things that any one can do--far the greater part of them would be in good dispositions for absolution before it was time for the priest to give it. Some time, perhaps when they were on the way to the church, perhaps when they were kneeling and trying to prepare themselves, perhaps not till they were telling their sins or receiving the priest's advice, but some time or other the affection to sin or the temptation which now disturbs the peace of their souls would be taken away.

Why, then, not try such a simple remedy? If you really want to recover the health of your soul set out to make your confession, to show yourself to the priest, whether you feel it or not. If you will believe me, depend on it, it shall also be true for you that your faith shall make you whole.

Sermon CXVII.

_Were not ten made clean?
and where are the nine?_
--St. Luke xvii. 17.

How often, my brethren, has our Lord been obliged to ask this question and to make this reproach! Times there have been when your souls were suffering from the leprosy of sin, times when the sight of your defilement, the pangs of a guilty conscience,

roused you to a sense of your unhappy state, and you have raised your voice and cried out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on me."
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And he, who is goodness and compassion, has looked upon you, and bid you show yourself to the priest, and you have been healed. But have you followed the example of the one grateful leper--have you gone back to thank him? Have you prostrated yourself before him, mindful of the greatness of the favor, and in word and deed, by fervent prayer, by humility, by a new life, shown your gratitude? Or have you, like the nine, gone your way, thankful indeed, but with a momentary, imperfect, unspoken gratitude, because the greatness of the benefit was not dwelt upon?
This ingratitude, which is so common, this forgetfulness, cannot be put before you too strongly or too often. At the coming of Jesus, during a mission or a jubilee, many call out to him to cleanse them; they go to confession and Communion, and for a time are healed of their leprosy. But because they so quickly go their way; because in the bustle of the world they neglect to come back to thank Jesus, their Master and Healer; because they do not separate themselves from and avoid infected persons and places, their old companions, their old haunt of drinking, the occasions of sin whatever they may be, therefore it is that the old malady returns. And as Jesus looks out on the few who come to his feet, to the Holy Communion, he is forced to exclaim in sorrow: "Were not ten made clean? where are the nine?" Alas! that we should so often wound that sensitive, loving Heart, that we should be so remiss in giving a return of thanks, that we should check the divine goodness and turn its very favors into a cause of our own condemnation at the great day of reckoning!
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Ingratitude has always been considered, and deservedly, the worst of vices; it touches us more keenly than any other wrong or injury, it moves us with a sense of anger, sorrow, and aversion peculiar to itself, because it is an abuse or a forgetfulness of that which is highest and best in us--our love, and the effects of our love, our kindness. Yet God's benefits are innumerable, his love is infinite, his honor unspeakable, his power almighty. Many who call themselves Christians can find no time to thank him for the blessings of each day; many, whom he has healed from sin, go their way in forgetfulness; even those who do try to make some return, who do keep themselves in his grace and frequent the church and the sacraments, are often niggardly and ungenerous in their efforts. Does his grace move them to some sacrifice of their pride, their convenience, or their means? The kind word, the charitable act come, but oh! so slowly; the poor are dismissed with a trifling alms, the church-collector is an unwelcome visitor. Yet it is by these things we show our gratitude. Let us remember, brethren, that as God is infinitely bountiful himself, so he in turn loves a generous giver, and that his benefits bear a proportion to our return of thanks in words and in actions.

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Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.
Galatians v. 16-24.
Brethren:
I say then, walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another: so that you do not the things that you would. But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcraft, enmities, contentions, emulations, wrath, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envy, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.
Gospel.
St. Matthew vi. 24-33.
At that time:
Jesus said to his disciples: No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?
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And which of you by thinking can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. And yet I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. Now if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven: how much more you, ye of little faith? Be not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathen seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Sermon CXVIII.

No man can serve two masters.
--St. Matthew vi. 24.

Who is your master? Perhaps you think you are your own master. You may say, "I am a free man in a free country." But think a moment. Is your soul really free? Surely not; for you cannot hinder your thoughts from running backward and forward. Sometimes you think of the past in spite of yourself; you enjoy its sinful pleasures over again in your memory, or you again suffer pain at

the bare recollection of past sorrows and trials. Nor can you hinder your soul from rushing into the future. You dream of success; you enjoy in anticipation the pleasures of gratified ambition. Now, why does your soul thus cling to the dead past; why does it strive to fly to the unborn future? Because your soul is a servant. And who is its master? Pleasure. Yes, and pleasure is so powerful a master that we obey and serve even its remembrance, its shadow. Indeed, I might say that we are slaves of pleasure rather than servants.
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But this master takes different shapes. Sometimes he calls himself Fashion. Very many otherwise intelligent persons are servants of Fashion. Did you ever spend an hour looking at the drives in Central Park on a pleasant afternoon? There you can see men and women whirled along in carriages fit for kings to ride in, drawn by horses worth thousands of dollars--beasts whose trappings are fastened with gold-plated buckles--and coachmen and footmen dressed in showy livery. And why is all this parade? Because those who ride out in that style are servants. The name of their master and lord is Fashion; he demands all this extravagance of them, and they obey him. Follow them home, and you will see them again at his service, spending many thousand dollars in adorning their houses with the costliest furniture and decking their bodies, for Fashion's sake, with rich silks and gold: everything offered up on the altar of Fashion, though the poor of Christ are starving all around them.
And many of the poor are servants. Who is the master of the poor? He is a devil, and his name is Drink. This devil of Drink must have a good share of a poor man's wages of a Saturday night. And as soon as a poor man loses work and loses courage this devil of Drink comes and whispers in his ear: "Be my servant and I will make you happy." And by this lie he entices the poor fellow into one of his dens, and there he makes him drunk, and from the bar-room he sends him home to be a scandal to his little children, and may be to beat his wretched wife.
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Others this master sends from that liquor-store to steal, and so to prison and hopeless ruin; others he sends to brothels; many a one he afflicts with frightful diseases and sudden accidents, and so brings them to hell. Sometimes, too, this demon of Drink gathers his slaves together into a mob to murder and plunder, and then to be shot down by soldiers. O brethren! is it not strange that any one should be a servant of this devil. Drink? Yet he has countless slaves, and not only among the poor but in every station in life.
But the strangest thing of all is that the foolish servants of sin and Satan fancy that they can at the same time be servants of Almighty God. They call themselves by Christ's name--Christians. They go to his church now and then: and although they have served Mammon all their days, they yet hope to enjoy God and his happiness for all eternity. Hence Jesus Christ in to-day's Gospel cries out in warning: "_You cannot serve two masters_."
Hence in another place he says: "_Amen, amen I say unto you, that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin_." So we

have got to choose. We must be either servants of God or servants of Mammon; we cannot be both at once.
Therefore, brethren, instead of giving our time, and money, and health, and heart, and soul to sinful pleasures, to lust and intemperance, and fashion and avarice--all cruel tyrants--let us have the good sense to enter the service of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord and Master who made us, and who redeemed us, and who will judge us; whose yoke is sweet and whose burden is light; whose servants are innocent and happy in this life, and who shall enter with him into everlasting dwellings in the kingdom of heaven.

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Sermon CXIX.

_The works of the flesh are manifest...
Of the which I foretell you,
as I have foretold to you,
that they who do such things
shall not obtain the kingdom of God._
--Galatians v. 19, 21.

The works of the flesh--that is, the various ways in which the desires of the flesh can be gratified--have always been the chief obstacles presented by the world to our salvation. This was specially the case in St. Paul's day, when a corrupt and sensual civilization had been attained which placed the happiness of man in bodily pleasure. And it is also specially the case now more than at any other time since then; for a similar so-called civilization is the boast of the present age, in which the desires and appetites of the body are exalted above those of the soul.
But the temptations of this modern age are more concealed than those of the former one; and on that account they are more dangerous to Christians than those of the time of St. Paul were. Satan has, we may say, learned wisdom by experience. At the present day, instead of shocking us by sins like these of the pagans, which could only repel and disgust those who had even the weakest love of God, he has learned to seduce the faithful by the gradual introduction of amusements and pleasures having the name of being innocent, making them worse and worse as the moral sense of those who engage in them, or who witness them, becomes more and more blunted.
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A prominent example of such amusements is to be found in the dances which have become fashionable in the last few years. There can be no question at all that, had they been suddenly presented to our eyes not very long ago, every one, without hesitation, would have pronounced them sinful, and no one would have engaged in them who professed to have a delicate conscience; whereas now it is equally certain that very many people who are careful, and even scrupulous, profess to see no harm in these dangerous recreations.
Let me not be understood to mean that dancing is in itself condemned by the law of God. There is no other harm in it, if it

be done in a proper way, than the danger of excess and waste of time to which any amusement is liable. Nor is there any more harm in two people dancing together than in eight standing up in a set; and the particular measure of the music is a matter of no consequence. The harm is in the improper positions assumed in what are called round dances, and which have been lately brought into almost all others. These mutual positions of the parties, these embraces--for that they simply are--are in themselves evidently contrary to modesty and decency. It seems as if no one would have to stop, even a moment, to see and acknowledge this. A very plain proof of it, however, should it be needed, is that every person pretending to be respectable would blush to be detected in such positions on any other occasion, unless united to the other party by very near relationship or marriage.

And let no one say that fashion justifies them. If it did it could justify every other indecency or impropriety. Neither fashion nor anything else can justify what is in itself wrong.

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Nor is it true that they are not noticed or cared for by those who indulge in them; that they are indulged in only because the dance happens to be so arranged. That may be true for some persons; but there is, unfortunately, very little doubt that many only dance on account of these positions, and would not care about learning or practising this amusement were it not for the opportunity offered by it for them. This is a good enough straw to show which way the wind blows.

The plain state of the case is this: To many these dances are, as one would expect, a remote, or even a proximate, occasion of sin, at least in thought, and sometimes in word and action. To many more they are a sensual excitement bordering on impurity. To many, it is true, they are simply an amusement; but this is due to the force of habit, aided by the grace of God, not to the natural state of the case. But for all they are paving the way--in fact, they have already done so--to things which are more plainly wrong; in fact, they themselves are becoming worse and worse all the time.

One of the works of the flesh of which St. Paul speaks in this Epistle is immodesty. Take away the veil of concealment which the gradual introduction of this sensuous practice has put over your eyes, and see if it does not deserve that name. Do not defend yourselves by saying that some confessors allow it. They only allow it because they are afraid of keeping you altogether away from the sacraments; and they do not wish to do that, if in any way they can satisfy themselves that you have even the most imperfect dispositions with which you can be allowed to receive them. But it is better to be on the safe side.

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There is no confessor who would not far rather that you should abandon this dangerous pastime, that you should cease to set this bad example. There is not one who would not be much consoled should you do so. I beg you, then, to give them that consolation. Give up these dances for God's sake, and for the sake of the salvation of your own soul and those of others. Give them up, and you will receive an abundant reward of grace in this world, and

of glory in that which is to come.

Sermon CXX.

No man can serve two masters.
--St. Matthew vi. 24.

It is perhaps a little strange, my dear brethren, and not much of a compliment on the part of Christians to the wisdom of Him whose disciples they profess to be, that so great a part of them should spend their lives in trying to do what he so solemnly declares to be impossible. It is curious that so many, so very many, of them should never have made up their minds which shall be their master. Almighty God or the devil, but should be hopefully trying to serve both.

Some there are--nay, many, if you take their absolute number--who have truly gone over, once for all and in real dead earnest, to God's side. They keep up a constant battle with temptation; if by weakness and surprise they fall for a moment, they pick themselves up again instantly by a sincere repentance and confession, and begin the fight again. They live in the grace and friendship of their Creator, and they are willing not only to be his friends but to be known as such; they are not ashamed to be pious, but would be very much ashamed to be anything else.

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On the other hand, there are not a few who were put on God's side by baptism, but have gone over entirely to the camp of his enemy; who have sold themselves body and soul to the devil. These wretched traitors have denied their faith, and now perhaps even blaspheme or ridicule it; they give free rein to their favorite vices, whatever they may be; they have abandoned prayer, and have openly and even boastingly taken the road which leads to hell. You all know of such. In these days of apostasy many of you have such among your acquaintance. They have got Satan's mark on their foreheads, and they do not care to conceal it.

But there is a very common kind of Christian who does not answer to either of these descriptions or belong to either of these parties, but is trying to get the advantages of both--to serve both masters, God and the devil, and get paid by both. He fulfils part of the divine law; he goes to Mass, sometimes at least; perhaps he does not eat meat on Friday; and now and then, it may be once a year, or on the occasion of a mission or jubilee, he puts in an appearance at a confessional and tells about the sins he has committed. He goes to Holy Communion, and seems to come over really and entirely to God's side. Well, perhaps he does come over, for a little while at least, a few days or weeks; but the chances are very great that he never really means to quit the other side for ever; or, it may be, at all. In his mind impure thoughts, words, and actions, drunkenness, and the pleasures of the devil generally, are a kind of necessity of life; he has no idea of really quitting them at once and for ever. His idea is to make a sort of a compromise with God; to do his "duty," as he calls it--that is, to keep in what he imagines to be the state of grace for a few hours or days now and then, and afterward go on as before.

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He wants to serve the devil during life, and yet be acknowledged as God's servant at the end; in short, he tries to be the servant of two masters.

Are there not many of you here, my friends, who have lived in this way all your lives, and mean to all the rest of the time that God spares you in this world? There are even many who have this intention on whose tongues the traces of his Body and Blood are yet fresh. How do I know? Because they are not resisting temptation; because they have not left the occasions of sin; because, instead of calling on God continually in prayer, they go on wantonly blaspheming his holy name; because the immodest jest is ready to come at any moment to their lips; because, instead of showing dislike to impiety in others, they acquiesce in it and applaud it; because, in short, they have not even begun the battle by which alone they can be saved.

Brethren, this is not the way to live; this is not the way to prepare to die. If you will not be God's servants during life, the devil will claim you at the hour of your death, and get you, too, in spite of the last sacraments which you may receive. "Ha!" he will say to you, "you tried to serve two masters, did you? What a fool you were! You were mine all along. You tried to give God a share of your heart; know now, since you would not know it before, that he will not take less than the whole."

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Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Galatians v. 25; _vi._ 10.

Brethren:

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. And if a man can be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of mildness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so shall you 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 who 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 the 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 do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Gospel.

St. Luke vii. 11-16.

At that time:

Jesus went into a city called Nain: 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 much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her: Weep not.

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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: That a great prophet is risen up among us: and God hath visited his people.

Sermon CXXI.

Behold a dead man was carried out.

--St. Luke vii. 12.

The sight which our Lord saw, and which is recorded in to-day's Gospel, we have often seen. We can scarcely walk a mile or two in a great city without seeing a dead man carried out. The hearse, the funeral procession, the pall, the coffin, the sabled mourners, are all familiar and every-day objects. Again, we read of death every day. We find in the newspapers, the hospital reports, and so forth, death in a thousand shapes. We see that death waits for us at every corner of the street, that it lurks in the river, hovers in the atmosphere, hides in our very bodies, is concealed even in our pleasures. Again and again we have heard the beating of its heavy wings and seen the clutch of its clammy fingers--sometimes in our own houses, sometimes in our neighbors', sometimes on the sea, sometimes on land, sometimes in the busy street, sometimes in the silent chamber.

Strange to say, however, although nothing is better known than death, nothing is more forgotten. We hear people saying every day, "How shall we live?" but seldom do they ever think of adding, "and how shall we die?"

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My brethren, every one of you here this morning _must_ die. There will come an hour when your heart will cease to beat, when you will close your eyes and fold your hands in death, and when, like the dead man in the Gospel, you will "be carried out."

O brethren! how are you preparing for that supreme moment? Are you ready _now_, at this moment, to die? If you are not you ought to be. Let us, then, see how we should prepare ourselves.

Above all things you should never forget death. When you see other men die, when you read of death, when you see the priest in black vestments, and hear the sweet tones of the choristers chanting the solemn requiem, then you should say to yourselves, "It may be my turn next."

Keep death always before your eyes; then when it comes you will not shrink from its touch. Again, keep your conscience clear, and make every confession and Communion as if it were to be your last. How many have come to their duties on Saturday and Sunday, and on Monday have departed for ever from this world!

The earth, dearly beloved, is a vast field, and Death with his sharp scythe toils in it every day. Blade after blade, flower

after flower, tender plant and fragrant herb, fall beneath his sweeping blows every hour, every second. You may now be as the grass that is the most distant from the steel: there may be acres upon acres between you and the severing blade, but the strong, patient mower is nearing you slowly but surely. Listen! listen! and you will catch the sharp hiss of his scythe and hear the murmur of the falling grass. Oh! then be ready, with girded loins and burning lamp. Be ready, for you know not when death shall come. Be ready, with clear conscience and well-cared for soul, for the last great hour.

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Lastly, pray to St. Joseph that you may obtain the grace of a happy death. Go to his altar; kneel at his feet and say, "dear spouse of our Lady and foster-father of Jesus Christ! obtain for me to die, as thou didst, in the arms of Jesus and Mary, and to remain with them and thee in the paradise of God."

Beloved, death is nearing, death is coming. Oh! then, I beseech you, neglect not these words of warning and advice. "Here we have not an abiding city, but seek one to come," even the heavenly Jerusalem, the City of God, which shines above. The gate of that city is a good and Christian death. God grant, then, that through that blessed portal we all may pass, lest we be left cold and shivering in the black night of the outer darkness!

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon CXXII.

_If we live in the spirit,
let us also walk in the spirit._
--Galatians v. 25.

There is a saying which, in Latin, runs as follows: "_Dum vivimus, vivamus._" Put into English, it is: "While we live let us live"; or, to bring out the idea more clearly: "While we live let us make the most of life."

It is a saying which has always been very popular with infidels. We have this life, they say--it is our own; but we do not know what is coming after it, or, indeed, if anything at all is; so, while we have it, let us use it; there is not much of it, and it will soon be gone, but it is ours now. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; so, then, "_Dum vivimus, vivamus_"--while we live let us make the most of life.

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Now, the Christian idea of life and the way to use it is somewhat different from that of the infidel. A Christian does know what is coming after this life; he knows that this short life is only a preparation for the next, which is eternal; he knows that pursuing the pleasure of this world, after the infidel fashion, will endanger his salvation; and if he values his salvation--that is to say, if he has common sense--he looks out for the life of his soul rather than that of his body, so that he may always be ready for death when it shall come. And he has a fear of pleasure, rather than a desire of it, on account of its danger; he crucifies the flesh, with its vices and concupiscences, as St. Paul says in the conclusion of the Epistle of last Sunday, that it may be subject to the soul, instead of subjecting the soul to

itself.
He makes up his mind, in short, to live in the spirit instead of the flesh; and in that, as I have said, he shows his common sense. But when he has got as far as that his common sense seems too often to fail him. He ought then to come back to the maxim of the infidel; for it is a very sensible one in itself, the only trouble with it being that the infidel has the wrong idea of life. It would be all right for the Christian.
The Christian ought to say--you and I, my dear brethren, ought to say: "_Dum vivimus, vivamus_." Or, in the words of St. Paul in the beginning of today's Epistle, which immediately follows that of last Sunday, we ought to say: "If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit."
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That is, if we are going to live in the spirit rather than in the flesh, let us make the most of our spiritual life. Let us enjoy it, advance in it, and get all out of it that we can. We have, indeed, much more reason to say so than the man of the world; for not only shall we have more of it in the next world for all that we get out of it now, but there is much more to be got out of it even here than out of the life of the body.
And yet many, perhaps most, good Christians content themselves with simply keeping in the state of grace and avoiding sin. They just keep themselves spiritually alive, and that is all. They are like misers, who starve in the midst of their gold. There are pleasures for them, even in this world, far above what it can itself give, and they do little or nothing to obtain them. Something has to be done to obtain them, of course. It is the same, however, with bodily pleasure, and those who seek it know that. Many a man has made a slave of himself all his life to get a few years of ease and comfort at the end of it. Why should not we do the same for the comfort of our souls?
Something has to be done, but not so much after all. A little more earnestness in prayer; a little more fidelity in meditation and spiritual reading; a little more care to uproot our evil habits; a little more charity and spirit of sacrifice for our brethren; and, last but not least, a little mortification beyond what is forced on us, or what is necessary to avoid sin, and the reward would soon come. Temptations would be lighter; the struggle would be easier; God would come nearer to us; and that dawn would rise in our hearts which is brighter than the lights which earthly hands can kindle, and which is the sure fore-runner of the eternal day.

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Sermon CXXIII.

Let us not become desirous of vainglory.
--Galatians v. 26.

These words, my dear brethren, are from the Epistle of the Mass of this Sunday. I feel quite sure that the advice which St. Paul gives us in them is a very sensible one, and one which we all need to take very much to heart.
What is this vainglory of which he speaks? It is the vain and false glory which comes from the admiration of others. It is

what, in the more important matters of life, the world calls glory, and does not call vain. It is what many great geniuses have spent their lives to acquire, and have even been admired for doing so. But it is what in smaller matters the world calls it vanity to seek; and the world generally laughs, at least in its sleeve, at those who do so.

The girl whose great desire it is to have her hat acknowledged to be the prettiest one in church is called vain and made fun of, perhaps, even by her rivals, who wish in their hearts that they had a nicer one, if it was only to take the conceit out of her; but the man whose ambition it is to have the brain that his hat covers acknowledged to be the smartest one in the country is not laughed at, but very much respected, if the brain be really a fine one. And yet the desire is really all the same thing in both of them.

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Now, my brethren, we are all more or less vain or desirous of this vainglory; rather more, in fact, than less. It will not do for us to laugh very hard at each other for it, for we are all in the same boat. It is a passion which is almost universal. Some people who are quite proud may fancy that they do not care a straw for what others think of them; but I fancy that they do, though perhaps the reason may be that the praise of others will help them to admire themselves.

So you see that I was right in saying that St. Paul's advice was one which we all need to take very much to heart--all of us, not only girls with the new styles of hats, but young men at college or in business, eminent merchants and professional men, including those whom God has called to serve him at the altar. We have all got to look out for this snare of vainglory.

And how? By despising it? Yes, in a certain way, but not in the way of pride. By resolving to value nothing according to the opinion that men have of it, but according to that which Almighty God has of it.

He values nothing much but what is, like himself, eternal. He does not care so very much more for your cleverness than for your beauty. He could spoil either one of them in an instant, if he chose. But what he does care for, and what he himself cannot spoil, though of course he could not wish to, are the merits which he has given you this life to acquire and to bring before the throne of his judgment, to be transformed into your immortal crown. Those are the only things which are worth your caring for, because they are the only things which he cares for. And they are what all can have, however low in worldly station they may be.

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Yes, my dear Christians, that is the glory for us to seek--the glory of God; that which comes from him. Try to have him think well of you. It is not vain to wish to be praised and admired, only let him be the one whom you want to have praise and admire you. He will do it, if you want him to and will give him a chance. He, your Creator, desires to honor and glorify you for ever. When you think of this can you care for other praise?

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Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Ephesians iii. 13-31.

Brethren:

I beseech you not to be disheartened at my tribulations for you, which is 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 with power by his Spirit 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 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 ask or understand, according to the power which worketh in us: to him be glory in the church, and in Christ Jesus, throughout all generations, world without end. Amen.

Gospel.

St. Luke xiv. 1-11.

At that time:

When Jesus went into the house of a certain prince of the Pharisees, on the Sabbath day, to eat bread, and they were watching 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 whose ass or his ox shall fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer him to these things.

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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 highest place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited by him: and he who invited thee and him, come and say to thee: Give place to this man; and then thou begin with blushing 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.

Sermon CXXIV.

They were watching him.

--St. Luke xiv. 1.

How condescending and kind, brethren, was the spirit of our Lord when he entered into the house of the Pharisee to eat bread; how base and ungracious, on the other hand, the conduct of the latter and his friends, who, as the Gospel says, "were watching him"! They watched him that they might catch him breaking the laws of

the Sabbath.
They envied him because his reputation was great with the people. They watched him because "he had a daily beauty in his life which made theirs ugly," and tried to find something to carp at, something to find fault with.
He was their guest; they were bound to treat him with respect and kindness; yet they violated the rules of hospitality, deceitfully making the banquet a cover for their plan to catch him.
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He was their Saviour and the benefactor of their people; one who, as they well knew, had healed the sick, given speech to the dumb, and made the blind to see. The knowledge of his goodness and power only moved them to envy. He was greater than they, and so they watched him that they might find something in his conduct which would lessen his reputation and good name.
Are there not found some in our own day who imitate the conduct of the Pharisee and his friends?
Jesus is often near you; you often meet him in your every-day life, often have him in your house in the person of one of his pious servants--I mean any one of your neighbors whose life is better than your own.
There are many who watch such an one with the spirit of envy and criticism, and they try to find out worldly motives for their neighbor's piety. Such persons say, as Satan did of old, "Does Job serve God for naught?" Often they exclaim, "I see my neighbor frequently at Communion, but she only goes for show; I should like to see some change in her life"; or "What does she run to church so much for? It would be a great deal better for her if she stayed at home and minded her family."
Again, many watch the prosperity of their neighbor with an envious eye; they hate to see their neighbor in a better house than their own, don't like him to have more money than themselves, and so forth. All this is watching Jesus as the Pharisee did.
There are many, too, whose consciences must accuse them of watching Jesus in the persons of his priests, who envy the priest's position, envy his authority over them, and such like.
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These people try to pick a hole in the priest's ways, to pass their opinion on his manner, his judgments, his actions. They watch him in his words, at table in their own houses, to see if perchance they can find something to make a dish of scandal out of. Yes, brethren, there are many such watchers as these, and Pharisees are they all.
Envy, which prompts this horrible spirit of unchristian criticism, is one of the worst offences against the great and fundamental virtue of charity.
Envy has inspired the hearts of men with the most wicked crimes. Envy delivered the innocent Lamb of God to a cruel death. Envy, therefore, is a grievous sin.
Envy and the spirit of criticism spring from pride. Envy makes us watch others, and such watching is from pride.
Watch yourselves rather than your neighbor and your superiors. "Brethren," says St. Paul, "if a man be overtaken in any fault,

you, who are spiritual, instruct such an one, in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."
Walk and pray lest ye enter into temptation. Watch Jesus and his servants, if you will, but do so to be edified, do so to learn something good. Watch Jesus, who is meek and humble of heart, that you may learn the lesson which he tried to teach the proud and envious Pharisees: "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

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Sermon CXXV.

Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled.
--St. Luke xiv. 11.

That was an unlucky guest who sat down in the first place and was sent to take the lowest. No wonder he was covered with shame; served him right. To be humbled in the very act of exalting ourselves is indeed hard punishment, sharp and painful as a pang in a tenderly sore spot. It is like being caught in a theft or a lie. For, truly, pride is theft. We have no right to be proud, because we own as our property nothing that we may be proud of. All that we have that is good is God's; to pride ourselves on that is to rob God of his due, and appropriate what does not belong to us. And pride is a lie, a deceit; "for if thou hast received," says St. Paul, "why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?" A vain boast is simply lying.

To lie and to steal are very mean things to do. To be caught lying and stealing makes us feel very mean in the eyes of others; and that is what comes to us when our pride is evident and is found out by our fellow-men, and then we are humbled as was the poor guest spoken of in the Gospel. Truth is the badge of honor among men. Humility is truth, because humility is to know our place and keep it; in this is truthfulness and comfort also. We feel at ease when we are where we ought to be. A bone dislocated is a torture; anything out of place is an offence and a nuisance, whether it be a misshapen limb or a stove-pipe that doesn't fit and smokes. You remember in the fable the fate of the foolish frog who wanted to be as big as the ox--he blew until he burst and collapsed.

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Now, is there not a great deal of that kind of work among us--I mean getting too big, reaching above us, exalting ourselves--in a word, not knowing our place? Let me instance: The poor will pass for rich: fine dress and flashy jewels in broad daylight on the street; at home, dirt, wretchedness, almost starvation. The ignorant will know more than they have learned, and so stretch themselves all out of shape, and wed in the most repulsive manner pretentious speech to gross ignorance. Not only is one man as good as another, but a great deal better. The layman will teach theology and canon law to the priest. The ward politician, who buys votes at five cents a glass, and trades them off for street contracts or other valuable consideration, can run the world, the Holy See not excepted. Our American boy of twelve thinks the old folks not a circumstance to him, and shows it in his behavior.

The school girl who can do a sum and thump an "easy exercise" on the piano scorns domestic work, leaves the kitchen to "ma," and cultivates the fine arts in the parlor. Our talk, our press even, is fall of unreality, inflated bombast and buncombe. We have no degrees of comparison but the superlative. God help us for a vain, boastful set! What is it all but untruthfulness, want of humility, strutting up to the head of the table in one way or another? Our conversations are full of ourselves; we threaten horrors or we promise wonders; and it all issues, like the mountain in travail, in ridiculous failures. Let us know our place, or humiliation will teach it us.

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Adam and Eve were well off, and might have been till this day had they known their place and been satisfied; but they wanted to go up, to become as God--and they came down to all the miseries of fallen nature. Simon the Magician started, with the help of the devil, to ascend into heaven like our Saviour; but God brought him down before he got very far. "He that exalteth himself shall be humbled." Moreover, pride finds its punishment in the very ridiculousness of itself. The fool imagines himself to be other than he is; the insane insists on taking to himself a character which is not his. Well, brethren, the mock-king and queen of the asylum are not more foolish and insane, because not more untruthful, than the proud man.

The lesson, then, is this: Keep to the place God has given you, don't put yourself forward in conversation, acknowledge your nothingness before your Creator, be true and real to your fellow-men; thus you will escape shameful humiliation and deserve to be exalted in the esteem of others and in the kingdom of heaven.

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Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Ephesians iv. 1-6.

Brethren:

As a prisoner in the Lord, I 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 vocation. 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.

Gospel.

St. Matthew xxii. 35-46.

At that time:

the Pharisees came nigh 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.

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Sermon CXXVI.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.
--St. Matthew xxii. 39.

Nothing can be plainer than the fact that we must love God, and it is equally plain that we must love our neighbor. Our Lord declares that on these two precepts depend the whole law and the prophets. Yet we see people who make very little of them both. The precept to love our neighbor is perhaps the least regarded. Let us, therefore, reflect upon this commandment to-day. In the first place, there is no doubt about the obligation. Jesus says plainly, and with authority: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor"; and again, in another place, he says: "A new _commandment_ I give unto you, that you love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

So, then, if you want to keep the commandment of Jesus Christ, if you want to be known as his disciples, you _must_ love your neighbors. The obligation is clear and plain.

But our Lord not only gives a _commandment_, but also explains the _method_ of fulfilling it. He not only says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," but also adds "as thyself." He does not say as much as thyself, because, of course, the orders of nature and charity both require that we should love ourselves better than our neighbor. We must save our own soul first. We must not peril our own salvation in order to benefit our neighbor. Our Lord says "as thyself"--that is, in the _same manner_, not in the _same degree_. We must love our neighbor for his own sake, just as we love ourselves for our own sake.

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If we only love our neighbor on account of the use he can be to us, the pleasure he can give us, or the positions he can obtain for us, then that is really no love at all. That is nothing more or less than loving ourselves. We must love him as Jesus Christ has loved us--with a supernatural love, with a love which is founded on a desire to save our neighbor's soul.

And now in every-day life how must we treat our neighbor in order to fulfil the command of Jesus Christ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"? First, do your neighbor no wrong, either by thought, word, or deed. You don't like any one to think evil of you. Very well, don't think evil of your neighbor. You don't like any one to speak ill of yourself; you don't like to be insulted; can't bear to be abused. Ah! then be careful that you don't visit such things upon your neighbor.

You don't like to be defrauded or cheated; you don't like to have

your property or your reputation injured, or to be wronged in any way. Why? Because you love yourself. Very well, then, "love thy neighbor _as_ thyself," and don't do to him what you are unwilling should be done to you.

Again, not only refrain from doing your neighbor wrong, but wish him well and do him good. Try to have his name on your lips when you are at prayer. Say: "O God! prosper my neighbor, even as thou hast prospered me." Endeavor to show your fellow-Christian that you are interested in his well-being, and heartily glad when he succeeds in life. Have that spirit in your heart which makes you as glad to hear that your neighbor has gained five hundred dollars as if you had made the sum yourself.

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Then, when you can do your friend a good turn, do it with a hearty good-will; give him a helping hand; try to encourage him in his business. Don't say, "Every man for himself and God for us all, and the devil take the hindermost"; but say, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you."

And, lastly, you want God to forgive your sins? You want men to condone your offences and look over your shortcomings and defects? Then love your neighbor as yourself. If he has injured you, pardon him; if he has done wrong, overlook it; if he has got defects, bear with them. "All things," says one of the saints, "are easy to him who loves." So, then, love God, love your neighbor, and all things will be easy to _you_. This life will pass away all the more pleasantly, and the life to come will be all the more bright and its reward all the more precious, if you will only remember and act upon this great commandment: "Thou shalt _love_ thy neighbor _as thyself_."

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon CXXVII.

With patience, supporting one another in charity. --_Ephesians iv._ 2.

We hear a great deal nowadays, my dear brethren, about toleration. It is a thing which the nineteenth century takes a special pride in. It seems to imagine that it is really a great deal more charitable and patient than any previous one, and that, in fact, the apostles themselves might learn a lesson of Christian virtue from it, if they could come back to the earth.

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I wish that such were actually the case; but if we examine this pretended toleration and charity we shall have to confess that it is simply a sham, having nothing whatever in it to make it deserve the name it takes. You would not say of any man that he was of a tolerant and patient disposition because he was quite willing that some stranger should be interfered with, provided he himself was let alone. Well, that is precisely the tolerance of the nineteenth century. The world is now tolerant about all things in which the rights of Almighty God are concerned, because it has made him a stranger to itself; but it resents interference with itself, and insists on being let alone in its own enjoyments as much as, or more than, ever.

The world, then, has not yet learned to be tolerant, patient, or

charitable in any true sense of those words, in spite of all its boasting; and it is much to be feared that it never will. After all, it is not much wonder that it has not; for this is a very difficult lesson, and one which one must have the help of God to learn. True tolerance or patience, bearing with others when they interfere, not with somebody else, but with ourselves, is a fruit of grace rather than of nature. It cannot be expected from those who have rejected the grace of God as a needless encumbrance in the journey of life. If they have the appearance of it, it is only an outside finish of what is called politeness, put on merely to save trouble and make things more comfortable on the whole.

But it is not for Christians who are trying to live by the light of grace, not of nature; who believe in God and are trying to keep his commandments; who wish to imitate Christ, and are receiving the sacraments which should enable them to do so, to follow the example of such.

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We ought to try to be really tolerant with our brethren, whatever their faults or defects may be or however much they may put us out or interfere with our comfort consciously or unconsciously, "with patience, supporting one another in charity," as St. Paul says in the Epistle of to-day. And yet must we not confess that too often we do not even make an attempt to practise this virtue? Your neighbor offends you in some trifling way, perhaps without really meaning to do so or knowing that he does; it may be even by some peculiarity which is not really his fault at all. Do you put up with it; do you say: "Oh! that is not much; I must take people as I find them and as God made them, not as I would like to have them; we all have plenty of defects, and perhaps I myself am the worst of all"? Do you not rather say: "Oh! there is no getting along with such a person; I will keep out of his way; I cannot bear the sight of him; it will be better for us to avoid speaking," and the like?

This intolerance, which is so common, is simply avoiding a cross which we ought to carry, not only for the love of God, like all others, but for the love of our neighbor also; and especially when it comes from those who are our brethren not only by a common humanity but by a common faith, who have with us, as St. Paul goes on to remind us, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." Try, then, to bear this cross cheerfully, and show, by so doing, that you really are aiming to fulfil the great commandments given in to-day's Gospel, by loving God, from whom it comes, with your whole heart and soul and mind, and your neighbor, by whom it comes, as yourself.

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Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

1 _ Corinthians i._ 4-8.

Brethren:

I give thanks to my God always for you; for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus, that in all things you are

made rich in him, in every word, 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.

Gospel.

St. Matthew ix. 1-8.

At that time:

Jesus entering into a boat, passed over the water and came into his own city. And behold they brought to him a man sick of the palsy lying on a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Son, be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold some of the Scribes said within themselves: This man blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the man sick of the palsy), Rise up: take thy bed and go into thy house. And he rose up, and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it, feared, and glorified God who had given such power to men.

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Sermon CXXVIII.

Why do you think evil in your hearts?

--St. Matthew ix. 4.

All those, dear brethren, who are trying to lead a holy life have a great horror of _external_ sins. They will not lie, steal, murder, or be guilty of adultery or intemperance. Still, I am afraid a great many of us are awfully careless about _internal_ sins. We forget that not only the sins which we openly commit, but those also which we secretly assent to in our own minds, are offences against God.

You can see this in to-day's Gospel. When our Lord said to the sick man, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," the Scribes directly said "_within themselves_, He blasphemeth"; and although they did not shape this sentence in words, it was accounted to them for sin, as we can see from the reply of Jesus Christ contained in the text.

You see, then, brethren, if you want to keep your conscience clear, you must not only avoid external but even internal sins. Indeed, I think the sins which we commit internally are even more deadly than the external ones. First, because they always precede the open offence; as our Lord says in another place, "From the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies." Now, you will see at once that "evil thoughts" come first on the list, by which I think our Lord wishes to intimate that they are the root of all the others.

Again, evil thoughts, whether they are against charity, or against chastity, or against faith--whether they are thoughts of pride, of hatred, or envy, or avaricious thoughts--insomuch as they are concealed from the sight of others, do not cause the

same shame to the guilty person as an overt act would. Thus, being the more easily committed, they are the more frequent and the more deadly.
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Lastly, dear friends, evil thoughts pollute the mind and heart, and in proportion as they and their darkness enter, God and his brightness leave. To indulge in evil thoughts is to defile the stream at its fountain-head and poison all the river below.
Be on your guard, then, dear brethren, against this insidious enemy.
Perhaps evil thoughts against faith may assail you. Cast them out before they have time to enter fully into the mind. Many, better perhaps and holier than you, have in times past become heretics, apostates, enemies of God's church because they did not trample at once upon these beginnings of evil. You may be assaulted by imaginations against holy purity. Stifle them, I beseech you, at once, or they will grow in strength and gain in frequency till they have buried the grace of God, peace of mind, and strength of intellect in one common and unhallowed grave. You have all doubtless heard of the avalanche which happens in regions where the mountains which rise from the great valley and tower above the nestling valleys are covered with perpetual snow. Perhaps it is a slight puff of air, or the light tread of the mountain goat, or it maybe nothing but the brushing of a bird's wing that detaches the ball of snow; but be that as it may, the particle, once started, rushes down the mountain-side, gathering strength as it hurries on, leaping from one precipice to another, till finally, having swept everything before it, the enormous heap falls upon the peaceful village and buries everything in "a chaos of indistinguishable death."
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Yet in the beginning that avalanche was but a ball of snow. So it is with evil thoughts against faith, chastity, charity, humility, and all the other virtues. Once let them start and you can never tell in what awful ruin they will end.
Nip evil thoughts, then, in the bud; and as chief remedies I would say:

1. Fill your mind with good thoughts. A vessel cannot be full of two liquids at the same time. Think of heaven; think of God, of Jesus, of Mary and her pure spouse, St. Joseph.
2. Remember the eye that sees the secrets of all hearts, and Him who saw the thoughts of the Scribes in the Gospel of to-day.
3. Remember that you can commit a mortal sin by thought as well as by deed.

Lastly, picture to yourself One ever standing by your side, with wounded hands and pierced heart, "whose name is faithful and true, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and on his head many diadems; who is clothed with a garment of blood," and who cries to you night and day, "Why do ye think evil in your hearts?"

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon CXXIX.

_And Jesus seeing their faith,
said to the man sick of the palsy:
Son, be of good heart,
thy sins are forgiven thee._
--St. Matthew ix. 2.

These words of our Lord must have been something of a surprise to the paralytic and his friends; welcome they must have been, but still unexpected, and to some extent disappointing. For the sick man had not been brought to Christ to have his sins forgiven; and that favor had not been asked, at least no request had been made for it in words.

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The paralytic himself must have wished it, it is true, for God never forgives our sins unless we desire forgiveness; but he did not say so, and his mind, like those of his bearers, was probably more occupied with his bodily than with his spiritual cure.

It will be worth our while to see why our Saviour chose to give them this surprise; why he did not cure the sick man first and forgive him afterwards. That might seem to be the more natural way: to restore him first to bodily health, and then to move him by gratitude to repentance and conversion. Still, when we come to consider it I think we shall hit upon two very good reasons for his course, and that without very much reflection. The first reason, then, for our Lord doing as he did, was to show us that the health of the soul is more important in his sight than that of the body, and hence requires our first attention. The second follows from the first: it was to remind us that, such being the case, we cannot reasonably expect bodily health or any other temporal blessing if we neglect to reconcile ourselves to God.

Now, these are two things that all of us, my dear brethren, must certainly know very well, otherwise they would not occur to our minds so readily. But in spite of this we too often fail to give our knowledge a practical application.

How few there are, strange to say, who really act as if the health of their souls were of more importance than that of their bodies! Take, for instance, in proof of this, a fact which we have often seen recorded lately in the daily papers. The yellow fever, you will hear, has appeared in some Southern town, and what has been the result?

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All the inhabitants, who could leave the place immediately did so, perhaps taking the very next train, and, it may be, leaving their property in the hands of strangers. Well, we may think this a little cowardly and foolish, considering that, after all, there would not have been, perhaps, more than one chance in ten even of sickness, if they had stayed; but still we cannot blame them, for we feel that we should very likely have done the same ourselves. But how many would act in this way in the presence of a spiritual danger, though it were much more certain and imminent than that of the body in this terrible Southern plague? Ask yourselves the question, you who remain contentedly in unnecessary occasions of sin, with much more than one chance in ten, nay, with an absolute certainty, that your soul will be not only sick but dead as long as you remain there; ask yourselves if you value the health of

your soul more than that of the body; see if you practise what you must believe if you are a Christian--that it is better to die even to-day in a state of grace than live for a moment in that of sin.

Well, whether you act on this belief or not. Almighty God does. He shows you that, as I have said, in this Gospel of to-day. And it follows that you cannot please him or be in his grace as long as you do not do for your soul what you would do for your body; that is, as long as you do not remove it from needless dangers. That is the first practical lesson to be learned from our Lord's action in the cure of the paralytic.

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And the second is that, if we hope to obtain from God temporal favors out of the natural order of his providence, we must first provide for our souls, which come first in his estimation. And yet many people seem to expect him to reverse the order which he has established. They promise conversion if they obtain the temporal blessing which they want. They may succeed through his abundant mercy; but the better and the surer course would be to think of the soul first and the body afterward. "Seek first," and he says, "the kingdom of God and his justice, and all things shall be added unto you."

And remember that this must be the real disposition of your souls, if you would be saved. The catechism tells you that the only contrition which will obtain forgiveness, even in the sacrament of Penance, must be what is called "sovereign"; that is, "we should be more grieved for having offended God than for all the other evils that could happen to us." Think well of this, and you will be able to add a good deal to what I have had time to say.

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Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Ephesians iv. 23-28.

Brethren:

Be ye 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. Let him that stole, steal now no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands that which is good, that he may have to give to him who is in need.

Gospel.

St. Matthew xxii. 2-14.

At that time:

Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying: The kingdom of heaven is like to a man being 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

wedding. 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 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 wedding indeed is ready: but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite to the wedding. And his servants going out into the highways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests.

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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 a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Having bound his hands and feet, cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

Sermon CXXX.

_Let him that stole,
steal now no more._
--Ephesians iv. 28.

These words, dear friends, are taken from the Epistle appointed to be read to-day, and contain a most useful lesson.

Now, I know the words "steal, stealing, thief, etc.," have a very ugly sound.

People have a horror of them. The worst insult you can give to any one is to say, "You are a thief." Still, in spite of this feeling, we know that sins against justice are very often committed.

Public men steal from public moneys. Employees rob their employers, children steal from their parents, servants from their masters, trustees from those whose affairs they have under control, and so on. From the time that Judas put his hand into the bag and filched from the scanty funds of his Master and his brethren, down to this present day, there have been Catholics who have so far forgotten themselves and "the vocation to which they are called" as to steal. Do you doubt this? Take up the first daily paper that comes to hand, and you will have evidence in black and white.

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Now, there are three ways in which we can commit the sin of stealing: first, by taking that which does not belong to us; secondly, by unjustly retaining what does not belong to us; and, thirdly, by injuring what is not our own. First, then, we must not take what is not our own. Now, this you all know so well that I need only say a few words about it. Brethren, the man, woman, or child who takes money, articles, clothing, or what not from another, without their consent and knowledge, is a thief!

When such persons creep to the till, the box, the desk of their neighbors, with stealthy tread and bated breath, to take what does not belong to them, God sees them, God's angel sees them;

and, could they but hear it, they would be aware of a hundred voices crying aloud, "Thou shalt not steal." You are a thief! You are a thief!

If you steal you must restore. Having stolen, you will find it very difficult to restore even when you have the money. If you do not restore (being able) you will go to that "outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." Oh! then, "he that stole, let him now steal no more."

Again, we must not retain what is not our own, for this also is a species of stealing. First under this head comes paying our just debts. "Brethren, owe no man anything," says St. Paul. Now, my friends, if you contract debts, and then when the time comes you do not pay them, but use the money for other purposes, you are unjustly retaining what is not your own, and thereby commit a sin against justice. There are some people who "want" (as the saying is) "to have their cake and eat it."

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They run in debt, they enjoy the things obtained on credit, and then when the time comes to pay they want the money also. Brethren, the motto of every Catholic ought to be, "Pay your way." When we leave our debts long without liquidation we not only destroy our credit, but we practically steal from our neighbor.

Then we must be careful also to pay our debts to God by supporting our pastors and our churches. It is a solemn command of God that we should give to the support of church and priest. It is our duty. It is a debt _owing_ to God. If you do not give of your means to this holy purpose you rob God--you steal from the Almighty by retaining what belongs _by right_ to church and pastor. Ah! then, "he that stole, let him now steal no more."

Lastly, we can sin against justice by injuring property or goods which belong to our neighbor. Now, my friends, if we hire a house or lands, or if we take some official charge of our fellow-Christian's goods, we ought to be as careful of these things as if they were our own. If we, through our carelessness, our neglect, allow another's property to be damaged, lost, lessened in any way in value, we steal from him just that much. Be careful, then, of these sins against justice. Do not rob your fellow-men. Do not retain what is their due; do not injure their goods or property. Remember the great God who sees you. He is not only perfect charity; he is also perfect justice, and with his justice will he one day judge.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

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Sermon CXXXI.

_And he sent his servants,
to call them that were invited to the marriage:
and they would not come._
--St. Matthew xxii. 3.

We cannot for a moment hesitate, my dear brethren, as to who is represented, in this parable of our Lord, by the king who made a marriage for his son. It is God the Father; and it is his Divine

Son for whom he has made the marriage. And that marriage is the union of our human nature with his divinity; it is what we call the Incarnation. And those who were first invited to this marriage, to partake of its benefits, are the Jews, who were first called to the church, to whom alone our Lord himself preached, and who were the first objects of the labors of his apostles; but who would not answer the invitation, even persecuting and putting to death those who gave it, and thus causing it to be given to others--that is, to ourselves--the city of Jerusalem being at the same time destroyed, together with the national existence of the Jewish people, as a punishment for their rejection of the Gospel invitation.

We Gentiles have accepted what they, his chosen people, refused. We have come by faith and holy baptism to this marriage of the King's Son, for we are within the fold of his Holy Catholic Church. But having done so, we are now all invited to sit down at the marriage feast. It does not satisfy his love for us that we should simply be within the four walls of his house; he wishes that we should also partake of the good things which he has prepared in it for the refreshment of our soul--that is to say, the special graces which come to us only by means of the church, and which are not found outside: particularly the sacraments, and, most of all, the great and wonderful Sacrament of the Altar, in which he has given us his Precious Body and Blood for the food of our souls.

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This, then, is pre-eminently the marriage feast of which he has invited us to partake, now that we are within his house. It is the Holy Communion. One would think we would be only too glad to do so. You would not expect to find wedding guests insulting their host by refusing to taste of the refreshment prepared for them.

But how is it in fact? As he has had to send all over the world by his messengers, the apostles and their successors, through its highways and byways, to find people, not rich and great, as he might expect, but poor, humble, and despised, to fill up his house, so he has to send round among those guests whom he has secured, to beg them to eat at his table. He has been obliged not only to ask them but to entreat them, and even to command them, under penalty of being turned out of his doors by excommunication, if they refuse. And in spite of all this, there are so many that do refuse that he does not carry out this threat, lest even his house should be deserted.

Is not this a shame? Is it not too bad that we, his miserable and unworthy guests, who have no right to be in his church at all, should have to be compelled to receive the food which he has prepared for us in it? More especially when we remember what that food is; that it is himself, his own Body and Blood; for such is his love that nothing else seemed to him good enough for us.

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Here it is, this royal banquet, waiting for us all. Every day we are allowed to receive it. And yet how few there are who do so! If any one should go to Holy Communion once a month he is regarded rather as presumptuous than obedient. In spite of our

Lord's repeated request, his people do not seem to believe that it is his will that not only a few but all of them should frequently come to receive him in this sacrament of his love. Of course, if you are to do his will in this matter, you must in others too. This feast is not for those who continually and obstinately break his laws. But how often you can approach it is a question for those to whom it has been entrusted to decide. Let the responsibility rest on your confessor, not on yourself. Do not let it be said that you, who are invited, will not come. Let not our Lord have to reproach you with ingratitude. Let not his table be deserted through your fault. The communion-rail is the place for all, not for a few. Come, then, often to it, if not for your own sakes, at least for the sake of Him who so longs to see you there and who has done so much for you.

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Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Ephesians v. 15-31.

See, brethren, how you walk circumspectly: not as unwise, but as wise: redeeming the time, for 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.

Gospel.

St. John iv. 46-53.

At that time:

There was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. The ruler saith to him: Sir, come down before that 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.

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Sermon CXXXII.

Sir, come down before that my son die.

--St. John iv. 49.

There are many useful lessons to be learnt from the ruler in to-day's Gospel. We can admire his confidence in Jesus Christ, his perseverance in prayer, his ready and speedy conversion to the faith. There is, however, another lesson to be learnt from

him which is contained in the above words: "Lord, come down before that my son die." Now, disease, sickness, fever, etc., is, as you know, dear friends, the symbol of sin, while death is the symbol of mortal sin and eternal perdition. Now, you will notice that the ruler did not wait till his son was dead before coming to Christ: he came when his child was at the point of death, or when (according to the exact meaning of the Latin text) "he began to die." The ruler, then, is a model for parents. He teaches you what care you ought to take of your children's souls. Many of your children, dear brethren, are sick. They are sinful, disobedient, careless, and so forth. Now, do you correct them _in the beginning?_ Ah! I know a great many of you do not. You let them go on till the fever of sin rises higher and higher and burns fiercer and fiercer. You let them go on till they die and are buried in habits of mortal sin, and not till then do you call upon God and his church.

Brethren, of all things you should watch your children when they are young. A husbandman does not try to force the well-grown wood to grow as he wishes; he trains the young and tender shoots. How often we see in the streets of our city a tribe of swaggering boys and wanton, frivolous girls, who have upon their faces the very mark of premature age and sinful precocity!

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We see young boys and girls at beer-gardens, at variety theatres, in billiard-saloons; and, alas! if they are there, there is every reason to fear that the grace of God does not adorn their souls. These poor children are spiritually dead. Ah! but there must have been a time when they "began to die." There must have been a moment when they first took to these scandalous habits. Then why did you not see that they went to confession, to Mass, to Holy Communion? Why did you not insist upon their morning and evening prayers being said? Why did you not keep them at home after dark? Brethren, soon we shall come to this pass: that none will be considered a child after five years of age. Our children of this age and country are "at the point of death." They are growing up with ideas of false independence, false liberality, and false religious principles. You parents, then, must call upon Christ. Jesus is represented on earth by his church and his priests. You must go, then, to church and priest, if you want your children to be saved before they die the death of sin. You must cut them off from the beginning of evil as soon as you see the least sign of the fever of sin upon them. Go yourself to Jesus Christ. Kneel down and pray for them. Lift up your voices and cry: "Lord, come down before that my child shall die." Send them to the sacraments; send them to Sunday-school; send them to Vespers and Benediction. Above all, interest yourself in your children. Go to Jesus, as the ruler did. Pray for your children every time you go to Mass and Communion, and every night and morning.

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Do not let them form evil companions and low associates. Insist upon their obeying the parental authority, and above all, teach them that boys and girls of fifteen or sixteen are not men and women. Lastly, let us all, priests and people, lift up our hands and cry to Jesus: "Lord, come down before that these children

die; come down with thy lessons of obedience; come down in Holy Communion; come down with thy grace and with thy quickening Spirit." Then, if we do these things--if we attend to our solemn duties as parents and pastors--we may each expect to hear from our dear Master's lips: "Go thy way, thy son liveth."

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon CXXXIII.

Giving thanks always for all things.

--Ephesians v. 20.

If we stop a moment, my dear brethren, to consider the meaning of these words, which we find in the Epistle of to-day, they will, I think, seem to us rather surprising; and if we did not believe in the inspiration of their author we should be inclined to say that he rather exaggerated the truth, and that we cannot be expected to take the lesson which he here teaches us quite literally. "Surely," we might say, "St. Paul must have meant that we should give thanks for all things which are really fit subjects for thanksgiving; that we should not neglect our duty of gratitude to God for his benefits. And when he tells us to give thanks for all things it was a little slip of his pen; we muse understand not all things, but all good things."

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We might talk in this way, I say, if we did not know that St. Paul was inspired; but knowing that, we must drop the idea that there can be any mistake or exaggeration. It must really be that we ought to give thanks for all things that happen to us, without exception. If our plans succeed we must give thanks; but we must do the same if they fail. Whether our wishes are gratified or not, we must give thanks. If we have riches, good health, plenty of friends, or if, on the other hand, we are poor, sick, and without a friend in the world, we must thank God, in adversity the same as in prosperity.

"Well," you may say, "it must be so, since we have the word of the Holy Ghost for it; but, for my part, I cannot see how it can be. I should be very willing to thank God for all these bad things, but I do not see what there is in them to thank him for. I acknowledge that I deserve punishment for my sins, and I will try to take it with as good a grace as I can; but as to giving thanks for it, that is a little too much for me. It seems to me that I should only be a hypocrite if I should pretend to do so."

Some of you, I am pretty sure, feel like talking in this way, at least at times when trouble has come upon you. Let us see if we cannot find the reason that your faith is so much tried.

It seems to me that it is because it seems to you that you are required to believe that evil is really good; and of course that is as hard to believe as that black is really white. You think that our Lord means evil to you; that he is acting with you as the authorities of the state might act. If any one breaks the laws he is shut up in prison or has to pay a fine. Well, that may do him good, but it is not meant for that. It is meant to do harm to him, that others may profit by his example and that the good order of society may be maintained.

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So a criminal cannot personally thank the judge, if he sentences him to hard labor for five years. It would not be reasonable for him to do so, and the judge does not want him to do it, for he does not mean to give him a favor.

So you think, when our Lord punishes you in any way, that he really means to do you harm, for some wise end in his providence, to be sure, but still really harm as far as you yourself are concerned. You regard it simply as the satisfaction of his justice on you, or perhaps for some good purpose in which you are not concerned; and so it is as hard for you personally to thank him for it as to say that black is white.

But this is just where you are mistaken; for there is a great difference between the punishments of God and those of man. If our Lord sends you any misfortune or cross it is principally for your own good. He always has that in view; he is not like a human judge. He would not allow a hair of your head to be touched, were it not really for your good; for he loves you more dearly than your best friend in the world can possibly do.

This, then, my dear brethren, is the right exercise for our faith: not to believe that evil is good, but to believe that God is good and does not mean evil to us, and that when he gives what seems to be evil it is really a blessing in disguise. Though it is plain that it must be so, instead of being contrary to reason, still it is an exercise of faith for all that; but an easy one, if we will only try it.

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Try it, then, when you are tempted to murmur against God's providence, and you will be able to give thanks for all things, whether they seem to be bad or good; and you will see that after all it is only good things which you are told to thank him for, because all things which he sends you really are good.

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Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Ephesians vi. 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 snares 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 the high places. Wherefore 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).

Gospel.

St. Matthew xviii. 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 compassion, let him go, and forgave him the debt.

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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 should pay 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 should pay all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

Sermon CXXXIV.

Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood: but against principalities and powers. --Ephesians vi. 12.

It is a most important truth, my brethren, and a very practical one for all of us, which is contained in these words of St. Paul; and it is the subject of the whole Epistle of this Sunday, from which this passage is taken.

This truth is that we have a host of enemies to contend with in the battle which we must fight to win the kingdom of heaven, who are much more powerful than flesh and blood--that is, than any human foes; much more formidable than any others which attack us, from within or from without.

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Who are these enemies? They are Satan and all his army of fallen angels. That these are what the apostle means by "principalities and powers" is plain from these very words, which are the names, as you know, of two of the nine angelic choirs. It is plain also, from what he says immediately before, that we should put on the armor of God, in order to be able to stand against the deceits of the devil.

Who can doubt that these lost spirits are terrible enemies to our salvation? They desire nothing more earnestly than our eternal ruin, and labor most persistently to bring it about. They have a malicious hatred and envy for us, and spare no effort to induce us to sin, as that is the greatest evil which can happen to us. As there is joy before the angels of God upon one sinner who

repents, so there is exultation among these fallen angels over every one who does not, and especially over every one who repents of his repentance and turns to sin again.

And besides the will which they have to injure us, they have an immense power to do so. They are superior to us in the order of creation; they have much more intelligence, knowledge, and strength than we. If they were permitted they could easily make us all subject to them, and reign over us with a more cruel tyranny than the world has ever seen.

"Well, father," you may say to me, "of course this must be true; but then they are not permitted to trample on us in this way. God holds them in check, so that they cannot do us the harm which they wish, and would otherwise be able to accomplish."

I grant you this. They certainly are not allowed to do us all the harm they might do and would like to do; but they are allowed to do a great part of it--so much that, without the help of God on our side, they would, even as it is, destroy us, soul and body.

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By our own strength we cannot possibly escape these terrible and merciless enemies, but only by the power of God. Without that we should be as helpless before them as a child among lions and tigers. If we would escape them it can only be, then, by calling upon God, and getting from him the strength and protection which he alone can give.

This is what St. Paul tells us in this Epistle, "Put on the armor of God," he says; and again, "Take unto you the armor of God." If you do not you will fall. Our Lord has allowed the devils to have the power which they still have to injure us, that we may learn in our dire extremity to have recourse to him.

And yet so far are we from realizing our danger, and seeking the only protection which can save us, that many Christians seem almost to doubt, like infidels, the very existence of the devil and his angels. There is nothing which Satan likes better than this, or which puts us more completely in his power. He does not care that we should know. Just now at least, who does us the harm, so long as the harm is done; and he knows that if we do not believe in him we shall not look out for him, and that if we do not look out for him we shall certainly fall into his snares.

Rouse yourselves, then, my brethren, from this indifference to your greatest peril. Believe, with a real and practical belief, in the existence and the tremendous power of these enemies who are hunting down your souls. Know that you cannot resist them of your own strength, and act on that knowledge. Pray to God to protect you, to keep them from you, and you from them. Ask Our Blessed Lady, who is their terror, to drive them away, and your guardian angel to keep them from your side. Avoid the occasions of sin which they prepare for you.

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Flee from them if you can; if not, resist them, and they will flee from you; but when you resist them, let it be in the name of Him who has conquered them, or they will conquer you.

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Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.
Philippians i. 6-11.
Brethren:
We are confident of this very thing, 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: because I have you in my heart; and that in my bonds, and in the defence, and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of my joy. For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding: that you may approve the better things, that you may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ. Replenished with the fruit of justice through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.
Gospel.
St. Matthew xxii. 15-21.
At that time:
The Pharisees going away, 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 C√¶sar, or not? But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Show me the coin of the tribute. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose image and inscription is this? They say unto him: C√¶sar's. Then he saith to them: Render, therefore, to C√¶sar the things that are C√¶sar's, and to God the things that are God's.

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Sermon CXXXV.

_The Pharisees going away,
consulted among themselves
how to ensnare him in his speech._
--St. Matthew xxii. 15.

It is needless to say, brethren, that they waited in vain. Our dear Lord never uttered anything but words of wisdom, justice, and piety. Is it so with us? We have enemies, strong and powerful, who have consulted among themselves how to ensnare us in our speech. Satan and his demons, evil companions, enemies of the holy faith--all these are watching to see if they cannot destroy us by means of our tongue. What, then, must we do to control _it_, of which St. James says: "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; the tongue is placed among our members which defileth the whole body, being set on fire by hell"? We must watch it carefully, watch it jealously, watch it constantly. Some of the older writers have said that nature herself has taught us how careful we ought to be of our tongue. First, because we have only one. We have two eyes, two ears, two hands, two feet, but only one tongue.

Again, the tongue is placed in the centre of the head, to show

(as they say) that it ought to be under the absolute control of our reason; again, because nature places it behind two barriers, the lips and teeth, so as to keep it prisoner; and, lastly (says an old writer in his quaint way), because it is chained in the mouth.

But there are other more solid reasons than these for watching our tongue.

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There is nothing so poisonous as a bitter word, an uncharitable remark, an offensive observation. Words such as these have ruined families, have caused murders, have damned souls. How often has a bitter word rankled so deeply in our neighbor's mind and heart that he curses us, refuses to speak to us, and thus is driven by us into mortal sin! What then? The devil, who is on the watch, has ensnared us in our speech; he has got one more sin recorded against us. Had we watched our tongues he would not have caught us; we should not have sinned; our neighbor would not have been scandalized. How common it is for us to hear God's name taken in vain and spoken lightly; how frequently, alas! do we hear the sweet name of Jesus used for a curse; how often that holy name, "which is above every name," is bandied about as though it were as the name of the lowest of creatures! Blasphemer! reviler of the Holy One! Satan has ensnared you in your speech. You have cursed, blasphemed, _sinned!_ Had you watched your tongue you had not done so.

And what horrible mutterings are these that we hear coming up from dark corners, from workshops, from factories, from lodging-houses, from streets? What whisperings are these, hot and burning with the fire of hell? They are words of impurity and bad conversations. They are accents that slay living souls, that pollute both the lips of the speaker and the ears of the listener; and, alas! the tongue, the unguarded, unwatched tongue, is the offender again. Ah! you are ensnared once more in your speech. Watch your tongue, then, lest you die the death of mortal sin. There is an every-day expression, brethren, which contains, I think, the best advice that can be given you; and that is, "Hold your tongue." Yes, _hold_ it under control of reason; chain it by prayer and the sacraments.

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If it wants to run into bitter words and unkind speeches, hold it back. If it wants to blaspheme, hold it; hold it, or you are lost! If it wants to utter words contrary to Christian modesty, hold it for Christ's sake, or you are undone. Take care lest Satan ensnare you in your speech; if he does he will condemn you to a cruel death in hell. Speech is silver and silence is gold. Few, if any, have been saved by much speaking; many have been lost by it. Oh! then, watch your tongue lest it destroy you.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon CXXXVI.

_Render, therefore, to C√¶sar
the things that are C√¶sar's,
and to God the things that are God's._
--St. Matthew xxii. 21.

What does our Lord mean by this, my brethren? He seems to say that there are some things which do not belong to God, but to some one else; that God has only a partial right in this world which he has created. It would appear to belong partly to C√¶sar; and who can this C√¶sar be, who shares the earth with its Creator? C√¶sar was the name of the Roman emperor, and our Lord means by C√¶sar the temporal authority of the state. Now, it must seem absurd to any Catholic, and indeed to any one who believes in God at all, to say that this authority has any right in the world other than that which God has lent to it; so we cannot imagine that our Lord meant anything like that. Nevertheless, there are plenty of people, who do not profess to be atheists, who really maintain not only that the state has rights against him, but even that its right always prevails over his. They say that we must render everything to C√¶sar, whether God wants it or not; that the law of the state must be obeyed, even against the law of God as shown to us by conscience.

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These people are really atheists, whether they profess to be or not. The only true God, in whom we believe, will not and cannot resign his right to our obedience or give up his eternal laws. Nay, more, he will and must reserve to himself the right of making new laws if he pleases, and annulling laws of the state which are contrary to them. Besides all this, he has also only given to the state a limited sphere in which it can work, and in which only its laws can have any force--that is, he will only allow it to make laws providing for the temporal well-being of its subjects.

This, then, is what belongs to C√¶sar--that is, to the state. It has the right to claim and enforce our obedience to laws intended for the temporal welfare of its subjects, and to these only as far as they are not contrary to the eternal law of God, or to others which he may choose to make. And that is all.

When it does not exceed its rights we must give our obedience to it; and we must presume that it does not exceed them unless it is clear that it does. This is what we must render to C√¶sar.

But how shall we tell that it does exceed its rights? First, by the voice of conscience, when that voice is clear and certain; secondly, by our knowledge of the laws which God himself has made; lastly, by the voice of that other authority which he has put in the world to provide for our spiritual welfare--that is, the Catholic Church. When God speaks to us in either of these ways we must obey him whether it interferes with C√¶sar or not; this is what we must render to him.

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If the state makes a law commanding us to blaspheme, deny our faith, or commit impurity, we will not obey. Conscience annuls such a law. If the state commands us to do servile work on Sunday its law has no force. We know that God's law is against it. And, lastly, if the state goes outside its sphere, and makes laws regarding things not belonging to its jurisdiction, as the sacraments, we are not bound by such laws. It has no power, for instance, to declare marriage among Christians valid or invalid. The church has told us this plainly. It is here specially where

the state goes out of its province, that it is subject to correction by the church; though it may be in other matters also. Our Lord, then, means that we should render to C√¶sar the things that belong to him, not because of any right that he has in himself, but because God has lent it to him; but that we should render to God the things that he has not lent to C√¶sar, whether C√¶sar consents or not. Obedience must always be given to God. Give it to him through the state in those things about which he has given the state authority, and in other things without regard to the state; thus shall you render to C√¶sar the things which are C√¶sar's, and to God the things that are God's.

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Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Philippians iii. 17; _iv._ 3.

Be followers of me, brethren, 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 wait for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, 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 most dearly beloved. I beg of Euodia, and I beseech Syntyche to be of one mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee, 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.

Gospel.

St. Matthew ix. 18-26.

At that time:

As Jesus was speaking these things unto them, behold a certain ruler came, and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is just 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 but touch his garment I shall be healed. But Jesus, turning about and seeing her, said: Take courage, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.

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And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the crowd making a rout, he said: Give place, for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed at him. And when the crowd was turned out he went in, and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.

Sermon CXXXVII.

_My daughter is just now dead;
but come, lay thy hand upon her,
and she shall live._
--St. Matthew ix. 18.

Such was the entreaty made by the ruler to our Lord in to-day's Gospel, and such are the words that the Lord says to us during the month of November, in behalf of the poor souls in purgatory. These souls have been saved by the Precious Blood, they have been judged by Jesus Christ with a favorable judgment, they are his spouses, his sons and daughters, his children. He cries to us, "_My children_ are even now dead; but come, lay your hands upon them, and they shall live." What hand is that which our Lord wants us to lay upon his dead children? Brethren, it is the hand of prayer. Now, it seems to me that there are three classes of persons who ought to be in an especial manner the friends of God's dead children, three classes who ought always to be extending a helping hand to the souls in purgatory. First, the poor, because the holy souls are poor like yourselves. They have no work--that is to say, the day for them is past in which they could work and gain indulgences and merit, the money with which the debt of temporal punishment is paid; for them the "night has come when no man can work."

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They are willing to work, they are willing to pay for themselves, but they cannot; they are out of work, they are poor, they cannot help themselves. They are suffering, as the poor suffer in this world from the heats of summer and the frosts of winter. They have no food; they are hungry and thirsty; they are longing for the sweets of heaven. They are in exile; they have no home; they know there is abundance of food and raiment around them which they cannot themselves buy. It seems to them that the winter will never pass, that the spring will never come; in a word they are _poor_. They are poor as many of you are poor. They are in worse need than the most destitute among you. Oh! then, ye that are poor, help the holy souls by your prayers. Secondly, the rich ought to be the special friends of those who are in purgatory, and among the rich we wish to include those who are what people call "comfortably off." God has given you charge of the poor; you can help them by your alms in this world, so you can in the next. You can have Masses said for them; you can say lots of prayers for them, because you have plenty of time on your hands. Again remember, many of those who were your equals in this world, who like yourselves had a good supply of this world's goods, have gone to purgatory because those riches were a snare to them. Riches, my dear friends, have sent many a soul to the place of purification. Oh! then, those of you who are well off, have pity upon the poor souls in purgatory. Offer up a good share of your wealth to have Masses said for them. Do some act of charity, and offer the merit of it for some soul who was ensnared by riches and who is now paying the penalty in suffering; and spend some considerable portion of your spare time in praying for the souls of the faithful departed.

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And lastly, the sinners and those who have been converted from a

very sinful life ought to be the friends of God's dear children. Why? Because although the souls in purgatory cannot pray for themselves, they can pray for others, and these prayers are most acceptable to God. Because, too, they are full of gratitude, and they will not forget those who helped them when they shall come before the throne of God. Because sinners, having saddened the Sacred Heart of Jesus by their sins, cannot make a better reparation to it than to hasten the time when he shall embrace these souls that he loves so dearly and has wished for so long. Because sinners have almost always been the means of the sins of others. They have, by their bad example, sent others to purgatory. Ah! then, if they have helped them in they should help them out.

You, then, that are poor, you that are rich, you that have been great sinners, listen to the voice of Jesus; listen to the plaint of Mary during this month of November: "My children are now dead; come lay thy prayers up for them, and they shall live." Hear Mass for the poor souls; say your beads for them; supplicate Jesus and Mary and Joseph in their behalf. Fly to St. Catherine of Genoa and beg her to help them, and many and many a time during the month say with great fervor: "May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace!"

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

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Sermon CXXXVIII.

_When Jesus was come into the house of the ruler,
and saw the minstrels and the crowd making a rout,
he said, "Give place."_
--St. Matthew ix. 23.

One of the great difficulties against which God's church has to contend to-day is the spirit of worldliness which has crept in to a very serious extent among the faithful. There are many dear brethren among us who (as St. Paul says to-day in the Epistle) "mind earthly things"; Catholics who try as far as they can to conform themselves to this world and the fashions thereof. We can see this worldly spirit in the manner in which many Catholics dress, the style with which they decorate their houses, the way in which they speak and act. But there is another way by which this tendency is indicated. I mean the manner in which we bury our dead.

Now, certainly, there is nothing more beautiful to the eye of faith than a dead Christian body. What is it that lies there still, and motionless, and cold? A corpse? Yes; but something more than that. Brethren, that poor dead thing is beautiful, it is holy. Its head has been touched by the cleansing waters of baptism and anointed with holy chrism, its tongue has touched the Body and Blood of Christ. Its eyes, ears, and hands, all its senses have been anointed with holy oil. That poor body has been the temple of the Holy Ghost.

More than this: that cold clay is a germ, a seed from which one day shall rise a fairer flower than earth hath ever seen; for, as St. Paul says, "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die first. And that which thou sowest thou sowest not the body

that shall be, but bare grain, as of wheat or of some of the rest."
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Yes, brethren, this dead thing is the "bare grain," but in the eternal spring-time it shall bud forth into the full ear, for it is the seed of a body glorified by the power of God.
Oh! then, seeing how holy the dead body of a Christian is, no wonder that the church should surround the burial of it with a certain holy pomp.
She burns lights by its side, she carries it in procession, she sprinkles it with holy water, she censes it with incense. Not only does she pray for the soul, she also respects the body.
So then, dear friends, to show respect for the dead, to surround them with that pomp which the church wishes, is well and good; but to make a dead body an object about which to display earthly vanity and pride is to defile that which is holy and outrage that which is decent. Yet this is often done. In place of the simple shroud or the holy habit which used to be considered the proper raiment of the departed, we now see them arrayed in garments which vie in extravagance and fashion with those of the theatre and the ball-room. Oh! brethren, when I think of our dear Master's body, in Bethlehem's manger, wrapped up in swathing bands, in the holy garden enveloped in linen cloths, and even to this day reposing upon our altars on the fair white linen corporal, it shocks me to think of those Christian dead who go down to the tomb decked out in silks and lace, and satins and trinkets, as though they were rather the votaries of earth than the heirs of the kingdom of heaven. I seem to see the Master standing by, and saying, "Give place."
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Again, what an abuse it is to see a body followed to the grave by a train of carriages which would often be more than enough for the funeral of a cardinal or a pope. What some one has called "the eternal fitness of things" requires that something of public display should be made over those whom God has set in authority. But to make such display over any ordinary Christian is simply absurd. Oh! my dear friends, far better spend your money to have Masses said for the soul than for a hundred vehicles to follow the body. Alas! I fear those hundred carriages and two hundred horses soothe your pride far more than they comfort the poor soul in purgatory who is panting and longing for the possession of God.
Let me end with a slight paraphrase of the text, such as we may imagine our Lord, were he now on earth, might use: "And when Jesus was come into the house of death, and saw the silks and the satins, and the worldly display, and the multitude making a tumult, and the horses and the carriages, and the garlands and the wreaths, and the feasting, he said: Give place, give place to me and to my church; and may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen."
Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon CXXXIX.

_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._
--Philippians iii. 18, 19.

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Here St. Paul gives us, dear brethren, a rule by which we may know, by their manner of living, the difference between the bad and the good anywhere in the world. This rule, however, shows us also who is a bad Christian and who is a good one. For it is too true that we can find many, calling themselves Catholics, who hate the cross, who find their happiness in sensuality, who love this world more than they love God, and who make a boast of their sins and crimes. The end of these is indeed destruction and eternal ruin.

Now, who are they? One need not go far to find them. They are those who are boasting about how much they can eat and drink more than another. They are those who try to drink others drunk, and then brag about it. They even make a laughing-stock of the poor, wretched man or woman who can't stand as much as they can. Neither are they to be found only among the men who almost live around and in grog-shops. Young men of great respectability and old gray-headed parents, of high position in society, do these things. They even look with contempt upon him who can't sin as much and as boldly as they do. More than all, the poor man feels ashamed and blushes because he is not superior to them in this kind of wickedness.

In the same way do some boast of their impurities, and their lying and swindling, in a business way, as they call it. These indeed glory in that which is a shame to the heathen. How much more, indeed, then, is this a shame to him who calls himself a Christian.

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But these are not the only crimes in which they glory who are enemies of the cross of Jesus Christ. There are those who cannot bear to be outdone in malice or revenge. Often do we hear them say, "I paid him off for it," or again, "She got as good as she sent." This generally means that by malice, spite, revenge, the one who did the first wrong was punished more severely than justice required. It means that the devil and one's evil passions were listened to, their promptings followed, and all made a boast of afterwards. A beautiful Christian example! Two immortal souls trying to see which can insult the crucified Redeemer the most! How can such an one ever kiss the crucifix? How dare to press those lips there represented, from which blessings were always returned for cursing?

Again, those who glory in their shame are those who boast of their careless lives, of never going to Mass, to confession, or to their Easter-duty, and of never observing the light law of the church by keeping the fasts of Lent and other days.

Others, again, boast of spending their money freely, not heeding the cries of wife and children for food. They neglect those who

have been entrusted to them by God. They let the poor wife work herself to death merely because they love the praise of a world which calls their folly openheartedness. These are really the meanest of men, but they believe the world when it calls them good, generous, noble.
All of these are, indeed, truly enemies of the cross which all Christians are bound to love. They are its enemies because the cross saves mankind, whereas they try to ruin souls. By their example and false teaching they make others like themselves. They help souls to hell while our crucified Lord is trying to save them. They take the part of the devil against their God.

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Easter being a movable Feast which can occur on any day from the 22d of March to the 25th of April, the number of Sundays between Epiphany and Septuagesima, and between Pentecost and Advent, varies according to the situation of Easter. There are always at least two Sundays, unless Epiphany falls on a Sunday, and never more than six, between Epiphany and Septuagesima. Likewise, there are never fewer than twenty-three Sundays after Pentecost, or more than twenty-eight. The Gospel and Epistle for the last Sunday after Pentecost are always the same. When there are twenty-three Sundays, the Gospel and Epistle for the last Sunday are substituted for those of the twenty-third. When there are twenty-five Sundays, the Gospel and Epistle for the sixth Sunday after Epiphany are taken; when there are twenty-six, those also of the fifth after Epiphany; when there are twenty-seven, those of the fourth, and when there are twenty-eight those of the third, in order to fill up the interval which occurs. In any year, in which there are more than twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost, proper sermons for these Sundays are to be found among those which are arranged for the Sundays following the Feast of the Epiphany. If one sermon is wanting, it is taken from the sixth Sunday after Epiphany; if two, three, or four are needed, the last two or three or four sermons which precede Septuagesima are to be taken, in their order.

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Twenty-fourth or Last Sunday after Pentecost.
Epistle.
Colossians i. 9-14.
Brethren:
We cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will 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.
Gospel.

St. Matthew xxiv. 15-35.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples: When you shall see "the abomination of desolation," which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth, let him understand. Then let those that are in Judea 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.

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Then, if any man shall say to you: Lo, here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold I have told it to you beforehand. If therefore they shall say to you: Behold he is in the desert; go ye not out: Behold he is in the closets; believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even unto 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 great 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. Now learn a parable from the fig tree: when its branch 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 near, even at the doors. Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Sermon CXL.

Behold I have told it to you beforehand.
--St. Matthew xxiv. 25.

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Once in a venerable manor-house, at the head of the carved oak stairway, stood an old clock. About half a minute before it struck it made a curious, buzzing, whirring sound. Then all the children of the house said, "Ah! the old clock is _warning_"; and upstairs they ran to see the clock strike. The clock told them beforehand what it was going to do.

Now, brethren, there is a clock that has gone on warning and striking for many a century, and that clock is called "the Church's Year." It was wound up last Advent, and since then it has struck Christmas, it has struck Epiphany, it has struck St. Paul's Day, it has struck Easter, Pentecost, Assumption, All Saints and All Souls. To-day it has nearly run down; it is _warning_ for next Sunday, when it will strike Advent again. The Church, next Sunday, will bring you face to face with judgment. To-day she _warns_ you that the great season of Advent is coming once more; that the old year is passing, that the new one is about to begin. So, then, brethren, before the clock strikes for judgment, before time is dead, while life and grace and opportunities still remain, take up your stand before the old clock; look at the hours depicted on the dial, and ask yourself how you spent last year, how you would be prepared if judgment should come to you a week hence.

Listen! How merrily that chime rings. You heard it about a year ago. It was the Church clock striking Christmas. Where were you then? Some of you, we know, were where you should be--at holy Mass, receiving Holy Communion at the altar-rail. You heard the organ pealing and the choir singing _Adeste fideles_; you saw the little Infant Jesus in the crib, and the bright evergreens decking the church, and felt in your hearts that indeed there was peace on earth. Happy you if it was thus. {470}

But alas! was it so? Were you not away from Mass last Christmas? Were you not neglecting your religion? Were you not in mortal sin? Were you not revelling, getting drunk, thinking rather of feasting and enjoying yourselves than of devotion and thanksgiving?

Then the hour of Epiphany struck! What gifts had you to bring to the manger-bed? Had you the gold of Christian charity to present? Had you the incense of faith and the myrrh of sweet and fragrant hope? Ah! it is to be feared that some knelt not at the manger-bed of Jesus, but on the brink of hell: forgetting God, scandalizing their neighbor, damning their own souls. On the "Feast of Light" (as the Epiphany is sometimes called) some were kneeling at the shrine of the world and '"holding the candle to the devil." Didn't you hear the pendulum of the old clock ticking, ticking, and seeming to say, as it swung: "Behold! I have told you beforehand! Behold! I have told you beforehand!" Why, then, did you not do penance?

Then came Lent; and on the first Sunday of that holy time the clock warned loud and clear for Easter. A voice almost seemed to be heard shouting in your ears: "Easter-duty! Easter-duty! 'Time and tide wait for no man!'" And so at last the clock struck. Easter had passed. You had been "told beforehand." You did not heed, and thus, oh! listen heaven, and listen hell, another Easter-duty was missed, and another mortal sin committed.

To-day, dear friends, the Church clock warns you again. The Church herself cries to you to cast "off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." Give ear, then, while there is yet life and hope. Have you been negligent? "Better late than never"; _now_ is the time to mend.

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Have you been a drunkard? _Now_ "be sober and watch." Have you neglected your children? Begin to care for them as you should. Have you neglected the sacraments? Come, prepare at once to receive them worthily. Whatever your state may be, remember--judgment is coming; death is at hand! Maybe God's clock in heaven already points, for you, at the last hour; maybe this is the last time that you will be _warned_, and then the clock will _strike_ and you will be in eternity. Time and tide are rushing on. Every tick of the clock brings you nearer heaven or nearer hell. Oh! then prepare yourself for the great day, that so when time _is_ dead and gone; when the great clock strikes for the _last_ time, you may be found ready, and go in with Jesus to his marriage feast.

Rev. Algernon A. Brown.

Sermon CXLI.

That you may walk worthy of God.
--Colossians i. 10.

"Brethren," says St. Paul, in the Epistle of this Sunday, "we cease not to pray for you, ... that you may walk worthy of God." These words may, no doubt, be understood to mean that we should live in such a way as to be worthy to receive God in his Real Presence at the time of Holy Communion, and by his grace at all times; and, finally, to receive him, and to be received by him, in his eternal kingdom of glory. But there is another sense, perhaps a more natural one, and certainly a more special one, in which we may understand them.

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This sense is, that we should live in a way worthy of, and suitable to, the dignity and the favor which he has conferred upon us, in making or considering us worthy, as the apostle goes on to say, "to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light"--that is in bringing us into, and making us members of, his one, true, and Holy Catholic Church. In other words, that we should behave in such a way as to be creditable to him and to his holy church, to which we belong.

Now, this is a point the importance of which cannot be overrated, and which we are too apt to forget. We lose sight of the fact that the honor of God and of his church has been placed in our hands, and confided to our charge; so that every sin which we commit, besides its own proper malice, has the malice of an indignity to the holy state to which we have been called. For this reason, a sin committed by a Catholic is always greater than the same sin committed by any one else; not only on account of the greater grace and clearer light which he has received, but also because God is more specially robbed of his honor by it. You all see this plainly enough when it is a question of a sin committed by one who has been called to the ecclesiastical or religious state. If a priest or a religious is guilty of any offence, though it be but a small one, you are scandalized by it, not only because he ought to have been better able to avoid it, but also because it dishonors God's choice of him to be a special image in this world of his divine goodness.

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But you forget that you also, merely because you are Catholics, dishonor God, and bring him and his holy religion into contempt by the sins which you commit. It is plain enough, however, that you do, though in a somewhat less degree than those whom he has more specially chosen.

And other people do not forget it, though you may. "Look at those Catholics," the world outside is continually saying; "they may belong to the true church, but they do not do much honor to it. See how they drink, lie, and swear. If that is all the good it does one to be a Catholic, I would rather take my chance of saving my soul somewhere else than be reckoned among such people."

Now, it is all very true that such talk as this is unjust and unfair, and that the very persons who say such things may really be much worse, at least considering their temptations, than those whom they find fault with. But still they have a right to find fault that those whom God has brought into the true church are not evidently as much better as they ought to be, than those whom he has not; and you cannot altogether blame them for finding fault with him rather than with yourselves, and saying that this Catholic Church of his is rather a poor instrument to save the world with.

Remember then, my brethren, that a bad Catholic is a disgrace to his church, and a dishonor to Almighty God, who founded it. A story is told of a man who, when drunk, would deny that he was a Catholic; he had the right feeling on this point, though he committed a greater sin to save a less one. Imitate him, not in denying your faith, but in taking care not to disgrace it; for God will surely require of you an account, not only of your sins, but also of the dishonor which they have brought on the holy name by which you are called.

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Sermon CXLII.

_As lightning cometh out of the east,
and appeareth even unto the west:
so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be._
--St. Matthew xxiv. 27.

These words of our Lord, my dear brethren, refer principally to the general judgment, which will come suddenly upon all, at least all of those who shall be alive at the time when it shall occur. And he could not have used a more striking comparison to show how sudden it will be; how it will take every one unawares, even of those who will be expecting it. You know that when you watch the flashes of lightning in a thunder-storm, though you are expecting them all the time, yet each one takes you by surprise; you hardly know that it has come till it has gone; you do not so much see it as remember it. So it will be at the last and awful day; all at once, without any warning, the heavens will open, and God will come suddenly, not this time in mercy, but in justice; not to save the world, but to judge it; there will be no time even for an act of contrition, but as every one is then found, so will he be for all eternity.

Probably you and I will not be in this world at the time of the general judgment; it is most likely that we shall die before it comes. We shall rise from our graves and be present at it, but we shall have been already judged; so that it will not be by it that we shall be saved or lost. But that judgment which we shall have gone through will perhaps also have come on us suddenly; as suddenly as the one on the last day. For it will come on us the instant that our souls leave the body; the moment after we die we shall appear before the throne of God to receive the sentence of eternal salvation or condemnation. So it may surprise us at any moment; for we may suddenly die.
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There is not one of us here who has any certainty that he may not before to-day's sun sets, nay, even this very hour or minute, even before he can draw another breath, be standing before that terrible judgment seat, and receiving that sentence from which there is no appeal.
How often do we hear of people suddenly struck down by death without a moment's warning; people who were promising themselves, as you no doubt are promising yourselves, many more days to live. They did not do anything, so far as we can see, to deserve such a sudden blow; they were living lives no worse and no better than those of others around them. "Those eighteen," says our Lord, "upon whom the tower fell in Siloe, and slew them; think you that they also were debtors--that is to say, sinners--above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem?" No, God calls us suddenly in this way to show that he is the owner of our lives, that he has made no promise to give any one of us a single moment beyond those which he has already given.
But sudden death is not, we may say, any special visitation of God. It is natural, not wonderful. If you could see the way in which your own bodies are made, you would wonder not so much that people die suddenly, but rather that they should die in any other way. It is not more surprising that one should die suddenly than that a watch should suddenly stop. The body is in many ways a more delicate thing than a watch; and in its most delicate parts the slightest thing out of order may be fatal. So we continue to live rather by the special care which our Lord takes to preserve our lives, than by any hold which our souls have on our bodies.
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But you will say, "After all, father, very few really do die suddenly, compared to those who have time to prepare." Well, it is true that there are not many who pass instantly from full health into the shadow of death; but if there were only one in a million, is it not a terrible risk for one who is not prepared? And, besides, in another way it is not true. For almost all die sooner than they expect. All think, even when they have some fatal illness, that they will have more time than is really to be given them. Death, when it actually comes, is a surprise; for every one, perhaps, the coming of the Son of Man is at the last like the lightning; every one expects it, but not just then; every one looks for a few moments more.
When you think of these things, my dear brethren, there is only one reasonable resolution for you to make. It is to live in such

a way that you may be ready to die at any instant; to be like those wise virgins of whom the Gospel of to-day's feast, the feast of the glorious martyr St. Catherine, tells us, who had oil in their lamps when the cry came at midnight: "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him." To have the grace of God, which is represented by that oil, always in the lamp of your soul; to be always in the state of grace, never in that of sin; for most assuredly that cry will come to each one of you, and sooner than you think; and woe be to you if you are not prepared when it shall sound in your ears!

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Five-minute Sermons
for
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on
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Preface.

Repeated and urgent requests from both clergy and laity have induced the publication of this second volume of Five-Minute Sermons. They have all been preached in the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York, and published weekly in the _Catholic Review_. Choice has been made of such as are really little sermons, since there are many excellent manuals from which purely doctrinal instructions may be prepared. Yet they all contain, it is hoped, a solid basis of doctrine plainly put and appropriately illustrated. The main object is, however, to edify, to quicken the moral perceptions, and to move in a reasonable degree the religious emotions.

Nearly all of these sermons may serve as skeletons for discourses of greater length; a fuller treatment of the topics, by means of familiar illustrations and more copious extracts from Scripture, will fit them for use at High Mass, or on Sunday evenings.

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First Sunday of Advent.

Epistle.

Romans xiii. 11-14,

Brethren:

Know that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light; let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel.

St. Luke xxi. 25-33.

At that time Jesus said to his disciples:

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

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Sermon I.

The Spirit Of Advent.

It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep.

--Romans xiii. 11.

This life of ours is made up of beginnings. After the rest of the night we have on each succeeding day to begin again our round of work, and then comes the night again, when our work must be laid aside. So, too, does the life of our souls consist in great part of beginnings, though in the great work of saving our souls there should be no such thing as rest. This work must be unceasing, until that night comes wherein no man can work, the night of death, when our great Master shall demand of us an account of our labor. On this day, then, which is the beginning of the Church's year, it is well for us to pause and ask ourselves how we are fulfilling the task that is set before us. Are our souls asleep? Have our consciences been lulled into a false security concerning the state of our immortal souls? Are we careless or indifferent about the one thing needful for us--our soul's salvation?

To each and every one of us to-day come the warning words of the Apostle, "Brethren, know that it is now the hour for us to arise from sleep." Now is the time for us to shake off our slothfulness, to rouse ourselves from our dangerous state of

idleness and inactivity, to cast off the works of darkness and clothe ourselves in the armor of light, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and, arrayed in the strength which he gives, to walk honestly as in the day. "The night is passed," says St. Paul.
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God grant that for each one of us the dark night of mortal sin may be for ever past and gone; that its terrible gloom may never again settle down upon our souls, shutting out the light of heaven, the pure and radiant light of God's grace. For "the day is at hand," the day of reckoning, the day of wrath and terror, when we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. The Church to-day warns us of the approach of that time. Year by year, day by day, hour by hour it is drawing nearer. "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."
Yes, our salvation if we have been faithful, or our eternal damnation if God's judgment overtake us in the state of mortal sin. Therefore it is that the Church, upon this first Sunday of Advent, lifts up her voice to warn us of the coming of our Lord, telling us of his near approach, and bidding us to prepare to meet him. Will you heed this warning, or will you still put off the day of your conversion to God? Beware! God's warning may be given you to-day for the last time. "Behold, now is the acceptable time"; "it is now the hour to rise from sleep." There is still time for you to turn from your sins and begin again to serve God. Perhaps you have tried before and then have fallen back into old ways and habits of sin. Begin again. We must always be beginning if we would make any progress. We must examine our consciences at the end of each day, and find out how we have offended God, make earnest resolutions for the morrow, and then begin each day with the determination to avoid the faults of the day before. This is a sure means of perseverance.
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And this beginning of the Christian year is a good time to take a fresh start in the affairs of our souls. During Advent the Church brings to our minds the consideration of the four last things. Death and judgment, heaven or hell are awaiting us. Begin this day, then, as though it were to be your last day on earth, and on each succeeding day for the rest of your life keep up this practice. "For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness" now at the beginning of this holy season. Drunkenness, impurity, contention, and envy are, alas! far too common amongst us. "Let them be not so much as named among you, as becometh saints," mindful of your high calling in Christ. Then when the Judge appears, he will find you ready to meet him. Having begun each day with the intention of serving God, you will then be ready and fit to begin that day which shall have no end in that heavenly city which "needeth not sun nor moon to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof."

Sermon II.

The Graces Of Advent.

_The night is past, and the day is at hand.

Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness
and put on the armor of light.
Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ._
--Epistle of the Day.

To-day, dear brethren, we enter upon the season of preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. For "the night is past and the day is at hand." "The day-spring, the Brightness of the everlasting Light, the Sun of righteousness," is come "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."
{17}
To give light to them that have been unfaithful to God's grace, to call them back--to turn them to a new life--this is the mission of our Saviour; and this is the call he makes upon us to-day--that we should return to him, "the Ruler of the house of Israel, who didst appear to Moses in the burning bush, and gave him the law in Sinai."

You, dear brethren, were taught that law when the first rays of the light of reason lit up your soul. God wrote it on your hearts; you heard it from your parents lips; your teachers bade you love it and keep it. But have you done so? Have you not become like those whom of old God taught, and who would not listen, but went after false gods, who bowed down before idols of gold and silver, of wood and clay?

Have you not bowed down like them when you preferred money-getting to serving God; when you were willing, for the sake of gold and silver, to risk the loss of your immortal souls? Have you not bowed down when you chose to gratify your lower instincts at the cost of your spiritual ruin? Have you not bowed down to idols of clay when you have steeped yourselves in drunkenness, in impurities, in the many sins of the flesh? Oh! surely you have need of the "wisdom that cometh out of the mouth of the Most High" to teach you "the way of prudence." Oh! surely you have need of "the Orient from on high," for you "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."
{18}
But, dear brethren, "the night is past." "Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness"; "let us walk honestly." Oh! "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." "Behold Emmanuel, our King and Law giver," he for whom the nations sighed and their salvation, has come to save us--to save men whom he has made from the dust of the earth.

Dear brethren, shall we be slow to go to him who comes with healing for our immortal souls? Tell it out among the people, and say, "Behold, God our Saviour cometh. Emmanuel is his name, and his name is great. Behold, he is my God, and I will glorify him; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord our Law-giver, the Lord our King, cometh to save us."

Begin this day to prepare for the joyous feast of Christmas. Cleanse your hearts by prayer and fasting; come to the sacraments and be washed in the blood of your Redeemer; come to his table and break the bread of true friendship, that the joy of your heart may be full when we shall celebrate that day of days, when the Word which "was made flesh dwelt among us." Truly "we have seen his glory," and "of his fulness we have all received." Let

us never forget his mercy; let us remember "that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep."

Sermon III.

St. John The Baptist.

_The angel said to him: Fear not, Zachary,
for thy prayer is heard;
and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son,
and thou shalt call his name John;
and thou shalt have joy and gladness,
and many shall rejoice at his birth._
--Luke i. 13.

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These words, my brethren, were spoken by the Angel Gabriel to Zachary, the father of St. John the Baptist, while he was engaged with his religious duties in the temple at Jerusalem. Before giving the account of the angel's visit St. Luke informs us that Zachary and his wife, Elizabeth, were both acceptable to God and obedient to the divine law. There are few who have received such commendation in the pages of Holy Scripture. It might have been surmised that Zachary led a good life, practising the virtues and avoiding the vices, since he belonged to the Jewish priesthood. Yet we find that his wife, Elizabeth, is mentioned as deserving equal praise with himself, for it is stated that "_they were both_ just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame."

Such is the brief account that St. Luke has given of the parents of St. John the Baptist. Though brief, it is enough to show that any son might well feel proud of parents such as they were--blameless in the sight of God. For many years they had lived together in the hill-country of Judea, conscientiously performing their duties, and cherishing the hope that they would be rewarded for their good actions. Like the rest of the Jews who remained faithful to the laws promulgated by Moses and the prophets, which God had made for Israel, they prayed earnestly for the coming of the Messias, the Orient from on high, who was ardently expected to descend from his throne in heaven in order to enlighten those in darkness and in the shadow of death, directing their steps into the way of peace. While serving God by strict fidelity to the commandments, they did not anticipate that an angel would be sent to visit them; they did not know until advanced in age that a son would be born to them who would be called the prophet of the Most High, the precursor of the son of David, appointed to prepare his ways.

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That this blessing was unexpected is shown by the fact that Zachary hesitated to believe the message of the Angel Gabriel, and on account of this hesitation, this mistrust of the good tidings that God sent to him, he was deprived of the use of speech for several months. After the birth of St. John the Baptist his tongue was again endowed with the power to speak, and his words on that occasion, spoken under the influence of inspiration, have been preserved in the grand canticle known as the Benedictus, which is justly assigned to a prominent place in

the Office of the Church.
These considerations enable us to perceive what sort of a home St. John the Baptist had while he remained with his aged parents. From the knowledge we have of them, there is no reason to think that they were deprived of anything requisite to make their home happy and comfortable. Early in life, however, St. John manifested a peculiar preference for the lonely desert. In a special manner he was sanctified before his birth, and received the gifts of the Holy Ghost in an extraordinary degree. It was not because his fellow-creatures had proved deceptive, nor because sad experience had taught him that the glittering charms of the world are transient and wither into dust, that he resolved to live like a hermit, separated from his relatives. Joyfully he abandoned his family privileges, with all that seems to make life among men pleasant, and went forth among the wild rocks in the mountain solitudes to live alone with God.
{21}
Why was it that he made such a strange choice? The answer is, that God directed him to leave houses and lands, his home and kindred, and endowed him with the heroism needed for a solitary, penitential life. In obedience to the will of God, acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he practised unusual mortification. He selected coarse raiment, made of camel's hair; he used a strange kind of food; he abstained entirely from the use of wine. By deeds of heroic penance, by extraordinary acts of self-denial, combined with the performance of his other duties, he advanced in the way of perfection. During this season of Advent we should invoke his intercession, and strive to remove the obstacles that impede the way of the Lord and the action of His grace in our sanctification.

{22}
Second Sunday of Advent.

Epistle.

Romans xv. 4-13.

Brethren:

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

abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost.
Gospel.
St. Matthew xi. 2-10.
At that time:
When John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples he said to him: Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another? And Jesus making answer said to them: Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them.
{23}
And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me. And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: What went you out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? A prophet? yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

Sermon IV.

Fair-Weather Christians.

_What went you out into the desert to see?
A reed shaken with the wind?_
--Gospel Of The Day.

Our Lord asked this question of his disciples, my brethren, regarding his precursor, St. John the Baptist, whom also they had followed in his time. "Why," said he, "did you take such trouble to see him? Why did you think so much of him? Was it because he was like a reed shaken by the wind? No, but because he was just the opposite of that. You thought highly of him, you honored him as I myself honor him, because he did not shake and tremble at the breath of popular opinion; because he was not afraid of the world, or of all the powers that are in it; because he only thought of God, and of his duty; of the work that he had been sent to do."
{24}
But would our Saviour be able to praise us so highly, my brethren, if he should come down now in our midst? Would he not say rather that we were indeed like reeds, turning to one side or another, according to the wind that happens to be blowing? I am afraid that he would have too good reason to find fault with the words and actions of many who call themselves Christians, an who even pass for pretty good ones.
Who are these people whom he would find fault with? There are plenty of them. They are what I should call fair-weather Christians. They go to church regularly, perhaps, and to the Sacraments, it may be, quite often; when they are with pious people they can be just as pious as anybody else. They say their prayers not only in church, but at home, too; they certainly try in a way to be good; sometimes at least they would not say or do anything wrong of their own accord. And when they are alone they do very well, too; they resist many temptations, and avoid a

great deal of sin. They are not what one would call hypocrites; far from it; they have a good many virtues, within as well as on the outside.

But the trouble with them is that they have little or none of what is commonly called "backbone." Alone or in good company they are all right; but take a look at them on the street, in the shop or factory, at their work or their amusements with their associates, and they do not stand the test so well. They laugh at every vulgar, filthy, and impure word that any one else pretends to think is funny and wants them to laugh at, or if they do not laugh out right they give a miserable, cowardly smile. They hear something said about the faith which they know is a vile falsehood, but they say nothing in reply; perhaps they even allow that there is some truth in it.

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It takes a long while for any one to find out that they are Catholics who does not guess it by their names or know where they go to church; it takes a great deal longer to find out that they are supposed to be good ones.

Now, what is the reason of this contemptible sneaking and meanness in those who ought to be brave and generous soldiers of Christ? It is just one thing. These people do not love God enough to dare to displease any one else for his sake. Most of them have got pluck enough when something else is concerned. They would resent an insult to themselves; perhaps for years they have not been on speaking terms with many people on account of some trifling slight or injury. But when God's honor and love are concerned, the first breath of disapproval keeps them from standing up for him, as the reed bends with the gentlest breeze which strikes it.

Yes, that is the difficulty; these good people do not love God enough to stand up for him as all Christians worthy of the name should do. Let them think of this seriously. For if one does not love God enough to offend bad men for his sake, how can he love him above all things? And if one does not love God above all things, how can he be saved?

Sermon V.

The Immaculate Conception.

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The beautiful feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin being so near at hand, let us consider it this morning. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, then, my dear brethren, is simply this: that our Blessed Lady, though the offspring merely of human parents, like the rest of us, and naturally liable to inherit original sin from them as we have inherited it from ours, was nevertheless by the special providence and decree of God entirely preserved from it.

She was preserved from it entirely, I say. This may be understood in two ways. First, it was never in her. It was not taken from her at the first moment of her existence, as it has been taken from us at baptism; no, it was not taken from her, for it was not in her even at that first moment.

Secondly, she was entirely saved from its effects, not partly, as

we have been. None of its consequences remained in her, as I have said they do in us. No, she was as if there had never been such a thing; except that her Son willed that she should suffer together with him, on account of its being in us.

Now, my brethren, I hope you all understand this; for a great deal of nonsense is talked about this matter, especially by Protestants, most of whom have not the least idea what is meant by the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother, and who yet object to it just as bitterly as if they did. They either confound it with her virginal motherhood, in which they themselves believe and yet seem to object to our believing it, or they accuse us of saying that she was divine like her Son, our Lord. If they would only examine they would find that what the Church teaches is simply this: that our Lady is a creature of God like ourselves, having no existence at all before the time of her Immaculate Conception; but that she is a pure and perfect creature, the most pure and perfect that God has ever made; immaculate, that is to say, spotless; free from any stain or imperfection, especially from the fatal stain of original sin.

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And that the reason why God made her so was that she was to be His own mother, than which no higher dignity can be conceived. If they object to this, let them do so; but let them at least know and say what they are objecting to.

Let us hope that some Protestants, at least, will not object to this doctrine when they understand it. But perhaps some of them may say: "This is all very good, but what right has the pope, or any one else at this late day, to make it a part of the Christian faith?" And it may be that even some Catholics will find the same difficulty.

I will answer this question now, though it is a little off of our present subject, on account of the prominence which has been given to it of late. The answer is simply this: The pope has not added any thing at all to the Christian faith in defining the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. He has no more done so than the Council of Nic√¶a did in defining the doctrine of the Divinity of our Lord.

You remember, my brethren, perhaps, that from this council the Nicene Creed, which is said or sung at Mass, takes its name. It was called together to condemn the errors of some who maintained that our Lord was not truly God. And it solemnly defined that he was. Very well; was that adding anything to the Christian faith? Of course not; it was simply declaring what the Christian faith was, to put an end to the doubts which were arising about it. That is plain enough, is it not?

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Now what was it that the pope did in defining the Immaculate Conception? Exactly the same thing. He defined what the faith really was to put an end to doubts about it. The only difference was, that those who opposed or doubted the Immaculate Conception of our Lady were not so much to blame as those who opposed or doubted the Divinity of our Lord, or even in many cases not at all to blame. It was not such a prominent part of the faith, and had been more obscured by time. But the action of the pope and

the council in the two cases was just the same.

Sermon VI.

The Total Abstinence Pledge.

The angel said to him: Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John; and thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great before the Lord; and shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb; and he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.

--Luke i. 13-16.

My brethren, the message brought from heaven by an angel deserves careful examination, because the angel acts as a messenger from God. A little reflection will convince us that the message delivered to Zachary by the Angel Gabriel contained a very peculiar prediction concerning the total abstinence from wine and strong drink, which St. John the Baptist practised throughout his life. In other matters no special directions were given regulating his acts of self-denial.

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No mention is made of his raiment in the angel's message; neither was any information communicated in regard to his choice of food. Hence there is a special significance in the declaration which the Angel Gabriel put forth when he predicted that St. John the Baptist would abstain from the use of wine and strong drink. This passage of Holy Scripture, therefore, furnishes a strong proof in favor of total abstinence. In the Book of Leviticus, x. 9, and in the Book of Numbers, vi. 2, as well as in the writings of the prophet Jeremias, xxxv. 61-69, there are texts to be found which show that total abstinence was recognized long before the birth of St. John the Baptist. But on account of his intimate relations with the Holy Family, and on account of the extraordinary approval bestowed upon him by our Lord, by which he was canonized, so to speak, before his death, St. John the Baptist is the most prominent of all the total abstainers mentioned in the Bible.

Considered as an antidote, an effectual safeguard against the degrading vice of intemperance, the practice of total abstinence is now defended not only by examples from Holy Writ, but also on arguments based on common sense and experience. It is regarded as the heroic form of the virtue of temperance, which may be meritoriously practised by those who have never been addicted to drunkenness. The determination to renounce even the lawful use of strong drink is especially commendable as a means of self-preservation for young men. More than any other class of society, they are assailed by temptations to excessive drinking; and by unwise and unscrupulous friends they are often taught to regard drunkenness as a pardonable weakness.

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Undoubtedly, then, it is a wise act for a young man at the present time to erect a strong barrier, a wall of defence, to protect himself from a most dangerous and destructive vice. For

occasional and habitual drunkards, however, who wish to reform and live in state of friendship with God, total abstinence is not a mere act of heroism, but something indispensably necessary. The pledge for them is simply a firm purpose of amendment, a manifestation of their desire to avoid that which they know has been for them a proximate occasion of sin. In many cases total abstinence, though it may be a stern remedy, is the only sure preventive of intemperance, and is imperatively demanded for the spiritual and temporal welfare of numerous families. The man who has offended God and debased himself by drunkenness cannot obtain an unconditional pardon. To obtain forgiveness from God he must have a sorrow for past offences, a determination to do better in the future, and a willingness to atone for his sins. What he must do in the future to secure his safety can be ascertained by examining his past experience. By the application of these principles, especially in the tribunal of penance, the growth of virtue is fostered and the progress of vice is retarded. In this way the Church proclaims to each individual the great lessons which St. John taught by the banks of the Jordan. To all of her children she repeats during this season of Advent the admonition uttered long ago by the voice crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight his paths.

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Third Sunday of Advent.

Epistle.

Philippians iv. 4-7.

Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men: The Lord is nigh. Be not solicitous about anything: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Gospel.

St. John i. 19-28.

At that time:

The Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and levites to John, to ask him: Who art thou? And he confessed, and did not deny: and he confessed: I am not the Christ. And they asked him: What then? Art thou Elias? And he said: I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered: No. They said therefore unto him: Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? what sayest thou of thyself? He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias. And they that were sent, were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying: I baptize with water; but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not. The same is he that shall come after me, who is preferred before me: the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

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Sermon VII.
Bad Company.

In one of his epistles (2 Timothy iii. 1-5) St. Paul speaks of _dangerous times_ for Christians, when "men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, traitors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasure more than of God; having an appearance, indeed, of piety, but denying the power thereof."

At the present time there is in the world, especially in populous cities, no small number of men who have the combination of vices so forcibly described by the Apostle St. Paul. In some places they may be in the majority, and have the power to enforce their depraved views on their righteous neighbors. By their slanders they can revile virtue; by their blasphemies they endeavor to bring odium on God's plan of ruling the world. Their hatred of religion is manifested not only in the regulation of personal affairs, but also in their business methods, and in their utterances on public questions. If these stubborn, puffed-up lovers of sensuality, traitors to God, who are without affection and without peace, could be assigned to a reservation in some corner of the world, their range of influence would be kept within a definite area. But they are like their master the devil, roaming from place to place, every where seeking the destruction of men's souls.

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Hence it is an important matter, and especially for Catholic young men, to consider the injurious results of the unavoidable contact with those in the world who are more or less infected with erroneous views, or have become the victims of debasing vices. Such characters are to be found in nearly every department of business. It often happens that a young man, when he begins to work, is obliged to enter a sphere beyond the control of his parents, where he will be in close proximity to blatant infidels, who claim an intellectual superiority on account of their unbelief. Business engagements may compel a Catholic young man to be within hearing of shallow sceptics, who take every opportunity to ask questions--not to get information, but merely to ventilate their contempt for all religious teaching. These hostile influences have produced in many of our young men very deplorable results. By a sort of indifference, resembling the dry rot, they have allowed themselves to get into a very unsafe state of mind regarding their duties to God.

Enlightened self-interest should prompt every young man to keep a sharp lookout for all that is injurious to him. He may have the best religious training, together with the virtuous surroundings of a good home, but these will not be sufficient without his own personal activity. If he selects by preference heretics and freethinkers as the companions of his leisure hours; if he is so puffed up with the idea of his own ability that he can find no Catholic associates worthy of his notice; if he is so confident of his own strength that he habitually neglects to receive Holy

Communion, he has become a traitor to the King of Heaven. Our Lord wants his followers to attain the highest standard of human excellence.
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To those who love him and fearlessly keep his commandments he gives the courage which belongs to true manliness; and their piety has power to surmount every obstacle on the way to heaven.

Sermon VIII.

The Voice In The Wilderness.

Make straight the way of the Lord.
--John i. 23.

This expression, dear brethren, is no new one in Holy Scripture, and it fell on no unaccustomed ears. More than seven hundred years before Jesus Christ the great prophet Isaias spoke about "the voice of one crying in the desert: Make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God." Again, three hundred years later, another prophet, Malachias, wrote: "Behold, I send my angel, and he shall prepare the way before my face." Again, about six months before Jesus Christ was born, an aged priest, Zacharias, took his own little child, who was only eight days old, in his arms, and in the beautiful hymn of the _Benedictus_ says of him: "Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way."
You know, dear brethren, who this little child was, who was the burden of all this prophetic song. You know it was St. John the Baptist. And you know, too, the mighty work he had to do.
And now, in this morning's Gospel, it is St. John the Baptist himself speaking: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord."
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Now, how is this "way of the Lord" to be "made straight" in the spiritual desert of our hearts? Well, the prophet Isaias tells us that there are five things which we have to do in this matter: The first, "every valley shall be exalted"; the second, "every mountain and hill made low"; the third, "the crooked become straight"; the fourth, "the rough ways plain"; and the fifth, "the glory of the Lord revealed."
He begins, you see, by telling us that the valleys must be exalted. And don't you think that these "valleys" are a very good likeness of all the things which we have left undone in our lives? All these abysses of idleness, of neglect, of carelessness, of indifference, which lie in the wilderness of our sinful past, these have to be filled up. Christ our Lord cannot come to us so long as there are such great holes in the road. We must set to work and "exalt" them by throwing into our religious life all the pains and care and diligence and faithfulness we can.
Then there are the "mountains and hills," which must be made low. For oftentimes, when the Evil One sees that a man cannot be altogether discouraged from serving God, then he turns round and persuades him that he _is_ serving God very well indeed; that he may be proud to think how often he has resisted

temptation, how often overcome difficulties, how often done great things for Christ's sake.

So arise the vast mountains of pride and self-will and self-conceit. But be sure our Lord will not climb over these to come to you. You must first get them out of the way. They must be made low, if you would enter into life: for it is written, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

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Then the "crooked places"--I suppose you know what they are--all crooked ways of lying and deceit and untruthfulness. We call a truthful person _straightforward_, because he does not turn about to this side or to that in what he says, but goes straight to the truth. Well, whatever is not straightforward is crooked, and the crooked path is one which Christ will not walk in. So we must try every day to go on more and more straightforwardly with what God would have us do, according to the saying in the Proverbs, "Let thine eyes look straight on, ... decline not to the right hand, nor to the left, and the Lord will bring forward thy ways in peace."

Once more: there are the "rough places." Rough tempers, rough words, and rough manners; such feelings as spite, and anger, and ill nature, and revenge; as cutting and cruel words, and quarrelling and fighting. Such rough places must be made very plain and smooth if the road is to be fitted for the feet of our meek and gentle Lord.

And, lastly: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed." So shall it indeed be to those that are found worthy to enter into the kingdom of heaven. But what that glory is who shall tell? St. John could not. "Beloved," he says, "we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be." St. Paul could not, for when he was caught up into heaven he tells us that he heard words "which it is not granted to man to utter." Isaias could not. "From the beginning of the world," he says, "they have not heard; the eye hath not seen, O God! besides thee, what things thou hast prepared for them that wait for thee." All we know is, that this glory shall be very great. And if we serve God faithfully here we shall one day see it, and shall one day know. We shall awake after his likeness and be satisfied therewith.

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Sermon IX.
Penance.

For now the axe is laid to the root of the tree.
--Matthew. iii. 10.

St. John Baptist, my brethren, as you know, retired to the desert at an early age, and led there an austere and solitary life, eating coarse and unpalatable food, abstaining from wine and strong drink, cutting off all unnecessary enjoyments of the senses, and giving himself up to prayer and meditation. What was his special motive in this extraordinary course of penance? It was that he might worthily prepare himself for the office which had been as signed to him--that of disposing men's hearts to recognize and receive our Lord when he should come as their Redeemer. It was by penance alone that those hearts could be so

disposed, and he was to be specially the apostle of penance; hence he had to give a signal example of it in his own person; for preaching, however eloquent, is of comparatively little effect unless the preacher practises the virtues to which he exhorts others; and the power of his preaching will be in proportion to the illustration which it finds in his own life.
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Therefore, though it was not necessary for St. John, sanctified as he was even before his birth, to cut off all other sources of pleasure in order to fill his soul with the joy that comes from the love of God, and though he had no sins to atone for, for his life had been free from blame, still he took up this course of penance in order to show forth even more plainly than by his words the need that his hearers would have, in their measure, to do likewise, if they were to share in the redemption to come. For now, as he told them, the axe was to be laid to the root of the tree. God's chosen people, the Jews, whom he had specially watched over for so many years, whom he had often chastised and corrected, and had brought back to his favor when they profited by his visitations, they were no more to be thus dealt with. The tree which had sprung from the seed of Abraham was not to be allowed any longer to stand with merely some lopping and pruning; no, now, if it still would not bring forth the good fruit of a thorough and genuine penance, it was to be cut down and cast into the fire. It was the supreme test which was approaching; if the people whom he had chosen would stand it, they should still retain their place; otherwise they should be rejected as a nation, and only those among them who would truly turn to their God should be saved.
My brethren, St. John is still preaching this doctrine of penance to us. The Church of the New Law is not on her trial, as was that of the Old; no, her Divine Founder has promised that she shall endure to the end of the world. But we, each one of us, have to take the words of his precursor to ourselves. We are called by the name of Christ; yes, but that will not save us. St. John said to the Jews: "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father." So we are not to think ourselves as belonging to Christ, unless we have cast out from our hearts and souls what puts a fatal obstacle to his entrance into them. His axe will be laid to our root also, unless we on our part lay the axe to the root of our sins.
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What is this root of sin in us? It is just this desire of sensual indulgence against which St. John in his life as well as in his doctrine came to make the strongest of protests. If we wish not to bring forth the fruits of sin, we must lay the axe to its root. We must practise penance and mortification, not indeed always to the degree in which he practised it, but at least so far as it is necessary that we may keep the law of God. We must not dally with those things which are dangerous to us, innocent though they may be to others. Our Lord has told us that if even our eyes and hands themselves are an occasion of sin we must pluck them out or cut them off; if, then, there be anything we enjoy, but can really do with out, we must not make a pretext of

the good use which we might make of it if it really is plain that we will abuse it, but must resolutely cast it away. If we would avoid the bitter fruit which will naturally grow we must lay the axe to the root of the tree.

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Fourth Sunday of Advent.

Epistle.

1 _Corinthians iv._ 1-5.

Brethren:

Let a man so look upon us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Here now it is required among the dispensers, that a man be found faithful. But as to me it is a thing of the least account to be judged by you or by human judgment: but neither do I judge my own self. For I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet in this am I not justified: but he that judgeth me, is the Lord. Therefore judge not before the time; until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise from God.

Gospel.

St. Luke iii. 1-6.

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

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Sermon X.

Fruits Of Penance.

Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance.

--Matthew. iii. 8.

St. John Baptist in these words, my dear brethren, teaches us, as he taught those who came to him, that penance, if it be true and genuine, must bring forth its proper fruit. Every repentance, if it be sincere, every confession, if it be really good, must be followed by a good life. If any confession is not so followed, it must needs be a delusion; though it should have been accompanied by torrents of tears, and the sins exposed as perfectly as God himself knows them.

And, moreover, the tree which brings forth the good fruit should continue to bear it; it should not only for a few days or weeks give this proof that it is what it should be, and then have him

who planted it come to seek fruit on it and find none.
Yet how often do we find sinners who come to confession with what would seem to be the best dispositions very soon back just where they were before! How discouraging it is to the priest to find the fruits of a mission which seemed to be so promising reduced down almost to nothing for so many who seemed to profit by it; to spend long hours, to wear away his strength, instructing, exhorting, and absolving, and to have so little return from his labor for God and for souls!
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What is the reason of all this failure of what began so well? Of course it is partly that the tree planted by the grace of God in the Sacrament of Penance was not tended afterwards. Its life was not supplied to it, as it should have been, by the frequent renewal of confession and reception of Holy Communion. But there was a difficulty further back than that; a want of something at the start, which, indeed, was the reason that the sacraments were not regularly received. What was this difficulty? It was a want of a thorough earnestness; of an understanding of the greatness of the work that was undertaken, and of a real determination to sacrifice everything in order to accomplish it.
It is a great undertaking which one commits one's self to in coming to reconcile himself with God after a sinful life. The task is not merely to examine his conscience, to tell his sins plainly and without concealment, and to feel heartily sorry for them; that is a great part of it, but by no means all. There is a great deal left, and that is to leave them for good; to quit company with them for ever. And this is not such an easy matter. When, one has lived so that his whole pleasure has been in sin, in drunkenness and debauchery, in filthy conversation, in bad actions and bad thoughts, it will perhaps seem almost like giving up life itself to part with them. The penitent sinner has not all at once become an angel; his whole nature has been warped and twisted out of place by sin, and, though the guilt of the sin has gone, the effects are there; his soul, like a limb out of joint, has much to suffer before it can get set right again.
A man must make up his mind, when he comes to serve God after serving the devil, that he has got an uphill road to travel; if he does not, he will not persevere. Labor and suffering, self-denial and mortification, he has to face these manfully. His consolation, his happiness, as well as his strength, have got to come from God.
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If one understands this he will seek that happiness and that strength again where he first found it--in confession and Communion. But if he does not, if he thinks that all will go right now without any more trouble, his old nature and habits will claim their dues, and he will soon be back in his sins again.
Yes, we must cut right down to the root of sin if we wish to bring forth the fruits of penance, and must make up our minds to suffer the pain that this cutting will bring. Occasions of sin must be avoided, appetites must be denied, contempt and ridicule must be faced; we must pray, we must struggle, we must resist

even to blood; we must put our former life to death, that Christ may live in us. For, as St. Paul tells us: "If we be dead with him, we shall live also with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him." There is no other way.
Let us not shrink from this pain and this conflict; that would be the greatest mistake of all. But let us understand it, that when the trial comes, as it surely will, it may not find us unprepared.

Sermon XI.

Preparation For Christmas.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord.
--Matthew iii. 3

We are such unprofitable servants that we have much to do to prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts. If we have done all that is required of us we are, nevertheless, unprofitable servants, and unless we believe this we are spiritually blind. {44}
The better the opinion which we have of ourselves the worse is our spiritual condition. The good opinion, than which nothing can be more false, which we have of ourselves prepares the way for a fall into sin.
The way of the Lord, the way of salvation, is found by humility, which always leads to penance.
The holy Council of Trent says that "the whole Christian life ought to be a perpetual penance." How few realize this, because they think they are what they really are not! Now, if penance be the life of the Christian in the state of grace, it must be a crying necessity for one who is in the state of sin. What food is to the starving man penance is to the soul in this unhappy state. Penance is the preparation required of us for the coming feast of Christmas. This is the lesson of Advent. For four weeks the purple vestments, the prayers and ceremonies of the church, and the fasts on Fridays have been appealing to our eyes and ears, if not to our hearts, to prepare in this way. The wise man views the obligation which he is under to do penance as very urgent. He banishes timidity and cowardice and puts his hand to the plough with courage and confidence.
The foolish man hates to hear of penance, because his passions have got the mastery. When asked to keep the commandments and fulfil the duties of his state, he says: "I cannot." To bridle his passions and give up bad habits seem to him too hard a task. {45}
Now, if you should consult any man who has done penance faithfully, so as to persevere in God's grace for years, he would say the foolish man's view of penance is a false one. God is more merciful and lenient than we imagine. It is the devil who dresses up penance as something repulsive.
In urging upon you to prepare for Christmas by penance my first words are: "Take courage." "Taste and see how sweet the Lord is." St. Leo says "the cause of the reparation which we make for our sins is the mercy of God." It is our way of loving him who first loved us. How well the prophet Isaias describes this penance when he says: "The Lord says, I will lead the blind in the way in

which they have not known; in the ways which they have not known I will make them walk. I will change their darkness into light, their crooked ways into ways that are straight, I will accomplish these words in them and will not abandon them. I am found," says God, "by those not seeking me, and I have appeared openly to those who have not asked for me."

We see by these words how much the grace of God assists us, and how God mercifully forgets our past sins when we do penance sincerely.

But our penance must be sincere. We must "bring forth fruit worthy of penance," says St. John the Baptist, the precursor of our Lord.

It matters not if we are "the offspring of vipers," as the holy Baptist called the multitude who approached him for penance, provided "we lay the axe to the root of the tree."

Now, the words of the prophet, instead of repelling sinners, attracted them. The publicans who were farthest from God came and asked: "Master, what shall we do?" And they received the gentle

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... which should be our chief one at Christmas, now that the days of innocent childhood are past. We do not hate sin from our hearts; we even cling to it; at best we make compromises with it. Mortal sin, perhaps, we try to avoid, but venial faults do not trouble us; this is the best that can be said for most of what may be called good Christians. And how many there are who come outwardly to worship before the manger of Bethlehem, but with hearts entirely turned from their God, who lies there in cold and poverty for their sakes, pleading with them for his sake to give up their sinful habits! How many go on offending him at this holy time, with out repentance, almost without remorse!

Hatred of sin; yes, that is what we want if we would be happy at Christmas. And now is the time to learn to hate it. For surely the love of God comes easier to us now, if we will only try to obtain it, than at any other time, unless, perhaps, on Good Friday, when we see the sacrifice now begun accomplished. And the love of God is the hatred of sin, which is the only thing which he hates, the one cause of all his pain.

Do not let this Christmas go by, then, my dear brethren, without the joy which should come with it. Do not let this opportunity pass of acquiring that love of our dear Lord which will make you really hate and trample under foot all that offends him, and which will make you rejoice beyond measure that he has put it in your power to do so. Pray, now, at least that you may learn to love him; that you may enter into the joy of knowing not merely that he can save you, but that he has saved you from your sins.

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Sunday within the Octave of Christmas.

Epistle.

Galatians iv. 1-7.

Brethren:

As long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all: but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father: even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law: that he might redeem those who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Therefore now he is no more a servant, but a son. And if a son, an heir also through God.

Gospel.

St. Luke ii. 33-40.

At that time:

Joseph, and Mary the mother of Jesus, were wondering at these things, which were spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother: Behold this child is set for the ruin, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. And there was a prophetess, called Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years; who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day.

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Now she at the same hour coming in, gave praise to the Lord; and spoke of him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel. And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in him.

Sermon XIII.

Christmas Joy.

Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. --Luke ii. 10.

There is hardly any one, my brethren, who lives where this feast of Christmas is kept who does not feel a special joy in it. Why do we say that "Christmas comes but once a year," if not because we feel that there is nothing else that can take its place? We look forward to it months beforehand; when it comes, we keep it as long as we can and let it go with regret. Why is it that it has such a warm place in our hearts?

Is it merely that it is by common consent a great holiday; that it is a breathing-place in the bustle and hurry of life, a time for meeting our friends, for giving and receiving tokens of affection and regard, a time of feasting and making merry? This has some thing to do with it, but it is not all. For if this were all it would be possible to make by law a holiday like this, which no one has ever succeeded in doing. The early settlers of

this country, in a mistaken zeal against church festivals, endeavored to make a substitute for Christmas; but the failure of their attempt has driven their descendants back to the observance of this feast, though not to the church which gives it to them.
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Yes, we all feel that the joy of Christmas is a thing not made to order. It comes from a source which lies in the very mystery which we commemorate; and, even though we do not meditate or reflect on it, the stream from this source diffuses itself through our life and sweetens all the other joys which come at this time. And they come because of it; we make merry outwardly because we are, and have cause to be glad at heart.
And what is this cause and source of joy? Is it because Christ our Lord has come to save us from sin and eternal ruin? No, it is not simply that; for we celebrate our salvation, our redemption, our ransom from the power of death and hell more specially at Easter than now. That is the festival of our Lord's triumph and our deliverance; it should and does open heaven to our souls, and give them a promise and almost a foretaste of it. But still it does not come home to our hearts as this beautiful time of Christmas does.
And no wonder; for at Easter we cannot but feel that our Lord, though triumphant and glorious, and promising us a share in his triumph and glory, still is separated from us. He has passed the portals of death, he has risen from the grave, he has put on immortality. We cannot follow him where he has gone till we have freed ourselves from all the stains of earth, till we have been purified and washed by penance in his Precious Blood. He has passed from mortal to immortal life, and it is the raising of the mortal to the immortal, of earth to heaven, that Easter celebrates.
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And this, though indeed it is the object of all our hope, is so high that we, sinners that we are, cannot fully make it our present joy. But Christmas is heaven come down to earth. It is the God of heaven condescending to us; taking our weakness upon him, sympathizing with us, and asking us for sympathy and love. He hides his majesty and glory; he veils the splendor of his face; he puts aside all that could distinguish him from ourselves. He invites us to come to him with out fear; he asks only that, sinful though we be, we should try to love him as he loves us. Christmas is the sight of the Creator begging for the love of his creatures, and humbling himself that he may obtain it; that is the reason why it goes to the heart of all who have any heart to give.
Let us then, in this happy season, enter into this joy which is the cause of all the rest which we have, which is so easy for us, which has come to our doors, and only asks that it should be let in. But let the love which goes with it be not a mere passing feeling, to bear no fruit in our lives. Let it bring us indeed to him who has come down to us; let our joy be crowned and perfected by a real return of our hearts to him who has done so much to win them; let us receive him in deed and in truth in his holy sacraments, and never let him go again.

Sermon XIV.
New Year's Eve.

Be sober.
2 Timothy. iv. 5.

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Brethren, those two little words of St. Paul in the epistle of to-day contain excellent advice, especially to-day, on the eve of the new year. How much woe it would hinder, how many families it would save from ruin, how many souls from hell, could they be made a common watchword in any large city in this country during the year 1883!

But do you wish me to tell you the easiest way to be sober? It is to take the total abstinence pledge. What does a man do when he takes the pledge? Just what the farmer does who, seeing that his fence is about high enough to keep the cattle out of the grain, makes it just one rail higher; for he knows that there may be one beast wilder than the rest who will leap over an ordinary fence. So a prudent man, seeing the ravages of the vice of intemperance among his friends, dreads some taint of it hidden in his own nature; dreads some moment of weakness during the passing of the convivial glass, or during some depression of spirits or foolish mirth. So he puts all danger out of the question by the pledge. For if there be danger from an inherited appetite or from a convivial disposition, or from prosperity or adversity, there is no mistake about this: the man who does not drink a single drop cannot drink too much.

But again: what does a man do who takes the pledge? Just what the kind mother does who wants to induce her sick child to take the bitter medicine--she tastes it herself. The pledge is taken by a man who may not need it for his own sake, but who loves another who does need it. It is taken in order to give good example. It is not only a preventive for one's self, but for those who may be led by our influence. It is one great means that fathers and mothers use in order to save their children from the demon of drunkenness.

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Oh! how pleasing to God are those parents who practise total abstinence by way of good example! Oh! how blessed is the home from which intoxicating drink has been utterly banished! How wise are those parents who thus teach their children that intoxicating drink, though it may be used with innocence, must always be used with caution! Children reared in such a home know well enough how to avoid treating, frequenting saloons, and convivial habits of every sort. Such parents not only obey the Apostle's injunction, "Be sober," but do the very best possible thing to induce those whom they love to obey it also.

But once more: what does a man do who takes the pledge? He offers something to God in atonement for the sin of drunkenness. And herein is the best use of the pledge. It combines all the other good purposes of it. It puts the top rail of double safety on the fence that keeps the beast out of the garden of the soul; it sets up the strong inducement of good example; but more than all it consecrates everything to God by uniting it to our Lord's thirst

on the cross.
Brethren, why was it that, when our Lord suffered agony of soul, he complained in such words as would be apt to move the drunkard more than any other sinner: "O my Father! if it be possible, let this _cup_ pass from me." "O my Father! if this _cup_ may not pass away from me except I _drink_ it, thy will be done." Is there no special significance in his choice of those words? And listen to the account St. John gives of our Lord's physical agony: "Jesus, knowing that all things were accomplished that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, _I thirst!_ ... And they filled a sponge with vinegar and put it to his mouth.
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When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar he said: It is finished! And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost." Thirst was the only bodily torment he complained of. Had he no special purpose in this?
So the man who takes the pledge suffers thirst in union with Christ and for the love of God to atone for sins of drunkenness. That is why it does not settle the matter against taking the pledge when one can say he does not need it. Our Lord had no need to suffer thirst. He could say, I own all the cool fountains in the world, and all the strengthening wine of the world is mine, and I might drink and never need to thirst for my own sake; but I love the poor drunkard, and for his sake I will die thirsting for a cool drink and tasting only bitter vinegar. And the Catholic total abstainer says: "O Lord! permit me to bear thee company in thy bitter thirst."

Sermon XV.

The Feast Of The Holy Innocents.

> _And Herod sending killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem and in all the confines thereof from two years old and younger._
> --Matthew ii. 16

Who is not shocked by the recital of Herod's cruelty? Carried away by pride and ambition, and the fear of losing what he had usurped, this tyrant tried to put to death the King of Kings by the murder of the holy innocents. Who in our day are like Herod? Those who murder innocent children.
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Fiendish mothers, desiring, perhaps, to cover their shame or to escape the labor of bearing and bringing up children, take the lives of their unborn infants. Those, too, who knowingly sell or give or advise the use of drugs calculated to destroy the life of the unborn--all such commit Herod's crime. Yet how often this crime is nowadays committed!
Woe to these wretches! Woe to the Herod-like physicians who, for any reason whatsoever, directly prescribe or use means to prevent child-birth! Herod met his punishment in a bad death, and his soul went into a hell of eternal torments. What must the murderers of little children expect?
But I have another cruelty to cry out against. It is that of those who destroy the "little ones of Christ" by neglecting to

instruct their little children in the way of salvation. The law of God requires that children as soon as they have the use of reason, which is about the age of seven years, should know the elements of the Christian doctrine, should know the necessity of avoiding sin, and should be taught the practice of virtue; also, that children, as soon as they are able to sufficiently profit by receiving Holy Communion, should do so. No child should ever be allowed to go beyond the age of twelve years without having made First Communion. Many can receive First Communion at nine or ten years of age, and perhaps younger. Confirmation should be received as soon as First Communion. Parents are guilty before God if they do not require their children to keep the commandments of God and his church from their earliest years until they leave the parents charge. How many parents do their little ones a deadly injury by not sending them regularly to Sunday-school!

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What is it to bring up children to burn in the flames of hell for ever, as some Christian parents do? It is simply soul-murder. It deserves no better name. Have you been guilty of soul-murder? If so, hasten to repair the evil as much as you can. You can never do it wholly, but you must do what you can. There is yet another cruelty towards "the little ones" of Christ. It is to scandalize them by your bad example. Instead of learning by your example to adore our Blessed Lord, to love and reverence his Blessed Mother and the saints, they, perhaps, learn to take God's holy name in vain. Your falsehoods teach them to lie; your dishonesty teaches them to steal. Your anger and quarrelling teach them to be stubborn and disobedient. Ah! Christian parents, be careful how you hang this millstone of scandalizing the little ones of Christ about your necks.

Finally, you destroy your children by not correcting their faults. You wink at the evil which they do. You fail to punish them, regardless of God's honor and their good. If you do punish them, it is not "correction in the Lord," but you do it to gratify your satanic rage. Some fathers and mothers are not worthy of the name. The dignity and responsibility of fathers and mothers are very great. See that you are faithful to the obligations which belong to your high and holy state.

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The Epiphany.

Epistle.

Isaias lx. 1-6.

Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thy eyes round about, and see: all these are gathered together, they are come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side. Then shalt thou see and abound, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged; when the multitude of the sea

shall be converted to thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Madian and Epha: all they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense: and showing forth praise to the Lord.

Gospel.

St. Matthew. ii. 1-12.

When Jesus, therefore, was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and we are come to adore him. And Herod the King hearing this was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him: and assembling together all the chief priests and Scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him, In Bethlehem of Juda; for so it is written by the prophet: "And thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come forth the ruler who shall rule my people Israel."

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Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, inquired diligently of them the time of the star's appearing to them; and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and search diligently after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him. And when they had heard the king, they went their way; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And going into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down, they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their own country.

Sermon XVI.

The Testimony Of The Spirit.

_For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God
they are the Sons of God._
--Romans viii. 14.

The end of our pilgrimage, like that of the three wise men, my brethren, is union with our Lord. Of course union with God, through his power and his being present everywhere, always exists, whether we are his friends or not. But the state of grace is the union of love. By that union God rules our souls. By that union the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the most Holy Trinity, really dwells within us. In the state of grace we are brought into loving contact with the divine Spirit.

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Now the Apostle, in the words of our text, wishes to teach us one effect of that wonderful union. "For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God." That is to say, when the Holy Spirit enters into your heart he announces his coming, he assures you of his friendship, he excites within you a

sentiment of filial affection for your Heavenly Father. How could it be otherwise? Could God be long in our hearts and we be altogether ignorant of it? Of course he does not take away the natural fickleness of our minds; the star sometimes shines faintly, or even for a while disappears from view. God does not reveal himself as he is; he does not interfere at all with his external work in the holy church; he does not substitute his interior action on the soul for that exterior action of visible authority and sacramental symbols. It is, indeed, by means of this external order that the Holy Spirit enters into our hearts; it is, besides, only by means of the church's divine marks, her divine testimony, her divine influence in the sacraments, that we can be quite sure that Almighty God has come down into our souls. Yet the Holy Spirit really has a secret career within us. "Deep calleth unto deep"; that is, the infinite love of God calls into life our little love. He has his inner church in our souls, so to speak; or rather he brings into his spiritual and hidden temple all that is outside, spiritualizes the external order, joins the purely mental with the sacramental, and, having set our faces in the right direction and started our feet moving in the right road, he sets us to thinking right, he stirs up noble aspirations, he purifies our feelings, and finally gives us testimony that it is really himself, the Spirit of God, who has thus been at work making our inner life such as befits the sons of God.

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Now, my brethren, as I said before, this testimony of God within us is not like the splendors of Paradise bursting upon the soul; nor is it so very plain as to be able to stand alone without the external criterion of his church as a testimony of God's friendship, except now and then in the case of some great saint. Yet there are many things in our inner life that, if we study them over a little, show that God has been acting upon us. What else is that wonder of the world called the faith of Catholics? Who else but the Spirit of God could give such power to believe very mysterious truths, such a stability to wavering minds, such a humility of belief to proud minds? And what except divine love could be as sweet as the taste the soul enjoys in the reception of the sacraments? Call to mind the utter transformation of soul that so often takes place at First Communion; remember the flood of divine influence at your Christian marriage; remember how after that death-bed scene your broken heart was cured of its despair when you turned to God; remember how at missions or during seasons of penance, or at one or other festival, it seemed to you that heaven was beginning before its time. All this is God's work on your life. The tender emotion at hearing the divine promises, the loving regret for sin, the joy of forgiveness, the imagination filled--plainly by no human means--with images of celestial peace, the understanding as clear of doubts as heaven of clouds, the will strong and easily able to keep good resolutions, sometimes the very body sharing the lightness and vigor of the soul--what is all this but the embrace of the Holy Spirit?

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And if one says _he_ does not feel it, and yet hopes he is in the state of grace, I answer that he will not be long deprived of it. Or it may be he is tepid; his soul is not able to feel any more than a hand benumbed with cold; his ear not hearing because his attention is too much fixed on the voices of the world to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. His eye is too much dazzled by the false glitter of the world to catch sight of the star that leads to our Lord's feet.

Sermon XVII.

Following God's Guidance.

_Be ye, therefore, followers of God,
as most dear children._
--Ephesians. v. 1.

My dear brethren, these are not words of counsel or good advice; they are words of command, written by St. Paul. This command is to follow God, and to follow him as most dear children, obediently as the Magi did of old. What is it to follow God? It is to do at least as much as we do when we follow any one great man. How do we act then? We seek to be with him a great deal. We listen to his every word. We do as he does. We adopt his views of things. We repeat what he teaches. Neither do we dare to differ from him, for fear that people will say that we have no sense; nor do we venture to act in any manner opposed to his ways of doing. In a few words, a man who is followed is the leader in fashion, in taste, and style. Everybody approves his ways, and imitates them.

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His friends have also the friendship of the world, simply because they are his friends. Any one whom he approves and recommends is listened to and followed because he has recommended him. If we want to follow God, he does not really require, outwardly, any more than men require of us to follow them.

But how can we do this?

First: Seek to be with God a great deal. Where is he, that we may find him? God is everywhere, and is always found by looking for him and seeking for him diligently in prayer; for prayer keeps us near to God and God near to us. And he is always on the altar: hear Mass not only on Sundays but now and then on week days; visit the Blessed Sacrament.

Secondly: Listen to his every word. God speaks to our souls in prayer, not with a voice like the voice of a man, but in his own sweet and quiet way. We must listen attentively to hear the gentle words of God, not with our outward ears of the body, but with the ability to hear that is within our souls; the ability of the soul to hear the voice of a spirit speaking to our spirit. God also speaks to us through his Holy Word in the Sacred Scriptures, in the Epistle and Gospel set apart for each Sunday of the year, in the writings of holy men and women, in the teachings of Christian parents and friends. But the most important way in which God has taught, and continues to teach us all, is by means of his church. When we listen to her words, in sermons and other instructions, we hear the Word of God.

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Thirdly: Do as God does. Try to be like him, and him alone. Take care to do always the thing that is right. Try hard to be loving, merciful, forgiving, and gentle to all, even your enemies. When we have anything to do, we must say, Would God do this way or that way? When we meet with cruel treatment from others, with ingratitude and base injustice from those we love, we must say at once, How does God treat those who do these things? How does he treat me, notwithstanding my many, many sins? I shall go and do to these bad people as he has done to me. I shall even bless them, as he has blessed me.

Lastly: If we want to follow God, at least as well as we follow a great man whom we have made a leader among us, we are sure to honor his friends, and obey those he sends to us in his name. Who are these? Not only all good people, but especially our pastors and spiritual directors. The pastor or parish priest is a man sent by God to make sure of the success of God's work in his parish. Any one who follows God in that parish unites heart and soul with his priest to help him carry out his plans. If any one wants to get the greatest amount of merit for his good deeds, he is sure to get it by following first these plans. For the priest stands as a father among his children. He knows the good and the bad, the rich and the poor. He knows what is best for each. He is the best adviser as to what ought to be done, and as to the way it is to be done. In charities he is certainly the best leader. Private works and charities are good, it is true; but the first duty, after one's own necessities are cared for, is to follow the order of God, in aiding the parish work through the parish priest and his assistants. We may safely say that one act done for God, in union with those put over us by him, is worth in heaven, and here also, many good works done simply because we like to do them our own way.

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To follow God, then, is to follow as dear children. We must consent to be led by God in all things connected with duty, just as little children are led by their fathers and mothers. We must take care, at least, that we follow his lead, and not show more honor to others than we do to him.

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First Sunday after Epiphany.

Epistle.

Romans xii. 1-5.

Brethren:

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

of another in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Gospel.
St. Luke ii. 42-52.
When Jesus was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and after they had fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him, they wondered.
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And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? did you not know that I must be about the things that are my Father's? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth: and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.

Sermon XVIII.
The Christian Home.

_He went down with them and came to Nazareth,
and was subject to them. ...
And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace
with God and men._
--Gospel of the Day.

In these few words, my brethren, the sacred writer raises the veil that conceals the mysteries of our Lord's hidden life, and gives us an insight into the domestic concerns of the Holy Family at Nazareth. Jesus lived with Mary and Joseph. He was obedient and subject to them, and so he advanced in age and wisdom and grace with God and men. The door of the holy house is opened to us, but only for a moment, so that we might get a glimpse of the domestic life of a model family. Joseph, the father, day by day works at his trade to support the family. He rises in the morning; gives his soul to God in prayer. He toils through the day. He comes home at night to enjoy his rest in the company of Jesus and Mary. He meets with trials, but he is patient; he is tempted, but he sins not; he leads a busy life, but he still finds time to pray.
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Mary, the mother, tends the household duties, with care and precision, and by her sweet, kind ways diffuses an air of peace and contentment throughout the home. Jesus, the child, is affectionate and submissive to his parents in everything. Here is the model of a true Christian home. Its ground work is the love of God; it is surrounded by an atmosphere of virtue, and to its members it is the holiest and dearest spot on earth. Such should our homes be.

The true Christian home is to society what the sanctuary is to the church of God. The parents are the priests in this sanctuary. It was God who ordained them priests when they stood before the altar with clasped hands and promised that they would be faithful to each other while life lasts. The Blessed Sacrament of this sanctuary is the Sacrament of Matrimony. It is the great treasure-house of supernatural strength to the married couple. The perpetual presence of our Lord in this sanctuary is by his grace, which is never wanting.

The altar in this sanctuary is the hearthstone around which the family gathers. The communion-rail in this sanctuary is the family table, from which are dispensed the necessities of life. There is about the sanctuary in the church of God an atmosphere of piety and reverence. It has a sanctity that no stranger dare violate; it has a privacy which no one but he who has a right dare invade. Such an atmosphere should be about the sanctuary of home. A priest would never allow a heretic or an infidel to sit in the sanctuary of God. He would never allow a corrupt man to stand on the altar of God. Take care, then, Christian parents, how you violate the sanctity of your homes.

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Take care what heretical or infidel books you allow to pass the gate of that sanctuary. Take care what bad newspapers you allow within its sacred precincts. Take care of the persons whom you allow to stand around your family altar. It is one thing, you know, to be obliged to meet a man in every-day life; it is a far different thing to invite him to your home, and permit him to violate its sanctity.

It is the duty of a priest on the altar of God, by his good example, to edify his flock; to stand at all times before his people a bright, shining light of Christian virtues. So, too, it is your duty, priests at the family altar, to be a model of all virtues to your children, so that they might learn from you what it is to be a Christian. Would it not be horrible for a man to come in on the altar and utter repeated curses? Would it not be fearful to see him stagger up to the altar of God in the state of intoxication? It happened once while Mass was going on, during the Elevation, while all heads were bowed in humble adoration, a drunken man rushed into the church, and in a loud voice uttered a horrible oath. It made the hearts of the good Catholic people stand still, and their blood ran cold in their veins. Is it any the less horrible for a father to come home intoxicated to the household sanctuary, or a mother, when anything goes wrong in the house, to give vent to her wrath in harsh language and sometimes even cursing?

See to it, then, dear parents; make your homes holy places--real sanctuaries, where you can do your duty as priests of our All-Holy God. Keep from them all evil influences, so that they might be places where even the Child Jesus would not be ashamed to dwell.

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Sermon XIX.

Jesus Teaching In The Temple.

_And not finding him,
they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him._
--Luke ii. 45

The Gospel of to-day tells us, my brethren, how our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph lost Jesus on their way home from Jerusalem, where they had gone with him to keep the feast of the pasch, and how in great distress they returned to the city in search of him. What fears and anxieties must have filled their minds as they thought of the many enemies which he had among the rulers of the people, jealous of his promised kingdom, and of the harm which they would try to do him if they recognized him for the child whom Herod had sought to destroy! And how perplexed Mary and Joseph must have been that he who had hitherto saved himself by their protection should at this tender age abandon them and remove himself from their care! Had they not shown enough love and care for him? Had they proved themselves unworthy of him? Surely it could not be his purpose when so young to begin his great work. Would he not at least have told them if such had been his plan?

No, our Lord did not propose to begin his mission then; for, though he was indeed God, he was also then a child, and that mission was not a child's work. But he did wish to show them that his great work even then filled his heart and soul; that the fire of love for us, which brought him to the cross, was consuming him even in childhood. "Did you not know," he said to them when they found him, "that I must be about my Father's business?" "How is it that you sought me?" "You might have known," he seems to say, "that, if I were not with you, I must be in the temple speaking to my people of their God."

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He also wished to give them an opportunity of merit by showing the love of God which filled their souls, too. For their grief was not the common grief of parents who have lost a child, great as that trouble is. It was the loss of the Divine Presence which affected them beyond measure. God had been with them for all those years as never with any one else, and now he had left them, they could not tell why or for how long. They would not have spared him for an hour, even to their kinsfolk and friends, with whom they thought he was, except for charity; and now he had left them, perhaps for the rest of their lives, which were worth nothing without him.

Would that we loved God, my brethren, as they loved him; that he were the light and consolation of our lives, as he was of theirs! Let us think of this as we reflect on their pain and anguish in that weary search for the visible presence of him whose grace was, after all, always in their souls. How is it with us? Would we care for this presence which they so bitterly missed? Would it not, perhaps, even be a painful restraint? Do we care, as it is, to be near Jesus? Is his presence in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar a consolation to us? We revere that real Presence of our Lord, but do we love it? If so, why do we not seek it more?

Do we even care for his presence by grace in our souls, which they always had in its fulness, and never dimmed by the shadow of sin? To lose that, had it been possible, would have been a thousand deaths to them; what is it to us? How easily do we lose

that grace; how little do we care to regain it!
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Oh! let us at least imitate our Blessed Mother and her Holy Spouse as far as this. If we do not love to be with Jesus as they did, let us at least seek to have him with us by his grace. If we have lost him, let us seek him, and not be weary till we find him; let us not rest till he comes again to our souls, never to leave them again.

Sermon XX.

How Our Saviour Takes Away Sin.

_Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who taketh away the sins of the world._
--St. John i. 29.

After our Blessed Lord was baptized by St. John the Baptist, beloved brethren, he retired into the desert, where he remained forty days in prayer and fasting. At the end of this time he directed his steps towards the river Jordan, where John was baptizing. Here a large concourse of the Jewish people had assembled to listen to the preaching of the forerunner of Christ. In the midst of these St. John, inspired by the spirit of God, and professing his deep and ardent faith, testified of our Lord that he is the Lamb of God, and that it is he who taketh away the sins of the world.
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What a glorious testimony this, and how cheerfully received by the fervent Christian! Have you ever pondered over these beautiful words, and made them the subject of your meditation? Have you ever tried to find out their true meaning, and thus make them profitable to your souls? Yes, truly, Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God. He is the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. For you and for me he voluntarily left the bosom of his Father, and lowered and even debased himself by assuming a nature like our own. For us he endured the sufferings and privations of his childhood; for us he sent up many heartfelt prayers to God the Father before the beginning of his public life; for us he labored and preached; for us he suffered the ingratitude of his disciples, the ignominies of the Jews, the insults of the soldiers, the hardships of the journey to Calvary, and, finally, ended his torments on the cross, with the cry "_Consummatum est_--It is finished." This, and much more, did our Blessed Lord gladly undergo for us all. And how have you, dear brethren, requited such infinite love? Fathers, are you solicitous for the little household which Almighty God himself has so fondly entrusted to your care? Then are you imitators of the patience and endurance of your Saviour during his bitter passion. Mothers, do you strive to make yourselves patterns of the Christian virtues of gentleness and forbearance? Then do you imitate the example of your Lord in bearing the defects of others and treating them with kindness and compassion. Oh! how watchful would we not be, dear brethren, could we but understand the infinite love our Lord Jesus Christ manifested for us during his life on earth! But St. John not only gave testimony to our Lord being the Lamb of God, but he further testified that it is he who

takes away the sins of the world.
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He did not come simply to announce to the world the divine mission which he received from the Father; he also came to heal the infirmities of our souls by imparting to them the abundance of his grace. This office he performed himself during his mortal life on earth. He it was that purified the soul of Mary Magdalene and enriched it with sanctifying grace. It was he who gave the living water of eternal life to the sinful Samaritan woman. And what our Lord did for these and many others, beloved brethren, he is now effecting in the midst of us. It is not necessary to remind you of how our Lord chose a small band of apostles, and made them the beginning of his church; how he bestowed upon them and their successors the unheard-of and marvellous power of forgiving sins. Yes, brethren, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church are the visible representatives of Jesus Christ; they are the comfort of the afflicted, the strength of the weak; they have an efficacious remedy for those who are living in the state of mortal sin; by pronouncing the words of absolution they restore to the penitent and contrite sinner his lost inheritance of sonship, and make him an heir of the kingdom of heaven. Oh! how thankful we should be for the mercy and goodness of our God! What a tender love we ought to cherish for the Church, the Bride without spot! What respect is not due to those who hold the place of Christ in our behalf! How sufficiently prize the inestimable blessing of the tribunal of penance! Let us remember and meditate upon those three precious graces, beloved brethren, that they may be the source of sweet joy to us now, and the earnest of a happy eternity hereafter.

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Second Sunday after Epiphany.

Feast Of The Holy Name Of Jesus.

Epistle.

Romans xii. 6-16.

Having gifts different, according to the grace that is given us, whether prophecy, according to the proportion of faith, or ministry in ministering; or he that teacheth, in teaching; he that exhorteth, in exhorting; he that giveth with simplicity; he that ruleth with solicitude; he that showeth mercy with cheerfulness. Love without dissimulation. Hating that which is evil, adhering to that which is good; loving one another with brotherly love; in honor preventing one another; in solicitude not slothful; in spirit fervent; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; instant in prayer; communicating to the necessities of the saints; pursuing hospitality. Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep; being of one mind one to another; not high-minded, but condescending to the humble.

Epistle of the Feast.

Acts iv. 8-12.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them: Ye rulers of the people and ancients, hear: If we this day are examined

concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole; be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you, builders; which is become the head of the corner; nor is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.

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Gospel.

St. John ii. 1-11.

At that time:

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

Gospel Of The Feast.

St. Luke ii. 21.

At that time:

After eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus, which was called by the Angel, before he was conceived in the womb.

Sermon XXI.
Profanity.

To-day, my dear brethren, as you know, the church celebrates the festival of the Holy Name of Jesus; of that name which is above all other names, at which every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess the glory of him to whom this great name belongs.

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Yes, the holy church does indeed reverence this holy name, and we, her children, do not fail to honor it. Following a pious custom, we bow the head when it is mentioned, and it is to be hoped that we also make at the same time with our hearts an act of homage to him who bears it, and thank him for all that he has done for us.

And yet, strange to say, some of these very Christians who pay to

the name of their God and Saviour, at least outwardly, this tribute of honor on certain accustomed occasions seem to take at other times a pleasure in trampling it, if I may so speak, in the very dirt under their feet. To see them in church, you would think that they would hardly dare even to take at all upon their own lips this holy name which they hear from those of the priest; but outside, on the street, and even, it may be, in their own homes, they show a horrible familiarity with it. This name above all names is coupled with every foolish, passionate, and even filthy word which the devil can put into their hearts and on their tongues.
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Do I say this is strange? Ah! that is far too weak a word. To one who will stop and consider, even for a moment, it seems incredible, impossible that a Christian, one who believes himself to have been created by the great God whose name he bears, and to have been redeemed by him from the power of the devil, at the cost of his own Precious Blood; who has knelt in prayer before him; who has received from him the pardon of his sins; who has received him in his real and true Presence on his tongue in the sacrament which he has instituted with such infinite condescension and love--I say it seems impossible, intolerable, inconceivable, that this wretched worm of the earth, on whom so many and such surpassing favors have been showered by the Divine Goodness, should, with this very tongue on which his God has rested, outrage and insult the name of this God, and that the name which above all others tells how good and merciful he has been. It seems as if even the infinite patience and love which our Lord has for us could not brook this indignity, this spittle cast in his face, not as at the time of his Passion, by one who did not know who he was, but by those who from childhood have known full well all the truths of their holy faith, and who well understand that it is the Divine Majesty which they despise. Indeed, my brethren, believe me, even the infidel shudders when he hears in passing along the street the holy name of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of him whom even he respects above all other men that have ever lived on earth, thus outraged, profaned, and defiled by those who profess to believe him to be far more than the best and greatest of men; who invoke him as the One who sitteth on the Eternal Throne, before whom the angels veil their faces, to whom is due benediction and honor and glory and power for ever and ever. Even the infidel, I say, shudders; and he wonders how it can be, if what Christians believe is true, that the God whom they thus insult suffers them to live.
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But you may say it is a habit you have got; that is the excuse which seems good to you, and which you seem to think that God ought to accept. Sup-pose you had a habit of spitting on your neighbor's face or clothes by preference to any other place, how long would he endure it? It is a habit, yes; but it is one which you can amend and get rid of altogether, and which you are most urgently and seriously bound to get rid of, if you would not have to answer for it at the bar of him whom this insufferable habit outrages and defies. Take care, take care, take care, I warn and

beseech you, for God's sake, for the sake of those who hear you, and for your own sake, that this habit come to an end. Watch, keep guard against it; punish yourself should you even inadvertently fall into it, that your offended God may not have to take the punishment into his own hands.

Sermon XXII.

The Sin Of Cursing.

_Bless them that persecute you;
bless, and curse not._
--Romans. xii. 14.

These words are found in the epistle appointed for the second Sunday after Epiphany, and were read by the church long before the institution of the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, which is now always celebrated on this day, yet they contain a lesson most appropriate to this feast. For there is no way in which God's most holy name, which to-day is especially set before us for our veneration, is more frequently or more grossly dishonored than by cursing. To curse is to call down God's judgment or vengeance upon our fellow-men, and its worst form is when the holy and awful name of God or our Lord is made use of.

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Unhappily the fault has become so common, even among those who think themselves good Catholics, that its grievous nature is seldom realized or, perhaps, even thought of.

The habit is often acquired in childhood, frequently from the example of parents, themselves given to cursing. Like all early-acquired habits, it grows stronger and more deeply-rooted with advancing years, until at last the habit is made the excuse for the sin. It is a vain excuse. You are guilty before God of mortal sin if you have formed this habit, and you are guilty of remaining in the state of mortal sin if you make no effort to break yourself of it. It will do you no good to go to confession and accuse yourself of cursing, unless you are contrite and follow the advice which your confessor gives you, and really make an earnest resolution and a serious effort to overcome this scandalous habit.

You should begin by making each morning a resolution to avoid cursing throughout the day, begging God's assistance for your efforts. If, during the day, you fall inadvertently into the old fault, you should impose some little penance upon yourself, such as the recitation of the "Hail Mary," or the pious ejaculation of the holy name of Jesus, with a prayer for God's forgiveness. And then at night you should examine your conscience as to how often you may have fallen into the habit during the day, and resolve to make the next day a better one in this respect. If you faithfully persevere in this practice you will soon be the master of your tongue, and able to restrain it from cursing by a little watchfulness; but if you do not adopt some such practice as this, and really set to work in earnest to overcome this habit, you are guilty before God of mortal sin, and your contrition at your confessions is not good for much.

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I have spoken of this habit as scandalous, as this is one of its

worst features. Besides the insult that is offered to God and his holy name, an incalculable amount of harm is done to our neighbor. Children, especially, learn to curse from their elders, and the extent of this fault among young children is frightful to contemplate. Those, too, who are not of our faith, when they hear Catholics cursing and swearing, are apt to set it down to some defect in our religion, and thus the true faith is brought into contempt.

But the habitual curser seldom thinks of these consequences of his sin. He rarely even attends to the meaning of the words he uses. If he could only be brought to stop and think of all that is implied in the expressions we so often hear upon our streets, he would shudder at the thought of using them. To ask Almighty God to send a soul to hell for all eternity, to utter that holy name whereby we are saved in a prayer for the eternal damnation of a soul redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ, is an impiety so dreadful that we could scarcely believe it possible did not our ears tell us the contrary.

Yet there are those who not only say these things, but mean them, at least at the moment when they are uttered. How carefully, then, should we guard ourselves against those outbursts of anger in which we are led to make such a fearful abuse of the gift of speech, the noblest of God's natural gifts to man!

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Above all, we should try to realize the spirit of the Gospel as expressed in the words of St. Paul, "Bless them that persecute you," remembering that no affront that can be offered to us can even justify the spirit of revenge that is implied in a curse. "Bless," therefore, "and curse not," that so you may yourselves receive the blessing of the Lord.

Sermon XXIII.

Reverence For The Name Of God.

The Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, brethren, affords an opportunity for meditating upon reverence for the honor of God, especially in the person of our Blessed Saviour. Reverence for God is something different from the love of God and the fear of God. Have you not noticed that when a bad boy neither fears his father nor (as far as we can see) loves him, that he yet often keeps up at least a show of respect for him? I don't care much for him, he says, but after all he is my father; I must respect him. So with sinners. Many a sinner will break every commandment of God and the church except one or two, which he fancies he must observe in order to keep up appearances; that is to say, show at least some outward respect. The most atrocious scoundrel will not eat meat on Friday, because that would be a sign of losing all respect for religion. A wretch abandoned to every vice will say a Hail Mary or make the sign of the cross sometimes in order to persuade at least himself that he has not lost all respect for religion. He will not despise the piety of his friends, but rather respect it. Respect for holy things and holy practices is the last remnant of religion in the sinner's soul.

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Well, brethren, let us ask if Almighty God has not set up any

particular sign of reverence that we are to pay him? What is that, among all religious practices, which he would have us do as a token of inner and outer reverence? Of course you know what I mean; you know that it is reverence for his holy name.
The name of God, and especially the name of Jesus, are set up as the divine standard before which every man will prove his reverence for God. Cursers and swearers and blasphemers forget this. No sin is so common as profanity in its various forms. Yet it shows a heart not only void of the fear of God, and of the love of God, but also, and worst of all, void of even reverence for God. A man who habitually curses is penetrated with defiance of the Divine Majesty. Holy Scripture says that he has put on cursing like a garment; that it has entered in unto his bones. In the old law a blasphemer was stoned to death. And in our own times God often anticipates the wrath to come by sending sudden death upon profane men. I lately read in the papers that a man, standing at a saloon-counter, cursed his own soul, and instantly sank down upon the floor stone dead. Many of you have doubtless heard or even seen such visitations of divine justice.
And it is in view of the sacred obligation of reverence to God in his chosen symbol--which is his name and his Son's name--that, although he had but ten commandments to give us, one of them was set apart to secure respectful speech when dealing with God: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
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Brethren, you and I in [the] future will be particularly careful to honor the sacred name of Jesus. Are you tempted? That name is a resistless charm against assaults of flesh, world, or devil. Are you tired out? The name of Jesus is a restful and soothing influence. Are you sick? That holy name will strengthen you with supernatural vigor. I hope that when you come to die your last breath may utter that name of Jesus with deep confidence, and that our Lord will answer your dying sigh with an affectionate welcome into his heavenly court.

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Third Sunday after Epiphany.

Epistle.

Romans xii. 16-21.

Brethren:

Be not wise in your own conceits. Render to no man evil for evil. Provide things good not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men. Revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved; but give place to wrath, for it is written: "Revenge is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." But if thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him drink; for doing this thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.

Gospel.

St. Matthew viii. 1-13.

At that time:

When Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes

followed him; and behold a leper coming, adored him, saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will; be thou made clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him: See thou tell no man; but go show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony to them. And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion, beseeching him and 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. And the centurion, making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.

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For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And Jesus, hearing this, wondered, and said to those that followed him: Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion: Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour.

Sermon XXIV.

Practical Faith.

_Many shall come from the east and the west,
and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
in the kingdom of heaven;
but the children of the kingdom
shall be cast into the exterior darkness._
--Gospel of the Day.

These words, my dear brethren, were spoken by our Blessed Lord to the Jews on the occasion of the cure of the servant of the centurion. This centurion was an officer, like what we would call a captain, in the Roman army; he was not a Jew, so he did not belong to God's chosen people, his church of the old law. No, he was a heathen by birth; he had been brought up in error, in ignorance of the true religion; he had not the prophecies which the Jews had to tell him clearly that a Saviour was to come into the world.

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He was indeed in darkness compared with this favored Hebrew people among whom his lot was cast; but he saw our Lord, and that was enough for him. He saw the power of God, and he believed. He knew that this Messias, whom the Pharisees were rejecting, was the Master of life and death. "Lord," said he, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." Immortal words these, which the Catholic Church has treasured up, and puts on thousands of lips every day, and which were rewarded by the divine acknowledgment,

"Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into the exterior darkness."

Now, my brethren, what lesson have we to learn from this praise of the heathen centurion, and this warning to God's own people, coming to us from the mouth of God himself? Simply this: that our salvation depends on the use which we make of the graces which he gives us; that the least will suffice, if we will but avail ourselves of them; but that the greatest will only serve for our eternal condemnation and ruin if we slight them and pass them by. A simple and evident truth this surely, and yet how apt we are to forget and neglect it! We are Catholics from our infancy, we say; we belong to families which have always kept the faith. We are indeed the faithful, to whom the kingdom of heaven is promised. And if we have not been always so, but have been brought from darkness into light, then still more is the divine favor to us manifest.

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Will He, then, who has done so much for us, not complete his work? We believe his word, we are in his true church, we receive his saving and life-giving sacraments; how, then, shall we not be saved? Are we not indeed those of whom he said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall pluck them out of my hand"?

Yes, my dear brethren, we think that we shall be saved because we are Catholics. But the truth is, that our being Catholics only gives us greater means of salvation; it is far from making our salvation sure. We have greater means and helps to save our souls; but woe be to us if we abuse them! And when we look around, and see many good and earnest souls, similar, as far as we can see, to that of the Roman centurion, deprived of the light that we have, not by their own fault, but by that of their fathers; when we see them trying to do their best with the little knowledge and the few helps that they have, must we not fear that God will take away from us the graces that we despise; that we, the children of the kingdom, will be cast into the exterior darkness, while others shall come from the east and the west and take the place which we have but do not deserve?

Let us, then, each and every one, if we have been unfaithful to the great graces which we have as Catholics--and which of us has not been so?--rouse ourselves to our danger. Yes, having the faith and the sacraments is a great privilege, but is one for which we must give a most strict account when we stand before the throne of God.

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Sermon XXV.

Living Up To Our Faith.

_Jesus, hearing this, marvelled;
and said to them that followed him:
Amen I say to you,

I have not found so great faith in Israel_.
--Gospel of the Day.

The love and care of the heathen centurion for his servant should certainly put to shame many Christian masters and mistresses of to-day, who not only do not encourage their servants to approach our Lord at Holy Mass and in the sacraments, but even put obstacles in their way. However, the lesson to which I wish to direct your thoughts this morning, and which it is the primary object of the Gospel narrative to teach, is the immense importance of living up to the grace and light which God has so bountifully given us.

A few weeks ago we kept the Feast of the Epiphany, the manifestation, that is, of our Lord to the Gentiles, to those who had not till then formed part of the church of God. The Jews alone, as you are aware, were God's chosen people. To them had been given the law and the prophets, the temple and the sacrifices, and--that to which everything else led up--the promise of the Messias. And all these privileges led them to think that they were individually very excellent people, and to look down with contempt upon the rest of the world and everybody in it. Now, here was a Roman, born and brought up in heathenism, taught, doubtless, to say his prayers to Jupiter and Venus and other vile creatures like them, a man holding, too, high office, commanding a garrison of soldiers, whose duty it was to keep down a conquered race.

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Well, this man, notwithstanding his bad education, notwithstanding the pride which, on account of his position, must naturally have been his, had made greater progress than the self-conceited Pharisees, with all their advantages, had ever made or were ever to make. While they lived and died in unbelief, he had already recognized in Jesus Christ the power of God; and, laying aside prejudice and pride of place and birth, he sends humbly to our Lord to ask him to heal his servant.

So clearly did he recognize our Lord's divine power that he did not think it necessary for him to come to his house. Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, as you will remember, would not be satisfied unless our Lord came down to his house; the centurion, on the contrary, stopped our Lord while he was on the way, saying: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word and my servant will be healed." So that our Lord, on hearing it, marvelled, and said: "Amen I say unto you, I have not found so great faith in Israel."

Now, how does all this apply to us? What lesson can _we_ learn from these events? The answer to this question is easy and obvious. We are by God's grace the members of the church of God, and, as such, we are in possession of the means of grace--the sacraments, the word of God, the intercession and prayers of the saints, and of innumerable privileges and spiritual treasures. Above all, and as the source and spring of all spiritual life, without which everything is valueless and worthless, we have the gift of faith. Now, faith is necessary; but faith is not sufficient. Without faith no one can be saved. But we must have something more than faith.

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The shipwrecked man clings for his life to anything within his reach; but unless the plank, or whatever else he has got hold of, is washed ashore, or a boat or some other means of help arrives, his plank only prolongs his agony. So is it with us. Faith is our plank; but unless this faith works by charity it will only add to our condemnation. More than this, it will, if not acted upon, get weaker and weaker, and be scarcely strong enough to move us to action. What, then, must we do? Why, we must live as our faith teaches us. First, we must learn our faith: learn the truths of our religion; next, we must practise them. If we do not do so we shall, perhaps, see what those Jews of old saw: the heathen and those who were outside of the church entering and taking their places. What our Lord said of them may, perhaps, be said of us: "I say unto you that many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Sermon XXVI.

The Sacrament Of Matrimony.

I think you are all persuaded, my brethren, of the wrong and the danger of Catholics going to a Protestant minister for marriage; and similar ones can be given why we should not go before a magistrate for that purpose. It is plain that the authorities of the State are not the right persons to assist officially at the sacraments of the church.
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It would be just as proper to ask the mayor to baptize your children as to go to him for marriage. To refer the matter of your marriage to him, however fine a man he may be personally, would be to acknowledge the right of the civil authority to take charge of religious affairs; and such a right Catholics cannot admit.
Besides, the magistrate labors under the same difficulty as a Protestant minister in conducting a Catholic marriage, of not knowing the laws of the church on the subject, and the impediments which may make the marriage invalid; that is, which may make it, though seemingly good, in reality no marriage at all. You know, for instance--to speak of this a little more fully--that the Catechism says that you should not marry within certain degrees of kindred; very well, it is not only forbidden to marry within these degrees, but a marriage within these degrees is not recognized by the laws of the church as a real and true marriage, and the parties have to be married over again, at least privately, if it is ever found out. And there are some other impediments which have the same effect. It is of no use to publish all these and try to explain them; many mistakes would be made, and matters would only be come worse. No, to be safe in all affairs of this kind you must go to those who have made a special study of it; just as you find out the law of the State from your lawyer, and not from a book. Go, then, to the priest; he is the one who has made a special study of the law of the church, and

the only one.
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In order to make sure that Catholic marriage shall be contracted before the priest, a law has been made, and binds in some countries, and in some parts even of this country, making it invalid, or null and void, if contracted without the presence of the parish priest of at least one of the parties. This does not, however, hold just here. But there is a very special and urgent law in this diocese, and in many others, forbidding the going to a Protestant minister for marriage, and reserving the absolution for this to the bishop, or some one authorized by him. Catholics, therefore, who are guilty of such a rash act get themselves into a very unpleasant position; still, they must, of course, try to get out of it sooner or later, and if any one finds himself in this predicament the only sensible thing to do is to come at once to the priest, who will help him as far as possible. All sins can be forgiven, and all mistakes rectified, if one has the right dispositions.

One word more on this most important subject. Some people seem to imagine that the difficulty which may come, especially in a mixed marriage, of avoiding the Protestant minister, may be got over by going both to him and to the priest, and going through the form of marriage twice. Now, let it be understood that this course cannot be thought of for a moment; for by it not only is the law broken which I have just mentioned, but a profanation of the sacrament also is committed by endeavoring to make the contract to which it is attached twice in the same case. It is as if one tried to be confirmed twice. No, in this matter there can be no compromise; a marriage in which a Catholic is a party must be put in charge of the Catholic clergy, and of no one else, except as far as mere settlements of money and the like are concerned.
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Go, then, to the priest for marriage; do not think of doing anything else. But do not go to him, as I have said some people do, for the first time just at the moment you want the ceremony performed, and expect him to marry you off-hand; for there are some very important preliminaries to be settled first, and it may take some time to settle them.

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Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

Epistle.

Romans xiii. 8-10.

Brethren:

Owe no man anything, but that you 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 this word: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The love of the neighbor worketh no evil. Love, therefore, is the fulfilling of the law.

Gospel.

St. Matthew viii. 23-27.

At that time:
When Jesus entered into the ship, his disciples followed him; and behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the ship was covered with waves, but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and waked him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them: Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up he commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: Who is this, for even the winds and the sea obey him?

Sermon XXVII.

The Ingratitude Of Children.

Brethren: owe, no man anything.
--Epistle of the Day.

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We are all debtors, brethren, for we all have some accounts to settle up. There are debts we shall never be able to redeem, debts that are just, pressing, and lasting as long as we are in this life. Such, for instance, is the debt we owe to God. The fact of his having created us, of having brought us out of nothing, of having given us immortal souls imaged after himself, would alone put us under the gravest obligations to him; but what is that compared to the debt we owe God for having redeemed us at a nameless price, by nothing less than the Precious Blood of his own beloved Son; and, furthermore, what is all this in comparison with the debt we owe God for our sanctification, for the priceless gift of his Holy Spirit dwelling within us, breaking away the mist of error and ignorance that clouds our intellect and hides from our vision the eternal truth; that gift that endows us with strength and fortitude, with the courage that comes from conviction, with the power that makes us triumph over every weakness, every unruly passion, every snare of our enemy the devil, over every thought, word, and action that makes us unworthy of sonship with God, brotherhood with Christ, and the heritage of an eternal crown?

This debt, dear brethren, is in general obvious enough; but, while we recognize it, How often do we find in our experience that men neglect, and shamefully neglect, debts that are dependent on and derived from the debt they owe Almighty God; men who neglect debts that are as grave and binding as those which are due to the God from whom they are derived!

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Now, brethren, if there is any injustice in this world more flagrant than all others, more worthy of condemnation and detestation, more certain of the visitation of God, it is this: the neglect of our duty to our parents. "Owe no man anything." Do we owe _them_ nothing? Do we not owe them much? Is there a time in our lives when that debt is not binding?

Ah! dear brethren, and what do we see in the world about us? Ingratitude, the vice of monsters, forgetfulness of ties that are nearest, dearest, and holiest. Young men, growing up into adult age, who, in their vain seeking after pleasures, become so blinded to duty, so debased in their appetites, so completely transformed into the incarnation of selfishness, as not only to

disregard the law of God, but the very instincts of nature--sons who would rob and starve their parents to satisfy their mean and low appetites.
The ingratitude of children to parents is a crying sin of our times. Let us be alive to it. Let the young men and women of our day remember that they are bound to satisfy these grave and serious obligations; that they are not to heedlessly put themselves into any state that will debar them from redeeming the debts they owe, from recompensing for all the care, toil, and money expended upon them.
"Owe no man anything." Take heed of this warning also, all you who contract debts without the slightest hope of paying them; see to it that the clothes you wear, the food you eat, the pleasures you indulge in are paid for; see to it that they are not purchased by the labor and money which belong to others. You who live in fine houses, who keep yourselves in costly array, who deny yourselves no pleasures, however extravagant, take heed! Whose money pays for it?
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Can you stand up and with a clean heart proclaim that this is honest? As you sit here to-day, do the words of the Apostle offer no rebuke to you, do you not feel their sting?
O brethren! let us be sparing in our debts; let us owe no man anything. The man without debts exalts himself in the eyes of his fellow-men and secures for himself a good conscience.

Sermon XXVIII.

Love Of Our Neighbor.

He that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law.
--Epistle of the Day.

There can be no doubt, my brethren, that the saving of our souls sometimes seems to be a very troublesome business. There are so many laws and commandments binding on us, so many sins which we are likely to commit; and if we break any of these laws in any grievous way--if we are guilty, that is to say, of mortal sin our--salvation is lost till such time as we repair our fault. Yet it may seem that we are surrounded by so many rocks on our voyage through life that it is almost useless to try to steer clear of them; and, if we may judge by their actions, many Christians actually come to the conclusion that there is no use in trying to keep their ship off these rocks. They make up their minds that spiritual shipwreck is unavoidable, and that the only way to reach the port of heaven is to be towed in on a raft which can be made out of the sacraments at the last moment.
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But really our salvation is not such a complicated and intricate affair if we would only look at it in the right way. The course which we have to follow is not such a difficult one to bear in mind and to keep. There are many commandments, it is true; but they all have the same spirit, and if we have that spirit they will all come quite easy.
What is the spirit? Our Lord has told us. It is the love of God, and of our neighbor for God's sake. The love of God and of our neighbor gives us a short cut to the kingdom of heaven; if we are

guided by it, we shall not come near the dangers that seem so many and so threatening.

Let us see how this is; how is this love going to work to keep us in the safe and sure track? It is not so hard to see. For what is it to love any one; how do we act towards one whom we really and truly love? Are we always trying to give him no more than we can help, and keep as much as we can for ourselves? Do we try to have our own way as much as possible, and never to step out of it for his sake, unless compelled by force or threats?

No, of course not. We keep far away from what will offend him. We always are trying to find out what will please him best. So if he is not unreasonable, and if he knows our desire and intention, the danger of offending him disappears.

Well, it is just so in the matter of serving God and keeping his law. The continual mortal sins into which Christians fall, and which it seems so hard to avoid, are due to their trying to run too near the rocks. No wonder they so often get wrecked in these dangerous waters. They are all the time striking on the commandments, and the whole sea seems full of them because they try to sail as near them as they can. If they would only give them a wide berth, and keep out in the deep ocean of the love of God, sin and its forgiveness would not cause so much anxiety and trouble.

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If we would only ask ourselves what will please God best, and try to give him all that he desires, as we should if we loved him as he deserves to be loved, and as we do with others whom we really do love--if we would do this instead of trying [to see] how far we can have our own way and yet come out right in the end, the whole matter of saving our souls would have a very different aspect. Now, why not try to follow this line? It is no fanciful thing beyond our power. Plenty of Christians have done it before us, and are doing it all the time.

But if we do not feel prepared, or are a little afraid to commit ourselves to this course just yet, at least we could endeavor to have some love for our neighbor, and make some sacrifice for him. We have St. Paul's word for it, you see, that even he who loves his neighbor will be sure to fulfil the law. Yes, we may feel quite sure if, by a generous love of our neighbor, we keep far off being wrecked on the last part of the Ten Commandments, that we shall run clear of the first part as well.

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Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

Epistle.

Colossians iii. 12-17.

Brethren:

Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another: even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection: and let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in

one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly, in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God. All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel.

St. Mathew xiii. 24-30.

At that time:

Jesus spoke this parable to the multitude, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. Then the servants of the master of the house came and said to him: Master, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up?

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And he said: No, lest while you gather up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Let both grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn; but gather the wheat into my barn.

Sermon XXIX.

The Christian Family.

Bearing with one another.

--Epistle of the Day.

No doubt you have often read about the oasis in the desert: a place of tall, shady trees, soft, green grass, and a great spring pouring out sweet, cold water. There the hot and dusty caravan stops, though it be miles out of the way; the heavy burdens are thrown off, and men and animals rest and drink and rest again. For one long, burning day they lie about on the grass and look off from their shady refuge over the yellow, sandy desert. They sleep and are rested; and as the cool dews of evening fall they take a last drink and creep away on their journey, sighing to think of the long and weary tramp to the next oasis.

Dear brethren, the oasis in the desert of this world is the Christian family. The father of the family "shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters." It is indeed but a feeble word to say that the influence of a good father is like the deep shade of a noble tree in the heat of summer, His influence is like the grace of God. Indeed, there is nothing in all this world so much like the presence of God as the influence of a Christian father.

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When the instinct of the Christian people would give a name to a good priest they called him father. What is more edifying than the virtue of a good father? In him are chiefly to be seen those manly virtues which are the highest form of human excellence: hearty love, self-restraint, open frankness joining heart, hand,

and voice in one. In him you admire that steadfast application to religious things, that regular use of prayer and of the sacraments, that clear knowledge of doctrine and ability to converse about it, that utter absence of frivolity, that intelligent practice of good reading. He is contented with his lot, and yet labors with steady, persistent industry. In prosperity he is modest and frugal. In adversity he is cheerful, a strong wall for others to lean against. He loves home and is fond of his wife. Gladly will he tend the babes while the mother gets the Sunday Mass, or of a Saturday evening while she goes to refresh her weary soul with a good confession. The company of his children is to him a foretaste of Paradise. He is not sour, nor is he brutal or harsh. He is not above making the children laugh or joining in their play; to make them happy and help them save their souls is his greatest joy.

Then there is the mother of the family, whose life is one unbroken round of acts of affection. The spirit of sacrifice, the craving to bear others burdens, is her spirit. You know how a good mother watches at the sick-bed the livelong night, passing back and forth through the dark rooms, listening to every breathing, answering every sigh with a comforting word, or a cool drink, or a soft caress. Only the next world will reveal to us the loveliness of such devoted souls; here we catch but a glimpse and an echo of it.

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The accents, the tones of the voice, the very silence, the manners, the ways of a good mother diffuse what Scripture calls the fragrance of ointments around her household. You know, too, how she saves and pinches to keep off debt, to dress the children neatly, to save a penny to give them a holiday, to save a dollar for hard times or a spell of sickness. And all this sacrifice is a matter of course with her. But the truest glory of a mother is her patience. The patient mother is the valiant woman of Scripture. She is the woman who smothers her anger; who will suffer the impertinence of an unruly child in silence; who forgets as well as forgives; whose admonition or correction is the reluctant tribute of a tender heart to the child's well-being. Do you want to know how she is able to do this? The secret of it is that she finds time--in the heavy duty of being everybody's servant--to attend to religion; to belong to the Rosary Society and make her monthly Communion; to give alms to the poor from her hard savings; to visit and watch with sick, or afflicted neighbors. It is, in a word, because she ever gazes in spirit upon that Holy Family where Mary was mother that she is able to be a good Christian mother.

When I began I intended to say something of the good boys and girls; while we have been engaged with father and mother the children have passed by. Perhaps we shall overtake them next Sunday.

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Sermon XXX.

The Duty Of Good Example.

_Use your endeavor to walk honestly

towards them that are without._
1 Thessalonians iv. 11.

The holiness of the church, my dear brethren, is for us who belong to her a thing so evident and clear that we can no more think it necessary to prove it than we can think it necessary to prove that the sun shines in the heavens. The practical and imperative way in which the church enforces holiness of life on each and every one of us is something with which we are so familiar that no shadow of doubt can enter into our minds as to its necessity. The means of grace which she offers to us, and of which she even requires us to make use, the sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord himself which she gives us, the penances she imposes upon us by way of fasting and abstinence, the warnings which she is ever giving us of the condemnation which will fall upon impenitent sinners, these and ten thousand other things make the sanctity of the church so well known that it is not so much an article of faith as a thing which we see with our own eyes and which falls under our own experience.

But there are those who are without these advantages. There are many around us, our near neighbors and friends, who are outside the church, not through their own fault, but by birth and education. These are not in possession of those means of knowing the church and her sanctity of which we are possessed; and in order to have this knowledge they depend to a very large extent upon ourselves.

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I wish this morning to call your attention to the responsibility which rests upon us on this account, and to one or two practical ways in which we are accountable to God for what that responsibility involves.

Now, that we lie under this responsibility is a truth not very hard to see. For, as I have said, those outside the church are ignorant of the doctrine and practices of the church. From their earliest years they have had utterly false and erroneous information given them about the church, an information so false and erroneous that they do not think it necessary or even right to make inquiries. How, then, are they to have the truth brought home to them? What way is there of spreading the light? Almost the only way, and certainly a way so necessary that without it all others are futile and vain, is that those who are called Catholics should lead such lives as the church requires of them. Now, if we do not do this we are of course responsible to God, as every man, be he Catholic or be he Protestant, is responsible to God for his whole life and every action in it. But more than that, a special responsibility in this time and in this country lies at the door of every Catholic man and every Catholic woman. Every Catholic man and woman who does not lead a good life is a stumbling-block and a rock of offence standing in the way and preventing many poor souls from seeing and embracing that truth which is necessary for their salvation; and those Catholics whose way of living forms such a stumbling-block will have to give a strict account to God not merely for their own sins and for themselves, but also for the souls of others whom they have ruined.

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Now, I am going on this account to ask you some questions which I hope you will answer honestly and conscientiously. And they will be questions about matters on which the world outside is competent to judge; and, therefore, if we fail in this respect we shall meet with its condemnation, and become hindrances to the knowledge of the truth.

First: There is nothing of which the business world thinks so much as truth, uprightness, integrity in business matters. To pay debts promptly, to do work squarely, to execute contracts faithfully, these are some of the marks of an honest man. Now, in view of what I have said, ask yourselves, is this way of acting the mark of all Catholics? Will a man who wants to get a house built, who is looking for a trustworthy clerk or assistant, choose out Catholics in preference to others, because he knows that they are worthy of trust? If this is not the case, if the being a Catholic is no guarantee of trustworthiness, you will have to answer to God for the bad effect your dishonesty has upon those outside.

And now a question for women. You all know in what virtue consists, the glory and honor of women. You all know what the world expects of women. You know, too, how much the church makes of modesty and chastity, in what honor she holds them, how strict she is in inculcating their necessity. Now, one of the effects of genuine modesty and chastity is to overawe and overpower the approaches of the unclean and impure. There is a majesty in virtue which lays low and keeps at its level vileness and impurity. Is everyone who comes near a Catholic girl or woman conscious of this influence?

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Is there something about every Catholic girl and woman which makes it clear to every dirty fellow that he must go elsewhere if he wishes to find a victim and a means of satisfying his disgraceful passions? It ought to be so, for the soul of every Catholic girl and woman, over and above the majesty of natural virtue, is the abode and dwelling-place of the grace of God. And if you are true children of the church such will be the effect your presence will have.

Well, my brethren, ask yourselves these questions; answer them honestly; and, if you find that you have done wrong, amend, not merely for your own sake but for that of those outside.

Sermon XXXI.

Bearing One Another's Burdens.

_Bearing with one another,
and forgiving one another
if any have a complaint against one another:
even as the Lord hath forgiven you,
so do you also._
--Epistle of the Day (Colossians iii. 13).

Perhaps you may think, my dear friends, that we have a good deal to say about this matter of charity and forgiveness, and if you do you are probably right; it was not long ago that we had occasion to remind you of it in one of these little morning

instructions. But why should we not speak of it often? Is not the love of our neighbor the second great commandment, like to and founded on the first? Does not St. John also make it the test of our salvation? "We know," he says, "that we have passed from death to life"; and why?
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Is it because we fast, say long prayers, visit the church, or even because we receive the sacraments often? No, it is "because we love the brethren." And he continues: "He that loveth not, abideth in death. ... We ought," he goes on to say, "to lay down our lives for the brethren."
In the latter years of the life of St. John, when he had become so old and feeble that he had to be carried to the church, and was not able to preach at any length to his beloved people, he would still give them a little short sermon. It was very short; not even a five-minute sermon; and it was not fresh every Sunday, but always the same. It was just this: "Little children, love one another." But his people, in spite of their great reverence and affection for him, were something like people nowadays, and got rather tired of hearing this same old story. They wanted something more novel and startling, and one day they asked him: "Master, why do you never tell us anything but this about loving one another?" He answered: "Because it is the Lord's command, and if it is fulfilled it is sufficient."
If St. John, then, preached about this matter of charity every Sunday, certainly we may be allowed to speak of it several times in the year. And you, my dear Christians, will not lose anything by hearing about it pretty often. For the matter is one in which there is always great room for improvement for us all. St. John said "little children"; but he was not speaking to the Sunday-school, if, indeed, he had one; no, it was to the children, big as well as little, children all of God and of his holy church, that his words were addressed.
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And these words are more needed now than they were then. Why, in the early times Christians used to be known from other people by their love and charity for each other. It was this that made converts to the faith, more, perhaps, than preaching or miracles. "See," said the world, "how these Christians love one another." But now I am afraid it would be hard to pick out very many Christians by this test. No; it is more likely that our infidel friends would say of all the Christians that they happen to know: "See how these Christians are all the time quarrelling with each other! They never seem to be content unless they can show their pride by having at least some one who is not supposed to be worthy of their acquaintance. They go to church and say their prayers--oh! yes; but perhaps there is some person, even in the next pew, that they used to know, but have not spoken to for years, and have no notion of ever speaking to, unless, perhaps, on their death-bed if the priest should insist on it. Bearing with one another, indeed! Is it possible that one of their Apostles told them to do that? Why, they do not put up with half as much as a sensible man would who had no faith at all. Let them suffer the least even fancied slight or indignity, and there is

an end of all their friendship. Forgiving one another, as they say the Lord has forgiven them? Well, if the Lord forgives as they do, his forgiveness does not seem to amount to much."
My brethren, depend on it, those not of our faith feel often this way, though they may not say it right out. And they are not far wrong. The kind of bearing with others, the kind of forgiveness, that is given them by those who have the name of Christians is too often one that will not stand the test of God's judgment.
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I am afraid that many pious people have found themselves in the wrong place after death on account of it. Let those who still remain profit by this lesson while they have time.

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Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

Epistle.

1 _Thessalonians i._ 2-10.

Brethren:

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

Gospel.

St. Matthew xiii. 31-35.

At that time:

Jesus spoke to the multitude this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown up it is greater than any herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof.

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Another parable he spoke to them. The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes: and without parables he did not speak to them. That the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the

world."

Sermon XXXII.

How To Make Converts.

_The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven,
which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal,
until the whole was leavened. _
--Gospel of the Day.

By the kingdom of heaven is meant in this Gospel, as in many other places, the holy Catholic Church; the spiritual kingdom of God, which is of heaven, though on earth; and leaven is another word for what we call yeast, and is used in the making of bread. Our Divine Lord, then, tells us that his church, to which we belong, is like yeast; and his meaning, if we consider a little, is plain enough. It is, that as a little yeast is put into a mass of flour or dough, to raise it, as we say, so he has put his church, which was in the beginning a very small thing, into the world, to raise the world to life and the knowledge and love of him.

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And certainly his comparison of the church to yeast was fully justified. In the beginning the world was everywhere attracted and moved in spite of itself by the lives of the first Christians. The heathen could not help admiring their mutual charity, their patient and forgiving dispositions, their temperance and self-sacrifice; and they could not refrain from asking themselves and each other: "Who are these that they call Christians? What do they believe, and what do they teach? What is it that makes them so loving and so amiable, so calm and peaceful, so happy in all their troubles, so ready to assist and serve not only each other, but all the world beside?" But no one could answer these questions but the Christians themselves; so the heathen had to go and get instructed in this faith which had been made so charming to them. Thus they were converted, and in their turn became apostles in the same way to others.

So the leaven spread through the mass; the contagion, so to speak, of faith, piety, and virtue was diffused over the world; people caught it from their neighbors. The Apostles had no need to make many converts in any one place which they visited. If they got a few, these few would take care of the rest. The little congregations which they founded grew and multiplied wonderfully, in spite of distress and persecution, by the force of the holy lives and good example of their members.

But was this way of growing only meant for God's church in the beginning? No, by no means. Our Lord says that the leaven of his kingdom was to go on working "till the whole was leavened." Does it, then, still move the world in this way? If so, how rapidly ought the church now to increase, when there are a thousand faithful for one in those early days!

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Yes, my brethren, it ought. For in spite of the boasts which the world is making of its reformed religion, especially just now, and of its progress and civilization, it feels at heart very uneasy. It has fallen away from God, and lost the truth, and in

its inmost soul it knows this; and it is looking for somone to bring light to its darkness, and to put its confusion in order. Why, then, does not the church increase more rapidly? Why does not the world now come to us as it did in those former days of its anxiety and doubt? Prejudices it has now against us, I know; but it had its prejudices then, too. There are many slanders believed against us, but that has been so from the very beginning; our Lord warned us of this, and it is a mark of his true church to be thus belied. So this is not the real trouble; no, the trouble is that most Christians do not by the good odor of their lives induce the world to inquire into their faith, and thus overcome its prejudices. We may argue till we and everyone else are ready to drop, but we shall never be as the first disciples were--the leaven of God's kingdom--till we show by our lives that there is something more in us than the natural feelings, good or bad, which make up the lives of others. Christians who forgive and excuse their enemies, who have charity for all, who are chaste and pure in word and deed, who are humble and self-denying, those are the ones--and, thank God, such there are--who make converts; and if we want the leaven of the kingdom to spread and raise the world to Christ we must be like them.

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Sermon XXXIII.

The Blessings Of The Faith.

_I will utter things
hidden from the foundation of the world._
--Matthew. xiii. 35.

These are the concluding words of to-day's Gospel, and they refer to the great truths that are made known to us through the revelation of Almighty God. For as believers in a divine revelation we know things that have been hidden from the beginning, and we have a knowledge that transcends all human knowledge. Our faith gives us light which our reason could never supply. We might spend our whole lives in the most profound study and investigation, we might dip into all the systems and master all the sciences, and we should still be ignorant of certain truths which our faith makes known to us. When we look back over the world's history and see the greatest minds of every age and country groping in the dark, seeking in vain for the knowledge which we possess, we can appreciate what a glorious privilege it is to be enlightened by the divine light of faith. For where its rays do not penetrate there can never be sufficient security in regard to the most vital truths of human origin and human destiny. We see the sad evidences of this all around us in the world to-day. Men who refuse to accept the revelation of Almighty God and the teachings of his church are in ignorance, or at least they are in doubt, about the origin and end of life. They are even in doubt as to the existence of God himself, though the universe by a thousand voices proclaims his presence and their own souls reflect his image.

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From age to age the human mind busies itself over the deep questions of philosophy and the discoveries of science. From

generation to generation men seek to solve the great problems of life by the force of reason; but revelation alone can adequately disclose the "things hidden from the foundation of the world," and without its divine light and guidance mankind must ever remain liable to sink into darkness and doubt.

How widely different is the state of the mind established in the settled convictions of faith from that where there is nothing but the theories and opinions of human knowledge! In the one there is the repose of certainty, security, and peace; in the other there are many puzzles unsolved, promptings unsatisfied, disquiet, and unrest. One short lesson learned in the school of divine faith will give more light and bring more comfort to the soul than all the knowledge that can be acquired in a life-time in the schools of human learning.

Great stress is laid nowadays on secular education. And we are told that what the country needs, what the world needs, are intelligent and cultivated men and women; and certainly education is an excellent thing, and most desirable for all. But why make so much of a knowledge that concerns only the petty things of earth and the fleeting course of time, and ignore a knowledge that relates to the Infinite God in heaven and a life that is everlasting? What will it profit us on our death-bed to have learned the facts in the world's history, to have been familiar with the teachings of philosophy and the discoveries of science, to have studied the writings and mastered the thoughts of men, if we know nothing of our Creator and our relation to him and the course of our destiny; nothing of the preparation we should make beforehand and the thoughts that should animate us as we stand on the brink of eternity?

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Here is the great contrast between the knowledge that God imparts to us and all human science--the one imparts to us the truths of eternity, the other teaches us the truths of time; and the difference between them is just as great as that between time and eternity. And if, as is generally the case, we estimate the value of a thing by its importance and permanence, there is surely no term of comparison here. The little child who has learned the first page of the Catholic Catechism has already acquired a knowledge which forty centuries of human speculation have never reached, and the simplest believer in Jesus Christ and his church is possessed of a wisdom far higher, far holier, than was ever conceived of by the greatest sages of old.

Let us realize, then, that faith is the highest knowledge, that it discloses to us "things hidden from the foundation of the world," and makes us sharers in the knowledge of God himself, and therefore elevates and crowns our reason.

Sermon XXXIV.

Good Example As A Means Of Making Converts.

_The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven,
which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal,
until the whole was leavened._
--Matthew xiii. 33

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This may seem a very strange comparison, my brethren, if, instead of letting it in at one ear, as the saying is, and out at the other, we stop to think of it a moment. For what sort of likeness is there between that glorious kingdom of heaven, which we hope some day to enter, and a little leaven or yeast put into flour to raise it and make it into bread? Surely, we should say, none at all. What could our Lord have meant when he said that the two were alike?

But let us think a little more about the matter. Is the kingdom of heaven of which he was speaking that heaven into which all the saved are to enter? Or is there not some other meaning which we may give to the words?

There is another meaning, and it is the true one in this place and in many others in the Gospel. It is the kingdom of God or of heaven, not in heaven, but on earth, of which our Saviour is here speaking. When he says the kingdom of heaven, he means the kingdom which he came to establish, his holy Catholic Church.

But how is this leaven, or yeast? Well, it is not so very hard to see this. It is because, being put into the world in the beginning in the form of a few weak, poor, and unlearned men and women, like the little spoonful of yeast put into a great mass of flour, it soon spread through the whole known world, and is even now spreading in the same way, changing and influencing in many ways all whom it meets with, even if it does not fully convert them: just as the yeast is spread through the whole of the dough, raising it and making it into good and healthy food.

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Yes, my brethren, this was the way that the church spread through the world and made its converts, especially in the early times. It was not only by preaching. The Apostles and their successors did not have much chance to preach to the world in general. They were not allowed to do so; public preaching would have brought down on them much greater persecutions than those which they actually suffered, and it would have required great miracles on God's part to preserve his church had such preaching been tried, especially in the great cities. No, they had to teach their doctrine, as we may say, on the sly; in fact, part of it was reserved for those who had already become Christians. It may seem strange now, but in early times no one was allowed to hear anything about the real presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament till after he had been baptized. This was called the discipline of the secret, and was kept up for a long time.

So, you see, Christianity was not learned in the pagan Roman Empire so much by preaching as by private instruction joined with good example. One person caught it from another, as the particles of dough get raised by those next to them. Masters and mistresses, for instance, caught it from their servants, others from their friends and acquaintances--first, from noticing their virtues, so different from those which the pagans had. They saw how gentle and affectionate, and still how courageous, they were; how they bore suffering without a murmur; how they shrank from the idols worshipped by others, and from all the vices which these idols represented; how little they cared for pleasure; how each sacrificed himself for his neighbor. "See," said the world,

"how these Christians love one another." Then the world began to inquire what was the reason of this love and of the other Christian virtues; and so religion spread from the lowest to the highest, till at last the Roman emperors themselves knelt before the cross.

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Things are somewhat changed now, it is true. The Catholic faith can now be preached and taught openly; still, it is almost the same as if it could not, for people outside the church will seldom come and hear it, or even read books explaining it. The discipline of the secret still prevails, not because we wish it, but because the world does. So now, as before, the faith must catch and spread from one person to another if it is to make much progress in such countries as this of ours. Protestants run away from the priest, and will have nothing to say to him; so it will not do to say that making converts is the priest's business and does not concern you. No, my brethren, making converts is your business, as things stand, perhaps even more than his. But how are they to be made? Not by cursing, lying, and drunkenness, sins too common, alas! among many who call themselves Catholics, and specially liable to be noticed by others. It was not by these that the first Christians converted the world. Not by quarrels and slanders; it is not by these that you will convince people that we Christians love one another. Turn, then, from the vices which repel, and practise instead virtues which will attract unbelievers, and lead them to inquire why you are so good instead of wondering that you are so bad. Then they will come to you, as they did of old to your ancestors in the faith, to learn the doctrine which has taught you these virtues; and you will be, as you should be, the leaven which is to leaven the world.

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Septuagesima Sunday.

Epistle.

1 _Corinthians ix._ 24; x. 5.

Brethren:

Know you not that they who run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain.

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

Gospel.

St. Matthew xx. 1-16.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples this parable:
The kingdom of heaven is like to a master of a family, who went early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing in the market-place idle. And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just.

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And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. Ho saith to them: Go you also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the laborers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When, therefore, they came, who had come about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should have received more, and they also received every man a penny. And when they received it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering one of them, said: Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? is thy eye evil because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.

Sermon XXXV.

Bodily Mortification.

"I chastise my body," says St. Paul in the Epistle of to-day, "and bring it into subjection." In these few words he gives us the great reason for the Catholic doctrine and practice of bodily mortification and penance, which Protestants so often find fault with.

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"I chastise my body," he says, "and bring it into subjection"; that is, "I chastise it, because I want to bring it into subjection. I want to tame it, to become its master; so I give it a good beating, I starve it now and then, and treat it badly generally, that it may learn to obey me."

That is the great idea of mortification, my brethren, in a nutshell. Every one knows that if you want to break a vicious horse you have to put him through a pretty severe course of treatment before he will be subject to your will. And every one knows that the body is naturally unruly, like a vicious horse; the body is always craving for things which it would be better that it should not have, and it will have them in spite of us if we do not take care. So, to subject it thoroughly to reason, we must put it through a severe course; otherwise, some time or other, it will get the better of us, and have its own way.

And there is a great deal more need of taming our own bodies than there is of breaking horses. For the horse can only kill our body, but our bodies can kill our souls; and furthermore, if we do not want to take the trouble of breaking a horse, we can shoot him, or get somebody else to take him; but we can not in anyway lawfully get rid of our bodies till such time as God sees fit to take them from us. We are tied fast to them, and cannot get away. So we are absolutely obliged to conquer them, if we do not want to be conquered by them. In other words, if we do not want our bodies to be a frequent cause and occasion of mortal sin to us, we must to some considerable extent practise mortification.
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That is the Catholic and true doctrine, as taught by the church, and put into practice, in some degree at least, by all the faithful who obey her laws. And it is also common sense. Every one must admit that the body is the great cause and source of mortal sin to far the greater number of people, and that if its appetites were thoroughly brought under control our souls would be saved from very great dangers, which otherwise they cannot escape. If, then, it is any object to escape these dangers--and no sensible man can deny that it is--one does not need to be a Christian, but only to have the gift of reason, and to look a little into himself and into the world about him, and he must grant that the bodily penances and mortifications which the church insists on are not foolish or superstitious, but in the highest degree prudent and wise.
But I know, my dear brethren, that you do not think that the mortification of the body required by the church is useless or superstitious; I give you too much credit for faith as well as for reason to imagine that. You do need courage, though--we all need it--to act up to what we believe in this matter. Let us then look this question fairly in the face. There is heaven before us to be gained, and sin to be overcome that we may gain it; and here are our bodies, with their depraved, corrupted, and often dangerous and sinful desires, standing in the way of our gaining it. If we will only determine in earnest to get the mastery of them, heaven is almost sure; if we do not, they will be very likely to carry us to hell. If we overcome them, we save ourselves and them, and make them a help instead of a hindrance to us; if not, they will do their best to drag us down with themselves to destruction, and if in the mercy of God we may indeed be saved it will be as by fire. Shall we not take a little trouble when such tremendous interests are at stake? Shall we trust to luck when a little effort will make heaven sure?

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Sermon XXXVI.
Sudden Death.

_Watch ye, therefore,
because you know not the day nor the hour._
--Matthew. xxv. 13.

These words, my dear brethren, are taken from the parable of the ten virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. Five of them, being wise and prudent, took oil in their lamps,

that they might be ready at any moment to light them; but the five foolish ones gave no thought to the matter. At midnight, when they least expected it, the cry was heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet him." Then the foolish virgins tried to borrow oil from the wise to fill their lamps, but were told to go and buy for themselves. While they were gone the bridegroom came; they were not ready; the door of the marriage-feast was closed when they returned, and in answer to their entreaty, "Lord, lord, open to us," came only the words, "I know you not." "Watch ye, therefore," says our Lord, in concluding this parable, "because you know not the day nor the hour."

Brethren, the meaning of this parable is so plain that it hardly needs even a word of explanation. Yet how unheeded it is, alas! by the majority of Christians!

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What does this oil mean that the foolish virgins neglected to provide for themselves and to have in their lamps? What but the grace of God, with, which our souls should be provided, and without which they are in the state of mortal sin? If this precious oil of God's grace is in our souls we are ready at any moment to meet the Bridegroom; no matter how suddenly the cry is made that he is coming, we can go forth with confidence to meet him and feel sure that the door of the marriage-feast of heaven will not be closed to us.

But if we have not this oil, if the lamp of our soul is empty, if we are in the state of mortal sin, what dismay comes on us, what terrible fear and distress of mind, when we are suddenly told to prepare for death! We have been saying all along, "Oh! there will be plenty of time," and now there is not plenty of time. God is coming to meet us, and to demand of us an account of our lives; we cannot hide from his face, and he will not wait. The hour fixed in the eternal counsels of his wisdom has come, the hour on which everything depends, the hour for which the years of our life should have been one long preparation, those years so carelessly thrown away.

Friends may stand around us who have not wasted the oil in their lamps as we have ours. Their souls may be full of the grace of God, preserved and increased continually by prayer and good works, by the love of God and frequent confession and Communion. They may have enough and to spare; but they can not lend to us. "No," they must say to us, "go rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Go rather," that is, "to the regular sources of that grace, the sacraments, which our Lord has placed in his church, to give life to the dead. Send for the priest, and with his help fill the lamp of your soul, and prepare to meet our Lord."

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But too often it is as in the parable of the virgins. While the foolish Christian, who has put off his preparation for death, who has lived in the state of sin, expecting to die in the state of grace, goes to fill his lamp, his Lord comes, finds him, and judges him as he is. The priest comes, but only to look on him lying dead. Or even if the oil of grace is brought to the sinner,

he has not, perhaps, the price to pay for it; that is, he has not those dispositions of sincere penitence and amendment of life, without which all sacraments are vain and ineffectual.
Brethren, it is a fearful point in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins that not one of the five who were so carelessly unprepared was able to have her lamp ready to meet the bridegroom in his coming. It should teach us to expect that, as a rule, a man must die as he has lived. No doubt there are exceptions; the mercy of God is over all, and wills not that the sinner should perish. But the only safe way, the only way, indeed, that is not the wildest folly, and even insanity, is to live as all good Christians do live, continually prepared for death; with the grace of God always in their souls, with no stain of mortal sin on them; with "their loins girt, and lamps burning in their hands"; and "like to men who wait for their lord when he shall return from the wedding: that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately."

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Sermon XXXVII.
Life's Purpose.

Brethren, know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that you may obtain.
1 Corinthians. ix. 24.

There is a great question, my dear brethren, that comes home some time or other to every man in the world who is not entirely taken up with the passing pleasures and fleeting interests of the moment; to every man, that is, who lives as a man, and not as a mere child. It is the most important and vital of all questions; and it will return often on us, put it away as much as we will. It is this: "What am I here for? what is the use, what is the purpose of all this life which I am living? What is the goal to which it is tending? what end do I hope to obtain?"
Yes, we must look forward in this way sometimes, and we must try to find something in the future better worth having than what we have now, or our life, with its labors and fatigues, becomes a burden almost too great to be borne.
So one man proposes wealth, another knowledge and learning, another fame and honor as his object in life; or at least he looks forward to bringing up children to whom he can leave his memory and his name, and who will carry on and complete the work he has begun.
But we Christians do not seek for an answer to this question. The answer is written plainly by faith in our souls; we may try to forget it or put something else in its place, but we shall find no other in which we can believe.

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The answer for us is, that this life has no end or object in itself which can justify or explain it, but that it is a time of trial, of probation for something better; that we live in order that it may be seen from our life whether we are worthy to share in an eternal life; that only beyond the grave can what the soul longs for be attained, and that we may fail in attaining it if we

do not keep it steadily in view and work for it with all the strength we have.
So our life is a race, a struggle for an immense and unspeakable prize to come at its end; and a prize which will never be offered again if we do not secure it this time. If we fail in this life our failure can never be retrieved; nor will anything else ever be offered us to live for. For all eternity we shall see what we might have had, and shall be tortured with vain remorse; and nothing else will give us even a moment's peace. This eternity will be intolerable, even were there no other pains in it; but on account of this alone we shall seek death for ever, and never find it.
And from this race, this struggle in which we are now entered, there is no escape. We cannot withdraw and have our name struck from the list of contestants. There is no half-way place which we can take between triumph and defeat. "Know you not," says St. Paul, "that all run in the race?" Yes, a power greater than ours has put us on the track, and is drawing us along it, whether we will or no. We cannot remain as we are, for He whose power has placed us here has made us for himself, and we cannot rest till we rest in him.
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Since, then, we have to run in the race; since we have to suffer, to labor, to pursue a happiness which we now have not; since we must do this even in spite of ourselves; since we cannot sit down and give up our place, what folly it is to run to no purpose, to turn aside and try to forget the only possible reward for all our toil, the only thing that can make the life which we must live worth living! Let St. Paul's words on this Sunday sink into our minds; and, since we have to run in this race on which everything depends, let us not trifle and lose its precious moments, but so run that we may obtain.

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Sexagesima Sunday

Epistle.
2 _Corinthians xi._ 19-_xii._ 9.
Brethren:
You gladly suffer the foolish: whereas you yourselves are wise. For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take from you, if a man be extolled, if a man strike you on the face. I speak according to dishonor, as if we had been weak in this part. Wherein if any man is bold (I speak foolishly) I am bold also. They are Hebrews; so am I. They are Israelites; so am I. They are the seed of Abraham; so am I. They are the ministers of Christ (I speak as one less wise), I am more; in many more labors, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea; in journeys often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from

false brethren: in labor and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in many fastings, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without: my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I do not burn? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my infirmity. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for ever, knoweth that I lie not.

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At Damascus the governor of the nation under Aretas the king, guarded the city of the Damascenes to apprehend me. And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands. If I must glory (for it is not expedient indeed); but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not, or out of the body I know not: God knoweth), such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, I know not: God knoweth; that he was caught up into paradise; and heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter. Of such an one I will glory; but for myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities. For even if I would glory, I shall not be foolish: for I will say the truth. But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth from me. And lest the greatness of the revelations should puff me up, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me. For which thing I thrice besought the Lord, that it might depart from me; and he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Gospel.

St. Luke viii. 4-15.

At that time:

When a very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities to him, he spoke by a similitude. A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And some fell upon good ground; and sprung up, and yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things, he cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him what this parable might be.

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To whom he said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside are they that hear: then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. Now they upon the rock, are they who when they hear, receive the word with joy: and these have no roots; who believe

for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns, are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground, are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.

Sermon XXXVIII.

Perseverance After A Mission.

_Power is made perfect in infirmity. _
--Epistle of the Day.

Not so very long ago, my dear brethren, we had a great mission in this church. It was well attended--that was almost a matter of course; for, thank God, every one considers it a shame to neglect so great a grace when it is offered, and the Catholic who refuses to attend a mission is regarded by those who know him as being in a very bad and dangerous state.

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And the mission, I trust, was on the whole well made by those who attended it. They made good confessions; they felt true sorrow for their sins. And they made real purposes of amendment against their vices, whatever they might be. The drunkard promised to abstain from drink for God's sake, though it might be almost the only thing that gave him pleasure; the impure promised to abandon and stamp out his evil passions and habits; the one who had neglected Mass and the other duties of his religion out of laziness, gluttony, or indifference, promised to be faithful to them for the future.

But how many of the thousands who made these promises have kept them? How many of those who were not leading a Christian life before the mission are now doing so? Some certainly; yes, some of the seed of the word of God, of which our Lord speaks in to-day's Gospel, which was then sown, has indeed sprung up and borne fruit, it may be a hundredfold. Some, in a good heart, hearing the word, have kept it, and brought forth fruit in patience.

But, alas! how many, on the other hand, have been like the wayside, the rock, or the thorns in our Lord's parable! The seed sprang up, and remained for a few days or weeks; but now, if you look for it, it has gone, trampled under foot, choked, or withered away.

Now, what is the reason of all this sad want of perseverance? Was it that those who made their confessions then were not sincere; that they made promises which they did not really expect to keep? Perhaps that may have been so with some of them; for some people do seem to think that one cannot be expected to avoid mortal sin, unless he is a priest or a religious, and even call others hypocrites who believe that they can and do avoid it. But there were others who failed--and these were a great many--because they thought they had only to say that they would do the thing, and that then the thing would be done.

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They did not know how weak they were; perhaps they do not know it yet. They will find it out sometime, as those do who have often taken the pledge in vain; and then it may be that they will

despair, which will be the worst of all. But if they use this knowledge right it will be their salvation.
And how will knowing that they are weak save them? Will it make them strong? Yes, but not in their own strength; it will save them by making them turn to the infinite power of God. This is what our Lord told St. Paul, as we learn in the Epistle of to-day, when he asked to have his temptation removed. He said to him: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity." The more we know our weakness the stronger we shall be, if our terror and distrust of ourselves will only make us turn to God in frequent, earnest, and fervent prayer for help, and in continual approach to the sacraments which he has given for our aid.
Oh! if Christians would only learn this one great truth, how the whole face of things would change! How the most obstinate vices, the most deep-rooted spiritual disease, would melt away at the touch of the Great Physician of our souls, if we would only go to him continually for their cure! How easily we should overcome the enemy if we would only understand that of ourselves we cannot overcome him, but that we can do all things in Him who strengtheneth us; and, understanding this, would go to him for the strength that we cannot get elsewhere!
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My brethren, you who have fallen and now fall so often, I beg you to put this truth in practice. You fail, and why? Because you have undertaken more than you can do. You wish to succeed? I hope so. Well, there is only one way. Do as you have done before, but also call God to the rescue. Pray frequently and fervently, and go often to confession and Communion, and success, instead of being hopeless, will be sure.

Sermon XXXIX.

Good Seed But No Harvest.

The Gospel of to-day, my brethren, is the parable of the sower who went out to sow his seed. Our Lord himself explains the parable, and tells us that the seed is the word of God; and the real sower of this word, of course, is God, from whom it comes, and from whom it has all its life and power.
The ground in which this seed is sown is the mind and heart of man; or, to put the matter in a practical shape, it is your heart and mine. There are many people in this world to whom very little of it has come, at least compared with what we have had; but we cannot complain that we have not had our share. The word of God spoken by the mouth of man, in sermons, instructions, counsels, and warnings, from the altar and in the confessional, and not only from the priests but also from others who have been the ministers of God and the channels of his grace to us--it is certainly no strange or new sound in our ears. And not only in this way have we continually heard God's voice, but often, perhaps even more frequently, have we heard it coming immediately from him, and speaking in our own souls.
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Plenty of this seed has, then, been sown in us; but where is the fruit, the harvest that should have come from it? Seed is not put

in the ground merely to be kept there. No, it cannot be kept there; if it is not destroyed or carried away it must grow and multiply.

The seed of God's word should, therefore, have grown in us. It should have been the beginning and the increase in us of the spiritual life, which should have grown stronger in us day by day from the time when we first came to the use of reason until the present moment.

Now, how is it in fact? As we look back on our lives, do we find that this has actually been fulfilled in them? Are we better, more perfect, nearer to God now than we were last year, or even ten years ago? Is it not rather to be feared that we have fallen back; that we are more careless, perhaps, even about mortal sin, than we were in times past; or, to say the least, that habits of venial sin have gained on us, instead of being overcome; that our prayers are less fervent, our reception of the sacraments less frequent, our love of God weaker than in the years which have gone by?

Holy Scripture tells us that the "path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day." "The just"--that is, those who are habitually in God's grace, who have and keep the life of God in their souls.

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The Christian virtues, the seeds of which were put in our souls at baptism, should have been growing during all our lives; they should have become strong trees now, deeply rooted and spreading far and wide. Even if they were killed at any time by the frost of mortal sin, they should have been speedily brought to life and renewed their growth before they had decayed and rotted away.

Brethren, I need not ask you if this has been so with you. With some, no doubt, it has. They may not feel that they have drawn nearer to God, but really they have. Temptation does not find the material in them to work on that it did; to avoid evil and to do good is every day easier and easier; they have still cause to fear, it is true, but still more and more ground to hope.

But, alas! how many there are in whom there is no sign of this growth which should have come from the seed which has been sown in them! Their light has not increased; no, it is almost always extinguished; when it does seem to shine it is but to flicker for a moment, and to disappear. The seed is no sooner sown in them than it is trampled under foot or carried away by the birds of the air.

Brethren, if the life of grace is not growing in our souls; if we are not falling less frequently, and rising more easily from our falls, than before, our path is not that of the just, and the seed of the word of God has not yet taken that root which will make it bring forth a hundredfold.

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Sermon XL.

The Uses Of Temptation.

_My grace is sufficient for thee;
for power is made perfect in infirmity._
--2 Corinthians xii. 9.

To all who are striving to lead a good Christian life the example of the saints is a powerful means of encouragement, and the more so when we see in the saints themselves the evidences of our common human nature, when we see them encountering the same difficulties and struggling with the same temptations which we ourselves experience. Their great deeds and miracles exalt them to a sphere far above us, and, while they fill us with admiration, would yet have a tendency to discourage us were it not for those other passages in their lives when they seem to be brought down to our own level by contact with those evil influences which are ever seeking to sway our fallen nature. The fact that the saints have had to engage in conflict with the basest passions is so far from lowering them in our eyes that it only serves to make them dearer to us and to stimulate us to a more faithful imitation of them.

And so St. Paul's account of himself in the Epistle of to-day has been a ground of encouragement to many a soul that had grown weary of an incessant warfare with temptation. The Apostle tells us that, in spite of the wondrous revelations and heavenly favors which he had received from God, he was yet tormented with temptations of the flesh. "And lest the greatness of the revelations should puff me up, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me.

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For which thing I thrice besought the Lord, that it might depart from me; he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity." To every soul struggling with temptation God speaks these same words of comfort. "What if you are weak and the temptation is strong? My grace is sufficient for you. My power shall be shown forth through your weakness, for what you could never do of your own strength I can and will do for you with my grace."

Many are the lessons we can learn from this text. When we see the great Apostle of the Gentiles engaged in a hard conflict with the demon of impurity, it shows us that God does not spare in this respect even his most chosen servants. On the contrary, by refusing to grant the prayer of St. Paul that he might be delivered from this sting of the flesh, God teaches us that temptation is often a special mark of his favor, even as a general would place his best and bravest soldiers in the thickest of the fight. We are also taught that, no matter how vile the suggestions of the evil one, they cannot soil the heart of him who resists them. If, as soon as the sinfulness of the foul thought or imagination is realized, resistance be at once begun, and kept up until the suggestion is banished, we may be sure we have not yielded, especially if we have had recourse to prayer. From the shield of prayer the arrows of the tempter are sure to glance and fall harmlessly to the ground.

But, on the other hand, these temptations teach us what we are in ourselves, or rather what we should be without the aid of God's grace. St. Paul tells us that God permitted those buffetings of Satan to preserve in him the virtue of humility, "lest the greatness of the revelations should puff me up."

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The evil imaginations arising in our minds show us to what a depth we should sink were God to withdraw his grace from us and leave us to ourselves. We should, therefore, make of such temptations an occasion of humility, acknowledging our own worthlessness, our own weakness, yet glorying, as St. Paul did, in the power of God's grace, which is able to make us strong, and endow us with supernatural merit. And here lies the greatest value and use of temptations--God's power is made perfect in our infirmity. A crown of merit is the reward of victory in the fight. Without the temptation we should not have had the merit of overcoming it. In the hour of trial, then, take courage from these words of God to St. Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity."

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_Quinquagesima Sunday. _

Epistle.

1 _Corinthians xiii._ 1-13.

Brethren:

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity. I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and 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. Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child. I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away the things of a child. We see now through a glass in an obscure manner: but then face to face. Now I know in part: but then I shall know even as I am known. And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.

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Gospel.

St. Luke xviii. 31-43.

At that time:

Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said.

Now it came to pass that when he drew nigh to Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. But he cried out much more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he was come near, he asked him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Sermon XLI.

The Qualities Of Christian Charity.

What a beautiful description it is, my dear brethren, which St. Paul gives us of the virtue of charity in the Epistle of to-day! If you have never read it or do not remember it, I would advise you to read it at once; and, indeed, nothing could be better than to commit it to memory.

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Let us look just now at a part of it. "Charity," says the Apostle, "is patient, is kind; charity envieth not; dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Now, I say this is very beautiful, is it not? And perhaps it seems all the more beautiful because the picture which it gives us is not a very familiar one. I know we are apt to think about as well of ourselves as of almost any one of our acquaintance; but can we say to ourselves, on reading or hearing this description of charity, "That's me; that's just my character to a hair"? No; somehow or other, though we would like to put on the coat, it does not seem to fit.

"Charity is patient, is kind." That is rather out of the way, to begin with, when we think how impatient and cross we are if anything goes wrong, if anybody stands in our way or interferes with us, or even ventures to differ from us in opinion.

"Charity envieth not." Worse yet. Why, some people cannot even see their neighbor have a new dress or hat without at once making up their minds to take the shine out of that conceited thing. And if they hear it said that Miss So-and-So is good-looking they will take some opportunity to remark: "For the life of me, I can't make out what any one sees to admire in her."

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Probably they might manage to see it if they would make a great effort; but how can they make the effort when no one seems to have any eye for their own good points, which ought to be so evident to all? And it is not the ladies only who have this weakness. You will hear something like this: "Oh! I consider him to be a much overrated man. I knew him when he was young, and he was nothing above the common. But some people certainly have

luck." Or, if you do not hear it out loud, the grumbling is there all the same in the heart. Perhaps some praise has to be given, but it is very sparing; given with great appearance of careful judgment and a desire to keep closely to the truth.
"Charity dealeth not perversely." How is this? Why, you will find Christians who would, as the saying goes, "cut off their nose to spite their face." They will even suffer themselves, if some one else can only be made to suffer too.
But I shall not have time to make all the applications. As I said, you had better read the Epistle, then you can make them for yourselves.
I wish, however, to call your attention before closing to one unpleasant circumstance. Is this charity, which St. Paul so highly praises and so beautifully describes, a sort of fancy and ornamental virtue, which is certainly very commendable, but which we can get along well enough without? Listen to a few other words which come a little before those I have read: "If I should have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Notice, he does not say, "I am not much, or these things are not much good, without charity": no, without it "I am nothing"; a cipher, and a sham. Take this home and meditate on it.
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Sermon XLII.

Delay Of Repentance.

_Be not deceived, God is not mocked;
for what things a man shall sow,
those also shall he reap._
--Galatians vi. 7, 8.

"Never mind, I will repent some day and confess it all to the priest; then it will be as if it never happened." Sometimes, my dear brethren, when men have made up their minds to commit sin, or to go on in a course of sin, they are tempted to say some such words as these; or if they are not fallen so low as to _talk_ in this way, yet, if we may form a judgment of their thoughts by their actions, such are the thoughts of not a few. I propose, therefore, to say a few words this morning on the great folly of this way of speaking, thinking, and acting, and to show you what a false notion it rests upon.
I will not stop to point out how uncertain that really is which is assumed as perfectly certain--namely, that an opportunity of going to confession will be granted to every one who acts in this way. A man who sins can never be sure that he will not be cut off in his sin. But I will take it for granted that the opportunity of making a confession is given; more than that, I will take it for granted that he makes a good confession and receives absolution as he promised himself. In such a case as this is it true that even then all will be just as if the sin had never been committed?
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My dear brethren, to imagine this to be the case would be indeed

a very great mistake. In order that you may see this I must recall to your recollection some well-known truths. In the beginning, God, having made man, placed him in a state of great happiness. He was without pain, sickness, anxiety, or death. How is it, then, that man finds himself in his actual condition? Why is it that man is subjected to so many hardships and miseries, obliged to toil for his daily bread, and, in the end, through anguish and suffering, give up that life which it has cost so much labor to preserve? Think, my dear brethren, of all the pains of mind and body which you have ever experienced, or which you have seen others experience; think of all the sufferings of which you have ever read, and ask yourselves the reason for all this vast mass of agony and anguish. That reason is given in one word. Of all the suffering that has ever been and that ever will be, sin is the cause. Directly or indirectly, mediately or immediately, every suffering finds in sin its origin.

Now, I do not say that when we come to particular cases we can always point out precisely how and why _this_ suffering is connected with _that_ sin. God in his providence permits suffering to attend upon sin for many different reasons. Sometimes it is permitted as a warning not to sin in order that men of sense and understanding, seeing what sin costs, may avoid it. Sometimes suffering in this world is, I am afraid we must say, but a foretaste of eternal suffering in the next.

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In some cases sufferings are sent to make us more like our Lord. But--and this is the special point I wish you to notice--suffering is very frequently sent by Almighty God as a punishment in this life for those sins the eternal punishment of which he has forgiven. This brings me back to the special point of this instruction. A man may go to confession, may even make a good confession and receive a good absolution--that is to say, he may receive through the merits of Christ the remission of the eternal punishment due to his sins, and yet things may be very far from being, as he promised himself, just as they were before. On the contrary, he may have a vast amount of punishment to undergo in time in consequence of that sin, which he would not have had if he had not committed that sin. This thought is very suitable for this season. Lent will begin next Wednesday. Its fasting and abstinence are enjoined by the church, among other reasons as a means of satisfying for the temporal punishment due to past sins. But, in order that this fasting and abstinence may be useful for this purpose, those who fast and abstain must be in the state of grace, because all their value as works of satisfaction is due to the indwelling grace of God. In order, then, that your fasting and abstinence may be profitable to your own souls, let me advise you to act like our wise forefathers acted, to come to confession at once in the beginning of Lent, and not to put it off with your Easter duty to the last moment.

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Sermon XLIII.

Lenten Obligations.

Next Wednesday, my brethren, we enter, as of course you know, on the great and holy season of Lent. On that day, no doubt, as many

of you as can will come to the church and receive on your foreheads the ashes which remind us of the penance to which these coming weeks are specially devoted.

The church is generally full on Ash-Wednesday, and one would think, on seeing the crowds pressing forward to receive the ashes, that they were all determined to enter into the spirit of the church, and to keep Lent as it should be kept. Yet how many there are who go through this outward form, and make a great deal of it, and yet neglect all that is signified by it; who give a show indeed of penance, but bring forth none of its fruits! Some, perhaps, of the Ash-Wednesday penitents will not be seen again in the church till they come forward again on Good Friday to kiss the cross.

Yet it is better to come to church, if only on Ash-Wednesday and Good Friday, than not at all; better to do some penance and show some love of God than to neglect these virtues altogether. But how much better still it would be to now thoroughly understand and seriously take to heart what God requires of us, especially in this holy time, and to make it the means, as it may be more than anything else, of our final salvation!

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First, then, to thoroughly understand what we are now to do. Everything must be well understood before it can be well done, and the keeping of Lent is no exception to this general rule. Many people break the rules of Lent because they do not clearly understand them.

Lent, then, my brethren, is not a time to be spent in penance altogether according to one's own devotion. Far from it; the duties to be performed in it are clearly and precisely laid down, and should be attended to very strictly. They are not many; they make no great demand on our time or strength; but the Christian who discharges them properly will make his Lent far better than one would who should neglect them and take any other practices, no matter how hard, in their place. It is better to keep the real rules or laws of Lent faithfully than to hear three Masses every day, and come to all the extra services, and give half one's goods to the poor, and yet neglect our regular duties.

What, then, are these laws? The first is the Easter duty, which should be made before Easter, if possible, though the church indulgently extends the time several weeks after that festival. Make, then, this great duty, far the greatest of all the duties of a Christian, at once; it will be very easy for all of you who have just made the mission to do it now, and the longer you put it off the harder it will be. Make it, then, if possible, the first day it can be made--that is, next Sunday--and get it, if I may say so, off your mind. Do not fancy that, as you have so lately made the mission, the Easter duty is of little consequence. If you had made twenty missions during the past year, and any number of jubilees, the law of the Easter duty would bind you exactly as much as if you had neglected them all. It is like hearing Mass on Sunday; nobody is excused at all from Mass on Sunday because they have been to it through the week.

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So this time, the great Sunday of the year, is set apart by the

church for the precept of Holy Communion; it must be fulfilled at this time, no matter how often one has received outside of it. The second and only other real law of Lent is that relating to fasting and abstinence. If you attend carefully to the rules that have been read you will understand this well enough. But do not confuse fasting with abstinence; that is the most common mistake. People often say: "Oh! I have to work hard; I can eat meat if I like." That is a great error, and a very foolish one. Many are excused from fasting on one meal and a collation; few from abstinence on the days appointed. If you want to have a safe conscience in eating meat you should consult a confessor, unless seriously ill.

Attend to these two things, then, and you will make your Lent as a Christian should. But, of course, you will also try to follow, to the best of your ability, the other devotional practices recommended by the church at this time. Come to daily Mass, and to the occasional services, and give alms according to your means. These practices, especially now, are of the greatest spiritual profit, and can not generally be neglected without spiritual danger. But remember that Easter duty and fasting, with abstinence, are the real laws. Obey these, at any rate, and then, so far as you are able, add the others beside.

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First Sunday of Lent.

Epistle.

2 _Corinthians vi._ 1-10.

Brethren:

We do exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith: "In an accepted time have I heard thee; and in the day of salvation have I helped thee." Behold, now is the acceptable time: behold, now is the day of salvation. Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed: but in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word ol truth, in the power of God; by the armor of justice on the right hand and on the left: through honor and dishonor: through infamy and good name: as seducers, and yet speaking truth: as unknown, and yet known: as dying, and behold we live: as chastised, and not killed: as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing: as needy, yet enriching many: as having nothing, and possessing all things.

Gospel.

St. Matthew iv. 1-11.

At that time:

Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards hungry. And the tempter coming, said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said: It is written, "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the

mouth of God."
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Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written: "That he hath given his angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou hurt thy foot against a stone." Jesus said to him: It is written again: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. And said unto him: All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus saith to him: Be gone, Satan, for it is written: "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve." Then the devil left him: and behold, angels came and ministered to him.

Sermon XLIV.

The Merit Of Fasting And Abstinence.

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

If any one of us, my brethren, should be asked what is the object of this holy season of Lent on which we are now entering, or what is the reason why it has been appointed, the answer would probably be that it is in order that we may do penance for our sins. Penance: punishment inflicted on ourselves in satisfaction for those offences for which we feel we have so imperfectly atoned, and to obtain from God those graces which we so greatly need: this, perhaps, is the idea uppermost in most people's minds when Lent comes round.
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Well, this is no doubt a reason, and a good one, not only for what we have to do in Lent, but for a great deal more that we may do, not only now, but all through the year. Few even of those who lead good lives do penance enough for their sins, even as it is; almost all go before God with a large account unsettled in this matter. How much worse would it be if there was no Lent, if the church never insisted on our chastising ourselves in any way, and seemed to treat such chastisement as of no consequence! The very notion of it would drop from our thoughts, as it has indeed long ago from the minds of those who have separated from the church and ceased to possess the true faith.
This is, then, a good reason for Lent; but there is another which we are not so apt to think of, and which, for this very reason, I would like to emphasize.
This reason is the one suggested by the words of the Gospel of last Wednesday, which you have just heard: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth; ... but lay up to yourselves

treasures in heaven. ... For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also."
Brethren, we should have no trouble at all in getting to heaven if we only really wanted to get there. Of course in one way we do want to get to heaven; that is, we all want to save our souls from the eternal anguish and misery of hell, and we know there is nothing for us but heaven or hell in the end. But I am afraid that many Christians, especially when they have health, strength, and plenty of this world's goods, have really very little wish to give them up, in order to pass, even could they do so at once, to those joys which the heart of man cannot conceive.
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No, their treasure is in this world; all their idea of happiness is founded on the pleasures which they have had, are having, or hope to have in it. Their treasure is here, and, as our Lord says, their heart is here too.
I think, then, that this other great reason and object of Lent, of which I have just spoken, is that we may do something to change this state of things; that we may get our hearts off this world, and see our real treasure in heaven, get to know it and love it, and have our hearts there with it. We ought now not merely to stop for a while from worldly pleasures, but to try to cease loving them, and to care for something better. We must love and care for something; let us try now to get the right object for love.
Now, what is this that we should love; what is our treasure in heaven? It is our Father who is in heaven, and who is heaven itself. Brethren, it is not so hard to love God as some people think. We can all try to do a little, at any rate; I mean to love God, not by keeping his commandments, but to love him in the same way as we love those things which are lovely and attractive here. Come to him now, this Lent; that, above all else, is what it was made for; come to church not only to hear a sermon, but to pray, to get near to God, and to bring him into your hearts. Shut the world out of your heart, that he may come in. Ask him to come to you and make his abode with you. Then, when he is really your treasure, he will draw you where he is; you will not have to try to get to heaven; you will go there of your own accord. To die to the world and live to God, this is the Christian's true life; and Lent was made to give this life to our souls.

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Sermon XLV.

Difficulties Of Fasting.

Brethren, another year has passed, and Lent has come around once more. I have no doubt that a great many of you wish that it had not; perhaps you would not be so very sorry if the church would have the goodness to do away with this tedious season altogether. Indeed, I imagine that to some people Lent is one of the greatest mysteries of our religion. And even if it is in some general way acknowledged as the proper thing in its due time, it never seems to come in just at the time that would be convenient. If it comes early, it is a very unpleasant interruption to the winter's pleasures and amusements; if it comes late, why could it not come

earlier, so that we could get through and have done with it soon? All the grumbling in the world, however, will not alter the fact. We cannot get rid of Lent, and we cannot fix its time to suit us, even if there is any time which would seem suitable. It is possible, indeed, to free ourselves from its burdens; we may do so either by neglecting its obligations altogether, or by getting somehow or other dispensed from them, without putting anything else in their place. But, after all, if we do this, we shall hardly feel any more comfortable. The best plan is, since Lent is here whether we will or not, to face it boldly and cheerfully, and make the best of it that we can.

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And, when we come to look at it, is it such a very terrible infliction? Do we not make rather too much fuss and complaint over what is not really such a very great penance?

Let us look, then, and see what is required of us. The principal thing, of course, is the fasting, as we call it, on one meal. Now, if we actually were reduced to only one meal in the twenty-four hours, I confess that it would be pretty severe; but, you see, in point of fact, we have the collation, at which eight ounces, or half a pound, of solid food is allowed. Now that is as much as many people would take anyway at tea-time. And then you can have a cup of coffee or tea and a small piece of bread in the morning. So, when we come to sift the matter, the fact hardly amounts to more than this: that the breakfast is rather a light one. And then, for those who really have hard work, even what is left of the fast goes by the board altogether.

Well, next there is the abstinence from flesh-meat. Some seem to think this dreadful. "Oh!" they will say, "I can't eat fish; it makes me sick." Indeed? Perhaps you are not very hungry, and do not need anything very much. When you are really hungry the fish will not taste so bad. But, then, who, except indeed the fisherman, wants you to eat fish? I do not think there is any law requiring it to be eaten; and if it has such a bad effect on you I would let it alone and try something else. And though fish is so uneatable, perhaps an oyster or two might now and then be worried down.

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Now, after the fast and abstinence, what is left? Really nothing at all in the law of the church, at least in black and white. There is, however, a custom, having about the force of law, prohibiting such parties and theatre-going as would be allowable enough, at other times. But have not you had a pretty good chance for these amusements for the last few months? And, if you are in the habit of some indulgence of this kind, a little quiet at home might be agreeable by way of a change.

But perhaps you do not like so much church-going. Well, this is not absolutely required of you. But it certainly is expected; and it will be well to cultivate a taste for it. Ought it to be such a great penance for a Christian to come and spend a little while in the presence of Him with whom he hopes to dwell for ever?

I think, then, that if you will look at Lent in the right light it will not seem so very grievous. It may be even that you will feel that now is a time to be a little generous with our Lord;

and, since he does not ask much, you may be disposed to give him a little more than he absolutely demands.

Sermon XLVI.

Wasted Opportunities.

_Brethren, we exhort you
that you receive not the grace of God in vain. _

What is this receiving of God's grace in vain, my brethren, against which St. Paul warns us in these words of the Epistle of to-day? It is receiving it and making no use of it; receiving it only to waste it and throw it away.

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We are all the time receiving graces from God. Every day, every hour he is giving them to us. For what is a grace? It is a help, a means to our salvation which comes from him. And these helps he gives us continually, by instructions, by admonitions, by good examples; by the evidences which he puts all around us of the shortness and uncertainty of life, of the instability of earthly riches and happiness, of the peace which virtue gives, of the misery which comes from sin. All these and countless other helps to lead us, almost to force us, into the way of his commandments are lavished on us incessantly. They come more or less to all men, but most of all to us children of his holy Catholic Church, who have the full light of his faith, the full teaching of his law.

But more than all he himself is every day speaking in our hearts, inviting, urging, begging us to turn from mortal sin; or, if we have indeed done that, to rise higher, and serve him more perfectly. If we had listened to all these calls, if we had availed ourselves of all these helps, we should now be far advanced on the way of the saints; we should, like St. Stephen at his martyrdom, see heaven opened before us and our salvation morally secure.

But we have not done that. We have been doing just what the Apostle warns us against; we have been receiving these graces in vain. We have received them, and it has been worse with us than if we had not; for we have received them, many of them at least, only to throw them away and trample them underfoot.

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What would you think, my brethren, of a man who, being anxious to reach a distant country, which was his true home, and where were those whom he loved, and, having no means to do so of himself, should throw away with contempt the sums which from time to time might in charity be offered him to enable him to accomplish his desires, should throw them absolutely away, not even using them to supply his daily wants or to secure some passing pleasure? You would say that he was a madman or a fool; that he had not the gift of reason, which raises man above the brute.

And yet this is what we have been doing; and even more than this. For there have been some, perhaps many, graces which God has given us which would even alone, if rightly used, have answered for all our needs. They would not have been mere contributions to our passage-money for heaven, but would have put us aboard the vessel, and made our reaching port little more than a question of

time. But these, like the rest, are gone without being used; they are strewn on the road behind us, and we cannot turn back to pick them up.

Such a great grace is the one which, in spite of our unworthiness, ingratitude, and folly, is now once more offered to us by our Father in heaven, who does not follow the rules by which an earthly benefactor would be guided. This season of Lent on which we are entering is one of the great helps, the great opportunities which he gives us to reach that country where he awaits our coming. One who spends even one Lent as it should be spent will be at its close well established in the way of solid virtue and peace, the way which leads certainly to the kingdom to which we all hope to go.

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It is for this that Lent is given us, not merely for a season of penance and suffering, to be got through with somehow or other as best we can; it is for this reason also that the church to-day solemnly warns us to use it as it should be used. Listen, then, to her warning voice; listen out of love and gratitude to God; listen out of love and holy fear also for yourself; for it may be the last great grace that will ever be brought to your door.

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Second Sunday of Lent.

Epistle.

1 _Thessalonians iv._ 1-7.

Brethren:

We pray and beseech you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received from us, how you ought to walk, and to please God, so also you would walk, that you may abound the more. For you know what commandments I have given to you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you should abstain from fornication. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles, who know not God: and that no man overreach, nor deceive his brother in business: because the Lord is the avenger of all such things, as we have told you before, and have testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel.

St. Matthew xvii. 1-9.

At that time:

Jesus taketh unto him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun: and his garments became white as snow. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him. And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them.

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And behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him. And the

disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said to them: Arise, and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes they saw no man, but only Jesus. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead.

Sermon XLVII.

The Joy Of Penance.

He was transfigured before them.

--Words from To-day's Gospel.

At first sight, my dear brethren, it seems strange that just as we have entered upon this season of fasting and penance the church should have chosen for to-day's Gospel one of the few accounts which the Evangelists have given of the manifestation on earth of our Lord's glory and majesty. The Gospels, as you are aware, are mainly made up of the record of our Lord's words, actions, and sufferings; they tell us how the Son of God made man went about from place to place doing good, healing the sick, consoling the sorrowful, and in the end undergoing cruel sufferings and an ignominious death. There are but few instances recorded of his being glorified and honored with more than human glory and honor, and when such is the case no long and detailed description is given, the fact is barely mentioned, and the narrative passes on.

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But to-day's Gospel forms an exception to this general rule. In it special pains have been taken by the Evangelists to give us in detail a description of the other side, so to speak, of our Lord's life. We are told that our Lord chose, out of the twelve, Peter, James, and John, and led them up into a high mountain, and was transfigured before them: so that his face did shine as the sun, and even his garments became shining and exceeding white as snow, "so as no fuller upon earth can make white." And then there appeared to them Elias with Moses talking with Jesus. And so astonished and impressed was Peter that he exclaimed: "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias."

Now, why has the church, by selecting the account of the Transfiguration at this season, turned our thoughts to what seems so inappropriate a subject? It would seem that it would have been better to have chosen those parts of the Gospel which treat of sin, of the judgment to come, of the punishments which await the impenitent sinner. Well, I do not know that I can tell you all the reasons why the church has made this choice, but I think I can give you one reason, and that is, that the church wished to encourage us and to animate us at this season by placing before us the glory which is in store for those who do penance and suffer here.

In this life there is nothing so familiar to most of us as suffering in some form or other. Most of us are obliged by our circumstances to pass our days in exhausting toil and labor. Disease and anxiety and want and disappointment are to be met with on all sides, and there are but few who are free from all

these evils.
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And to all--even to those who are the most favored in this life--there is an hour coming which nothing can avert--the hour of death. This, as every one may see, is the present state of things. Moreover, our Lord, so far from encouraging us to expect freedom from suffering, insists continually upon its necessity. "Deny yourselves," "take up your cross daily," "blessed are the mourners," such are the words our Lord addresses to his disciples. And the church, that this teaching of our Lord may not be a mere speculation, brings it down into every day practical life by commanding us at this season to fast and abstain. From all this the necessity of suffering is evident.
But however true this is, suffering is not an end in itself; it is only a means to an end; it is but a road to everlasting joy and glory. God permits and commands sufferings in order that he may give to those who endure their sufferings well an abundant reward. As St. Paul says: "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." And it is in order that we may ever remember this that the church calls upon us to consider the manifestation of the glory of our Lord and Master, to whom we must be made conformable in all things--in suffering in this life, in glory in the next.

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Sermon XLVIII.

Christian Perfection Not Impossible.

This is the will of God, your sanctification.
--Epistle of the Day.

What, my dear brethren, is the will or intention of Almighty God and of the Catholic Church, which is directed by his Holy Spirit, in establishing for us this fast of Lent, and commanding us to observe it? What is the end which he meant that every Christian should attain by keeping it, and which makes the opportunity now offered to us such a great grace as we were warned last week that it is? The words of St. Paul to-day answer these questions for us. "The will of God," he says, his intention for us at all times indeed, but specially now, "is our sanctification."
But what is our sanctification? It is the making us saints. That, then, is what Lent ought to do for us. It ought to make us saints; God and his church mean that it should.
"Well," perhaps you may say, "if that is the end for which Lent is appointed, it seems to me that the end is seldom attained. For my part, I am afraid I shall never be a saint; saints are few and far between. It will take more than one Lent to make a saint out of such a sinner as I am."
If, then, you say this, I must confess that there is a good deal of truth in it. We must all feel and acknowledge that. Any one who could feel sure now that when Easter comes he will be fit to be canonized must either be very proud and presumptuous, and far from real sanctity, or have some special revelation from God, to which, I think, none of us will pretend.
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But for all that it is true that Lent ought to sanctify us; it ought to make us saints, only we need not take the word in quite so high a sense. Though we may hope for the greatest possible gifts now, we cannot confidently expect them. There is, however, a sanctification that we ought to expect from this Lent, and what is it?

It is what I fear many of you, even though tolerably good Christians, do not expect. What do I mean by a tolerably good Christian? I mean, of course, one who expects to make his Easter duty. One who does not expect and mean to do that can hardly be called a tolerably good Christian; it would be more nearly right to call him an intolerably bad one. Well, then, you who are good Christians expect to make your Easter duty; so far, so good. But it is not far enough. For what is it that is meant, perhaps, by that? Is it not merely to make up your mind to confess your sins and to keep for a few days as you ought to be, and then be pretty much as you were before? Has not that been the experience of the past Easter duties of not a few of you, my brethren; and may not the same be said of the missions you have attended, and the other great graces you have received from time to time in your life? You came up to the surface, as a fish jumps out of the water for a moment, and then down you went again.

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But that is not enough. That is not sanctification, and it is not the will or intention of God. What you ought to expect is much more than that. What, then, is it? It is simply this: that when you have made your Easter duty you are going to stay all your life where it will put you. It is that the habits of mortal sin which you may then have to confess will be gone for good; that those impure thoughts, words, and actions will have stopped for ever; that the shameful drunkenness, and all the sins which came from it, will be things only of the past; that you will never again wilfully neglect Holy Mass; that in every way you will really live as you ought, all the time in the state of grace, in peace with God and men, and in readiness to die at any time, even without the sacraments, if such should be God's will; that, in short, you will be truly converted to him once for all.

That is the sanctification which past Lents have not brought you, but which this one should. Do not, I beg you, think it is impossible, for it is not only possible but easy. Do not make your Easter duty the highest point and the end of your Christian life; it should be only the beginning of it. What a consolation it will be to you, if in your future life you can look back on this Lent and say, "That was the time when I really began to be a good Christian; since then I have not had much on my conscience; I have kept in the state of grace. I made really good and strong resolutions then, and I have been faithful to them ever since." There are those now, plenty of them, who can say this of some past Lent. Let it be now your turn to say it of this one. It is not a matter of luck and chance; if you will, this grace of a lasting conversion from sin is now offered to each and every one of you. It is yours to a certainty, if you will take the trouble to secure it; for it is the will of God.

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Sermon XLIX.

_The Divine Presence In Our Churches. _

Lord, it is good for us to be here.

--St. Matthew. xvii. 4.

The Gospel of to-day tells us of the wonderful Transfiguration of our Lord upon the mountain in the sight of his Apostles Peter, James, and John. "His face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as snow." And Peter, wrapt in wonder, yet conscious of the privilege of being present at such a time, exclaimed: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Jesus has withdrawn his visible presence from us. We cannot, like St. Peter and St. John, behold him with our bodily eyes, nor with our ears can we hear him speaking the words of life. It is better for us that it should be so. In our present sinful and imperfect state we could not bear the splendors of his glorified humanity. When from out the bright cloud which overshadowed him the disciples heard the voice of God proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son," "they fell upon their faces, and were very much afraid." The sight of all this glory, and the knowledge that they were in the presence of Almighty God himself, filled them with fear. So, too, would it be with us now if Jesus were to show himself to us as he now is in heaven. At the sight of his majesty and glory we, too, should fall upon our faces with fear and trembling.

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Now, our dear Lord, knowing this weakness of ours, does not withdraw his presence from us, for he has promised to be with us, even till the end of the world; but he hides his glory from us under the humble appearance of bread and wine. Beneath these outward forms he remains continually in our churches, there in the tabernacle, by day and night, claiming our adoration and our love. In Holy Mass he is daily raised aloft by the hands of the priest, offering himself to God the Father for the sins of the world. In the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament he is lifted up to bless his faithful ones. And God still speaks to us by the voice and teaching of the church as truly as he spoke to the disciples upon the holy mountain, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." We can still see our Lord, yet only through the cloud which overshadows him--that is, by the eyes of faith. Yet he is none the less really present in the tabernacle upon the altar than he was upon Mount Thabor on the day of his Transfiguration.

When, therefore, we come into his sacred presence, when we enter the church and see the little lamp burning before the altar to tell us that he is there, our sentiments should be those of St. Peter at the Transfiguration: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." It is good for us to often visit him in the Blessed Sacrament; it is good for us to often receive his Benediction; it is good for us, nay, necessary for us, to assist at Holy Mass when the church bids us do so; above all it is good for us, above all it is necessary for us, to receive him in Holy Communion, and especially now at this time for the fulfilment of the Easter duty. Jesus is present in the Blessed Sacrament only for our own good, for the good of our souls. When, therefore, we see this

great goodness of our Lord towards us, how can we be so heedless of our own good as to turn away from him?
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And when you come before the Blessed Sacrament, remember that you are in God's presence. Do not forget to bend your knee in adoration. Do not take advantage of his mercy in hiding his glory from you by forgetting that he is really here, by spending the whole time of Mass with roving eyes and thoughts. Fix your attention upon the altar where he is, and offer him the best homage that your heart can give. It will be good for you to be here, if you have the same sentiments at Mass which the disciples had at the Transfiguration. You should be filled with a holy fear lest your idle thoughts at this holy time should one day be reckoned against you. For now he veils himself from you in mercy and love, but one day he will appear to you in far more dazzling brightness than he ever manifested on earth. Oh! then, despise not his presence here, that when at last you stand before him he may judge you worthy to enjoy his presence for ever.

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Third Sunday of Lent.

Epistle.

Ephesians v. 1-9.

Brethren:

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

Gospel.

St. Luke xi. 14-28.

At that time:

Jesus was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb; and when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke; and the multitude admired: but some of them said: He casteth out devils in Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. And others tempting, asked of him a sign from heaven. But he, seeing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation, and a house upon a house shall fall. And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say, that in Beelzebub I cast out devils.
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Now if I cast out devils in Beelzebub, in whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I,

in the finger of God, cast out devils, doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things which he possesseth are in peace. But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armor wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils. He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest: and not finding, he saith: I will return into my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there. And the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd lifting up her voice, said to him: Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck. But he said: Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.

Sermon L.

Immodest Language.

How pertinent to our own times are the words of St. Paul in the Epistle of to-day, addressed nineteen centuries ago to the Christians of Ephesus: "But all uncleanness, let it not be so much as named among you, as becometh saints. ... For know ye this and understand that no unclean person hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

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There is no vice, my brethren, more common among men at the present day in all classes of society, from the professional man to the day-laborer, among the rich and the poor, the old and the young, than that of obscene or immodest conversation.

Among the better educated this poison of impurity is clothed in language which serves to veil its disgusting nudity, and thus the more securely to insinuate itself and to deceive the unwary; while among the less educated it is oftener expressed in words that reveal its horrid filthiness and shock common decency. Listen to the conversation of almost any chance gathering of young men, and you will soon hear the double-meaning joke, the attempt of some one to be witty, which serves as much to expose the shallowness of his pate as the corruption and rottenness of his miserable heart.

Holy Scripture says that "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh." How true this is! But if one were to use this criterion in judging the thoughts that fill the hearts of many amongst us, how debased and pitiable must be their condition! And how shocking it is, my dear brethren, to meet a young man whose dress and manner at first give evidence of respectability and good breeding, but who, when an immodest allusion is made or an impure joke uttered, is the first to shout with laughter! Such a one is well described by our Blessed Lord as "a whited sepulchre? full of dead men's bones."

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And yet these whited sepulchres are not very rare in the

community. You meet them in every walk of life--in the counting-room and in the factory, at the "respectable" club-room as well as in the grog-shop, and alas! must we say it, among Catholics as well as among non-Catholics.

Yes, among Catholics, who have been elevated to a supernatural state through the merits and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ; whose hearts have been sealed by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and on whose tongue the Body and Blood of our Lord has often been placed--even these have dared to cherish in their hearts and express with their tongues thoughts and sentiments that would shock the moral sense even of the unregenerate.

Are they laboring under the incredible and awful delusion that they commit no great sin when they entertain or give expression to such thoughts? Do they think that they escape mortal sin when their impurity is expressed in the form of a joke or a pun, or when they by a laugh countenance and encourage the like impurity in others? Ah! my dear brethren, it is to be feared that too many consciences have been lulled to sleep by this cunning device of the devil.

The first introduction to sin for many a one has been the listening with pleasure to the double-meaning word uttered, perhaps, by a companion, or while in the company of others. He was then put on trial not by the devil alone, but by the one also who uttered it. But the blush of modesty which rose instinctively to his cheek from a pure heart was by an effort suppressed through human respect, and the voice of conscience, that told him to administer a rebuke to the minister of Satan or abandon his company at once, was hushed into silence, and the demon of impurity from that moment took possession.

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Take warning, then, my dear brethren, from the words of St. Paul, and never countenance by a laugh or in any other way any offence against holy purity, in whatsoever form it may be expressed; "for know ye that no unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

Sermon LI.

Honorary Church-members.

He who is not with me is against me.
--Luke xi. 23.

Societies in our day, brethren, have become a great moral force, the very best means of promoting and spreading any great cause. Men recognize this fact, and so combine together, that by unity of purpose they may better advance the principles they desire to support. Many of these societies are made up of two distinct classes--the active members, who are the bone and sinew, the life of the institution, and the honorary members, who take no personal interest in the management or working of the society, but who, nevertheless, are good enough, or interested enough, to advance the cause they honor by the support of their name.

You and I, brethren, belong to a society, the Catholic Church, which embraces the whole world. We have in view one great object--the salvation of souls, the spread of the kingdom of Jesus Christ among men. But this society of ours, a real, living,

organic institution, differs from most others in this: that it does not need the support of _honorary_ members; neither will it approve their existence in its bosom.
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No, the church would have all her members living, active, earnest supporters of her principles, and from them all she requires a pledge that they will keep her laws, advance her ends, and fight her battles for the kingdom she was established to uphold. She will welcome no mere spectators to her ranks, and as for neutral ground, she recognizes none; for those who are not with her are against her.
And yet there are many who call themselves Christians, _would-be honorary_ members of the Catholic Church, who do not even realize what the word Christian means; who seem to forget that to be a Christian imposes the obligation of being at war with all that is anti-Christian. An honorary membership for such Christians is very convenient; a membership that would allow them to be on good terms with Christ and Satan. The fasting and praying, the vigils and good works, the real brunt of the battle they would leave to the active members, while they would look on with an encouraging smile of approval.
Ah! brethren, learn this lesson once for all and well: between Christ and the world there can be no compromise. He who is not with me is against me. There is no neutral ground, for the moment we desert the Christian rank and file we give the hand of fellowship to the enemy. We cannot serve two masters well, and in the Catholic Church there is no membership worthy the name that is not an active, complete membership. The drones of the hive may nourish and thrive for a time, but let them remember they run the awful risk of final destruction.
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The question I would have you ask yourselves today, and meditate upon during this holy season, is this: Are you active, living members of the church, that mystical body of which Jesus Christ is the head and the Holy Ghost the life-giving principle, or are you simply _would-be honorary_ members? Have you at heart the interests of God's holy church; are her sorrows, her wants, her trials yours? Are the sacraments she offers you the source and support of your life? If so, you have reason to thank God. Or are you standing afar off ready to give an approving nod when the world smiles, or slink off like a coward when the world frowns? Are the laws of the church irksome to you and so avoided? If this be the case, you are nothing but dead limbs, and liable to be cut off without a moment's warning from the living body, for dead members are against, not with, the parent stem.
Would-be honorary members of the Catholic Church, beware of the error of trying to give one hand to God and the other to the devil; beware of the fallacy of thinking that because you are outwardly connected with the church you cannot be lost--that hell was never intended for Catholics; that, somehow or other, you will come out all right in the end. That is what Judas thought when with his sin-stained lips he kissed his Lord whom he had so lately sold to the enemy.
Have you still the faith, then beware lest your want of charity

may bring on a want of faith. Have you still a conscience, beware lest your frequent attempts to stifle it may extinguish it altogether. If there be a spark of it left I beg of you stir it up. Be in earnest, and at least let not this Lent pass without a good confession and communion, the only condition on which you can become active members of God's holy church. Put your heart in the work and you will be happier for it here and certainly happier hereafter.

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Sermon LII.

Half-Hearted Christians.

He that is not with me is against me.
--Gospel Of The Day.

These words, my dear brethren, like many others spoken by our Blessed Lord, may be interpreted in various ways. They may be understood to mean that he who is not with Christ, by being united to his true flock, who does not belong to the one church which he has founded, is injuring the cause of Christ, is persecuting and hampering his church in its warfare against its enemies; or, in other words, that Protestants and heretics in general, zealous Christians though they may seem to be, are really hurting Christianity about as much as they help it, if not more. And it is plain enough to us that this is true. If there had never been any heresies and schisms in the church, we cannot doubt that there would have been now few nations not Christian. But this, true though it may be, seems to have little practical bearing for us. We are not heretics or schismatics, and I hope that we have no inclination to be so. Still we must remember that bad Catholics do about as much harm to the work of Christ and his church in the world as heretics. In fact, there would never have been any heretics had there not been bad Catholics to begin with.

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But, after all, it does not seem that our Lord is speaking so much of heretics, or of bad Catholics, when he says: "He that is not with me is against me." For he goes on to tell us that "when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding, he saith, I will return to my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

The meaning of this is plain enough. It is that a man cannot give up a bad life, and then remain betwixt and between, neither bad nor good. His soul cannot stay empty, swept, and garnished. He must keep the love of God in it; he must have good thoughts and do good works, or the devil will come back, take possession of the empty soul, and make it worse than it was before.

So this gives a new sense to the words, "He that is not with me is against me." He that is not a real good Christian, trying to live for the glory of God, and to do the work for which God has put him in the world, will be a bad one before long, if he is not already. We cannot lie low and shirk the duties which belong to

us as Christians and as Catholics. We must be God's servants, and live in such a way as to be known as such, or we shall begin again to serve his enemy.

Let us take an instance, and you will see well enough what I mean. A young man or woman has been going with bad company, who, though perhaps they call themselves Catholics, are a disgrace to the name, and has joined with them in all their vile conversations and sinful actions.

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Now, too many of those who have been living in this way seem to think that after their confession and communion they can go back to this company and still avoid remark; that nobody will have occasion to say that they are pious, or notice any change in their life; that they can keep all right in God's sight, and also in that of their bad companions; that they can avoid doing any harm, and still do no good.

Let such remember these words: "He that is not with me is against me." If you want to stay in the grace of God, you must hate sin, and love virtue; and if you really do this your life and conversation will show that such is the case. You must be a friend of Christ and an enemy of the devil and of all his works, and not only be willing but proud to be known as such; if you will not do this our Lord will not have you or keep you. Choose, then, which side you will take; do not fancy that you can take neither. If you try to steer a middle course, and live an empty and unprofitable life, neither one thing nor the other, you will soon slip back just where you were before.

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Fourth Sunday of Lent.

Epistle.

Galatians iv. 22-31.

Brethren:

It is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bond woman, and the other by a free-woman: but he that was by the bond-woman was born according to the flesh: but he by the free-woman was by the promise. Which things are said by an allegory: for these are the two testaments: the one indeed on Mount Sina which bringeth forth unto bondage, which is Agar: for Sina is a mountain in Arabia, which hath an affinity to that which now is Jerusalem, and is in bondage with her children. But that Jerusalem which is above, is free: which is our mother. For it is written: "Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not: break forth and cry out, thou that travailest not; for many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that hath a husband"; now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he, that was born according to the flesh, persecuted him that was according to the spirit: so also now. But what saith the Scripture? "Cast out the bond woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman." Therefore, brethren, we are not the children of the bond-woman, but of the free: by the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.

Gospel.

St. John vi. 1-15.

At that time:

Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias: and a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were infirm. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

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

Sermon LIII.

The Happiness Of True Penance.

Rejoice Jerusalem.

--Introit of the Mass for the Day.

This is called "L√¶tare, or rejoicing Sunday." It may surprise you, dear brethren, to be told that this is a day of rejoicing; you will be amazed, no doubt, that, in the midst of the rigorous Lenten fast, when men should bewail their sins and do penance for them, and sounds of mirth and joy are hushed, the church should bid us rejoice.

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Yet thus she does to-day. In mid-Lent even she would have her children rejoice, would have them forget for the moment penance and turn their hearts to thoughts of gladness, that, by so doing, she may teach them that the rigors of this season, the self-denial and curbing of the flesh she imposes on us, is undergone that we may realize more fully the spirit of her teaching--that we may, in truth, preserve, or get back if we have lost it, that interior joy, that spiritual jubilation which is the portion of every one who serves Christ as he should be served.

Our religion is one of joy, because we are Christ's and he is ours; and what more can we ask, or what greater can be bestowed

upon us, than the having of Christ; Christ, at once perfect man and true God; Christ, whose life is the model of our lives, whose grace is the source of all joy; Christ, to have whom is to have a brother, and, at the same time, the eternal God; the God by whose word were made all things that are, who knows no limit to his power, who has in himself all perfections that man can desire or conceive of; a brother--a man like ourselves, with a human heart like our own, with affections like those of other men; a brother burning with tender love for us, knowing our weakness, knowing our wants and ready to succor us; a man who was himself tempted, who has himself suffered the miseries of this life, who, in a word, was made like to us in all save sin. This is whom we have when we have Christ, and should we not rejoice at having such a one?

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We should and do rejoice; our hearts are always full of gladness when we are in God's grace, and Christ is ours and we are his; and this is what the church wishes for all her children--the friendship and the love of God. She ever has Christ herself, and so is never sad; though she may mourn with him suffering, still there is joy behind all her sorrow.

If she puts on sombre garments, if she calls man to penance, if she fasts and covers her head with ashes, she is still glad in the depths of her heart. She is calling you and me to share the gladness, to get it back if we have lost it by mortal sin; she is bidding you and me to keep that gladness by chastising our bodies; she is warning us that we may lose God's grace, as, alas! too many before us have lost it, unless we are vigilant.

Dear brethren, listen to the church's voice to-day; come, all of you, come and share her joy. If you are not in God's grace do not let another day go by without making your peace with God. Oh! how much you are losing, and for what? For some trifling satisfaction which cannot bring true happiness; some mean gratification of your lower nature; for sin you are letting slip by the offer of God's friendship and the joy of a good conscience. Do you want to die as you are living? If you do not, repent of your sins to-day; before you leave this church promise God that you will sin no more; that you will be in fact what you are in name--a Christian.

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Sermon LIV.

Liberty Of Spirit.

By the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.

These, my dear brethren, are the concluding words of the Epistle read at Mass to-day. They ought to be of unusual interest to us, for they speak of a matter which we all care very much about; which some care so much about that they are willing to fight for it, and to die for its sake.

If you have listened to these words of St. Paul, which I have just read, you know what this is of which I speak, and for which we all care so much. It is freedom or, as we often call it, liberty. Many, as I just said, will even die, if need be, rather than abandon it; and indeed thousands, nay millions, have actually done so. Man feels that he must have it. Life, liberty,

and the pursuit of happiness he claims as his right.
Especially do people nowadays ask for liberty, and insist on having it. The child is no sooner out of his mother's arms than he wants and tries in all things to have his own way. Obedience is a lesson that he seldom willingly learns. He thinks that when he is a man he can do as he pleases; and he does not see why he should not even now. Sometimes he succeeds in having his own way, in spite of his parents; he runs away from school and, when a little older, from church; he passes his life among such companions as he chooses, who help him to get the liberty which they think they have themselves got, by defying all the laws of God and of man.
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But is this really liberty which these foolish children, and young men and women more foolish than children, think they have got by trampling on all law? No; a thousand times no! It is to true liberty only as the shadow to the substance, as they find to their cost before they have travelled very far on this road. They have but escaped from a light and easy yoke to take on their necks one far heavier and more grievous, and which becomes more and more so every day. They have left the service of the kind and good Master to whom they belonged and entered into that of a hard and cruel tyrant instead. He has filled them with base and beastly passions, and made them slaves to these passions. They are given over, body and soul, to impurity, gluttony, or drunkenness, or it may be to a mean and miserable greed for money. At last, perhaps, they try to turn back and shake themselves free from these accursed lusts, which have fastened on them, and are draining the very life-blood from their souls; but it seems that they cannot do so. They set out to do as they pleased, and how has it ended? In their being bound, hand and foot, in the slavery of sin.
But what was their mistake? Were they altogether wrong in wishing for liberty? Is the desire for freedom, which is implanted in us, all a delusion? Are we never to do as we desire, but always to have a restraint and a yoke upon us?
No, my brethren, the idea of liberty is not a mistake. We are right in wishing for liberty, hoping for it, and trying to secure it in the right way. But the mistake these foolish people of whom I have spoken make is in going the wrong way in the search for it: in looking for it in the wrong place.
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Where, then, is liberty to be found? I will tell you; and you may be surprised at what I say, for it does not sound as if it could be true; but it is true, nevertheless. True liberty, then, is in the service of God. Those who serve God best are the freest men on earth.
But how can this be? I answer, It can and must be very easily and very plainly. For those who serve God best of all--that is, the saints in heaven--always do just what they like, and enjoy doing it most perfectly. They have got rid of all the hindrances that, more or less, prevent every one here below from doing what he wishes.
And, of course, those who try to walk in the path of the saints

here on earth also have much of this freedom. The more they learn to do God's will the more they love it; and so they are always doing more and more what they like, and more and more easily all the time; and that is just what liberty is: to do what you like, and to do it without pain or difficulty.

The servants of God, then, have their liberty, because they have got free from sin, which is the only obstacle to it. And this freedom from sin is the gift of Christ, it is the fruit of his Passion; it is, then, the liberty which he has given us. It is ours if we wish it. Try, then, my dear brethren, in this holy season of Lent, when his graces are so abundantly poured out, to gain that freedom which they will surely give us, that "freedom wherewith. Christ has made us free."

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Sermon LV.

The Lust Of The Eyes.

_Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,
but rather reprove them.
For the things that are done by them in secret,
it is a shame even to speak of._
--Ephesians v. 11, 12.

Some weeks ago, my dear brethren, we had occasion to speak of the horrible and filthy vice of impurity, which is every day dragging into hell thousands of souls with the mark of the cross of Christ on them, and washed in vain with his Precious Blood. As was said then, many Christians do not seem to realize the enormity of sins against the Sixth Commandment--at least those of thought and of the tongue; to which may be added those coming from the use of the other senses, especially that of sight.

An immodest imagination or desire, wilfully entertained or enjoyed, is a mortal sin, and gives the soul so harboring it instantly into the power of the devil. Let us hope that no one having the Catholic faith will doubt this, or think it too strict a doctrine; for it is the unanimous consent of all the teaching authority in the church from the beginning, amply supported also by Holy Scripture. What shall we say, then, of wilful and deliberate gazing at immodest pictures, or of reading matter directly calculated to inflame impure passions, and certain to have its effect?

Now, I hardly need to say that a city like this is full of these temptations coming through the eyes into the heart. The good and pure instinctively avoid them, and scarcely know that they exist; accustomed to watch the slightest movements of their souls to evil, and instantly to repress them, they shrink with horror from those filthy words and pictures on which others eagerly gaze.

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They know that, as the Apostle says, it is a shame to speak of these things, a greater shame to write or to read of them, a greater shame yet to expose them to sight, to incite temptation by them, and thus to destroy the souls for which Christ died.

I say that the good and pure are not likely to be caught in this net of Satan; by this I mean those who have been warned of the evil, who understand its danger, and from well-formed habits of

virtue set themselves resolutely against it. But there are others who are good and pure--in their baptismal innocence, perhaps; young, at any rate, and unused to sin, at least of this kind--who are not forewarned and forearmed like those of maturer years, who, seeing bad pictures in papers sold even at stores otherwise of good repute, and kept, perhaps, by Catholics, do not fully understand how bad they are, and are led to look at them with pleasure, to learn evil which they knew not of, and thus to contract habits of sin which they will never overcome.

Now, what does our Lord say of those who thus put temptation in the way of the young and innocent? You all know his words: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones who 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." Strong words these, but they are those of the Divine Wisdom, and beyond correction by human lips. Yes, it is better to die, better even to die in the state of sin, than to add such a sin as this to our number.

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Let us beware, then, not in any way, however indirect, to give sanction or encouragement to this work of the devil in our midst. "Have no fellowship with these works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Do not buy or even take up for a moment the indecent papers or books now unfortunately so common among us; still more, do not sell them; do not allow them to be in the house; do not suffer your children to look at or read them; do not frequent places where they are to be had. Set your faces resolutely, for the honor of God and the Catholic name, as well as for your own souls sake, against this plague of immodest literature, which has assumed such fearful proportions and become so bold and unblushing in these days in which we live. Think nothing to be light or of little moment in this matter; mortal sin is much easier in it than you may believe.

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Passion Sunday.

Epistle.

Hebrews ix. 11-15.

Brethren:

Christ, being come a high-priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation: neither by the blood of goats, nor of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of a heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? And therefore he is the mediator of the new testament: that by means of his death, for the redemption of those transgressions, which were under the former testament, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel.

St. John viii. 46-59.
At that time:
Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews:
Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me? He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God. The Jews, therefore, answered and said to him: Do we not say well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered: I have not a devil; but I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me. But I seek not my own glory; there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Amen, amen, I say to you: if any man keep my word, he shall not see death for ever.
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The Jews therefore said: Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered: If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. And you have not known him, but I know him. And if I shall say that I know him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know him, and do keep his word. Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day; he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him. But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

Sermon LVI.

The Precious Blood.

The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.
--1 Epistle St. John i. 7.

We all know, my dear brethren, that when a man is born into the world he is born _unclean_ before God. He is then _so_ unclean that he is not fit to associate with the sons of God and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. He is then so unclean that he can never be anything but an outcast from God until he is made clean.
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Is there any way in which he can be made clean? Yes, for when he is baptized he is made a new creature; he is cleansed from the stain of original sin, made a child of God and heir of the kingdom of heaven. He is then so pure and holy that if he die immediately he will go, to a certainty, straight to heaven. For baptism applies the Blood of Christ to his soul, and he is become truly clean. But suppose he does not die immediately after baptism, how is it with him then? If he keep his baptismal innocence, so far as never to commit a mortal sin, he still has a right to go to heaven. He can then demand of God permission to enter heaven.
Can he, however, demand this permission to enter heaven immediately after his death if he has committed only venial sin? That depends entirely upon his contrition at the moment of death.

If he is not so sorry for all his sins that his contrition is [not] perfect, then he can't enter heaven immediately, but must go to purgatory to be made perfectly pure, so that he can be taken into heaven.

I have said that baptism applies the Blood of Christ to the soul and makes man pure and innocent. Now, baptism is a sacrament. It is the first one and is necessary to salvation. Without it no man can enter heaven, nor even purgatory, for the purgatorial state is the first and lowest state of blessed and holy souls who must go to heaven in the end. But the blood of Christ is applied to the soul of man in other ways, although baptism must come in in the first place.

In what other ways is the Blood of Christ applied:

First, by the Sacrifice of the Mass. For by the Mass we repair our sins, get grace to keep from sin, and make our purgatory shorter in consequence. He who hears Mass daily makes the best prayer that a man can make, and he is more certain to have his prayer answered. He also helps the living and the dead, and brings down upon himself and his own special graces from God.

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Secondly, the Blood of Christ is applied to our souls by the Sacrament of Penance. Men defile their souls by sin, by _mortal_ sin after baptism. He who receives the Sacrament of Penance worthily--that is, with true sorrow for all mortal sin, with a firm determination to lead a good life and repair the wrong he has done--that man receives again the grace of God that restores his soul to eternal life.

Thirdly, in Holy Communion we receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in a hidden manner, but in deed and in truth. The consecrated Host is the eternal and ever-living God himself. You know, my dear brethren, the strength of this divine food. How it gives new energy to the soul, destroys the power of concupiscence, banishes, or at least weakens, temptation, always giving us the grace to hold our own against the world, the flesh, and the devil. _And there are Catholics who refuse to make this Communion once a year!_

But there is one thing that ought to be said here. A Catholic ought never to consider as useless, or as almost useless, any one of the sacraments. This too many do as regards confession. They underrate it. They think, therefore, it is no good unless they receive Communion every time they go to confession. Now this is a grave error. One is _not_ obliged to go to Communion every time he goes to confession. Those who cannot go to Mass nor Communion, on account of their business or employment or work keeping them away, can at least go to confession very often during the year. All such an one has to do is to prepare himself carefully, step into the rector's house, make his confession, and go on to work again. If he but make an arrangement with some one of the priests he can always be heard at once. Frequent confession is a wonderful help to a good life and a happy death.

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Sermon LVII.

Christ's Passion.

Which of you shall convince me of sin?
--John viii. 46.

To-day, dear friends, is Passion Sunday, and our long Lenten pilgrimage is nearing its end. Heretofore our thoughts have been on ourselves, our own shortcomings, our own sins. Now we stand, as it were, on the hill overlooking the Holy City, and see before us, as a map unrolled, the scene of our Redeemer's agony: Bethany, the olive-garden of Gethsemani, and, further on, the barren mount of Calvary, with its three crosses standing forth, black and cruel, against the fair blue sky.

Now our thoughts turn from ourselves to our Lord. We have seen what the effect of sin has been on us. Now we look and see, and our shame should deepen as we see, what sorrow and tears and agony it has brought on the eternal Son of God.

To-day the cross is veiled, the pictures are shrouded in mourning, the "Gloria" ceases to be sung. So our sins covered our dying Lord as with a garment, and sorrow chokes the voice of holy church, fills her heart to overflowing, and stills all her songs of praise.

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What is this veil which obscures the cross of Jesus Christ and makes his Passion of no effect? O dear brethren! is it not our sins? What platted the crown of thorns, and drove those sharp spikes deep into his sacred head? Our selfish pride. What sent those nails through his hands and feet, fixing them to the tree of shame? Our wicked deeds and our wanderings from the path of duty. What parched his tongue with such burning thirst? Our shameless indulgence in drink. What pointed the spear of the impious Roman soldier, and hurled it deep into the Sacred Heart, whence issued the red torrent of the Precious Blood? Our inordinate appetites and sinful lusts. As often as we sin we crucify our dearest Lord afresh.

"Which of you shall convince me of sin?" What more could I have done for my vineyard which I have not done? I came down from heaven; took upon myself the form of a servant, the likeness of sinful flesh; set you a perfect example how you should walk; was led as a lamb to the slaughter; was scourged, spit upon, mangled, crucified; what could I have done more? Which of you shall convince me of sin? Which of _you_, my brethren? How many graces and blessings do you not owe to that crucified Lord? In how many sore temptations have you not been defended and strengthened? In how many bitter sorrows have you not been comforted? From how many shameful falls have you not been raised up? O Christian soul! for whom Christ died, look upon that bleeding, suffering, dying Saviour, and, if nothing else will move you, let those ghastly wounds, which your sins have made, plead with you. Acknowledge your transgressions: abase yourself in the very dust.

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Let that sacred Passion plead with you, that infinite love plead with you, that Precious Blood plead with you, those last tender words plead with you, and teach you, for their sake and your soul's sake, to love the Lord more dearly, to dread sin more effectually, and never, as long as you live, to add to that heavy

burden by any wicked deed of yours.
So shall, a few days hence, the veil be lifted from the cross, and our sorrow be turned to joy, for when the Lord of Glory shall arise we too shall arise with him, and reign with him in glory for evermore.

Sermon LVIII.

Dangerous Companionship.

Walk circumspectly; not as unwise, but as wise.
--Ephesians. v. 15-16.

To-day, my dear brethren, I propose to make a few remarks on the dangerous occasions of impurity, so common in these times.
The danger of which I wish specially to speak is that which comes from the familiar acquaintance which now exists to such a great extent, and is taken so much as a matter of course, between young persons of different sexes. This undue familiarity is too common everywhere in this country; and more than anywhere else in a city like that in which we live. Young women here with us, even though they be Catholics, and good enough Catholics in some respects, seem to forget, or rather never to begin to realize, the laws of decorum and modesty which well-instructed persons, even though not professing to be specially religious, have hitherto rightly taken for granted.
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To take a flagrant instance. A priest, being a man educated according to the rules of respectable society, is unspeakably surprised when he for the first time hears some young woman, apparently of a careful conscience, ask him if it is a sin to flirt. For what is this which is called flirting? It is simply deliberately and wantonly acting in a way to attract the attention of particular persons of the opposite sex, to make signals which are to be understood as marks of preference for, or of desire of acquaintance with, some young man or men whom she may chance to see on the street. A sin to flirt! How can you ask such a question? Why, outwardly and at the first appearance, the act is not very different from that of an abandoned woman seeking to attract those whom she thinks will notice her. The intention, of course, in your minds is often comparatively harmless, it is true; but by outward standards the act is simply disreputable. Furthermore, it shows a feeling which any lady, really worthy of the name, would hesitate to show even to one whose character she well knew to be good, and who had for a long time given to her respectful and proper attentions. A woman or girl who flirts seems to be, if she is not in reality, lost to all sense of decency; and those are almost as much so who shamelessly walk at night up and down the avenues in the hope of attracting attention.
This seeking to form unknown acquaintances of the opposite sex or to attract special attention among them is, then, a thing which no Catholic girl should think of, if she has any sense of shame. But when such acquaintances are formed by an introduction in itself proper, they should be very carefully considered.
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For a young woman to make one of the other sex her friend or

familiar companion, as she well may one of her own, is a thing which should be unheard of. She should have but one such friend, and he should be one who has acted honorably to her by proposing to her to take the honorable part of her husband, and whom she has before God and in her conscience felt to be worthy, and accepted by a binding engagement. Before that, and to all other men, politeness with proper and modest reserve should be the constant rule, affection and familiarity out of the question. And yet we find girls keeping company, as it is called, and that without any sort of serious guarantee of the purposes of the other party, not only with one after another, but even with more than one at once.

For the reasons, plain enough, on which these directions rest, promiscuous assemblies of both sexes, such as those to be found at certain gatherings, now unfortunately so popular, are full of danger, and had far better in all cases be avoided. A freedom of manners prevails in them--to say nothing of direct temptations to the senses--and an ease of making acquaintance, which opens a free door to sin. I do not wish to be too severe, but, as a rule, I do say, leave such places alone. Young women, respect yourselves; demand the respect of others. There is the moral in a nutshell.

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Palm Sunday.

Epistle.

Philippians ii. 5-11.

Brethren:

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

Gospel.

St. Matthew xxvii. 62-66.

And the next day, which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day: lest his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard; go, guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure with guards, sealing the stone.

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Sermon LIX.

Hardness Of Heart.

_To-day if you shall hear his voice,
harden not your hearts. _

These words, my dear brethren, are taken from the beginning of the office recited by the clergy on this and the following days, up to Holy Thursday. They entreat us not to let this time, precious above all others, go by without making the use of it which our Lord means that we should make; not to let him show his love for us without giving him love in return.

"Harden not your hearts." How is it that we harden our hearts? It is by putting off our repentance; by clinging to the world and its pleasures, to the gratification of our sinful passions, and waiting for some time to come when it will be more convenient to give them up, or when we shall feel more strongly moved to do so. We think that this time will surely come, that the stream of God's graces will be uninterrupted, and that when necessity urges we can avail ourselves of the one that happens to be then within our reach as easily as we could have done of the many that went by long ago.

But, my brethren, this is a great and a terrible mistake. It may be, indeed, that God in his goodness and mercy has many graces yet in store for us equal in themselves to those which we have had; but if we have despised and neglected the past ones they will not be the same for us as those were which went before, {204}

A word of warning, a single prayer, the sight of the crucifix or of our Blessed Mother, a pious picture, an Agnus Dei, is enough to move the innocent soul of a child to the love of God; the most powerful mission-sermon often fails to make any impression on one who has spent his life in sin. It is not the grace that is wanting on God's part. No, he is there in his power; his arm is not shortened; he is still mighty to save. But his voice seems to the deaf ear of the sinner faint and indistinct; his message is the same old story. Yes, it is the same old story; it must be the same, for there is but one. There is but one name under heaven whereby we can be saved, only one Gospel which we can preach, and the sinner has heard it so often with indifference that its interest is gone.

Then--most dangerous delusion of all--he comforts himself with the hope that at least he will die in the grace of God; that somehow or other he will, as he passes from life to death, be brought from death to life. He forgets that the sacraments were not given to give repentance to the sinner; no, they have for their object to give pardon and grace to those who have repented. Do you think it is of the slightest use to anoint with oil the senses of a man who lies unconscious, and who has not, while he had the use of his mind, turned really and truly away in his heart from his sinful life? The priest does it, indeed, in hopes that he may have repented; but how faint is that hope for those who have suddenly been stricken down! And even if there is more time; even if some sort of confession can be made, is it so sure that the hardened heart, which has all its life loved and clung to its sins, will now love God and hate sin? God's mercy is great, it is true; he may now give extraordinary graces, but he

is not bound to do so; and if the ordinary ones have failed before they may also fail now.
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Yes, my brethren, now is the time--a better time than your last hour. Now in this Passion season the Precious Blood of Christ is flowing more freely for you than you can expect ever to find it again. Listen to his voice now; do not wait till it becomes fainter. If you have not spent Lent well so far, come now and make the most of the help so abundantly given you in these holy days. Harden not your hearts any longer; it is a dangerous game to play.

Sermon LX.

Spirit Of Holy Week.

> _Think diligently upon him that endured such opposition from sinners against himself._
> --Hebrews. xii. 3.

The week which we this Sunday enter upon, my dear brethren, is called Holy Week; and of all the many sacred seasons which the church has set apart, this is by far the most solemn and sacred. Everything which it is within the power of external rites and ceremonies to do has been done by the church in these services, in order to bring home to her children the great lesson which this holy season should teach. And while it is true that the church has not made attendance obligatory under pain of mortal sin, yet it would argue a very poor and ungrateful spirit, and one but little in accordance with that of the church, if any one should without good reason neglect to be present.
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Now, what is the truth which these services have it for their object to impress upon our minds? No other than that fundamental, distinctive truth--the Passion and death of Christ, its reason and effects. The church this week excludes from commemoration everything else, and applies herself exclusively to tracing the steps of her Lord and Founder from his entry into Jerusalem in the midst of acclamations and rejoicings, to the entombment of his dead and blood-stained body in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea. Now, every one must have, necessarily has, in these events the greatest interest--an interest which surpasses every other.
And, first, as to those who are in the habit of going frequently to the sacraments, who understand their great value, and find in these means of grace their chief consolation in the midst of the troubles and cares which surround them. For these the commemoration of the Passion and death of Christ can not but be profitable. The author of "The Following of Christ" tells us that we ought not to consider so much the gift of the lover as the love of the giver. And we all know that we esteem the trifling present made by a dear friend more than much more costly things which we have ourselves bought or earned. Now, the sacraments are not merely inestimable treasures in themselves; they are also tokens and pledges of the love of Him who instituted them, bought by him at the cost of his own most Precious Blood, given to us to show us his love to us. Every time a man goes to confession,

every time he receives Holy Communion, he is receiving that which was instituted and established and bestowed upon him out of love; and if he wishes to know how great that love was he ought to have a lively sense of what it cost our Lord to merit those graces for us--namely, his bitter Passion and death.
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But there are many who neglect the sacraments, who come to them but seldom, perhaps only to their Easter Communion; perhaps not even to that. What is to be thought of those who act in this way? Certainly, however smart and keen and intelligent they may be, or fancy themselves to be, in lower matters which are nearer to them and fall beneath their senses--in money-getting, in trade, in art, in literature--such men show but little sense and understanding about things which are of real importance and value. In what way may these duller and obtuser minds learn to appreciate these higher things? Certainly the price given for a thing by a prudent man is a good means of learning what it is worth. Now, if those who neglect the sacraments, who make but little of them, would during this week apply themselves to the consideration of the price paid by our Lord for those sacraments, I have but little doubt that they would be led to form a truer notion of their value and importance.
I wish I could conclude without alluding to another class which, though I trust it is not numerous, yet does exist--I mean those who do not neglect the sacraments, but those who do worse: who profane them. Those who make bad confessions, who conceal mortal sins, who have no sorrow for their sins and no purpose of amendment, who make the infinite mercy and goodness of God a reason and pretext for wallowing in vice and sin--what shall be said of these?
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We know that our Lord is reigning now gloriously in heaven; that nothing which we can do can cause him loss or pain; yet it is also true that those who act in this way do all that lies in their power to trample under foot that Precious Blood which was shed for them. But while there is life there is hope, and if even those would devote this week to meditation on the Passion of our Lord, they might form a just estimate of what their souls cost our Lord, and turn to him while there is yet time.

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Easter Sunday.

Epistle.
1 _Corinthians v._ 7, 8.
Brethren:
Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new mass, as you are unleavened. For Christ, our pasch, is sacrificed. Therefore let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
Gospel.
St. Mark xvi. 1-7.
At that time:
Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, bought

sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back, for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished. And he said to them: Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen, he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see him as he told you.

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Sermon LXI.
Easter Joy.

_H√¶c dies, quam fecit Dominus:
Exultemus, et l√¶temur in ea._
--Psalm cxvii. 24.
[USCCB: Psalm cxviii. 24.]
"_This is the day which the Lord hath made:
Let us be glad and rejoice in it._"

So sings the Psalmist. So sings the church today in Holy Mass, and every Christian heart beats with the response: "Let us be glad and rejoice."

A happy Easter, then, to you all, my dear brethren! A happy Easter to the old, to whom, in the natural course of things, many returns of this blessed day cannot come! A happy Easter to the young, rejoicing in all the freshness and vigor of youth, and confidently looking forward to many renewals of Easter joys! A happy Easter to the rich, upon whom God has bestowed an abundance of worldly goods! And a thrice happy Easter to God's own special friends, the poor! Thus holy church bids all be glad and rejoice, for to-day Christ is risen, the Saviour of us all.

The joy of Easter, my dear brethren, like that of Christmas, is all-pervading. We feel it in the air we breathe, we see it in the sparkling eye and radiant countenance of the child. The quick and hearty salutation of our friends, "A happy Easter to you!" increases our own joy, for we perceive that all about us are sharers with us in this great gift of the risen Christ.

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But the joy of Easter differs from that of Christmas in this: that the latter brings to us the glad tidings of the coming of the true King, the strong and valiant leader of the mighty host of Israel, and our hearts leap with joy as we go forth, with buoyant step and strengthened arm, and fight the great battle of life. Easter joy is the joy of victory, for our gallant Leader, the strong Son of God, has gone before; he has overcome the enemy, and death is swallowed up in victory.

Yes, Christ has fought the battle and won. But there remains for us a battle to be fought, but not an uncertain one; for we have received virtue from the victory of Christ, and by following him faithfully, by keeping our eye fixed steadily on the banner of Christ--the banner of the cross--our victory, too, is certain.

This, then, is why Easter time gladdens the heart of every true Christian, for it brings with it the assured hope of final victory over sin, which is the sting of death, by a glorious resurrection.

But, my dear brethren, mid all these rejoicings may there not be some poor soul among us who does not participate in the joys of Easter time? Some soul for which Christ on Good Friday poured forth the last drop of his Sacred Blood, but which to-day finds itself estranged, nay, even in a hostile attitude towards its only true friend? Oh! would to God there were not even one such ungrateful soul in the whole world. But, alas! I fear there are many upon whom our loving Saviour, the risen Christ, must look this day as his declared enemies; some wretched souls over whom hangs the thick, black cloud of mortal sin, unrepented and unforgiven, and through which the bright rays of God's infinite love cannot penetrate. Yet even these need not despair; the joys of Easter time may still be theirs, for the same loving and sword-pierced Heart of Jesus is still ready to be reconciled with them.

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Oh! if there be such a one present here this morning let him take courage, come at once to the tribunal of penance, become one of the friends of the risen Christ, and share with us the joys of Easter.

And those who have been, but are no longer, strangers to God's grace, persevere, I exhort you, during the short space of this life in the friendship of our crucified Lord, and yours, too, will, like his, be a glorious resurrection.

Let us, then, my dear brethren, on this happy Easter day elevate our hearts to God in humble thanksgiving for all his benefits, and let us unite with the holy church in the prayer of the office for to-day. God! who, through thine only-begotten Son, hast on this day overcome death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life, we humbly beseech thee that, as by thy special grace preventing us, thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continued help we may bring the same to good effect. Through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Sermon LXII.

Easter And The Love Of God.

> _This is the day which the Lord hath made:
> let us be glad and rejoice therein._
> --Psalm. cxvii. 24.
> [USCCB: Psalm cxviii. 24.]

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Familiar words these, my brethren, and for ever associated in our minds with this greatest of all Christian festivals. Frequently on this day and through its octave does the church repeat them to us; they sound now continually in our ears. And no doubt they find some echo in our hearts. Yes, we are glad, we do rejoice; surely no one who can call himself a Christian could hear unmoved the outburst of our triumph and exultation yesterday as the

"Gloria in Excelsis" was intoned in the Mass, telling us that the lion of Juda has conquered, that God has arisen and that his enemies are scattered, that he has put death and hell under his feet. For the moment at least we would say with St. Paul: "O death! where is thy victory? O death! where is thy sting? Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But as the newness, the freshness of the Easter joy and triumph passes away, does not another feeling come and mingle with it? A feeling of awe, almost of dread, comes upon us, like that terror which came upon the guards at the sepulchre as they saw the angel who rolled away the stone, of whom St. Matthew says that his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; like that fear which came even on the holy women as they saw the two angels in shining apparel standing at the empty tomb; and upon the Apostles themselves when Jesus stood in their midst soon after; for the evangelist tells us that they were troubled and frighted, in spite of his words giving them peace and telling them not to be afraid.

Indeed, I think there was no one of those who saw our risen Lord, except his glorious and Blessed Mother, whose love was so perfect that it quite cast out this fear.

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And still more is it in our poor and imperfect hearts; we cannot shake it off. How many are there of us, unless, indeed, those innocent ones who have not yet known what sin is, who, if this were really and truly the morning of the resurrection, and the risen one could be seen by those who should seek him, would arise gladly and run to meet him, and fall in loving adoration at his feet?

If we can in our inmost heart feel that we would, we have reason indeed to be glad and rejoice to-day. But to feel so there must be something in us besides that thrill of triumph and of victory which overpowers us as the splendor of the resurrection first breaks upon our souls. There must be a true, fervent, and deep love of the God who to-day comes so near to us; a hatred from the bottom of our hearts and souls of all that in the least degree separates us from him; there must be, beside faith, also hope and charity, such as the saints have had--that hope which knows that he loves us and has forgiven us, that charity which would make us die sooner than offend him again. And these we have not because of our sins.

Yes, it is sin which casts the shadow on our Easter; it is the love and affection for it which still remains in us; it is that compromising spirit which is even at our best times holding us back, keeping us from fully loving, trusting, and giving ourselves up to God, for fear that we might lose something by doing so; it is this that makes us afraid to approach him and to share in his joy. As for mortal sin, that, of course, takes the happiness of Easter away altogether; to one who is in its darkness the thought of meeting God brings, and can bring, no thought of joy. But even venial sin brings its dread with it,too.

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And what is the remedy for this dread? It is very simple. It is

only to try now to begin to love with our whole hearts him who has loved us, and given his life for us; whose delight is to be with us and to have us come to him; to keep nothing back from him--in short, to live here in our feeble measure the life we hope to live in heaven. This is the way, and the only way, for us to enter now as we would wish into the joy of our Lord.

Sermon LXIII.

The Triumph Of Christ.

_This is the day which the Lord hath made:
let us rejoice and be glad in it. _
--Psalm. cxvii. 24.
[USCCB: Psalm cxviii. 24.]

The festival of Easter is, above all things, my brethren, a day of joy. Just as we love the sunshine more after days of cloud and tempest, so also is our joy keener and more intense when it follows sorrows.

It is for this reason that the joy of Easter is greater than that of Christmas, or of any other season of the Christian year. For we have been passing through a time of sorrow. We have beheld in Passion-tide our dearest Lord in suffering. We have beheld him as the King of Martyrs, worthy of the title, because his pains were so far in excess of anything that mere man has ever suffered or could ever suffer. We have seen him in his agony in the garden, when the sins of the whole world and of all time were presented to his vision and pressed heavily upon him, filling his Sacred Heart with deepest grief.

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We have called to mind his betrayal by his trusted friend and disciple; his arraignment before impious and unjust judges; his cruel condemnation and death. Despised and rejected by his own chosen people whom he had come to save, a robber and murderer preferred before him, we have beheld him abandoned to the tortures of the heathen soldiers, scourged, and spit upon, and crowned with thorns, and finally led forth to die a malefactor's death upon the cross.

And worse than all is the thought that he was forsaken by those whom he held most dear, those whom he had chosen to be his special friends and disciples, and who had been his constant companions in his public ministry. They all forsook him and fled, leaving him to die.

Then we have followed him along the sorrowful way of the cross; we have meditated deeply upon his three last hours of agony; we have almost heard his deep, expiring groan as he rendered up his soul to the hands of his Father.

Now, if we have thus learnt well the lessons of Passion-tide, the joy of Easter will come to us in all its fulness. If we have pondered well the depth of humiliation to which our Lord subjected himself in his death upon the cross, we shall well realize the greatness of his triumph to-day. The joy that filled the hearts of the Apostles, of the holy women, and, above all, the Immaculate Heart of our Blessed Lady when they knew that the Lord had risen indeed will be ours to-day, and we shall cry out in the words which the church puts into our mouths: "This is the

day which the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it": for "the Lord is my strength and my praise, and is become my salvation." Therefore, to-day the voice of praise and of salvation "is in the dwellings of the just throughout the world."
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"For the right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength"; the right hand of the Lord--that is, his almighty power--has raised up Jesus from the dead. He has risen glorious and triumphant, and in his glory and triumph all mankind are sharers. For by his resurrection he has overcome death and opened unto us the gates of everlasting life. He has triumphed over sin, which brought death into the world, and which was the cause of his death. His resurrection, therefore, means our deliverance from sin and death, and is a pledge to us of that life which he will give to his faithful ones.
Surely, then, we can have no greater cause for rejoicing than this. Pray, then, my brethren, that your hearts may be filled with the true spirit of Easter joy. "Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full; and your joy no man shall take from you."

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Low Sunday.

Epistle.
1 _St. John v._ 4-10.
Dearly beloved:
Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in water only, but in water and blood. And it is the spirit that testifieth, that Christ is the truth. For there are three that give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one. And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God, which is greater, because he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself.
Gospel.
St. John xx. 19-31.
At that time:
When it was late that same day, being the first day of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands, and his side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord. And he said to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you shall retain, they are retained.

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Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Unless I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days his disciples were again within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then he saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not incredulous, but faithful. Thomas answered, and said to him: My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing you may have life in his name.

Sermon LXIV.

How To Use God's Gifts.

_If ye be risen with Christ,
seek those things which are above,
where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God._
--Epistle to Colossians. iii. 1.

The feast of to-day, my dear brethren, brings to a close the solemnities of Easter; and it was the practice, in the early ages of the church, for those who had been baptized on Holy Saturday to put off, on this day, the white garments which they then assumed, and to resume again their accustomed occupation.

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The white garments were but an external sign of that internal purity and cleanliness which the soul received in the waters of Holy Baptism, and the soul, thus purified and strengthened by God's grace, went boldly forth to the battle-field of life, to meet again its three great and deadly enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil. So we, who, during the penitential season just closed, have faithfully observed the laws of holy church, and, by fasting, have brought the flesh under subjection to the spirit; by foregoing our accustomed pleasures and amusements have brought the world under our feet, and, by a good confession and Communion, have again enlisted in the ranks of Christ, and thus declared ourselves eternal enemies of sin and the devil, start again to-day with renewed strength to follow our Leader, the risen Christ, to certain victory.

St. Paul, in the Epistle from which the text is taken, reminds the Christians at Colossa that, if they be risen with Christ, their thoughts must now be turned to where Christ is--sitting at the right hand of God. "Mind the things that are above," he continues, "not the things that are upon the earth; for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

O brethren! would that Catholics did but realize this great truth! Would that their thoughts and affections were directed

towards their eternal destiny! Absorbed, as they are, in the sordid pursuits of this life, they cannot be too often reminded that we are here only on trial. An almighty and merciful God has, with a lavish hand, surrounded us with the means of gratifying our reasonable desires and appetites. But, alas! the very gifts of God serve not unfrequently to make us forget the Giver.
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Look around you and see what is the object for which this noisy, bustling world is striving; what the end for which most men seem to exist. The fact is, brethren, that Mammon, the heathen god of riches, has disputed Christ's sovereignty over the hearts of men, and has actually erected his altar in those very hearts where the grace of Christ once reigned. The only conception men seem to have of this present life is this: that it is a place where we are to strive to become wealthy in the shortest possible time, without being over scrupulous as to the means, and then to retire from active pursuits, the better to indulge our sensual appetites. They thus invert the order of Divine Providence, and make an end of that which was intended only as a means to enable us to attain our eternal destiny.
Everything in this world, my dear brethren, was intended by God for our happiness here and as a pledge of an eternal and infinitely greater happiness hereafter. It is a great mistake to suppose that Christianity requires us to ignore these wonderful gifts of a kind Providence, and to forego all the pleasures of this life. No, not at all! Indeed, we are absolutely obliged to make use of many of them if we would maintain our very existence. God acts towards us as a kind and affectionate father acts towards his child. The father knows that his child loves him, and he feels confident that the little presents he makes the child from time to time will only serve to strengthen the fond affection which nature has implanted between them.
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But what would you think if those gifts of the kind father served only to estrange from him the heart of his child? You would, undoubtedly, say that such a state of things was unnatural. Well, so it is, my dear brethren, with us, who, after all, are only children of an older growth. God, our Creator and Father, has given us life and all the things in this beautiful universe to enjoy. And all he asks in return is our love--our hearts. But, remember, he is not satisfied with an imperfect and partial love. He is a jealous God, and will allow no one to share our hearts with him. So that when men fix their affections on the things of this world without referring them to God, and use these gifts without regard to the Giver, they too are acting in an unnatural or, at least, in an irrational manner. Give your whole heart to God, brethren, and then you will enjoy his gifts, and, as St. Paul says, "When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory."

Sermon LXV.

The Christian's Peace.

_Jesus came, and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this,

he showed them his hands and his side.
The disciples, therefore,
were glad when they saw the Lord.
He said therefore to them again:
Peace be to you._
--Gospel of the Day.

He stood in their midst. To-day he stands in the midst of us and utters the self-same words, "Peace be unto you." And he shows us his hands and his side, and we are glad. And again he says, "Peace be unto you."

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To be at peace with the world is the aim of many men. But to have one's life run smoothly on, to be hindered neither here nor there, to be always in the sunshine and never in the shadow, may bring us peace and gladness, but not the peace and gladness that our Lord would impart. For after his words of gentle salutation he showed them his hands and his side impressed with the wound-prints of his Passion, as if to say: "The peace which I wish you is that which comes after strife, conflict, and sorrow; that peace which is the rest and the reward for labor and endurance."

Yes, dear friends, ours is to strive, to contend with self, with a nature that is fallen, with a proneness to evil, with desires that are selfish and carnal. To contend with the world, to disavow its principles, not to listen to its temptations; to realize and to confess that pleasure, success, ease, money, fame, are not the objects for which a noble soul must seek, but that God is our true end, and that mortification and self-denial, the cross, are the true means to arrive at that end, the way to come to union with God.

To be at peace with the world; yes, I admit that it is a thing to be desired, but only so that we are at peace with Almighty God, too. And how is that peace gained? Only by the keeping of his law. At peace with the world, because the world cannot disturb one at peace with God; this is the Christian's life. But so great a boon is not gained without a strife, as the joy of Easter is not till the sorrow of the Passion has passed.

Our duty, then, dear brethren, is to strive, and to keep the law of God, that first law written on our hearts, that law which he has given to us both by his words and by his life on earth, and which he still repeats to us through his holy church.

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Foolish, indeed, are we above all others if our Easter joy is only that of the worldling, and our peace that which the world gives. This is not the peace that comes after looking at his hands and his side; not the joy that the disciples felt as they gazed on the risen Saviour, who stands to-day here in our midst, as he did among those his first followers, and says to us, as he said to them, "Peace be to you."

We may have that peace, my brethren, if we are willing to obtain it and to deserve it as they did. We shall have it descend upon us, if, while we gaze at his hands and his side, we are conscious that we have indeed shared his Passion and cross. May indeed be ours this peace of God, which shall keep our hearts and minds in

Christ Jesus.

Sermon LXVI.

True And Lasting Peace.

Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: "Peace be to you."

--From the Gospel of the Sunday.

Peace be to you! This is our Lord's Easter blessing, thrice repeated in the Gospel of to-day; and a blessing which all his faithful may obtain. And it is the one for which we are continually seeking, each in his own way, but which we can find nowhere but with him who to-day offers it to us.

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What is this peace? Is it freedom from conflict? Is the Christian to have no battle to fight, no enemy to overcome? No, surely our Lord does not promise us such an easy road to heaven as this. "Do not think," he says, "that I came to send peace upon earth; I came not to send peace, but the sword." We must make up our minds, for the sake of the Christian faith, to sustain not only the assaults of the devil and of our own evil passions, but also the opposition of those who should be our friends. "A man's enemies," our Saviour goes on to say, "shall be they of his own household."

In this sense, then, we cannot hope for peace in this world. No, our lot must be, if we have really enlisted in Christ's army, that of all soldiers: war, and its turmoil. As St. Paul says it was for himself so must it be for us: "combats without, fears within." Struggles for our temporal life; for God has said to Adam our father, and in him to us his children: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread "; struggles far more terrible and momentous for our spiritual life, against flesh and blood, also "against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness," in which a single slip may mean eternal ruin, a single wound instant death.

Where, then, is our peace in this inevitable war, this contest which demands all the energies of our body and soul? What peace can we have while its issue is still uncertain, its events yet unknown? Surely it seems a mockery for our Lord to say, "Peace be to you," when he sends us not peace, but war and its alarms. But it is not a mockery; he who cannot be deceived also cannot deceive. His words are faithful and true. He has really peace to give us--peace in the midst of combat, calm even in the storm.

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When the storm arose on the sea of Galilee, and he was asleep in the boat, his disciples came to him, saying: "Lord, save us, we perish." But he answered: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" Was there not reason for them to be fearful, to lose their peace of mind, when death was staring them in the face, and all their efforts to save themselves were vain? No, not if they had faith to show that God was with them.

This, then, should have been their peace; this should be ours: the possession of God. He has given himself entirely for us and to us in the battle in which he has placed us. He fights on our side. What, then, have we to fear if we will only keep close to

him? We are sure of the victory if we call him to our aid. As St. Paul says, "If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also with him given us all things?"
Peace, then, we should have in our spiritual combat; but how in the battle for our temporal life? Here we are not promised success; no, it must be defeat, at least in the end. We must lose at last by death all that we seek of the goods of this world. The peace which the world gives is then a delusion; it lasts but for an hour; the shadow of death is upon it. "O death!" says Holy Scripture, "how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions!" Here again, therefore, our true peace is in the possession of him who is eternal; this is the peace which the world can neither give nor take away. All the storms of this world will not shake or disturb him whose house is built on this rock. "Who," again says St. Paul, "shall separate us from the love of Christ; shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword?"
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This, therefore, is the true peace of the Christian: confidence in God, indifference to all that is not God. It is the peace of our Lord himself. "My peace," he says, "I give unto you." Let us ask him indeed to give it to us, now and for evermore.

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Second Sunday after Easter.

Epistle.

1 _St. Peter ii._ 21-25.

Dearly beloved:

Christ has suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not: but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly. Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree: that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray: but you are now converted to the pastor and bishop of your souls.

Gospel.

St. John x. 11-16.

At that time:

Jesus said to the Pharisees:

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own sheep they are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and flieth; and the wolf snatcheth and scattereth the sheep: and the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd: and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

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Sermon LXVII.

The Good Shepherd.

_For you were as sheep going astray;
but you are now converted
to the pastor and bishop of your souls._
--1 St. Peter ii. 25.

To-day is the Sunday of the Good Shepherd, and the church sings in joyful strains: "The Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for his sheep, yea, who was contented even to die for his flock, the Good Shepherd is risen again--Alleluia!" It is in this tender, loving, and, to us, most winning character that our Lord presents himself in the Gospel of to-day--the Good Shepherd, who knoweth his sheep, and acknowledges them as his own, whose tender care for them is so great that he is willing even to lay down his life for their sake, yet with the power to take it again for his own glory and for their eternal good. We are those sheep for whom he died, and for whom he rose again, for they are in the truest sense his sheep who believe in his name, and are gathered into his one fold, the holy Catholic Church.

But it is not enough to believe; we must also hear his voice. How have we done this in the past? Have we hearkened to his voice as he spake to us through the offices of the church, through the words of our pastors, through the still, small voice of conscience? Alas! we have been as sheep going astray. We have been deaf to his voice, as it has so often spoken to us, bidding us follow him. And, having strayed away from our Shepherd, we have refused to listen to the loving tones of that same sweet voice, calling us back to our place in the flock, but have wandered still further away into the pleasant pastures of sin, where all seemed delight for a time, but where the wolf, the great enemy of our souls, was lurking, waiting for his chance to seize us as his prey for ever.

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Oh! into what danger have we run by thus wandering from the right path! But now, during the holy season of Lent that is passed, the church has been appealing to us through her solemn offices, and through the earnest words spoken by her ministers, to forsake our evil ways, to leave the deceitful pleasures of sin, and return to where we can alone find pasture for our souls, to the sacraments of the church, wherein the Good Shepherd gives himself to his sheep. Many have hearkened to the call of the Saviour's voice, many have come during this holy time to the green pastures and the still waters, where the Good Shepherd feeds his flock, and, with souls restored and renewed, are prepared and determined to walk hereafter in the paths of righteousness, where he leads the way. Even when at last they shall walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death they will fear no evil, for he will be with them, his rod and his staff shall comfort them.

But there are also many, far too many, who have not listened to the voice of Jesus, as he calls them in this blessed Easter-tide. Poor, wayward sheep, they still wander in paths of their own choosing, which can only lead them into danger and into death. O foolish, wandering ones! take heed ere it is too late to the

gentle voice that calls you. Your souls are soiled and sin-stained, and you have need to be washed in the stream which flows from your Shepherd's side, his Precious Blood shed for you when he laid down his life for your sake.
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Come, wash and be made clean in the Sacrament of Penance which he has ordained for your cleansing. You were as sheep going astray; be now converted and return to Jesus, the pastor, the shepherd, the bishop of your souls. You have been famishing for the food you need for your spiritual sustenance. Come, then, to him who so graciously and tenderly invites you to the table which he has prepared for you. Draw nigh with joy to the heavenly banquet of his Sacred Body and the goodly, overflowing cup of his Precious Blood, that your souls may be fed and have life eternal. Then will you be strong in the presence of your enemies, his mercy will follow you all the days of your life, and you will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, even in that house of many mansions which he has prepared for those who love and follow him. For he has said of those who hear his voice and follow him: "I give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall snatch them out of my hand." And remember that other promise of his: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood has everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Yes, poor, lost sheep though we have been, if we now turn from our wayward paths to hear his voice and follow him, he will raise us up at the last day, and place us among his favored sheep upon his right hand, to be glad for ever in the light of his countenance.

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Sermon LXVIII.
Dead Faith.

That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts.
--Ephesians iii. 17.

Holy Writ teaches us in many places, my brethren, that God dwells in our hearts by charity, and here we are taught that he dwells by faith also. Of course, the meaning is the same. For an elect soul to know Christ is to love him. And even for a reprobate soul to know the truth of religion is that indescribable boon which makes a possible salvation capable of becoming quickly real. How terrible the misfortune of the Calvinist who believes that a bad life necessarily means absence of faith! How consoling to know that our sinful friends, if they have but the true faith, have a seed of eternal life which may yet spring up into a fruitful tree!

Yet it is terrible to think of how some men trifle with their faith. Brethren, look at the end and judge the beginning by it. The end of wicked men is damnation, hopeless and eternal. Now, what is the faith in hell? Something that makes the Christian's torment altogether peculiar. There the name of Christian, now so noble, now entitling its bearer to pardon for every sin if but breathed forth with an act of sorrow--there the name of Christian will be a nickname. In one way he will have more faith then than now; he will know more of revealed truth, have a clearer

knowledge of heavenly things. But then the hand wounded by the nail, and which now is never out of reach, will be withdrawn finally and for ever.
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Imagine the agony of a soul in hell, whom each article of faith will cause for ever to wail and weep only this one sentence: "It is all my own fault." Brethren, you may complain that this sort of preaching does not provoke to much mirth. But there are those who should know that for them this ought to be a time of weeping and not of being merry: persons who have faith in their hearts, but not Christ. For see how men in Italy, holding fast to the truth with one hand, have with the other set up the abomination of desolation in the holy place. And see how, in France, men who deem themselves insulted if called anything but Catholics, yet deliberately rob the children of the people of the bread of life by establishing paganism in the schools. And see how many there are among us whose faith, instead of being a rule to live by, an irresistible attraction towards our Lord in a true grief for sin and strict union with him, sealed by frequent Communion, is but something handed down from father to son, like name and color and race--a traditional faith--and this proved by their vicious lives.
But happy are they in whose hearts faith has prepared a dwelling for our Saviour. Our Lord is surely present within us if we are in the state of grace. Hear what he 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 an abode with him." He comes, indeed, silently; he hushes the festive greetings of the angels who escort him; he hides the dazzling glory of his ascended triumph, for now it is faith and not sight. But there in the heart he none the less dwells. We live with him. The Christian feels his presence. He has an interior life whose very breath is that presence.
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He is stamped with our Lord's character. Such a soul is truly and literally called _faithful_--faith-full. And once you are intimately acquainted with him you perceive in his ways and actions that our Lord lives with him. Better yet, he perceives it himself. How different he is from one whose knowledge of religion is mere persuasion of the mind and empty talk! With the true Christian knowledge is power. To know the true faith is for him to know how to live: better yet, to know how to suffer, how to wait, how to love, how to die.
Brethren, this congregation is divided into two parts--those who are to be saved and those who are not. Those of you who are to be saved are those in whose hearts Jesus Christ actually dwells by faith. Those who are to be lost are those whose faith means that Christ has a claim against them, payment of which they will postpone till it is too late.

Sermon LXIX.

Suffering False Accusations.

He delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly.
--Epistle of the Day.

I suppose, my dear brethren, that there is no grievance to which we are subjected more common, and certainly there are few more distressing, than that of being judged unfairly by others. As Catholics we are all specially liable to this; we all know how Protestants, even those who profess to be quite friendly to us personally, and who sometimes will say a good word or two for our religion, still calmly assume, as a matter of course, that we believe and practise many things which we and all intelligent and honest men detest and abhor.
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They say, for instance, that we worship images; that we pay money not only to have our sins forgiven, but even for permission in advance to commit new ones; that we believe the pope to be Almighty God; that we maintain that the end justifies the means; and so on to any extent. It was only a few days ago that it was unblushingly stated in an assembly of one of their sects that the Catholic Church was more guilty in the matter of permitting divorce than other denominations. There seems hardly to be a falsehood about us so gross or so absurd that some of them will not be found to believe and to assert it.
And we of the clergy are more exposed to these slanders than any one else. They say, they take for granted, that we are hypocrites and deceivers; that under a cloak of sanctity we practise all kinds of vice; that we do not believe a word of what we teach; that our only object in our profession is to exercise power or to make money; these things and many others pass current in the world about us, so we are looked upon by many as detestable wretches not fit to live. In us, especially, are our Lord's words fulfilled: "You shall be hated by all men for my name's sake."
But it is not only from outsiders, or in matters where religion is concerned, that we have to put up with false charges and unjust suspicions. In our own private character and actions we all find ourselves liable to them; we find our neighbors and acquaintances judging and even speaking unfairly about us.
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Priests suffer in this way sometimes from their own parishioners; the laity perhaps from the priest, and often certainly from each other. How frequently we hear people complain of slander or belying from those whom they supposed to be their friends; one would think that it was not the exception, but the rule.
Now all this is certainly very hard to bear. And yet as we go through life we cannot expect to be free from it; and we must try to find a way of bearing it as well as we can. What is the best way?
One way, and a very good way, of putting up with this trouble is to make allowances for the unavoidable prejudice, ignorance, and imperfection of those who say about us what we know to be false, who do to us what we know to be unjust. They may not, they do not, know this as well as we do. "Father, forgive them," said our Lord on the cross, "for they know not what they do." We think others are slandering or injuring us through malice; ten to one they think they are in the right. Probably we ourselves should act just the same way in their place.
Make allowances, then; give our neighbors more credit for good

intentions; that is one way to put up with this suffering which we cannot altogether avoid or put a stop to. But a better and perhaps an easier way is the one recommended by St. Peter in to-day's Epistle. "Dearly beloved," he says, "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guilt found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, did not revile; when he suffered he threatened not, but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly."
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He, the holy, the innocent one, was more wickedly and unjustly accused and judged than any of us sinners have been, or ever can be; shall we not then bear, if need be, the same treatment for his sake? To be spoken evil of falsely is to be like him; it is the mark, the badge of the Christian. This is the example he has left us that we should follow his steps; shall we refuse to profit by it?

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Third Sunday after Easter.

Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph.

Epistle.

1 _St. Peter ii._ 11-19.

Dearly beloved,

I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims to refrain yourselves from carnal desires, which war against the soul; having your conversation good among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, considering you by your good works they may glorify God in the day of visitation. Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake; whether it be to the king as excelling, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of the good; for so is the will of God, that by doing well you may silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not as making liberty a cloak of malice, but as the servants of God. Honor all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; honor the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Epistle Of The Feast.

Genesis xlix. 22-26.

Joseph is a growing son, a growing son and comely to behold; the daughters run to and fro upon the wall. But they that held darts provoked him, and quarrelled with him, and envied him. His bow rested upon the strong, and the bands of his arms and his hands were loosed by the hands of the mighty one of Jacob: thence he came forth a pastor, the stone of Israel.
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The God of thy Father shall be thy helper, and the Almighty shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, with the blessings of the deep that lieth beneath, with the blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of thy father are strengthened with the blessings of his fathers: until the desire of the everlasting hills should come; may they be upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the Nazarite among

his brethren.
Gospel
St. John xvi. 16-22.
At that time:
Jesus said to his disciples:
A little while, and now you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me: because I go to the Father.
Then some of his disciples said one to another: What is this that he saith to us: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me, and because I go to the Father? They said therefore: What is this that he saith, a little while: we know not what he speaketh. And Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him; and he said to them: Of this do you inquire among yourselves, be cause I said: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me? Amen, amen I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you.
Gospel of the Feast.
St. Luke iii. 21-23.
At that time it came to pass:
When all the people were baptized, that Jesus also being baptized and praying, heaven was opened: and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape as a dove upon him: and a voice came from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus himself was beginning about the age of thirty years: being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph.

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Sermon LXX.

Devotion To St. Joseph.

_Go to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you. _
--Genesis xli. 55.

It is Joseph's nearness to Jesus and Mary during his life that leads us now, when he reigns with them in heaven, to confidently call upon him for succor in our needs, and especially do we go to him because to his patronage the whole church has been commended, that by his intercession he may do for her and each of her members what he did for Jesus and his Mother when he was in the flesh.

Wisely has the church made him her protector, for his power with God must be very great. Of this we can have no doubt, when we remember that to his care were entrusted the purest and the best who have ever walked this earth--Jesus and Mary--Jesus, the Son of God; Mary, his stainless Virgin Mother, whose chaste soul the Holy Ghost made his dwelling-place, delighted with its beauty. Above the seats of all the bright angels who serve in the courts of the Most High Mary's throne was raised, and one day she would

be the angels mistress and queen; Jesus was their Lord, their Maker, before whom they bowed in lowliest reverence. And yet Mary was Joseph's spouse, and Jesus rendered him the obedience a son should give a father. Very worthy must he have been who held so high an office.
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Joseph was a necessary member of the family. He served as a veil to screen from the vulgar gaze the deep mysteries of the Incarnation and Nativity; he led the way into Egypt, and his faithful arm supported the Mother and the Babe during the journey; he brought them back to their own land and provided shelter for them; their daily bread was the fruit of his labor--in a word, during the boyhood and youth of our Lord they were entirely dependent upon him.
Such, then, was Joseph's position in the Holy Family; he was the master and guardian of the household; and this is what the church would have him be in every Christian family. It is you, Christian fathers and mothers, who should be especially devout to St. Joseph, for he is your patron in a particular manner. You, like him, have the cares of the household upon you; you must provide for the life and health of the children God has given you; it is your duty to see that they are instructed in the faith and attentive to their religious duties, and that they study their school lessons; you should guard them against the dangers they must meet with in a great city like this, and keep them away from those who may lead them to evil; and, above all, you should give them good example in the practice of virtue. To fulfil your duties well you need divine assistance. Go to Joseph--go to the foster-father of Jesus Christ; he will intercede for you, and obtain the many graces of which you stand in need. Go to him and tell him all your troubles; you will find him very gracious.
But St. Joseph is the patron not of heads of families alone. The church would have you all, dear brethren, "go to Joseph and do all that he shall say to you." From him she would have you learn a tender love to Jesus, a love manifesting itself in deeds, not simply in words. Joseph devoted himself to the service of our Lord, and so should we.
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But how can we presume to say that we love or serve Jesus if we do not keep his commands; if we neglect our duties as Catholics and as members of society? Let us show how much we love him by doing something for him, as St. Joseph did, and let us, like him, be constant in our well-doing, permitting no day to pass without some acts of love to God. And if we would hope to make progress in the ways of God, let us daily "Go to Joseph and do all that he shall say."

Sermon LXXI.
Christ And The Church.

_I have yet many things to say to you,
but you cannot bear them now. _
--St. John xvi. 12

These words were spoken by our Lord in his last discourse to his disciples. What were those things which he had yet to say to

them, but which they could not then bear?
They were things pertaining to the kingdom of God--that is, his church, his kingdom upon earth. He was about to leave the world and go to the Father, but he would leave behind him an organized body to represent him. During these forty days, then, he sketched out the plan of the Catholic Church, which the Apostles were to bring to completion, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who was to teach them all truth.
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These were the many things he had yet to say to them, but which they could not understand till then, because of their former imperfect and even erroneous notions of the nature of his kingdom upon earth. He had spoken of his church before, as it were, in hints; now he speaks no longer in parables, but plainly. Listen to the few recorded words of those which he spoke during these forty days, and you will find in them an outline of the Catholic Church.
He first asserts his authority to found a kingdom in this world, saying, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth"; and then declares that he commits this same authority to his Apostles and their successors in the church: "As my Father hath sent me, I also send you." And, lest any one should say that this power and authority were given to the Apostles alone and not to their successors, he bids them go forth into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature, and promises them his continual abiding Presence even to the end of the world. One of the Apostles he invested with a special authority over the others. The Good Shepherd would not leave his sheep in this world uncared for, so he gave to St. Peter and his successors the office of pastor of the whole church in the words, "Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep." He also set forth the means of obtaining entrance into this earthly kingdom of his namely, faith and holy baptism--"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved "; and he declared the blessedness of those who would accept the faith upon the authority of his church: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."
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He provided a means by which those who should sin after baptism might find pardon and remission of their sins by instituting the Sacrament of Penance, giving to his Apostles and their successors the power to forgive and retain sins: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." He had already instituted on the night before his Passion the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and during those forty days he undoubtedly gave his Apostles the necessary instructions concerning the rest of the sacraments of the new law. The Gospels do not pretend to give us all our Lord's doings and sayings, as St. John expressly tells us at the end of his Gospel. But in these recorded sayings of Jesus, during this last brief time that he spent on earth, we have the written constitution of the Catholic Church, though but in outline. The office of the pope as supreme pastor, the plenary authority of the church, and the necessity of faith upon that authority as a means of obtaining eternal salvation--all this is clearly set

forth in the words that I have quoted to you.
"Go, teach all nations," said our Lord to his church; and he added, "teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you." On our part, then, is required faithful submission to his teaching, as it comes to us through the voice of his church. It is only by faith in this teaching and by a diligent observance of the commandments of God and his church that we can hope to save our souls and attain to the blessedness which he has promised.

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Fourth Sunday after Easter.

Epistle.

St. James i. 17-21.

Dearly beloved:

Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change nor shadow of vicissitude. For of his own will hath he begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be some beginning of his creatures. You know, my dearest brethren, and let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man worketh not the justice of God. Wherefore casting away all uncleanness, and abundance of malice, with meekness receive the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Gospel.

St. John xvi. 5-14.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples:

I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he shall come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin indeed: because they have not believed in me. And of justice: because I go to the Father; and you shall see me no longer. And of judgment: because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, shall come, he will teach you all truth. For he shall not speak of himself: but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak, and the things that are to come he shall show you. He shall glorify me: because he shall receive of mine, and will declare it to you.

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Sermon LXXII.

Evil Conversation.

_And he said to them:
What are these discourses
that you hold one with another? ...
And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth. _
--Luke xxiv. 17-19.

Brethren: Suppose our Lord should stand in our midst to-day and demand from each one of us, as he did from these two disciples,

What are these discourses that you hold one with another? Do our conversations, like theirs, contain nothing reprehensible? Would our answer be as pleasing to God as theirs was? If so, brethren, we have reason to thank God, and go on our way rejoicing. But of what do the majority of men most readily converse? It is sad that we have to confess it, but God and his works, the soul and its wants are topics anything but agreeable to most of the men of our day. And so every legitimate means must be resorted to in order to make the things of God and spiritual conversation at all palatable.

And you, fathers and mothers of families, what are these conversations which you hold one with the other? What are the topics most commonly treated of in your Christian homes? Is it the virtues of your neighbors that are spoken of and recounted for your own edification and your children's imitation? Would to God it were always so! But there are homes supposed to be occupied by Christians where God's holy name is never mentioned save to be blasphemed, where the neighbor is never spoken of except to recall his follies, his vices, or even his atrocious crimes.

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Christian parents, beware of the scandal your conversations may give to your family, but especially to your innocent children. Remember that many a soul to-day steeped in vice received its first sinful impulse from some unguarded word, some improper topic of conversation heard in the home that should have been the nursery of every virtue.

And from you, young men and women, an answer might be profitably demanded to this important question: What are the conversations which you most readily indulge in one with the other? Are they in any way improper, or such that you would be ashamed to have them repeated in the presence of your parents? If so, then your discourses are not concerning Jesus of Nazareth, and you are not following the example of his disciples. But if in your conversations, following the Apostolic rule, the things that savor of uncleanness are not so much as mentioned amongst you, what is to be said about the precious time you squander in idle, frivolous talk? Remember that time is but the threshold of eternity, every moment of which is of the highest value to you now; and this is why on the last great day we shall be held to account for every idle word. Young men and women, never admit into your company those whose conversations are unworthy of a Christian, and especially let your own language be always in harmony with your high calling.

Indeed, brethren, to all of us this question of our Lord brings home an important lesson. For if we would lead good Christian lives we must not only abstain from all that is unbecoming or scandalous, but we must also regulate with all diligence our ordinary commonplace conversations.

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Let them be always such that we would not hesitate to repeat them before God or his most virtuous servants. If we would have our conversations agreeable to God and men, we should make it a rule never to speak disparagingly of those _absent_, and never

take advantage of their absence to say anything which we would not dare say in their presence. And the other rule we should follow is this: never to say in the presence of others anything which could give scandal or leave a bad impression.

Brethren, if we think often of this question of our Lord, if we are diligent in following these rules, our conversations will be always edifying to our neighbors and useful to ourselves. Then, if called upon at any moment by our Lord, we can answer with his disciples, Our conversations are "concerning Jesus of Nazareth."

Sermon LXXIII.
Temptation.

_Blessed is the man that endureth temptation;
for when he hath been proved,
he shall receive the crown of life,
which God hath promised to them that love him. _
--St. James i. 12.

These words, my dear brethren, are from the Scripture read in the Divine Office for to-day. They also, and very appropriately, have a prominent place in the Office read on the feasts of martyrs through the year.

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"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." "Yes," you may say, "certainly, if a man does endure and resist temptation, it is a good thing, and one for which he has reason to be thankful; but for my part, I would rather get along without being tempted." This is a thought which is very likely to occur to those who are in earnest about saving their souls, and are therefore afraid that they may give way to temptation, commit mortal sin, and be lost. They are inclined to envy others who seem to have a good and innocent natural disposition, and sometimes they may, perhaps, wish that they themselves had died in their baptismal innocence, before temptation and sin were possible.

Now this wish is not altogether wrong; it is certainly pleasing to God for us to desire that it might be impossible to offend him, and that our own salvation might be made secure. But it is a mistake, when he does allow temptation to come on us without our fault, to think that it would be better for us if he had not done so.

It is a mistake, and why? Because far the greater part of us cannot acquire supernatural virtue in any high degree, give much glory to God, or be entitled to much reward at his hands, without a good deal of temptation. If it would please God to infuse all the virtues into our souls without any trouble or labor on our part, it might indeed be very well; but this he is not bound to do, and generally he does not choose to do it. He prefers that we should obtain our virtues partly by our own exertions. And as we will not pray or meditate, do penance or mortify ourselves enough to accomplish this end, there is no way to make any virtue strong and hardy in us except by forcing us to oppose its contrary vice.

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It is quite easy to seem very pleasant and good-natured when one has no crosses or provocations; but let a sharp or insulting word be said, and it will soon be seen how much real patience there is

in this seeming good-humor; perhaps passion will flame out all the more violently for being long in repose. But if one's patience is often tried, and stands the test by means of our own earnest struggles, it will become after a time something which we can really count on.

This, then, is one good in temptation, that it makes our virtue really strong and solid for future use. But another value of it is to enable us to make acts at the very moment which will have an eternal reward and merit, and which we should never make were we let alone. Let one be tempted by impure thoughts for a day, and faithfully resist them; in that day he will perhaps have done more to please God and obtain merit and glory in heaven than in a year of ordinary life.

So if temptation comes without our own fault, we may indeed rejoice and count ourselves blessed, as St. James says; for it is indeed an earnest of the crown of life which our tried and strengthened souls shall win, and which shall be decked with the innumerable gems which our battles with sin have merited. But let us not allow it to come by our fault, for then we cannot hope for a blessing with it. "Lead us not into temptation," we say every day; profitable as the contest may be to us, it would be presumption to offer ourselves to it, or to ask from God an opportunity for it. Let us wait till he chooses to call us to the strife, and then thank him for the trial which shall give us, with his help, the crown of life which he has promised to those who love him, and for his love hate and resist sin.

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Fifth Sunday after Easter.

Epistle.

St. James i. 22-27.

Dearly beloved:

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his natural countenance in a glass. For he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. But he that hath looked into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued in it, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work: this man shall be blessed in his deed. And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion pure and unspotted with God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation; and to keep one's self undefiled from this world.

Gospel.

St. John xvi. 23-30.

At that time Jesus said to his disciples:

Amen, amen I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name. Ask, and you shall receive: that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask

in my name: and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and I go to the Father. His disciples say to him: Behold now thou speakest plainly, and speak-est no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things, and that for thee it is not needful that any man ask thee. In this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

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Sermon LXXIV.

Sins Of The Tongue.

And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain. --St. James i. 26.

My dear brethren, we see by these words that we have a rule by which to find out whether or not we deserve to be called sincere Christians or hypocrites. In order to be a sincere Christian, what has a man to do? He has to get control of himself; to get his soul and all that it can desire subject to the law of God; to get all pride, covetousness, lust, anger, envy, gluttony, and sloth under the control of his own will; to get that will subject to and one with the will of God; and, what is more, he must keep himself in this state of mind at least so far as to restrain himself from committing mortal sin and the graver venial sins if he desire sincerely to keep his soul well out of danger. He who acts thus is a truly good man, and that man's religion is not vain.

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What is the first thing to be done to begin to live in this way? It is to examine and see in what way a man commits the greater number of sins. One will soon find that the tongue of man is the means by which a man sins most frequently and in the most devilish manner. For, says St. James, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, ... defileth the whole body, ... being set on fire by hell." We see from this how dangerous to the soul is the tongue of man. As we do see this, are we not bound to keep in check, _at all costs_, this source of evil? Any one can see that, if he does not bridle his tongue, his religion is vain indeed. In fact, it is nothing but a merely outward show. It is hypocrisy of the worst kind. But what are the sins of the tongue we most often hear? They are blasphemies, curses, and oaths; the retailing of our neighbors faults with delight and evident pleasure; quarrels, bickerings, constant reproaches for faults that are past, gone, and even sincerely repented of long ago; immodest and impure conversations, with jokes and stories a heathen feels ashamed of; hints and little words that seem almost nothing, yet injuring seriously the reputation of some one, separating friends, and making even those near and dear to each other by every tie cold and distant for a long time, if not for the rest of their lives. God deliver us all from the evil tongue! It works in our very homes. The husband becomes by it bitterness

and gall to his wife and family. The wife becomes a torture to husband and children. Both by it make home a curse instead of a blessing, and separate those of whom the word of God declares, "Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Too often do we see sad examples of this kind. Too often do we find such a husband, who is like a roaring wild beast in his home, and a wife whose tongue once set going, even for a slight cause, is like a clock running down, or like the mill-clapper, so often used as a figure of an unruly tongue.

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The bad tongue of a child is the ruin of all in the house. That child is a tale-bearer and a traitor against those who begot him. A detestable habit of the evil tongue is what the world calls "damning our neighbor with faint praise," or, in other words, praising him highly, even to the skies, and putting in a little word of evil that destroys him all the more surely. One will excuse himself by saying: "But, after all, I spoke well of him. It can't do any harm!" Yet he knows in his inmost soul he has ruined or seriously injured his neighbor. How would I feel if I were spoken of in this manner? is the question one should have asked himself before he said a word.

How common is it to find persons the moment they see anything wrong done by another or hear of it hurry in great glee to tell it at once! Do we not know, my dear brethren, that such a one is a scandalizer of men, and that the Christian rule requires us to be silent then under pain of sin? But the greater the evil done the more delighted are they to tell it. It should be just the other way. Never reveal to any one the sin of your neighbor, unless to save an innocent person or another from damage of some kind. This damage must be serious to oblige one to tell, even then, the sin of another, for he is equally obliged by God not to tell it under ordinary circumstances.

Remember, then, that no one can be a true Christian unless he keeps from these sins by bridling his tongue. Otherwise, as the text declares, "this man's religion is vain."

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Sermon LXXV.

Perseverance In Prayer.

_Yet if he shall continue, knocking, I say to you,
although he will not rise and give him,
because he is his friend;
yet because of his importunity he will rise;
and give him as many as he needeth._
--St. Luke xi. 8.

Many people complain that their prayers are not heard. Again and again they have made some special requests for temporal, or it may be even for spiritual, blessings, and nothing seems to have come of these petitions. Others get what they ask for, but they are not so favored; and they almost make up their minds that it is of no use for them to pray. They think, perhaps, that they are too great sinners for God to hear them; or that they do not know how to pray right; or they are even tempted to believe that prayer is a mistake altogether; that God's will is not moved by

it; that, if any one does seem to get anything by it, it is only by chance, and would have come without it just as well.
Now what can be the reason of the failure of these good people in prayer? Is it, perhaps, because what they asked was really an evil for them, and so God could not in mercy grant it, but had to give them something better instead, which they have not noticed? Or is it that they did not strive to do their best to win what they wanted also by their own exertions as well as by prayer; that they would not put their own shoulder to the wheel? If it was some virtue, such as charity or patience, that they were asking for, and meanwhile took no real pains to cultivate and practise it, no wonder that God would not give it to them.
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Or, lastly, is the reason for their disappointment that they were praying for others whose will was obstinately set against their prayers? A mother prays for her son, and her prayers are heard, though they may not seem to be. Graces are granted to him, but he resists them. God has not promised to send them, in such a torrent as to sweep away and break down all opposition, though he may yet do so, if she will only persevere.
Persevere! Ah! that word suggests what may be the real difficulty, the true reason for the seeming uselessness of so many good prayers. They are good as far as they go, but there are not enough of them. The effect that is to come of them is to come all at once; it is like the fall of a tree in the woods under the blows of the axe: the tree will come down, but not at the first, the second, the tenth, or perhaps even the hundredth stroke.
Yes, my brethren, our Lord could no doubt grant our prayers as soon as we made them, but he does not wish to do so. And I think we can see at least two reasons why he does not. First, if he grants what we ask at once we will go off with what he has given us, and hare no more to say to him. And, strange to say, he enjoys our society; he has himself said his delight is to be with the children of men. So he keeps us around him, though it be only to tease, as a father would the children he loved, if he could not keep them any other way. And, secondly, he knows that it is good for us to be with him; and that every time we pray in earnest we come nearer to him, and our souls become stronger. So it is that, both for his own sake and for our good, he sometimes will not grant our prayers unless we persevere in them for a very long while.
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Our Lord has given us to understand this importance of persevering in prayer very plainly in the Gospel read on these days, called Rogation Days, between to-day and the Feast of the Ascension. He represents to us in the parable of this Gospel a man who has gone to bed, and is roused at midnight by a friend who wants to borrow some bread to set before an unexpected guest. He at first tells the disturber to leave him alone; he says that he cannot be bothered to get up at such an inconvenient time; he pretends to drop off asleep, and keeps his friend outside knocking and pounding for so long a time that he almost gives it up as useless. "Yet," says our Lord, "if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him

because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."
This is the lesson, then, it may be, for those who have had no success at their prayers. They did well to begin, but they did not keep at it long enough. Let them go at it once again, and keep on. Let them ask, and keep asking, and they shall receive; let them seek long enough, and they shall find; let them keep knocking and making a disturbance, and at last the door shall be opened, and they shall obtain what they desire.

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Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension.

Epistle.

1 _St. Peter iv._ 7-11.

Dearly beloved:

Be prudent, and watch in prayers. But before all things have a mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring. As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let it be as from the power which God administereth: that in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel.

St. John xv. 26-xvi. 4.

At that time:

Jesus said to his disciples:

When the Paraclete shall come whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me. And you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you, that when the hour of them shall come, you may remember that I told you.

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Sermon LXXVI.

After A Mission.

There is nothing, my dear brethren, which can give more joy and consolation both to pastor and people than a mission such as that which was closed last Sunday.

Thank God, there were many who had been living previously in sin, but who really turned from it then with their whole hearts, and who now have a happiness in those hearts to which they had long before been strangers. This happiness ought to last all their lives. God means that it should; they can make it do so if they will.

But how will it be in fact; how is it too often, after such times of grace and fervor? We have had missions before, which really seemed as if they marked a new era in the history of our parish;

but we look for their fruits now and find them only few and far between. Too many of those who made them went back a month or so afterward to the old ways of sin.

What was the reason that they did not persevere? Why was it that they had the same sad story to tell when they came back this time that they had a few years ago?

Was it that they never expected it to be otherwise? Perhaps so. Some Christians--shame to say it--seem to think that mortal sin cannot be avoided. Such do not really try to avoid it; how can they? How can any one seriously attempt what he believes to be impossible? No wonder that such as these fell; the question is if indeed they ever arose.

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For how could they have made the purpose of amendment which a good confession requires? Let them understand, at least now, that it is possible to abandon mortal sin at once and for ever.

But was it, perhaps, that they thought they could keep the grace they had got by their own unaided strength; that they could fight the devil single-handed, or even that he would never trouble them much again? Ah! my brethren, if any of you thought that he made a terrible mistake. Satan does not give up the souls which he has once possessed so easily. He knows the advantage which all habits of sin give him, and he is going to make the most of them. He will surely attack you, and you are weak, while he is strong. If you undertake to fight him alone, you will go to the wall. You cannot conquer him unless God helps you.

But, after all, there are not many Catholics who do not know that it needs God's help to persevere. Oh! yes; almost every one will say, when asked after confession if he is going to avoid sin for the future, that he will, "with the help of God."

Well, then, what is the matter? If we know that we are in danger, and that we can escape from it, but only by God's help, why does not that help come and save us?

I will tell you why it does not. And to do so I have only to turn to the first words of to-day's Mass: "He shall call on me, and I will hear him; I will deliver him and glorify him."

That is the whole story. If we want God to deliver us, we must ask him to do it. In other words, if we wish to persevere, we must pray. If we do not go to God to get the strength which we need, we must be without it.

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The sinner who repents, and does not pray often and fervently afterward to keep the grace he has, being especially careful of his morning prayers; who does not, above all, make often the best of all prayers--that of again coming to the sacraments--is a fool, and the devil's laughing-stock.

The great majority of those who have been leading a bad life, and who abandon it at a mission, or at any other time, will not persevere unless they are willing to take the trouble to make frequent and earnest prayers, and to come to confession again within a month. That is simple fact; it is the teaching of experience, not mere guess-work. Are you, my friends, willing to take that trouble for your soul's sake, or do you prefer to fall as you have fallen before?

Sermon LXXVII.

Bearing Witness For Our Lord.

_And you shall give testimony,
because you are with me from the beginning._
--St. John xv. 27.

It might be asked, dear brethren, what need God has of _our_ testimony, or why the creature should act the part of witness for the Creator? Certainly Jesus Christ needed not the testimony of men, but in his infinite goodness and wisdom he has seen fit to commit to each one of us a sublime and holy mission, none other than that of giving testimony of him before the world, for the sake of our fellow-man.

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"You are," says St. Peter, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, that you may declare the virtues of him who hath called you out of darkness."

This, then, is our mission, to be witnesses for Jesus Christ; and to-day we are going to consider how we are fulfilling it. You know, brethren, with what a keen sense of criticism the world examines the testimony of those witnessing in behalf of others, and how it values their testimony in proportion to their uprightness and integrity. Well, so it is with regard to us and the testimony we are called upon to give of our Blessed Lord. We Christians are all on the witness-stand of this great world. To-day the unbelieving world is passing judgment upon our testimony, deciding whether it be for or against Jesus Christ; but, brethren, there will come a day when Christ himself will sit in judgment upon this same testimony and reward us accordingly. Since, then, this our mission is so important, brethren, how are we to fulfil it? It seems to me in no better way than by leading truly Christian lives, and thus forcing the world to acknowledge that we are animated by the spirit of God. The early Christians brought the light of faith to thousands, not by preaching, but by the holiness of their lives; and so, when the pagans and infidels came in contact with them, they were forced to admire and exclaim, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" Would to God that the life and conduct of every Christian to-day could force a similar confession from the unbelievers of our time.

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Indeed, brethren, all Christians of our day have a great mission to fulfil in this regard; but _we_ especially, for the reason given by our Lord himself--"because you are with me from the beginning." You, beloved brethren, who have had the faith from the beginning--from your earliest childhood--have a special reason why your testimony for Jesus Christ should never be failing. Has it ever been so? Have your virtuous lives and edifying example brought home the truths and beauties of the Catholic faith to those outside the church? I fear, brethren, the conduct of bad and negligent Catholics has kept back many from inquiring into the true faith. Such Catholics, wearing the livery of Satan, have given false testimony of God, and will have to render an account for it.

We can all of us, brethren, give testimony of Jesus Christ by

every action of our lives. Parents can and should render this testimony by the good example they give their families, and the Christian solicitude they have for their spiritual welfare. Young men and women should give this testimony by the profession and practice of God's law and the church's precepts. Let the consideration, dear brethren, of this our high mission, our being called to give testimony of God, be the means of animating us to renewed fervor in the service of Jesus Christ.

Sermon LXXVIII.

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Watch in prayers.
--1 St. Peter iv. 7.

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To-day is the Sunday of expectation, and it brings to our minds that upper chamber in Jerusalem, where the little band of the chosen disciples of the Lord were gathered together waiting for the coming of the Holy Ghost. There were the eleven Apostles and the faithful women, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and his brethren. "All these," says the sacred chronicler, "were persevering with one mind in prayer." Hence the Epistle of to-day urges us to imitate them, and begins with the exhortation: "Dearly beloved, watch in prayers."

We too must watch and wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost. He has, indeed, already come into our souls in Holy Baptism, cleansing them from original sin and making them his temples. He has come again in Confirmation, with all the fulness of his sevenfold gifts, to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Christ.

Yet he comes to us continually every day, knocking at the door of our hearts and begging for admittance. Every impulse of what is known as actual grace is from the Holy Ghost, and such graces we are receiving all the time, every hour of the day. We must therefore prepare ourselves for his coming, and when he has entered into our souls we must strive to keep him there. The Holy Ghost is the life of our souls. It is his constant presence and indwelling which is the state of grace which makes us pleasing to God. To obtain and to preserve this abiding presence of the Holy Ghost we must imitate the Apostles in their watchfulness and prayer. We must watch lest the time of temptation should find us unprepared and off our guard; we must pray that the Holy Ghost may come into our hearts, bringing with him ever richer treasures of divine grace; that he may take possession of our souls and make them all his own; that he may guide our minds, and with the fire of his love inflame our hearts to do his holy will in all things.

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But we must first of all prepare for the Holy Ghost by cleansing our souls from sin. Where sin reigns the Holy Ghost can never dwell. The Apostles prepared for his corning by penance. To that upper chamber in Jerusalem came St. Peter, who had denied his Lord, St. Thomas, who had doubted his resurrection, and the others who had wavered in their faith, and, in the time of trial, had forsaken their Master and fled. But now they had been

convinced of their error, and they came together with sorrow for their past unfaithfulness, and a full determination to lay down their lives, if need be, for him who had died for them. This is the spirit in which we should prepare for the Holy Ghost. If your hearts are defiled with mortal sin, delay not the time of penance. The Holy Ghost is ready to descend upon you. He only waits for you to do your part. Make ready, then, a place in your heart, that he may enter in and dwell there.

"O my dearly beloved brethren!" exclaims St. Gregory the Great, "think what a dignity it is to have God abiding as a guest in our heart! Surely, if some rich man or some powerful friend were to come into our house, we would hasten to have our whole house cleaned, lest, perchance, when he came in he should see anything to displease his eye. So let him that would make his mind an abode for God cleanse it from all the filth of works of iniquity."

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"And they were persevering with one mind in prayer." Our prayer must be persevering if we would gain that which we desire. This is what our Lord meant when he said that we ought always to pray and not to faint. Unless we persevere in prayer we shall without doubt faint by the way in the journey of life. And let us do as the Apostles did, join our prayers to those of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and we shall have a sure hope of obtaining what is most needful for us. Then, as the Holy Ghost once descended upon her, and wrought within her the Incarnation, so also will he come into our hearts, and make them the abode of the Holy Trinity. Then, if we listen to his blessed voice within us, we shall grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for the Holy Ghost will teach us all things, according to the promise.

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Feast of Pentecost, or Whit-Sunday.

Epistle.

_Acts ii. _1-11.

When the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in the same place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them, And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this voice was made, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every one heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how have we every one heard our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians; we have heard

them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.
Gospel.
St. John xiv. 23-31.
At that time Jesus said to his disciples:
If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words. And the word which you have heard is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.
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These things have I spoken to you, remaining with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you: not as the world giveth do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I have said to you: I go away, and I come again to you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe. Now I will not speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so I do.

Sermon LXXIX.

The Holy Ghost In The Church.

_The Holy Ghost,
whom the Father will send in my name,
he will teach you all things,
and bring all things to your mind,
whatsoever I shall have said to you. _
--Gospel of the Day.

On the day which we now commemorate, my brethren, the Holy Ghost came down, as you know, on the little company of Christians assembled in the upper room at Jerusalem, to prepare them for the great combat in which they were about to engage against the devil for the conquest of the world. He came down upon them to make of them the church of God; to establish them in the truth, and to bring to their remembrance, as our Lord had promised, the faith which they had received from his lips.
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He came to give them not only the knowledge but also the courage and strength which would be necessary for them to persevere, to resist and overcome all the attacks of the enemy, and to weather all the storms which heresy, infidelity, and worldliness were about to raise against the one true faith.
And he was to come, and has come, not only on them, but on those who have followed them as well, and for the same purpose. We have received him, and he abides in the Catholic Church to-day as he did in the times of the Apostles. The Holy Ghost is the life of the church; it is his presence which distinguishes her from the human institutions which have appeared in the world with her and have one by one sprung up and passed away. It is his abiding with

her that makes her life perpetual, ever the same and ever new. But how is the Holy Ghost in the Catholic Church? How is it that he is her life, and that he keeps now, as of old, in the one true body which all who will but clear the mists of prejudice from before their eyes can see is the one which Christ promised to form, and to which all his promises were made?

In the first place, the Holy Ghost is in the Catholic Church by the gift bestowed on the successors of the Apostles in the Apostolic See, of infallibility in teaching the faith. In this way the truth is sure to be kept in the world; it cannot fail to be taught, while the Vicar of Christ remains to teach it.

But it is not only in the Holy See that the Spirit of God abides. The bishops throughout the world also teach the faith by his help and guidance; and this help is also given to the clergy who assist them.

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Nor does the work of the Holy Ghost stop here; he is also with the body of the faithful, enabling them also to recognize the truth when they hear it, and to distinguish it from error. "You have the unction from the Holy One, and know all things," says St. John; "I have not written to you as to them that know not the truth, but as to them that know it."

Yes, the Holy Ghost is throughout the church; he is her life, and is not only in her head, but also in her members. Were he not in the members, though the pope indeed should remain to teach the truth, the faithful would not have remained faithful or attentive to the truth which he would teach.

What a blessing, then, my brethren, is this light of the Holy Ghost, which is given in its measure to each one of us; which keeps us in the one fold, and which makes us, out of many, one body in Christ; which brings his words always to our minds, and which preserves us from the ever-changing doubt and confusion which is the lot of those who arc separated from the one true church in which he dwells! Let us, then, preserve this unspeakable gift; let us not quench the Spirit of God within us.

And how is it quenched? How do we lose the light of faith which he gives?

By sin, and never except by sin. Though instruction be indeed good and salutary, it is not the simple and the unlearned who lose the faith, but such as give ear to their passions, specially those of pride and impurity. All the heresies which have torn multitudes from the church of Christ have had their roots not so much in ignorance as in sin. "Keep yourselves," then, my brethren, as St. John warns you, "from idols"; this is the only sure way to keep in yourselves the light of God.

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Sermon LXXX.

The Guidance Of The Holy Spirit.

_If any one love me he will keep my word,
and my father will love him,
and we will come to him and make our abode with him;
he that loveth me not, keepeth not my word._
--Gospel of the Day.

To-day, dear brethren, the church sends up her voice of praise for the coming of the Holy Spirit. On this day the Holy Ghost, the personal love of the Father and the Son, came upon the disciples in that upper chamber in Jerusalem, where they were gathered together in prayer awaiting the promise of the Father. He came upon weak and timid men, but when he had poured himself upon them behold we have the great Apostles, the teachers of the divine word, the fearless and untiring searchers after souls, the founders of the church.

Ah! what a change had been wrought in these timid followers of Jesus, who had fled from him in the hour of his need, and who, after his resurrection, lay hid with barred doors for fear of the Jews! Their fear and their weakness have disappeared, and the whole world is not large enough for the exercise of their zeal, nor less than the conversion of all nations the end of their noble ambition.

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But, dear brethren, the self-same Holy Ghost, who brought about this change in the Apostles, comes to us, nay, abides in us, if we fulfil the condition our Lord lays down--namely, that we love him. And he makes the test of our love the keeping of his word. If we love him the Father will love us, and the Father and the Son will come to us and make their abode with us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is our sanctifier. It is he to whom are ascribed the works of love. He dispenses the graces which the merits of Jesus Christ have won for us. He purifies from sin and unites our souls to God. He dwells in every one who is free from grievous sin, and by his light and strength he gives us help to overcome the temptations which assail us.

He is the Spirit of joy and sweetness, filling us with the fear of God, urging us on in the love of God, guarding us from the loss of God's friendship by the winning sweetness of his consolations. How greatly, then, should we love and adore the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Blessed Trinity! We should often call upon him and pray to him. We do not invoke the Holy Ghost enough. We pray to the Father and to the Son, and so indirectly honor God, the Holy Spirit; but we should pray more frequently to him directly. We should call upon him to give us, if we have it not, the grace of God, and to increase in us the fire of divine love that we may realize in ourselves the promise of the abiding of God in us by keeping his laws.

What folly it is for us to imagine that God can have a dwelling-place in our sin-stained soul! How can the Holy Spirit find pleasure in one who by mortal sin has made himself God's enemy; who has been guilty of a deliberate act of rebellion against his Maker and been unfaithful to or left unheeded his own sweet drawing?

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Alas for us, if this Pentecost finds us in this awful state! Alas! if the voice of our conscience has been silenced; this day then brings no joy to us! The Holy Spirit has no abiding-place within our souls. We have not loved the Son because we have not kept his words: "He that loveth me not keepeth not my words." And

because we have not loved him the Father and he will not come to us. The loving Holy Ghost is not master in our house; we have driven him out who was our best friend and thrown open the gate to our enemy. Will you remain thus, you who are in sin? Let not this day go by and to-morrow find you unrepentant. Grieve for your past offences, keep the law of God, and you shall have the fulness of the Holy Spirit.

Sermon LXXXI.

The Easter Duty.

In this great feast and its octave, my dear brethren, we commemorate the last of all the wonderful events which brought the Christian religion into the world. To-day our Divine Saviour, having ascended into heaven, fulfilled his promise in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles; to-day the Catholic Church was fully established, and given power to convert the world; to-day the order of things was begun which is to last to the end of time.

And with this octave closes, therefore, that especially holy part or season of the year which centres round the resurrection of our Lord, and which has, for most obvious reasons, been appointed as the time in which every Christian is bound, under pain of mortal sin, to receive Holy Communion, or make, as we say, his Easter duty.

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Only one more week remains in which to attend to this most important of all the obligations of a Catholic, to fulfil this greatest precept of the positive Christian law.

Now, what is exactly this precept of the Easter duty? Strange to say, you will often find people who do not seem to have any clear idea about it at all, in spite of all that is said about it from the altar and in common catechisms and books of instruction. And yet it is very simple. It is just this: Every Catholic of sufficient age to receive Communion is bound to receive it on some day between the first Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday--that is, a week from to-day--inclusive; and it is very difficult for any one to have any excuse from complying with this law.

The Easter duty, then, is not merely an obligation to receive once a year. A person may receive a hundred times in the year, and yet not make his Easter duty; just as one may hear Mass every day in the week, and yet not fulfil the precept of hearing Mass if he stays away on Sunday. Now this seems quite easy to understand; but there are people, and plenty of them, too, who will make a mission shortly before Lent, and then say at this time: "Oh! I went to Communion not very long ago; there is no need to go so soon again." They might as well say on Sunday, if they had heard Mass on Saturday: "I need not go to church to-day; it was only yesterday that I was there." The law of hearing Mass is not to hear it once a week, but to hear it on Sundays and holydays of obligation; so the law of Communion is not to receive once or twice a year, but to receive at the time appointed. No other time will do.

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But some may say: "I have not committed any mortal sin since my last confession; I am just as good as these people who are running to church all the time." Very good, perhaps you are; though it may be that Almighty God does not have so high an opinion of you as you seem to have of yourself. But it is not the question whether you are good or not; the law is not to confess mortal sin at Easter; far from it, one ought to have no mortal sin to confess, then or at any other time. No, the law is to go to Communion. One should get leave to do so, of course; but if you have no sin on your conscience, what is easier than to say so to the priest? You ought to be glad to be able to say it.
Do not, then, make the foolish excuse either that you have been to Communion at Christmas or there about, or that you have nothing to confess now. Come this week; if you put your Communion off one day beyond next Sunday you are guilty of breaking this law. If you are in mortal sin, get out of it by making a good confession and Communion; if you are not, do not fall into it by refusing to obey this most peremptory and most urgent command. Any one who has not received since Lent began, and refuses to do so on or before next Sunday, may, indeed, call himself a Catholic, but is not worthy of the name.

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Trinity Sunday.

Epistle.

Romans xi. 33-36.

O the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and recompense shall be made to him? For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen.

Gospel.

St. Matthew, xxviii. 18-20.

At that time:
Jesus said to his disciples: All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.

Last Gospel.

St. Luke vi. 36-42.

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples:
Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall measure it shall be measured to you again. And he spoke also to them a similitude: Can the blind lead the blind? do they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master; but every

one shall be perfect, if he be as his master.
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And why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but the beam that is in thy own eye thou considerest not? or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye, when thou thyself seest not the beam in thy own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye.

Sermon LXXXII.

The Divine Majesty.

For of him, and by him, and in him are all things; to him be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.
--Epistle of the Day.

To-day, my dear brethren, the church, having completed the round of feasts and fasts which she began on Christmas, having brought to our remembrance our Lord's birth, his holy childhood, his ministry on earth, his Passion and death, his glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost as he had promised, finally brings us into the presence of the Being by whom all these wonderful works have been accomplished, and who is the sole object of our adoration, the ever Blessed Trinity, the three Divine Persons, the one God. She bids us contemplate, so far as it is possible for us, the great and ineffable mystery into the faith of which we have been baptized, and to join with the angels and saints in the canticles of heaven, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come."
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"Of him, and by him, and in him are all things," says the Apostle, reminding us of this highest of all the teachings of the Christian faith. Of the Father is the Son, and by the Son is the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and in whom is their life and mutual love. The distinction of the Divine Persons is thus intimated to us; but the Divine Nature is only one; of, by, and in that One are we and all things created.
We and all the world around us are of God; not part of him, nor born of him according to nature, nor proceeding from his substance, but still of him in that we owe our being entirely to him, who drew us from nothing by his almighty power. Nothing could ever have existed outside of God himself except through the wonderful, incomprehensible act of creation. From nothing, nothing of itself could come; all things are from and of God, who created them from nothing.
By his almighty power, then, we have been created, and by it now we are sustained. We could not live for a moment except by his continual support. It is only by his aid that we can draw a single breath, walk a single step, or perform the simplest act. The winds and the waters, and all the powers of nature, as we call them, are his powers, too, which he lends to us, and makes subservient to our use.
And in him we live and move and are. He is nearer to us than we to ourselves. It is not only that he makes us live; it is his

life by which we live; our life comes from and belongs to his eternal life. The life of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is in himself; ours is in him.
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To him, then, the one and only true God, "be glory," as the Apostle says, "for ever and ever." How often we say these words, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," and how little do we think of what they mean! If all that we are and have is from God, by him and in him, how can we set ourselves apart from him, or claim anything for ourselves against him? How can we glory in ourselves, or desire glory from others, when all glory, praise, and honor belong of necessity to him from whom, by whom, and in whom all things are?
For this is what it means when we say, "Glory be to God." Not some glory or praise or recognition of his greatness from us, as a sort of tax or tribute which we must pay to keep the rest for ourselves. No, when we have given glory to God as we should, there will be nothing left for us to keep. This is the perfection of the creature, to prostrate itself at the foot of its Creator's throne, and to cast all the crowns it has received before him that sitteth thereon, and to say with the angels and saints in heaven, "Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, because thou hast created all things, and for thy will they were and have been created."

Sermon LXXXIII.

The Mystery Of The Holy Trinity.

_Go ye, therefore, teach all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost._
--St. Matthew, xxviii. 19.

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It was the faith in the Most Holy Trinity that the Apostles were sent forth to teach throughout all the world to every creature. It is into this faith that every Christian is baptized by the invocation of the thrice-holy name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and because of this baptism he is bound to persevere all his life long in that steadfast faith in the Holy Trinity for which the church to-day teaches us to pray. Think it not strange that this doctrine should be so deep a mystery. We are surrounded on all sides by mysteries. There is scarcely a department of knowledge into which we can turn our minds where we are not met by things which we cannot understand. There is, therefore, nothing wonderful in the fact that God is the greatest mystery of all. We cannot solve the mysteries of nature and of life as we see them before us. How, then, can we expect to comprehend the nature and the inner life of God? It is not for us, with our poor, feeble minds, to ask the how or the why, but simply to bow down in humble adoration before the truth of God as he has revealed himself to us. Faith would not be the virtue that it is if everything were perfectly plain to us. The chief merit of faith is in accepting on God's authority that which is beyond our own reason. His revelation of himself to us is only partial. The full light that we are capable of receiving will not come

until we are before his throne, and see him face to face, for it is only when that which is perfect shall come that that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see, as it were, through a glass, in an obscure manner, now we know but in part, but then we shall know even as we are known. Meanwhile our time of trial remains, and we must submit our minds as well as our hearts and wills to God.
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But he has not given us this partial revelation of himself in order to perplex and worry us. He has told us all that is good and needful for us to know in our present state. We should not, therefore, fix our minds upon that which he has chosen to hide from us, but upon that which he actually has revealed to us, and we shall find in this more than enough for our love and devotion. Each Person of the Blessed Trinity has some special relation to us, and there are, therefore, special acts of love and adoration which we can pay to each. He has revealed himself to us as the Father, not only as the Father of the Eternal Son, but as our Father as well; our Father, because he has adopted us as his children. Nothing that we know on earth of a father's love can compare with the tenderness with which the Eternal Father regards his children. We, therefore, must become as little children towards him, looking up to him with love, with reverence, with simple trust, striving to fulfil his holy will in perfect obedience, knowing that he wills only our good, here and hereafter.
God the Son has revealed himself to us as our Saviour and Redeemer, and because we are through him the children of God, as our Elder Brother, sharing in our human nature, having been tempted like us, and having suffered far more for our sake than we shall ever be called upon to suffer for him. Hence in all our trials, in all our temptations, in all our sufferings, we have his example to cheer us, knowing that we are but treading the steps that he trod and bearing our cross after him. His Precious Blood is still flowing through the sacraments to cleanse us from our sins, his grace is ever ready to help us in the hour of need.
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And God the Holy Ghost is revealed to us and given to us as the life of our souls, our helper, our comforter, our sanctifier, stirring up the flame of divine love in our hearts, urging us to good deeds, and giving us the strength to perform them. We, on our part, must listen to his voice and follow his guidance, that so we may abide in the love of the Father and of the Son.
Thus is the Blessed Trinity revealed to us, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Let us not question, but praise, adore, and love.

Sermon LXXXIV.

The Divine Judgment.

_And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying:
"All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." _
--Matthew, xxviii. 18.

When these words were uttered by our Lord he had risen from the dead. On this occasion he had with him only the eleven Apostles, whom he had instructed to meet him by appointment at this time

and in this place--a mountain in Galilee. A few words they are, but full of meaning. The Apostles saw our Lord in the flesh again; they heard his own human lips utter this truth: that all power is his in heaven and in earth.
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How did they understand him? They understood that the Man they saw, the human being who then stood before them, was endued with all power that God would exercise in heaven and in earth; that to rule this vast universe was his right; that to sit on the throne of heaven, to be worshipped and adored as God by every creature, to shape the destiny of this world, of its many nations, of its many families, of every single soul born and to be born in it; to open and shut the gates of hell at his own will, to judge all without exception, each separately at the moment after death, and all together in the great Judgment day of God, is his right and office as the Man, because he is Man in God and God in Man; the Man selected to be the One through whom the Divine Nature manifests himself in all the fulness of the Godhead in human nature.
But what, therefore, is the first thought that must enter our hearts? It is necessarily this: How will that Man receive us when we are called into his presence, one by one, as we leave this world? How will that countenance look to us at that moment? How will those ears listen to our reports of our own lives? How will those lips speak to us in that dread moment?
But why do we ask ourselves these questions? Because we know that we are to meet that Man in God, face to face, to give an exact account of all of our deeds in the body, and that he is the One to praise or blame us, reward or condemn us, receive us into eternal blessedness or cast us out into eternal, never-ending darkness, and deliver us over to the rule of those who shall be our masters in hell.
Can we tell what the result will be? Yes; and to a certainty! If our lives have been good, or if we die in his friendship, the Man Christ Jesus will give us a blessed and glorious welcome; but if our lives have been wicked, that Man will reject us for ever. He will not have us anywhere near him. He will not endure our presence a single moment, nor permit us to speak in his presence, nor ever again to mention his holy name, but will cast us into that region of creation where holy names are not permitted to be uttered.
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Do we truly hope that this sad fate will not be ours? Then we are truly good, leading good lives, are faithful to our duties as good Catholics. If we truly hope for his approval we can judge ourselves now and know we shall receive it.
How is this? If each one can say to-day, the last of the Easter-time, I have obeyed the commands of the church and made my Easter duty, then each soul is free from mortal sin and knows the judgment of our Lord will be in his favor. Let any such soul die at any moment now and the mercy of God is surely his, for he is now in the friendship of God, his soul is restored to its heavenly state, and every soul in this state is so acceptable to our Lord that he can not condemn it, but must welcome it to the

society of those who are saved for ever.
O unfaithful, negligent Catholic! whose life heretofore has been a dishonor to God, a shame to your family, a scandal to your neighbor, and a disgrace to the church of Jesus Christ, have you turned from your sins and made your peace with God this Easter-time? Have you washed your past life clean from sin by this Easter duty? Then you, too, _know_ you will receive the welcome of our Lord, the Man Christ Jesus, your King and your God. Otherwise you are still his enemy, and have a right only to his eternal wrath. How can you sleep a moment or be at rest a single instant longer while knowing you are condemned already, because you have not made your Easter duty?

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Second Sunday after Pentecost.
And Sunday Within The Octave Of Corpus Christi.

Epistle.
1 _St. John iii._ 13-18.
Dearly beloved:
Wonder not if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself. In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him: how doth the charity of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.
Gospel.
St. Luke xiv. 16-24.
At that time
Jesus spoke to the Pharisees this parable:
A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were invited that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee, have me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee, have me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning, told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame.

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And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house maybe filled. But I say unto you that none of those men that were called shall taste my supper.

Sermon LXXXV.

Holy Communion.

_A certain man made a great supper
and invited many._
--St. Luke xiv. 16.

I suppose every Catholic here to-day, except some young children, has once or many times in his life been to the "Great Supper," and eaten the "Bread of Life" which is served at it; and those little ones of the Lord's Holy Catholic family are looking forward to the bright day, to be for ever afterwards the day of sweetest memory, when they too shall have that honor and happiness--the day of their First Communion.

If such be the case, what is the use of the church repeating to us every year the threat in the Gospel against those who made foolish and selfish excuses for staying away--"None of those men that were called shall taste of my supper"? We have been called. We have answered the invitation. We have been to the supper. Isn't that enough? The Gospel evidently does not apply to us. But wait a bit. I have two things for you to think about. In the first place, the calling to the Great Supper the Gospel speaks about is a standing invitation for life. By this I mean that the law of the Catholic Church obliges every one to receive Holy Communion annually--that is, during the Easter season.

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It is then, first of all, an _annual_ invitation; and going one year is not answering the call for the next year. Every one who has learned his Catechism ought to know that. In the second place, what would you think of a near relative whom you had invited to be present at your marriage anniversary dinner, who should send for reply that he had already dined with you on the Fourth of July? This is like what people say who, when asked if they made their Easter duty, tell you, "Oh! no, I went at Christmas," or "I was at the mission." Now the _annual_ marriage supper which the King makes for his Son, and to which we are invited, is at Easter, and neither Christmas, mission time, the Forty Hours, nor the Fourth of July will do, unless, indeed, the mission or the Forty Hours took place in the Paschal season.

The second thing I want you to think about is that the invitation to partake of the "Great Supper" of Holy Communion, whether at Easter or at any other time, is a call to make what is known as a _worthy_ Communion; that is, you must be absolved from sin and thus be yourself worthy. That is requisite, and that is enough. There are some scrupulous people who fancy that they themselves have got to do beforehand all that the Communion is intended to do and will do. Who is it that prepares the Supper, they or the Lord? If they will do the little that is asked of them, they can safely leave to the Lord the responsibility of doing his part. A _worthy_ Communion should also be one that is worth something to the one receiving it, and should not be a worthless exterior performance, which has no interior act of communion in the heart to correspond to it.

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And now this kind of worth of each and every Communion depends upon what the communicant chooses to make it. All is to be had

that God can give. The means of getting the good from Communion is one and the same means for getting the good in receiving other sacraments--that is, prayer. Prayer beforehand, prayer daring it, prayer afterwards. The more you want and the more you ask of, the more worth will your Communion be. Suppose our Lord should suddenly quit the sacramental form of the host and ask a communicant at the altar-rail, "What do you wish for?" and he should answer, "I don't know; I never thought of asking for anything," you would reasonably conclude that he was not likely to receive very much. Now, I hope you who often come to the holy table are paying attention to this. If you come often, it is supposed, and justly supposed, that you want a good deal, and that you are deeply in earnest about obtaining what you desire. Much as, I am sure, your Communions are worth to you, I wish you would set about making them worth still more. In a word, you must think more about what you need. Get your requests ready. Have them, as it were, well by heart, so that if the Lord should ask you what you came for, your reply would come out quick and earnest enough. Of all privileges and honors, in this world, receiving Holy Communion is, indeed, something for us Catholics to boast of. How the "outsiders" envy us our faith and the comfort it brings to us!--the infidels of every name and kind, the Protestants and others, who either have no Communion, or at best a sham one.
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How would you like to have yourself thrust aside and one of them called by the Lord to take your place at his table? Beware, then, how you treat his invitation; come as often and be as well prepared as the Spirit of Divine Love shall inspire you.

Sermon LXXXVI.

The Sacred Heart Of Jesus.

The month of June has, as you know, my brethren, been set apart by general consent for devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as that of May has in the same way been devoted to our Blessed Lady; and on next Friday, the day following the octave of Corpus Christi, the church solemnly celebrates the Feast of the Sacred Heart. This feast, formerly observed only in some places, has for about thirty years been kept everywhere.
As the devotion to the Sacred Heart has of late spread so widely in the church, and is so plainly pleasing to God and most salutary to us, it is well that we should understand it clearly, that we may enter into it more fully. In the first place, then, we will ask, What is the nature of the worship which we render to the Sacred Heart of Jesus? And, secondly, Why is it specially selected as the object of our devotion?
What, then, is the nature of our worship of the Sacred Heart? It is, of course, the same as that which we pay to our Lord himself--that is, the worship which is due to him as God the Son, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.
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His human nature, united to the divine nature in one Person, is truly worthy of divine worship and honor. God, having become man, his human heart is the heart of God, and must be adored as such.

Let us, then, remember this: the devotion to the Sacred Heart is one that is given to God himself, just as that is which we have for the Blessed Sacrament in which he resides on our altars. But why do we select the Heart of our Lord, or rather why has he himself selected it, as a special object of our adoration? I say, why has he himself selected it? for this devotion to the Sacred Heart in modern times is due specially to a revelation made by our Lord to the Blessed Margaret Mary, a nun of the Visitation, two centuries ago.

In answer to this question we may say that our Lord's Heart is the fountain of his Precious Blood, which was shed for our salvation, and was pierced by the lance, like his hands and feet by the nails, on the cross; and it is in this way specially pointed out as the object of our gratitude and love. But even a more urgent reason is that the heart is a natural symbol of love, agreed on by universal consent at all times and in all parts of the world, and therefore that the Heart of Jesus most perfectly represents his love for us. In adoring the Sacred Heart, then, we adore in a particular manner the love of Christ for sinners; and it is for this reason that he has given us this devotion, knowing that it is only by the thought of the love of his Heart for us that our hearts can be won to the love of him.

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Yes, my brethren, God wishes our love; it was to obtain it that he became one of us and died for us on the cross; and it is to win it now that he asks us to remember and to adore his Sacred Heart. "Let us therefore," says St. John, "love God, because God first hath loved us." This is the spirit of this devotion: that we should not try to save our souls merely for the fear of hell, but that, seeing how much God has loved us, we should love him in return. And also that, seeing how much he has loved our brethren, the same fire of divine charity may be kindled in our hearts, and thus each one of us may do our share to carry on and to complete the work for which he shed his Precious Blood: the bringing of the world to the knowledge and love of him.

Sermon LXXXVII.
Ingratitude.

A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. ... And they began all at once to make excuse.
--Gospel of the Day.

You know, my dear brethren, the parable given by our Divine Lord in the Gospel of to-day. The principal point of it is in the words which you have just heard. The guests who were invited to the supper, instead of feeling honored by the invitation and accepting it gladly, began to make one excuse or another; one had his farm, one his oxen, and another had just married a wife. None of these reasons would have prevented them from coming to the supper had they really wished to; they were mere flimsy pretexts put forward to hide their indifference to their host and to all that he had to offer them.

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You know this parable, and I think you also know well its meaning. As our Saviour uttered it the coldness and ingratitude

of those whom he had come to save rose up before him, giving him a foretaste of the agony which was afterward to overwhelm and crush him in the garden of Gethsemani. His heart, burning with love for men, longed and thirsted for love in return; it was all he asked; could he but have had that all the pains of his sorrowful life and terrible death would have been as nothing. But no; he foresaw that, after all, those to whom he stretched out his arms on the cross in loving invitation would, for the most part, turn a deaf ear to his appeal; would give him at the best but a reluctant and half-hearted service; would keep as much as possible for themselves, and give as little as possible to him. And, in particular, he foresaw that the crowning gift which he had in store for his rebellious and ungrateful children--his own Body and Blood, which he was to leave them in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and in which he was to remain with them even after his work was done and the time come for him to return to his Father--would be rejected by the greater part even of Christians with the same indifference with which his other sacrifices were to be met. He saw himself in our churches, unwelcomed and almost unknown by the most of those whom he loved to call his friends. He saw that, though for a time in the first fervors of faith, when the sword of persecution drove those to his side who were not overcome by it, he would, as he desired, indeed be the daily bread of his people, yet there would come a day when that faith would be dimmed, and the love which sprang from it would grow cold. He knew that an age would come when--shame to say it--his church would have to force her children by strict laws and threats of excommunication to receive him in the sacrament of his love even once a year.
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And he knew that, in spite of all this urging, many still would excuse themselves from the divine banquet, offered so freely to, nay, almost forced upon, them; that millions every year would miss their Easter duty; would either turn from the bread of life to the food of swine by deliberate choice, or at least would, on some frivolous pretext, put off the time of their reconciliation till the last day appointed for it had gone by.
Alas! my dear brethren, children of this God and Father who has done so much for us, I fear that some even of you who hear my words have once more thus grieved his heart and despised his love. In all this long time of Lent and Easter which, has just gone by you have missed the duty to which the most sacred and solemn of all the laws of the church has called you. But still our Lord has not yet treated you as you have treated him. He has not yet said to you, as the host said in the parable: "None of you that were invited shall taste of my supper." No; once more, in this great festival of Corpus Christi, he makes yet another appeal to you, to put aside your excuses, and to come to him with all your heart and soul. Do not, I beseech you, continue to insult and despise him who thus humbles himself before you, and still tries to remind you of his goodness and mercy. Come to him without delay, and make amends for your past neglect; all will be forgiven and forgotten. But remember, if tempted to reject him once more, and to postpone your return, that even his infinite

mercy will at last have to yield to his justice; that his loving Spirit cannot strive with you for ever.

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Third Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

1 _St. Peter v._ 6-11.

Dearly beloved:

Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation. Casting all your solicitude upon him, for he hath care of you. Be sober and watch; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalleth your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, when you have suffered a little, will himself perfect, and confirm, and establish you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel.

St. Luke xv. 1-10.

At that time:

The publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus to hear him. And the Pharisees and the Scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spoke to them this parable, saying: What man among you that hath a hundred sheep: and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, doth he not lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing: and coming home call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost. I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance. Or what woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost. So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

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Sermon LXXXVIII.
Sinful Amusements.

Be sober and watch, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.

--Epistle of the Day.

I need not tell you, dear brethren, that there is nothing more contrary to the spirit of our holy religion than melancholy. The church would not have her children long-faced and mopish, eschewing all pleasure as a thing sinful; nor would she have them unhappy by depriving them of what is good and forbidding what is innocent, but like a wise mother she permits, nay, sanctions, harmless amusements, knowing that this, far from being an

impediment to us in our efforts after holiness, is rather a help. But, unfortunately, all pleasures are not innocent. There are some which are sinful--very sinful--and which, instead of aiding us by begetting a holy gladness, fill us with remorse and rob the soul of the grace of God, which is the principle of all our joy. Such pleasures as these the church forbids; such as these she would have us avoid, and she warns us that they come not from God, but from our adversary the devil, who is seeking our ruin. It is with regret that we say it, still we say it with truth, that of late years a very dangerous sort of amusement has taken more or less hold upon numbers of our young people, and, now that we are at the beginning of summer, it may not be amiss to say a word or two about a certain sort of "picnics."
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It is hard to conceive how a young man or woman, who wishes to be deemed respectable, or even to preserve self-respect, can attend any of those _moonlight_ gatherings known as picnics, festivals, etc. Call them by what name you please, as a whole they are bad. The places where these meetings are held, the persons whom you cannot avoid coming in contact with, make them dangerous at least, and very frequently a real occasion of sin. How can a young girl know the character of him with whom she is dancing? She has been introduced, to be sure, but what of that? Does she feel quite certain that she may not be subjected to insult or worse? Is she satisfied that her mother would be pleased to see her with her present companions? Is she not engaged in a dance which borders on immodesty? Take care, my good girl, you have taken your first downward step to-night; retrace your way, and never be found at such a "festival" as this again, if you value your good name. Nor can young men attend these "moonlight rural gatherings" without endangering their fair fame and interests. A pure woman will not marry a man who consorts with bad characters. She will not trust herself to the tender mercies of one who reaches home in the early morning in a half or wholly drunken state. She cannot look forward to a happy life with one of this character, and she will not encourage his attentions. Employers are not over-anxious to have in their service those who come to their occupations with evident marks of debauchery.
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They believe that young men of this sort are not efficient, and they believe so rightly; they think that these are not altogether trustworthy; that they are constantly exposing themselves to danger and theft. It does not pay, young men, to go to "moonlight picnics." It is not to your interest, either temporal or spiritual. Do not be carried away with the idea that you can be dissipated with impunity. "Be sober and watch" yourselves, remembering that a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and certainly to be preferred to the gross pleasures of moonlight orgies.

Sermon LXXXIX.

Divine Providence.

_Casting all your solicitude upon him,

for he hath care of you._
--1 St. Peter v. 7.

The doctrine of God's providence is one of those great truths which, though accepted by every Christian, are often not apprehended practically in everyday life. By the providence of God we mean that loving care which he takes of all his creatures, and especially of man, ruling, guiding, and protecting them, "ordering all things sweetly," as holy Scripture has it, that each one of his creatures may attain to the end for which it was given existence.

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God's work does not stop with creation. It would be absurd to suppose that he made all things and then left them to take care of themselves. On the contrary, we know that his sustaining power is necessary in order to keep us in existence at all, and that if he were to withdraw his sustaining hand from us we should at once fall back into the nothingness from whence we came. But God's providence over us means something far more than simply keeping us alive. It enters into every circumstance of our life. Whatever befalls us, day by day, is with his permission, is in accordance with his holy will. Whether he blesses us or smites us, it is all the same: everything comes from his loving providence, and is intended for our good.

Our Lord's teaching concerning the providence of God is very clear and plain. He tells us that God cares for the lilies of the field and for the birds of the air, so that not one of them is forgotten before God; and, he adds, "Are not you of much more value than they?" For "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." "O ye of little faith!" he still says to us, "why are you so slow and dull of heart to understand? Why will you not see the hand of God directing the whole course of your life?" Men go on in their carelessness, unmindful of God, taking the good things that come to them as a matter of course, or as the result of their own labor, forgetting that every good and perfect gift is from above. But God does not forget them. In spite of their indifference, he still watches over them, providing them with all things needful for their souls and bodies, and with his grace ever seeking to lead them to him. How many, too, spend their time in foolishly worrying over their petty trials! It is all owing to a lack of faith; they refuse to recognize God's hand in their daily life. Yet again and again our Lord and his Apostles repeat the exhortation, "Be not solicitous"--that is, do not worry--"casting all your solicitude upon him, for he careth for you."

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But it is especially in the great trials of life that the doctrine of God's providence is necessary for us, and full of consolation, and perhaps it is at just such times that it is the most often forgotten. When some heavy trouble comes, how often does the sufferer fail to acknowledge that it is sent by Almighty God--that is, an ordering of his providence, and therefore to be submitted to with patience and humility. "Dearly beloved," says St. Peter in the Epistle of to-day, "be you humbled under the mighty hand of God." To be humble is to acknowledge our true

position in God's sight, to confess that we are his creatures altogether in his power, and that he has the right to do with us as he pleases. Our faith assures us that he will not use this right to our disadvantage. Away, then, with all silly murmurings and complaints that God is unjust. Good sense alone will teach that that cannot be. If you understood the full extent of the malice of even venial sin you would see that you receive but a small part of what you really deserve. Follow, then, the counsel of Solomon, and "reject not the correction of the Lord, and faint not when thou art chastised by him; for whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth."

But if the burden seem too hard for you to bear alone, Jesus is ready to help you. "Come to me," he says, "all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Go to him in the Blessed Sacrament, pour out your grief to the Sacred Heart, and you shall find rest for your soul. "Cast thy care upon the Lord," said David in the Psalms, "and he shall sustain thee."

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Then, having humbled yourself under the mighty hand of God, he will exalt you in the time of his visitation and fill you with his peace. And "the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, _when you have suffered a little_, will himself perfect, and confirm, and establish you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Sermon XC.

How To Bear Burdens.

_Cast thy care upon the Lord
and he shall sustain thee._
--Gradual of the Mass.

Which of us, dear brethren, is without his burden or his care? Whatever our station in life, however high or lowly we may be, to each comes his portion of sorrow, to each come difficulties and temptations. If we escape one trial we are sure to find another, and probably a worse one, awaiting us. It is our lot here upon earth to suffer, and we ought to expect nothing else, for if we hope for perfect happiness in this world we are doomed to bitterest disappointment. The way in which to carry ourselves with regard to our difficulties is not to seek to avoid them, or when they come upon us to run away from them, but to accept them as the portion of our heritage and to make them a source of merit and sanctification. If we would but cast our care upon the Lord, if we would but willingly submit to what his all-wise providence designs for us, these apparent miseries would become for us real blessings and bring upon us the choicest of God's gifts--an increase of his holy grace in our souls. God will help us sustain our burden if we receive it with resignation; if we love it he will make it even sweet to bear.

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But, you may say, this doctrine is very pretty in theory. How about the practice of it? It is not so easy to be indifferent to the things of this life, to the wants of the body, so as to be quite as willing to be poor as to be rich, to have a good, substantial meal or a morsel of cold victuals. People cannot be

expected to prefer misery to happiness.
We are not asking you to prefer misery to happiness, nor even to be indifferent as to what shall happen you. Although this would be far more perfect and would soon make him who had such disposition very holy, still we do not ask so much. What we would wish you to do is what we think all are bound to do--namely, to have confidence in the providence of God; to recognize his hand guiding the course of events in our behalf. We know that he is good and merciful and ready to help us in our need; we know that even when he punishes it is not so much in anger as in love that he does so; yet we complain and are discontented, and some even go so far as to blaspheme the God who, at the very moment when we are treating him with such indignity, is lovingly working all things together unto good, who is doing for them more than they would ever hope for. Oh! what pride is theirs, who set up their judgment against God's and insist upon the Almighty doing things according to their fancy. They see no reason why they should suffer this or that. Why should they be treated so harshly? Other people have comfort; why should not they?
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Oh! what folly, what blindness is there in the hearts of men and women who speak thus! What ingratitude is theirs! Perhaps the God they are abusing has forgiven them hundreds of mortal sins; perhaps he is withholding what they are demanding because he sees if he granted them the things they ask their salvation would be endangered; yet all that he is doing in loving kindness is being misunderstood, because men are unwilling to bow down to the holy and adorable will of God.
Dear brethren, let it not be said of us that we are ingrates or that we are so foolish as to think ourselves wiser than God; but let us turn to him with all our hearts and recognize in all he sends us his unspeakable mercy; let us ever see in him the All-wise God, our Father, and never permit ourselves to be deceived by the rebellion of our lower nature. Let us, in a word, "cast all our care upon the Lord."

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Fourth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.
Romans. viii. 18-23.
Brethren:
I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that made it subject, in hope: because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth, and is in labor even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel.
St. Luke v. 1-11.
At that time:
When the multitudes pressed upon Jesus to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth. And he saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And going up into one of the ships that was Simon's, he desired him to thrust out a little from the land. And sitting down, he taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering, said to him: Master, we have labored all the night and have taken nothing: but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net was breaking.
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And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking; which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt be taking men. And when they had brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed him.

Sermon XCI.
How To Suffer.

_Brethren: I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. _
--Epistle of the Day.

I think, my brethren, that there are few good and faithful Christians who do not have, as they journey through life, a fair share of crosses, trials, and sufferings. Sometimes these crosses are not noticed much by other people, but they are heavy enough for those who have to bear them. The priest hears more of the troubles of the world, as well as of its sins, than any one else; misery is a very old story to him; and he has his own trials, too, in plenty, though many think that in his state of life he has mostly avoided them. Yes, trouble and suffering seem to be, and indeed they really are, the rule of life for Christians, happiness rather the exception; unless we are willing to get what some call happiness by disregarding the law of God.
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Now this is a very unpleasant fact; but it is a fact, and we have to accept it. But how shall we best do so? That is a point which it will be well to consider.
Shall we simply take our trouble because we cannot help it, and fret as little as we can, because fretting only makes it worse? Or shall we take comfort by thinking that others are in the same plight as ourselves; by believing, though perhaps we cannot see

it, that our luck, though hard, is not harder than that of most of those around us?

These would be two pretty good ways of getting along for one who had no better. But it would be a shame for us to fall back on them. One who has faith should be able to find a better way than either of these.

"Yes," you may say, "I know what you mean; a Christian ought to be resigned to God's holy will. We are taught and we believe that all things come to us by the providence of God; that he is all-wise and infinitely good; so, when he sends us anything hard to bear, we must say, 'Thy will be done,' and know by faith that it is for the best."

Now I do not want to say anything against this way of bearing trouble; it is a good way, and it is a Christian way; none more so. And perhaps some times it is the only one that will seem possible. But after all it is not exactly what I mean, or it is not at any rate all that I mean; and it is not what the great Apostle St. Paul, whose glorious and triumphant death, after a life of suffering, we commemorate with that of St. Peter to-day, meant in those immortal words which I just read.

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"I reckon," says he, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."

That is his consolation. "We have," he says to us, "a little to suffer here, but what is it after all? A drop, bitter it is true, but still only a drop, against an eternal torrent of joy with which God is going to overwhelm our souls. Truly it is not worthy to be compared in its passing bitterness to the ocean of delight of which it is the earnest for the future. It is, in fact, the little price which we have to pay for that future; and it is not worth speaking of when we think what it will bring."

Indeed, my brethren, it must be a matter of astonishment to the angels, it ought to be so to us, that we think so little of the heaven which God has prepared for us. We profess to believe in it; we do believe in it; but we seem to forget all about it. We can have it if we will; moreover, these very crosses and trials, if we have them, are a sign that our Lord means almost to force it on us. Let us, then, think more of heaven; meditate on it, look forward to it. The thought of heaven was the joy and strength of the martyrs; why should it not be the constant support of ordinary Christians, too?

Sermon XCII.

Good Works Done In Mortal Sin.

_Master, we have labored all the night,
and have taken nothing._
--Gospel of the Day.

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The Gospel of to-day tells us, my dear brethren, how St. Peter and his companions, after wearying themselves with dragging their heavy nets the whole night, had caught nothing for all their pains; and how, as soon as our Lord appeared, and they were able to work with his guidance and help, they took more fish than

their boats would hold.
There is a most important spiritual lesson contained in this simple story. This miraculous draught of fish is, as it were, a parable, acted out instead of told by our Divine Saviour. And its meaning is this: that those who work in the night of the soul which is caused by mortal sin have indeed much trouble, sorrow, and labor, but it is all for nothing. All that they do and suffer while remaining in this state counts for nothing in their favor in the eternal account of God. Whereas, on the other hand, the slightest action of one who is in the state of grace, and who, therefore, works in union with Christ, has attached to it a great and imperishable glory in the kingdom of heaven.
St. Paul also teaches us this quite explicitly. "If I should distribute," says he, "all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity" (that is, the love of God, which makes the state of grace), "it profiteth me nothing." Whereas, on the other hand, he says, for himself and others who are united to God by grace, that "what is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."
This is, I say, my brethren, a most important truth. Do you fairly understand it? Do you take in its full meaning and application? Let us look at and study it as much as possible in these few minutes; then let us take it home with us, meditate on it, and make it thoroughly our own.
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All of us have our labors, trials, and pains; some arc heavily burdened with them. To work and to suffer is the lot of all, from which there is no escape. We cannot avoid our destiny; we must make the best of it.
Yes, that is just it; we must make the best of it; if we have any prudence, any true love or care for our happiness, we will make the best of it, and not the worst. Why suffer this poverty, this sickness, this worry and distress of mind? Why do all this hard work? Why go through all these long and weary days, and get nothing in reward for all our labor and suffering but the mere means with which to keep up this painful and toilsome life, and to sweeten it, perhaps, with some fleeting sensual pleasures? Why not have something to show for all our trouble at the end of our time here on earth? Why not make it, as we may, into a crown to take with us into that life which has no end?
This is what those do who remain in the grace of God, who commit no mortal sin, or who, if they ever fall into it, repent and free themselves from it with out delay. All their pains and all their labors are recorded in heaven, and treasured up to be woven into a crown of merit for such as persevere to the end. God is with them, as with St. Peter on the lake of Genesareth; they work for him, and in the light of his presence, and their slightest actions obtain a rich reward.
But those who foolishly think that to remain thus is a task beyond their strength, who pass their lives in mortal sin, and only seldom and for a short time rise from it, have the same trouble; and at the end, if indeed they come to God then and enter heaven, being saved as by fire, they find no treasure of

good works gone before them. "Master," they have to say, "we have worked all night and have taken nothing. We have worked in the night of sin all our life."
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Let us not, then, follow their example. Let us not run their fearful risk of not obtaining salvation at all; and let us also determine that when we are saved we will have a life well filled with the fruits of grace to lay at our Saviour's feet, for which we may merit to hear him say: "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Sermon XCIII.

Fishing For Men.

_Master, we have labored all the night,
and have taken nothing._

St. Peter was without doubt a good fisherman, and a patient one, as all good fishermen are. He was content to fish all night with such poor luck as to catch nothing at all.
But after he had taken our Lord on board his ship it seemed as if all the fish in the lake were anxious to be caught. Such a wonderful haul was made that St. Peter and all the other fishermen were dumfounded with astonishment. How mightily they were all pleased may well be imagined.
Now, I think there is in our day something going on very like St. Peter's fishing all night and catching no fish. The Catholic Church is the ship of Peter, and he who exercises the authority of master in that ship, together with his mates and other officers, are holding the place which St. Peter was exalted to when our Lord made him the master fisherman of men. That is, the Holy Father, the pope, the bishops and priests are fishing for men, and our Lord promised that they should catch them, too.
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In a certain degree, also, everyone on board Peter's ship--all Catholics--have to do with this great work--the spreading out the nets and drawing souls into the true church.
For some time there have been some efforts made to catch a certain kind of fish known as _Protestants_, and there is another sort, also becoming common in these waters of ours, called _Infidels_. And it seems to me that there has been a good deal of fishing all night long, and not half the haul made that was hoped for. We feel like repeating St. Peter's complaint --"Lord, we have labored all the night and taken nothing."
The fishermen know their business, and they have worked hard. No trouble on that score. When may we hope that the promise of our Lord will be fulfilled and labor shall be crowned with success? I'll tell you. It will be after Christ has taught his divine doctrine from the ship, and when he can say to us, "Now let down your nets."
If there is anything both true and astonishing it is the prevailing ignorance of their own or of any other religion among Protestants and infidels. You would think that, among so many learned and well-to-do people who have every advantage of education and general information at hand, they would not only know what they believed, but also the reasons why.

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They make a great boast of knowing, some of them, all the _good_ that there is in the Bible, and others all of what they call absurdities and contradictions in the holy volume. You need not be afraid of all this supposed knowledge. In fact, some read the Bible very little, and great numbers of them don't hear half of what the majority of us Catholics hear in church. Catechize them, and it will soon appear that they are densely ignorant of all religion. How can we hope that such people will admire all the beauties of our faith, and appreciate all the powerful and logical arguments in favor of this or that truth, who are so lacking in information about the very rudiments of religion?

I meet such people frequently, who are, nevertheless, regular hearers and worshippers of the best preachers of our day, or who pick up here and there some sayings of the pretentious philosopher of the hour.

Christ must teach this multitude from the ship of Peter, and he will do so when he can say of us, "Whoso heareth you, heareth me"--that is, when you and I so live up to our faith that when they hear us they hear a Christ speak, and when what we speak is for their instruction and suited to their great ignorance of divine things. We must be simple and plain in our instructions when directed to them.

Moreover, we must thrust this instruction of the first things every Christian (be he child or man) ought to know upon them in all charity; and be quick about it, for without it they will be in imminent peril of losing their souls. They are good enough according to what they know. They, like the best of us, love truth, and are really hungering for what is unquestionably for their greater happiness.

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Oh! if we Catholics would only live like Christ and speak like Christ, then it would be high time to let down the net. Protestants and infidels would rush in crowds to be taken. Priests would not know where to find room for the converts. Enter into the work of spreading Christian doctrine, then. Buy Catholic books of instruction. Buy a good many and give away a good many. It may set them thinking. And the reading of good, plain instructions, like the simple words of our Lord, will set them to praying as well. When a Protestant or an infidel once begins to pray to know the truth, it will be sure to lead him into the net that is let down from St. Peter's ship, only too happy to be numbered among those taken by the divinely-appointed fishers of men.

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Fifth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

1 _St. Peter iii_. 8-15.

Dearly beloved:

Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, loving brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble: not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but on the contrary, blessing:

for unto this are you called, that by inheritance you may possess a blessing. "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him decline from evil, and do good: let him seek peace, and pursue it: because the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears unto their prayers: but the countenance of the Lord against them that do evil things." And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good? But if also you suffer any thing for justice sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their terror and be not troubled; but sanctify the Lord Christ in your heart.

Gospel.

St. Matthew v. 20-24.

At that time Jesus said to his disciples:

I say to you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be guilty of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be guilty of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be guilty of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be guilty of hell fire. Therefore if thou offerest thy gift at the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and first go to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

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Sermon XCIV.

Forgiveness Of Injuries.

_If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar,
and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee,
leave there thy offering before the altar,
and go first to be reconciled to thy brother;
and then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift._

--Gospel of the Day.

There are few things in common life, my dear brethren, more surprising than the fact that some people seem to consider themselves good Christians, and well worthy to receive the sacraments, who have a grudge against some of their neighbors and never speak to them; perhaps never answer, even if spoken to by them. These people seem to think, I say, that they are worthy to receive the sacraments; and this not only at Easter, but, it may be, quite frequently. Some of them, I fear, consider themselves to be pious and devout; they say, it may be, long prayers every night and perhaps also in the morning--though, if they really thought of the words on their lips, I do not know how they could get through one Our Father. "As we forgive those who trespass against us" ought to stick in their throats. They will not speak to those persons who, as they think, have trespassed against them; they wish, then, that God should have nothing to say to themselves. "Forgive us," they say to him, "_as we forgive;_ we will not speak to others, so do not thou speak to us; turn thy back on us, pass us by; that is what we do to our neighbors.

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Cut us off from thy friendship, send us to hell"; that is what every Our Father means in the mouth of these detestable hypocrites when they say, "Forgive as we forgive."
How these people get through their confession and receive absolution is as surprising as that they should make the attempt to do so. They are caught, no doubt, once in a while, but it is to be feared that a large proportion of them slip through the priest's fingers, either by saying nothing about the sinful disposition in which they are or by telling a lie to the Holy Ghost and to their own hearts, if they would but examine them, by putting all the fault on the other party. When the other party appears, then we come nearer to the truth. "I spoke to So-and-so," they say, "but got no answer."
Now, let it be distinctly understood that to refuse to answer any one who speaks to us with a good intention; to take no notice of a word or a salute, given with a view to renewing friendship, or even out of ordinary politeness, is, in almost every case, a mortal sin. Of course I do not mean that is so when the omission comes from inattention or carelessness; no, I mean when it is intended as a cut to the other party. About the only instance in which it can be allowed is that of a superior, who has a right to take the matter in his own hands, and can put off reconciliation for a time without danger. A father, for instance, may keep his child at a distance for a while in this way as a punishment for an evident offence; but I am speaking of equals, one of whom can have no right to punish the other.
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But you may say: "This person has injured me grievously. He or she ought to beg my pardon." Perhaps this is so; though often, if you could see your own heart and that of the other as God sees them, you ought to beg pardon as much as he or she. It is rare that an unprovoked injury is done by any one consciously and without what seems a pretty good excuse to himself. But even granting that the injury is really grievous and unprovoked, do you expect your neighbor to go down on his knees to you, or to humble himself by a formal apology, not knowing how it will be taken? Would you find it easy to do such a thing yourself, however guilty?
No, by turning him off in this way you put the balance of injury against yourself, however great may have been the other's offence. No one should dare to go to Communion after such a slight unatoned for. And yet even brothers and sisters have done such things, and, I fear, received Christ's Body and Blood with this sin on their souls.
Let us have, then, no more of this. If one is not willing to be in charity with his or her neighbor, let him or her not come to confession, or at least, if coming, take care to state the matter as it really is. "Go first and be reconciled with thy brother; and then, coming, thou shalt offer thy gift."

Sermon XCV.

Feast Of SS. Peter And Paul.

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To-day, my brethren, holy church celebrates the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, one the prince of the Apostles, the other the great teacher of the Gentiles. Their glorious martyrdom took place the same day in the imperial city of Rome. A glorious victory indeed was their death, one being crucified, head downwards, the other beheaded, sealing thus with their blood that invincible faith in our Lord and in his religion which has made them fit to be cornerstones of his spiritual temple. Besides their faith, they were most distinguished for confidence in God. The two virtues, faith and hope, of course, blended together in their souls, borrowed from each other, and in the fire of heavenly love were melted into one. Yet confidence in God, or the virtue of hope, was the very impulse that set them forth to preach, gave them their gift of miracles, and led them out at last with the deepest joy to offer up the sacrifice of their lives.

And it was by such heroic trust in God that our holy church was founded. The beginnings of the true religion may be summed up by saying that God sent out men who were willing to stake their lives upon his fidelity to his promises. The soil on which our Saviour planted the true vine was watered by the blood of martyrs. The Breviary speaks of the blood of our two great Apostles as the purple robe of immortal Rome. And their virtue of implicit, instinctive confidence in God's love for us and for his church is the spiritual garment every Christian puts on when he is made a member of Christ.

Looking across all those centuries, my brethren, and contemplating the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul, our hearts should be strengthened. What are the trials of the church now compared to those at the very beginning?

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We lament, indeed, that St. Peter's successor is a captive in his own house, and also that in many regions of the world the true faith of the Apostles has to struggle for its very life. Yet the struggles of the church are now those of a giant, are against a world in great part doubtful of its own cause; struggles which make us only the more evidently pleasing to God, as they are gradually forcing us to strip ourselves of every human help and practise the Apostolic virtue of trust in God alone. "Some upon horses and some upon chariots, but we call upon the name of the Lord." Oh! when we come to realize that the welfare of the church is not in numbers, or in fine buildings, or in the wealth and power of Catholics, but only and entirely in the practice of the virtues of our religion, we shall not have long to wait for the triumph of the truth. When the vast world-power that we call the Catholic religion was (seemingly) but the frantic experiment of a handful of men, just then it won its noblest victories.

Heathenism could not be voted down nor fought down; nor did God send earthquakes and floods to cleanse the earth of its foulness. The men who founded our faith won the victory because they were penetrated with the conviction that the Maker and Governor of mankind was their Lord, and that Jesus Christ, his Son, would never swerve from his plighted word.

Such, then, brethren, is the virtue I bid you learn from the

example of SS. Peter and Paul: confidence in God. Learn that and it will teach you all. How the value of prayer is shown forth by this virtue; how the practice of patience is commended; how the purely spiritual side of religion is brought forward by trust in God!
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And to you of this church it is especially proposed to cultivate this Apostolic virtue. For is not your church named for St. Paul? And is he not associated every way, historically and in the devotions of our religion, with the prince of the Apostles, St. Peter? They are our first fruits; they are most closely joined to Christ, the root of the spiritual tree of life. St. Paul says: "For if the first fruit be holy, so is the mass also; and if the root be holy, so are the branches."

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Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Romans vi. 3-11.

Brethren:

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

Gospel.

St. Mark viii. 1-9.

At that time:

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

seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

Sermon XCVI.

The Divine Bounty.

_And they did eat and were filled,
and they took up that which was left of the fragments,
seven baskets._
--St. Mark viii. 8.

The Gospel to-day tells us of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, whereby our Lord fed the multitude in the wilderness. Not only did seven loaves and a few little fishes satisfy the hunger of four thousand, but seven baskets were filled with the fragments that were left. This is the way in which God always works in the dealings of his providence with mankind. He is not content with giving us enough: he gives us more than enough--"full measure, pressed down, and running over." He hath opened his hand and filled all things living with plenteousness. Look at the earth which he has prepared as a dwelling for the children of men, and see how bountifully he has provided for all their necessities. "Oh! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men," and cry out with David: "How great are thy works, O Lord! Thou hast made all things in wisdom; the earth is filled with, thy riches."

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But if God has thus lavishly provided for the bodily wants of man, he has been even more bountiful in providing for the needs of his soul. "He hath satisfied the empty soul and filled the hungry soul with good things." Just as air, water, and food, the things necessary for the sustenance of our bodies, are found in the world in great abundance, so also does God's grace abound, which is necessary for the life of our souls. Just as we must breathe the air in order to live, so we have but to open our mouths in prayer, the breath of the soul, and God's grace, which is as plentiful as the air of heaven, is poured into our hearts, filling us with new life. And as we must breathe the breath of prayer, so also we must drink the water of salvation which, mingled with blood, flowed from the wounded side of Jesus. That living water which He promised to give is his Precious Blood, shed for all upon the cross, yet continually flowing in copious streams through the sacraments to cleanse and refresh the souls of men. We have but to approach and drink and our thirsty souls shall be satisfied. "He that shall drink of the water that I shall give him," said Jesus, "shall not thirst for ever. But the water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." Draw near, then, with joy and draw this water from the Saviour's fountains, the sacraments which he has ordained in his church. Wash therein, and you shall be clean; drink thereof, and your soul shall be refreshed.

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And for food he gives us the Bread of life, the living Bread which came down from heaven, even his own most Precious Body and

Blood in the blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. "He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever"; but "unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, you shall not have life in you." His grace would have been enough to sustain us; but he is not content with giving us his grace alone, he must give us also Himself. This is the greatest instance of the wonderful prodigality of God towards us. After creating the world, and providing it with all that is needful for our bodily life, after giving us his grace in an almost overwhelming abundance, we might think that his generosity would have spent itself. But no, he goes still further, and his last and greatest gift is himself to be the food of our souls. Surely there is nothing beyond this. God could not do more for us than he has done. In giving us himself he has done the utmost that is possible.

When, therefore, we behold the wonderful works of God in our behalf our hearts should swell with thankfulness to him who gives so abundantly unto us, above all that we could ask or think. Since God has been so generous towards us, let us not be guilty of the base ingratitude of despising his gifts, and rejecting the mercies he holds out to us! Rather be generous towards him, and as he gives us himself, so let us give ourselves wholly to him, striving in all things to please him, offering ourselves daily unto him, soul and body, as "a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, our reasonable service."

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Sermon XCVII.

Feast Of St. John The Baptist.

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Birthday of St. John the Baptist, of whom our Lord said that a greater man than he was never born; and we well know what kind of greatness Jesus Christ would make much of--the greatness of holiness. Looking at his life altogether, we see in him a striking example of one wielding great power and acquiring an eternal fame, who set out to do neither, but rather avoided both. No doubt as he grew up he must have heard something about his miraculous conception, of the angelic prophecy concerning him, and of that wonderful visit the Mother of God made to his own mother before either he or Jesus Christ was born. No doubt he felt himself to be consecrated to God, and set apart in a special manner to aspire after a holy life. And now it is just his fidelity to all those interior inspirations, which, costing him, as it did, so much self-abnegation, and taking him apparently out of the way of obtaining a great name, really made him great.

He was a notable example of those who gain all by giving up all. Only those who have this character in a marked degree are truly great in their souls, for virtue is both the source and the glory of nobility. No birth however high, no station or office however exalted, no good luck however extraordinary, high honors, great wealth, nor heaps of badges and medals can make up for the lack of it. A mean, covetous, selfish, proud, gluttonous, sensual, envious-minded, overbearing, spiteful, unforgiving, greedy king or emperor neither is nor can be great, no matter how vast his dominions or countless his subjects.

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On the other hand, we Catholics know of, and recognize often, the most extraordinary nobleness and refinement of soul in many who are among the poorest, most suffering, and often, in book-learning, the most ignorant of our brethren. What is it that gives to many such that singular taste for and perception of what is pure, beautiful, and true, which they unmistakably possess? And, in times of great trial and sacrifice, what is it that often brings them out above and ahead many others of whom we might be led to expect so much more? I'll tell you: it is the greatness of their holiness, the nobility of their virtue. It is that manifestation of what is really great in the sight of God and his angels--their love of truth, their ready self-denial, their big-hearted charity, their loyalty to God and religion, the independence of the world, their free obedience to superiors, their sweet endurance of pain and sorrow, their meek, forgiving spirit. Such as these are the souls of the great, whom the world, the flesh, and the devil attack and may wound, but cannot conquer. If sometimes we are tempted, dear brethren, to envy the apparent good fortune, as it is esteemed, of those whose greatness is not thus founded in virtue, we may be sure that we are weighing something with a very light and empty weight in the other balance, which may be very bulky, sparkling, and showy, like a big, bright, sunshiny soap-bubble, but with nothing inside, and of very short continuance.
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So you see how true greatness is within the reach of every one, and within quite easy reach, too. One is not obliged to do a great many things, nor labor many years, nor accomplish what makes a long report with large headings in the newspapers. One has only to take care _how_ the work is done one is called to do--with what spirit one does it. Says the "Imitation of Christ": "We are apt to inquire _how much_ a man has done, but with _how much virtue_ he has done it is not so diligently considered. We ask whether he be strong, rich, beautiful, ingenious, a good writer, good singer, or a good workman; but how poor he is in spirit, how patient and meek, how devout and internal, is what few speak of." Yes, it is not so much the long and splendid record of the work, but the spirit of the working, the pure, unambitious, God-loving intention ruling our labors, that makes them worthy of everlasting memory and meritorious of the renown of a great name, which leaves behind one a memory held in benediction and the history of a life delicious to recall.

Sermon XCVIII.

Idleness.

And they had nothing to eat.
--Gospel of the Sunday.

The people who crowded about our Lord had nothing to eat, because out of love of the word of God they had for a time quit their work and their homes. This docility, this constancy argues well for their earnestness in the fulfilment of all their other duties. They were out of food, not through laziness, but because

of set purpose they preferred spiritual to temporal nourishment. Hence they merited this extraordinary and unlooked-for manifestation of our Lord's goodness and providence in supplying them with food.
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We may confidently expect, my brethren, the assistance of God even in temporal want and necessity if our honest endeavors fail. We are not to be over-solicitous; we are not to desire nor strive after an over-abundance of such things. This promise, however, we have: that our Heavenly Father knows our needs, and he will come to our aid. But we have a duty, an obligation to discharge, and that is to work, to earn our bread. Now, this is the point of my sermon: that there are many people--the number seems to be increasing--who have nothing to eat, or who say they have not, and it is their own fault.
They do not merit any special interposition of Heaven to save them from the consequences of their own laziness; they do not seem to deserve, they do not deserve, the assistance of the charitable, who are the stewards and the representatives of the Lord. Now, brethren, do not imagine that this is a harsh and an unchristian way of regarding the necessities of the very poor; do not suppose that I make no allowance for the sickness, the lack of work, the hard times, the calamities which from time to time afflict the deserving and the laborious. If you are in a position to know, you cannot but be persuaded that the tendency to ask for help, the inclination to throw burdens on institutions public and private, the frequency, the boldness, the unreasonableness of such demands is on the increase; the number of those who are unwilling to exert themselves, to undergo the routine, the strain of work, grows day by day. Yet the Apostle says, "If any man will not work, neither let him eat."
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He bids every one labor faithfully in the calling wherein he has been placed. There is no such thing as true religion save in the faithful discharge, first of all, of our natural duties, and in compliance with the first great law of labor.
Now, I have frequently noticed one peculiarity about many of those who say they have nothing to eat, and that is, they cannot be said to have nothing to drink; and the presence of this kind of nourishment explains very often the lack of all other. No, my brethren, let us be industrious, saving, and sober, mindful that the law of God has imposed labor on us; let us try to help ourselves; then, if we fail, Heaven will surely help us, even in ways as truly miraculous as our Saviour's for the multitude in the desert.

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Seventh Sunday after Easter.

Epistle.

Romans vi. 19-23.

Brethren:

I speak a human thing, because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, unto iniquity; so now yield your members to serve

justice, unto sanctification. For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from justice. What fruit therefore had you then in those things, of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death: but the grace of God, everlasting life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel.

St. Matthew vii. 15-21.

At that time Jesus said to his disciples:

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree yieldeth good fruit, and the bad tree bad fruit. A good tree cannot yield bad fruit, neither can a bad tree yield good fruit. Every tree that yieldeth not good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not every man that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

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Sermon XCIX.

Mortal Sin The Death Of The Soul.

The wages of sin is death.

When the Apostle, my dear brethren, wrote these words, he did not mean only to express the truth (for truth it is) that the inevitable result of sin, even in this world, is the misery, and finally the death, of the sinner; nor even (though this also is true) that by sin death was introduced into the world. But he wished especially to teach us that the direct and immediate effect of mortal sin is a death much more fearful in itself, and much more awful in its consequences, than any mere cessation of the life of the body--namely, the death of the soul.

Mortal sin cuts a man off from his last end; it, as it were, disconnects the soul of any one who is unhappy enough to be in that state with all the springs of the supernatural state. A soul which is in mortal sin is cut off from the mystical body of Christ, and, like a limb cut away from the body of a man, it ceases to have any part in the nourishment with which that body is supported and enabled to pass through the wear and tear of the every-day life of the world.

The soul from the time of baptism to the time of death is kept alive by the gift of sanctifying grace. Remove this and the soul inevitably dies. Restore this and it is alive again. Now, it is just the removal of this sanctifying grace which is the immediate effect of mortal sin.

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As long as any baptized person remains free from the fearful stain of deliberate mortal sin sanctifying grace remains, and every sacrament received, nay, every good act performed, every good word spoken, and every aspiration to higher and better things which passes through the mind, increases the grace which

is conferred upon that soul; but the moment the will is deliberately turned away from its Creator, at that moment sanctifying grace ceases and the soul dies. This death is a real death of the soul; it prevents the soul from meriting anything towards the attainment of its last end, and should any one be unhappy enough to die with mortal sin upon his conscience his soul must, by the law of its very being, be buried for all eternity in hell.

See, then, my dear brethren, how fearful a thing this sin is which can have such fearful effects. God has made us to enjoy him for all eternity in heaven, and yet by sin we turn against ourselves, and, if I may so speak, compel the good God to issue against us an eternal sentence of banishment from his divine presence. We prevent our own souls from reaching that end for which alone they were created. We reap for ourselves an eternity of untold misery, instead of one of surpassing bliss.

Let us, then, to-day make a firm and constant resolution that, cost what it may, nothing in this world shall induce us to kill our souls by staining them with sin; and if any one is so unhappy as to be in that state now, let him now resolve that he will by a good confession cleanse his soul, and from henceforward, casting behind the things that are past, he will press forward to the things that are before.

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Sermon C.

False Prophets.

Beware of false prophets. --Gospel of the Day.

I think, my dear brethren, that you all know pretty well what our Lord means when he says in to-day's Gospel, "Beware of false prophets." You would tell me, at least if you stopped to think for a moment, that he means to warn us against those who were to come after him, pretending to teach his doctrine, claiming that theirs was the true and pure Christian religion, or putting on, as he says, the sheep's clothing, but really striving to draw the faithful away from the unity of the church which he had established; being, in fact, to use his own words, ravenous wolves.

Yes, you would tell me this, and you would be right in your explanation of his words. It is, indeed, of these false Christian teachers that he would warn us. It is against the innumerable errors which are taught as Christianity, and against the countless self-appointed guides to his one religion who were to multiply as time went on, that he wished to forewarn us; to keep us from listening to them, or allowing ourselves to be turned by them from the one source of truth which he has provided for us in his holy Catholic Church.

And no doubt, in a way, we listen to his warning, and are not much deceived by their pretensions, at least in these days. If a Catholic loses his faith nowadays, it is usually easy enough to see that he does so, not because he is really deceived by the false prophet and takes him for a true one, but because he wishes to lead an easier life without being blamed for it; because he

objects to confession and the other laws of the church as imposing too much restraint on him, or because his temporal interests will be advanced by the change.
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But still, in spite of this general security which we now have against being deceived by the persuasions of those who would lead us into error, nay, even on account of this very security which we feel, we do not obey quite carefully enough our Lord's warning. We think we are in no danger from these false prophets, and so we are willing enough to hear what they say. We would not join with them; far from it; but we think there is no harm in hearing or reading their discourses, or acquainting ourselves with their books. We do not, in short, beware of them; we think that there is no need to do so.
Really, however, there is. When our Lord said, "Beware of these false prophets," he meant just what he said. He knew that they would do us harm if we did not beware; that, if they did not destroy our faith, they would at least mar its purity or diminish its intensity if we did not take care to avoid them and their teachings in every way. And the church has always acted on the principle which her Divine Founder here laid down, in her instructions to her children. She does not wish even her priests to concern themselves with heretical or infidel doctrines, except with the intention of confuting them as their office requires, fortified though they be with the most thorough instruction in and knowledge of the truth.
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We are none of us perfectly wise and above the reach of even the most absurd errors, especially when our nature, corrupted by sin, is enlisted on the side of those errors; and, if not in danger of actually falling into any of them in particular, we may at least, by acquainting ourselves with those into which great men have been led, be likely to fall into the most dangerous of all errors, that of believing that truth is so hard to find that it cannot be expected that all should find it, and that it makes no difference what a man believes, as long as he does what seems to the world in general to be right.
The true course for us is, then, to beware of false guides in religion by keeping out of their way altogether; and, on the other hand, to study as far as we can the truth, which, if we learn it and grasp it as we should, conveys in itself the answer to them all. Listen to the true prophets, and leave the false ones alone; that is the highest wisdom from the mouth of our Divine Lord himself.

Sermon CI.
The Last Sin.

_For the wages of sin is death;
but the grace of God,
life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord._
--From this Sunday's Epistle.

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This is not the only place in Holy Writ, my brethren, where eternal life and death are set before us as the wages we shall

some day be paid. The word of God frequently admonishes us of the choice we are compelled to make between eternal sorrow and eternal joy, and for this most evident reason: we are always actually engaged in making the choice. The very essence of our merit hereafter will be that we shall have freely and deliberately chosen Almighty God and his friendship, in preference to any and everything besides. And the reason, and the only reason, why a man will lose his soul will be because he committed mortal sin and died unrepentant--that is to say, choosing to love what God bids him hate. What we call the choice between virtue and vice St. Paul calls the choice between life and death. And with that choice we are constantly confronted. Not that we always realize it, nor do I mean to say that the first time one grievously offends God he settles his fate eternally; but that each mortal sin really earns the wages of eternal death, and only the blessed mercy of God saves us from our deserved punishment. And furthermore, it is some mortal sin or other that at last breaks down God's patience. If at any particular occasion he does not see fit to take us at our word, so to speak, and leave us for ever in that state of enmity that we have chosen, it is not because we do not deserve it; it is because he is a loving Father to us, and is often willing to stand a great deal of wickedness on our part; or because we have some dear friends who are servants of God and who pray for us; or because the Blessed Virgin has acquired some special attachment to us and intervenes for us; or because God reserves us for a later day, when he will make such an example of us as will save other sinners; or because, again, he saves us for a later day to make us models of true penance.

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But just look around you, brethren; just call to mind what you have heard or perhaps seen of God's judgments, and the Apostle's lesson becomes object-teaching. Have you not heard of a sudden and unprovided death and then remembered how years ago that man started a disreputable business? It was thus that he made his decision for all eternity. On the other hand, a man now temperate, once a drunkard, will tell you that long ago he took the pledge and broke it, and broke it again, but still persevered, and finally, by the grace of God, has managed to keep it. He was fighting the battle of fate and he won the victory. That dreadful appetite overcome, the practice of religion became easy to him.

In another case a man is led away little by little from the rules of honest dealing; at last he refuses to pay a certain just debt, one that he can easily pay if he wishes. After that avarice eats into the core of his heart and he is lost for ever.

And, brethren, what a relief to hear after a sudden death that the poor soul was a monthly communicant!

Many are tested by Almighty God demanding that they shall withdraw from the proximate occasions of mortal sin. The voice of conscience, a sermon heard in the church, the private advice of some good friend--for all these are the voice of God--admonish[ing] them against what leads them to mortal sin; against very bad company, or the saloon, or the Sunday excursion,

or dangerous reading, or lonely company-keeping. Perhaps one's conduct about such dangers has more to do with his choice in eternity than any thing else.

I do not mean to say that this fateful decision is a mere lottery, but it is a moment at the end of years of rebellion against God when an effort is made by the grace of God to save the sinner; and for weal or for woe it is the last chance. Some time or other the last sin will be committed, the last grace will be granted.

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O my brethren! how very reasonable is the holy fear of God. Oh! how wise are they who have joined fear and love of God together so that the fire of love has burned the dross of slavishness out of fear, and fear has mingled reverence and humility with love. Alas! that so many should live as if eternal life and death had no meaning for the present hour.

Some are like that millionaire I heard of. Walking home one day, a heavy shower of rain began, he stopped a hack and asked what the driver would take him home for. Fifty cents, was the answer. he began to beat him down, and finally, refusing more than twenty-five cents, he walked home in the rain. But he caught cold, went to bed, and died. He had played the miser many a time before, but the last time had come. So many a one thinks his one sin more, his one other rejection of grace, is but like the multitude of other such offences gone before; and all the time he is deciding an eternal fate.

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Eighth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Romans viii. 12-17.

Brethren:

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

Gospel.

St. Luke xvi. 1-9.

At that time:

Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable:

There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him: What is this I hear of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship: for now thou canst not be steward. And the steward said within himself: What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be put out of the stewardship, they may receive me

into their houses. Therefore calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: A hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? Who said: A hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: Take thy bill and write eighty.

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And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. And I say to you: Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.

Sermon CII.

Spirit And Flesh.

For if you live according to the flesh you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live.

--Romans viii. 13.

What does the Apostle mean by this? This only, that the flesh with its concupiscence and lusts must never get such power over our will that it will carry us along with it and make us obey its longings and desires when we know these are forbidden by Almighty God. I say "this only" because to have the flesh is no sin; neither is it a sin to feel the disorderly movements of the flesh that lead to sin; but it is a sin to consent to these and to follow them. For this reason we are told that if we mortify the deeds of the flesh, to which these movements of the flesh lead us, we shall live. But what does the word "mortify" mean? It means to destroy that which makes the life of a thing. Notice here the Apostle does not tell us to mortify the flesh itself but the deeds of the flesh. To do this we need not then attempt to kilt the flesh, but we must destroy all that gives life to its deeds.

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What are the deeds of the flesh? They are the seven capital sins--pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth. Can we kill them? In the most important sense we can. We can get them so under our control that, after awhile, they will move us but slightly and cannot influence us to any great degree. We shall feel from time to time that they are still present in us, but that cannot disturb us much. We shall have taken their strength away. We shall have made them so weak that we can check them easily.

Ought not each one of us strive to get ourselves into that blessed state? But how can we do it? Make up your mind to do it. Form a good resolution, one that will not change but that will be firm for life. Then live according to that resolution. When pride is aroused, refuse to follow its promptings; when covetousness moves the heart, stop the eager desire for gain; when lust would lead you away, contend against the thought until it is driven out; when anger disturbs, seal the lips with the sign of the holy cross; when gluttony makes you long for feasting and drinking,

refuse to go where these things are going on; when envy racks the soul, pray for the one who is the object of envy; when sloth tempts you to self-indulgence and inactivity, stir up the fear of God and holy shame within the soul, for sloth is a destroyer indeed of all that is truly manly and heroic in us.

But all this is about as hard to do as anything a man can do, some may say. Yes, it is hard to do, but the success is _sure_. Shall a man do less for God than for himself? See the time and labor spent to secure that which is necessary for the body and success in the life of only a few years in this world. Shall a man not do as much for the good of his soul and for eternal life in the next world?

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Is it really so hard as it seems? By no means. We make it harder than it really is by putting it all together and by thinking we are to do it all at once. This is not true. It must be done by degrees, slowly, patiently, perseveringly, but surely.

The devil makes us think it harder by telling us, when we feel the sharpness of the first struggle, "You can't bear it this way, for life." You can if God wills it and gives you the grace. And most people, almost all Christian souls, do not have it "this way, for life." Those who keep up the struggle get stronger day by day. In them the flesh and the movements of sin grow less day by day. The devil, however, wishes us to believe the lie he tells, to make us give up the struggle. Do not listen to the lie and it cannot hurt you. Remember always, it is a lie, and the mind will not take hold of it.

We can make it all the easier by trusting God, who will always help us in the struggle. _Pray_ more. Go to confession often. The confessor will then help us and remove much of the burden by good advice. Go to Communion often, and God himself will make it easier for us than we imagine by giving his own strength to the soul at that time. Only begin earnestly to control the flesh, continue perseveringly to use confession and Communion. This, with daily morning and evening prayer, will take away very many difficulties. Soon we shall find we have truly mortified the deeds of the flesh, and then indeed we shall live, for the flesh will then be dead or dying fast and too weak to hurt the soul. Keep, then, in the mind the text from the Epistle of to-day: "For if you live according to the flesh you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live."

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Sermon CIII.

The Business Of The Soul.

The Lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely.
--Words Taken From To-day's Gospel.

One of the things which strikes us most forcibly in reading the instructions of our Blessed Lord as we have them in the holy Gospels is the matter-of-fact, common-sense, business-like manner in which he sets before us the way we must act in order to save our souls. We find no sentimentalism, no rhetoric, no

fine-sounding flights of eloquence which delight the imagination and please the fancy indeed, but which are too fleeting and flimsy to serve as a basis of every-day action. No; with our Lord this matter of the salvation of our souls is a matter of infinite business, a question of eternal profit and loss. Let me recall a few examples: "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking good pearls, who, when he had found one of great price, went his way and sold all he had and bought it." Here the way in which we are to act in order to get the kingdom of heaven is compared to the way in which the man of business acts who finds a good article--something worth his money. What does he do? Why, if it is really worth it--and the kingdom of heaven, the salvation of our souls is worth it--he sells all that he has and buys it.
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And yet again our Lord places before us the salvation of our souls as based upon a calculation of what is the more profitable course to take in those words the realization of which has called forth the highest heroism of the greatest of the saints: "If thy eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee." Why? Because "it is better for thee with one eye to enter the kingdom of God than, having two eyes, to be cast into the hell of fire." Here again it is a calculation of loss and gain--the loss of an eye in this world as against that of the whole body in the next. Shall I, on the principle that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, keep my two eyes; or shall I, for the sake of saving the whole body, pluck out the eye, cut off the foot or hand? But of all the places where this way of looking at things and of acting is inculcated and enforced, the most striking is in the parable read in to-day's Gospel. Here our Lord, in order to lead us to take a practical, hard-headed way of acting with reference to the salvation of our souls, brings before us the conduct of the unjust steward, and, strange to say, actually praises it. And how did this unjust steward act? The unjust steward was a dishonest man. He had been placed in a position of trust, but had wasted his master's goods--perhaps speculated with his money, made false entries in his books, or something else of that kind. Well, the truth came out at last, as it generally does sooner or later, and he was at his wits end what to do. No thought of repentance enters into his head; he has got on a wrong road, and he found it, as we all find it, very hard to get out of it.
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And so, knowing the men with whom he has to deal, he sends for some of his master's debtors, and, in order to make them his friends and to establish a claim on them for help and assistance when he gets into trouble, he alters their bills and makes them less. "And the Lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely." Our Lord does not commend, of course, the dishonesty of his conduct; this we all understand. But he commends his clearness of sight as to what was for his worldly interest, and his promptitude in taking wise and suitable means to further that interest. What our Lord wants to teach us is that we must act for our highest interest in the same clear-sighted, determined, wise, and prudent way in which this specimen of a worldly man acted for the sordid and selfish and foolish ends of

men of this world. Well, my brethren, take these thoughts home with you, and ask yourselves, each and every one of you, how you are acting. Have you an intelligent view of the end you have to attain, of its value and importance, and of the means by which it is to be attained, and are you acting earnestly in order to attain that end?

Sermon CIV.

The Judgments Of God.

_Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity;
that when you shall fail
they may receive you into everlasting dwellings._
--Gospel of the Day.

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My dear brethren, there will come to each one of us a day when all those earthly goods we now enjoy shall fail us, when we shall have to turn our backs on the world and all that it has to give us, and prepare ourselves to stand before him to whom all things that we had and enjoyed belong, and give an account to him of the uses which we have made of them. We have, like the steward in to-day's Gospel, a Lord and Master; and to him we must sooner or later give an account of our stewardship.

And it is only too likely, we may say it is indeed certain, that when that dread moment comes at which this world must be left behind, the charge will also be made against us, as against the steward in this parable, that we have wasted our Master's goods. Our consciences will rise up and condemn us, and anticipate the accusation which shall be brought against us when we shall actually come face to face with God. Then all the security we have had in the thought that we are not murderers, robbers, or adulterers shall vanish; we shall not be able to console ourselves with the idea that we have done no great harm to any one. We shall see how selfish and how sensual our lives have been; that we have wasted for the pleasure of a passing moment the greater part of those gifts which God gave us for his service. Wasted our time, our strength, our knowledge, and our abilities in getting for ourselves the means of gratification or amusement, or in raising ourselves for our own sake to a position of honor or of wealth. We shall see what we might have been, what God meant that we should be, and compare it with what we are. Fain would we then be able to say with St. Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course." Our faith indeed we shall, it is to be hoped, have kept; but we shall feel that our fight has been but a poor and cowardly one, and that we, instead of finishing the course which our Lord laid out for us, have gone over only a very small part of it, and that its goal is far, far away.

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What, then, shall be our hope? For hope we must have if we would not offend God even more then than through life. He commands us to hope; but in what shall our hope be placed?

Where or in what but his mercy? He will take us, grievously deficient as we are, and make the little, miserable offerings which we have to present to him, the remnant of what he gave us,

into some kind of a crown of eternal life, if only we will turn to him with our whole hearts; if we will at least, at that last moment, really believe in him, hope in him, and love him. He that perseveres to the end, he that will not die in mortal sin, shall be saved.

But what shall obtain for us at that last moment the faith, hope, and charity which we need? Who will help us to persevere when the enemies of our salvation are making the most of their last chance to snatch it from us? Will those with whom we have enjoyed life then stand by to help us? It is to be feared that they and all that they have done for us will not avail us much then. No, the friends who will then be most valuable to us will be those, if indeed we have such, whom we have not sought for our own sake, but whom we loved for God's sake. And it is not the riches which we amassed that will then be precious to us, but such as we have given away to those who needed it more than we.

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These are the friends which our Lord, in to-day's Gospel, tells us to make, that they may help us at the hour when our eternal destiny hangs trembling in the balance. These are the friends which may be made by that mammon of iniquity, those worldly riches which are too often the occasion of sin, and whose prayers and blessings may indeed be the means of our being received, in spite of our unprofitableness, into everlasting habitations. Happy is the man who, when he comes to die, knows that God's poor have prayed for him, and have blessed his name.

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Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

1 _Corinthians x._ 6-13.

Brethren:

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

Gospel.

St. Luke xix. 41-47.

At that time:

When Jesus drew near Jerusalem, seeing the city, he wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies

shall cast a trench about thee: and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And entering into the temple, he began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying to them: "It is written: My house is the house of prayer"; but you have made it a den of thieves. And he was teaching daily in the temple.

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Sermon CV.

Justice And Mercy.

And when he drew near, seeing the city, he wept over it.

--From the Gospel of the Sunday.

Which one of the children is best loved by the father and mother? Is there any poor little cripple in the family? That is the favorite child. It makes the parent's heart bleed to see the limping walk or the hunched back, to see the sallow, pain-marked face of the little one. That is the one who receives the warmest caress; for that one the kindest tones and cheeriest words and nicest presents are reserved. Well, brethren, it is the same in the spiritual order. God has his best favors for his most unfortunate children: for men and women in the state of mortal sin. That is one reason why our Lord lavished such affection on the Jews; they had most need of it. Their hearts were the hardest hearts in the world. Jerusalem was the most accursed city in the world. It and its people were on the point of committing the most awful crime possible to our race. Hence our Lord wept over it those bitter tears of rejected love, and breathed those deadly sighs of a heart wearied and disappointed in fruitless efforts for their salvation.

It is true, amidst those tears he told of the persistent obstinacy of the Jews, and of their final impenitence, and of their terrific chastisement. But he did it all with many tears and with a depth of regret better told by tears than words.

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Brethren, there is a deep mystery taught us by this scene. It is the mystery of the union of two sentiments in God which to us seem essentially different--justice and mercy. How could our Saviour weep over a downfall so well deserved? How could he regret what none knew so well as he was to be a punishment all too light for the crimes of the Jews? Is there not a mystery here? How can it be explained? There is no adequate theoretical explanation of it. But there is a practical one, and a very excellent one, too. It is this: Put yourself in a Jew's place; fancy yourself one of that apostate race; stand up before our Lord and listen to his sentence given against you with infinite reluctance--every hard word a sigh of tender regret. Do you not see that this exhibition of mercy in the Judge only renders the justice of the sentence more evident to you and more dreadful? Mercy thus lends to Justice a weapon which, while it only crushes down its victim the deeper, at the same time elevates much higher

in the culprit's eyes the rectitude of the sentence.
Of course, the justice of God and his mercy are perfectly equal. Yet in some true sense we may say that his mercy is more powerful than his justice. Does not the Psalmist say that God's mercy "is above all his works"? Do we not know by observation and experience that where the wrath of God sets apart a single victim his tender love wins over a thousand? Why, the very sentiments of our hearts, the very convictions of our minds by which we earn forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance, are they not the free gift of God, earned by us only because "us" means persons penetrated with light and strength streaming down from the throne of mercy?
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We offer our repentance to God in a kind of a way as children make Christmas presents to their father. Where do they get money to buy them? From their mother, and she saves it up from the household expenses or gets it as a gift from her husband. In the long run the presents were bought by the one to whom they are given. Yet they are very dear to the father; he values them; they are real presents to him; they express a real devotion; they lose nothing of their character of presents because he is at the expense of it all. So with our Heavenly Father. If he gives the gold we coin it; we stamp the beloved form of the Son of God on our poor prayers, so that when they have made the circuit and are back again in the divine bosom from which they sprang forth, somehow we have added something to them.
Brethren, let us hope that when our Lord's tears concerned us it was not in view of our reprobation, but of our salvation. Let us be inflamed, too, with a sense of our ingratitude that we are such unworthy children of so good a Father. A man may swagger and brag down his better self when merely threatened with punishment. But who among you can face, without flinching, the tears of so good a friend as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

Sermon CVI.

Neglect Of Divine Warnings.

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The Gospel to-day tells us, my dear brethren, that Jesus wept as he approached Jerusalem; not for himself, nor for all he was so soon to suffer there, but for the city itself, and for his chosen people, to whom he had given it for their glory and joy. Yes, this beautiful city was their joy and their pride; long before they had been taken from it into captivity by their enemies for a time, and as the Psalmist says, speaking in their name, "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Sion." And he goes on: "If I forget thee, Jerusalem, may I forget my right hand; may my tongue cleave to my mouth if I do not remember thee, if I do not make Jerusalem the beginning of my joy."
And now this city of theirs was to be taken from them again by a more grievous and fatal disaster than it had ever yet suffered. They were to be scattered from it all over the world to do a long penance for their sins and their rejection of him who had come to redeem them. And our Divine Lord's Heart yearned for them, for these his creatures, and at the same time his brethren and his

countrymen. Fain would he have saved them, if they would but have been willing, from the terrible sufferings they were to undergo. Gladly, as he says himself, would he have sheltered them, if they would even now have come to him, from the tempest which was about to break upon them from the justice of God. He wept because they would not come and avail themselves of his love.

We should pray for them that the day may be hastened when they shall return and acknowledge their true Messias, their own Lord and Master, the only true King of the Jews. But they are not the only ones to weep for; they are not the only ones whom he has loaded with favors, and who have been ungrateful; there are others besides the Jews whom Almighty God has chosen for his people, but who have rejected him and distressed his loving heart.

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Who are they? They are in general all sinners, but especially such as are Catholics; they are those souls for whom Jesus has done so much from their earliest years, in the midst of whom he has lived and wrought so many works of power and goodness; those whom he has enlightened with his truth, those whom he has warned against sin, those whom he has borne with so long and forgiven so often, those whom he has fed with his own Body and Blood. And yet, through evil habits, by frequent mortal sin, they live on, deaf to his warnings, despising his love, not knowing the time of their visitation, until evil days and a sad ending come upon them. Can we wonder that their enemies, the evil one and their bad habits, compass them round about, and straiten them on all sides, and beat them down and leave them wasted and desolate? Can we wonder that, since they would not bear the sweet and ennobling yoke of Christ, they will be forced to groan in the fetters of Satan and be exiled for ever from the true Jerusalem, the home of peace, which is above? No, brethren; such is the fate of those who persistently abuse God's grace, who reject his mercy and his efforts to save them. God forbid that such a career, such an ending, be ours. Let us, then, take warning; let us be careful about temptations; let us not presume on our own strength nor on God's goodness in the past; let us not make light of anything which is dangerous or forbidden. Let us endeavor not to grieve our Lord by any infidelity, great or small, but try to be faithful to every grace in this the day of our visitation, and to follow the things that are for our peace here and our happiness hereafter.

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Sermon CVII.

Living From Day To Day.

If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace.
--St. Luke xix. 42.

The fault of the Jews, my brethren, was twofold: boasting of the past and waiting for the future. It is especially on account of the latter fault that our Lord in this day's Gospel lays such stress on the words "and that in this thy day." It is a warning against trying to live in the future.

We all know, to be sure, that one may go to the other extreme, and by a form of sloth be too careless of the future. Some things there are which are certain to come upon us, and their coming must be provided for. There is a judgment to come, and every minute of to-day is like a bailiff busy gathering evidence for that Divine Court. Temptation is sure to come, and its strain upon our virtue must be foreseen in every prayer of every day. The common wants of life for one's self and family are inevitable in the future, and must be prudently provided against. In all such things we know that the future is an actual fact, and is just as present to God as this very instant is to us.
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What our Lord would rebuke is not a prudent foresight, but that weak and idle state of mind which postpones to the future what should be done at once. This is the commonest of human delusions. In a temporal point of view it is condemned by the saying, "Procrastination is the thief of time," and it might be added of many other valuable commodities. In a spiritual point of view the dreadful result of delaying till to-morrow what should be done to-day is expressed by the saying, "Hell is paved with good intentions." Wise men resolve to do in the future only what they cannot do now. Many and many a poor soul has lost the kingdom of heaven for that one reason: resolving instead of doing.
Brethren, a practically-minded Christian lives his spiritual life from day to day. He knows that the future is something entirely in God's hands. As for himself, his actual ability to do good begins and ends with each passing hour. If he provides well for it as it comes and goes he has done his part; God will not fail to take care of the future. One's peace of mind is never secure till one has learned to be content with present duty well done. Oh! what a happiness when one's soul is unburdened of care for the future. Do you covet that happiness? It is yours if you leave nothing undone for the present. If you can honestly say, "That is all I can do for the present," you may add, "and the future also."
But, you say, what about a purpose of amendment? Does not that dwell specially on the future? Yes, it does; but it springs from a present sorrow. And if the sorrow be as heartfelt as it should be the purpose of amendment will take care of itself. A deep hatred of sin is the only true sorrow, and such a hatred must be enduring. The test of a contrite man is not what he promises but what he does. His sorrow unites the past and future in the present. Warned by his past weakness, he begins right here and just now by prayer and work to guard against a future relapse.
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Learn a lesson, brethren, from our Lord's warning and from the fate of the Jews. It is better to say one's morning prayers to-day than to resolve to become a saint next week. To-day is here, and next week is nowhere. This day is mine; I know not if I shall have so much as one other. God has the past and the future. I will thank him for the past, I will beg him for the future. As to the present, with God's help, I will set to work to do my utmost.

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Tenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

1 Corinthians xii. 2-11.

Brethren:

You know that when you were heathens you went to dumb idols, according as you were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, saith Anathema to Jesus. And no man can say, The Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. To one, indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom: to another, the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit: to another, faith in the same Spirit: to another, the grace of healing in one Spirit: to another, the working of miracles: to another, prophecy: to another, the discerning of spirits: to another, divers kinds of tongues: to another, interpretation of speeches: but all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one as he will.

Gospel.

St. Luke xviii. 9-14.

At that time:

To some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others, Jesus spoke this parable: Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor such as this publican. I fast twice in the week: I give tithes of all that I possess.

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And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven; but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner! I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Sermon CVIII.

Sympathy for Sinners.

_O God, I give thee thanks
that I am not as the rest of men,
extortioners, unjust, adulterers,
nor such as this publican._
--St. Luke xviii. 11.

Did you never notice that pride and hardness of heart go together? That miserable Pharisee could not enjoy his self-glorification without condemning his neighbor, a person, as it happened, far more deserving than himself. Indeed, the worst vices seem to love each other's company as if they were all blood relatives. Coveting our neighbor's goods, for example, goes along with stinginess of our own; gluttony and lust are twins. Almost

the same may be said of oppressing others and disobeying lawful authority; and in this hateful Pharisee we behold the union of pride in one's self and contempt for one's neighbor. The sinner seems to be bound with a chain every link of which is double.
Now, brethren, this is a fault often found in far better souls than this haughty Pharisee. Many of us have too little sympathy for persons whom we know to be in mortal sin. To be sure, it is no harm to rejoice that we are at friendship with heaven. But the worst of it is that some of us are never really happy at the thought of our own virtues till we are quite miserable over our neighbor's wickedness; and when we say with our lips, How wicked So-and-So is! our heart whispers, And how good I am!
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The spirit of correction possesses many good people--a spirit commonly the sign of hidden pride. No sooner do we take the first steps in amendment of life than we are divided between rejoicing in our own goodness and lamenting over other folk's vice. I know not what we good people should do for something to talk about were it not for our neighbor's shortcomings.
Brethren, this vanity is very foolish and very dangerous. Who dare say that he has nothing to fear from the judgments of God? Who can count himself safe so much as one day from his own natural feebleness, or from the wiles of Satan, or from human respect? And if we do rightly trust in God's favor, how can we forget that progress in virtue is a necessary condition of our remaining virtuous at all? Now this progress means simply a right knowledge of our remaining defects and a solid purpose to overcome them; something with which the vice of the Pharisee is quite incompatible. Nothing so blinds us to our own little faults as too much regard for our neighbor's big ones. Doubtless it would have been just as difficult for the Pharisee to correct his harshness of voice, or his lofty bearing, or his patronizing airs as to overcome his great sin of pride itself; and such is the case with many of us. The beam in our neighbor's eye looks so shocking that we quite forget that we have quite a squint in our own eye from various little motes in it.
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Be certain, therefore, brethren, that, if you find hard feelings in your heart toward sinners, you have no long journey to make before you discover the capital sin of pride in your own. Why can we not leave judgment to God, and treat poor sinners after our Lord's example, praying and suffering for them? I do not mean to say that we should forget to mention to them the awful chastisements of God; indeed, a truer friend does not exist than one who warns us of our future destruction, and some, such as parents, are in duty bound to give such admonition. But in the treatment of moral maladies we should bear in mind that bitter words and harsh looks spoil good medicine. And especially should we bear in mind that we have had our own wicked days.
Let us, therefore, regard sinners with much tenderness, dropping out of our view while we deal with them our own darling selves. Let us realize that we ourselves are poor souls, quite capable, but for God's singular favor, of falling into the worst state of sinfulness.

Sermon CIX.

Morning Prayers.

Two men went up into the temple to pray.
--From the Gospel of the Sunday.

The lesson of this day's Gospel, my brethren, is prayer; its necessity and its humility. Our short sermon must be contented with a little corner of this great field--that is to say, morning prayers.

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Suppose that your child is sick, what is your first word in the morning? It is, How is the baby this morning? Then follows much more: I think it is a little better to-day; it seems easier; or it passed a bad night; I hope the day will be cool, for it suffers from heat. So, anxiety for your poor little child consecrates your first thoughts and words to its welfare. And do you not know that your poor soul is either sick or runs the risk of catching a deadly sickness every day you live? There are bad sights on the streets that tend to sicken it; there are snares of the devil, such as cursing and foul-talking companions, bad reading and saloons; there is a spiritual cancer within--I mean the temptation of the flesh--which can only be kept from destroying the soul's life by constant and severe treatment. Now, thoughts and words do your sick child little good; but they are the very best things for the soul, especially early in the morning. The man or woman who kneels down and says the morning prayer guards against temptation, heads off the noon-day demon, and provides that happiest of evenings, that is to say, the one which follows an innocent day.

There's a saying against braggarts and promise-breakers that "fine words butter no parsnips." It is not true of words said in charity to our neighbor or in prayer to God. Sincere words addressed to God as the day begins sweeten every morsel of food the livelong day, lighten every burden and weaken every temptation. Why, then, are you so careless about morning prayers? It can only be because you do not appreciate your spiritual weakness or you do not care what becomes of your soul before bedtime. But somebody might say: Father, can't you tell us something to make the morning prayers easy? It is very hard to remember them, and then it is so pleasant to get even five minutes more sleep, especially in the winter time; and, again, I am always in a hurry to get off to work, etc.

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Now you might as well ask me to tell you something to make you relish a good wash and a clean shirt. If a man does not hate dirt, it is preaching up the chimney to try to make him love to be clean. Prayer cleans the heart. Prayer clothes the soul with the grace of God. Prayer brings down God. Prayer drives away the devil. Or, I might rather say, that for a clean heart, and in order to get the grace of God, and in order to vanquish temptation, prayer is simply and indispensably necessary.

Once a man came to me and said: Father, for years I was addicted to habitual vice of the worst kind (and here he named a fearful sin), but I began some time ago to say the Litany of the Blessed

Virgin every morning and the Litany of Jesus every night, and this practice has entirely cured me of that dreadful habit. Some such story as that, my brethren, every man must tell before he can say that he is delivered from sin.

For my own part, I look upon regular morning prayers as a plain mark of predestination to eternal life. "Ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you," is our Lord's promise to those that pray; and the best prayer is the morning prayer. Be ready, therefore, to correct yourself for omitting it. The day you forget it go without something you like to eat, put a nickel in the poor-box, double up your night prayers, make a special request to your guardian angel to get you up in good time for morning prayer the following morning. For the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," "Apostles Creed," "Confiteor," and Acts of Faith, Hope, Sorrow, and Charity, that you say in the morning will in the end give you a happy death and the kingdom of heaven.

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Sermon CX.

Feast Of St. Mary Magdalen.

_Many sins are forgiven her,
because she loved much._
--Gospel of the Day.

My dear brethren, no one who has faith can fail to be more or less anxious as to whether he will in the end save his soul. We all know that our faith alone will not save us; that faith, as St. James tells us, without works is dead. And we know that everything depends on the last moment; that as the tree falls, so will it lie for all eternity. So we tremble to think that perhaps that last moment will find us with our sins unforgiven, and all unprepared to meet our Judge; and that, in spite of our having borne the name of Christ, we may be then cast away from his presence into the outer darkness for ever.

Some people, I know, have a very simple way of reassuring themselves about this all-important matter. They think that, of course, when they come to die they will send for the priest; then, if he gets there in time, of course there can be no question about their salvation. And even if he does not, perhaps they would not altogether despair; certainly their friends will not despair of them. God, they think, will not utterly cast off those who have always believed in him; their prayers and those of their friends will certainly obtain them a place in purgatory, and at last they will save their souls, at least by fire.

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But, after all, do not even the most confident of us sometimes have a fear that even the last sacraments may not make our salvation absolutely sure? The last sacraments are not so very different from the others we have received before; and do we always feel fully prepared to die after every Communion which we make? No, there is a haunting fear that something is not right which pursues us even at the altar-rail; we would give much if we could only do something which would take it away altogether.

Let us not be troubled because we have this fear; it is better

not to be entirely free from it; above all, let us not stay away from the sacraments because we have it. If we stay away in any case except that of known and certain mortal sin which is not forgiven, we shall only make matters worse. But still this fear is generally a sign of something wrong; it does not altogether come from humility, or from the desire of salvation. It comes from a want of something which we ought to have; from a want of the greatest of all virtues, of that which includes all others, and brings all others with it--from a want of the love of God. Not an entire want of it, but a want of strength in it, a want of affection; a want of that feeling which we have for our friends, and which, above all, we should have for the greatest and best of all.

Yes, perfect love, as St. John tells us, casts out fear. It is the short cut out of all these worries, difficulties, and anxieties which all who are not hardened sinners must have without it. It was the direct and simple road which St. Mary Magdalen took in escaping from sin.

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She followed the Friend of sinners as he went on his mission of mercy; she saw the miracles of his power and goodness; she saw the love for men which shone in his face and inspired his every word and action, and her heart was touched and melted. She took it away at once and for ever from all those vain things to which it had been attached and gave it truly and entirely to him who had made it, and who had come in sorrow and suffering to win back his own. And her many sins were forgiven because she loved much; because all the powers of earth and of hell cannot put an obstacle between God and the soul that loves him as he should be loved.

If we would only do as she did; if we would put away all these bargainings about just how much we are bound to give to God, and how much we can safely keep for ourselves; if we would love him as she did, not with a mere passing sentiment, but with that devotion and self-sacrificing affection which it is so easy sometimes to give to a mere creature; if we would let him, as he wishes, into our hearts as our dearest and best, and make everything else give place, then fear would pass away, and we should say, "Let God take me when he will; let me suffer what my sins deserve, but surely he will not keep me from loving him." Yes, my brethren, to love God is the one thing necessary; to love him is to save our souls.

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Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

1 _Corinthians xv._ 1-10.

Brethren:

I make known unto you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand: by which also you are saved, if you hold fast after what manner I preached to you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all, which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures: and that he was buried,

and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures: and that he was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then was he seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace in me hath not been void.

Gospel.

St. Mark vii. 31-37.

At that time:

Jesus going out of the borders of Tyre, came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the territories of Decapolis. And they bring to him one that was deaf and dumb; and they besought him to lay his hand upon him. And taking him aside from the multitude, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue: and looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be opened.

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And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And he charged them that they should tell no man. But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

Sermon CXI.

Want Of Confidence In God.

He hath done all things well.

--St. Mark vii. 37.

The spectators of the double miracle related in this day's Gospel were filled with admiration at our Lord's power and goodness; they could not help exclaiming, "He doth all things well." Would to God, brethren, that such a sentiment of our Lord's love and power filled our hearts! Confidence in God, however, is the very virtue many Christians lack most. True, we say and believe that God is infinitely good--that he is mercy itself. But such language is very indefinite and may express a very dim conception. It is something like saying that a stone is very hard or that water is very wet. We are apt to form pictures of God's attributes in our minds, just as a painter may make a portrait of some historical personage he never saw; many of our notions of God are fancy portraits, all imagination.

But just think of the actual grounds of our confidence in our Blessed Lord. Just realize that this wonderful being is filled with the tenderest human love for the worst of us, and has all the divine power at his command--being both man and God--to make good his love by bringing about our spiritual and temporal welfare.

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The Incarnation is the divine Mercy made man for the love of us. Can we suppose that such a being, having begun the good work of

our salvation by giving us the true religion, will leave anything undone, that we will let him do, to bring us to the kingdom of heaven? Do you think that such a loving Father would teach us, his children, A B C except with the set purpose of going clean through to X Y Z? Just think, that it positively never happened that any wretched sinner, how ever degraded, ever implored our Lord's forgiveness and was rejected; nay, that he himself secretly inspires sinners with their grief and horror for their evil ways, and then imparts forgiveness in return for his own gift. The fact is that the question is not whether God will forgive us, but whether we will let him do it. In a word, this infinitely good and infinitely powerful being is bent and determined that we shall enjoy perfect happiness, world without end.

What a wonder, then, that we can treat our Lord in our cold-hearted way! Scrupulous persons treat him as if he were a tyrant; lukewarm Christians treat him like a stepfather; obstinate sinners treat him with open contempt. The practise of prayer, the reception of the sacraments and other aids of religion--we treat them as school-children do their lessons: we do it all because we are afraid of the consequences if we don't. Considering how much God loves us his service should come as easy to us as breathing the air; it should be the element in which we live. If our faith were a little more practical God's loveliness would be as plain to us as the open day and the sun in the heavens.

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Furthermore, and this is still more practical, lack of confidence in God is why we repine at his visitations. It is easy enough to say, be resigned to the will of God, but how can we be content to suffer unless we are penetrated with confidence in the divine goodness? Brethren, you know how we sometimes take medicine. We wrap it up in a pleasant-flavored wafer or hide it in a spoonful of sugar, and down it goes and we never taste its bitterness. So a lively confidence in God, if we only had enough of it, is the sweetness to wrap around the bitter things of life. Temptations, long and wearisome poverty, ill-health, unpleasant companions in the household--these and other such trials are the bitter pills of the soul; when we fairly realize that God means them for our spiritual good we can bear them with patience, even with thankfulness.

Did you ever hear of the witch-hazel, and how people used to fancy that a crooked branch of it thrown into the air would fall on the spot where a good spring of water could be found? Well, the witch-hazel of the Christian soul is just this question: How much confidence have you in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ for you? If that does not reveal the hidden springs of your heart and bring the waters of love gushing forth, then that heart is hopelessly dry.

Sermon CXII.

Devotion To The Blessed Virgin.

Why do Catholics pay so much honor to the Virgin Mary? Are they not doing an injury to her Son by over-honoring his Mother? What

is the reason, the doctrine, of the Catholic's devotion to Mary?
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Very fair questions, brethren; questions which you should be ready to answer with intelligence and kindness. So that now, as we approach the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption into heaven, let us renew our faith in her dignity. What, then, does the Catholic faith teach us about her? It teaches us that she is the Mother of God; and further, that, on account of the foreseen merits of her Son, she was preserved from the stain of original sin; that she was always a virgin; and that it is lawful and profitable to ask her prayers. Such are the articles of faith concerning the Blessed Virgin.

Once you know something about her Son's divinity you easily perceive her dignity of Mother of God. Her title of Mother of God plainly rests upon the fact that her Son is God. Jesus Christ is God; his nature is divine and his person is divine. And here you must bear in mind the distinction between nature and person. He has the nature, being, essence of God. And he has the person of God; for our Saviour is God the Son, second person of the Most Holy Trinity. What, then, is human about him? for we know that he is as truly man as he is truly God. The answer is that he has a human nature as well as a divine nature. He became man; and he did so by taking human nature from Mary, his Mother. But, you ask again, is he a human person also? No, for we have seen that he is the divine person, God the Son. There cannot be two persons in Christ. He is but a single person, one individual, and that is divine. So that the divine personality of the Son of God takes human nature and unites it to the divine nature. The one divine person whose name is Christ, and who is of both divine and human nature, has no human personality, but divine.
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And this is the Son of Mary. Is she not the Mother of our Lord, personally his Mother? Can any one be a mother and not be mother of a person? Is he not personally her son? What a dignity! What a mysterious and wonderful eminence, to be mother of the divine person of the Son of God made man. No wonder that we honor her; although we know full well that all she has of dignity and sanctity she has by no power of her own, but by gift of God, and that she is purely a human being. Those who do not honor Mary fail to appreciate the majesty of Christ; fail to understand the doctrine of the Incarnation; fail to grasp the immensity of the divine love in God becoming man.

No wonder, then, that God should have saved her from the taint of Adam's sin, should have preserved her a spotless virgin, should have saved her pure body from the grave's filth by the Assumption into heaven. The Angel Gabriel tells us what Mary is: "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and thou shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High. ... The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore the Holy (One) that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."
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Now, brethren, to be a mother is to hold an office. It is to

exercise by divine right the highest powers committed to a human being. What wonderful rights a mother possesses! An affectionate allegiance is due her from her son: an obedience instinctive, sacred, supreme; a reverential and hearty loyalty which arouses the noblest emotions in the hardest heart and gives birth to heroic deeds even in men of the weakest natures. A mother is entitled to her son's love by the most sacred of all obligations. Well, just think of it: our Blessed Lord was, and is yet, bound to his Mother by that imperative divine law; he was, and is yet, subject to the sweetest and, for a noble nature, the most resistless impulse to do his Mother's will and to make her happy. He owes her love, obedience, reverence, friendship, support, companionship, sympathy. And he that doth all things well, would he not do his whole duty as Son, would he not be a model Son? Would he not grant her lightest wish while he lived with her on earth, will he not gladly do so now in heaven?

Hence our Lord Jesus Christ spent nearly his whole life in his Mother's immediate company, consenting to postpone for her sake his Father's work of publishing his divinity and preaching his Gospel. Hence he worked his first miracle at her request at the wedding of Cana. Hence he inspired her to prophecy that all generations would call her blessed. Hence, too, our Lord has instilled into every Christian heart some little glow of his own deep filial love for her.

In truth, brethren, whatever Christ's Mother is to him by nature, that she is to us by adoption. Just in proportion to our union with him are we bound to her. And if we wish to know him well we can study in no better school than his Mother's. If we wish to love him tenderly, her maternal heart can best teach us how. And if we have favors to ask him we shall be glad, if we are not too self-conceited, to secure her prayers to assist us.

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Sermon CXIII.
Gratitude.

My brethren, we have had a word to say before this about the vice of ingratitude, and of how mean a vice it is, especially in a Christian. Now let us consider the opposite virtue--gratitude. It is, to be sure, one of the little virtues. Yet how can we call any class of virtues little? No doubt there are, strictly speaking, grades of merit very much higher one above the other. But that is not so much from the action done in each case as from the motive that inspires the action. One saves a man's life for the love of money; another gives a glass of cold water for the love of God. The glass of water is nothing compared to a human life; yet the glass of water will be rewarded for all eternity, and the saving of the human life is paid for as we pay for a load of coal. Brethren, beware of thinking there is any thing to be called little that has to do with God and eternal life; and always bear in mind that, by practising little virtues with an earnest purpose to please God, your merit is according to your heart, and not according to your hand.

I do not intend to speak specially, just now, of gratitude to God; but between man and man gratitude is one of those gentle

virtues that increase our fondness for each other. Gratitude is a short cut to sincere and lasting friendship.
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And if a supernatural motive inspires one's gratitude to his friends, then a holy friendship is the result. Some people complain that they have no friends. I think they are most to blame themselves. Have they never had a favor done them? Why, every one of us has had a score of favors done him every day of his life. Those who bear it in mind, who say a word of hearty thanks, who watch a chance to do a favor in return, never lack friends. Brethren, never forget a favor. Return it if you can, at least in part; but at any rate never forget it. Feel grateful at least; say a thankful word; offer up a prayer for your benefactors now and then. The best use we can make of our memories is to remember our benefactors. Favors done and favors gratefully remembered are the two halves of a happy life. It would be only simple justice if we looked on gratitude as we do on a just debt; for gratitude pays debts, first in good-will, and before long in a more substantial manner. You know that an honest debtor will always try to save a little from day to day to pay his debts. So we can do a little from time to time by way of instalments, so to speak; we can say a daily prayer for our benefactors, write an occasional letter, pay a visit now and then, often praise them to our friends.
Of course, those who have done us the greatest favors are entitled to the deepest gratitude. Now, who has done so much for us as our parents? Certainly, next to God, our parents stand first in the list of our benefactors. Yet many, especially after they have married and settled down in their own families, are wanting in gratitude to their parents. Married persons who are badly treated by their own children should sometimes ask themselves if it be not in punishment for their forgetfulness of their own parents.
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Of course, when we are in middle life, what was done for us in childhood seems very far away; it was diffused over many years; it was a regular habit and course of life; it was bound up in our parents own happiness. But let us bear in mind, all the same, how true and deep the love that inspired it; how unwearied the patience; how self-forgetful the devotion of our parents, and let us seek every chance to make their last years happy.
Brethren, shall I say a word about gratitude due to us of the sanctuary? Has not some priest done you a favor; converted you by a sermon, inspired you to perseverance by his advice in the confessional, soothed your sick and weary heart, or reconciled you to a dreary burden? If so, you ought to pray for him, and especially for your pastors.
But gratitude to God is, of course, the first and best of all. From him we have received all, and, having forfeited every favor, again and again received them back from the divine bounty.

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Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.
Epistle.

2 _Corinthians iii._ 4-9.
Brethren:
Such confidence we have, through Christ towards God. Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God. Who also hath made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the Spirit. For the letter killeth; but the Spirit giveth life. Now if the ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which is done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather in glory? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory.
Gospel.
St. Luke x. 23-37.
At that time:
Jesus said to his disciples:
Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them: and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself." And he said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor?
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And Jesus answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead. And it happened that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, he passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey came near him; and seeing him was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine: and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him: and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go and do thou in like manner.

Sermon CXIV.

The Good Samaritan.

Go and do thou in like manner.
St. Luke x. 37.

How few of us, brethren, are really naturally of a self-sacrificing disposition! How few actually enjoy, for

example, the offices of the sick-room, or so much as a little visit of condolence to an afflicted friend!
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That is why our Blessed Lord, in this day's Gospel, has given us the beautiful parable of the good Samaritan. Although a heretic and schismatic against the law of Moses, he is chosen as a model because he had a tender, compassionate heart, and was willing to put himself to trouble and expense for his neighbor's welfare. The corporal works of mercy, brethren, are the easiest of the ways to the love of God. People are fond of admiring the members of religious orders, who, for the love of God, serve the sick and the aged, the insane and the orphans; often forgetting that if this is good as a life-work for them, it is not bad as an occasional practise of virtue for us living in the world. All around us there are shoulders bending under weary burdens and hearts breaking with insupportable cares: yes, even in one's own household. How often do men deny their wives the pleasure of their company; when Sunday comes, going off with any chance companions and leaving the poor mother to mind the children, to miss Mass, and sit lonely at home the livelong day. How very often do young men think of taking anybody's sisters to some respectable place of amusement rather than their own sisters! I think that if a spiritual thermometer were dipped into such men's hearts they would be found pretty near the freezing point.
But, brethren, the sick-room--ah! that is the place on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho where men and women are oftenest found lying in the direst distress. Have you ever been very sick? If so, you know the value of a little good nursing. A man who was just recovering from a very dangerous sickness told me once that when his head was burning with the fever he would willingly have given a hundred thousand dollars for the cooling, restful relief he enjoyed every time the nurse rearranged the pillows for him.
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And if you cannot be a regular nurse for the sick, there is no reason why you should not pay an occasional visit to the sick-room. You can spend a pleasant quarter of an hour in cheerful conversation. You can relieve some poor, weary watcher, so that she or he may get a little rest. You can take the ailing child from the worn-out mother's arms and let her lie down and rest her stiffened limbs, or go to church to refresh her anxious soul. You can bring some little delicacy to soothe the sick person's palate. You can read some prayers beside the sick bed morning or night; for we all know that in time of illness it is almost impossible to pray one's self. You can lend a hand to set things to rights, to cook a meal of victuals, or wash the dishes, or run an errand to the drug-store or grocery; and ever and always you can say a word of comfort, of hope, of resignation to the divine will--words cheap to give but precious to receive. And when at last death is come your presence may be of the deepest comfort. Then is the time to come forward promptly and help to lay out the Christian corpse; to set up for a night beside that strange, silent guest in the coffin; and, when you find two or three gathered about it, to have the courage to lead in reciting the rosary for the soul's happy repose.

I know, brethren, that there are many kind hearts who zealously practise these lovely virtues. But there are others, especially among the men, who nearly quite forget them. And others still who do them grudgingly, and only after many entreaties. To obtain a kind act from an unwilling heart, and after encountering many excuses, is like blowing a dying fire: before you see the bright coals your face is pretty well covered with ashes and cinders.
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Brethren, let us not be put to shame by the Samaritan. When confronted with persons suffering from poverty, sickness, death, or any misfortune, do like the Samaritan: forget all about their nationality, or acquaintanceship, or religion. Say something or do something in charity and for the love of God; your neighbor's deepest gratitude and God's sure reward will amply repay you.

Sermon CXV.

Our Neighbors.

_Which of these three, in thy opinion,
was neighbor to him that fell among robbers?
But He said, he that showed mercy to him._
--Gospel of the Day.

We are taught in the Gospel of today to love our neighbors as ourselves. Now, if we have this love it shows itself in deeds. If, when we see our neighbor in distress, we pass by, thinking some one else may help him, but _we_ cannot, we are like the proud priest and the Levite, not like the good Samaritan. Our Lord, after describing the charity of this Samaritan, says: "Go and do thou in like manner." We can not pass by our neighbor when he is in extreme necessity without sin; and if his necessity be great we must help him, at least out of our abundance. It is a mistake to think that we are free of obligation in this matter. St. John says: "He that hath the substance of this world and shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?"
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Are not all men creatures of God? Are not all men redeemed by the Blood of Christ? Does God give more of this world's goods to one man than to another because he loves one more than another? Not at all. The poorest in this world's goods may be rich in God's grace. It is plain, then, that if God has charity for all men, we cannot have his grace if we do not exercise charity towards all, and particularly our neighbor in distress. We must love those whom God loves if we love God, and this love must be _active_--"not in word nor in tongue," says St. John, "but in deed and in truth."
We all pray to God for mercy; but if we would find mercy we must show mercy. "Blessed are the merciful," says our Lord, "for they shall obtain mercy." But, says St. James, "judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy." Mercy shall be granted to the merciful, but it shall be denied to the hard of heart. "Deal thy bread to the hungry," says Isaias, "and bring the needy and the harborless into thy house. Then thou shalt call and the Lord shall hear."
St. Jerome says: "I have never known a merciful man to have a bad

death." The word of God encourages us "to redeem our sins with alms and our iniquities with works of mercy to the poor." It says further: "For alms deliver from all sin and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness." We are taught also in Holy Scripture that Christ considers as done to himself what we do for the poor, but that if we refuse to help those in distress it is as if charity were refused to Christ himself. The sentence which shall decide our eternal happiness or woe will be according to our behavior towards our neighbor in distress.
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Let us take care not to be deaf to the cries of the suffering poor; let us rather embrace with affection the lovely virtue of mercy. Bishop Challoner says: "It was mercy which brought the Son of God down from heaven to us, and it is mercy which carries us up to him." He calls "mercy the favorite daughter of the great King." The reward of the merciful will be very great. "He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay him."
Those of us who labor in the sacred ministry and those who do work in the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul meet continually with persons whose distress appeals most powerfully to our charity. How we wish the offerings for the poor were more generous! How we wish God would inspire pious Christians to send in donations for the poor! If you would sometimes send into the church-office envelopes containing money for the poor, what good use we could make of it, and how it would call down the mercy of God upon your souls! Brethren, we have Jesus Christ with us in the persons of the poor.

Sermon CXVI.

Occasions Of Sin.

Who is my neighbor?
--From the Gospel of the Sunday.
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This is a very important question, my brethren. We depend much for our happiness on the kind of persons who live around us and on how they feel to-wards us. Our Lord answers the question by the famous and touching parable of the Good Samaritan. By that parable he teaches us kindness of heart; he makes that the mark of true neighborly conduct. The good neighbor is the friendly and benevolent one. But may we not turn the question around and learn another good lesson from it? I think we can. The Gospel is like a piece of good cloth. You know when a wise mother buys some cloth to make the children clothes she will get a piece that, as they say, will do to turn--that is, when one side is worn out you can rip up the garment and make it over again with the inside turned outside, and so it will last quite a while longer. So we may learn, perhaps, another lesson from the question in the Gospel by reversing it and asking, "Who is not my neighbor?" The saloon-keeper is not your neighbor. Geographically speaking, no doubt he is your neighbor. He takes care to be handy to you. He is on the ground-floor of the big tenement-house you live in, so that you must pass his door to get to your own. Or he is on the corner you must turn twenty times a day. If nearness were the

only mark of a neighbor, the saloon-keeper is very neighborly indeed. But, morally speaking, and in the meaning of our Lord's parable, he is perhaps the last man who can claim to be your neighbor. Yet many honest fellows treat the saloon-keeper not only as their neighbor, but as a partner in their business. They do the hard work; the workingman's share in the partnership is to bend under the heavy hod in the hot sun, or to strike with the heavy sledge on the rocks, or to be half-stifled the livelong day in the hot factory; the other partner has for his share of the work only to smile and pass the bottle.
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You know which one gets the bulk of the profits; or if you do not, the working-man's wife and family know it all too well. How many foolish men are there who have taken this bad neighbor into partnership the most confidential, and not only give him most of their money in return for worse than nothing, but have made him, besides, the managing partner of their leisure, their friendships, and their politics! As to the sorrows that are bred by the saloon-keeper's traffic, he manages to escape them for a time; and may God give him the grace to repent of his sins and fly from their occasion--that is, change his business--that he may escape the divine wrath in the future.
Another very bad neighbor, and one very unworthy of that name, is a certain class of newsdealers. I say a certain class, for I hope that not all news dealers are alike. But there are very many of them who are guilty of the loss of human souls by selling periodicals and books which can only corrupt the mind and heart of the reader. I ask you, Christian parents, what do you think of those who dress out their windows, with bad pictures to lure passionate youth to the early wreck of soul and body? What do you think of persons who actually make a living in selling journals which are but the pictured proceedings of the police courts? O my brethren! how often is the grace of a good confession and Communion destroyed by a few minutes bad reading! How many there are whose first mortal sin has been some act of youthful depravity suggested by what was bought at a newsdealer's! Such news dealers hold Satan's certificates to teach the science of perdition.
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What need has the Evil Spirit to fear the Catholic Church and Catholic school as long as he is not hindered from laying his snares for youthful virtue in every direction, as long as the laws against obscene literature are a dead-letter? Therefore, let Catholic parents furnish their families with good reading, both secular and religious; let them take at least one Catholic paper, and let them patronize and direct their children to patronize news dealers who do not sell dangerous matter.
Of course there are other bad neighbors, such as those who invite you to a public dance, or a moonlight excursion, or a Sunday picnic, or a low theatre. But I think you will agree with me that the commonest vices are intemperance and impurity, and that our worst enemies are those two bad neighbors, the saloon-keeper and the vender of impure literature.

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Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Galatians iii. 16-22.

Brethren:

To Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed. He saith not, "And to his seeds," as of many: but as of one, "And to thy seed," who is Christ. Now this I say, that the testament which was confirmed by God, the law which was made after four hundred and thirty years, doth not disannul, to make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. But God gave it to Abraham by promise. Why then was the law? It was set because of transgressions, until the seed should come, to whom he made the promise, being ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now, a mediator is not of one: but God is one. Was the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could give life, verily justice should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Gospel.

St. Luke xvii. 11-19.

At that time:

As Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he passed through the midst of Samaria in Galilee. And as he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off: and lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was cleansed, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell on his face, before his feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan.

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And Jesus answering, said: Were there not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger. And he said to him: Arise, go thy way, for thy faith hath made thee whole.

Sermon CXVII.
Thanksgiving.

Where are the nine?

--St. Luke xvii. 11.

[USCCB: St. Luke xvii. 17.]

Of the ten lepers whose cure is related in this day's Gospel, only one returned to give thanks, and he was a Samaritan; the others went their way; they were cured indeed of their dreadful disease, but disgraced by our Lord's sad question, Where are the nine?

Thanksgiving, brethren, should follow after God's mercies to us, not only as a matter of justice, but in order to secure the effect of those mercies themselves. Just as, in our bodily life, in order to get the benefit of fresh air, breathing _in_ must be followed by breathing _out_, so the giving of thanks must follow the reception of all divine favors. The grace of God

is to the soul what the breath is to the body; and the body, to live, must not only draw the air in, but give it forth again to make room for new and fresher air. So in the life of our souls we breathe in God's grace and we breathe out thanksgiving.
Thanksgiving is furthermore a matter of justice. The holiest debt we owe to God or man is the debt of thanks. Every honest man gives thanks for favors received from other men, and every upright soul gives thanks to God.
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It is the most indispensable of all our obligations, because it is the least that we can do. In all our traffic with heaven, gratitude is the only coin we can mint ourselves. Thanksgiving is that part of our sanctification necessarily our own. Well, brethren, if this be really true and who can deny it?--then a great many of us are insolvent debtors of the worst kind. Now you hear it said sometimes that the man who does not pay his debts is as bad as a thief, and in many cases this is perfectly true. So the difference between an open sinner and a thankless Christian is that between a thief and a man who by his own fault does not pay his debts. Indeed, we sometimes feel as if God ought to thank us for the favor we do him by condescending to serve him. Confession and Communion and daily prayer, forgiveness of in juries and resisting temptations so puff us up with conceit that we are apt to blame God because in view of our holiness he does not exempt us from the ordinary ills of life!
As a matter of fact it is with God and us as with a storekeeper and his customer. You know why a man cannot get trust at a store; it is because he was trusted before and didn't pay his debts. Now pretty nearly all the pay that God asks for his favors is that we shall give him thanks, and if we will not do that much he can hardly think us worthy of his further bounty. If we do give thanks he multiplies his favors; for he is determined to keep us in his debt, and as fast as we return thanks so much the faster does he lavish his love upon us.
So when we ask why we suffer this miserable stagnation in our spiritual career, perhaps the true answer would be that we are members of a big multiple of that original thankless nine.
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Oh! let us thank God that we have the blessings of the true religion, that he is our Father, Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and the Blessed Virgin Mary our Mother. Let us thank him for his gracious promise of the everlasting joys of Paradise. For these unspeakable favors our thanks should be ceaseless.
Let us give thanks, too, in our fervent morning prayers that we have escaped the dangers of the night, and in our night prayers that we have been saved from the noon-day demon. When we rise from our meals let us offer a word of thanks, making at least the sign of the cross, blessing God for the health he gives us and our family. Let us thank him for our afflictions--yes, even for temptations; for the pains we suffer thereby are the growing-pains of the soul. Especially after receiving Holy Communion let us give long and heartfelt thanks for all God's dealing with us; for we have then received the greatest of all his gifts, his only-begotten Son.

Sermon CXVIII.

Shamelessness In Sinners.

_There met him three men that were lepers,
who stood afar off and lifted tip their voice,
saying: Jesus, Master, have mercy on us._
--The Gospel of the Sunday.

Leprosy, my brethren, is often spoken of in Holy Writ, and is considered a type of sin. It is a loathsome and contagious disease, and when a man was so unhappy as to contract it, besides being driven away by the Mosaic law, he fled in very shame from the company of others.

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So it is with the common run of sinners; one of their direst sufferings is shame, from which comes such remorse, such self-detestation, such reasonable envy of the happy state of the innocent, that, standing afar off, the poor sinner at last lifts up his voice and cries to our Lord for mercy. So there is always some chance for a poor sinner while he is ashamed of himself; where there is shame there is hope.

But, brethren, it happens in our times that there are many sinners without shame. Many great sins are done almost as a matter of course, and some even made matter of jest, perhaps of boast. Need I mention them? Time was that if a man wished to see a vulgar play he was forced to creep up some dark alley; now he may go to a filthy opera in a coach and four, and with the lords of the land, ay, even the ladies of the land. When you and I were boys there was but one commonly known illustrated paper with immoral pictures and bad reading matter; the news dealers now hang their stands all over with them, and young men, and even young women, buy and read them without a blush. You and I can remember when it was a disgrace for a man to idle behind a bar-room counter and get his living from the drunkard and spendthrift. These men make our laws now. It used to be the pride of a young man to get to work as soon as possible to help the old folks along; we hear now too often of hearty young men shamelessly dependent on their parents. And we know of too many parents who are not ashamed of habits of intoxication nor of cursing in the hearing of their little ones.

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And how many mothers of families are there whose harsh voices are heard all over the neighborhood, quarrelling with their husbands and scolding their children! Time was when a drunken woman was what Scripture says she is, "a great wrath, and her shame shall not be hid." Now they publicly send their little boys and girls to the saloon for beer.

Do I exaggerate? Am I not, on the contrary, forced for decency's sake to pass over other shameless sins, which all but the blind and deaf know of among us? Indeed, dear brethren, the word of God is true now as of yore that sinners "preach their shame like Sodom." The lepers laugh at their leprosy. They run in among us to blight us. Their disease, that blight which withers the soul with eternal decay, they rub off upon us. They do it by bad example, by laughing at the simple virtue of good Christians, by

jesting and mockery, by bullying, by ill-gotten riches and ill-gotten power.
But we must remember that they are all this time really sinners, and worse than ordinary sinners, because without shame. Here, then, is our first duty; not to permit human respect, worldly position, or a bullying tongue to silence our love of God's honor, our detestation of what does it harm and our pity for the sinner himself. A good remedy against shamelessness in sinning is just a little plain talk. If sometimes, instead of laughing at a vile jest, we should say, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," we should please God and save souls. In the family, especially, parents should create a sound family opinion about places and persons and reading and amusements and all things else that lead to sin: bad theatres, moonlight excursions, public balls, liquor stores, and beer-gardens. A little plain talk, accompanied by good example and much prayer on the part of good Christians, will do a great deal, if not to cure the leprosy of sin in those who have it, at any rate to keep the lepers standing afar off from the uncontaminated and innocent.

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Sermon CXIX.
Dangers Of Venial Sin.

_I know thy works,
that thou art neither hot nor cold._
--Apocalypse iii. 15.

It is plain that these words of Holy Writ describe a person in the state of venial sin; or rather one who is in that state wilfully and quite careless about it. Now, my brethren, I do not wish to make you scrupulous, but there is no mistake about this; all experience shows that persons careless of venial sins are pretty sure to slip down into mortal sins. Indeed (on the other hand), about the only ones who manage to keep clear of mortal sins are those who are fearful of falling into venial sins. Save the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves; or, waste the pennies and the dollars will waste themselves. Scripture applies this as follows: "He that despiseth small things shall fall little by little." If one keeps the dogs and goats out of the garden the cows will have small chance to get in. Keep a watch on the venial sins and the mortal sins will keep out of sight.
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And does it not stand to reason that, if one is habituated to look keenly after little sins, it is morally impossible for him to be carried away by great sins? If you are anxious and distressed because your soul seems less pure, less holy, less beautiful than it ought to be, with what horror will you be filled at the bare thought of becoming a regular slave of the evil spirit! And how much easier is it, brethren, to keep a sharp lookout for a few little trifles, rather than to be always running the risk of eternal woe!
And now I will tell you of some of those who are full of venial sins, and pretty sure to be sooner or later in a state of mortal sin. Those who are content with their Easter duty--a soul content

with a spiritual meal once in twelve months cannot have very vigorous spiritual health or a very strong appetite for divine things. Those who are often late for Mass--once in a while they will miss it altogether, and for no particular reason, except that they feel it a great bore to have to do anything for the love of God. Those who continually neglect their morning prayers: even though they make an effort to say their night prayers, they have omitted deliberately the most necessary religious act of the day. Those who are addicted to idleness; for that is one of the worst occasions of sin, both mortal and venial. Those who are stingy, especially to their near relatives and the poor; to love money is to love something our Lord has a great contempt for. Those who are touchy and resentful; for they cannot live in peace with anybody, and peace is necessary for our spiritual welfare. Those who tell improper stories, and are fond of hearing others do it; but as to this class, I am not sure but that they are in mortal sin already: "Can a man put fire in his bosom and not be burned?" Those who are fond of gossip; for God will not permit us to trifle with our neighbor's good name, and gossipers and tale-bearers are often not in mortal sin, only because, malicious as they are, they are just as stupid.

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Those who, though they don't get drunk, yet hang around saloons, and those who are fond of drinking and treating; and this is a case, my brethren, where only judgment-day will tell where venial sin ends and mortal sin begins.

Dear brethren, the only really safe way of dealing with God is the generous way. Arouse yourself with high and noble motives to be a real friend of God, faithful and true in things little as well as great, and religion will seem something new and ever so much pleasanter to you. Otherwise you will not have the comfort of being sure of God's friendship at all. You may be like an old lady who once told me very sorrowfully about how her daughter died. "I was watching at her bedside," she said, "and, after a long spell of suffering, she dropped off at last into a gentle slumber. I turned down the lamp and stepped softly into the next room, waiting to hear her call me when she woke up. An hour passed, another hour, a third, and still she slept on. Finally the doctor came, and so we had to wake her up. But oh! when we came to the bedside we found her dead, cold and dead, while I thought her asleep." So your soul may seem to you only sleeping, only lukewarm in God's service, only careless about your religious duties; whereas it may be all the time, if not in the very state of spiritual death--mortal sin--at least in the torpor which goes before it.

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Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Galatians v. 16-24.

Brethren:

I say then, walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to

another: so that you do not the things that you would. But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcraft, enmities, contentions, emulations, wrath, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envy, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.

Gospel.

St. Matthew vi. 24-33.

At that time Jesus said to his disciples:

No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?

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And which of you by thinking can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. And yet I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. Now if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven: how much more you, ye of little faith? Be not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathen seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Sermon CXX.

The Poverty Of Christ.

For after all these things do the heathen seek.

--St. Matthew. vi. 32.

In this day's Gospel our Blessed Lord would teach us that the difference between men is the difference between the objects for which they live. And he lays down the fundamental law of his kingdom, that if the chief object of one's life is the enjoyment of the things every where about us--eating and drinking and money and lands--he has therein a mark of belonging to the kingdom of this world. To belong to our Lord's kingdom we must live for none of these things as the end of our endeavors. We may, indeed, have and use the things of this world, but for higher purposes than the world itself can offer; as far as any enjoyment in them is concerned, it is too trifling a matter to engage our serious

pursuit.
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Yet, brethren, is not the whole Christian world absorbed in seeking after what should be the heathen's peculiar treasure? Is not this the most anxious inquiry, How shall I get rich? Is not the possession of riches deemed the most enviable happiness? Is it not the best praise of an individual that he is prosperous, and of a nation that it is wealthy? What a serious lesson it is, therefore, that our Lord expresses his contempt for what is deemed the height of human wisdom among us--a contempt no less profound because so gently expressed! If--he as much as says--if you and I are to make choice of beauty, you may choose King Solomon's wardrobe with all its jewels, and I will take the new-blown lily; if you talk to me of foresight and skill in the business of life, you may admire the successful speculator, but the little sparrow is my model.

And our Lord's life was fully in accord with his doctrine. For it was of set purpose that he saw fit to lack those things that nearly all men covet most; that he was the child of a poor maiden, and the apprentice of a country carpenter; that he was a wanderer barefoot and needy about Judea, yet all the time the only-begotten Son of the Lord of all majesty; that he was seemingly a tried and convicted malefactor, and died naked and all but alone upon the gibbet, yet all the time the immortal King of ages.

The truth is that this unhappy overvaluing of the more lowly things of life is a fault deeply rooted in our fallen nature. That the eager pursuit of wealth is not compatible with God's service; that it is the peculiar province of the heathen we indeed know.
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And we know that the human soul is too noble a being to expend its dearest action to purchase any perishable thing whatever. Yet very many persons who deem themselves good enough Christians are quite proud of their success in the heathen's way of life. And many other Christians fall into downright despair because God has deprived them of the things that "the heathen seek." Far be it from us indeed to underestimate the burden of poverty, or to say that it is an easy thing to suffer it. God knows that it is a terribly hard thing to be poor; to see one's family suffer actual hunger; to wander about the streets with no roof to cover one; to lie helplessly sick and be too poor to get proper food or medicine. But on the other hand it is wrong to act under such circumstances as if all were lost, or as if God hated us; that is the very time to arouse one's faith in God's love and one's reliance on his promises; to seek his consolation in the holy sacraments; to raise one's eyes hourly to his countenance by fervent prayer that he may relieve the burden, or at any rate grant patience to bear it.

Oh! how few there are who gladly and heartily choose the Kingdom of God and his justice in preference to the treasures of this world! How few there are who do so even grudgingly and doubtfully!

Yet the doctrine stands: to labor for a postponed reward is the

Christian's life, and for a present reward the heathen's. To pass by a seen and present joy for the sake of an unseen joy is the Christian's wisdom. To trust the voice of an unseen benefactor--in a word, to walk in the darkness of a supernatural faith--is the fundamental virtue of our religion.

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Sermon CXXI.

Brotherly Love.

But the fruit of the spirit is charity.
--Epistle of the Sunday.

Mark these words, brethren; for they describe the Christian religion, at least as far as its practical effects are concerned. The presence of the Holy Ghost is known by a kindly disposition, a friendly feeling towards others, a longing to make others happy, an affectionate sympathy for their sufferings; and all this for the love of God. So St. John says: "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren." The necessary result of sanctifying grace is a deep attachment to our friends and a loving forgiveness towards our enemies. "For all the law," says St. Paul, "is fulfilled in one sentence: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Kindness of heart, generosity, self-forgetfulness, done to be like Jesus Christ, is the beginning and the end of our holy faith.

"I give you a new commandment," said our Lord to his disciples, "that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you love one another." Again: "By this shall men know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another." He thus tells us what his law is--fraternal charity; that is the newness of life man got from heaven above; that is the torrent of heavenly influence rushing down upon us and bearing us away upon its billows; and that is the mark set upon us by which we know ourselves, and others may know us, to be the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

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But somebody might say, How about the love of God? Is not the love of God the end of all religion? Is it not our first duty to love God so strongly that we prefer him to all things else, even our nearest relatives? Is not the love of God the one absorbing duty of our lives? In answer, my brethren, I have only to say that that is but another way of looking at the same thing; for since the coming of our Lord among us God has become man, and we are born in holy baptism, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." When our Lord, true God as he was, took human nature, he took our poor nature just as it is, saving its sinfulness; and it is his blessed will that one by one every man, woman, and child in the world should personally be joined to his divine nature by baptism, and, as St. Peter says, be made partakers of the divinity he possesses. And even the poor, unbaptized heathen, they are to be gifted with this divine privilege by our love for them and our loving efforts to give it to them. Now do you not see why our Lord, his Apostles, and his church made so much of the love of one's neighbor? And do you not see that, whether you begin to love with God or with man,

if you do it along with Jesus Christ, you do it with the God-man, and therefore always in God and never out of man?
Yet another might say: But, Father, what about the sacraments, and what about the practice of prayer, and what about the laws of the church? I answer by a comparison: Why do men plant and then reap a field of wheat? That they may in due time get the grain, make bread of part for themselves and families, and sell the rest to their neighbors.
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Now, some may use the very old-fashioned way of thrashing out the grain by the tread of oxen, and others by the beating of the flail, and others by the great, roaring thrashing-machine. The last way is the quickest and cleanest and best. So our Lord, when he became man, invented the sacraments; he established his church as the new and best way of obtaining the ripe fruit of the Holy Spirit, and that way he commands us to use. So the man who really loves his neighbor as himself learns to do it by using our Lord's methods, the sacraments, and he cannot get along without them. So, brethren, cultivate more and more this sweet Christian virtue of fraternal love; and especially in your families. When the children cry, when they are sickly and peevish, when others are cross and exacting, when some are dull and stupid, when the meals are too late or the food is not cooked right, when the thousand-and-one annoyances of living with others vex and harass you, remember that you are a Christian, and that loving patience, great good nature, fondness for friends--to say nothing of zeal for the conversion of poor sinners--are virtues that will win you the kingdom of heaven.

Sermon CXXII.

Religion For Week-days.

_No man can serve two masters. ...
You cannot serve God and Mammon._
--Gospel of the Day.

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What does our Lord mean by this, my brethren? "No man," he says, "can serve two masters." "Why," you might perhaps answer, "I do not see any difficulty about serving two masters. What is to prevent a man, for instance, after his regular hours of work are over, from hiring himself out for the evenings to some other employer, if he has strength enough to spare? Or, if he can make such an arrangement, why should he not work for one in the morning, and another in the afternoon? And are there not, in fact, many people, teachers, for example, who give private lessons, who have a great number of employers whom they agree to serve at stated times?"
Yes, this seems true enough. It seems so true that I believe there are many people who, in spite of our Lord's statement to the contrary, divide their service between God and Mammon. They hire themselves out to the devil, or at least to the world during the week, and when Sunday comes round, and they put on their good clothes, they change their master at the same time, and, at least for the time that they are in church, read certain words out of their prayer-books, in which they offer their service to God. And

they do not appear to think that there is anything strange about this. They think that, of course, decency requires that God should want part of their time for his service, and that he is quite reasonable in only asking for one day out of seven; but that he should have any claim on them during the part of the week that he does not specially reserve does not seem to occur to their minds. That is the time engaged to the other master--that is, to their worldly interests or pleasures. They find no difficulty in reconciling the service of God and Mammon at all; they can be good Christians and also men of the world like others without the slightest trouble.
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But I seem to hear some one say, "Father, are you not pushing this matter rather too far? Surely one cannot be in church or saying his prayers at home all the week. Some people may find time to come to early Mass and all the devotions, and live what you may call a pious life generally; but I have to go to my business or my family will starve. What would you have me do?" Well, I will tell you. I do not find fault with any one for attending to his business during the week, and working as much as he is obliged to provide for himself and his family properly; but I must say, by the way, that many people, under this excuse, fall into the snare of avarice, and work early and late to hoard up riches which neither they nor their family need, and which, left to their children, is only too likely to be an occasion of sin. However, I repeat, no one is to be blamed for attending to the proper duties of his state of life; for working at his business, if it is a legitimate and useful one. But what one is to be blamed for is for attending to it as if, instead of being God's business, as it ought to be, it was no business of his at all; as if he had nothing to say about it, and his laws did not apply to it. The delusion that too many Christians are under is that their religious life and their life in the world are entirely separate concerns; that religion, morality, God's laws in general, have nothing to do with politics, business, buying or selling, or what they call practical affairs. They say, If we did not do as others do about these things, we could not get on at all; so they calmly take for granted, even, perhaps, in the confessional, that such things have no moral aspect whatever.
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This is a great delusion and a fatal blunder. A Christian has got to be a Christian first, last, and all the time; one cannot be a Catholic on Sunday, and to all intents and purposes a Protestant or an infidel during the week. If you can't get on on the principle of serving God and trying to find out and do his will on Monday as well as on Sunday, then all I have to say is, "Don't get on." I dare say there is some truth in your complaint; a man who manages his business and daily life generally, as if there was no God in the world, will probably make money faster, and have in some ways a better time, than one will who believes in God and tries to do his will. Very well, then, if you prefer this world to the next, act according to its standard Sunday, Monday, and all the time; but don't try to cut inside of it and get a pass to heaven on the ground that you have used another standard

now and then.

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Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Galatians v. 25; _vi._ 10.

Brethren:

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. And if a man can be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of mildness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so shall you 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 who 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 the 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 do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Gospel.

St. Luke vii. 11-16.

At that time:

Jesus went into a city called Naim: and there went with him his disciples, and a great multitude. And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her: Weep not.

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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: That a great prophet is risen up among us: and God hath visited his people.

Sermon CXXIII.

The Fruits Of A Bad Life.

_Be not deceived, God is not mocked;
for what things a man shall sow,
those also shall he reap._
--Epistle of the Day.

One would think, my dear friends, that the Apostle would hardly have needed to remind any one having common sense, or even a little experience, of such an obvious truth as this. Surely no one expects, when he plants some kind of seed, to have some other

kind of crop come from it. "Do men," says our Divine Lord, "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" No, we are all well aware that if we want to grow any kind of grain or fruit we must sow the seed or plant the tree which produces it.
And yet, strange to say, though we all do acknowledge this law of nature in everything outside of ourselves, we fail to apply it to ourselves, and especially to our souls. In matters simply pertaining to the body we do indeed know that the cause will produce its effect. If we sow the seed of some fatal disease in ourselves we expect it to break out and run its course; we do not believe that, as a rule, tears or even prayers are going to stop it.
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But when it comes to the soul, many Christians seem to think that everything regarding it may be shifted at their own will; that they may go on for years sowing the seeds of all kinds of abominable vices in their souls, and that, later on, whenever they may desire, all this work can be undone in a moment, and those souls, which sin has rotted through and through, can be put right back where they were as they came from the baptismal font, or even set on a perfect level with those in which the seed of every virtue has been implanted and carefully nurtured from childhood.
Ah! my dear brethren, this is a great and a terrible mistake. Hear the words in which St. Paul continues: "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." "He that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption." Here is the great evil of sin, which repentance, however sincere, cannot utterly undo. True contrition will, no doubt, especially if accompanied by the Sacrament of Penance, take away the guilt of sin; but unless it be very intense, and accompanied by an extraordinary love of God, like that of the great saints, it will not, in releasing from guilt, remedy all the deformity which long-continued habits of vice have worked in the soul. Yes, sorrow may come in such an overflowing torrent as to break down and sweep away all obstacles in its path; but how often does it come so? To have such sorrow for sin is a rare and remarkable grace from God which the sinner has no right to expect.
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All this is specially true, as the words of the Apostle teach us, of the sins of the flesh, such as drunken-ness and impurity. The body will hang on to sin after the soul has given it up, and will drag the soul again down with it. Oh! that those who are addicted to these horrible sensual habits would realize their danger, and feel the net which the flesh has been weaving round their spirit. But no; they go on from week to week, from month to month, making, it may be, now and then a feeble effort to escape; but too often it can be seen after each confession, though they are indeed on their feet again, that the odds against them are greater than ever, and that their weapons are dropping out of their hands.
Brethren, grace is powerful, surely; but you are much mistaken if

you think it is going to destroy and make of no effect the law of nature. Rouse yourselves to the combat which is before you while there is yet time; for the time may come, and perhaps sooner than you think, when the corruption of the flesh will quench the feeble spark of contrition which God has hitherto given you, and in which lies your only hope.

Sermon CXXIV.

Sins Of Parents.

And Jesus said, Young man, I say to thee, arise.
--St. Luke viii. 14.

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Many mourning parents, brethren, are represented by the poor widow of Naim, told of in this day's Gospel; and their mourning is for sons dead in mortal sin. These are indeed days of many and various vices, and our young people are far from being exempt. Blasphemy and religious indifference; neglect of prayer, Mass, and the sacraments; drunkenness and impurity; such are the plague-spots on the spiritual corpses of many of our young people.

Yet, alas! as parents raise their eyes to our Lord's gracious countenance and beg his pity, they should sometimes confess that they are not without blame for their misfortunes. Many parents spoil their children by bad example. For if they profane the name of God in the midst of their families, they need not be surprised to find that in after-years their children have no reverence for God or for his church or his sacraments. Fathers who come home smelling strong of drink, and now and then plainly intoxicated, may indeed hope to save their own souls by thorough repentance, but are likely enough to have drunkards among their children. Parents who tolerate improper language in the household, and can laugh at a double-meaning joke, and see no harm in a lascivious dance or a doubtful novel, need not be surprised to find that their daughters have lost maidenly reserve, and that their sons are given to open debauchery. Parents who neglect their Easter duty, and who easily excuse themselves from Sunday Mass, need not be surprised if their children fall quite away from the practice of religion and even from its belief.

Now, it often happens that children who have been treated too leniently while quite young are treated too severely when a little older. Too much authority should not be used with boys and girls who are some years in their teens.

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With them authority is at best a medicine, and not a food. To strengthen a boy's virtue, to make him love religion, to give him a bright notion of the next world and of the value of his soul, the exercise of authority is one means, but perhaps the least useful of all. In some cases authority can only do harm. To make a person who has full use of reason a good Christian it is necessary to put him in the way of intelligent instruction, by giving him good, readable religious matter, books or papers; by persuading him by such inducements as an occasional little present, and by a continual interest in his progress, to keep his place at Sunday-school; by introducing and discussing religious

topics in family conversation, and by interesting him to attend sermons and lectures. Meantime let there be many kind words and much sympathetic conduct, forgetfulness of past offences, patience with natural difficulties and with youthful folly; let all this go beforehand and authority will find nothing left to do.

Brethren, do not suppose that it is always best to _force_ one to do what he ought to do; try rather to induce him, to attract him. St. Francis de Sales says: "You can catch more flies with one drop of honey that with a barrel of vinegar"; and he also says: "For every ounce of good advice add a pound of good example."

Therefore it is that so many scolding parents end by becoming weeping parents. Parental authority, which should be merely the supremacy of all that is worthy of affection, has made home hateful and driven the children into occasions of sin--the saloon and the low theatre for the boys, the stolen interview and the common dance for the girls.

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But, some one might say, what if your child has got beyond you and will be bad in spite of every best endeavor on your part--what then? Well, at any rate there is no sense in railing at him. If you can not make him better, what is the sense of making him miserable? And is not then the very time to lay him, spiritually speaking, in his coffin, and lead our Lord up to him, and, kneeling down, say: O Lord! have pity on me, for this is my dear son, dead in mortal sin? Say but the word; touch his dead soul with thy loving hand; stir him up to repentance!

Many such prayers cannot be said without producing their effect: the resurrection of your child's soul from the death of mortal sin.

Sermon CXXV.

The Law Of Charity.

_Bear ye one another's burdens,
and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ._
--Epistle of the Day.

The law of Christ, dear brethren, is essentially a law of charity. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." This is the whole law of Christ summed up, and it is plain that this is a law of love. But the Apostle bids us bear one another's burdens that we may fulfil this law, which, as is evident from the text just quoted, imposes upon us the love of our God and of our neighbor. How, then, will the bearing of others burdens help us to serve God better?

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That we have burdens, and some of us rather heavy ones, is clear enough; and that most of us are only too willing to have some one help us to carry them will be, I think, generally agreed to. Every one has his own difficulties; every one has something which he would like to get rid of if he could, because it interferes with his comfort. Now, I do not think the Apostle wished us to suppose from his words that God would have us free each other

from _all_ suffering, since that is not possible, as we know that hardship forms a necessary part of our probation. We must expect to have something to suffer always.

But what he would have us do, it seems to me, is to help each other by counsel and material aid, to make what otherwise might be almost unbearable easier to carry. "My yoke is sweet and my burden light." This is the spirit he wishes us to strive after. It is an unselfish spirit he desires for us, such as will make us forget our own sufferings in ministering to the wants of others. He wants us to cultivate charity; to look beyond ourselves and our own interests, and take up the troubles of our brethren.

But you say to me: "I do not see what advantage there is in all this; if I take another's burden, I am but adding to my own." It is just here that our really helping each other appears. It is by this very assistance we give our neighbor that we fulfil the law of Christ, which demands suffering of us. For by our sympathizing with others and sharing in their difficulties our own burdens become lighter. If we simply took care of ourselves and were forgetful of all the rest of the world, we would chafe beneath our load; we would be so wrapped up in ourselves that nothing could persuade us that our sufferings were the very best things that could befall us.

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By helping our neighbor we help ourselves. We are led to be reconciled to our lot, to expect nothing more from God for ourselves than what we see others getting. We know that they have as just a claim upon him as we, yet they have their troubles as well as we. The road to heaven is open to all, but all must take what they get as they go along, and be thankful for it and make no comparisons. All get a goodly share of what is disagreeable to nature on the way; our own portion differs only in kind and quantity from that of others.

By helping our neighbor, too, we fulfil, as the Apostle tells us, the law of Christ, for the law of Christ is charity--love towards God, love towards our fellow-man. Our stooping to our neighbor's need fosters God's love in our souls no less than love of our neighbor. It makes us go to God as our Father and recognize his justice. We perceive the necessity of mortifying our rebellious appetites and placing ourselves entirely in God's hands. How much happier, how much better Christians we would be did we but bear each other's burdens! Then we would soon learn what now seems so hard: that the yoke of Christ is indeed sweet and his burden truly light.

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Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Ephesians iii. 13-21.

Brethren:

I beseech you not to be disheartened at my tribulations for you, which is 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 with power by

his Spirit 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 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 ask or understand, according to the power which worketh in us: to him be glory in the church, and in Christ Jesus, throughout all generations, world with out end. Amen.

Gospel.

St. Luke xiv. 1-11.

At that time:

When Jesus went into the house of a certain prince of the Pharisees, on the Sabbath day, to eat bread, and they were watching 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 whose ass or his ox shall fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer him to these things.

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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 highest place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited by him: and he who invited thee and him, come and say to thee: Give place to this man; and then thou begin with blushing 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.

Sermon CXXVI.

Christian Humility.

He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

--Gospel of the Day.

As we hear these familiar words, my brethren, some of us will perhaps be inclined to say, or at least to think, that this matter of humility is just a little threadbare, so to speak; that we have already heard pretty much all that can be said about it. I dare say this is true; but when a thing is very important it has to be spoken of quite often. And humility is very important; after the love of God and of our neighbor, there is nothing more so. In fact, the difficulties in the way of loving God and our neighbor as we should, come, we may say, entirely from our inordinate love of ourselves; and this inordinate love of ourselves generally takes the shape either of pride or sensuality. In other words, pride and sensuality are the two great causes of all our sins; what wonder, then, that our Lord

should warn us so frequently about them?
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And the very fact that we think we have heard enough about humility shows that we are not so humble as we ought to be. If we think that we are well up in this matter, it is a good sign that we are not. Many people will say, especially when they are on their knees, "Oh! I am a miserable sinner; I am everything that is bad"; but when they get up from their knees, and look around them, you will find that they think themselves in point of fact pretty nearly as good as anybody else, and perhaps, on the whole, rather better than most people whom they know.
It is not, however, after all, about the matter of goodness that pride is most sensitive. Most Christians, unfortunately, do not try very hard to be saints, and are not very much tempted to be proud of their achievements in that direction. But almost every one considers himself tolerably well gifted in the matter of natural common sense; he thinks his brains about as good as any one else's, though he may readily admit that he has not had so great advantages as another, or, in other words, that he is "no scholar." So, to be thought or called a natural-born fool is a very hard trial for any one's humility; almost all of us, I am afraid, would rather be called a rascal. To be considered bad-looking, that again is a great mortification to some people; or to have one's birth and family despised, to be thought low and vulgar, how many can you find that will put up with that? That is the real reason why you so often hear some one find fault with somebody else for being "stuck up"; it is that when he or she is stuck up I am stuck down.
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You notice, my brethren, that this matter of pride is mostly comparative, as I may say. We should not mind other people being stuck up, if we could only be stuck up too. And it is just here on this tender point that the parable of our Lord in to-day's Gospel touches. He says: "When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest, perhaps, one more honorable than thou be invited." This is where the shoe pinches, this admitting that some one else is more honorable than we are; especially in this country, where every one shakes hands with the President, and all are made, as far as possible, equal. Still, we can manage to admit that there are some who are better entitled to the first place than ourselves; indeed, we cannot well help that. But our Lord would have us go farther than this. He says: "Sit down in the lowest place."
That is the great lesson of humility that is so hard for us to learn. Not to say, "I am a miserable sinner; I am blind, weak, and fallible." Oh! yes, we can say that easily, because we feel that everybody else ought to say it of himself, and probably will say it. But to be ready to acknowledge, especially if the general opinion goes that way, that we are inferior to anybody else, whoever it may be that we may be compared with; to take this for granted, and not be surprised if others agree with us, this is that true humility which is exalted, not by being put in a place where it can be able to crow over others and thus be turned into pride, but by being granted the exaltation of being brought

nearer to God.

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Sermon CXXVII.

Vanity.

_When thou art invited to a wedding,
sit not down in the highest place._
--St. Luke xiv. 8.

It is not many Sundays ago that our Lord's words taught us humility by the spectacle of the Pharisee's pride contrasted with the publican's lowliness. Yet holy church repeats the same lesson to-day by telling us what our Lord thinks of one who is vain enough to take too high a place at the wedding-feast. And indeed, brethren, it takes much teaching for us to learn the corruption of our own hearts. If there is anybody we lack close acquaintance with, it is our own very selves. If there is one book harder for us to read than any other it is the book of our own hearts. Yet in spite of this ignorance of ourselves, either before God or in comparison with our neighbor, we are always tempted to set ourselves up for something far better than we really are, and no less tempted to depreciate our neighbor.

We are too anxious to exercise the same certain judgment about relative merit in spiritual things as we fancy we can do in temporal affairs. You doubtless know the various standards of worldly preference. One person looks around at others and exclaims in his or her secret heart: With what shocking bad taste do such and such ones dress! They must be very vulgar indeed; surely I cannot be expected to demean myself by going in _their_ company. Another says: There is a great deal in social standing. Let every one know his place in the world and keep it; as for me, I am certainly quite above the company of such and such persons.

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Another says: Brains is the standard; good clothes and social position--what are they but miserable vanity and prejudice? But I have brains; and I know it, and can show it; therefore, stand aside for me, for I am entitled to preference.

Now, brethren, what is there in the spiritual life that answers to good clothes? I will tell you: it is certain external practices of devotion. External devotions are indeed necessary for the soul just as clothes are for the body, and if used in the right spirit give one spiritual warmth and adorn the soul with interior virtues. But we must not be vain of them. And what answers in the spiritual life to the consciousness of social position? The remembrance of many years spent in God's service and the various spiritual gifts received from him. But beware of spiritual pride. And what answers to human talents and ability? Facility in prayer, glibness of speech about spiritual things, knowledge of devotional books, and the like. And these may be made a cause of vanity.

So when our Lord looks in among the guests at his spiritual table we may well imagine his saying to one or other of us: Friend, I perceive that you have been trusting a trifle too much to certain external practices; they are very good in themselves, but should

be joined to a deeper and truer contrition for your sins and a more practical use of penance and mortification. I am sorry to make you blush, but really you must step down a few seats lower.
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To another he says: Friend, you are in the wrong place; I know that you have received many graces from me in the past, but I also notice a great want of gratitude on your part; besides this, I see from your present disposition of mind that, if you are left where you are, you are likely to be quite puffed up with vanity. So I will set you down a little lower to a place opposite a good dish of thanksgiving and an other of humility. To another he says: What are you doing there, you who are so fault-finding and overbearing? Do you trust to your knowledge of spiritual things and your pious talk? Your religion consists of words, words, words, and what I want is deeds. So, down with you to the last place at the table; and if I had any place lower than the last you should certainly have it.
Brethren, let us be glad to sit down anywhere at our Lord's banquet; glad of so much as the crumbs from the table. That is to say, the friendship of God is too precious a thing, and too much all his own to give, that we should presume to glory in it. Humility, detachment from our own excellence, willingness to think poorly of our own merits--such are the virtues that underlie all true piety.

Sermon CXXVIII.

Behavior In Church.

And he spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table. --Gospel of the Day.

Our Blessed Saviour in this day's Gospel teaches us a lesson of good order and practical conduct which may be applied in many ways. I will make the application of it this morning to our conduct in church.
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We will consider the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the great feast to which we are invited, the church the banquet-hall, and the pews the places set apart for the guests.
There is nothing more conducive to the pleasure and purpose of an assemblage than the good order and proper arrangement of everything connected with it, and we often hear persons speak of some event in which they participated as being most enjoyable because everything was so well ordered and arranged. Now, all this applies with double force to the public services of religion. Catholics greatly enjoy the public services of the church when every is well ordered and arranged, and there is nothing to distract them or jar upon them. For at every service there is the divine presence, and where perfect order reigns it soon makes itself felt: its calm peace steals in upon the soul, it communes sweetly, and worships "in spirit and in truth."
But in order to secure an external condition of things in our churches so essential to recollection and prayer, each one must know his place and occupy it without delay or confusion, and in our present system of church arrangement each worshipper is

supposed to have his or her special place assigned, and the regular seat in the church has become a requirement of devotion as well as a necessity of church finance.

Hence, to secure a permanent place in the church is a duty of devotion as well as something of an obligation; and we find that truly pious Catholics almost invariably try to secure seats in their parish churches, be they ever so humble. Indeed, Catholics who fail to do this are not apt to be very steady in the practice of their religion; and there can be no doubt as to the neglect of duty in the case.

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To contribute to the support of religion is as much a positive law of the church as to attend Mass on Sundays, and the ordinary revenue for the support of religion comes from the pew-rents. We insist, therefore, that every Catholic who can possibly afford it should have his seat in church; good order requires this as well as duty and devotion. It is a poor business to be all the while occupying other people's pews, and sometimes, perhaps, be required to vacate them. Pew-holders have their rights, and they must be protected in them. Nevertheless, to secure good order and harmony at the services of the church, pew-holders must be willing at times to waive their rights and allow strangers and others to occupy the vacant seats in their pews. This is no more than politeness and common Christian charity demand. To refuse a vacant seat in church to a stranger is selfishness gone to seed, and they are few, I hope, who would be guilty of such vulgarity. But while all who possibly can should have their regular places in church, there will, no doubt, always be a very considerable number who, through poverty or perverseness, will be pew-holders at large, and to them I would also address a few remarks. The Catholic Church is the church of the poor! This is our glory and our pride. No one can be too poor to attend the services of the Catholic Church. God is no respecter of persons, nor is his church. The poor are always welcome in her grandest temples, and none should ever miss a single service of religion because they are too poor to hire a regular seat. In this church, thank God, everything is free to them, and there are always vacant seats for them to occupy.

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We not only wish non-pew-holders to occupy the vacant seats in our church, but we insist on their occupying them, for the good order and harmony of the services require that, as far as possible, all should be seated. The only condition we impose is the Gospel injunction: "Do not sit down in the first place" or in the place of another; and if you are told to move up higher, do not refuse. Crowding around the doors is more objectionable than anything else, for there is nothing else that interferes so much with the good order and arrangement of the services. Let me repeat, then, in conclusion, the words of the parable: "Friend, go up higher," and don't crowd around the doors.

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Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Ephesians iv. 1-6.
Brethren:
As a prisoner in the Lord, I 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 vocation. 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.
Gospel.
St. Matthew xxii. 35-46.
At that time the Pharisees came nigh 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 called 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.

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Sermon CXXIX.

Prayer For Sinners.

_And the other is like unto this:
Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself._
--St. Matthew. xxii. 39.

How great must be the dignity of human nature, my brethren, since, as we learn by this day's Gospel, our Lord couples the love of his fellow-men with the love of his own sovereign and divine self! Perhaps if we appreciated the native worth of human nature we should be a trifle more patient with its faults. I mean, of course, other people's faults, for with our own faults we are all too patient.

The practical lesson conveyed by the commandment, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," is that it is our duty to love sinners and to pray for them. To love good people is easy enough, and we think a man a kind of a monster who has not at least one or two dear friends whose virtues have won his love. But it takes a good Christian to love what at first sight seems so hateful--a drunkard, a libertine, an apostate, a bully, a thief. To have an actual, practical affection for such persons, even when one is related to them, seems quite a special thing--a peculiar vocation, a side-path in the spiritual life, and not by any means the common business and regular vocation of every-day Christians. Yet a moment's thought shows that it is, without any doubt, our

Lord's blessed will that we should have a special affection for just such hardened sinners. Are they not men, and are they not purchased by the Blood of Christ?
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How much we mistake our duty in reference to such poor wretches! When you say of one, "Oh! he is a most worthless creature," how surprised you would be if you could hear a whisper coming from his guardian angel: "Jesus Christ thought him worth dying for." And when you say of another, "Oh! I can't bear him; I can't stay a moment in his company," how surprised you would be to hear, "And I, an angel of God, I gladly keep him company day and night." Surely, brethren, there is something worth loving, heartily loving, in a soul that our Lord would die for, and to whom God would give a bright angel as a constant companion. We are like men going through a picture-gallery: we admire only the brilliant and unmistakable beauties displayed there--here a gorgeous sunset, there a fine battle-scene, and again a ship tossing upon the waves. But one of better taste than common, without forgetting all these, will be able to detect the work of a great master, though faded with the lapse of many years and covered all over with dust. So it is with the poor sinner's soul: it is the work of a great master. And what though it be all stained and spotted with mortal sin; is there no such thing as true repentance? Are there no fountains of living waters in the sacraments in which it may be washed whiter than snow? Are there no gems of divine grace with which it may be decked out as a bride waiting for the bridegroom?
Prayer for the conversion of sinners should be far more practised than it is. Why, brethren, look around you in this great city, and if you can count the stars of heaven or the sands of the sea-shore you can count the men and women in mortal sin; and, alas! very many of them belong to our religion. Nay, look about in your own families.
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How seldom will a family be found where there is not at least one member living openly at enmity with God! Now, just here, in the midst of the worst wickedness, are many thousands of devout servants of God, and in every family one or two souls whose very names might be Faithful and True. And God arranges this mingling of good and evil, that the good souls by their prayers may save the bad ones from eternal death; just as in southern countries men plant eucalyptus-trees in low, marshy places, for the eucalyptus, with its fragrant leaves, counteracts the poisonous vapors of the swamp.
If, therefore, you pray for yourself you do well; but do not forget that, if you are a true Christian, the poor sinner is your other self. And if you pray for the souls in purgatory, do not forget that there are many souls about you who are always in danger of hell, and unless many prayers are offered for them they are likely enough to be lost for ever.

Sermon CXXX.

The Christian Vocation.

_I beseech you to walk worthy of your vocation

in which you are called._
--Epistle of the Day.

In the Gospel our Lord says that the perfect love of God and of our neighbor fulfils all the law and the commands of God through the prophets. At another time he said: "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." It is plain that every Christian has a vocation--that is, is called to a Christ like, a God like life. Something more is expected of him because he has received infused light to know by divine grace how to do more. In general, we call that a higher, a more exalted spiritual state. Now, there are degrees even in this depending upon the particular grace it pleases God to give to one person or another.

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One star differeth from another star in brightness and glory, and so shall the glory of the Christians differ in heaven, according to the perfection to which they have brought their souls while in this school-time of the world-life. Over and above what are called strict Christian laws, which one must obey or lose heaven, there are certain principles of Christianity called Evangelical counsels--namely, poverty, chastity, and obedience. Some folks fancy these counsels apply only to monks, nuns, and priests. That is a great mistake. Monks, nuns, and priests receive grace and are bound by _their_ vocation to practise these counsels in a high degree, and yet not even all these in the same manner. A secular priest, for instance, is not called to practise poverty in the same manner as a priest of a religious order, although he or even a layman living in the world may practise that counsel, as he may the other counsels, too, just as perfectly as any monk ever heard of. All depends on the grace one has. His vocation and his responsibility and his position in heaven all hang on his fidelity to grace.

All Christians should practise the counsel of poverty. Yes, both rich and poor. The spirit of poverty is detachment from created things. One's heart must not be set on them. One must not love riches for their own sake. One must feel obliged to share with the poor. One must not despise the poor, but love them for Christ's sake.

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One must give a good deal for religious purposes. One must keep his baptismal vows to renounce the devil and all his pomps. One must, therefore, deny himself in many things that savor of the pride of riches, even if he is rich. Why? Not because he is a monk, nun, or priest, but because he is a Christian.

Every Christian must practise the counsel of chastity. Heaven help us! In these degraded times, to judge by the fashionable indecencies sanctioned by so-called society people--the horrible abuses of the holy state of marriage, the filthy accounts appearing every day in the newspapers--one would think that even the Sixth Commandment was abolished. Now I need not enter into particulars, but you know, without further argument or illustration, that every Christian man, woman, and child would be unworthy the name if they did not, almost every day, make many sacrifices and struggles against temptation--all of which mean practising the counsel of the Christian perfection of chastity.

So also of obedience. One must obey the Ten Commandments and the laws of the church. Oh! yes. And have we not also to obey the special decrees of the Holy Father, of our bishop, and of our pastor? What sort of a Christian is he who is his own shepherd, or one who is always "standing up for his own rights," as they say, submitting just within law and only when he cannot help himself? And does _Christian humility_ mean nothing in act? That is a narrow road of obedience and a long one, as you all know; and blessed is he who joyfully walks therein.
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Instead of wanting to shirk these counsels, and put all upon the shoulders of religious, every one ought to be praying hard that God will, of his divine bounty, give us, too, men and women living in the world, more and more grace to practise all that our worldly condition will allow us to do, convinced by faith that he is most truly happy here, as he will certainly be hereafter, who is filled with high Christian aspirations, striving to "walk worthy of his vocation" and realize in himself the picture of a perfect Christ-like life.

Sermon CXXXI.

Erroneous Views Of Vocation.

_As a prisoner in the Lord,
I beseech you that you walk
worthy of the vocation in which you are called._
--Ephesians iv. 1.

Brethren, has it ever occurred to you that each one of us has a vocation in this life? I refer not to our Christian vocation, which we all have in common, but to the particular state of life to which each one of us has been called. It is not an uncommon error for people to think that priests and nuns are the only privileged mortals who are called by God to some special work, and that to their vocation alone God has attached peculiar and extraordinary graces.

This is an error we must correct. We have all, thank God, the vocation to be Christians and the call to be saints, but we have, moreover, our own special calling, suitable to our character and disposition; and our common Christian vocation, and in a great measure our eternal salvation, depends on our fulfilling worthily the particular vocation in which we are called.
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Some of us God has called to be priests, to serve continually at his altar. Some to be fathers of families, and others to remain single all their life. Some he has called to the higher professions, and others to the hard but manly toil of every-day life. But to all these vocations, to all these different states of life, he has attached certain duties, peculiar obligations, which must be met and fulfilled.

The great danger, brethren, that we have to avoid is the common and stupid error of those who hold that their every-day vocation has nothing to do with this Sunday calling; that there is little, if any, connection between their own special calling and their general calling to be Christians; who maintain that as business men they can and must act in their own business-like way,

banishing God from their hearts and his law from their lives, at least during their hours of business.

This error, stupid as it is, is not so uncommon as one might at first imagine. Take a few practical cases. How many are there who, when they examine their conscience, ever think of questioning themselves upon the duties of their position in life? How many fathers of families, listening to these words to-day, question themselves daily as to how they govern those whom God has put under their charge; how they watch and provide for the spiritual and temporal welfare of those whom they are called upon to support? How many young men ever think of asking themselves how they have fulfilled the obligations they are under to parents, now perhaps unable to take care of themselves? How many business-men question themselves as to the honesty or propriety of this or that mode of action they have been following?

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Alas! they are few indeed. And this is the practical outcome of not recognizing the close connection there is between our every-day calling and our Christian vocation. As every vocation, brethren, has its duties and its difficulties, so every calling has its special helps and graces. God saw each one of us from all eternity--just as we are to-day, with all the weaknesses of our character, with all the difficulties that surround us, and all the temptations with which we have to contend. He foresaw all these things and provided for them, regulating his helps and graces according to our wants, and directing all things towards our final destiny. His grace is always sufficient for us, and as long as we remain in his friendship there is no vocation or calling so difficult or trying but what can be cheerfully and manfully borne and worked towards our soul's salvation. The lot of some is certainly not an easy one, but God always fits the back for the burden.

The practical question I would have you ask yourselves to-day, brethren, is this: Granted that I have a vocation in this life; granted that Providence has placed me in a position that involves duties and obligations to God, my neighbor, or myself; how am I fulfilling these obligations? How am I walking in the vocation in which I am called? Worthily or unworthily--that is the all-important question for me to answer to-day to the satisfaction of my conscience, as I will have to answer it one day to Almighty God.

Am I the father or mother of a family? If so, do I discharge the duties of my calling? Do I make my home pleasant and agreeable for my children? Do I supply them with suitable home amusements? Do I furnish them proper reading matter, or do I allow them to waste their time and ruin their souls with the vile penny literature of the day?

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Do I oblige them to come to Mass and approach the sacraments, while I neglect these duties myself? Or am I a business-man who deals squarely and honestly with my neighbors, never on the alert to take advantage of the ignorant and weak? Am I in the employment of others, and, if so, do I fulfil my calling worthily by doing all that strict justice or Christian charity requires of

me? Or am I just to men who work for me? These are some of the questions regarding your vocations that I would have you ask yourselves to-day.

Brethren, when we come to render our account to God, be sure of this: he will not trouble us with the question as to whether we have been experts in our respective professions, whether we have been successful business-men or skilled mechanics; no, but whether we have been just and honorable, whether we have walked _worthily_ in the vocations to which we have been called.

Walk then, brethren, worthy of your vocation, worthy of the church which has reared you, worthy of the hope that is in you, worthy of the name you bear, that of Christ, who has redeemed you. Imitate him, live as he lived, and suffer in your calling the things he suffered. Then the prayer of our patron St. Paul will not be in vain, and we will walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called.

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Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

I _Corinthians i._ 4-8.

Brethren:

I give thanks to my God always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus, that in all things you are made rich in him, in every word, 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.

Gospel.

St. Matthew ix. 1-8.

At that time:

Jesus entering into a boat, passed over the water and came into his own city. And behold they brought to him a man sick, of the palsy lying on a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Son, be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold some of the Scribes said within themselves: This man blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the man sick of the palsy), Rise up: take thy bed and go into thy house. And he rose up, and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it, feared, and glorified God who had given such power to men.

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Sermon CXXXII.

Presumption Of God's Mercy.

Unless you have believed in vain.

1 Corinthians xv. 2.

Dear Brethren: The Apostle appears to be of a different mind from some of us, who seem to think that there is no such thing as

believing in vain. Do not sinners rest quite secure in their wickedness just because they believe in the true religion? Do they not feel sure of salvation because they know how to be saved? Is not the blessed privilege of the holy faith the secret reason of many a person's delay of repentance? It is against all such that St. Paul stands when he speaks of a vain faith; and our Blessed Lord himself when he says that pagan Tyre and Sidon shall rise up in witness against those who had the true religion and used it only to puff them selves up with spiritual pride.

To be guilty of an unused faith is the high-road to eternal loss among Catholics. Some poor souls will be lost because, though born in error, they have refused to follow the light of reason into the church. But we shall be lost, if at all, because we have believed in vain. Some outside of the church shall be lost because they have sinned even against the simplest precepts of nature's law. But we shall be condemned for believing all that our Lord revealed and making it vain by our wicked deeds. A vain faith is like the background of a picture: the eye catches and dwells on the objects in the foreground, but these could not be seen clearly but for the tints in the background against which they are drawn. So what we do will one day be contrasted with what we know; the strong light of faith will only cause the black, filthy sins of our life to be more fully revealed to the Judge.

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Have you never seen a blind man whose eyes seemed perfectly good, clear, and bright, and yet utterly blind? There is such a kind of blindness; some men really have eyes and see not, because the nerve is dead, and the nerve is like the soul of the eye. So with our faith: God gave it to us to see by and walk by and live by; to know his law and live up to it, to know our sins and to confess them with true sorrow--in a word, to practise what we know that we ought to practise. But some become like the idols of the nations you read of in one of the Vesper psalms: "They have eyes, and see not; they have ears, and hear not." Wicked Catholics perceive the right way; they hear of the dangers of the wrong way, and go right along with this knowledge, and neglect prayer and Mass, blaspheme and fight, get drunk and debauch, and steal, yet having all the time full assurance that somehow or other their faith will save them. Brethren, their faith is vain; their hope of eternal life is not reasonable or well founded; the beauty of the truth they possess is like the cold beauty of a corpse, which makes one shudder only the more from its incongruity with the putrid decay so surely approaching.

Yet how rich a treasure is the true faith! What a comfort to know the truths of religion! What a privilege to know our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to be in communion with him, his Blessed Mother, his glorious saints, his holy church! What a perversity, then, to use all this as a burglar uses his rope-ladder: a means of making a criminal life more secure.

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But it cannot be. It is a delusion. There is no means of making a criminal life secure, except by turning quickly away from it, detesting it, confessing it, and, by the light of faith and the

strength of charity, leading a good life.

Sermon CXXXIII.
Drunkenness.

_Take heed to yourselves,
lest perhaps your hearts be over charged
with surfeiting and drunkenness,
and the cares of this life._
--Luke xxi. 34.

These words of our Lord recorded by St. Luke contain a very direct admonition against intemperance and its associate vices. Gluttony and drunkenness are closely allied, inasmuch as the former is generally associated with excessive eating, and the latter is used to denote excess in intoxicating drink. Not only from a religious standpoint, but from medical science, St. Luke knew and could teach the injurious effects on the human system produced by the unrestrained gratification of the appetites. His knowledge in these matters was evidently recognized by those associated with him in preaching the Gospel, for St. Paul speaks of him as "the beloved physician" (Colossians iv. 14).

There are many passages of Holy Scripture that show forth the dangers of drunkenness. In the Old Testament we read that Noe and Lot were both taught by sad experience the shame and degradation arising from the loss of self-control through the excessive use of intoxicating drinks.

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No sanction can, be found in the Bible for the opinion that intemperance is a pardonable weakness. It is a very long time ago, indeed, since this vice of drunkenness was first condemned by the authorized teachers of religion. Among the vices it is properly classified with gluttony, which is one of the seven deadly sins.

The Apostles sent forth by our Lord to teach all nations strenuously inculcated the duty of _sobriety_ and _watchfulness_ on each individual Christian. St. Peter and St. Paul especially insist on this personal vigilance as being of the utmost importance. _"Being sober_, hope perfectly for that grace which is offered you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. _Be sober and watch_, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour" (First Epistle of St. Peter v. 8-13).

St. Paul teaches the same lesson of _personal vigilance_ in these words: "Let us _watch and be sober_, having on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thessalonians v. 6-8). "For the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us that, renouncing impiety and worldly desires, we should _live soberly_, and justly, and piously in this world" (Titus ii. 3).

A great doctor of the church, St. Augustine, in the fourth century declared that there were at that time drunkards, plenty of them, and that people had grown accustomed to speak of drunkenness, not only without horror, but even with levity. This condition of things was brought about by the vicious teaching of the pagans, who sanctioned every form of sensual gratification.

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In one of his sermons St. Augustine uses these words: "The heart of the drunkard has lost all feeling. When a member has no feeling it may be considered dead and cut off from the body. Yet we sometimes are lenient, and can only employ words. We are loath to excommunicate and cast out of the church; for we fear lest he who is chastised should be made worse by the chastisement. And though such are already dead in soul, yet, since our Physician is Almighty, we must not despair of them."

Again in a letter to a bishop, written in the year 393, St. Augustine refers to the intemperance then prevalent in the city of Carthage. "The pestilence," he says, "is of such a magnitude that it seems to me it cannot be cured except by the authority of a council. Or, at least, if one church must begin, it should be that of Carthage. It would seem like audacity to try to change what Carthage retains." Then he proceeds to urge that the movement against intemperance be conducted in the spirit of meekness, saying: "I think that these abuses must be removed, not imperiously, nor harshly; by instruction rather than by command, by persuasion rather than by threats. It is thus one must act in a multitude: we may be severe towards the sins of a few."

From the words just quoted we see that St. Augustine was justly opposed to the indiscriminate condemnation of a multitude for the sins of a few. And it is very necessary to bear this in mind while dealing with the vice of intemperance, which is so widely prevalent at the present time. The crimes of drunkards are frequently exposed to view in the columns of newspapers, yet the unvarnished truth is seldom stated concerning those who co-operate with them in the nine ways of being accessory to another's sin; and this means especially those who, in cities infected with intemperance, keep saloons, and those who invite men to drink whom they have reason to fear will abuse it.

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We know that there are leaders in the ways of vice as well as in the ways of virtue. Special severity is needed with those who deliberately persist in doing wrong with malice aforethought. Men who strive to make laws to defend iniquity, who teach and foster vice for their own personal profit, may properly be called blind leaders of the blind, whose fate has already been predicted by our Lord, the Supreme Judge of the world.

Sermon CXXXIV.

The Dignity And Happiness Of Obedience.

_Children, obey your parents in all things;
for this is pleasing to the Lord._
--Colossians iii. 20.

Brethren, there are many new things found out nowadays; but there are also some old ones and good ones being forgotten. Among other things we are apt to forget the happiness of obedience. Of course I do not mean obedience to the church; perhaps there never was an age when Catholics rested so content in the gentle restraint of our holy mother the Church. But I refer to the practice of obedience one to another, done after the pattern of our Lord Jesus Christ. The loveliness of this virtue is best seen in the

bosom of the Christian family. Affection, indeed, is the bond of the family, but the fruit of affection is obedience. There is nothing more pleasing to God than the son who is always at the service of his father and mother.
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Few families are without at least one such son. He is often the one of whom at first the least was expected; of poor natural talents, of delicate health, of irascible temper, or one whose earlier years were wayward. But all the time he was observant, though no one, not even himself, gave him credit for it. Year by year the spectacle of father's and mother's affection and sacrifice penetrated him, till he became deeply attached to them. How much this reverent love for his parents had to do with his religious state as a boy and a young man! It may be true that scarcely any boy ever grows up to be a man and is never a liar to his father and mother, or a pilferer of cake and fruit and pennies about the house. But the good boy drops all this at First Communion or when he goes to learn a trade, and he becomes honest and truthful in little things as well as great. One of the happiest days for him between the cradle and the grave is when he runs and puts the first dollar he has earned into his mother's hands. That good son lets all his brothers go away from home to seek their fortunes; he stays with the old folks, comforts their old age, closes their eyes in death, and with much love and many tears follows them with his prayers beyond the grave. The others were, perhaps, good children, but he is the hero of the family. Then there is the good daughter, who in childhood is the sunshine of the family, and in maturer years everybody's other self. How many parents, too poor to hire a servant, have living riches in an industrious daughter! How often do parents find one at least of the girls who from very infancy is the joy of the whole family; who seems to have received in baptism such a fulness of the Holy Spirit that charity, joy, peace, patience, long suffering, kindness, and piety are the common qualities of her character!
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The faith also finds an apostle in such women. An intelligent woman, though perhaps unable to argue skilfully, can establish the truths of religion by methods all her own. A friendly jest, good-natured silence, a patient return of loving services for ill-treatment, the spectacle of her good life, not an hour of which lacks a virtue--all this in one instinct with religion is an unanswerable argument and often irresistible. How did it happen, people sometimes ask concerning this or that person, that she did not marry? She had good enough looks, excellent sense, a bright mind, affectionate disposition, and saw plenty of company. Why did she not marry? My brethren, the day of judgment will tell us that it was because God had set her apart that she might be for her widowed mother or her shiftless, unhappy brothers and sisters the pot of meal that should not waste and the cruse of oil that should not diminish. Brethren, I know of no order of nuns more pleasing in God's sight than the devout women who live a dependent, obscure, hard life in the world, and are old maids for the love of God.

Finally, you may say that such sons and daughters are hard to find. I answer that there are multitudes who approach the standard we have been considering, and more, perhaps, than you fancy who actually attain to it.

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Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Ephesians iv. 23-28.

Brethren:

Be ye 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. Let him that stole, steal now no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands that which is good, that he may have to give to him who is in need.

Gospel.

St. Matthew xxii. 2-14.

At that time Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying:

The kingdom of heaven is like to a man being 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 wedding. 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 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 wedding indeed is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite to the wedding.

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And his servants going out into the highways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the wedding 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 a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Having bound his hands and feet, cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

Sermon CXXXV.

Lying.

_Wherefore, putting away lying,
speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor._
--Epistle of the Day.

Of all the vicious habits into which we are prone to fall, there

is none more common, and none more miserable, mean, and contemptible, than this one of which the Apostle here speaks. There is also none about which Christians in general have so lax and careless a conscience. True, every one regards lying as in some sense at least sinful; and many would hesitate about going to Holy Communion if they had told a lie after confession. But in spite of that, when the Communion is once made, the tongue which has just received the God of justice and truth will immediately begin again to offend him by telling falsehoods which are too often unjust as well as untrue.

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Still, when there is an injustice done by telling a lie; when some one else suffers by it in his character or his goods, there are, I hope, few who do not see what a sin they have committed, and understand that they must make reparation by taking back what they have said, if they wish to be good Christians. But, for all that, how many injurious lies are told, even by those who think themselves good Christians, and never properly retracted or even thought of afterward by those who tell them! The most abominable slanders pass from mouth to mouth; they are listened to and repeated with the greatest interest and eagerness, without any trouble being taken to ascertain whether what is said is true or not. These people who are so free with their tongues never seem to imagine for a moment that, even when circumstances would justify them--and it is very seldom that they do--in telling a fact bearing against their neighbor they are under an obligation first to find out by careful examination whether it be indeed a fact; otherwise the sin of an injurious lie will rest on their souls.

There are, however, some, and indeed many, who abhor slander, and who are really careful about telling injurious lies, and who hasten to retract what they have said against others, if they find out that, after all, the fact was not as they had good ground to believe. But there are not by any means so many who are careful about the truth for its own sake, and who do not scruple to tell white lies, as they are sometimes called.

What are these white lies? They are of two kinds. The first are those which are told for some end in itself good, to get some advantage for one's self or for another, or to get one's self or some other person out of a scrape; to conceal a fault, to avoid embarrassment, or to save somebody's feelings. These are called officious lies.

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Then there are others, called, jocose, which do no good to any one, but are told merely for fun; such as the little tricks on others which are often indulged in, or boasts made about things which one has never done. They may be taken back before long, and only meant to deceive for a moment; still they are meant to deceive, if only for a moment, and are, therefore, really lies. Now officious lies are really forbidden by God's law as well as injurious ones, though of course not so bad as those. And yet how few act as if they really were sins at all! People will say, "I told lies, perhaps three or four every day, but there was no harm in them." No harm! No harm to other people; no, perhaps not,

except by bad example and the loss of confidence in your word and that of others; though there is great harm even in that way. But there is a greater harm than this: it is that which the liar does to the sacredness of truth itself, and, as far as he can, to God who is the eternal truth, who loves truth unspeakably, and requires that we should love it for his sake. He will not allow us to tell the most trivial falsehood, though by it we could save the whole world from destruction, or bring all the souls which have been damned out of hell and put them in heaven.

Remember this, then: there are lies which are not injurious, but there are no lies which are not harmful and sinful; no lies for which you will not have to give an account at the judgment of God. Stop, therefore, I beg you at once, this mean, disgraceful, and dishonorable habit of falsehood; it will never be forgiven in confession unless you make a serious and solid purpose against it. Put away lying then at once and for ever, and speak the truth in simplicity; you may sometimes lose by it for the moment, but you will profit by it in the end, both in this world and in the world to come.

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Sermon CXXXVI.
Truthfulness.

_Wherefore, putting away lying,
speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor,
for we are members one of another._
--Ephesians iv. 25.

St. Paul here teaches us that truthfulness of speech should be a mark of those who profess the true faith. He speaks of the darkness of understanding, the ignorance, the blindness of heart of those who are alienated from the life of God; "but you," he says, "have not so learned Christ. You have been taught the truth as it is in Jesus. You have been taught to put off the old man who is corrupted according to the desires of error, and to 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."

Yet, even without these supernatural reasons and motives, the duty of truthfulness is plain to everyone by the light of natural reason alone. The gift of speech which so strongly marks the distinction between man and the lower animals enables us to clearly communicate our thoughts to each other. If, then, we make it a means of deceiving others, we plainly offend against the law of nature, which is God's law. In every relation of life we are obliged to depend upon the statements of other men; we have a right to the truth from them, and it is therefore our duty to tell the truth to others.

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We can have no feeling of security if we cannot trust the word of those with whom we are brought into daily contact. If lying is common in any class or community, it creates a spirit of distrust and uneasiness instead of that mutual confidence which should prevail.

A high sense of honor in men of the world will often make them strictly truthful. Such men despise a lie as something base and mean and utterly beneath them. If, then, purely human motives, a mere sense of worldly honor, will keep men from lying, how much more should this fault be avoided by those who claim to be trying to serve God, and who are constantly assisted by his grace. Our Lord has told us that liars are the children of the devil, "for he is a liar and the father thereof." But we are called to be the children of God, who is the eternal truth; we have been given the light of the true faith. We glory in the certain truth of our religion; should we not then be zealous for the cause of truth in all things, even in the least. Absolute, unswerving truthfulness in speech should therefore mark the true disciple of Christ. "But," some may say, "a lie is only a venial sin." Yes, it is true that a lie which is not malicious, which does not, and is not intended to, harm our neighbor in any way, is not a mortal sin; but it is the meanest of venial sins, and we know that a long and terrible purgatory awaits those who are guilty of deliberate venial sin. Moreover, carelessness about the commission of venial sin leads to mortal offences, and there is nothing which will more readily lead a man into other and graver faults as the habit of deliberate untruthfulness.
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Cultivate, then, a love for truth, and seek to acquire the habit of truthfulness even in the smallest matters. Every one despises a deceitful person, and there is nothing a man resents so much as being called a liar. If you do not like being called a liar, do not be one.

Sermon CXXXVII.
White Lies.

_Wherefore, putting away lying,
speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor._
--Epistle of the Day.

There is perhaps no sin, my brethren, for which people seem to have so little real sorrow, or for which they so seldom make a practical purpose of amendment, as this miserable one of falsehood, of which the Apostle here speaks. You will hear it said: "I told lies, but there was no harm in them; they were to excuse myself, or to save trouble." They are matters to be confessed, oh! yes; the liar will perhaps even run back to say that he is a liar, if he (or quite likely she) has forgotten to mention it at the time. But as for correcting the habit, that is quite another matter. It would seem that the Sacrament of Penance is expected to take effect on these sins by mere confession, without contrition or purpose to avoid them for the future.
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But the liar will say: "I am sorry; I have contrition for these lies." Let me ask, however, what kind of sorrow have you? You are sorry that things were so that you had to tell a lie; but if things were so again to-morrow, would not you tell the lie again? If you are sincere, I am afraid you will say: "Yes, I suppose I should." Where, then, is the purpose of amendment? Without purpose of amendment contrition is nothing but a sham.

Let us, then, my friends, look into our consciences about this matter, and get them straightened out properly. I do not want to be too harsh about it; for after all there are some expressions which people call lies, which are not really so, because the one to whom they are addressed is not expected to be deceived by them, but merely to be prevented from asking further questions. Some people, too, call it a lie when they do not tell the whole truth, but we are not always required--though we often are--to tell the whole truth; and when we are not, there is no lie, as long as what we say is actually true as far as it goes. But it would take too long to go into all the cases concerning what is or is not a lie; and as a general rule one can by a little common sense find them out for himself. Find them out, then; if you cannot surely do so by yourselves, get advice; and when you are certain that you are all right, do not call it a sin to act according to your conscience and reason, and do not make a matter of self-accusation out of it.

But when you cannot see any way to make out that what you say really is not a lie, then do not fall back on the idea that, if it does not injure anybody, there is no harm in it. You are false to yourself in this; for you know there is harm in it, otherwise you would not feel uneasy about it.

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And what is the harm? The harm in a lie is simply that it is a lie, and therefore an offence against God, who is the truth. This is what St. Paul tells us in this very Epistle of to-day. "Put on," he says, "the new man, who, _according to God_, is created in justice and holiness of truth. Wherefore," he continues, "putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor."

Yes, my brethren, God is the truth, and he infinitely loves the truth, in himself and in his creatures. He does not wish us to sacrifice it in the slightest degree, even to save the whole world from destruction. There is harm in a lie, then; harm, if I may say so, to God himself and to his dearest interests. Do not think, then, to save his interests, or any one else's, by lying. Tell the truth and let him look out for the consequences. Tell the truth for God's sake, because he loves it, and hates a lie; tell the truth, and love the truth, for its own sake. We are, as St. Paul says, "created according to God, in holiness of truth"; let us keep the pattern to which we have been made.

Stop, then, deliberate lying for a purpose, which is but too common. But also be careful in what you say; try not even to fall into falsehood thoughtlessly. Let it be your honest pride that your word is as good as your oath.

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Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Ephesians v. 15-21.

See, brethren, how you walk circumspectly: not as unwise, but as wise: redeeming the time, for 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.

Gospel.

St. John iv. 46-53.

At that time:

There was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. The ruler saith to him: Sir, come down before that 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.

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Sermon CXXXVIII.

Christian Marriage.

My dear brethren, we shall, on this occasion, occupy the short time allotted to us with some remarks on a most important subject, namely, that of Christian marriage. We ask for your especial attention to what we have to say on this matter, on account of the great bearing which it has on your happiness both here and hereafter, and hope that you will endeavor to understand thoroughly the teaching of the church regarding it, and that you will resolve not only to obey the laws, but also to follow her suggestions and be governed by her spirit in an affair in which your welfare is so deeply concerned.

The great majority of Christians, as well as of the world in general, are called in the providence of God to the state of marriage; and their calling is as truly a divine vocation as that of others to the religious life and to the priesthood. If, then, the priest or the religious cannot expect to save his soul if he neglects the virtues and the duties proper to his state, neither can those who enter the state of matrimony, if they do not appreciate and endeavor to fulfil the requirements and conditions which God has attached to it; if they rush into it without thought, and remain in it simply from convenience or necessity, without realizing its responsibilities or feeling the burden which it imposes on their consciences.

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And yet this is what very many seem to do. Of course we take it for granted that a Catholic, worthy the name, will not marry a person of a different religion. But one should not marry a bad Catholic. Many appear to be indifferent in this matter to their eternal salvation and act as if conscience and religion had

nothing to do with it, but they disregard and fling to the winds even the most common and obvious dictates of prudence as to their comfort and peace in this world. What possible hope of happiness in married life, for instance, can a young woman have who unites her destiny with that of a man who is evidently falling, if, indeed, he has not already fallen, into confirmed habits of intemperance; whose past and present life gives no assurance of advancement or worldly success, but, on the other hand, every indication of the drunkard's failure, ruin, and degradation? What can she be thinking of who, for a mere fancy or caprice, accepts the offer of one to stand as her protector and support whose selfish and beastly appetites are sure to make him soon trample her under his feet, and treat her merely as a drudge to be starved with her children in order that he may gratify his passion for drink, and to be kicked and beaten if she so much as implores him to reform? Or how can she dare to take for her husband one whose sensual passion is certain soon to extinguish every spark of true love he may have felt for her, and who will, before long, be unfaithful to her for the very reason that made him at first seem faithful?

It is painful to speak of these things; but, unfortunately, the frequency of such cases obliges us to do so. Such miseries in marriage cannot be considered, at least in cities like this, as exceptional and extraordinary; no, they must be taken into account, not as mere possibilities, but as actual realities. And, of course, there are others which we have not time to enumerate; the ones of which I have spoken will serve as examples.

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It is, then, the part not only of Christian prudence but also of worldly common sense, to make sure, as far as possible, to avoid these dangers. It is far better to remain single than to make a bad marriage; let every one, then, before taking this most important of all steps in life, look carefully where it will lead. Let every one, and certainly every Christian, before selecting a companion for life, whose place no one else can take, satisfy himself or herself that the one who is thus selected has the qualities that are calculated to insure happiness to both parties; that he or she has natural virtues and good habits, well and solidly formed; at least industry, sobriety, and those qualities in general which business-men, for example, try to secure in those who are to be charged with matters of far less consequence than the support and care of a family.

Sermon CXXXIX.

Mortification Of Our Lower Nature.

_Now if we be dead with Christ
we believe that we shall live also together with Christ._
--From the Epistle of the Sunday.

The meaning of the Apostle, my brethren, is expressed in one great Catholic word--mortification. The lower nature that is in us must be put to death that the higher may live. The animal must die that the man may live. And if literal death be not hereby signified, yet so really destructive of mere appetite is the Christian's union with Christ that mortification or putting to

death is one condition of obtaining it.
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Human ease and pleasure are opposed to the soul's fulfilment of its destiny. In itself no doubt the natural joy of this life is not evil. But there is no joy of man simply "in itself." It all flows from that root of bitterness which original sin planted in our hearts, and which makes it necessary that we be not simply obedient to God's law, but "born again"; "for," says the Apostle in this same Sunday's Epistle, "we are buried together with Christ by baptism into death, that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life." "Knowing this: that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed." "For he that is dead is justified from sin."
These are very strong words, my brethren. They and the many other such words in Holy Scripture have much to do with explaining our religion--the cross on our churches, the crucifix over our altars, the shamefaced confession, the constant self-denial; even the plaintive tones of the church's voice in her chants, even the touch of sadness in her most joyful offices. Indeed, the true joy of a Christian is in the theological virtue of hope--is placed in a paradise which for him is yet to begin. He is too hardly pressed with the conflict of his higher and lower nature to be quite happy, except in anticipation of a victory never fully gained this side the grave. And it is only when the very taste for ease and pleasure has become blunted that the consolations of the Holy Spirit begin to be felt. The whole inner life of a Christian is regulated by his power to deny himself, and to deny himself, especially in outward things--in eating and drinking, in working and resting, in seeing and hearing.
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To noble spirits the very innocent care of the body is irksome; and this from no sin of sloth, but because the soul, absorbed in high spiritual things, is vexed by the mean things of our animal nature. Hence the every-day business of a religious man is to restrain the headlong folly of corrupt nature by the bit and bridle of mortification. And this is every Christian's duty. Though one may feel no call but to the ordinary Christian state, yet is he plainly called to self-denial. Outside the church there is little or nothing of the practical self-restraint of the Gospel. And even among ourselves many are forgetful of this war of the spirit against the flesh, except at the rare intervals of infrequent confession or during such seasons as Lent and Advent. The need of constant self-denial is one of those truths that the ever-flowing waters of forgetfulness wash out of our memories the quickest. Hence it is related of St. Philip Neri that he was accustomed to say in the morning: "Lord, keep thy hand upon Philip to day, or, Lord! Philip will betray thee."
So, my brethren, there is no grace you have more need to pray for than the strength of will to practise some daily mortification. Nay, pray for the grace to accept those that God sends every day and it is enough. Oh! if we could bear patiently for the love of God with his own visitations, with such things as sickness of body and dulness of mind, with poverty and disappointment, with

the evil temper of other members of the family, their stupidity and selfishness, we should soon be safe. Brethren, we are all novices, and God is the universal novice-master, and these are his daily mortifications. Others he gives us, too, through the ministry of holy church. Not a week passes over but we must give one day to God and to our better selves by abstinence from flesh meat.
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Not a season goes by but the three Ember days are set apart for hunger and thirst. Holy Advent, the penitential season of Lent, make a loud call--would it were better heeded--on our higher nature to reduce the beast to subjection. Meantime, if one wants more self-denial, let him advise with his father confessor, let him consult spiritual writers, let him hearken to the spirit of God within him, always bearing in mind that beyond such mortifications as are of obligation it is not prudent to go, except by advice of a prudent spiritual adviser.

Sermon CXL.

The Value Of Time.

Redeeming the time.
--Epistle of the Day.

There is a precious treasure, my dear brethren, which is always partly, but only partly, in our possession. Now and then we wake up to the conviction how valuable it is. There is something which must be done, and there is only just time to do it in; we wish there were more, but no, only just so much is allotted to us. Then we realize how priceless time is. The sinner, suddenly struck down by some terrible accident, and with only a few minutes to live--what would he not give for a half-hour more; for time to look into his confused and disturbed conscience; for time to rouse himself to real contrition for his sins; for time, at least, to send for a priest, and with his help make some sort of preparation for eternity!
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But it is not only at the end of our lives, or in moments of such supreme importance, that we would pay for time with gold, or with other things upon which we set great value here. Often we would give much to be able to put ourselves back a day or even an hour in our lives; what an advantage it would give us! We look back on many hours and days in the past; there they were, once at our service, but now squandered and gone for ever.
Time, then, is this precious treasure, which we shall never wholly lose till we pass out of this world for ever. Its golden sands are running rapidly away from us, but still some remain. The uncertainty how much of it is still left should make us put to the best use each instant as it passes. Who would not draw prudently from a chest in which his whole fortune was locked up, if its amount were unknown to him, if the next demand might exhaust it; and who would not put to the best use each penny that he drew?
This is the instruction, the warning that the Apostle gives us in to-day's Epistle: "To walk circumspectly; not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time." Saving it--that is to say, not letting

it slip by us idly and unprofitably; not only having it while it lasts, but receiving also the precious fruits with which it is laden.

How much this caution is needed! How careless we are about this priceless possession which is ours from moment to moment! Some part of it indeed we are generally obliged to employ, and fortunate we are that it is so, in some occupation of profit to ourselves or to others.

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Yes, fortunate; for that man must earn his bread by the toil of his body or mind is hardly after the fall a curse, but rather a blessing. Place fallen human nature in the paradise of our first parents, and its final loss could hardly be averted. But the rest: how often do we see, when work is over, that the only thought, even of Christians, is to get rid of this invaluable gift, the precious time which God has given them! They seem to have no thought but to lose themselves and it in some mere sensual pleasure, to fritter it away in gossip or some foolish and needless diversion, or to forget it and throw it away in slothful and unnecessary sleep.

Brethren, some day we shall want all this time that we are now wasting. Then it will stand out before us in its true value; we shall see that it should have been redeemed, and that it is now irredeemable. And what is more, God, who gave it to us, will require an account of it at our hands. He gave it to us for an object; there is not a minute of it that he did not mean us to turn to good use. And we can carry out his purpose if we only will. Let us, then, beware of idleness; even our recreation and rest should be such that we can feel that he would approve of them, and that they will help us in our remaining hours to do the work that he has required and expects us to do. To kill time--let this be a word unheard among us; to kill time is to trample down the seed of eternal life and to invite death to our souls.

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Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Ephesians vi. 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 snares 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 the high places. Wherefore 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).

Gospel.

St. Matthew xviii. 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 compassion, let him go, and forgave him the debt.

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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 should pay 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 should pay all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

Sermon CXLI.

Forgiveness Of Injuries.

_Shouldst not thou then have had compassion
on thy fellow-servant,
even as I had compassion on thee?_
--St. Matthew, xviii. 33

These words of to-day's Gospel are spoken by our Lord to every one who has been wanting in charity to his neighbor. Each one of us, as a servant of God, as a steward of the gifts, both temporal and spiritual, which he has entrusted to us that we may use them for the furtherance of his honor and glory, is a heavy debtor to the divine justice. But his mercy and love are always ready to temper his justice, if only we show the proper dispositions, if only we bend our rebellious wills to the condition he requires of us, without which it is impossible for us to obtain forgiveness.

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This condition is found in the oft-repeated but little thought of petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us." The servant in the parable received forgiveness from his lord for the sum of ten thousand talents (a very large sum of money), yet he was unmerciful to his fellow-servant, who owed him a hundred pence. The difference between these sums is by no means so great as the difference between our offences against Almighty God and those of our brethren against us. If we could only realize who it is that we have offended, and then reflect as well upon our ingratitude

in offending him, as upon the innumerable benefits he has showered upon us, we might form some faint idea of the gravity of our sin, and of the immense debt that we owe to his justice. We could not then refuse forgiveness to our neighbor for the trifling, and perhaps merely fancied, injuries that we may have suffered from him. "With what measure you shall mete, it shall be measured to you again." "If you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts," you cannot hope for pardon from God.

How, then, can we best practise this forgiveness which is so necessary for us? In the first place, it must be earnest and sincere forgiveness. It must be "from your hearts," as our Lord says. No mere outward show of forgiveness will be enough, for God sees the heart, and no appearances will satisfy him. But, on the other hand, the forgiveness will not be real and earnest unless it be shown outwardly. Many profess their willingness to forgive who yet show resentment and a spirit of revenge in many little ways, by looks, words, and actions which prove that there is no real forgiveness in the heart.

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Then again we find persons who, when they are urged to forgive some wrong, answer: "Well, father, I suppose I must forgive, if you tell me so." It is plain that this is but a very unwilling and faint-hearted forgiveness, which, will not answer before God. Why will not the generosity of God towards us lead us to show a like spirit towards our brethren?

We should strive to forgive offences the moment they are committed against us. Our natural impulse when any insult is offered to us is to resent it at once, and pay back in the same coin. How different is this from the example set us by our Lord, "Who, when he was reviled, did not revile; when he suffered, he threatened not." We should check the first uprisings of resentment, and keep back the angry reply, in imitation of our Blessed Lord's silence before his accusers and tormentors. By the practice of this Christian silence many a feud of long continuance would be prevented.

We must also "lay aside all malice," and be ready, when an injury has been done, to be reconciled with our offending brother. This is often very hard for us to do, and very repugnant to our natural inclinations, but it is, nevertheless, absolutely necessary. If we bear malice towards any one, we are not worthy of the name of Christians, or followers of Christ.

Try, then, to put in practice the teaching of this day's Gospel, and forgive from your heart those who have offended you, showing your forgiveness by your words and acts. There is nothing more scandalous and injurious to the Christian name than constant quarrels and long-continued animosities between those who go regularly to the sacraments. Follow, then, the injunction of St. Paul: "Let all bitterness, and anger, and indignation, and clamor, and blasphemy be taken away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind to one another, merciful, forgiving one another, even as God has forgiven you in Christ."

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Sermon CXLII.

Gossiping.

_Laying hold of him he throttled him, saying:
Pay me what thou owest._
--Words Taken From To-day's Gospel.

The Gospel of this Sunday, my dear brethren, inculcates in the strongest possible way the distinctively Christian virtue of brotherly love--the duty, that is, of cherishing a spirit of charity and consideration for other men, and especially of forgiving any injuries which they may have done us. This obligation is, however, so clearly and frequently and earnestly enforced in the New Testament, and from our earliest days has been brought home to us in so many ways, that at first sight it might seem that I could do something better this morning than to go back to such an old and familiar subject. And yet, old and familiar as it is, every-day life affords so many proofs that we do not carry our knowledge into practice that I am sure that nine in every ten, perhaps ninety-nine in every hundred, stand in need of being reminded of this old and familiar though badly learned lesson.

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For of what is the every-day talk of most women and a great number of men made up, if not of ill-natured criticism and depreciation of their acquaintances, neighbors, and even friends? In the words of St. Paul, are we not continually biting and devouring one another? Are not the newspapers filled with stories which pander to this uncharitable spirit? What, in short, is more common than detraction, and even slander? Yet even these evils, grave and deadly as they are, are but small compared with other manifestations of this same uncharitable spirit. Why, I have been told of people who have worked side by side in the same work-shop, attended the same church, even knelt at the same altar-rail, and yet, for some trifling cause or other, have refused to speak to one another for years! What trouble priests have with people who come to confession to them! Sometimes the very most they can get is a vague, half-hearted expression of forgiveness, but on no account can they in some cases induce their penitents to extend to one another that which is due to every man, be he Jew or Turk, Catholic or Protestant--the ordinary salutations which civility requires.

Now, that all this is wrong is evident. Not one of us is so blind as not to be able to see that. But what the Gospel to-day points out, and what I wish to present to your serious consideration this morning, is the very unpleasant consequences which will infallibly follow upon such conduct. We know the story very well. A slave is in debt to his master for a very large amount--an amount which, while quite willing, he is utterly unable to pay. His master releases him from this debt. Whereupon this fine fellow, meeting a brother-slave who owed him a paltry sum, accosts him in the brutal manner mentioned in the text, demands immediate payment of the money, and, not withstanding the debtor's entreaties and his willingness to make it good as soon as possible, locks him up in prison until the amount is forthcoming.

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Thereupon his conduct is brought to the knowledge of their master. He at once summons the wicked slave before him and "delivers him to the torturers until he pays all the debt." Then our Lord says, and I ask for your serious attention to his words: "So also shall my Heavenly Father do to you if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

Of course, it is unnecessary to point out how strictly this applies to us. Many other texts might be cited from the Gospels to the same effect. One only I will mention, and that is, that we cannot say an "Our Father" without making the very forgiveness of our sins, which we ask for, dependent upon our forgiveness of the faults of others. We must forgive if we wish to be forgiven, and this forgiveness must be from the heart; no mere form of words, sufficient to satisfy men, but it must be a forgiveness sincere and genuine, such as to satisfy God, the searcher of hearts, before whom we must appear to give an account of our whole life.

Sermon CXLIII.
Mixed Marriages.

I wish to give a short instruction on the Sacrament of Matrimony this morning.

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If a marriage with a merely nominal Catholic be fraught with dangerous consequences, and be the cause of much disturbance and anxiety to one who wishes to be a Christian in deed as well as in name--and that it is so I think all will agree--what shall we say of a mixed marriage, as it is called--of the union of a Catholic with one who holds religious views opposed to the faith of the church, or who, perhaps, has no belief or religion at all? How can any true harmony or peace be expected when there is discordance in the matter of religion, which lies nearest to the heart, and is more thoroughly interwoven in all the ideas, opinions, feelings, and practices of a practical Catholic than any other whatever?

Sympathy, union of interests and desires, of plans, hopes, and efforts, must exist in all true friendship; nay, more, without it association or companionship of any kind soon becomes a burden. There is no remedy for this except by dropping or putting in the back ground those aspirations and affections which are not shared by the other party. And what is true of all friendship is, of course, true above all of that which should be the highest, nearest, and dearest of all friendships--namely, that of marriage. The only way for a Catholic to be at all happy in a mixed marriage is to put religion in the background; to regard it, as, unfortunately, too many do, as a matter of very little importance; as something to be professed, indeed, and occasionally practised, but which is to have no special influence on the general course and tenor of one's life.

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How can a Catholic wife, for instance, who is earnest about her religion be really happy with a husband who cannot attach any importance to, or see any sense in, her practices of devotion; to whom holy Mass, Benediction, the sacraments, the veneration of the saints and angels, and many other things which are her great

helps and consolations in life, are mere idle mummeries and superstitions; who looks contemptuously on her observance of Lent, of Fridays, and fast days; who considers all the teachings and laws of the church an imposition and a fraud, to be done away with as far as possible; who, in short, either looks forward to nothing at all beyond this life, or, if he hopes for heaven, has a different one from hers, and seeks for it in a different way? The only plan that can be followed to secure even a seeming peace and agreement is to bring down the Catholic religion to its lowest level, to make out that it is not so very different from Protestantism after all; to be content with Mass on Sundays; to eat meat on Fridays whenever it is more convenient; to let the pope and the church generally get on as best they can, and to say no more about them than can be helped. Yes, this mixture even in the Catholic party of Catholic and Protestant is only too likely to be the result of a mixed marriage.

I know that it may be said, and with truth, that Protestants are not always prejudiced against our religion; that sometimes a Protestant husband is not only willing but anxious that his Catholic wife should attend thoroughly to her religious duties; and we find cases of Protestant wives even becoming Catholics, mainly, as it would seem, to induce by their example a more faithful practice of religion in their Catholic husbands. But these are results which we have no right to expect--no, not even if they are promised beforehand. And too often we find a state of things in a mixed marriage much worse than what I have described. {470}

We find, in spite of the most solemn promises made beforehand, a bitter and shameless persecution; Mass and the sacraments forbidden; children denied not only Catholic instruction, but even the grace of baptism; the priest not allowed in the house even in time of sickness, and nearly all hope gone of receiving the last rites of the church at the hour of death. We do not wish to blame the Protestant party too much in these cases; he may be acting according to his conscience, but such a conscience, though perhaps good enough for him, is not one which a Catholic should run the risk of being governed by.

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Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Philippians i. 6-11.

Brethren:

We are confident of this very thing, 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: because I have you in my heart; and that in my bonds, and in the defence, and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of my joy. For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding: that you may approve the better things, that you may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ. Replenished with the fruit of justice through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and

praise of God.
Gospel.
St. Matthew xxii. 15-21.
At that time:
The Pharisees going away, 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 C√¶sar, or not? But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Show me the coin of the tribute. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose image and inscription is this? They say unto him: C√¶sar's. Then he saith to them: Render, therefore, to C√¶sar the things that are C√¶sar's, and to God the things that are God's.

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Sermon CXLIV.

Obedience To The Civil Authorities.

_Render therefore to C√¶sar
the things that are C√¶sar's,
and to God the things that are God's._
--Matthew xxii. 21

Our Lord made this reply, my dear brethren, to the question of some who asked him whether it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not; or, in other words, whether it was right to pay taxes to support the government of the Roman Empire, to which the Jews were then subjected, and which was a pagan, and in many ways an impious and ungodly power. They hoped that he would say that it was not; for if he did, they would have a very good charge to make against him before the Roman governor, as one who was a rebel and a disobeyer of the laws; and could thus bring about his ruin, which they earnestly desired. Now, if it really had been wrong to pay these taxes Christ would of course have said so; for, as they had said to him in truth, though they meant it as flattery, he was a true speaker, and would not betray the truth to please any man or to escape any danger. But instead of answering in this way, as they hoped, he surprised them by saying that they ought to pay the taxes which were imposed on them; he commanded them to obey the power, hateful in many ways as it was, whose subjects they were.

We must, therefore, conclude that the power of the state, or the law of the land as it is called, has a real claim in the name of God and of Christ to our obedience. For if our Lord required those who heard him to obey the Roman authorities, he would also require us to obey the duly constituted authorities under which we live at any time. For the cruel and persecuting pagan empire of Rome was surely no more worthy of respect and obedience than any other under which our lot is like to be cast.

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And if we could have any doubt as to our duty in conscience on this point, St. Paul confirms this lesson most emphatically.

"There is no power," he says, "but from God; and those that are, are ordained of God. ... And they that resist purchase to themselves damnation. ... Wherefore be subject of necessity, not only for wrath" (that is, for fear of the consequences) "but also for conscience sake." And coming to the very matter of which our Lord has spoken, he proceeds: "Render, therefore, to all men their dues. Tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom."

We see then clearly, my brethren, that the laws of the land bind us in conscience. And we do not by any means need to go back to apostolic times to find instruction to this effect. The successors of St. Peter, and those teaching in union with them, have always insisted on this duty of obedience to the civil power very strongly. Only last year, for instance, our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., has, in an encyclical letter, taught it to us very clearly. "The church," he says, "rightly teaches that the power of the state comes from God." And he tells us that, whatever the form of government may be--that is, whether the rulers are chosen by the people or not--it is not simply from the people that their right to rule and to be obeyed comes; the people in an elective government do not make the power, although they designate the person or persons in whom the power of God is to rest.

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Of course no one denies that the civil power may, in particular cases, forfeit its claim to our obedience by requiring of us things manifestly unjust or plainly contrary to the law of God or of the church; as, for instance, if it should require us to attend Protestant worship, or should forbid us to make our Easter duty. But such cases are very rare, at least here in this country. We shall know easily enough when they arise. There is little fear, as things now are, of too great respect for law among us; the danger, rather, is of our regarding laws as the mere decisions of a majority, to which we have to submit as far as we cannot help it, and because we cannot help it, but to which we owe no interior reverence, and by breaking which we commit no sin. Whereas the truth is that we do sin by breaking any law of the land which is not manifestly unjust or contrary to the rights of God and the obedience we owe to him.

Remember, then, my brethren, to render to C√¶sar the things that are C√¶sar's. The President, Congress, our governors and legislatures, and the other powers that be are really God's vicegerents, though not in so high an order as the spiritual; still in their own place they truly act in God's name. Find out and consider what they require; confess and amend any disregard or disrespect for their laws, unless you wish to be guilty of contempt and disobedience to him from whom all law comes.

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Sermon CXLV.

Thanksgiving Day.

Giving thanks to God the Father.
--Colossians i. 12.

This week, as you know, my brethren, a day has been appointed by

the civil authorities, according to long-established custom, which we are invited to devote specially to thanksgiving for the many blessings which we have received from God during the year. And though the observance of this day is not an ecclesiastical obligation, yet there is a singular appropriateness in it for us on account of its falling just at the close of the year which the church celebrates. At this time, when we have completed the round of the mysteries of our faith, and are about to recommence it in the season of Advent, it must naturally occur to us to look back and thank God, not only for all his temporal benefits, but also and especially for the spiritual blessings which he has given us, and which we have just finished commemorating.

Even in the temporal order, however, we have abundant cause to be grateful to God. True, we have had our trials and sufferings, some more, some less; though even these we can perhaps even now see, and shall see more clearly hereafter, to have been blessings in disguise. But we have had much happiness and comfort in spite of these trials. Surely we ought not to pass this by unnoticed. But this is just what we are too likely to do. Somehow or other, we are all apt to take things when they go right as a matter of course, and only to notice them when they go wrong. When we are sick we complain and make a great fuss, and perhaps are not satisfied unless we can make everybody else unhappy as well as ourselves; but when we are well, that is just as it should be: no thanks to anybody for that.

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No thanks to God, whose loving care and providence are necessary, and are given to us at each moment of our lives, and who is continually warding off from us a thousand dangers to which we are exposed, often through our own fault; no thanks to him whose angels watch over us to keep us in all our ways. By our ignorance and imprudence we are frequently endangering this wondrous life which he has given us; with all the science in the world, we do not understand it and could not direct it; it is he who causes our breath to come, our hearts to beat, and our blood to flow in our veins.

So also in the common affairs of life, our industry and skill would avail nothing if God did not come to our assistance. If our work or business prospers at all, it is due to him; it is his free gift. And all the conveniences of modern life which we pride ourselves so much on are the fruits of his power and skill which he lends us. It is he who shines on us, not only by the sun and moon, but also in those lights which we think that we ourselves produce; it is he who sends our telegraphic messages for us, who carries us where we will in our steamers and railway trains.

These perpetual and ordinary comforts of life, then, in which we all share, as well as our very life itself, are God's gift. And beside these, are there not more blessings which we can see if we look back on the year, standing out from the rest? Have we thanked him for all these? If not, let us then really make this a time to atone for past neglect; a time of thanksgiving in deed as well as in name.

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But, above all, let us, whom he has given the signal and

unspeakable blessing of the true faith, thank him for that. To those who have just come from the doubt and confusion of the world outside this true church this is a happiness which outweighs all troubles, a perpetual sunshine which drives away all clouds. Why should it not be so to us all? This is what St. Paul in his epistle wishes that it should be. "Giving thanks," he says, "to God the Father, who has 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." Let us think on these words, and see if there is not enough in them to make at least one Thanksgiving day.

Sermon CXLVI.

The Communion Of Saints.

We are so near the Feast of All Saints and the commemoration of all the faithful departed--All Souls day--that we may well let our affectionate thoughts follow after our brethren who have gone before us and sleep in the peace of Christ.

There is scarcely one of us, dear brethren, who has not been familiar from childhood with the article of the Apostles Creed, "I believe in the communion of saints"; and there are few, if any, who have not derived consolation from this dogma of our faith, teaching, as it does, that we are not entirely cut off from those who have gone before us, but form with them one great family, of which the head is Christ and the members the souls of the just, whether in heaven or in purgatory, or still in the flesh.

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But if this truth of holy religion brings consolation, it brings also the duty of praying for our brethren who are passing through the cleansing fires of purgatory; who, because of sin or the debt due for sin, cannot enter their eternal home until they have repaid the last farthing. They can do nothing for themselves--their day of meriting is past; they look to us who are their friends to help them.

While they were with us they were very dear to us--bound to us by ties of blood or friendship. Let us do our duty to them now; let us, by our good works in their behalf, show how much we love them; let us show that our affection for them was not selfish nor pretended, but so real and strong and lasting that death has but strengthened it and brought it to its fulness.

What one of us but has his daily task--his allotted work? Yet as each day brings its own burdens, so each day is full of opportunities of gaining indulgence for the souls in purgatory. The many inconveniences we all of us are called upon to suffer, the many sacrifices of comfort and of pleasure we make, the disappointments we meet with, the fatigues we bear--all these may be made sources of refreshment to our friends beyond the grave. If in the morning we would but offer to God all we shall do and suffer during the day for his honor and glory, and for the relief of the departed, oh! how soon would the angels welcome them to their true country, and how many advocates we should have before

the throne of God!
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But if so much can be done without any particular effort on our part, what shall we say of the efficacy of the special prayers we recite for them and the Masses we have offered for their repose! How shall we tell of their gratitude, of their unceasing supplications for us! We lose nothing, dear brethren, by praying for them; be assured we are rather the gainers, for not only do they pray for us, but more--our charity towards them deepens in our souls our love for God, and makes us thirst the more after virtue and holiness, and wins for us a higher place in heaven and a brighter crown of everlasting glory. Let us be generous, then; let us storm heaven with our prayers for the souls in purgatory, and we shall find rest for ourselves as well as for them.

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Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Philippians iii. 17; iv. 3.

Be followers of me, brethren, 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 wait for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, 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 most dearly beloved. I beg of Euodia, and I beseech Syntyche to be of one mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee, 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.

Gospel.

St. Matthew ix. 18-26.

At that time:

As Jesus was speaking these things unto them, behold a certain ruler came, and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is just 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 but touch his garment I shall be healed. But Jesus, turning about and seeing her, said: Take courage, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.

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And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the crowd making a rout, he said: Give place, for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed at him. And when the crowd was turned out he went in, and took her by the hand. And the girl arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that

country.

Sermon CXLVII.
Mixed Marriages.

From the simplest lessons of experience, my dear brethren, I think it ought to be plain enough how miserable a thing a mixed marriage is likely to be. Even if the faith and practice of the Catholic party and of the children is what it should be--which is certainly hardly to be expected--there will be great and continual suffering to them on account of the separation of the Protestant father or mother--who is all the more loved the better and kinder he or she may be--from the unity of the church and from the ordinary means of salvation.

In fact, it can hardly be imagined how any one having a lively faith in the Catholic religion can marry a Protestant or infidel, unless under the influence of a hope that some time or other the conversion of the other party will be effected. This hope does occasionally prove not to be a vain one. There are cases, no doubt, in which a Protestant, who would not probably otherwise have turned his thoughts to the question at all, does become a Catholic by means of marriage.

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But the best chance to obtain such a conversion is before the marriage is entered on; that is the time to try to secure it; and it is the duty of every Catholic who thinks of marrying one outside the church to do the best in his or her power to bring the other party over, not only in name but in fact, to the true faith. I say in fact, for, unfortunately, many a non-Catholic, who has no strong conviction about religion in any way, will be willing to call himself a Catholic, and even to be baptized, in order to remove objections which may be made. Take care, then, that the conversion which is professed is a sincere and genuine one, and not merely got up for the occasion. I have heard of a case in which the Protestant party, when his religion was urged by the priest as an objection to the marriage, which would make trouble, most cheerfully replied: "Well, father, if it would be any convenience to you, I am quite ready to be a Catholic." Such converts are not so very uncommon, though it is not often that they let their state of mind be seen so plainly. They will sit through several instructions given to them by the priest, making no question or remark about anything which he says, that they may get through as soon as possible; and when they do get through, that is about the last of their Catholic profession, or at least of their attendance to any Catholic duties.

If, then, a conversion, and a real and true conversion, cannot be obtained before marriage, there is certainly much fear that it never will be accomplished afterward. Be warned, then, in time; do not indulge false hopes in this regard; do not marry in haste and repent at leisure.

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And about this matter of conversion I will say a few words, with reference not to Protestants, but to careless and negligent Catholics. A Catholic who is negligent of his duties has, it is true, if he keeps his faith, a resource which the Protestant has

not; he knows what to do to be reconciled with God at the last; he will probably try to do it, and he may succeed. There is then more hope for his final salvation in this way than for the Protestant; but that does not make him a better companion during life; and many of the miseries of a mixed marriage are met with, and some, perhaps, even in a greater degree, with nominal Catholics than with Protestants. If, then, you contemplate marriage even with a Catholic, be sure to see that he or she attends to the duties required of Catholics, and has not contracted vicious and dangerous habits. Do not delude yourself with the idea that a confession and Communion must be made at the time of the marriage, and that the priest will attend to all that is necessary. For this confession and Communion may be in some cases not so very good and fervent; they may be something like what some Protestants, as I have said, go through with for convenience or necessity. No, do not leave it all to the priest, but do your own part. If the behavior of the other party before marriage is not such as becomes a Christian, both with regard to the frequentation of the sacraments and also in the matter of temperance and in others of which you are the best and indeed the only judge, it is not likely that it will be so afterward. Take care, then, before taking a step which you cannot retrace. You, not the priest, are the one to secure now the amendment of life which is so necessary. A word to the wise should be sufficient.

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Sermon CXLVIII.

Imitation Of The Saints.

_My fellow-laborers,
whose names are in the book of life._
--Philippians iv. 3.

Thus does St. Paul in the Epistle of to-day speak of St. Clement and the others who had "labored with him in the Gospel." Do you wish that your name, too, should be written in the book of life? Follow the path trodden here below by the saints of God, and then, even while yet on earth, your name will be recorded in heaven. For holy church commands us to observe this festival of All Saints, of which we are now keeping the octave, not only in honor of those whose names are in the calendar, and whose feasts come round in the course of each year, but also in praise of that great multitude which no man can number--of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues--who stand before the throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. The saints whom the church has honored with canonization are but a small number in that vast multitude. They were the heroes of the Christian army, but the great majority of those who are now receiving the homage of the church were the rank and file--common every day Christians, like ourselves. The festival of All Saints, therefore, especially appeals to us by showing us that sanctity is not something away off out of our reach and entirely beyond our powers, but that it is what we must each strive after if we hope to win heaven. For nothing defiled can enter there, and without holiness no man shall see God, As, then, we hope to be one day saints in heaven, we must try now to be

saints on earth.
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That is why St. Paul addresses all the faithful as the "beloved of God, called to be saints." Yet many Christians are forgetful of this high vocation. They seem to think that God has laid down one rule, one course of life for saints, and quite another for ordinary people. This is all a mistake. God's law is the same for every one. There are, indeed, special duties belonging to particular states of life, but apart from these there is no difference in what is required of every Christian. We are all of us bound to follow the strait and narrow way which leadeth unto life. The chief happiness of that life will consist in the sight of God, to be always in his presence, serving him continually in joy and thanksgiving. And the way to this life our Lord has told us in the sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."

So, then, in order to attain to this life, to dwell for ever in the sight of God, it is not necessary to imitate the saints in their extraordinary deeds, their heroic acts of penance and self-sacrifice, their suffering for the faith. Some of us are, indeed, called upon to stand out conspicuously among other Christians, as they did, and show to the world an example of courage and heroism. But for all of us the hidden virtues are the ones required, and if we cultivate these, God, who seeth in secret, will himself reward us openly in the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. The one thing needful for each one of us is purity of heart, to cleanse our hearts from sin and from all affection towards sin. "Dearly beloved," says St. John, "if our heart do not reprehend us, we have confidence towards God."
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See to it, then, that your heart is all right towards God. Cleanse your soul from mortal sin by turning your heart away from the sin you have committed by sincere and hearty contrition and by a good confession. Then _keep_ your heart right towards God by giving it to him who says to you, "My son, give me thy heart." God alone is worthy of the full love of our hearts, and he alone can satisfy the heart of man. If we set our affections upon sin or upon the passing things of this world there is reserved for us in the end nothing but unsatisfied longings and bitterness of heart. But if we purify our hearts from every affection that would lead us away from God we shall indeed be called "blessed," and our names shall be written in the book of life.

Sermon CXLIX.
Heaven.

_Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven._
--St. Matthew. v. 2.
[USCCB: Matthew. v. 3.]

All Saints' day is a solemn and glorious festival for all heaven as well as for all the world; for to-day God is praised, and the great salvation by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ magnified

and lauded by a common, universal act of holy congratulation and worship among all the saints--that is, among all souls that are united to God in the communion of saints, whether in the church triumphant, in the church suffering, or in the church militant.
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It seems to me that none but Catholics believe in heaven, the eternal home of the saints after death, because they alone appear to understand what a saint is, as the church has proved herself to be the only power which has been able to train and canonize one.
Yes, all we can know of heaven is, that it is the reward, the everlasting life, the new and divine state of being which the saints enter into and enjoy when they have left this world--that is, when they die in the church militant and rise in glory in the church triumphant. If any Christian, then, or so-called Christian, fancies he can meditate about heaven, and hopes to get there without knowing what a saint is, and without striving to be as near one as he can, he is simply deceiving himself. I fear that the kind of place some people think would be a good enough heaven for them, if we are to judge by the way they live, is, in fact, not much above what the state of hell really is. Many are the souls who ought to have been saints, and are damned because they were unfaithful to the vocation God gave them, and too sensual to make the necessary sacrifices that such a vocation demanded. What kind of a heaven, for instance, do you think the many intelligent Protestants we meet with every day will likely get, who know they ought to become Catholics to save their souls, and are yet afraid to take the step; who stand still and count the cost, and cheat their consciences with the false doctrine that no real sacrifices are demanded of them, because God will be more glorified if they leave all to him and do nothing themselves? And yet these people, and a good many Catholics, too, are living just such lives, and in their deaths they will not be divided.
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And now do you say: O Father! tell us, then, what a saint is, that we may be sure we are not all wrong, but may have some hope of imitating such, and so join the company of the glorified ones in heaven when we die! I answer: A saint is one who does everything he feels that God wants him to do, and carefully gives up and avoids everything that he feels is not pleasing to God. Apply that to yourself. God does not want the same thing of everybody, nor require all to make the same sacrifices. So that, as a fact, there are all kinds of saints, as we know. But in what he does require he demands that one should aim at doing it _perfectly_. "Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect," said our Lord. Be perfectly honest, be perfectly pure, be perfectly sober, be perfectly charitable, be perfectly obedient to the laws of God and man, be perfectly humble, be perfectly free from loving money or other riches.
Don't let me ever hear you say again that you are "a man of the world and must live in it" as an excuse for the wretched apology for a Christian life you lead. You know that is a lie. You are a man, and _a Christian man of the kingdom of God and of his

saints_, and _that_ is the kind of a place you live in, and must square your life accordingly, or you will never see the kingdom of God and of his saints in glory, which is heaven, when you die. In to-day's Gospel our Lord pronounces the eight beatitudes. Think on them, and, if you do not know them by heart, take out your Bible when you go home and read them at the beginning of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. So live that you will merit to be one of those our Lord declares to be "blessed," and you will surely be a saint.

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_Easter being a movable Feast which can occur on any day from the 22d of March to the 25th of April, the number of Sundays between Epiphany and Septuagesima, and between Pentecost and Advent, varies according to the situation of Easter. There are always at least two Sundays, unless Epiphany falls on a Sunday, and never more than six, between Epiphany and Septuagesima. Likewise, there are never fewer than twenty-three Sundays after Pentecost, or more than twenty-eight. The Gospel and Epistle for the last Sunday after Pentecost are always the same. When there are twenty-three Sundays, the Gospel and Epistle for the last Sunday are substituted for those of the twenty-third. When there are twenty-five Sundays, the Gospel and Epistle for the sixth Sunday after Epiphany are taken; when there are twenty-six, those also of the fifth after Epiphany; when there are twenty-seven, those of the fourth, and when there are twenty-eight, those of the third, in order to fill up the interval which occurs. In any year, in which there are more than twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost, proper sermons for these Sundays are to be found among those which are arranged for the Sundays following the Feast of the Epiphany. If one sermon is wanting, it is taken from the sixth Sunday after Epiphany; if two, three, or four are needed, the last two or three or four sermons which precede Septuagesima are to be taken, in their order. _

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Twenty-fourth or Last Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle.

Colossians i. 9-14.

Brethren:

We cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will 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.

Gospel.

St. Matthew xxiv. 15-35.

At that time Jesus said to his disciples:

When you shall see "the abomination of desolation," which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth, let him understand. Then let those that are in Judea 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.

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Then, if any man shall say to you: Lo, here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold I have told it to you beforehand. If therefore they shall say to you: Behold he is in the desert; go ye not out: Behold he is in the closets; believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and, appeareth even unto 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 great 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. Now learn a parable from the fig-tree: when its branch 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 near, even at the doors. Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Sermon CL.

Marrying Out Of The Church.

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In our course of instructions on marriage, my dear friends, we have so far spoken chiefly of the care which should be taken in the selection of the person who is to be one's constant companion through life, and shown that not only earthly happiness, but even the salvation of the soul, may depend on this choice being made wisely. We will now go on to consider the ceremony of marriage itself.

Some people, though they have always been Catholics and lived among Catholics, seem to be entirely ignorant of the laws and requirements of the church on this subject. They appear to think

that nothing has to be done but to call on the priest some fine evening, and that he will marry them then and there. And if it is not convenient to go to the priest, or if he makes any difficulty about it, why, then a Protestant minister or his honor the mayor will do at a pinch.

Now there are several points which these people need instruction about, and several mistakes which they make in this very important affair. We shall have to consider them separately. And we will begin with the greatest mistake of all which can be fallen into by Catholics who wish to get married, and that is to go to a Protestant minister for the purpose.

What is, then, the harm exactly of going to a Protestant minister to get married? Is it that a Protestant minister is an immoral or vicious character, with whom we should have nothing to do? By no means. He is, indeed, more likely to be to blame for his errors in religion than his people, for he has, from his greater knowledge in religious matters, a better chance to know the truth; but even a minister may be in good faith about his doctrine. And in other respects he may be a worthy and estimable gentleman.

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But the reason why Catholics should avoid going to him for marriage is that marriage is one of the seven sacraments which our Lord has entrusted to the keeping of his church. These sacraments, then, belong to the church, and we cannot recognize the right of those who separate from her to administer them or to assist officially at them, though they may have the power to do so validly. Therefore, though marriage be real and valid when contracted before a Protestant minister, and though his own people, of course, are not to blame, if in good faith, for availing themselves of his services, we cannot do so. In deed, this would be the case even if marriage were not a sacrament, but merely a religious rite or ceremony; we cannot allow the ministers of any sect separated from the church to act as such for us in any religious function; to do so would be to allow their claim to act in the name of Christ. This we can never do, and, above all, where the sacraments are concerned.

Another, and a very weighty reason, why Catholics cannot go before a minister for marriage, is that no one but the Catholic clergy can be supposed to be sufficiently acquainted with the laws of God and of the church regarding Christian marriage. There are impediments, as they are called, which make marriage invalid unless a dispensation is obtained from the proper source. Some of these are commonly known, such as those which proceed from a near relationship of the parties; but there are others which are not known even by name to the great mass of the faithful, and which a Protestant minister, even should he happen to know them, would never for a moment regard.

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Catholics, therefore, if they go to a minister to get married, run a great risk of not being really married at all, owing to these impediments not being detected or attended to. By the law of the State their marriage may be a good and real one, but in the sight of God it will not be so, if any such impediment should

exist, and not have been removed by dispensation; and this holds, even though no suspicion of such an impediment should have arisen. You see, then, how important it is in this matter to consult those who are competent to advise them.

Sermon CLI.

Joy In God's Service.

_Let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, ...
and be, ye, thankful._
--Colossians iii. 15.

Of the several great lessons contained in to-day's Epistle, the one most insisted on and brought out is that of thankfulness and joyfulness in the service of God.

In the labors of St. Paul (and his labors were more abundant than all the Apostles), in his frequent tribulations and crosses, he never ceased giving thanks in all things--nor did he ever tire of inculcating this same duty on the first Christians. If, then, my brethren, thankfulness and joyfulness are such a great part of religion, it would be well this morning to see if they be characteristic of our service. We have a multitude of reasons for being thankful to God, if we but thought of them--the gifts of nature--life, health, strength, the pleasures and gratifications of the mind, learning, objects of interest, of study and beauty, both in nature and art, the pleasures of home, the joys of friendship.

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These are real and great benefits; they are causes of joy and motives of thankfulness. Our good God intended us to find enjoyment in the moderate use of them, not, indeed, as ends in themselves, but as means to our one great end. And so he has spread the charm of beauty over this place of our sojourn and made it pleasant and interesting, lest we lose heart and become sad, and languish on our journey to heaven.

But to speak of higher gifts and benefits: What motives of joy and thankfulness ought we not to find in the knowledge of God, his truth, mercy, and goodness as made known to us in the Scripture and in his Divine Son, our Saviour and friend, the God-Man; in the gift of the faith, the spiritual riches of the church and the sacraments, his mercies to us personally--blessings on our labors, the removal of dangers from our paths, his gracious forgiveness of our sins, time and again. Then, too, what we expect and through his mercy count on for the future--the joys of heaven, those delights which pass our understanding. The life of heaven will be pure joy, and its one occupation thankfulness. Surely, then, this life should be a figure and foretaste of it; and so St. Paul thought, for he bids us "be thankful," "rejoice and rejoice always"; singing in grace in our hearts, and in every word and work giving thanks to God.

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It is plain that, since God has done his part in bestowing the benefits in such abundant measure, we should do ours in returning thanks, for gratitude is the correlative of benefit. It is equally plain that the true religion is joyful. Now, is such our religion? Is this the way we act? Is it the way we consider God's

service? We see, I think, more anxious and sad faces than thankful and glad ones; and I fear that the joyfulness of the latter does not come generally from the reasons I have given. It comes too often from worldly causes, from success in temporal things, from hopes and prospects which relate to indifferent things, if they are not dangerous and positively bad. Whereas the common idea of religion is that it is an unpleasant, sad, up-hill sort of a thing, which imposes restraints upon us, and, far from being a cause of thankfulness and joy, is a great interference with the pleasure of life. Pious people, too, are regarded as dull, simple, spiritless creatures, quite the opposite of joyful. This is all wrong, all false, and, if it be our religion, then we _have not_ the true religion, at least practically. For as God's benefits are real and great, so our thanks and joy should be in them and correspond to them. Religion, being our highest duty, should be and can be our highest pleasure. God says it is, and he is truth; those who have tried say the same. "What shall I render to God for all he hath rendered to me?"--"better one day in thy courts than a thousand years in the tents of sinners"--"taste and see how sweet the Lord is." Our consciences and experience bear out the same truth; for surely evil cannot be compared to good in fulness, in intensity; and, above all, it will not wear, it will not last, and it leaves us dissatisfied, fearful, sad. The pleasure and joy of a good life to a good man even here are far greater than the pleasure of sin to a sinner. {497}

Let us, then, make up our minds, once for all, that not only is religion the most necessary, but the wisest and the happiest thing for us. Let us serve God with thankfulness, both for what he has done and will do for us, if we are faithful. If he has done so much in this state of probation, exile, and punishment, what will he not do when the time of reward and enjoyment arrives. Surely, considering what we are and what we have done, the pains and crosses bear no proportion to the benefits, and we have cause even in present labors to be thankful and in every word and work to give him praise through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sermon CLII.

Forgive And Be Forgiven.

"_Bearing with one another
and forgiving one another,
if any have a complaint against another.
Even as the Lord hath forgiven you,
so you also._"
--Colossians iii. 13.

This, my dear brethren, is the law of Christ. It is a law we are bound to keep. We cannot save our souls unless we do keep it. There is no possible way to escape its requirements, for our Lord himself declares positively: "But if you will _not_ forgive men, _neither_ will your Father forgive _you your offences_" (Matthew vi. 15). Therefore, there is no way to save our souls, no way to be true Christians in life, unless we forgive all and every one, without exception, every injury they have done us.

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But one may say: I do forgive all who have injured me if they repent, say they are sorry, and ask pardon! My dear brethren, this won't do. You must forgive whether they repent or not. Nothing less will satisfy the Lord. The best reason is that since the Lord has forgiven us, so we also are bound to forgive all. A true lover of the Lord doesn't want a better reason. A greater or a better cannot be given. Our Lord himself has set the example. He has taken our sins upon himself, and caused the Eternal Father to forgive us our sins for his sake beforehand, before we have even repented or shown by a single sign that we want to belong to God and to hate sin. Do we not receive in our baptism, as infants, the grace that destroys original sin? Original sin placed us under the power of the devil, and made us unworthy to be called the sons of God, but our Christian baptism made us again the sons of God. Does not God forgive us also our mortal sins, giving us time to repent, and even waiting patiently for our repentance? Remember, these sins after baptism are all the greater because after being made innocent we again become guilty.
But some try to excuse themselves and say: It is hard to have to do this; I can't do it. The sin against me is too great; it ought not to be forgiven. This is not true. There is nothing we can't forgive, nothing we are permitted to leave unforgiven. We can forgive any sin against us if we will. If it is hard, pray and it will become easy. Sincere prayer for him who is our enemy is sure to remove very soon all feeling against him. This is certain: that it will, _without fail_, prevent the malice and revenge in our hearts from overcoming us and causing us to sin grievously against charity. Remember that everything we do well for our Lord is hard at first, but is made easy by prayer and faithful, persevering effort.
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Again, some object: I try to pray but cannot, because when I pray I think of my wrongs and begin to hate my enemy, so that my prayer is insincere or stops on my lips! Then pray for all poor sinners, and don't mean to leave your enemy out of your prayers. This is a good beginning, and keeps you from mortal sin, for pray we must _for our enemies_. This is a fundamental law of the Christian life. If we intentionally leave out one single soul when we pray for all poor sinners, we sin in the very presence of God, and our prayers are rejected; nor shall they be accepted until we include that soul also.
Let us remember, my dear brethren, that we are called by our Lord to show to the world that being the friends of God means that he puts into our souls his loving, merciful, long-suffering Spirit, and thus makes us like to himself. Does any one want to be God-like? Then let him forgive from his heart every injury and all who injure him.
To gain courage to forgive, let us see what forgiveness does. It saves God's honor. It prevents his being insulted. For example: when one insults us, he sins against God and insults him also. If we answer back, we also insult God, and make two sins instead of one. Next, our angry answer makes our enemy reply again; for another sin are we responsible. So it goes on until a number of

sins are committed by each one. Silence on our part would have prevented these insults to God and left our souls unstained. We were not silent. The consequence is we not only increased another's sin, but we added our own and lost the friendship of God.
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Had a forgiving spirit been in each soul this could not have happened. Had it been in one of them, one soul at least would have been kept from sin. Cultivate, then, a forgiving spirit, and "even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so you also" forgive all.